

Tap Tap Tap... Tap Tap Tap



You just never know who is going to walk into the studio on any given day. Yesterday it was a delightful young lady of 84 who just wanted a DVD of one of her tap dancing performances to be copied. But this was not just any transfer of an old performance of years gone by. This was a recording of a recent show. As a matter of fact, at 84, she is still teaching tap to anyone who would like to learn.

I had to ask, since I've been an admirer of tap dancers for some time, who her favorite all time tap dancer was. I was expecting the usual suspects. Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Ann Miller, etc... Her reply was instant and a bit of a surprise. Without missing a beat she blurted out, Dan Dailey.

In my age group, Dailey was not all that well known as a tap dancer... to be frank, he probably wasn't all that well known at all. I remember seeing him in a 60s sitcom called The Governor and JJ in which he starred with Julie Sommars. It only lasted a few seasons. But, as it turns out, he was quite a hoofer in his younger days.

After bouncing about MGM in a few modest parts, his big break came after he returned from WWII and was allowed to sign a contract with 20th Century Fox. They paired him with their biggest female star, Betty Grable, in the musical Mother Wore Tights. He would eventually co-star with her in two other films. He had another big hit with Give My Regards to Broadway which boasted an all-star lineup. He then had a string of semi-successful films but the film I remember him in most was a sports biopic where he played Dizzy Dean in The Pride of St Louis.

If you still can't quite place him, here's a snippet of a musical number from It's Always Fair Weather with Dailey, Gene Kelly and Michael Kidd as soldiers returning home from the war. (Dailey is the tall lanky fellow.)

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