

# An American Art That's Now Part of the World

By JENNIFER DUNNING

The all-American art of tap-dancing has taken on a life of its own in Barcelona, Nuremberg and cities throughout Japan and Brazil as well, to judge by "Tap International" on Friday night at the Duke on 42nd Street.

The first of three formal programs in the American Tap Dance Foundation's annual Tap City festival, the spirited, warmhearted evening em-

## Tap International

Duke on 42nd Street

phasized choreographed routines in a traditionally improvised, idiosyncratic art form.

Guillem Alonso of Spain opened with a low-key solo that was danced, improbably, to Charlie Chaplin's slow-moving "Limelight" theme, performed meditatively on guitar by Roger Raventós. Mr. Alonso's fast traveling volleys of footwork melted intriguingly into floor-skimming silence, but he was more persuasive in a later solo, a delicate sand dance filled with a variety of sounds and tapped asides to the audience.

Sonidos, one of three groups representing Brazil, came next in an act featuring a male and a female soloist and a chorus in an arty number based in African rhythms, song and music. Also from Brazil, **Christiane Matailo tapped while she played a piano and sax, vamping to the audience on a stage shared with the genial Gilberto de Syllos, who played the electric bass.** And the Brazilian group Ritmico exuded youthful exuberance and can-do spirit in a dance in which Cintia Chamecki, Igor Cor-

Tap City continues through Saturday at the Duke on 42nd Street, 229 West 42nd Street, Manhattan; (212) 239-6260 or [www.atdf.org](http://www.atdf.org).



Don Boggs/Charles/The New York Times

Members of Rumba Tap at "Tap International," part of the Tap City festival, continuing through Saturday.

rea and Jenai Cutcher chased spotlights in a laid-back but purposeful way.

Representing Israel and Spain, Sharon Lavi performed a duet with Ruben Sanchez that was both easygoing and electric, with the two non-competitive pals dancing for and with each other. The German duo of Tap and Tray (Kurt Albert and Klaus Bleis) already have an enthusiastic New York following, and this was one of their best routines, a number that included some witty play with two steel trays. Best of all, they still look like closet dancers — bank clerks, perhaps — who have found an indulgent god in tap.

The Finnish rapper Sofi Kyrklund and friends offered a pleasantly re-

## Tap-dancers from around the world show off in New York.

laxed number, the antithesis of a crashing, thudding, joyous improvisation by a wild man named Kazu Kumagai from Japan. Nate Cooper and Sharon Leahy tapped an American hoedown at a breakneck, gathering speed, accompanied by Rick Good on banjo and Matt Gordon on fiddle.

Max Pollak, another New York favorite, looked uncharacteristically self-conscious in numbers, with Chi-

kako Iwahori and Mr. Pollak's Rumba Tap chorus, that were drawn from his experiences dancing in Cub Mari Fujibayashi and Olivia Rosenrantz, a duo called Tapage from Japan and France, danced the evening's most sophisticated choreography in a chic duet with split second timing and synchrony.

Mr. Lavi, Mr. Pollak's Rumba Tap and Ritmico will perform again in the "Tap Forward" program on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights. Tap and Tray, Nate Cooper and Tapage will perform in "Tap as Song," featuring Tony Waag, the festival's irrepressible director, and including the beloved tap veteran Mable Lee on Wednesday and Friday nights.