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The Silver Belles, all in their 80s and 90s, glam it up in a recent dance performance (from left, Marlon Coles, Cleo Hayes, Elaine Ellis and Fay Ray). Below: The late Silver Belles member Bertye Lou Wood (center) at the Apollo Theater in 1938.



# Belles have a ball

THESE FORMER 1930s  
SHOWGIRLS ARE BACK,  
AND CAPTURED ON  
THE SILVER SCREEN

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**S**ome people spend their days in housecoats when they get older. For their own final decades, the Silver Belles have chosen dancing shoes.

Around the time "Like A Virgin" rocketed Madonna to iconic status, five former Harlem Renaissance showgirls came out of retirement

once danced alongside Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington, who shuffled at the Apollo Theater and the Cotton Club.

That's partly why, after a half-century of leading lives mostly away from the spotlight, they reclaimed their places on stage.

Now in their 80s and 90s, the Silver Belles can be seen on celluloid and in person at the Oct. 20 Connecticut premiere of the documentary, "Been Rich All My Life."

The film will be shown at 1 p.m. at the University of Connecticut Waterbury branch. It follows the Belles over two years, exploring their 70-year-long friendship through performances, weekly rehearsals and behind-the-