



Break Dancing: Art and Sport

Story by Audrey Williams

Photos by James Parker

Though 15-year-old Ernest McIntyre III lives in Los Angeles, Calif., his visits to see family members in Winston, and what he

does better than most, break dancing, has made his name and face familiar to Twin City residents.

In the streets of the South Bronx, where it was born, break dancing is no longer just an outlet for letting off steam -- it's a shot at fame.

Break dancing has been commercialized, packaged, mass produced and now tops the best seller how-to-list as the most popular dance craze since the twist.

Break dancing has made its way to the 14th Street Recreation Center in Winston-Salem and neighborhood kids such as 14-year-old Alex Groves can't keep off the heels of one of its finest practitioners.

"Ernest McIntyre is better than good," says Groves. "He's the best."

Fifteen-year-old Ernest McIntyre III, son of Winston native Ernest McIntyre Jr., is making his annual summer visit to the East Coast from his home in Los Angeles, where he lives with his mother.

This is the second summer he's taught the basics of break dancing at the recreation center. He's now even more equipped to handle his number

one status in Winston-Salem, especially since he's featured for four minutes in the British crossover group Kraft Werk's latest video, "Tour de France." He predicts the recently released video will soon make its way to the East Coast.

In break dance lingo, Ernest is the "3-D Robot," a name he adopted after perfecting the two moves that have made the dance so popular.

His warm-up routine, which has been mistaken for the actual dance itself, he says, is a rigorous

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-- Ernest McIntyre III

stretch and writhing of the body, using hand stands to lift his small frame off the floor.

When the warm-up is completed, Ernest begins to twirl his body across the floor, gliding, sliding and popping. For a moment, you wonder if it's an art or just skill.

"Yeah, I guess you could say that," says

Groves. "It's fun to do and it's a good thing to get known by."

Close to 20 young boys pack the room where Ernest teaches his class in the basics of break dancing. As they watch, they slap the five in approval of the awesome moves the 5-3 breaker makes with his body.

"That's bad," says Groves after witnessing Ernest's rendition of the helicopter.

Even with a video to his credit, Ernest still strives for perfection. He has to, for there's no telling when he'll have to battle against a fellow popper or break dancer.

"I popped against Turbo one day on Hollywood Boulevard," says Ernest, "and I beat 'em."

Michael "Turbo" Chambers is featured in the Lionel Richie video "All Night Long" and the movie "Breakin'."

Ernest specializes in the rhythmic and jerky pop, a "skill" he says he learned in the first grade from Robot Darryl, who is also featured in "Breakin'."

"He taught me everything I do," says Ernest. "I learned it from him."

His large dark eyes focuses on an object and off he goes into his version of the aerial and the windmill. It all appears painful, but he dares to grimace.

Like the break dancers before him, who were jeered at and asked to leave the city's sidewalks or face a public nuisance charge, Ernest is not welcome at a local skating rink, he says, even though break dancing has become well-known in the South.

"I can't even dance at the skating rink," says Ernest, "or they'll kick me out, 'cause every body will stop skating and start watching me and they lose money."

Despite being the center of attention and the heartthrob of the dance floor, Ernest, a track enthusiast, envisions a career far removed from entertainment.

"I want to be an architectural engineer," he says. "That's what I really want to do. Break dancing is just a hobby for me."

A youngster himself, the 125-pound, brown-eyed dancing sensation has become an eye-level role model for the kids who are students in his

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Patterson Y's Fitness Center-- as good as the commercial ones

By AUDREY WILLIAMS
Chronicle Staff Writer

Once the Winston-Lake YMCA is completed and ready to take the place of the aged Patterson Y, supporters of the present facility say more people will be inclined to take advantage of the services offered.

Barbara Young, a Winston native and a law student at Wake Forest University, is taking advantage of the Y's Fitness Center and the five- and six-week aerobics classes for men and women offered Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 5-6:30 p.m. The morning class is held on the same days, but from 9:30-11 a.m. A four-week slim-nastics class is also offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

The aerobics classes have been sponsored by the Patterson Y since the exercise craze hit a peak in 1980.

Young says she joined Barbara Dunlap's evening aerobics and weight training class over a week ago because the class was affordable and just as good as the more polished figure salons and fitness centers in Winston-Salem.

"I don't think the community is aware of all the outlets the Patterson Y has to offer," she says. "They go to the glossier and more visible programs but maybe that'll change with the new edifice.

"This class is within my budget constraint," Young says.

The Patterson Y's Fitness Center was a part of a renovation process in 1977 and 1978, which included additional and separate facilities for men and women. It is equipped with universal weights, a treadmill and Olympic weights.

Executive Director Richard Glover says he's sure the new facility will attract more health enthusiasts, but he adds that the present structure's Fitness Center is just as inviting. The new facility's Fitness Center will house a sauna, steam bath and jacuzzi.

"Right here a lot of people might perceive that the Patterson Y is just for youth," says Glover, "but it's not.

"We have even seen an increase in women using the facility (Fitness Center)," he says. "Historically and traditionally, the Y has been youth-oriented, but now the role of the Y is changing and it will change more so in the new facility because it will be designed for the whole family."

In the evening class, Dunlap, a former Elaine Powers figure salon instructor who has devoted her life to keeping healthy, distinguishes her class from the morning one by putting her students

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Aerobics instructor Daisy Baldwin: "They see me -- this 52-year-old woman -- and think: 'If she can do it, I can too'" (photo by James Parker).