

Silence on Eminem deafening

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she once said that he was a dope MC. Or why hasn't Dre, Eminem's boss, said anything?

Probably, everybody is waiting for the controversy to pass over and it will. Mainstream media will see to that. Fox News wrote a short article on its website. After mentioning what Eminem did the author

closed the story citing that Eminem has changed his ways.

If only black artists can get the benefit of the doubt like that.

Some people argue that black rappers degrade women too, and I have to agree. But the difference is this guy specifically said black women.

Maybe that's why there's so much silence. When black

women are the targets of hate or crimes it's as if society doesn't care. I refuse to believe so many people would be silent if Nas had released a song degrading white women.

When Professor Griff made anti-Semitic comments years ago the media didn't let it go until he was no longer a part of Public Enemy.

When Bill O'Reilly started a campaign against Ludicris, O'Reilly didn't stop until Pepsi dropped Ludicris from its ad campaign.

The chicken has come home to roost for black people and hip-hop. Since black men have disrespected women so long on records and talk shows, the rest of the world has followed suit and the world remains quiet.

Chicago dance tradition gains broader following



By Bennie M. Currie
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — It's Tuesday at the 50 Yard Line Bar and Grill and the dance floor is packed with couples twirling and sashaying to the mellow sounds of Barry White, Gerald Levert and other R&B balladeers.

The dancers are cooler than cool, executing intricate moves best described with one word — smooth. This is stepping — Steppin', if you will — a distinctive Chicago-bred derivative of swing dancing that is spreading across the country.

Stepping originated in the 1950s as The Bop, taking on its current name around 1990. The dance is a six- or eight-count movement during which partners face each other and clasp hands while alternately moving side-to-side and spinning to the beat.

Those are the basics. But stepping is better defined by the individual and improvisational style on display most nights in Chicago and its suburbs, where the dance has had a cult-like following among blacks for more than four decades.

"Stepping is about more than just dancing. It's a social way of life," said Herb Kent, a disc jockey at the WVAZ-FM radio station and longtime observer of the scene. "Stepping was born here. It probably goes back to the days when jazz was hot and the dances like the Lindy Hop and the Jitterbug were so prominent here."

With help from R&B singer and Chicago native R. Kelly, whose current single and video for "Step In the Name of Love" is getting heavy airplay, stepping is now gaining devotees from Washington, D.C., to Atlanta to Los Angeles.

"When I first saw it, I fell in love with it," said Benjamin Cunningham, an avid ballroom dancer in Detroit, where stepping has joined a list of dances that include the Latin Hustle and salsa. The accountant and part-time dance instructor learned how to step about 18 months ago and now teaches it locally.

"I don't even want to do the other dances anymore," Cunningham said.

Stepping's spread doesn't surprise Pete Frazier, a Chicago impresario who has produced a stepping video and plans to complete a "how to" DVD later this year.

"It's a dance where you don't have to break a sweat but you can still go out and enjoy yourself because

floor, Calvin offers a caveat: Counting your steps is a no-no!

"The dance is a basic six or eight step dance usually, but when you get on the floor and dance you don't ask the lady what step she wants to do," Calvin said. "You just pick up the count and go with the flow."

Not only might a novice stepper lose some cool points by fixating on function rather than form, he or she also runs the risk of rejection.

"If a stepper thinks you don't know how to step, you might get left out on the dance floor," said Clint Mitchell, a 30-year stepper.

Many top steppers belong to cliques and social clubs that regularly get together at dance parties known as "steppers sets," Mitchell said, noting that older steppers prefer the more straightforward "original" style while younger dancers lean toward the improvisational "freestyle" form. Others are fans of "walking," a slower version of stepping.

But no matter the style, steppers are a sight to see, showcasing slickly choreographed moves that sometimes are rivaled by flamboyantly colorful outfits.

For 53-year-old grandmother Patricia Gray, Tuesday "is my night to step." She has been a regular at the 50 Yard Line, located on the city's South Side, for the last five years.

"It's a form of exercise," Gray said. "My family knows not to bother me on Tuesday because they know where I'll be."

Stepping's exact origins are harder to pinpoint. From dancers to DJs to organizers of steppers sets, confusion abounds. While it is widely

viewed as an offshoot of the Bop, it's hard to pinpoint how the dance became known as stepping.

"It's like the blues or jazz," according to Dan Land, 47, who runs a Web site devoted to all things stepping. "You can't really specify who created it. It's something that evolved."

And as other dances (the Jerk, Hustle, Electric Slide) emerged and faded from pop culture, the Bop remained on the Chicago scene. Land added, "It would always be around and people would keep changing it," he said. "In the 70s it was called the New Bop and later on, stepping."

Frazier, whose dance party billed as the "World's Largest Steppers Set" drew about 2,000 dancers from Detroit, Atlanta, Milwaukee and elsewhere Labor Day weekend, also hosts an annual convention in Las Vegas. He hopes that stepping will develop a mainstream following the way salsa dancing has — a view shared by Land.

"That has always been one of my objectives," Land said. "It's a black cultural dance to me and people are beginning to do it all over the country. They may call it Ballin' (in Detroit) or 'Hand Dancing' (in Washington, D.C.), but regardless of what you call it, it all comes from Chicago."

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COCA-COLA
"STUDENT" OF THE MONTH
Ian Cedric Montgomery
7th Grader,
Wilson Middle School



Aspirations:
To attend college
and become an architect

Our 12 year old "Student of the Month," Ian Montgomery, is an A-B honor student in the Scholars program at Wilson Middle School. An active, popular and involved student, Ian has won numerous awards for excellence in creative writing, citizenship, art and math.

Ian's extra curricular activities include membership in Boy Scout Troop 130, Sci-Teen volunteer program and Discovery Place where he volunteers at the Omnimax Theatre.

When not in school or volunteering, Ian enjoys reading, playing chess, drawing, listening to music and increasing his action hero collection.

Ian is the son of Trina Montgomery-Ardrey. He has two brothers, Alex and Fredrick "Chuckie." Ian and his family attend Manna Bread of Life Ministries Church, where his grandmother, Mary M. Davis is pastor. Active at church, Ian sings on the youth choir and is an usher.



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