

HIP MOVES

New movies are reflecting the influence of urban dance

By Marian Liu
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(KFT)

SAN JOSE, Calif.

Hip-hop dance is infusing pop culture as never before, moving from street corners and music videos to fitness centers, dance studios and television shows.

And now Hollywood has noticed.

"Right now dance is the key focus, the main focus of everything going on," says Shane Sparks, a choreographer from "You Got Served." "Honey," another hip-hop dance movie, opened late last year.

The hip-hop dance of today is a more choreographed form of street and club dancing, as opposed to the more free-form moves of earlier styles, such as break-dancing.

"Each move now that Britney Spears or Justin Timberlake does takes a little bit of this and that from breakdancing, locking, popping moves, and blends it all in," says Beto Lopez, a hip-hop dancer from Stockton, Calif.

The choreography also has become a mainstay at concerts.

"If you eliminate all the dancers and keep the artists there, I don't think the shows would be as incredible," says Shane Sparks, choreographer for B2K, IMx, Ginuwine and Brandy.

"There's a definite surge in the white neighborhood that wouldn't necessarily be exposed to hip-hop in their everyday life," says Keith Pinto, an MC and hip-hop dance teacher at DanceAttack in Los Gatos, Calif. "They watch MTV, see other kids doing it and want to be a part of it. You can pretty much go to any dance studio in the Bay Area and they'll have a hip-hop class."

To see how hip-hop dance is being mainstreamed, look no further than high schools and fitness centers.

"That's the music ... at school dances, so we want to learn how to dance to that," says Diana Schnabel, a 17-year-old

junior from Willow Glen High School in San Jose.

Her high school's drama shows once showcased mostly singing and skits, but recently they have been taken over by hip-hop dance routines, she says.

Fitness centers are also taking advantage of the trend, citing it as the newest fad in exercise after yoga and Pilates.

Amanda Arnold started teaching hip-hop in June at three 24 Hour Fitness Centers in San Jose. She said that even aerobics conventions have started to include hip-hop in their repertoire.

"I grew up when hip-hop was pretty popular, and as I got older, I went to the clubs where we danced to rap and hip-hop," says Arnold, a San Jose resident. "But now I'm 26 and it's old school to go clubbing, so this is what I want to do when I work out."

People like Arnold have grown up with hip-hop and now are old enough to promote it.

"We're in control of it now," says Lopez, director of a break-dancing documentary called "The B-boy Connection" set to be released in time for the next year's Sundance Film Festival. "We may not have Hollywood power or money, but we can promote our own events and sell our own clothing."

Yet, even as hip-hop dance and fashion are becoming more pervasive, some say it comes with a downside. Aiko Shirakawa, a hip-hop dance instructor at San Jose's Roosevelt Community Center, says that although this trend has paved the way for many dancers, it also has fostered more suggestive dance moves.

"The young new generation is getting out there and feeling energized and inspired, but girls are left with the dances that are slutty, like striptease dancing," says Shirakawa, 35. "As a parent of a 5-year-old daughter, I would be horrified and would never leave her side. I would let her take everything: jazz, popping,

Hip-Hop Dance Glossary

Get your groove on with these moves

■ **Battling:** competitive dancing

■ **Break dancing:** acrobatic dancing

■ **B-boy or B-girl:** a break dancer, now in more general use for any member of the hip-hop culture

■ **C-walk:** the Crip walk, or foot shuffle, the name for this popular move comes from the street gang the Crips

■ **Drop:** the transition between upright or standing moves and break dancing or moves done on the ground

■ **Footwork or freezes:** break dancing or ground moves that you hold or "freeze"

■ **Locking:** locking the body into different poses

■ **Popping:** flexing and releasing the muscles really fast to create popping movement

■ **Power moves:** movements that are used to show the power of the competitor, such as continuous back spins (called a "windmill")

■ **Top rocks:** shuffling around and doing footwork, what the B-boy does before hitting the floor for ground moves

■ **Up-rocks:** upper-body dancing that includes arm movements that mimic fighting or combat

(Sources: Jennilee Gomez of B-syde, Keith Pinto of Felonious: One Love Hip Hop, and Jorge "Popmaster Fabel" Pabon of the Rocksteady Crew-Universal Zulu Nation)

locking; everything but hip-hop."

And some hip-hop dance pioneers like Ralph Casanova, who launched moves in Brooklyn as King Uprock, are disappointed that they aren't getting recognition for their contributions. Many plan to boycott "You Got Served" because it does not pay tribute to the history of hip-hop dance.

Yet Dave Scott, choreographer

of "You Got Served" and of artists including B2K, Tyrese, Brian McKnight and ice skater Tara Lipinski, says the movie "shows some rawness and is a little diluted to appeal to every artist. It does not really get into the back door of everything."

"I've seen hip-hop dance grow and kind of get drowned out by a lot of things such as stage shows, pop crews and pop," says Scott, who also judged the Wade Robson Project, a hip-hop

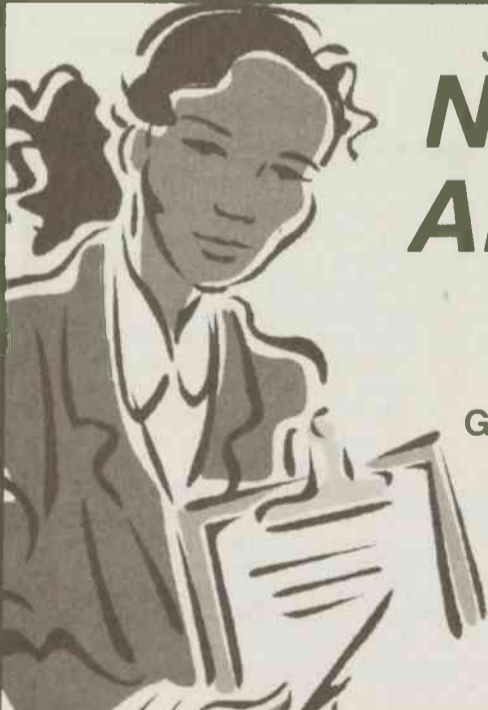
television competition. "There are different ways to represent hip-hop. It's like a big bowl of gumbo."

Visit these Web sites to learn more about the history of break dancing:

www.jam2dis.com/j2dbreak-dancehist1.htm

Physical Graffiti: The History of Hip Hop Dance:

www.daveyd.com/history/physicalgraffitifabel.html



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