February 2006

Hip Hop Club

Zach Johnson
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2006/iss1/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ethos by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Dub H brings together a variety of personalities with one common desire. It's not about the booty-bouncing, rump shaking or gyrating hips. It isn't just about the booming bass and the fast-paced beats either. It's not just about the moves and the attitude at Dub H, Iowa State's hip hop dance club; it's about hip hop as a culture.

Each week, Dub H hosts free workshops at each meeting in which both students and non-students can participate in a variety of dances. The choreographers work tirelessly matching steps to the beat and then teaching it to large groups of eager dancers.

"We have a lot of trained dancers, but we also have a lot of untrained people who want to be more acquainted with hip hop," said president and junior in mechanical engineering Olufunmilola Anjonrin-Ohu. "There are about 40 dancers who are really into it, and the rest do it for fun. Dub H started with 30 people six years ago and now it's the biggest club on campus. Even with 500 people, we're trying to keep it personal. I try to walk around and talk to everyone so that they don't feel like they aren't really a part of Dub H. We're having what I like to call 'growing pains.' With such a large group it can be hard to organize everything."

Anjonrin-Ohu grew up in a house where her love for dance formed early, as she remembers dancing in the kitchen.
with her family while preparing dinner. However, now her love of dance has taken on a new spin, with her duties as the president leaving her oftentimes feeling stressed and spread too thin. According to her, she wouldn't have it any other way.

"It's a lot of pressure being the president. Last year's president liked to do everything himself, and that worked for him. For me, my big thing is listening to everyone so at least they know that their opinions were heard. However, dance is my release. It helps me get away from the pressure of schoolwork," Anjonrin-Ohu said.

"Dub H has taught me a lot about patience. It's given me a lot of strength too. Hip hop is the red-headed stepchild of dance, because people see it as just a club. We're not really that established yet. It takes a lot of strength to keep coming back."

Even with all of the stress that comes with teaching dance steps to such large groups, secretary of Dub H and senior and design major Jon Castro has learned a lot from his experiences in Dub H. He said that his involvement in Dub H has given him extra confidence in himself, both as a dancer and as a person.

"I co-choreographed a dance last spring for the first time with Kristen Snobeck [Dub H's vice president] and it took my skills to a whole new level. It was a challenge, but turned out to be really fun and successful," Castro said. "This last fall was the second time that I choreographed, but this time I did it on my own. [Choreographing a dance by myself] took everything to a whole other level because the ideas and dance moves had to solely come from me. It was definitely a stress at times, but teaching 20-25 people a dance on your own isn't easy in general. I had a whole new respect for the choreographers in previous dances that I was in because I put myself in their shoes and realized what kind of person and leader they had to be."

Kyle Taylor, a member of Dub H and a senior in advertising, sees hip hop as more of a sense of style and confidence. He finds unique ways to learn the dances and incorporate his own pizzazz into the dances.

"The most difficult thing for me with
hip hop is learning counts. I am not much of a count-oriented dancer; I am more in sync with the beat and sounds. I myself tend to make a lot of noises to help me with the different counts,” Taylor said.

All of the dancers’ hard work pays off in the end, though, when they get a chance to perform for both fun and competition.

“As a club, we all come together with all of our skills, talents and backgrounds and create amazing shows for people to see. Through the show people are able to see how hard we have worked and the dedication everyone had to have to come together outside of their college class life and live a little more,” Castro said.

However, the performances that are closest to Anjonrin-Ohu’s heart are those the group puts on for various charities, of which include Run for Life, Got Ignorance? and an HIV benefit.

“At the HIV benefit there’s a dinner and a silent auction and then we perform to raise money for research. The dancers usually participate in the auction too, because it’s an important cause. We try to do as many charity shows as possible and help anyone we can help, like when we performed awhile ago at Got Ignorance?,” Anjonrin-Ohu said. “We’ve always been a diverse club and so we support anything diverse that we can. The HIV benefit is especially important because there are so many minorities with HIV.”

Gaining exposure at these charity events and through other performances, Dub H is gaining in popularity at a rapid rate.

“We tend to become a larger club with every semester that passes, and that can be overwhelming at times,” Castro said. “At one point we had as many as 175 people wanting to be a part of the club, but we still encourage and want more people to join and be a dancer and we definitely
encourage people to choreograph no matter whether you are a new member or an old member."

As the club continues to grow in both number and talent, Anjonrin-Ohu has one goal in mind: to keep the club about expression through dance and diversity, not about celebrating a booty-bounce or sexual/violent lyrics.

"Most hip hop music is suggestive; we don't want to perform that kind of stuff for our younger fans. It should just be about how good of a dancer someone is, not about how fast that girl can shake her ass," Anjonrin-Ohu said. "In the future I hope that Dub H becomes a more refined group. We have people who have danced all of their lives and people who have never danced a day in their lives and come to learn a few new steps. I want people to see the members of Dub H as professional dancers."