

Dancers get big 'break' at Capitol

By Tony Perry

They were breaking, popping and gliding before an awe-struck standing room only crowd Monday, but the most exciting experience of the afternoon for them was watching a videotape of the performance.

Members of "The Funk Affect," gathered around a television monitor in the video production studio shortly after a 1:00 P.M. break dancing exhibition in the auditorium during which they

demonstrated the movements of the latest cultural metamorphosis of dance along with two other young break dancing teams, "The Harrisburg Circuit Breakers" and the "Cosmic Rockers," also from Harrisburg.

Conceived and coordinated by second semester Multi-Media major Carol Kokoski, the exhibition more than filled the 208 seat auditorium with an enthusiastic crowd that clapped and cheered.

The teams "popped" (moved their bodies jerkily as if they were segmented), "glided" (moved their bodies fluidly as if they were floating), and performed the difficult moves of "breaking" (spinning on the floor, rapidly moving the feet and hands while on all fours, or some variation of the two).

"It was an exhibition, although the kids performed as if it were a competition."

"I loved it," says Kokoski, obviously exhausted from the difficult task of organizing the program as well as arranging for the performance to be videotaped for a documentary for her Ethnic America course.

Kokoski interviewed all of the dancers prior to the performance and was really impressed by the discipline and skills involved in break dancing.

"I really appreciate the hard work that they put into it," she comments. "They are all good kids. I learned a lot about the kids and about break dancing itself."

Although its origins have been estimated between the years 1974 and 1976, break dancing has exploded into a national phenomenon in the past three years, helped particularly by the movie "Flashdance," which featured a cameo appearance by a break dancing troupe which influences the lead character to incorporate some of the movements into her own dance routine. This recent popularity has taken the combination art form/sport from the streets of large urban cities like New York to cities like Harrisburg and Middletown.

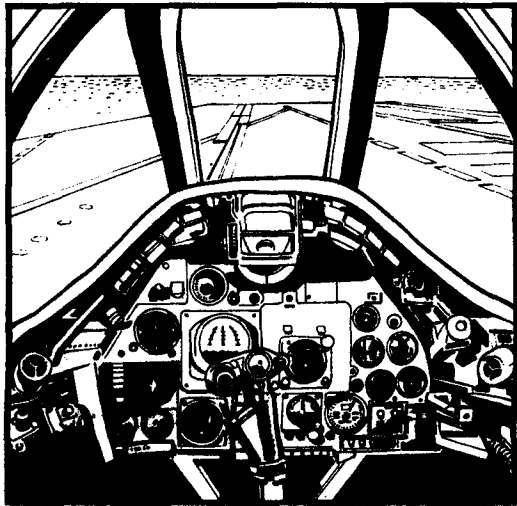
"I was curious when I started," remembers Kokoski, "if there were any break dancers in Harrisburg. When I started asking around, word of mouth led me to these three teams."

"It's been a lot of work," she adds. "Each performer had to be treated differently."

Even though they were performers on stage, the members of "The Funk Affect," ranging in age from 16 to 18, stood mesmerized as they watched themselves "break" on video tape.

It was their turn to be awed.

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