



Photos by Adriane Jaeckle / El Paso Times

The Sun City Floor Rockers and Pharaohs of Phunk are, top row from left, Paul "Locksmith" Muñiz, Alex "Chance" Mendoza and Patrick "Pac-Man" Perez and, bottom row from left, Josef "Prophecy" Silva, Bibiano "BB Boy" Maldonado and Joseph "Poppin' Joe" Muñiz will be at the Battle Time: 2007 Street Rhythms Reborn competition today.

Breakin' to the beat

Competition today celebrates street arts

By Sandra Valladolid
El Paso Times

To those haters who say break dancing is dead, Ricardo Ogaz has a message for you: "Break dancing never died; it just went underground."

Though break dancing hit its greatest commercial popularity in the '80s, it continues to thrive in true hip-hop style. "The real, original hip-hop was all positive and about having a good time and moving forward and upward," said Ogaz, a member of the dance crew Pharaohs of Phunk who competes in dance contests in the United States and Mexico. "It's that great positive outlook that keeps break dancing alive everywhere."

With block-rocking beats, some of the hottest DJs and MCs will spin music for break dancers, poppers and graffiti artists at the Battle Time: 2007 Street Rhythms Reborn competition today at Canutillo Middle School, 7311 Bosque Road. The original venue was changed.

The competition was supposed to have been at Ysleta Independent School District's Cultural Arts Center, but the school district closed all facilities Friday because of a winter storm.

"From California to Texas, Oklahoma and Juárez, the best of the best will compete for scholarships to help them with their educational and career goals," said Patrick Perez who co-organized the event with Ogaz. "It's a show you can't miss. The performers' passion for their artistry is contagious."



Alex "Chance" Mendoza, front, and Patrick "Pac-Man" Perez will perform.

The annual break dancing event was created in 1998 by Canutillo Middle School Vice Principal Bibiano Maldonado to encourage the development of street arts and to foster a relationship between the community and local hip-hop artists.

"He (Maldonado) continues to be our mentor even though he has now passed the torch to us," Ogaz said.

Perez, founder of Lead, Encourage And Dance, a motivational performance program, credits Maldonado for his success

Make plans

- ▶ **What:** Battle Time: 2007 Street Rhythms Reborn competition for break dancers, graffiti artists, DJs, poppers, MCs and hip-hop lovers. The competition will have a series of elimination rounds, featuring one-on-one graffiti artists at 4 p.m., four-on-four break dancing crews and one-on-one poppers starting at 6:30 p.m. There will also be MC and DJ battles. Doors will open at 2 p.m.
- ▶ **When:** 2 p.m. to midnight today.
- ▶ **Where:** Canutillo Middle School, 7311 Bosque Road.
- ▶ **How much:** \$10. \$5 more to take a camera inside.
- ▶ **Information:** 820-0042 or www.myspace.com/streetrhythms or www.leadencourageanddance.org.

in El Paso.

"He's shown us the ropes on how to organize great programs for students," said Perez, who has spoken to more than 150,000 youths on the importance of setting goals.

Break dancer Erick Hayes is excited to check out the competition.

"In (California), there were shows at the malls and streets, anywhere," he said. "Not so much here in El Paso. So I'm looking forward to checking it out. It may be my only chance to battle in town."

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