



BPAPS 'Drop It Like It's Hot' event a success

Staff writer receives more than bargained for during event

By Isaac Rocha
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I had practiced all week. As a DJ, it is necessary to plan ahead for the crowd that you are playing for. After all, country music at an NBA ALL-Star game just wouldn't feel right.

Last Friday, Feb. 18, came a little quicker than I expected, but then nothing would prepare me for this.

The Bakersfield Performing Arts and Philanthropic Society and Peace Web sponsored "Drop It Like It's Hot" dance contest was at 7 p.m. and I was asked by Shonell Peoples, a junior and Political Science major at CSUB, to DJ the event because of my involvement with the CSUB Hip Hop Club.

This is one of the first real shows I have ever done. I mean, I have done house parties but nothing as completely public as this.

I found at sound check from Darryl Redd, a choreographer and judge for the dance contest, that I would have to play each individual recording for the dance groups.

All of the dance routines hinged on this dusty, archaic and up to this point unreliable CD player that I pulled out of my closet and rigged through my mixer before the show. Each track had to be in order and on cue because the dancers had practiced routines that went along with their music.

All of this was organized in the very short hour before the show started.

A little after 7 p.m. people started filling up the small room. I was into my set, just spinning some hip hop as usual, when the show officially started with an inspiring opening song by a member of BPAPS calling for peace and love.

It was a great start to the show because by this time the Multi Purpose Room was almost full of people. The dancers sat in costume waiting, parents and friends lined the walls in support and soon the room would be as full as I have ever seen it.

Then the man hosting the event, a man of broad shoulders and ample girth who towers around at 6 feet 4 inches approaches me with his sidekick, who makes up for his lack of height with plenty of width.

It was BET Comedian Shawn Harris with his guest Hurricane.

"Play track one when I tell you to," said Harris as he handed me a CD before he got on stage. He introduced himself, gave me the cue from the stage, and the show was officially in full swing.

From this point on it was up to me to play filler music and the tracks for the dance contest.

But I wish it were as easy as that.

Some dancers wanted me to play just half of one track, then quickly switch to another track. Others had scratched CD's that wouldn't work right and others brought tapes, one which was accidentally recorded over about 5 minutes before the show started.



Photo by Isaac Rocha

Shonell Peoples, second from left on stage, speaks to a packed house during BPAPS' event, "Drop It Like It's Hot."

While all of this hectic, on-the-spot preparation was going on behind the scenes, the show was still rolling and the comedian was really funny.

When he wasn't doing his routine, teasing the crowd or mocking the latest Usher single, he made good use of my hectic on-the-spot organizing by putting me on the spot for not having music ready for him when he asked.

"C'mon DJ, play something," taunted Harris. I froze, saw everyone looking in my direction and hastily threw on a record only for Harris to tell me to "turn that mess off." He got a good laugh at my expense. I just figured he ran out of material. But I was prepared for the next time he tried that route again.

The dance contest went surprisingly smoothly. The CD player never skipped, and we even played most of the tracks in order. Unfortunately for a couple of groups, there was a tape malfunction and a bad CD that temporarily slowed the competition, but it was quickly taken care of by quick thinking from Redd and the latecomer DJ Ome, who brought her own expertise and great sound system.

There was a good turnout of 11 entries, including CSUB's Kaibigan club, each bringing their own style to the show. The winner was DSC, a local group of break dancers who did a routine to Def Squad's remake of the hip hop classic "Rappers Delight" which earned them the \$200 prize.

The standout entry of the night was a woman in her mid-forties, dressed in what looked like an Indian/belly dancer outfit down to the bells on her feet. She performed a trancy, graceful routine to music that sounded like it came from a hookah bar in India. Though it was a deep contrast with the hip hop theme of the night, the crowd gave her a booming applause.

"The event was refreshing and new, it was nice to see people of all ages, religions, and races come together to promote awareness, peace and several different elements of hip hop including b boys, DJ's, MC's and people of all ages, religions, races," said

Isaac Buentello, a Liberal Studies senior who attended the show.

The dance helped raise \$320 for BPAPS, which is going to use the money to help write a grant for scholarships for young activists looking to make a difference in the community.

After a speech was given by BPAPS member Marissa Harper promoting AIDS awareness and safe sex practices by providing free condoms, Harris went on stage for a few more jokes.

Again, Harris called for music and this time I had it ready. "Man, turn that mess off," Harris again joked which provoked more laughs from the audience.

As soon as he started to get back into his jokes, I turned up the music full blast.

He paused.

He turned and looked in my direction with bewilderment. I turned the music down.

Harris started to speak again when I turned up the stereo to full blast. This really got the crowd laughing, and he looked at me with a smile and it was then I knew I had him. The joke was on him.

After a few more teases and huge laughs from the crowd, I let Harris do his thing. The only time he put me on the spot after that was to give me props.

"The attendance was great. The show turned out wonderful," said Peoples.

After the dance contest there was performance from BPAPS members Inesha Williams and F-Teezy, and an open mic session that lasted until the show ended at 11 p.m.

It was a great learning experience for me as a DJ, as I found to expect the unexpected at such a diverse event as this. I also learned that it takes dedication, patience, and a little luck for an event with all of these last minute changes to run smoothly. For that, much thanks goes out to Redd and Dj Ome Lopez from Fresno. They were the glue that held the event together.

But most importantly I learned how to fend off annoying comedians with music.