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**Hip Hop Dance in New Zealand:
Philosophies, Practices and Issues.**

Katherine Walker

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Masters
in Creative and Performing Arts (Dance Studies), The University of Auckland.**

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ABSTRACT

Hip hop dance has a long, interesting and often conflicting history. Hip hop dance forms have flourished in Aotearoa and have become a large part of the country's youth culture. New Zealand has received world wide acclaim for the hip hop dancers and choreographers it is producing. As an experienced hip hop dancer, this research aimed to offer an informed inside view of the New Zealand hip hop dance community. It is hoped that this research will also provide a valuable resource for the New Zealand hip hop dance community and an opportunity to reflect its practice.

This qualitative research placed value on the voices of the eight hip hop dancers who participated in the study. The study was driven by the question: What are the philosophies, practices, and issues that are informing hip hop dance in New Zealand?

Through analysis of interviews and observations the data revealed dominant emerging themes and issues present in the hip hop dance community. For the hip hop dancers in New Zealand their culture is at a stage where it is deciding where to go; whether it should stay as a competition-driven youth practice, or mature into a diverse dance culture.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Journey

I got on the plane. I put all the things I needed for the flight in the right places, shoved my carry on back pack under the seat in front of me, placed my Masters research draft in the seat pocket and got comfortable. Well as comfortable as I could be in the cramped Jet Star flight. My crew Hopskotch, and myself, were heading to Hip Hop International's (HHI) World Hip Hop Dance Championships in Las Vegas. After 3 months of trying to fundraise approximately \$30,000 to attend the competition this was the best flight we could afford. I was sitting next to 2 of the boys from the South Auckland crew 'Dziah 2.0' (the adult crew from 'Dziah Dance Academy'). Before we left we had several meetings with Dziah 2.0, 'D-Skyz' (the varsity crew from Dziah Dance Academy), and the Hamilton based crew 'Vogue'. We had coordinated our travel plans and even combined some fundraising activities. Soon we would be meeting Vogue in LA so we could all bus to Vegas together. This was just the start of our journey. A journey that Dziah had taken many times over the last few years; the experience of which showed in the way they travelled, they had it down to a practised art.

This was my second trip to the World Hip Hop Dance Championships; but the first taking my own crew. The first time I went was in 2007 with my old crew Triple8funk, that year we had placed fifth. We had clear goals that we wanted to win the competition that year, but fell a few places short. This year we had prepared ourselves not to think about placing. We had decided to value the process and the experience. Though I did worry if we had prepared the

crew enough for that. However our goals were clear; 1. Enjoy the experience and 2. Enter the individual battles as well as the crew competition. The night of practice and staying awake until 5 am before the flight started to creep up on me. I slept for the remainder of the journey.

We got off the first plane in Australia. Three hip hop crews squashed in one small airport, wearing their crew t-shirts and buzzing with excitement. We managed to get through in time to have some Eagle Boy's pizza before we prepared to board the longer flight to LA, dreading the 6 hour bus ride when we arrived.

The heat hit me as soon as we stepped off the plane in Los Angeles and I followed the familiar route through customs. I wished I had one of the friendlier looking customs processors like the one that asked one of our members to do 'the dougie'. Once through customs we joined the other crews, waiting for the chartered bus to arrive. While waiting we saw some of the girls from 'Request' (the defending champions from New Zealand) and wished them a safe journey to Vegas before they hopped into their vans. The bus arrived and Hopskotch and our supporters, Vogue, and Dziah Dance Academy equipped with their own support teams and managers, hopped onto the bus and we started the journey to Vegas together. Though we were all good friends by this stage there was still electricity from the oncoming competition in the air. This only heightened as the trip progressed; even more so when we were dropped off at our different hotels. However, along with any feelings of competition, we still arrived in Vegas possibly the most united that New Zealand teams have ever been on a trip to the world champs. In some measure our efforts already

revealed a degree of success.

1.2 The Return Journey

We got on the bus. Hopskotch, DZIAH Dance Academy, Vogue and the supporters; all tired. The competition was over. Any feeling of competition between the three teams was long gone. We were truly 'Team New Zealand'. We were all proud of the success New Zealand had achieved. The 'Lil Saintz' had placed second in the Junior division, ReQuest had placed second in adults, and the other crews in 'The Royal family' had secured 3 out of 4 gold medals. However it was now time to relax and unwind. We had all gone through the same experiences of hard work and excitement followed by feelings of fatigue and disappointment. For Hopskotch, our performance hadn't gone as well as we'd hoped. Half of the team had gotten sick from the desert heat and I had even managed to catch a flu bug while in the plane. The performance was a struggle. The competition was filled with politics, and we had a lack of support from our New Zealand representatives (organisers from New Zealand who are essentially our support system while in Las Vegas, and our communicators with HHI). After our performance we only had competitors from different countries, as well as our travel group congratulate us. I'm not sure if the New Zealand representatives even came to watch. Still to this day we haven't heard anything nor received an acknowledgement of commiseration or even a "well done".

Although I had prepared myself for disappointment nothing hit me harder than seeing the disappointment of my own team members, and our travel group. The judging seemed to be

a game of chance and popularity. I had known this before we performed, as I learnt this lesson in 2007, however it didn't make it any easier when Hopskotch got knocked out of the first round. Before we left Vegas we reminded ourselves of our original goals, and felt that even though we hadn't placed we had achieved what we had come to do. We had focussed on process rather than product, and we had also entered the World Hip Hop Dance Championship battles for locking, popping, all styles and breaking; a feat that no other New Zealand crew to date has done. Without all of that I wondered how crews coped with disappointment. On the way home I began to question the motivation behind our community in New Zealand.

Too common are the phrases "get that gold" or "let's take home the gold" at these competitions, and the Team New Zealand meetings set up by New Zealand representatives at the world champs. Never did I hear the phrases "just enjoy yourself" or "so proud of your creativity". Hip hop dance for New Zealanders seemed to mean winning competitions. This is not what hip hop dance means to me. Winning is not my overall goal for my company.

After the bus ride, the plane ride, the stopover in Sydney and the consequent plane ride to Auckland I had to settle back into student life. My Masters thesis (of which a draft travelled to and from Las Vegas untouched) seemed harder than it did before I left. I was not inspired by my community; after this experience I was thoroughly discouraged. I found myself struggling to fit my thoughts into the question 'what are the meanings of hip hop dance to hip hop dancers in NZ'. All I could think about was the motive of winning, the goal that seemed to dominate New Zealand hip hop dancer's philosophies and practices. Is the

ultimate goal for New Zealand hip hop dance really to get as many gold medals as we can at a competition that judges you on a 2 minute performance? I wanted to discover that there was more to New Zealand hip hop dancers than this, or at least discover if there was any change. I wanted to re-evaluate the picture I had of the New Zealand hip hop dance community. The question driving this research is; what are the philosophies, practices, and issues that are informing hip hop dance in New Zealand?

1.3 Hip Hop and Me

My experience in hip hop dance has been a journey, and still is to this day. I expect my knowledge to gain in depth and weight and to take different directions after new experiences; and for the people I encounter to affect and add to my perspectives.

I started my journey in hip hop dance when I attended a street jazz class titled 'hip hop' in an East Auckland dance studio. After attending this class for a year I thought I was a hip hop dancer. When I went to University I encountered a group called Triple8funk. My world changed. After watching them I realised quickly that I had a lot more to learn; and that what I had been learning was not hip hop dance.

Many things happened almost at once. I started to audition for Triple8Funk, I took part in a community project called 'Dziah2Dream', I took breaking workshops with some of the Disruptiv All Stars at Disrupt gallery on Krd, and I started studying dance at the University of Auckland. My world was opened to the knowledge of bboying, new school, locking, popping

and more. There was a whole culture to be discovered. I was inducted into Triple8funk in 2006 and started to perform and compete with them. The highlight of which was going to the World Hip Hop Championships in Los Angeles in 2007. At the end of that year my partner and I left Triple8Funk and started our own crew 'Hopskotch'.

Since then I have been heavily immersed in different hip hop dance styles and different aspects of hip hop dance. I have involved myself in the hip hop dance community by organising battles, choreographing and producing shows in New Zealand. As well as teaching, performing, and entering one-on-one battles and crew competitions locally, nationally and internationally; in places around New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, China, Niue and America. Throughout my journey I have tried to broaden my understanding of hip hop dance and its histories, practices, styles, pedagogies and meanings, as well as its constantly growing global context, by immersing myself in different local cultures.

Perhaps my most significant education in hip hop dance culture started when my partner and I created Hopskotch; which has provided some of the greatest learning experiences of all.

1.4 Questions and Methods

This research investigates the hip hop dance community of New Zealand and the perspectives and experiences of its participants. The research aims to provide a window into the hip hop dance community of New Zealand by researching the question: What are the

philosophies, practices and issues that are informing hip hop dance in New Zealand?

In order to answer this question I conducted qualitative interviews with 8 active hip hop dancers. I purposefully selected diverse dancers in respect to their age, dance experience, gender, and background. Each participant was required to be over 18 and have had at least 4 years experience in the New Zealand hip hop dance community.

The aim of this research is not to define what is or what is not hip hop dance, but to discuss how it is practised, the meanings associated with it and how it has been culturally appropriated in New Zealand. In addition to this, the study aims to identify gaps in the current literature on hip hop dance in New Zealand, and hopes to provide a base for further research into this area. It is hoped that this research will be a useful resource for the New Zealand hip hop dance community.

I approached this qualitative study with a constructivist paradigm and an ethnographic methodology in order to allow for multiple realities to be researched. Semi-structured interviews were the primary method of gathering data in order to gain thick descriptions of the participant's experiences and critical reflections on their own understandings. During the process of data collection many themes started to emerge. Data was organised and analysed using a constant comparative method and presented as narrative case studies. Data was then discussed according to emergent themes.

1.5 Experiences Reflected

This study was born out of my personal experience in hip hop dance that has developed over the last 10 years. The opening narrative reveals a glimpse into the experiences I had at the World Hip Hop Championships in 2011, and some of the issues that are present within the New Zealand hip hop dance community.

This more recent experience refreshed my memory about the same competition that I had entered in 2007; though my team had placed well that year we still went through many of the same difficulties. Now, experiencing this competition again as a crew leader with a few more years of experience and maturity, I had more depth to my perspectives. With my Masters research in mind, I delved into these renewed experiences and I began to reflect upon and question the hip hop dance community in New Zealand.

This research will contribute to a small but growing base of literature on hip hop dance culture. Perhaps the most valuable attribute of this research is the value I have in providing the voice of the 'insider'. Often when reading literature on hip hop dance I have felt like my community, as well as myself, have been misrepresented by the academic 'outsider's' perspective often present in such texts (Nur Amin, 2010). My hope is that I can accurately convey the voice of the participants of this research and the meanings behind their words.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

The chapter following this introduction provides further context for this study with a review of relevant literature, and situates the research in the context of youth and hip hop cultures. The third chapter places this qualitative study within an ethnographic methodology and a constructivist paradigm and outlines the specific methods of data collection. Following this is a results section where information from participants is presented in separate case studies. The results are then analysed and discussed before concluding this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In order to contextualise this research within wider discourse in the field, I have described and analysed pertinent literature. The amount of literature available on hip hop dance was scarce both in quantity and often in quality. Therefore I not only refer to published books, but refer to more relevant and time appropriate sources such as YouTube video interviews with pioneers of hip hop culture. This is particularly relevant to this study as internet and media based information sharing has been a crucial element to the growth and popularity of hip hop dance. This literature review aims to discuss and review topics that are currently relevant to the hip hop dance community.

2.2 Hip Hop and the Young at Heart

Within this research the majority of the participants fit into the 'youth' age bracket therefore the research may fit within youth cultural research and lean towards the premise that hip hop is a youth culture. However I would like this research also to reflect that there are people active in hip hop culture that no longer fit into the youth age bracket. Hip hop is not only for youth but also for those who are passionate about the culture and its crafts. As DJ Kool Herc explained in an interview: "Hip hop is for the youth and the young at heart" (Video file, Morethanastance, 2011).

2.2.1 Youth

The term 'youth' comes with many associated meanings and histories. According to Wyn and White (1997) youth has been a significant subject of research over the last 40 years; and has emphasised a range of subjects on the concept. Youth as a concept has often been centred around youth as a problem (Wyn and White, 1997); youth at risk (Wyn and White, 1997); and youth identity or culture (Kelly, 2004). According to Andrew Ross (1994) "youth as a term has accumulated a wide range of associations that can be evoked at will: 'change', 'alienation', 'hope', 'social flight', 'immaturity', 'idealism', 'creativity', 'insubordination', 'apathy', 'dissent', 'naiveté'. Many of these terms are interchangeable." (p. 3)

As a defining age category youth indicates the pre-adult phase of life. Mallan and Pearce (2003) explain that the 'youth' age category is from 13 to 25 years, where the age continuum can extend at both ends. As the age category indicates the concept of youth is usually in reference to the individuals in the transition of growing up - adolescence. As discussed by Wyn and White (1997), youth is seen as a separate 'stage' of life because the time of youth is about preparation for future (real) life which is the reward of adulthood.

2.2.2 Youth Culture and Subculture

Mallan and Pearce (2003) suggest that the study of youth culture namely 'youth subcultures' began during urban redevelopment during the 1950's; subcultures were suggested to be an attempt by working-class youth to bridge the gap between new

circumstances and their former working-class community life. "Subcultures are seen to form part of an ongoing working-class struggle against the socio-economic circumstances of their existence" (Mallan and Pearce, 2003, p. 19). According to Epstein (2002), youth is the period in life where individuals are most prone to alienation, he says "it is this tension between childhood and freedom and adult responsibility that reportedly proves to be a fruitful ground for the growth of alienation" (p. 4). He goes on to reason that this alienation may inform a need to find one's identity within the world and provides a ground for youth cultures to form; "Adolescence is the period in one's life in which choices begin to be made and identities formed. It is through this process of identity formation that cliques and subcultures tend to flourish" (Epstein, 2002, p. 4).

The term subculture refers to shared collective values, behaviours and cultures of a sub-society (Fine and Kleinman, 1979). Youth culture is often seen as a subculture to 'normal' culture, separated from adult culture.

According to Ross (1994), youth culture as a consumer category or product has been around for at least 40 years. As stated by Brooks (2003), youth as a commodity is the ultimate cultural elixir, transfigured and marketed to an aging population through particular modes of production and imagery. Corporate society harnesses the essence of youth and sells it back to the adult culture as an "anti-aging formula" (Brooks, 2003, p. 3). By targeting those euphemistically referred to as the young at heart, a range of products is skewed towards the 25-50 year-old demographic so that they may relive their youth (Brooks, 2003). Hip hop

culture is often categorised as youth culture, or a youth sub-culture. It was packaged and sold very soon after its inception.

2.2.3 Youth Culture and Social Dance

Dances created and practiced in social context have been known to spark huge phenomenon within youth culture. Social dance is said to be “a means by which young people negotiate and accumulate status within their own social worlds” (Longhurst, 2007, p. 181), by keeping up to date on the latest developments and being as ‘hip’ as possible. The Charleston in the 1920’s, Rock and Roll in the 1950’s, and Punk in the 1980’s (Giordano, 2007; Chambers, 1985) are all dance forms that have been known to define the popular youth culture of particular generations. Many of these dance forms have a direct relation to the music they were created to. As said by Emilio Austin: “What people need to understand is that when music takes off there’s always a dance to go with it” (Video file, Youku, 2010). For hip hop this is no different. Many of hip hop’s dance forms were spawned in social contexts and in direct response to the music that was playing.

Youth social dance forms have steadily developed from partner dancing, to partners dancing solo with each other. This created a fertile ground for new forms of dance to develop amongst youth due to the new ability to use the arms. The evolution for many of the hip hop dance forms started after social dancers stopped holding hands. For example the dance form ‘locking’. Toni Basil explained that it was in the early 1960’s that people started to let go of their partners, and dance by themselves. She further explained that when Don Campbell started to communicate with other dancers in the club, by using his

arms and pointing at them, the dance form of locking started to develop (Basil as cited in Video File, MoreThanMovesTV, 2012)

2.3 Hip Hop: A History

In order to fully understand hip hop culture and the formations of its dance styles it is important to acknowledge and understand its catalysts, histories and pioneers.

Hip hop culture started its development in the Bronx, New York on the East Coast of the United States of America in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Many factors sparked the evolution of what is now a considered a global culture (Gjorva, 2012). These factors include; the civil rights movement; the building of the cross-Bronx expressway and the subsequent relocation of residents it caused; the burning of apartment blocks for insurance; the resurgence of gang violence and drug dealing; and the creation of 'the projects' (Chang, 2007a). These dominant factors all added fuel to the flames for the lower socio-economic residents of the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn where oppression was tangible. Hip hop culture arose and gave a chance for the oppressed and marginalized to voice their distress, anger, and fear (Chang, 2007a).

There are three men who are often referred to as the founders, god fathers, or trinity of hip hop; they are Clive Campbell (DJ Kool Herc), Afrika Bambaataa (birth name is unknown) and Joseph Saddler (Grandmaster Flash) (Chang, 2007a). To gain a deeper insight into the political importance of hip hop culture and its meanings one must note that all three of

these pioneers were involved, and some even leaders, of some of the most feared gangs of New York City. Ironically, through hip hop they endeavoured to be positive role models for their community. These three men revolutionised music and dance both despite and because of their circumstances.

Hip hop culture is said to have started to evolve in clubs, house parties and block parties; most specifically the parties that DJ Kool Herc threw. Kool Herc's revolutionary contribution to hip hop started when he decided to extend the breakdown of a song by running two turntables at once and looping the break so it played over and over again. This technique started to become widely known and practiced, and soon many DJ's were utilising the same method. This new music trend heightened the energy of the music causing the dancers to go crazy (Chang, 2007a). Kool Herc would then call those dancers 'break girls and break boys'. This is how hip hop's first dance style 'bboying' got its name. 'B-boy' as termed by Kool Herc, stands for break-boy, the boy that danced in the break of the music (Brenner & Jones, 2002; Pabon, 2006). Later the media termed the dance style 'breakdancing', this term is still largely rejected by the underground bboying community. At the same time the skills of DJing and bboying were developing, rapping over the music and graffiti art were becoming well established in their own codes, practices and aesthetics. Afrika Bambaataa is attributed to naming hip hop, taking the words usually used by MC's as part of a scat style of rhyming such as; "Hip Hop ya'll, and ya don't stop, rock on, till the break of dawn" (Pabon, 2006, p. 19).

It is important to note that what we know of hip hop culture today relies on the passing of

knowledge through mostly social and oral means, while this does not negate that what we know is true, it means there may be other histories that have not been heard. As Jeff Chang stated in the prelude of his book 'Can't Stop Won't Stop': "There are many more versions to be heard. May they all be" (Chang, 2007a, p. 3).

2.3.1 Hip Hop on Screen, YouTube and Globalisation

It is said that hip hop was dying out, before it spread due to the influence of the media. Jeff Chang (2007a) explained, "That's how the future seemed in the Bronx in 1979. But by the beginning of the new decade, brought out by commercial interests, pressed down by the state, and saved by traditionalists, the Bronx-born culture jumped its borders forever" (p. 127). After hip hop became more established in the underground through battles, parties and jams, the media and corporate America started to take an interest (Brenner & Jones, 2002). The media found a great way to package and sell the hip hop product. Gangster rap headed into the mainstream and after the 1984 Olympics where New York City breakers were featured, and movies such as 'FlashDance' (1983), 'Beat Street' (1984) 'Breakin' (1984) and 'Breakin' II: Electric Boogaloo' (1984), were released, bboying went global and mainstream. The media is often blamed for killing the authentic hip hop culture, yet it also kept it alive by sending it global; creating local manifestations of the culture in different countries.

Today the message of hip-hop is transcending borders. From *xi ha* in China to 'hip-life' in Ghana, hip-hop is a lingua franca that binds young people all around the world, all while giving them the chance to alter it with their own national flavour . . . But one thing about hip-hop has remained consistent across cultures: a vital progressive agenda that challenges the status quo. (Chang, 2007b, para. 8)

Since then new movies have emerged reigniting hip hop culture and dance in new contexts and versions. New tools such as the information sharing web site 'YouTube' have also provided dancers with endless amounts of footage to watch and learn from. This is the information age and no one can use the lack of resources as an excuse from learning when YouTube has provided a workshop you can take in your bedroom or living room (Video file, fbodztv, 2008).

2.3.2 The Four Elements and Hip Hop Evolution

There is a lot of contention surrounding what is and what is not included as hip hop. Often when hip hop culture is discussed there are two polarised views; the authentic or 'righteous' view, and the mainstream or 'corporate' view (Hoch, 2006). The authentic view of hip hop allows the extent of hip hop culture to be limited to 'the four elements': MCing, DJing, Bboying, and Graffiti Art. Afrika Bambaataa was the first to define hip hop as these four elements (Chang, 2007). As this was originally what was said to be the be all and end all of hip hop culture, those who consider themselves purists hold fast to and preach this idea. The mainstream or 'blingers', are those that exploit the culture and package these elements into product. These two polar paradigms however do not represent the full extent of hip hop artists and practitioners. Nor does the four elements represent the whole entity of hip hop culture. There is a lot of tension between the two, and this extends to hip hop dance (Goddess, 2006).

While Afrika Bambaataa defined hip hop as the four elements he later added a fifth

element; knowledge, which is not as recognised in the original four (Chang, 2007a; Uno, 2006). DJ Kool Herc believes there is more to hip hop culture than these categories he said: “people talk about the four elements . . . I think that there are far more than those: the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you look, the way you communicate” (Herc, 2007, p. xi). Other forms of hip hop have also emerged and have started to be recognized as elements such as beat boxing, language and fashion (Hoch, 2006). However purists will often still assert that hip hop is only and only will be confined to the traditional four categories. As Chang, cited by Wang (2010) explained:

I’m not interested in writing about hip-hop just in terms of rap music - which is what most people might think when they hear the word “hip-hop” - or even as a cultural force encompassing the “four elements”. Hip-hop is all that and—to kind of flip dead prez’s epigram - it’s also bigger than all that. Hip-hop offers a generational worldview that encompasses the shoes you choose to whether you’re inclined to vote or not to how you understand the issue of race. So I use this worldview to look at the last three decades of the American century. (para. 2)

The adding of new elements suggests a notion of hip hop evolution, and change from generational input. Over the past ten to twenty years a new wave of hip hop aesthetics has started to grow with a changing generation. Danny Hoch (2006) believes that new traditions, works and elements are the products of a generation that grew up in hip-hop that is now branching out of the fundamentalist rules. Hoch (2006) explained:

Some works are created by traditional hip-hop artists who feel limited by the original four elements yet wish to continue the aesthetic; some are made by hip-hop kids who went to art school, others by art school kids who discovered hip-hop later in life. Some of the creators are old-school b-boys who have recognized that, as artists, they want to do more than perform in Las Vegas as an ‘attraction’. (p. 355)

Jeffrey Green also known as 'Doze' has been a bboy and a graffiti writer since the late 1970's is one of those who has mixed old and new traditions. After studying at the High School of Art and Design he has created a career from his roots in hip hop art (Chang, 2006).

Green, as cited in Chang (2006) explained, he had to expand from a purist mentality:

I know a lot of b-boys . . . They still just b-boy, or they still just do walls, still just do trains, 'cause they're purists. But then what happens when you do that? You cut yourself off from so many things that are unseen, and that keeps you from creating and re-creating new thought because you're stuck in this hip-hop limbo. You don't want to be in that place; it gets boring. (p. 326)

He goes on to explain his understandings of the term 'hip hop' itself. Green said: "You used to say 'Hip-hop, you don't stop'. It really was never called 'hip-hop' until it went downtown and some fool hears 'Hip hop you don't stop' and they said, oh, that's a name. That's where I stand on that. It's more of a feeling, not a label. Its essence is ethereal: it's ether" (Chang, 2006, p. 328). To say it is ethereal implies a philosophy that hip hop is more than a tangible product, but a state of being, or a worldview.

Afrika Bambaataa is also known for giving hip hop its ethos "peace, love, unity and having fun" (Chang, 2007a, p. 105). The idea of community and unity holds true to many members of hip hop culture. As explained by Nancy Yu, known as Bgirl Asia One, "What are you doing? What are you doing to make this world a better place? What are you doing to help someone who has less than you? If you're not doing anything you really need to look at yourself man. 'Cause we within hip hop we carry that on our shoulders man" (Video file, Tafau, 2011)

As well as being more than the four elements, hip hop is also more than a culture defined

by the generation it was born out of. Graffiti writer Brett Cook-Dizney also allows for generational evolution:

It is so easy to get stuck in these habits of what hip-hop is supposed to be, what painting is supposed to be, what activism is supposed to be, and have that dictate what comes out. The revolution is about let's make a new thing. As a revolution it revolves, so, of course, it is considering what has come before it, but it's changing to a new manifestation of the thing. (Chang, 2006, p. 326)

It seems that the philosophy of generational input and change, as well as knowing your roots, resounds with many hip hop artists. Though there is still a lot of contention surrounding the idea of what hip hop is meant to be especially to those defined as 'hip hop purists' (Hannah, 2009). However, in its essence hip hop is seen to be: an ethos, or a way of being (Chang, 2006; Price 2006); about helping your community (Herc, 2006; Video file, Tafau, 2011); about the battle and the cipher (Chang, 2006); and about peace, love, unity and having fun (Price, 2006); about inclusion and multiculturalism (Video file, Morethanastance, 2011; Hoch, 2006). As Grandmaster Flash once said you can either "survive and change, or get left behind" (Chang, 2007a, p. 136).

2.4 Hip Hop Dance or Street Dance

The term 'hip hop dance' within this thesis is used loosely as there is a lot of tension surrounding the term. 'Hip hop dance' has come to be an umbrella term for many different dance styles that have now been adopted into the culture. As described in the rules of Hip Hop International's world championship competition (Hip Hop International, 2012):

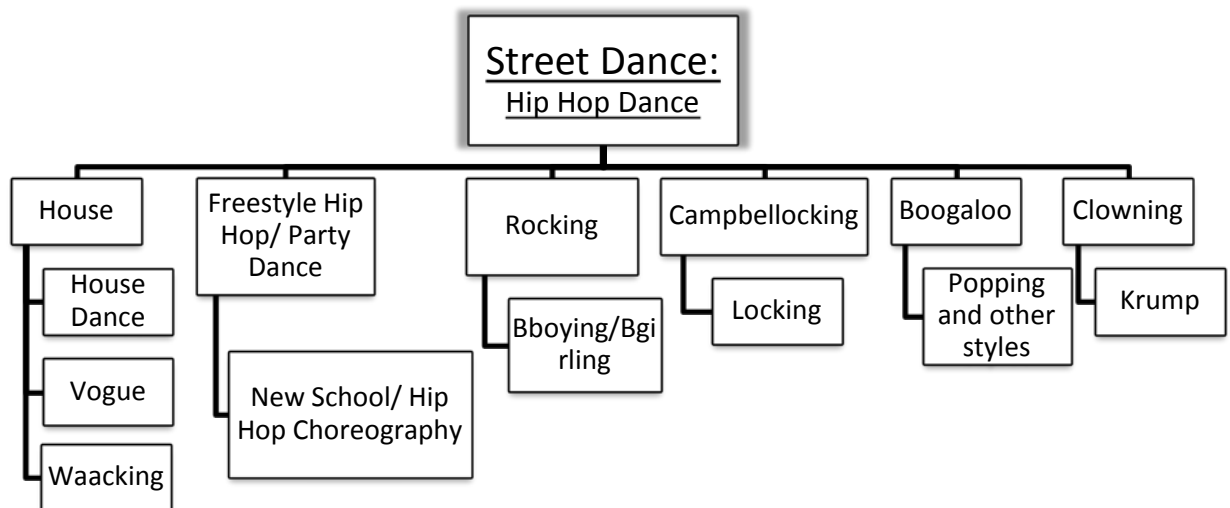
There is no one definition to describe hip hop dance. Hip hop dance is a fusion of street dance disciplines and cultural interpretations that capture the look, attitude,

posture, music and elements of the urban environment to make it uniquely hip hop. Hip Hop dance is continuously transforming and redefining itself with each new generation of dancers. (p. 1)

Whilst the hip hop culture is supposedly built upon an inclusive nature “peace, love, unity and having fun” (Price, 2006, p. 13), and it is said the four elements are no longer the definition of hip hop culture; what is included as hip hop dance is a contested topic and is often quite exclusive according to those who consider themselves ‘authentic’ insiders. Bboying and only bboying is often considered the authentic and only hip hop dance. It is from this folkloric paradigm that springs exclusion to other dance forms that were developing at the same time across America as well as in New York.

An ‘educate before you re-create’ philosophy resounds through the hip hop dance founders of different styles. There are many that discuss generational input and appropriation; however it is often followed by a warning to research histories from the ‘right’ people. This will be discussed according to each style. The following sections will outline different dance styles that have now come to be known under, or adopted into, the hip hop dance umbrella. Each dance style has its own separate history. The styles I will discuss are: ‘bboying’, ‘popping’, ‘locking’, ‘waacking’, ‘vogue’, ‘house’, ‘krump’ and ‘new school hip hop’. It is important to note that not all these styles listed are regarded as hip hop dance by all those that participate in them. Many of these styles are often referred to using the more appealing blanket term ‘street dance’. For the purposes of this research I have employed when in discussion I will include them under the hip hop dance umbrella.

The term 'style' reoccurs throughout this study and refers to a sub category, genre, or separate dance form of hip hop dance. I have provided the diagram below in order to easily identify the different street dance forms that have come to be included in the hip hop dance umbrella. It is important to note that I have provided this as a simplified reference point in order to have a visual gauge on how these forms are grouped. However the complexities of the cultures and histories of these dance styles are not this black and white. Neither does this diagram reference all street dance forms; just those that are discussed within this research.



A warning to the reader, the system of what is included under the hip hop dance umbrella is both contradictory and complicated. But the information I have provided is sourced from founders and key figures of hip hop dance.

2.5 Hip Hop's Authentic Dance: Bboying and Bgirling

Often known as hip hop's first and most authentic dance (Stevens, 2006) 'bboying', or 'bgirling', started in the early 1970's in the Bronx and was given its name by DJ Kool Herc. However the style had evolved from other forms of dance such as 'rocking', up-rocking' and 'the outlaw'. Luis Roberto Martinez Jr. also known as Alien Ness explained (Fricke & Ahearn, 2002):

The b-boying didn't start at the Herc parties. You could take the b-boys back to the outlaw gangs of the late '60s, '70s. They were the original b-boys, and it was part of their war dances. That's why the competitive level is always going to be there with the b-boy. . . from the competitive levels of the outlaws. (p.9)

Jorge Pabon also explained his witness of the evolution (Frick & Ahearn, 2002):

The first groups I ever saw dance were actually outlaw gangs. . . The style of dance was different from b-boying, where one guy went out and then you had to go out and burn him with better moves. With the outlaw dance they would do it at the same time; they would sort of dis the guy they were battling with a series of moves, and then they'd flash their colours . . . and it didn't always have a peaceful outcome. (p9)

Jeffrey Green known as Doze explained how he developed his own steps by taking movement from the outlaw and converted them into Bboying. "The dance is actually very long. It's like a fifteen minute dance. It has a lot of steps . . . we learned a fraction of it, but what we did with that dance is took it to a whole 'nother level" (Chang, 2007a., p. 138)

From top-rocking and up-rocking, the dance descended to the floor (Chang, 2007a). Bboying pioneer Richard Colón, also known as Crazy Legs, was largely responsible for reviving bboying from an early death with the 'Rock Steady Crew' in 1979. Colón explained the transformation:

It got into elaborate footwork, into a freeze, and then you mixed up the top-rocking, then the floor-rocking, the spin into a freeze . . . ours was just a natural progression from standing up to going down. It's funny because a natural progression would be from down to up, but for b-boys, it's up to down." (Chang, 2007a, p.117)

The dance style formed quickly as the essence of the style lies in competition and being better than your opponent in battle. Colón explained that styles evolved quickly because "it was like, what you gonna have next week? . . . You strive to take your move to the next level. It's about shock value, always shock value, but keeping it flavour and stylized and making it yours" (Chang, 2007a, p 117).

Today bboying is practised globally and is most authentic in the underground scene; though this is no indication of the magnitude of its global community. It is often characterized by its power moves, such as windmills and head spins, and its nature for floor work often called footwork, such as the 6 step. At a battle or cipher a bboy or bgirl will often dance in short segments. Each segment is from ten to thirty seconds (Bishop, 2008) but is generally longer depending on the dancer and the context. If a segment were to be broken down it would typically include one or more of the following; top-rocks, drops, footwork, power, and freezes. These elements are all encompassed in the character and style of the individual bboy. Foundation is a key term for bboys and bgirls. Foundation can mean a base of knowledge of history and traditional vocabulary with movement such as the six step, or a foundation of knowledge of self and what makes one unique (Alba, 2010). When a bboy is in battle they also need to be aware of 'burns' and 'disses' from their opponents that amplify the tension in battle, and have an ample supply of comebacks in their arsenal.

2.6 The 'Funk Styles': Locking and Popping

Locking and popping are two distinctly separate street dance styles. These two styles each have their own history and their own culture and aesthetic. However just as mainstream media coined the term break dance, it has also lumped these two styles together either as 'pop-lockin' (Pabon, 2006, p.23) or has also grouped them as 'break dance' (Stevens, 2006). The culprit for creating this mixing of styles according to Lys Stevens (2006) are music video montages and popular movies such as 'Breakin I' (1984) and 'Breaking II: Electric Boogaloo' (1984). The issue of putting all these styles under the same name is that each dance style has separate identity and cultural markers. As Stevens (2006) explained, "to lump differences under one title is reductive and negates the dedication and work involved in becoming skilled in a particular dance form" (p. 364).

While bboying was being created on the East Coast; both locking and popping were being created and developed in the 1960's and 1970's on the West Coast of North America (Pabon, 2006). They both shared development, transmission and fame on the television series 'Soul Train'. The two styles have only recently come to be accepted or "adopted" (Video file, strifetv, 2010; Video file, UnassumingProduction, 2010) as a part of the hip hop umbrella. Originally they were separated as 'funk styles'. This was partly because of geographical boundaries, as they originated on the West Coast as opposed to the East. Also the music genres that nourished them were mostly funk and RnB, at outdoor functions as well as discotheques (Pabon, 2006).

2.6.1 Locking

Don 'Campbellock' Campbell is known as the creator of the dance style locking (Wong, 2011). As stated by Pabon (2006) the creation of the dance started when Campbell was trying to imitate a popular local dance called the funky chicken. As he couldn't do it properly, he added an effect of locking of the joints of his arms and body which then became known as his signature dance 'Campbellocking' (Pabon, 2006). While there is said to be other groups before them (LockerLegends, 2008) the most influential locking group 'The Lockers' was formed in 1973 by Campbell (The Lockers, n.d); which was made up of 7 dancers who developed the dance further. These dancers were; "Don Campbell (Don Campbellock), Toni Basil, Dave Gregory Pope ('Greg Campbellock Jr'), Fred Berry ('Mr Penguin' AKA 'Rerun'), Leo Williamson (Fluky Luke), Bill Williams (Slim the Robot), and Adolfo Quinones ('Shabba Doo'); later when Basil and Berry left the group Tony Lewis Foster ('Tony GoGo') was brought in (The Lockers, n.d.). There are also other well known dancers that contributed to locking, such as Jimmy Foster (Scooby Doo). Many of the movements that are now considered locking vocabulary were party dances that were evolved and set by the original lockers. The 'educate before you re-create' philosophy resounds with locking as explained by Tony GoGo:

It's your generation right now, it's not my generation, it's not up to a generation of a lot of people that maybe are trying to tell you what to do. You just keep your spirit and do what you're doing now and if there's something that you really don't understand . . . get the knowledge that you need . . . check with the real OG's first . . . we're here to help you guys . . . to have knowledge of what you *are* a part of here. (Video file, LockerLegends, 2010)

The Lockers were among the first dancers to take street dance into the professional

performance realm. Hip hop theatre choreographer and artist Rennie Harris explained: “They showed us it was possible to be professional and still bring it the way street dancers can only do. The Lockers forged a new path for us all” (Harris, as cited in The Lockers, n.d.). Locking was made famous through various appearances and performances by The Lockers in shows such as ‘Soul Train’, ‘The Tonight Show’, ‘The Dick Van Dyke Show’, ‘The Carol Burnett Show’ and ‘Saturday Night Live’ (Pabon, 2006). The locking dance style is characterised by ‘wrist rolls’, ‘points’ (exaggerated pointing with index finger), and the ‘lock’ where the arms are bent at the elbows and locked in that position (like holding the handlebars of a bicycle), hip movement, and often involves a slightly theatrical personification of a specific character (Wong, 2011).

2.6.2 Popping/ Boogaloo

‘Popping’ has come to be known as an umbrella term for many dance styles that have been grouped together such as; boogaloo, scarecrow, ticking, waveing and many more (Pabon, 2006). However according to Sam Soloman (‘Boogaloo Sam’), the person most credited as the creator of the dance (Pabon, 2006), the correct umbrella term is actually ‘Boogaloo’ and the styles included in the term are: popping, ticking, scarecrow, puppet, toyman, old man, neck-o-flex, twist-o-flex, master flex, Egyptian twist, rome-o-twist, back slide, moon walk, tidal wave (Video file, FunkyKye923, 2012).

Boogaloo Sam explained that when developing the style he was influenced by old party dance movements such as the ‘jerk’ and the ‘twist’ (Video file, FunkyKye923, 2012). The name popping originated from when he’d do the steps of the jerk and he would say “pop”

on the movement's accent. The name 'Boogaloo' came from his uncle when he would tell him to "do that boogaloo Sam", instructing him to do many of the older party dances (Video file, FunkyKye923, 2012). A big inspiration to Boogaloo Sam was The Lockers he explained:

By early 1974 I had already developed my own individual style of dance. But in Oct of that year I saw Don (Campbell) and the Lockers. This inspired me! I started going around my neighbourhood and assembled a group of guys to create our own individual style of movement. Which became the Electric Boogaloo Lockers. Later to be called the Electric Boogaloos. (The Lockers, n.d.)

Popping and Boogaloo's aesthetics focus on illusion. Popping as a dance form is centred on a sudden 'tense and release' motion of isolated muscles to create a sudden jerking motion (Wong, 2011). Boogaloo as a style often involves loose movement, rotation and rolls at the hips and joints, and the appearance that the body diverts in different angles and directions. One of the moves of popping is called the 'Fresno' in reference to the location Fresno, California where the entire dance style was developed.

2.7 House Dance: House, Vogue and Waacking

House dance is made of many different dance styles. These dance styles both predate and came after hip hop culture's inception however they are well integrated within the hip hop dance or street dance community. These dance styles were mostly born out of club culture.

2.7.1 House Dance

House is still a relatively young form of street dance only having started around the 1980's (Video file, Youku, 2010). It was not originally considered a part of hip hop dance, and there

are those that will argue that it still isn't. However, the style has made its way into hip hop choreography competitions around the world and is often included as a hip hop style in competition criteria (Hip Hop International, 2012). Caleaf Sellers known as one of the original house dancers started doing house dance in 1986 (Video file, Youku, 2010). In an interview Sellers explained that the style originated in New York when people would dance to the looped 'breaks' of disco music that eventuated to house music; much like how Kool Herc looped his records and created hip hop (Video file, z895, 2010). According to Sellers 'House' as a name came from a club called 'The Warehouse' where Frankie Knuckles used to DJ; people would request music at the record stores that they heard and say "I want the house music" (Video file, z895, 2010). As the style of dance was practised to house music it became known as house dance (Video file, Youku, 2010). Sellers goes on to explain that is his version of how house came about and that dancers should keep contributing and growing the dance now. He said: "I see myself as one piece of the puzzle; there are many pieces of the puzzle. There are many stories and my story is just one . . . your job is to help it grow further" (Video file, z895, 2010). Mr Wiggles also suggests that house has emerged from rocking and the Spanish hustle (Video file, StreetDanceLT, 2011).

House is improvisational in nature and relies on fast and sometimes intricate footwork, fluid groove movement in the torso and also floor-work, the arms and hands are often an extension of the movement of the torso and don't take away from the feet. "The main components of house dance are "Jacking" (circular chest rotations), "Footwork" (feet movement), and "Lofting" (ground moves)" (Wong, 2011, p. 4).

2.7.2 Vogue: Strike a Pose

The dance style 'vogue' or 'voguing' started in Harlem, New York in the 1960's and was cultivated through homosexual culture in the 'ballroom community'. A 'Ball', consists of various competitions such as walking, and dancing; voguing being the most prestigious (Rose, 1994). The ballroom community has been part of underground lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender subculture since the 1950's where drag queens competed for best costume or best body (Ninja, 1994). When the balls moved to Harlem to avoid racial discrimination, it became a predominantly black scene. After the 'butch' queens wanted their own category voguing came into being when the drag queens would walk down the runways with giant fans and their hand movements would be strategically placed (Ninja, 1994).

Voguing is characterised by dramatic posing, creating lines with the body and a feminine persona; "voguing is basically a dance that is taken from fashion and changing it around and adding a new life to it" (Video file, Frameline, 2011). It is started off being practised to RnB and House music (Rose, 1994). It is probably most famously known from Madonna's hit single and music video 'Vogue' released in 1990. However, the voguing presented in Madonna's was taught by Vogue dancers Jose Guitierrez and Luis Camacho (Ninja, 1994). Prior to Madonna's single another video had publicised voguing, however, it had not reached the same level of exposure. The video was Malcolm McLaren's 'Deep in Vogue', and was choreographed by Willi Ninja, founder of a legendary Vogue 'house'; 'The House of Ninja's'. The short documentary, 'Voguing: The Message' described a house as, "like a gang or a clique, or a group of people; or basically a house is like a family unit. You have your

mother, your father, the children” (Video file, Frameline, 2011). Ninja also explained that Vogue houses are based on the high fashion houses such as the ‘House of Chanel’. Where they develop their own image and style and raise money to throw balls (Rose, 1994). Along with Willi Ninja, there are other founders or developers of the vogue dance form such as Hector Xtravaganza, Archie Burnett and *Soul Train* dancer Tyrone Proctor. The last two of which are also well known ‘waackers’.

Voguing has recently been performed in hip hop dance contexts; by both males and females, gay or straight. Voguing is now often included under the hip hop dance umbrella, but it more widely recognised under house dance culture, or even street dance. The synthesis isn’t new, as even in the 1990’s there were fusions of hip hop dance and vogue, as explained by Ninja; “I saw a video of this boy named Adrian who dances like a hip hop version of vogue, real street, real hardcore. . . right on the beat he’ll go down the floor, balancing on his hands, do backflips and walkovers” (Rose, 1994, p. 174). Voguing today is still practised in underground balls, battles and now also included in hip hop choreography competitions. Vogue battles are commonly broken into the four categories; old way, new way, vogue femme and dramatics (House Dance International, 2010).

2.7.3 Waacking and Punking

‘Waacking’ and ‘voguing’ have similar histories, therefore are often confused as being the same thing. Waacking has also been confused as ‘locking’, which developed in the same place around the same time, but can also be traced back to the night club culture of New York in the 60’s before it became popular in the 70’s (Imperial House of Waacking, 2012).

In part one of a three part interview; waack dancer Tyrone Proctor, an original waack and vogue dancer, explains waacking was developed by the gay community on the West Coast of America and was primarily done to 'underground' disco music, and 'punking' is what is known as the straight person's version of waacking (Video file, z895, April, 2011). However Viktor Manoel, another dancer from the waacking era, explains in an interview (part 2) that the name punking derived from the word 'punk' which at that time, was slang for 'fag' and, punking was about turning a negative into a positive (Video file, Lissmiss22, 2011). In the first part of the interview Manoel also described the dance as representing a form of escapism for gay people at that time. It was a way of going to the clubs and expressing oneself with freedom (Video file, Lissmiss22, 2011). As with most forms of street or hip hop dance, the truth of the dances history lies in the individual who tells it. Proctor explains this theory in an interview:

The only thing that I can do is I can only try to teach what I've lived through . . . and you have to also understand that this is my truth, it might not be Shabba Doo's it might not be somebody else's but it's mine. When you go to Shabba Doo you'll hear his truth, you see what I'm saying? And you should take that. And then it's up to you to decide what you feel is right and wrong . . . do what you wanna do. (Video file, z895, 2011)

Like voguing waacking was influenced by famous female movie stars from the 40's and 50's such as Marilyn Monroe and black and white photos from the time. This is seen through the feminine style of movement. Where voguing is distinguishable for hitting the beats of house music with lines and poses, waacking is characterised by dancing to the spectrum of sound that disco music provides and emphasizing feminine hand gestures. "Waacking is known for its dynamic and powerful fast overhead arm movements, its poses, and its dramatic

expression of music, with particular emphasis on percussive patterns of a song” (Wong, 2011, p 5). Other well known waackers are Adolpho ‘Shabba Doo’ Quinones, Archie Burnett, and Anna ‘Lolli Pop’ Sanchez (Imperial House of Waacking, 2012).

2.8 Hip Hop Dance and Party Dance

Hip hop dance also known as ‘hip hop party dance’, or ‘freestyle hip hop dance’ (Elite Force Crew, 2011), is one of the only styles that has come to be accepted with the title ‘hip hop dance’ according to older generation hip hop dancers. It argued to be the only other authentic hip hop dance besides bboying (Video file, bboyworldasia, 2012). The style of dance started in the 70’s alongside the development of hip hop culture and eventually evolved into hip hop freestyle dance around 1984 in clubs such as ‘Roxy’ and ‘Inferno’ (Video file, Youku, 2010; Elite Force Crew, 2011). It’s called hip hop dance because it was done to specifically hip hop music, as opposed to the funk tracks and break beats that bboys danced to (Video file, Youku, 2010).

Hip hop party dance is a social dance style made up of specific vocabulary that evolved in the club scene with moves such as the ‘Roger Rabbit’, ‘The Wop’, ‘The Smurf’, ‘Prep’, and many more. The movement vocabulary arose in response to hip hop music such as ‘Do the wop’, and ‘Do the James’ where the lyrics would instruct the dancers to do particular movements and dances (Youku, 2010). This type of dance has evolved with generational input as explained by Rennie Harris; “before it was called hip hop it was just a social thing everybody was doing it in the community. . . Real hip hop is a social dance like ‘Souljah Boy’

or ‘the dougie’, those are social dances, those are party dances that’s what hip hop is”
(Video file, KinerEnterprisesInc, 2011).

2.8.1 New Jack Swing

‘New Jack Swing’ is a style of dance done to a hip hop – pop fusion style of music from the late 1980’s and 1990’s by artists such as Bobby Brown, Bell Biv Devoe and Teddy Riley (Video file, bboyworldasia, 2012). Often it is considered to be hip hop dance (party dance) vocabulary done to new jack swing music that is mistaken as a style of its own; this is a particular issue for older generation hip hop dancers such as Buddha Stretch (Video file, bboyworldasia, 2012). However New Jack Swing as its own dance style is regularly practised by dancers in places such as Japan where it has developed its own cultural practices that are still popular today with dancers such as the ‘New Jack Swing Brothers’ and the ‘L.L. Brothers’ (Video file, NJSDance450, 2010).

2.9 New School/ Hip hop choreography

New School is typically personalised choreography inspired by different hip hop dance aesthetics and vocabulary. It can be seen on recent blockbuster movies such as the ‘Step Up’ series, ‘You Got Served’ (2004), ‘Honey’ (2003) and television series ‘Americas Best Dance Crew’. It has inspired competitions such as the ‘World Hip Hop Dance Championships’, ‘Bodyrock’, and ‘World of Dance’.

This is perhaps one of the most contested dance styles under the hip hop dance umbrella. It

also doesn't have a set name. It is often also called; urban dance, new school, LA style, hip hop funk, contemporary hip hop dance, neo-hip hop, street funk, lyrical hip hop, and the list goes on. For the purposes of this research and to clarify I will refer to it as New School.

Many hip hop dance fundamentalists and first generation dancers have strong opinions that this dance style does not deserve to be included in the hip hop umbrella. For example Suga Pop a funk style fundamentalist expressed this view:

As far as what they call hip hop now, is not really hip hop. It's usually, we call it choreography. Or bad jazz dancers tryna make a buck you know? Pretty much they couldn't cut it in their own thing so now they just throw the hip hop name on it and pretty much it's given them leeway to kind of do whatever they want because they figure hip hop's got no real moves but that's fine but if they're talking about popping and locking we have exact movements with exact names to them. (Video file, DanceChannelTV, 2009)

However, there are other older generation dancers such as bgirl Asia One who explains the dance style: "It's considered hip hop dance . . . we kinda call it hip hop choreography it's taking a little bit of all the classic hip hop styles popping, locking and bboying and putting them in one, instead of just doing one" (Video file, Asia One, 2012).

New School can be linked to early line dances such as 'the hustle' which were choreographed movements performed and learned socially in clubs around the time of hip hop cultures inception. Some of these line dances could be up to 32 counts long (Giordano, 2007). There is also the possibility that New School derived from dancers learning from music videos and creating their own dances for fun. In fact Buddha Stretch, well known hip hop 'party dance' specialist, who is ironically against personalised choreography being

included in hip hop dance, started making hip hop choreography as early as 1987. He said: “I was deemed the choreographer with the help of Michele Ann Travis . . . These were the beginnings of Freestyle Hip Hop Dance where I incorporated ALL the dances that I knew or just learned into our routines” (Elite Force Crew, 2011, para. 7). DJ Kool Herc has even made reference to this new style in an interview and explained that hip hop culture was born to evolve:

It’s always gonna be ‘wow where this come from?’ Just like MTV, they didn’t know there was another art form to hip hop; all of a sudden ‘America’s greatest dancers’, ‘America’s ‘this’ dancers’. . . Everything ain’t gotta be put out there right away. Some things gotta have a way of nourishing and coming up. That’s the thing about hip hop man it’s forever elevating and forever changing. (Video file, Morethanastance, 2011)

Like many of the hip hop dance styles, the specific origin is unknown and is still up for debate, and may be for a long time.

2.10 Krump

Krump is one of the newest styles to have formed and be included under the hip hop dance umbrella. Its inception was in the early 2000’s by dancers Caesare Willis (‘Tight Eyes’) and Jo’Artis Ratti (‘Big Mijo’) in South Central Los Angeles (Thewarrior2005, 2007). The broadcast of the style to a global audience is accredited to the documentary ‘Rize’(2005) (Yarber, 2011), which caused youth around the world to start practising the dance. This style is very commonly used in hip hop and street dance competitions today. It is also practised in its authentic form in battles and ‘sessions’ or ‘labs’ (practices or jams). There are different ‘styles’ of krump which refer to the way that the movement is characterized; such as ‘grimy’, ‘flashy’, ‘goofy’ and more (Dance Origin, 2012).

The physical movement attributed in Krump can involve arm swings, isolations, stomping, thrashing, and characterized facial expression. When viewed from outsiders the style may look overtly aggressive and sometimes even demonic (Williams, 2009), particularly when the dancers are getting 'buck'; a moment or time of heightened emotional release through strong movement. However there is more meaning behind the style than what one takes from the first glance. Firstly the dance evolved out of the expression and venting of socio-economic caused frustrations and the anger from dangers of living in the 'hood' (Del Barco, 2005). To many krumpers the dance style is also an expression of Christian faith (Yarber, 2011). "The word "krump" evolved from the lyrics of a song from the 1990s, but the young dancers have given it another meaning: "Kingdom Radically Uplifting Mighty Praise" (Del Barco, 2005, para. 7).

The future of Krump is still unknown, Harris explains; "Krumping will do one or two things. It will go on to create a codified vocabulary or become a dance form that the next generation may refer back to inform their dance style" (Menzie, 2009). At present more codified vocabulary of Krump is being taught and practised.

2.10.1 Clowning

When discussing Krump one cannot neglect to mention its less aggressive predecessor 'Clowning'. Clowning was created in 1992 by ex-gang member Thomas Johnson also known as Tommy the Clown (Menzie, 2009). The development of clowning started when Johnson made an impromptu appearance at a child's birthday party and danced in clown regalia,

makeup and oversized shoes; youth interest in his style peaked and he created a clowning dancing academy for the 'hip hop clowns' and organized community events and competitions such as 'Battle Zone' (Menzie, 2009). Clowning involves exaggerated hip hop vocabulary and moves such as the 'clown walk', 'the wobble' and 'the stripper dance'. The ethos behind clowning was to take youth off the streets and give them something more positive; where clown groups would replace street gangs (Bishop, 2008).

2.11 Hip Hop Dance in New Zealand

Hip hop dance in New Zealand started its development with bboying. It is said that bboying came to New Zealand through Western Samoa, and was first seen to be practiced by young Maori and Polynesian males (Kopytko, 1986; Zemke-White, 2002). It is likely that this was how it made its transmission along with media such as dance movies and video clips. Michael Jackson, Malcolm McLaren's "Buffalo Girls", 'Beat Street (1984) and American television shows such as 'That's Incredible' are said to be among the commercial stimulus for the aspiring bboys in New Zealand; and with it came fashion, gestures, language, and music (Kopytko, 1986; Zemke-White, 2002). For Polynesian and Maori youth hip hop dance and its culture identified with the image of black Americans:

The picture of black ghetto kids doing their stuff was a compelling trigger for black kids here (New Zealand) who were already solidly identifying with the television image of Black America-Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, Fame, Roots. It wasn't long before mainly Black kids all over the country were boning up their moves . . . The dedication was enormous" (Scott, 1984, as cited in Kopytko, 1986, p. 23).

Since then hip hop dance in New Zealand has flourished. Battles, competitions, showcases, and ciphers are now regular events.

New Zealand began to be represented on the international hip hop dance scene as early as 2001, and possibly earlier, when an all-star bboy crew 'Black Attack' flew to 'Battle Of The Year' in Germany (BOTY, 2008). The introduction of new hip hop dance styles brought in new events and opportunities. New school or hip hop choreography brought hip hop dance crews into the forefront when crews started travelling to the United States to compete at the 'Hip hop International: World Hip Hop Dance Championships', often referred to as 'worlds' amongst insiders. The first crew to travel to the competition was South Auckland based crew 'Dziah' in 2005, they returned to the competition and came second in 2006 (Collins, 2006). From then on this competition has dominated the goals for the New Zealand new school hip hop dance community; crews have travelled to the United States every year in the hopes of winning. The all-male crew by the name of 'Sweet and Sour' were the first ones to place first at this competition in 2008 in the varsity division. Since then New Zealand began to dominate and become known as a threat to the global hip hop dance community (Video file, bboyworldasia, 2012). In 2011 New Zealand dominated by winning three out of four divisions (Sundae, 2011).

The SDNZ National Street Dance Championship ('Nationals'), and its regional counterpart, form the qualifiers for the Hip Hop International: World Hip Hop Dance Championship.

Nationals is the biggest annual event in hip hop dance in New Zealand. In 2012, 500 or more dancers took part in the nationals alone (DANZ, 2012).

Success for New Zealand hip hop dancers has not only come from 'worlds'. Prestige

(originally DZIAH) has even had their own television show called 'Phunk Nation' (Maori Television, 2011), and Parris Goebel has been hired as a choreographer for Jennifer Lopez (Tasman-Jones, 2012). There are many more success stories, and there will be more to come in future.

2.12 Battles, Ciphers, Jams and Competitions

Hip hop dance wasn't originally designed for the stage and was based on elements of freestyle instead of choreography (Pabon, 2006). The transition to theatre and stage based performance of hip hop dance only happened years after its inception and has grown into a field of its own.

Competition runs deep within many of the hip hop dance forms as discussed by Harris (Harris, as cited by Chang, 2007a): "If you really look at hip hop dance, it's a rite-of-passage thing. You never see the arms release down. They're always up in a fighting position. It's going to war . . . what do we say? We say you're going to battle" (p. 115). Each dance style of hip hop has its own practices and methods. The most common elements of hip hop practice are battles, ciphers, jams, competitions and showcases.

A cipher as explained by Chang (2007) is partly for competition and partly for community, it's a circle of participants and onlookers that closes around dancers as they dance, usually improvised, in the middle. "If you have the guts to step into the cipher and tell your story and, above all, demonstrate your uniqueness, you might be accepted into the community. Here is where reputations are made and risked and stylistic change is fostered" (Chang,

2007, para. 7).

A jam can mean anything from a practice session to an event where people will cipher. Bboy jams are often the places where many dancers will get together at one location and share their knowledge with one another and practice.

Battles are confrontational competitions where the dancers go head on to prove they are more skilled than the other. Battles can range from being one on one, to whole crew battles. Battles are more commonly practiced by hip hop dance styles that have a freestyle element to them.

Competitions can either refer to battles or on stage competitions. These are more commonly associated within the new school, or hip hop choreography community but do also extend to other dance styles. Usually a crew will prepare a 'set' or piece of choreography with a set time limit and will be judged according to set criteria.

2.13 Conclusion

Whilst researching this literature there appeared to be a number of resources on hip hop culture, with a particular focus on rap and hip hop music, yet very few on hip hop dance. In addition to this it was difficult to come across formally published work that accurately described hip hop dance culture and the issues that apply to the hip hop dance community. YouTube videos and interviews with the founders and pioneers were perhaps the most respectable and accountable sources available, and will also provide the best connection

with the hip hop dance community.

It is important to understand the tensions surrounding hip hop dance, and the pressure placed on the new generation to understand the histories and original meanings. This review aimed to address the issues and histories surrounding the hip hop dance styles that are most closely related to the participants of this research. It was hoped that this review would contextualise the research so as the stories, findings and terms that emerge through the following chapters have deep meaning and provide deeper understandings of the positions, issues and culture of the participants.

3.1 Introduction

This research seeks to understand New Zealand hip hop dance culture, by investigating the philosophies, practices and issues of 8 hip hop dancers. This chapter outlines the research methods undertaken in this study. The first section situates the research within qualitative inquiry and a constructivist paradigm. The second section discusses how this research is aligned with an ethnographic methodology and introduces the case study as a method of organizing data. This is followed by a discussion on my position as an insider researcher, and the effects this may have had on my research. The next section outlines the methods of data collection and introduces the study's participants. Lastly, this chapter discusses the methods of analysis employed and the trustworthiness and limitations of this research.

3.2 Qualitative research

A qualitative mode of inquiry was selected for this research in order to gain data that was thick in description and quality. Qualitative Research as opposed to quantitative research is known to rely on the use of expressive language and the presence of voice of text (Janesick, 1998). This was important to my study as I was not aiming to gain one objective truth or to prove a hypothesis, but instead, discover and understand a variety of perspectives of the hip hop dance community in New Zealand. Qualitative research allowed me to construct and reconstruct my research process throughout the study. The phases of qualitative

research often overlap and intermesh; analysis of early data contributes to new emphases in the data collection and new data collected can produce new analyses (Weiss, 1994). This allowed the continuation of data collection throughout the report writing stage, refinement of question and final analysis.

3.3 Constructivism

Within a qualitative framework a constructivist paradigm suited this research. A paradigm represents a set of 'basic beliefs' or a 'world view' that can define the nature of the world for its holder (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). For the purposes of research a paradigm can define the way with which the research is guided, shaped and interpreted. The constructivist paradigm has the ontological belief that knowledge is constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This allowed me to investigate the hip hop dance culture with the assumption that there may be multiple realities as within constructivism realities are apprehendable and based on multiple mental, social and experiential based constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Within constructivism many realities can co-exist, they can also be conflicting, it is important to note that constructions are not passive but active and all are meaningful (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As a member of the New Zealand hip hop dance community this allowed me to investigate participant's perspectives and knowledge of hip hop dance without surrendering nor asserting my own beliefs, preventing what could have been important issues from emerging.

The epistemological assumption of constructivism implies that the "investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are

literally created as the investigation proceeds” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). As I interviewed each participant within the present study more light was shone on aspects of their experiences and philosophies that I had not considered investigating before. Ultimately, the different constructions and experiences that the participants provided shaped and reshaped the direction and end results of this research, as well as adding to my own constructed knowledge of hip hop dance culture.

The constructivist paradigm allowed my own voice as a member of the hip hop dance culture to be present within the research. This helped direct the research, enabling deeper discussions with the hip hop dancers, allowing meanings to emerge.

3.4 Ethnography

This research is situated within an ethnographic methodology as “unlike qualitative research in general, the principal and most important characteristic of ethnography is that it is rooted in the concept of culture” (Lecompte & Schensul, 2010, p.11). It is important to note that the particular culture that is being researched is the hip hop dance culture of New Zealand. This strays from the original ideas where ethnography of a culture was defined by location and ethnicity, as William Trochim (2008) explained:

Originally, the idea of a culture was tied to the notion of ethnicity and geographic location (e.g., the culture of the Trobriand Islands), but it has been broadened to include virtually any group or organization. That is, we can study the "culture" of a business or defined group. (para.2)

Even though hip hop culture itself is often seen as a sub-culture of popular or youth culture, smaller still is the culture of hip hop dance in New Zealand. Irrespective of size, this can still

be seen as important in the field of ethnography.

Ethnographic research values what people in some particular place or status ordinarily do, and the meanings they ascribe to what they do, under ordinary or particular circumstances (Wolcott, 1999). The aim of the present research is to understand the philosophies, practices, and issues of hip hop dancers and how these understandings are constructed within the New Zealand hip hop dance community.

Some characteristics that define an ethnographic study according to LeCompte and Schensul (2010) are: that the data collection occurs within the natural setting of the culture; it involves intimate face to face interaction with the participants; it presents an accurate reflection of participant's perspectives; and, it frames human behaviour and belief within a socio political and historical context. These characteristics have informed the process of this research with the intent that the research accurately represents the participants' voices and perspectives as well as providing critique and analysis.

Using an ethnographic framework involves utilising a range of means for gaining information such as observation, interviews, participation, recording and writing about a particular group of people. This study utilised the data collection methods of observation, semi-structured interviews, journaling and importantly valued the 'case study' as a means for focussing and organising the ethnographic approach taken in this study.

3.4.1 Case Studies

Within ethnographic methodology of this research a case study approach to organising data and reporting research outcomes was utilised. In this way “the researcher has an opportunity to provide many excerpts from the actual data that let the participants speak for themselves” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 47). A key characteristic of case study research is that it studies a phenomenon (the “case”) in its real-world context (Yin, 2011, p. 17). Presenting data in this way for this particular research provides a sufficient introduction to the participants and how they are situated within hip hop dance, also providing valuable historical context for how they came to be involved in the culture.

Gathering data from eight different cases enabled this research to collect an abundance of thick descriptive data and allowed for multiple perspectives to be gathered. Using the case study approach with multiple individual cases created a purposeful and smooth transition into, the constant comparative method of data analysis used in this study. “When more than one case is studied, the researcher can conduct cross-case analyses for comparison purposes. These analyses respect the integrity of each case and then seek commonalities across cases, as well as differences” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 103). Participants in this research are presented as individual cases, whilst their data has been compared and discussed according to emerging themes, differences and similarities.

The use of narrative was included in the presentation of these case studies in order to increase understanding and situate the reader within the process of this research. As

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) explained “we achieve meaning through shared encounters” (p. 38). By presenting results in this format it is hoped that the reader will feel included in process of the research in the way that anthropologist James Clifford explained: “You are there, because I was there” (Clifford, as cited in Riemer, 2009, p. 214).

3.5 On the inside: Position of the Researcher and the Researched

A valuable perspective this research offers is the use of and the emphasis on the emic perspective. Utilising an emic perspective was important to this research as it acknowledges the researchers experience and insights as being of value, and also integral to the research process. Emic research values “the meaning people give to their experiences and the way in which they interpret them” (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010, p.6) . The insider perspective within this research comes from both the emphasis on the participant’s perspectives as well as my own as an insider-researcher. As a hip hop dancer in New Zealand I was able to access opportunities that an outsider may not have, and approach the participants as members of my own culture. One of the positives of emic research is that the insider has access to more intimate or “privileged” information than that of an outsider (Edwards, 2002, p. 78). The benefit of having shared experiences with many of the participants subtly created a system of peer accountability for the trustworthiness of information given by participants as well as how I represent them through the research.

Arguments of subjectivity and objectivity have long been associated with the insider versus outsider position of the researcher, as well as other possible risks such as the risk of assumed knowledge. When an insider researcher works in the setting and is a peer of the

group under study there is often a tendency to believe that one knows the culture, and take subtleties and tacit knowledge for granted (Asselin, 2003; Edwards, 2002). As an insider researcher there was a possibility that I might assert my own experience over my participants, take for granted new information, or dismiss perspectives that I may not agree with. As I had identified these risks I approached the research with my 'eyes open' (Asselin, 2003) and aimed to seek new knowledge and understandings as well as differing perspectives from my own. This meant I had to carefully balance the use of my insider knowledge in order to gain insider quality data, but also be aware of my own biases and see the culture with fresh perspectives and an open mind.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

This section outlines the specific methods that were used to collect data for this research and why they were employed.

3.6.1 Semi Structured Interviews: Conversations about Hip Hop

"Interviews that sacrifice uniformity of questioning to achieve fuller development of information are properly called qualitative interviews" (Weiss, 1994, p. 3). Qualitative interviews can take many forms such as structured, unstructured and semi structured (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). I chose to employ the semi-structured interview technique as it allows for an element of structure as well as story and thick description. Semi-structured qualitative interviews allowed the research participants and this researcher to have conversations that, while focussed, allowed for deep reflection on issues meaningful to

participants.

A topic guide was created with questions and topics of interest to investigate. In this way even though questions or topics were chosen they were not fixed, and allowed the participants of this research to expand on their experiences. The topic guide was utilised as opposed to the fixed question-open response method, as when employing the latter full descriptions of experiences may be missed if interviews were restricted to the path of the topic guide. As Weiss (1994) stated: “the fixed question-open-response approach would have succeeded in getting a headline but would have missed the story” (p. 13). However if the direction of the interview was heading too far off course the guide was available in order to steer the interview back on course.

As Valerie Janesick (1998) stated: “interviewing is an act of communication” (p. 29), and we all communicate differently. The semi structured interview applies the assumption that “it may take different kinds of questions, perhaps put in different order, to get the same information from different people” (Kane, 1983, p.63). The semi structured interview technique allowed the use of adaptable questions, introduced in different orders so interviews could flow like natural conversation.

3.6.2 Observation

With semi-structured interviews as my primary method of data collection, observation played a smaller but important role for the research. Observations were performed within the natural setting of the participant’s normal practice. Both the location and the scheduled

time were selected by the participants.

The method of observation I chose was, non-participant observation (Riemer, 2009). This was a choice that I made in regards to the community being studied. In the New Zealand hip hop dance community I have observed a disconnection between different crews. There is an element of competition and being a participant in the culture myself I did not want to disrupt a rehearsal or class by joining in without payment. The idea of learning from each other or sharing varies between different crews. While I knew some participants would welcome me to join in, I knew there may be others that it would cause some discomfort. Therefore, I decided to act as a non-participant observer throughout all observation sessions in order to remain consistent.

Whilst in the observation process a non-participant researcher will take the role of passive observer, trying not to disturb any natural flow of the normal rehearsal/class session (Riemer, 2009). The presence alone of the observer can introduce a distortion of the natural scene, which the researcher must be aware of at all times, and try to minimize any such effect (Hoepfl, 1997, p 53). The researcher will take these issues into account when making field notes. During observation the focus remained upon the participants dance practices, key philosophies, relationships, pedagogy and values in action.

3.6.3 Journaling

During the data collection process journaling was used in order to record observational notes relevant to the study. The researcher's journal was also used during the process of

this study in order to reflect on the research process. Maykut and Morehouse (1998)

explained the use of journaling:

“These notes are variously referred to as a diary, a journal, or as memos, and contain the researcher’s personal record of insights, beginning understandings, working hunches, recurring words or phrases, ideas, questions, thoughts, concerns and decisions made during the research process”. (p. 68)

This process was useful when it came to analysing the results by being able to identify key themes within the research and how they had progressed from the start to the finish.

3.6.4 Participants

For the intentions of this research I decided to employ a method of purposeful sampling when selecting participants. Purposeful, or purposive, sampling involves selecting the most productive sample to answer the research question based on the researcher’s practical knowledge of the research area, the available literature and emergent evidence from the study itself (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As an insider of hip hop dance culture I used my knowledge of the community to design a framework of characteristics and criteria for participant selection. This included, but was not limited to; age, experience level, area of specialisation, accessibility, and links to the new school community.

The participants selected for this study were: Parris Goebel, Josh Mitikulena, Margaret MacKenzie, Justin Haiu, Soph Evans, Chris Teava, Ennaolla Paea, and Joseph Ling.

3.6.5 Ethics

Ethical approval was sought and granted for the purposes of this study. This was important as participants were not offered anonymity therefore any information they shared could and can be linked back to them. Ethical approval is intrinsic to the constructivist paradigm because of its inclusion of participant values in the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Participants were notified of this and gave their consent before participating in this study.

Participants were contacted via email or personal communication and presented with a participant information sheet to read through before being asked to inform the researcher if they were interested in taking part. An interview was then scheduled at a place of convenience or comfort to the participant, by the participant. Before the interview was conducted each participant had the project and its aims explained to them in full and were given time to read through the participant information sheet and consent form, before giving their consent.

3.7 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis follows three main steps. These steps are organizing the data, categorizing the data and interpreting the data (Bogdan & Biklen 2003). In accordance with the qualitative and constructivist paradigms a constant comparative method of data analysis was employed. The steps of the constant comparative method of analysis according to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) include; reading for themes, coding, categorising, and identifying key themes. These steps were followed during the analysis of data for this research.

After interviews were transcribed in full and observation notes were typed out the data compiled through interviews and observations was evaluated and searched for emerging trends. Topics of importance were identified during the interview and transcription process and the interviews were constantly compared against each other. As stated by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) in the categorizing and coding process the researcher seeks to develop a set of categories that provide a 'reasonable' reconstruction of the data she or he has collected. This helped to identify the key issues raised by the participants as well as both their differing and similar philosophies surrounding them. Information was organised into topics and then discussed.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Limitations

In order to establish the trustworthiness of this research a detailed description of the research process was provided. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) four research processes that contribute to trustworthiness are; multiple methods of data collection, building an audit trail, working with a research team and member checks. Three of these processes have been utilised in this study as I have not had the resources to engage a research team.

This research has incorporated a combination of interviews and observations in order to increase the understanding of the wider area of research and place the research in a valid context. An audit trail has been created by means of a researcher's journal, as well as the storage of original interview tapes, coding of interview transcripts and field notes.

Credibility was also sought by offering a copy of interview transcripts to the interviewees to check and correct any errors or misrepresentations. Perhaps the most important aspect of trustworthiness of this research lies in the insider position that I as the researcher hold within the community of hip hop dance in New Zealand. The importance and weight of accurately painting a picture of this community was largely felt and carried throughout the research process. In other words, my integrity within my community is on the line.

3.9 Conclusion

This study was conducted within a qualitative and constructivist paradigm. An ethnographic method placed emphasis on valuing voices from the field. Semi structured interviews were the primary form of data collection and participant observation was utilised to gain a better understanding of the participants practices. A constant comparative method was used to analyse data. I took many steps to ensure that this research was trustworthy and credible in order to gain a truthful and interesting picture of the hip hop dance culture from an insider's perspective.

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter introduces the 8 dancers that participated in this study. The participants were selected through purposeful sampling. Each participant was invited to participate and were presented with a participant information sheet. This included information on the research and what would be required of them if they took part. After confirmation of their participation, the initial interviews or observations were arranged according to availability. The participants chose interview and observation locations according to what would best suit their situation and availability. The locations used were predominantly cafe's but also included a participant's house, and an office at their work place. Before each interview participants were reminded that any information provided would not be confidential and they each signed ethics forms to confirm their consent to this.

The use of journaling during and after the interview and observation process was useful in recording the feelings, actions and tones of each meeting with the participants. It is hoped that this, along with the use of narrative in the presentation of this data will capture these elements which made each meeting unique; as well as provide an insight into the individual character of each participant. In order to preserve the participant's voice within the text their words are presented as they were spoken; slang and all.

4.2 Interview Structure

Interviews were conducted using a semi structured frame work. Six topics relating to hip hop dance in New Zealand governed the direction of questions within the interviews, these topics were; background, meaning, issues, practice, philosophies and aims. Questions were open ended and allowed for the experiences and perspectives individual to each participant to be expressed.

4.3 Case Studies

The following chapters present the experiences and reflections of the eight participants of this research: Parris Goebel, Justin Haiu, Sophie Evans, Josh Mitikulena, Margaret MacKenzie, Chris Teava, Ennaolla Paea and Joseph Ling.

4.3.1 Case one: Parris Goebel



After correspondence with Parris's father come manager I arrived at The Palace Dance studio in Penrose on a Saturday afternoon. The whole 'Royal Family' was at this rehearsal.

'The Royal Family' is a name they have given to their full suite of crews and members; composing of 'Bubblegum' - the kids crew, 'Sorority'- the teen crew, 'Misfits' and 'ReQuest' the adult crew's were inside the studio practising for an upcoming performance for Christmas in the Park. I walked past the small office and lounging area and quietly went into the Royal family's rehearsal. Other than a few waved and whispered hellos to some of the dancers that I knew I went in virtually unnoticed. Parris was sitting right in front of the mirrors, her eyes focussed on the moving bodies in front of her watching for every detail. Her laptop and sound system was set up next to her so that she may just extend her arm to control the sound. Every now and then she would get up and offer more instruction or join in herself. When the Bubblegum kids started to play around and display their age, which their advanced dancing ability is little indication of, they were taken to the office for a talk with Parris. When they came back they were quiet and focussed. Though the rehearsal was physically intense and each dancer was covered in sweat; the rehearsal atmosphere still managed to possess the feeling of family and camaraderie found in many hip hop dance crews. However there was one aspect of the rehearsal that is considered almost a luxury by many dance crew leaders (including myself). Due to both the respect of dancing under a well known and skilled choreographer and the knowledge of the very changeable and privileged position the dancer's hold in the company; when Parris talked everyone listened.

After the rehearsal the whole team pitched in to tidy up the studio, wipe down mirrors and sweep the floors. When everyone had left and been picked up Parris took me into the small office to commence the interview. With cupcakes on the table, Parris and I pulled up some chairs and began to talk.

Parris Goebel is a half Samoan/half New Zealand European choreographer and dancer for Request Dance Crew; which she started in 2006 at the age of fifteen. She also teaches at her studio 'The Palace' and trains 4 other dance crews in 'The Royal Family' company. At the time of the interview Parris was 20 years old and despite this young age she says: "I feel old. I feel really old. . . . I think because I have a lot of responsibility. So I feel like I've grown up really quick". When asked if she had expected this kind of success she explained that it had never occurred to her that it would get this big, she says:

That is actually so trippy to me because when I started Request it was just me and four other girls and literally it was just for fun. I wasn't like 'OK we're going to win worlds and one day we're going to grow into a group of 8 and then we're going to start our own studio'. I really didn't have it planned out like that. It was just for fun. I just wanted to perform and I didn't want to perform by myself. So I started a crew.

Parris began her dance education through watching music videos before she took classes at Let's Dance studio:

When I was really young, the scene was nothing like what it's like right now. So I would just copy like video clip dances. Like Missy Elliot, Beyonce and Destiny's child, I'd just copy that. That was kind of like my learning . . . I think I didn't take my first proper class until I was like 11ish maybe a bit older than that. And that was my first proper class and I just fell in love with it.

Parris continued learning dance while she was at college before leaving school to pursue dancing as a career. "End of 5th form [I] dropped out and I went to America to train over there for a bit. Then I got a scholarship over there in an agency. Then I came back and really decided to chase my dream of starting my studio".

When discussing the street dance scene in New Zealand Parris describes that the dominant dance style is new school; “I think we’re very weak here at our old school styles”. And within new school she details that the trends are always changing:

I think it used to be blow ups, but then it changed. And I think it went kind of femme for a bit, I think it went very g-funk for a bit. I think this year it’s turned very, how I say it, ‘gangsta 101’ like clean, imitated gangsta. I say imitated because I don’t feel like its raw and I don’t think it’s real. I think it’s just like this is a gangsta set. I think that’s what everyone’s tryna follow now.

Parris goes on to discuss that following trends has presented some issues:

I think when I look at New Zealand I look at it like a sponge and it just constantly soaks up stuff. And sometimes its good and sometimes it’s bad. It’s good as in its constantly evolving but I think it’s bad as in sometimes it loses its identity, and crews lose their identity by being sponges and following. . . . I think when we see something we copy or when there’s a trend or a phase, we join.

She explains what New Zealand dancers soak up to be:

I think it’s a mixture I think the influences are choreographers in America, I think people like hunt them down and copy them, especially guy ones. And I think the other thing is worlds, I think they’re always highly influenced by the crews that win worlds. . . which is sad because for me I think inspiration should come from everything, from a table to a phone to electricity. That’s what your inspiration should come from. Not from watch, watch, watch.

A trait of street dancers in New Zealand that Parris values the most is originality and the ability to be oneself; and names a crew that she thinks possesses those traits:

To me movers and shakers are people that are constantly stepping out not necessarily winning, just like for me Hopskotch does that a lot. . . . It’s like it’s about what they do not where they place and I can see that through what [they] do ‘cause [they] actually do some stuff that no one else would do and that’s really cool. That’s a mover and shaker for me, not people who are always like cool and are doing what everyone else is doing.

Through the course of the interview Parris raised other issues about the street dance scene, such as the emphasis on competition. She said

I think it's very competition based and I say that [because] I don't think that besides a competition do you see a crew just perform to perform? No. Just ask how many showcases there are just to showcase. There's none. So it's very competition based. And I think that's a good thing and a bad thing like I think everything is. I think it's good because I think competition is the number one thing to help you grow, because it's giving you structure and it's giving you time limits so you have no choice but to work hard. But then it's bad because it gets people into that mentality 'if I lose, I suck'. Or 'if I do this then we're not going to win so we'll have to do this'.

Another issue for Parris is the lack of opportunity for street dancers in New Zealand. "I think a lot of people's mindsets here is that when you get to a certain stage or adults 'I just have to stop because there's nothing else'. So I think creating that opportunity is a really important". She goes on to say that there is even less opportunity as an individual dancer: "I think the structure of our community here has almost made it impossible to make it as an individual dancer. 'Cause where do you go? Where do you compete? How do you showcase?"

In future Parris hopes to continue pursuing her dreams and wants to enable others to be able to follow in her footsteps:

I think my dream is to create a pathway, I guess, for dancers here through the studio that they can see . . . Request's plan is to move to LA next year in the middle of the year and have a Request based there so that we can do more international stuff and I guess chase the dream and just go for it . . . we'll keep sending crews every year to worlds, 'cause I think for me that just keeps giving more and more opportunities to a new group of kids every year . . . And hopefully by having Request based in America, obviously the girls aren't going to be in it forever so there's going to be that opportunity in America so that maybe girls here that are getting older can hopefully

one day think if they really love it to move over to America and join Request over there. So it's like showing that pathway.

A few months after this interview Parris was asked to be a choreographer for Jennifer Lopez's world tour and performed with her on the TV Series 'American Idol'; she is currently living her dreams.

4.3.2 Case two: Justin Haiu



When I arrived in Aotea Square in Auckland central it was alive with activity. In one corner was a display of live 'Pacific Barbie's on pedestals; in another, members of the public were being chased by giant seagulls; and on the grass patch 'Occupy Auckland' protestors were still camping out in tents. I watched as three business men walked into the centre of the square, dressed in suits and talking on their phones. A button on a CD player nearby was pushed and played a soundtrack for these three men. This caused the men to start dropping their phones, fall over each other and engage in almost a flash mob styled performance of physical theatre mixed with the styles of popping, breaking and contemporary dance. Justin Haiu was one of these businessmen. He moved fluidly between the different dance styles

and displayed great strength and control. The three businessmen interacted with each other, and the audience, and showed off their individual skills as well as group choreography. At the end of the piece the business men picked up their phones and proceeded on to what appeared to be their daily business. Whilst entertaining and beautiful in its own way, to see hip hop dance practised in this way in New Zealand is surprisingly rare.

I caught up with Justin at McCafe in Manukau accompanied by his 20 month old son. Our interview took place next to the children's playground so that we could talk while Justin could keep his son entertained and keep an eye on him at the same time. I already knew a bit about Justin's background and how far it reached, so I was excited to see what this interview would unfold.

Justin Haiu is 31 years old and was born in Whangerei; he moved to Auckland when he was 13. Justin is of mixed heritage, he explains "my dad's from Wallis and Futuna Islands and my mum's from New Plymouth. She's New Zealand European". When asked what he does for a living he explains he is "a freelance entertainer" and that it has changed over time:

'Cause a couple of years ago it was all different. I was doing a variety of stuff. But now this year I'm just dancing for the New Zealand Dance Company and working with Red Leap theatre. At the end of last year we did some street theatre, so I think the stuff that I'm trying to aim towards now is having a theatrical element of storytelling of themes or messages that are positive and will hopefully leave a mark on people for good.

Justin started learning dance through school and grew to be inspired by videos:

I danced when I was doing Kapa Haka . . . I was doing that in primary, intermediate and college years. . . . And I watched . . . Michael Jackson actually! When he came over here they showed a little bit on TV. And I think I was watching 'a stranger in Moscow', and he was doing some robot, and I was like "man I wanna be like that!" So I just started doing that at school with my friends. And then in '98 I saw Run DMC vs. Jason Nevins . . . and that inspired me big time to wanna dance.

He also started taking class with Gandalf Archer; "I took a hip hop dance class at city dance. I think it was Gandalf that taught it. Yeah he was a bit of inspiration that I looked up to as well. He was in the competition scene". Justin also started breaking in well-known New Zealand bboy crews before joining two of the pioneering hip hop dance crews in New Zealand; Ngaru Puawai and then Jireh. He explained his crew journey:

I started hanging out with some 'Excellians' some dudes from [Excel School of Performing Arts]. . . . before that I was in some breakdancing crews. Triple C squad was my first crew, later it became Qwik n Ezy, named after the Clendon Community Centre, or Clendon Community Crew. [laughs] . . . And then I jumped into Faith City Rockers. And I think just being in the Christian scene around other Christian dancers I think that's when I started hanging round with the Excellian dudes. Yeah and I was just asked to be a part of Ngaru Puawai. They tried to go cultural, hip hop, break dancing, just kind of performance in general. We had that element of Kapa Haka and wanting to encourage youth.

In 2001 the crew changed to Jireh:

We started in 2001 I think it was. We went to Melbourne for a singing competition, we didn't place anywhere but we were good though; apart from me [laughs]. We were there for a month so we thought that we would just kinda tour around schools, and youth rallies, churches, on the street, malls. Then that's where we ended up and we just started carrying on.

Justin informed me that one of his biggest passions when getting into hip hop dance was bboying:

I was addicted to bboying for like 2 years solid. I think probably back then I was like 'I am bboying, I love bboying!'. 'I'll bboy right now!'. I can remember going to sleep and all I could think about was bboying and so I just had to jump up and just started breaking, 'cause I stayed in the garage [laughs]. And then I was like 'oh I'm satisfied' and I could go to sleep [laughs].

He explained that since then the community has gone through some big changes; "there seems to be a lot more crews. It's bigger. Yeah it's definitely changed like there was a bboying wave throughout New Zealand; with more bboy comps; more bboy crews; more bboys. But that changed to hip hop dancers, and to street dance, and to competition dancers".

When asked if he still feels part of the street dance community he told me that's not always the case. He said:

I feel a little bit out of the community . . . I think 'cause I'm always, street dance wise, I'm always doing it solo. So there's no community, I'm not around the community". He also explains that this may also be due to a lack of paid work in the art form and that because of this doesn't always feel like a hip hop dancer. "I feel a bit funny calling myself a hip hop dancer now. Just 'cause I feel like I'm on the verge of it now. I still love street dance. I mean I'd be doing street dance if there was a street dance company that would pay. But there are only contemporary companies, or contemporary works, that offer paid work. I think that's actually why I went down the contemporary track was 'cause they were paying and no one else was. I still love it and I still do it. I still jam inside my house.

Hip hop dance gave Justin a pathway into the performing arts world, I asked him if he thought he would be dancing now if he hadn't pursued street dance. He said:

I don't think so. Yeah it was definitely a big big drive. 'Cause it actually took quite a few people to say to me 'you know you're actually pretty good when you do that'. So I think that I just started believing in myself after hearing some of that. You know like 'oh am I?' like I'm actually good at something. Yeah I know yeah, 'cause I didn't think I was all that at school; academically I wasn't but physically like in performing arts I

excelled and in Kapa Haka and in rugby we won every year. But I didn't know what to do afterwards.

Justin's aspirations for the New Zealand hip hop scene and for himself are synonymous; "I would like to see it get funding, for there to be a few paying hip hop theatre companies. And I'd like to be in one [laughs]; to tour with it, to put on shows".

4.3.3 Case Three: Sophie Evans



I arrived at the Kilbernie based studio in Wellington not knowing what to expect. Not being based in Wellington myself, I had never visited the studio that was run by 'The Company NZ'. I walked up the stairs and was greeted by a board of upcoming notices for the New Year, and then continued through the next door into a weekly rehearsal to observe Sophie Evans. The rehearsal was being run by Ben Uili the leader of The Company who was currently announcing that the new floors for the studio would be arriving the next day and the mirrors would be at a later date. I found myself a space to sit on the smooth concrete to start my observation. When the rehearsal started everyone followed Ben as he taught them a new routine. Sophie was learning off to the side, neither fully in the group of thirteen

dancers, nor out of it. This I thought must be the position of someone who's a dancer as well as a leader, a tricky position to manage. Ben gave instructions to do the dance both with him and then on their own. Sophie was asked to demonstrate in front of the company and the piece was then performed in groups, which were greeted by applause from the dancers waiting to perform next. Water breaks were filled with laughter and quick conversations before getting back into rehearsal. More choreography was to be learned and every now and then Sophie would raise her hand to ask a question about the choreography or would approach Ben with a suggestion for any complicated timing to try and help the group. I left the rehearsal as the company was still working their way through the choreography, going over it again, being taught additional movement and working up a sweat.

Sophie and I met up at a small local cafe close to her house in Karori. The last time we had talked properly was at the world hip hop championships in Las Vegas in 2011. We had a lot to catch up on.

Sophie is a 20 year New Zealand/European student from Wellington. When asked what she does she explained "I'm a third year commerce student but I basically dance full time [laughs], and I teach dancing and dance myself". I asked why she chose that subject of study as a dancer, she said:

I picked up marketing and management and then I think 4000 students graduate with that degree alone . . . everyone was like why are you doing that degree? I was like because I can learn, like everyone's going in for one kind of job, but I'm learning to market and manage myself as an artist rather than in the business world where you guys are going to fight over like 100 jobs.

Sophie's dance background goes back quite far. She explained:

My mum's a ballet teacher, so when me and my sister first grew up it was compulsory to do ballet. You had to be five to enrol in her school, but we were both three [smiles]. And then I've just been dancing ever since. . . . But we were allowed to give up when we were thirteen and my sister gave up but I kept going. And I really wanted to pursue that as my career, but then I just stopped enjoying it.

She then picked up hip hop dance at 16. Her transition into the hip hop crew community was through a friend. "My best friend who is a full time ballerina now, and was doing ballet then, she was like "oh I'm in this team called Sidestep, you should come along". So I went along and I'd go to their practices and stuff. And then they had an audition and I got in". From there she has been involved in other crews. "There was Sidestep, Virtue, well they were kind of at the same time and then I was in Virtue, then Emerge, and now The Company, which is De La Funk". After moving to Australia for 3 months, Sophie came back to finish her studies and continue working with The Company.

Last year Sophie went to the world hip hop championships with The Company NZ for the Mega Crew division. "There was like 22 of us, mixed boys and girls and really different ages and everyone was so different. But everyone got along to the point where that was by far the best trip I've ever done. Dancing on that stage in the run through, everyone walked off stage almost crying and saying like "I love everyone!" Though her team placed 7th and didn't make it to finals that didn't matter. "We tried focus everyone on look how much fun you've had getting here, look what you've achieved getting here, that alone is enough".

Even though her experience of worlds was enjoyable she explained the competition has had an impact on the New Zealand hip hop dance community.

You're not someone until you've gone to worlds or you've come first or yeah. It's hugely competitive in terms of that. So I guess that it does mean that it is all about winning here. But I feel like maybe as of last year there's starting to be a bit of a change. People have started to experience worlds and they're seeing that that's not what it's all about.

I asked Sophie if she thought there were any issues in the New Zealand hip hop dance community. She explained:

Yes I think there's quite a lot . . . but I think that a lot of dancers find that they are torn between it is the issue of opportunity vs. loyalty. I guess with anything, if someone starts to succeed in something. You know like their career takes off and they keep succeeding and excelling and people want to join that. But then they are torn between being loyal to maybe the people that have trained them or where their friends dance and things. And there's the tall poppy which is a big issue here . . . like putting other people down and that kind of stuff. Be great on your own terms; because you deserve it, don't talk about other people.

Her dance crew The Company NZ and crew leader Ben Uili have presented her with inspiration and taught her many lessons.

Some people strive to be the best in the world or get this and do that and go there and get my name up here. And then there's those who try to, and this is what I've learned since I've been with Ben, is you can get all of that and it's awesome but it's all gonna fade right and it's gonna be meaningless but it's the process of getting there [that's important] . . . I've trained with different people and stuff and I feel like this is why I can't leave The Company 'cause now I've formed all of these relationships and met all these people that I don't want to leave. It's not about how great I'm going to be as a dancer but to keep growing.

Sophie's aims for her future are clear, however because of the current structure of the New Zealand hip hop dance community she is unsure on how to get there. "There's no direct

pathway set up that you can go through and yeah I honestly have no idea. I would ideally love to tour and do shows and perform. But I want to perform is what I know, but I don't know how I'm gonna do that or where I'm gonna do that".

4.3.4 Case four: Josh Mitikulena



Sounds of laughter could be heard before I even arrived at the door of the Kenneth Myers Centre dance studio to observe Josh Mitikulena at a 'Hopskotch Mega Crew' practice. As I opened the door I witnessed a group of 24 people playing games. The class stood in two lines, one behind the other standing with their legs just over shoulder width apart.

Underneath each line was a person crawling through the line of legs. Each time a person got to the front of the line the person at the back would start crawling. It was a race to get to the other end of the studio. After a lot of laughter and a lot of cheating, one of the teams won and couldn't help rubbing it in. This preceded another game and an intensely physical warm up. Though the warm up was strenuous everyone was still laughing and cheerful after the games, this attitude continued into the next section of the rehearsal where the dancers would be learning more choreography for the 'Mega Crew' division at SDNZ national hip

hop championships. Josh organised the group into their formations and watched the group perform his choreography. He then offered everyone individual notes that he had written down after observing the video he took of the last rehearsal. Each person took their notes and worked individually on the sections they needed the most work on, often asking others for more help. Josh walked around, offering more advice and giving one-on-one demonstrations to those struggling. When the practice ended it was clear that the session wasn't over. No one it seemed was ready to leave yet and started to cipher and jam. It wasn't until the threat of being locking in the building at closing time that the last of the dancers left.

In the small suburb of Karori, Wellington, I conducted an interview with Josh Mitikulena at his family's home. Josh now works and lives in Auckland, he was in Wellington for a holiday. Though Josh is my partner, I still had a lot to learn about his experiences and perspectives on the hip hop dance community. In his small study we began our conversation.

Josh is 24 years old and a graduate of the University of Auckland. "I studied a Performing Arts degree majoring in dance, which is now the Dance Studies degree. I also did a Post Graduate diploma in Creative and Performing Arts." Josh is full Niuean. "I was born and raised in Wellington to Niuean parents. So I'm full Niuean but I consider myself kiwi-Niuean or New Zealand Niuean". He describes his profession as; "Freelance dance teacher. So I'm just going around different places, studios, schools and I just teach hip hop dance". And explains there are difficulties involved. "Yeah it is difficult and I'm always constantly looking for something to do; whether it's me starting up my own project or looking for a job, yeah, just constantly always looking for something".

Josh started dancing in the style of breaking:

The first hip hop dance style that I ever learned was breakdancing to the public or bboying to those that are in the know. My cousin showed me a little like crab freeze, a little hand spin freeze and I told him it was wack and that he should never do it again [laughs]. And then he like left my house and once he left I practised it for the whole week and then he came back and I was like 'yo cuz, check this out!' And then I did it and I did it better than he did it. And then after that I just sort of ran with it. I guess there were other things around at the time like that RUN DMC clip came out with RUN DMC vs. Jason Nevins, it was like Asia1, Crazy Kujo and these other famous bboys that I didn't know their names back then but they sort of got me going into it.

Though he started breaking around 2001 he didn't get involved within the community until 2004. He explained:

I started by myself, and I was learning by myself just teaching myself. And I was learning off things I saw on TV, things I saw on the internet. I never really got into the breaking scene until I did a workshop in Lower Hutt with this crew called Step Kings . . . there was this lady Tweek and her then husband Swerv and they sort of showed me some moves. . . . It was just this 8 week like foundation sort of work shop thing. But then that was sort of it for the year. But when I got to 5th form that's when I decided I wanted to really try and get into it; and that's when I started meeting other people in the scene.

Josh went from there to being in the new school crew scene. After being based in Wellington crews Josh moved up to Auckland for study and then joined a crew called Triple8funk which he went to the World Hip Hop Championships with in 2007. Then he started his own crew in 2008. "The crew name is Hopskotch. I've been in a few crews before I started Hopskotch with my partner". His background influences the direction of the crew.

Josh said:

I guess, my bboying and my hip hop dancing will sort of always run together, next to each other, and that's been pretty cool. So we try and enter competitions a lot to try

and stay active in the hip hop scene, or new school dance scene, and also try and enter bboy competitions. So we're still competing, we do a lot of showcases whether that's making our own concerts or performing at different places like schools and corporate events. But we're still pretty active in different scenes which I think is really good.

Josh explained that University has helped him think differently about his dance:

I want people to feel something; that the move is more than what the move is physically that it can become something more than just a 'oh I put my hand here or I move my leg like this' it's something that can make you feel something by the way that you frame it. And I think that going through University has sort of helped me understand that a whole lot more and being able to break that down to try and understand how different ways of you framing what you do with your dance, not just the dance, but other things that make the dance.

He went on to explain the purpose behind the name Hopskotch:

We chose Hopskotch because basically everyone was being so serious, and that's cool, that's fine; but I guess my thinking is different. Where we still can be serious when we want to be but at the end of the day dance has always been about fun for me. You do it because originally it's this fun thing to do so you should try not to lose that feeling.

Josh explained his perspective on the issues that surround calling the new school dance style hip hop dance:

Hip hop dance in terms of style is I think it's arguable. I'm one of those guys that's pretty free. When I was breaking I used to think that bboying was the only original hip hop dance and blah blah blah. But then I started to meet people from lockers to poppers and house dancers; and a lot of them see themselves as hip hop dancers. So who am I to say that they're not hip hop dancers? I mean I didn't make it so it's not for me to go and hate on them. It comes back to me to that feeling, like if this guy's feeling it, he may not be dancing to the same music as me but he's a hip hop dancer. 'Cause who am I to say that the feeling that I get off the music isn't the same feeling that he's getting or she's getting . . . I can't say that because if hip hop is being about 'peace, love, unity and having fun' and being free and being open then I can't say that.

Josh has several perspectives on issues surrounding the world hip hop championships competition and its impact on the New Zealand hip hop dance community. On worlds he said:

I think it's good. It's popularised our scene. It's made people want to get into dance more. And I think if people are getting into dance more; then how is that not a good thing for us as a scene. But I mean I don't really like the competition. I've been there twice; and both times I didn't like it.

He goes on to inform why.

I think the one thing I don't like about it is the people that come away with the idea that being a successful dance crew at a competition is the bees knees; that it's the biggest thing that you can ever accomplish in dance. I just feel like that's just really misguided and there are a lot of people that aim for that and then that's it. I just feel like a competition is a competition it's not really an overall gauge . . . it's not the be all and end all". His main concern is that it limits growth rather than promoting diversity. "I think it's important for a scene to grow and to have it grow in different areas. Because then that way not only does it grow the skills that we have in the scene already but it invites people in different ways.

Another issue Josh has with the competition is the pressure it puts on crews and the wider community when fundraising.

It's really hard in three months to raise money if you're all from the same area. And so I've sort of been a person that's given feedback to the people that run the competition and it would be awesome if they could even do their competition at the end of the previous year. Just so you have 6 or 7 months just to be like sweet we can fundraise. You know? . . . 'Cause I mean no one wants to go 'oh yeah I'll go support this crew' and then the week after 'oh I'll support this crew' and then the middle of the week 'oh yeah this crews having a workshop'. It's just really hard. But if they could spread it out it would give more opportunity for people to space it out and then they can try and get the most out of the opportunity.

Other issues in the scene for josh include opportunity vs. loyalty and a lack of humility.

I don't like it when people crew hop, when they just go from one crew to another crew to try and find out what the best thing is. And the other thing would just be big headedness like people thinking that they're like, I just hate it when people give themselves a celebrity status without actually being a celebrity. 'Cause the way I see it is like, I just see it like anyone, like who are you? You're just a dancer, you're just another person. What does it matter that you've won whatever comp, or what does it mean that all these people like you, like at the end of the day we're all the same. So I just hate that sort of thing you know. A lot of that's becoming a bigger thing now. I think people just need to humble themselves and like it's a small country there's no need for it. It will always be there people will always be like that.

Josh hopes to choreograph more in the future; "A big dream for me would be choreographing for really talented dancers. . . . I don't really feel the same performing as I used to perform these days. I guess I get more of a buzz when I work together with people, I sort of see it as like a puzzle". He also plans to establish Hopskotch as a touring dance company:

I'd really like us just to be able to travel internationally and showcase our stuff. And also to I guess the big thing for me is I've always been a dancer that likes to be well rounded. But my well rounded is just well-rounded within hip hop. So I'd like the dancers in our crew to be well rounded in hip hop. . . . Like they may not be the best but at least they won't ever go into a situation where it feels too unfamiliar.

4.3.5 Case Five: Margaret MacKenzie



I walked into the Viva Latino studio to see Margaret preparing choreography for her 'hip hop heels' class. When her students arrive Margaret welcomes them all enthusiastically and talks to all of them individually asking where some of the others are; as only 3 regulars showed up today. At the start of class Margaret puts on the song 'I'm every woman' and explains that they did a Whitney Houston tribute the previous week. They then warm up to the song, and every now and then Margaret pretends she has a microphone in her hand and pretends to sing. After the warm up she explains the choreography. "There's only three today so it's really intimate, the dance is really intimate, so I guess it suits the theme!" and informs that the piece is to Beyonce's 'Dance for you'. Margaret breaks down each step in the choreography and provides imagery for her explanations "stretch out every move, it's like string yeah or like gum!". The choreography places emphasis on womanly shapes and feminine character. Margaret's energy and enthusiasm stays high and bubbly through the entire class; always offering humour to put the class at ease and praises them on improvements.

Margaret Joyce MacKenzie is a 28 year old from "Glenfield on the North Shore". However she was originally born in "Alotau, Papua New Guinea" and moved to New Zealand when she was 2 years old, "so majority of my life's been kiwi". She is of half New Zealand European and half Papua New Guinean descent. When asked what she does for a profession Margaret explains "I am a freelancer. So I do freelance make up artistry mainly for weddings and photo shoots. And I teach as well . . . I teach neo burlesque and hip hop heels. I never planned to teach the neo burlesque I promise!" Margaret started dancing when she was

young as something fun to do with her sister. "I started dancing 'cause my big sister danced. And she always used to make dances up for me to dance with her when we were playing dress ups and things. . . It was just something that I did with my big sister . . . And at church; the dance productions and things you know". When she was 11 that all changed when she took dance in Intermediate. From there she started doing jazz. "At 13 I started going to jazz dance classes, which they called jazz hip hop I think. It was just like casual classes for 6 months. I paid for that with my paper run money! [laughs]. Then I couldn't be bothered doing my paper run anymore so I couldn't go to classes!". At 15 she got involved with dance at church again and then created an all-girls group with her sister called 'Soul'd Out'.

That was for years, we just continued dancing, us girls. We travelled to Sydney for the Olympics in 2000. We went and did gigs like around Tauranga, it was actually a big part of our lives. Even back then I was still in high school . . . And parachute was like always the biggest thing obviously being a church group. And that was when the likes of Jireh and Faith City Rockers and I think there was only one other crew from like Christchurch or something were around. You know that thought of performing as a dance crew. I think that was in the late 90's or early 2000's.

From there she joined the crew Triple8funk and went to the world hip hop championships in Los Angeles in 2007, a few years later she left the crew. Through the experience of going to Worlds, Margaret realised that being in a crew and going to that competition may have hindered her own personal development. She said:

You train up for that one routine, you start claiming this one style, you know one little bit of, a few seconds of something over and over for like months and then it's over. And being in a crew you have to look like each other . . . which is another thing that

I've struggled with growing up in a crew. Or dance group back then. Was that we were doing it for performances or whatever and everyone was trying to be clean and look like each other so there was no kind of development of your own style or your own feel coming through.

She elaborated further in how she thinks it has affected New Zealand dancers:

If we see someone that's doing it, we wanna do it to and we wanna do it better. Which is cool and I don't see anything wrong with that. But if it's coming from a place of just winning . . . and no kind of knowledge or understanding of movement or your body or the art then you've missed out on so much. . . . Especially growing up in a crew, you know, you grow up and you're just learning from a particular leader or someone and that's all you know. You haven't done your research you know? . . . I mean that's cool, do your comp; but then have all the other times as well to balance it out . . . Yeah I mean for years I ended up struggling trying so hard to try and look like someone in class, like the teacher. And I just haven't got it. I just haven't realised until recently that I need to start feeling it in my own body; in my own style. Which I'm still figuring out, but it's at least a little more freeing.

I asked what Margaret does to stay active in the community now. She answered:

Now? Not much. I just go to classes. I'm pretty, yeah; I'm kind of over the whole crew thing. I feel like my crew days are definitely over. So for me it's just been more going to class and dancing with friends and stuff. It's definitely been more my own personal development . . . Yeah and just teaching but again my style is; I mean like it's, got a hip hop or slight urban feel to it. But it's definitely womanly but I've always come from that womanly place. Like it's always been my thing; and that's what I always come back to.

To this she voiced her frustration on the current trends within the hip hop dance community:

I really don't like trying to dance like a guy. . . . That's just not how Margaret moves! . . . The recent years I've had a real love hate relationship with dance. 'Cause I loved it, when I first started we were performing it heaps and that was when, I suppose back then those were my glory days you know we were performing all the time! [laughs]. We were on stage and getting props and we were doing like cool 90's dancing you know it was cool back then! And then all these new styles came through and it was like oh! What I do is not what's cool anymore! Girls are getting more angry and

aggressive and I'm still like happy.

When I ask Margaret what hip hop dance means to her she explained:

I think of hip hop dance, but to me, what is hip hop dance to me; that is so different. It's very personal; it's a very personal thing that I wish I could . . . That I wish I could be how I feel about it. In my head I see myself like doing these things, like entering in a bgirl comp or something [laughs] but my body just doesn't go there!

In 2010 Margaret travelled to New York for dance.

I went to Broadway dance centre for 3 months doing an, ISVP, international student visa programme. So it was like an intensive course for 3 months . . . so you get to choose your styles and what you want to major in and then you have 12 classes a week that you have to go to regularly . . . So I just majored in hip hop and jazz I probably I did a double thingy. Oh and you had to do two classes of ballet a week, it was compulsory.

In that experience she discovered how much the New Zealand hip hop dance community was lacking in experienced female teachers.

I just wanna learn from a woman! . . . I wanna go to class but I wanna learn from a woman! That's why I love New York, they had all these older teachers who were like telling me, giving me, feedback and I looked up to them. I was like "ahhh" their style is how I felt and you know that's how I wanted to move. And I came back here and it's just guys, guys, guys, guys.

Though Margaret discussed plenty of issues she adds that the way things are aren't necessarily wrong, but there just needs to be more development. She shared:

I feel like it's not wrong how it is, you know that's just how it is . . . I'd like, if anything, not change but develop, like develop the community. Like if we could become more involved with each other's stuff. Learn how to express rather than compete. Learn how to like experiment with our bodies and move. But be given a place to do that. I think we need things, we can't just go on and do it ourselves in New Zealand; there almost needs to be a place for that sort of thing. Like a comp's especially created to do

something, so something else that's created for people to be a little more expressive or more community based or something different.

4.3.6 Case Six: Chris Teava



I hopped off the bus, into the rain, and with my umbrella up I walked down a dark road on Auckland's north shore to find C3 church dance studio. Accompanied by lightning and thunder I walked down a long driveway to where I found the church with a few welcoming lights on. As I walked up into the studio some kids were just coming out of a class that had just finished. Chris Teava was just starting to get ready to teach and informed the students that I would be taking photos and joked with them not to pose for the camera. The class was made up of 8 children and started with Chris asking them if they had done their dance homework. Some very excitedly had, some hadn't and they were told they would be doing solo's at the end of class. Warm up included isolated head movements, stretches and some more challenging full body movement. Once warm, they proceeded to learn a short and simple choreography from Chris. Chris not only taught from the front of the class but taught using the whole space; sometimes dancing on the side; up the front; at the back and even in the middle of the students. The class changed lines often to allow all of the students to have a turn in the front row. Class ended in a circle where Chris gave the kids homework to

practice moving their shoulders in isolation and with groove in preparation for next week's class; also with the instruction to look after their parents and make them a cup of tea when they got home.

For the interview, I met with Chris at a cafe on K'Rd in Auckland city. Just up the road from his own church. Knowing that Chris was heavily involved in the krump community made me eager to discuss the street dance style that I have had the least amount of experience in.

Christopher James Teava is a 24 year old Cook Island Maori, "born and raised on the north shore" of Auckland and now lives in West Auckland with his wife and her family. Chris is a youth worker and part time dance teacher. He also runs events in New Zealand; "Other than that I'm running some major events in New Zealand for the Krump the dance community; recently just finished doing Krump nationals which was a real big success". Chris focuses his time on these events because he feels like there's something missing in that community. He said:

At the moment the krump community . . . It's kind of been like up and down. Every time there's a major event a lot of people train up for it and then they dance at it and then afterwards everybody will just isolate themselves from everybody. So what I've tried to do is tried to get consistent events and jam sessions going on.

He never intended to be a key figure in the Krump community he explained:

I had no intention of doing anything like that, it just, or not so much happened but I knew what the community needed and I just did what someone else didn't step up to do". Chris also feels like he is known as two different people in the street dance community; "It's weird 'cause like in the dance community I'm known as krumper, but in the krump community I'm known as a hip hop dancer.

Chris informed me he wasn't always involved in the hip hop dance scene and started dance in ballroom: "I actually started in intermediate with Ballroom and Latin dancing and I did that for about 6 years. I competed all over New Zealand and went to Australia for an Australasian competition in Melbourne". After doing that for many years he started to act on his passion for the dance he saw in video clips. He explained:

I always liked the music video clip dancing. Back then it was Usher and JT started coming out a bit. I just thought man that would be real cool to do! And then all of a sudden me and a friend of mine, Kamy Mam, because we lived on the same road; we just self-taught ourselves through video clips. We just jammed in our rooms . . . Then I think not so long after that 'You Got Served' came out and that's when it all became big, and it was just everywhere!

From there he started choreographing for friends in Latin and Ballroom competitions for their hip hop sections and then became involved in taking classes.

I did a Certificate in Maori Performing Arts with Mika Haka. He had a team of people that were still bboying and popping and stuff. People like [Taupuhi Toki] from 'ODC', he was my old dance mentor, he was one of the guys that taught me some of the old school styles like popping, locking and bboying. . . . From then on I started doing classes and workshops with different people. I think Gandalf [Archer] was one and Joel [Gallarde] was another one.

Chris entered the Krump community after being inspired by another movie. "It's funny because I went to a screening of a movie called 'Rize', at the Civic theatre . . . Ever since that movie I just started doing it".

Chris recognises various issues in the hip hop dance community. One of those issues is the dominance of one style of hip hop dance, new school, and the lack of respect for others. He said:

I think any style shouldn't be overshadowed by another style. I think each style should be complimenting with another. If anything I think the new school chorey style should be respecting the styles that started before them because . . . the style that they're doing right now wouldn't have been done without the guys before them taking the risks.

In future Chris and his wife hope to continue to run events and start a krump organisation.

He explained:

We're wanting to set up some sort of youth organisation for the krump community and for that to be a pathway for New Zealand krump to get up there. But also for the international guests to come into New Zealand; because I think ultimately what's missing is that representation in the community to be the voice to the outside community to say "hey this is what's happening it's still going it's not dead.

He discussed the name of it with me. "We haven't got any confirmed names but we're looking at taking up Krump Aotearoa. Purely because we felt like it was something that could incorporate the whole community." He also has his own goals in the new school community and voices his aim to leave something behind for future generations.

"Ultimately it's to set that up but again probably on the chorey side would be try and get up there and stay up there [laughs] and be real creative with what I do. But ultimately I think what I've learnt over the years is about leaving something for the next generation".

4.3.7 Case Seven: Ennaolla Paea



I arrived in Otara at the Dziah Dance Studios. A place I had been many times before in greatly varying contexts. I have a lot of memories attached to this place associated with the different crews that have called this studio home. On this night I was going to observe the director of Street Dance New Zealand (SDNZ), Ennaolla Paea at a rehearsal for an upcoming concert called 'City Lights' with her group 'Eclipse'. When I walked through the garage-style door into the warehouse-sized room, covered in graffiti art from another time, the first thing I saw was 5 girls and 5 boys working as separate groups dancing on a small stage in front of the mirrors. Ennaolla was going back and forth between the girls and the stereo offering instruction and practicing moves over and over again. The second thing I noticed was that it was very cold in this studio and all the dancers were still wearing long sleeves and beanies. After watching the rehearsal for a small time it was evident that Ennaolla was the main choreographer for this group. She would critique girl dancers and then say "let's just go over the foundation of it"; in order to work on the correct aesthetic. After observing a lot of laughing, dancing, and patience when it comes to which group uses the stereo; Ennaolla was calling out "5 minutes then we'll split to script writing". As I watched the

dancers winding down Ennaolla came to talk to me. When I asked what script writing was; she explained it was for the upcoming concert. She would create the concepts for a show and gets the others to “fill in the gaps”; a team effort to create the show. When she asked me if I had got everything I needed I knew this was a polite cue for me to leave.

Bright and early on a weekday morning, Ennaolla agreed to meet with me before her work day started. Our meeting place was a cafe in Manukau not far from where the Auckland Regional and National hip hop championships are often held by her organisation Street Dance New Zealand (SDNZ).

Ennaolla Marie Wallbridge-Paea is 23 years of age. She was born in Christchurch before her family moved to Otara, Auckland where she’s grown up since the age of one. She is of mixed descent; “my dad is from Niue and my mum is from Canada. That’s my main ethnicities”. When I ask Ennaolla what she does she fills me in on her many different roles:

I do part time everything. I do part time running Street Dance New Zealand, and so we mainly focus on running dance events that ideally can reach um national coverage so that everyone can participate. So that’s the likes of ‘Street Camp’, regional events and, ‘National Dance Champs’, and even ‘Dream’ we’re extending to reach different regions. So that’s Street Dance New Zealand. Then I also run Luminous DC. Which is, um, well it sounds like a dance company but really it’s just a group of friends and we’re like a dance family and there’s about 12 dancers involved in that kinda group. And yeah we just, we train, in different ways because we’re not all committed. For example everyone doesn’t wanna be in a crew; they just wanna up-skill so the dancers are there for different reasons . . . so I train and run that entity. And then the third thing that takes up most of my life too is I run a youth ministry at our church, that’s part time as well. But basically I work with youth in everything that I do. Whether it’s dance, performing arts, or mentoring; yeah anything to do with youth that’s basically me. So that’s my life!

An interesting educational background and managing her brother's then dance crew 'Dziah', is what lead Ennaolla to running events today:

I was homeschooled actually all the way [laughs]. And it's a joke because they're like "Oh Nola, you dropped outta home school!" [laughs] . . . To be honest it didn't work out, I was really good with my home schooling until 5th form and then yeah after that I did correspondence. That didn't work out, probably because Dziah was getting quite up there and I did a lot of the management side and the administration side and I was starting to get mentored and started to get really passionate about event management . . . By the end of it my parents saw, "oh you're so caught up in events, and you're doing well, and you're working and stuff so oh well!". And so yeah, I didn't actually finish anything [laughs] . . . that was my learning environment and that was my high school or even tech, you know.

And that has lead her to become the head figure of SDNZ, the company that presents the biggest hip hop dance competitions in New Zealand.

Ennaolla started hip hop dance quite young as an 8 year old having fun, and furthered her dance with her brother:

It wasn't til I was about 14 that my brother he started a group, for fun again, for a dance comp in Wellington. And we just started from there. And that was 14 years old, kind of when everything was more serious . . . And so, wow what year was that? . . . 2003! And then after that the original Dziah started and heaps of groups started popping up and then the crazes went from there.

A group by the name of 'Dcypher' was Ennaolla's first official dance crew. She was in Dcypher from when she was 15 until she was 19 years old. "Basically Dcypher started out as a dance class. Then there was a competition so my brother was like 'oh, yup let's do the competition! . . . Yeah and that was my first dance crew, and that was where I learned how to lead a crew, cause I'd somehow ended up the leader". However when I asked about the

first hip hop dance style Ennaolla had learned I was surprised to find out it had been bgirling with a different crew:

I think I was about 14/15, and this was before I was in Dcypher, but I looked up to Faith City Rockers. And I went to the church Faith City, and I dreamed oh I wish I could be with them! And they took me under their wing anyway, so I got to be a part of Faith City Rockers, not a long term, but it was at least a year and a half or something.

Now her passion in hip hop dance lies in 3 different dance styles; krump, waacking and locking with a particular interest in Krump.

It's actually because of my faith. And so the way I see myself when I'm in my krump persona, it's actually how I see myself like if I was like, how do I say it? God sees me much bigger than in my little frame, you know and so that's how I see myself when I'm in that circle . . . That's why krump is probably my favourite style 'cause of that connection.

As Ennaolla had been around in the earlier days of hip hop dance in New Zealand, I asked her to explain the first hip hop crews she had seen:

Ngaru Puawai was the group that was before Jireh. And it was the same, similar members, and I don't know why, I don't know the history of the group but they were together and then it somehow turned into Jireh, which was a more overall performing arts team . . . And then after Jireh; they inspired so many people and then out popped out Dziah. And Dziah probably wouldn't have happened if Jireh wasn't around.

Ennaolla explained that she has witnessed some changes in the hip hop dance scene and has tried to offer more events to solve new issues:

I think from my perspective I'm seeing our previous issues are getting sorted in terms of regions are starting to connect with each other . . . And I think too, a lot of previous

immature rivalries have really kind of stopped. Well I hope [laughs]. But um I think the biggest issue that we're trying to [sort out], is the whole educational side of street dance. The way that we're trying to combat it is one with Street Camp and two is actually Mega Schools division. Because it forces kids to be like, wait they're judging us on this and judges are looking for foundations and what is foundations? OK we gotta do our study up, who can we learn off? . . . We don't want hip hop dance just to turn into a stage show with no understanding.

Something that she finds to be a big issue in New Zealand is misinformation on technique and history:

We're isolated, or it's not that we're isolated but we're isolated from teachers. We do lack good teachers; we do have you know a few, but not enough to be able to really push the scene here in that sense. And also I guess we are isolated from a lot of teachers who have learned from the founders or from the OG's because then that filters through. And so we don't have that access and a lot of people rely on YouTube, but not knowing that what they're watching might not be correct.

When she started the organisation Ennaolla wanted to be careful not to cause conflict with the name of it. "A lot of people have a lot of arguments over what's hip hop and that . . . we named Street Dance New Zealand for the sake of not causing conflict with people who really believe hip hop is certain things".

As the head of SDNZ Ennaolla explained that there are things that she doesn't like that have come out of her events.

I've found that most dancers or a lot of dancers only focus on nationals. Like "I wanna go to worlds, I wanna go to nationals, I wanna do regionals!", but they don't have a clue that that's only like 5% of the dance world. There's so much more to dance and they're missing out on all of those opportunities, or creating those opportunities. So it's hard for us watching the people only focus on worlds, and at nationals if they don't make it to worlds they disappear until the end of the year.

As a competition organiser Ennaolla has seen crews before and after events, I asked her if she thought that there was a big emphasis on winning as opposed to entering a competition for experience. She explained:

Yeah I do think it is. As a competition event manager you see a lot of kids crying when they don't get what they were hoping for. And also the emotional build up, it's a lot of pressure; physically it's such a strain and once emotions get in there it's a mess. Yeah I do think a lot of people, they focus on that. What I do think perhaps they don't focus on is equipping themselves before they head into the competition, mentally as well as physically. Like in terms of up-skilling and understanding the competition they're getting involved in. You know a lot of people just jump in a comp, not realising wait what does this rule mean? What does that actually look like for judges? So it's that whole, really equipping themselves before they get in. And also mentally preparing themselves. You've gotta focus on winning, you can't enter a comp and just, like, you have to focus on winning. But it's what happens after to be able to prepare yourself in case you don't [laughs].

Her own goals for her future in dance focus on Krump and choreography:

A short time goal is to be able to win Krump battles against guys. Already battled one amazing krumper, but in certain krump battles you don't get judged on who wins or not but yeah that's like a short term goal to be respected against guys. Probably a long term, to be able to train some winning teams. Yeah, so it's more like the training side. And to choreograph, to be respected as a choreographer.

4.3.8 Case Eight: Joseph Ling



As I walked up the long winding staircase leading up to City Dance from McDonalds I could already hear people in the office paying to take Joseph Ling's class. I continued to walk up the rest of the stairs to the small waiting area in between two studios. When I got there music could be heard and the partly opened door allowed a glimpse into the studio to see that Joe was already inside and going over today's lesson. I walked in followed by four other students and Joe greeted everyone as friends. Three girls stood by the piano in the corner of the room giggling and watching Joe as he went through some choreography. Class started with a reminder from Joe that this was an advanced class and that if you hadn't had previous experience you may struggle and advised those people to take a 'groove class' with him first before coming to this class. Joe took the students through an intense warm up, moving and stretching almost every part of the body. Eventually the class was filled with thirteen students, some walking in up to fifteen minutes late, but joined into the class seamlessly. The class continued and they learned a piece of choreography which Joe broke down into sections each with detailed explanations of feeling, placement and transition.

On another afternoon I caught up with Joseph on Queen St. From there we walked down to Starbucks together after he decided that might be the best location to both have coffee and talk. Once settled in to our comfortable couch seats with our coffees I began to ask Joseph about his background.

Joseph Ling aged 22, known as 'Joe', told me that he was the youngest of two brothers, though his family is Malaysian they had lived in Singapore and moved to New Zealand when he was 10 years old. Since being in New Zealand he has always lived on the "east side" of

Auckland. Joe is the only dancer in his family although they will often joke with him, he says; “oh they try and dance now [laughs]. Every time they see something of mine they’re like ‘woah yeah check it out’ tryna imitate it [laughs]”.

Joe works in a “marketing and admin role” as well as teaching dance. He explained:

I’m teaching for city dance in the city. I’ve set up with my company Sound Vision, some other classes during the week too targeting the dance community. And that company Sound Vision is just a collaboration of a few dancers that have previously been in different crews that have been active in the New Zealand dance scene, hip hop dance scene. So that’s 5 of us now. And we were kind of just working to develop I guess the dance community and build the dance community in New Zealand. So that’s pretty much our mission.

Joe started dancing when he was 16 he explains, “So in Year 12 or 6th form was when I started. Just learning from videos; and stuff that I was watching on TV and music videos.”

What initially interested him in hip hop dance was a demonstration by a friend:

First moment that intrigued me was when a friend of mine showed me the moonwalk; The backslide. After I learned that I was like far this is cool, let’s learn more! And then the side walk and the robot and started to do a bit of waving; so started through kinda more of the freestyle elements. But back then I didn’t know anything of that; it was just a bunch of cool moves to show off in front of the girls at school [laughs]

From there he explained that a dance group from a church he entered a talent quest at “saw potential” in him and a friend and asked him to join. The crew was called “O2”. He explains the transition as “confusing”; “that was the closest thing I had to learning from a studio. ‘Cause that was the first time we were introduced to actually counting out music. Yeah, because before we’d just be like “OK this move here, this move.. go!” [laughs], “oh missed it!” [laughs]”.

Before 'worlds' Joe and his crew would compete at a church based competition called CTC:

I can't remember what it stands for actually. But I remember that was like the annual event. That was like the world champs of that time, yeah. It was in Wellington and we'd road trip down to Wellington, which was fun in itself going with the crew and everything. It was just a whole performing arts competition . . . And it was kind of like areas competing with areas. So like Auckland against Wellington against South Island. So it was just a crazy event that would happen once a year and that was what you worked for, what you would work towards.

Then in 2006 O2 was given the opportunity to go to worlds in Los Angeles.

That was the year after Dziah went for the first time. And there weren't any qualifiers established in New Zealand yet. So we were really lucky 'cause one of our leaders, he just contacted the people who organised it in LA and he was just like, "hey, we want to come over is that possible?" And they asked Dziah about us and we were really good friends with them so they referred us. They were like "yeah, yeah, they're good". So it was just lucky [laughs].

So in "3 months" the crew worked hard to fundraise for the event. Joe explained:

It was really lucky too 'cause we were under a part of a very generous church. So when they heard about us being able to get the opportunity they got behind it too. So people came to our concerts, people were donating money, and yeah we had to raise 40 grand, back then I was like I never even thought of 40 grand in my life and all of a sudden we had to come up with this.

Joe explains that the competition gave him a bigger drive for dancing. "But definitely being at that competition and seeing what other people are capable of at that competition made me want to go home and practice even more".

When asked to describe the New Zealand hip hop dance community, Joe brought up the issue of disconnection:

I'd say that the dance community in New Zealand is very disconnected. Hip hop dance scene anyway. There are only a few moments in the year when dancers really come together and that's for competitions; competitions and events. And there aren't enough events that aren't competitions, so it's mostly just competitions when you get to see people from other crews.

He goes on to explain there is a disconnection between the sub-communities of different styles and a possible reason for it. Joe said:

I think it's just 'cause they haven't understood each other. They haven't understood what the other is doing I guess. So new school people don't understand the fundamentals of old school dancing. They won't really bother getting amongst it you know. Likewise with old school dancers and new school dancers. If they don't see why they're doing what they're doing then they won't get amongst it.

Joe hopes to achieve his future goals for dancing and the hip hop dance community through the company Sound Vision, YouTube is one of the tools to achieve those goals.

Yeah, so we do video projects and the main reason for those is just to get our branding out there. Get our craft out there. Just brand awareness really and to push people to see dance at a level where dancers can be considered artists themselves . . . [Sound Vision] really sat down and re-planned everything and refocused ourselves and kinda really just went over and over details about why we're together, why we exist, what we want to achieve, and we realised it's not actually to do competitions. It's not actually become famous dancers and it's really to build the scene and build the community through something we love to do.

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter reveals and discusses the emergent findings from the previous 8 case studies. The case studies revealed many different philosophies, practices and issues however there were 6 dominant themes that emerged. These were; age and career, competition and worlds, inter and intra community, YouTube, Knowledge of History, and Meanings. Within each of these themes lies the key identities, attitudes and identity markers of New Zealand hip hop dance culture. It was also found that with each key theme issues overlapped and intertwined; where one issue relates to and often causes another. The dominant hip hop dance form that was discussed was new school hip hop dance, therefore much of this discussion is in the context of that part of the community as well as the New Zealand hip hop dance community as a whole.

While I've chosen to discuss these more dominant themes it is important to note there were far more issues presented by the participants that are also worthy of discussing however were not brought up as often as the chosen discussion topics.

The use of the participants' voice, by including full and thick descriptive quotes, is important to this chapter. A key component of this research was to remain relevant and informative to the community and culture being studied; therefore the use of the participants voice aids in creating a more understandable and accessible resource for the hip hop dance community.

5.2 The Community: Inter and Intra

The New Zealand hip hop dance community was discussed as being divided in two essential ways; by style, and separate crews. The concepts of inter and intra communities are evident through the smaller communities that create the whole.

5.2.1 Inter Community: Style

The hip hop dance community is naturally divided into smaller stylized communities, where events and competitions are based in particular styles and marketed to a certain group of people. Through my own experience and the information given by participants it is evident that dancers from different hip hop dance styles in New Zealand seldom support or attend or combine events, but rather stick to a particular style. This is both discussed as a negative thing as well as a natural tendency to stick to what you're interested in.

The following are the thoughts of some of the participants on this issue. Sophie believed that there shouldn't be so much segregation between styles as they are all part of the hip hop family. She also outlined that The Company NZ tries to bridge that gap:

It shouldn't be so separate because it's from the same family of movement. I think that probably because you know how you have to do a lot of different styles within a competition piece, that that's probably helped people find out a little bit more about different styles. . . but if we are doing a show we'd often get breakers in. Because it brings in like a different element I guess. But there's not enough of it. And it's very separate.

Justin believed that there are a few hip hop dancers in New Zealand that interact with other parts of the community however there just aren't enough:

I can only think of Hopskotch that's open to that and that does it. And that attracts a variety of styles. I guess what people do, then it attracts those people. So if it's hip hop dancing, then it'll attract those who do hip hop dance. But you can kind of see some cross over's but it's within their community. . . Nah to be honest I don't think there's much of a connection.

Margaret thought along the same lines as Justin and believed that it's a natural separation due to specific tastes, she said:

I mean how involved can you really get when you're focused on one thing and that's your main love. I mean you can try. You can try and support every other style but if your hearts not in it then I don't know.

Parris had the same notion as Margaret, but goes further and explained the styles as being separated worlds:

I don't think it's like on purpose, I just think, it's just separated. You do think it's just more of a world, there's the bboy world, there's the choreography world, there's the krump world. I think of it more as [different] worlds. But the cool thing is like it's not like a rivalry. It's just a natural separation that's what I think. . I think it would be amazing if there was more unity, but then again, like everything else, there's no one showing the way.

Josh explained that he does travel between the different styles, and attempts to unite different communities:

We never get together. Straight up [laughs]. We're like one of the only crews that does like bridge the divide . . . by doing different styles. I guess I reckon that's one of the things we're sort of known for is that we try and do a lot of things. The only thing at the moment that we don't really get into, that's popular here, is Krump . . . We're active in the hip hop scene, we're active in the bboy scene as much as we can be, but we're not active in the Krump scene. Which I would like us to be.

Joe put the separation down to misunderstanding. He believed that old school and new school dancers have not understood each other, he explained:

I think it's just 'cause they haven't understood each other. They haven't understood what the other is doing I guess. So new school people don't understand the fundamentals of old school dancing. They won't really bother getting amongst it you know. Likewise with old school dancers and new school dancers. If they don't see why they're doing what they're doing then they won't get amongst it.

Like Joe, Ennaolla believed that the lack of understanding, or more specifically education, in the different styles is what causes the divide. As well as the lack of freestyle ability, she said:

I think that also comes back to the issue of not being educated in styles so people will say "oh, I'm a dancer", but what does that really mean? They move to music. And then you've got people who are really passionate and are like "oh, I'm a popper". Those people are passionate about their scene, but there's not, there's basically heaps of people that can compete in dance. But they never rock up to a freestyle session or locking session or a bboy session or anything 'cause they don't understand enough of that style. Yeah there is a big segregation and then there's like almost, what, not much of an underground scene here. So it would probably be frustrating to those who are passionate about the underground kind of dance and freestyle battles and that.

Being a dancer from one of the crews that does bridge the divide between the dance styles it has been possible for me to experience different sides of the community. I believe that in order for the dancers from different hip hop dance styles to understand each other, become a more inclusive community, and ultimately ease tensions surrounding what should be classified as hip hop dance, there needs to be more interaction between stylized communities. This means thinking of the community as a whole. This thought is echoed by Jeffrey Green (Green, as cited in Chang 2006a) as he pointed out hip hop is meant to be about community as a whole; "It was always about community. And that is definitely not a

factor in what the world of hip-hop plays in today. There's no community. There's cliques and scenes, but nobody's really looking out for nobody" (p.324). I believe there will always be a divide, because of the different practices involved in participating in the different hip hop dance forms, however, in order to understand each other, grow, appreciate, and more importantly learn from each other, this issue needs to be addressed. Goddess puts it simply "You ain't got to love everybody, but there needs to be some level of respect and acceptance" (Goddess, 2006).

5.2.2 Intra Community: Crew Culture

Within the New Zealand new school community a crew culture has developed that has had different effects on how dancers are able to interact and practice hip hop dance. One of the effects of which is isolation. Dancers rarely collaborate, socialize or mix as they do this with their own crew. In some ways the community has formed almost a (non-violent) gang like culture where spoken or unspoken rivalry exists between different crews. The participant's offered the following views on this.

Chris believed that politics is prevalent, and when that can be put aside people will be able to come together. He said:

I definitely hope that all the politics can be put aside; and I hope people can put aside their differences for them to go 'yo, this what you love to do this what I love to do, yea sweet, let's collaborate and lets push the movement together'. I think if I was to look at it right now, I think it'll still be isolated, something needs to, I think something will break, but something needs to be broken for the community to come together.

Margaret didn't feel like the community needed to change but that a collaborative

community needs to be developed in addition to what is already in place. She said, "Not

change but develop, like develop the community. Like if we could become more involved with each other's stuff. Learn how to express rather than compete. Learn how to like experiment with our bodies and move".

Joe believed that the community was very disjointed and that there is a lot of work to be done to mend that:

I'd say that the dance community in New Zealand is very disconnected. Hip hop dance scene anyway. There are only a few moments in the year when dancers really come together and that's for competitions; competitions and events. And there aren't enough events that aren't competitions, so it's mostly just competitions when you get to see people from other crews. 'Cause every other point of time in the year is when they're off with their own crew in a different areas doing their own thing; so yeah I'd say it's very disjointed. And it's not anyone's fault it's just the nature of it, not enough I guess things happening for dancers.

Josh believed that it was just a natural tendency to drift to the people who are interested in the same things to create smaller communities within the whole:

I would say that it's both. I reckon there is community feeling within the community like say new school; there are little communities. So there is like the big overall community but then there are like crews that are naturally drawn to hang out with other crews; that are I guess like them and have similar ideas and do similar styles.

Ennaolla believed that the disconnection is present but there is nothing that can be done.

She said: "There is disconnection and unfortunately I guess it's not something that can actually be dealt with. I do however believe that New Zealand's in a much healthier state than almost all countries I've talked to [laughs]".

Many issues were discussed as products of crew culture. One concept was that a

strengthened crew identity means the loss or weakening of individual identity. Margaret said:

Being in a crew you have to look like each other . . . I mean that's cool, do your comp but then have all the other times as well to balance it out. . . I haven't realized until recently that I need to start feeling it in my own body in my own style; Which I'm still figuring out, but it's at least a little more freeing.

Another effect the crew culture has had on the scene is that it is very difficult to participate or make a mark on the scene as a solo artist. As Justin is a freelance artist based in street dance and hasn't been in a crew for many years, I asked him if he felt like he was able to participate in the community. He answered: "I feel a little bit out of the community . . . I think 'cause I'm always, street dance wise, I'm always doing it solo. So there's no community, I'm not around the community. That's probably why I feel isolated; because I'm isolating myself when it comes to dancing". Parris explained her thoughts: "I think the structure of our community here has almost made it impossible to make it as an individual dancer. 'Cause where do you go? Where do you compete? How do you showcase?" Chris also offered his opinion: "No one can make it by themselves. It sucks . . . You have to be a part of a crew to make a statement on the scene, which is real stink. You can't be an individual dancer".

It is often the case that well known solo artists are well known because they have previously been in a crew, or still are in a crew. It has become very hard, I believe, because of the structure of the community catering to crew based competitions and offering very little in the way of solo opportunities. This is also heightened by the small population of New Zealand which provides very little opportunity in the entertainment industry for those

hoping to pursue more commercial careers. This often causes some of our most talented or driven dancers to look for work internationally, taking their skills with them. Sophie explained that she had to leave the country in order to see the crew culture of New Zealand:

It's hugely crew focused, and I didn't realize that until I went to Sydney. . . But here you have to be in a crew to make it, even to be noticed. And that's just because it's so competition based. And you might not be in a crew now but you have to be in a crew to get somewhere.

This issue may have an impact on how New Zealand hip hop dancers are perceived internationally, where going solo is a well developed and natural part of most underground dance communities. Ennaolla explained:

I think that's because New Zealand has . . . somehow grown into a crew based country. To a point where it's only a crew based country, like the mentality is like "you're only a dancer if you're in a crew". That's the mentality here. And then you go overseas and it's like I don't need to be in a crew, I'll just dance on my own you know, audition, do that comp with that group. . . You put any New Zealander, take them out of their crew all of a sudden they're like jelly legs and they're freaking out.

While there are certain limitations that come with nature of crew culture, there are reasons for this development. As Ennaolla went on to explain, this crew culture could also be seen as New Zealand's specialty, and that it could have derived naturally from ingrained indigenous nature. Ennaolla said:

That culture although has given us a strength because New Zealand's looked to like 'wow you're crews are amazing' you know? That I personally believe is 'cause New Zealand's culture's very whanau based. It's very collective and the whole village mentality of islanders or Marae type. It's very cultural, it's like in us; it's in our natural blood whether we're the ethnic group or not it's the culture of New Zealand. So that's come out naturally in our dance.

There are also other benefits to being in a crew. Margaret explained her opinions on being in a dance crew:

Suppose that's why there's so many of them. And I suppose Auckland being so widely spread as well. If you get people in the same area that like to do something then it's not too far to travel so they just create their own thing out west or out south, they just have their own crew out south. Or they all do something in town so it's easy to be based in the city. I think it's probably easier to be in a crew. It's cheaper to be in a crew. It's self-motivation to be in a crew I feel. Like you can ride on the leaders a lot more.

The hip hop dance community of New Zealand has largely been structured around the crew identity, and this has both its positive and negative effects on the art and skills that are develop here. Through the course of this study I have been able to reflect more on my own ideas surrounding this issue. At first I believed that what was developing in New Zealand was incorrect; that the reliance on crewmembers and crew performance was a major weakness. I still believe in some ways that it is a weakness and that the community needs to be developed in other areas, however it now feels more like a natural cultural progression and formation of a national hip hop dance identity. As Ennaolla discussed; it is possible that the nature of the crew culture that has developed in New Zealand derives from tribal or whanau culture and Maori and Pacific Island identity. As said by Moeke-Pickering (1996) identity formation and maintenance are influenced by one's ethnicity, politics, location and environment. Traditional whanau culture provides a supportive and learning environment where its members share a sense of collective affiliation, obligatory roles, responsibilities and the importance of uniting people (Moeke-Pickering, 1996). Although the hip hop dance community in New Zealand is considerably more diverse today its initial beginnings were

dominated by Maori and Pacific Island participants (Capital Times, 2011). Therefore it is only natural that the culture of the hip hop dance community in New Zealand would be a progression or extension of the environmental and ethnic influences; such as whanau culture.

Not only may this crew culture be a natural extension of New Zealand national culture but also the crew nature that is associated with early hip hop culture. Where hip hop crews evolved in the replacement of gangs. “Instead of gangs, they started turning into little area crews . . . In every area there would be a DJ or breakdance crew “(Chang, 2007a, p. 80). DJ Kool Herc used to stay clear of naming his group a crew because of the negative connotations to gangs. He explained “That name ‘crew’ took the place of a gang. So it was never Herculord crew. . . it was billed with the sound system we called the Herculoids” (Herc, as cited in Chang, 2007a, p.81).

5.3 YouTube

YouTube is an information sharing website where users are able to upload their video footage on the site and make it available to anyone on the internet. It has proven to be a huge phenomenon since its creation in 2005 (YouTube, 2012). It has been a tool of growing popularity amongst the global hip hop dance community ever since. It has had many influences on the New Zealand hip hop dance community. This chapter will discuss how YouTube and dance on screen is used within the community and the effects it has had.

5.3.1 Before YouTube

Gaining inspiration from dance on screen is not new for hip hop dance. Movies and video clips are partly to blame for the mass globalization of the culture (Stevens, 2006) and have become dominant pedagogical resources ever since. Many of the participants discussed being inspired and drawn to hip hop dance by movies, video clips and television.

For Chris it was popular movies and music videos that introduced him to hip hop dance:

Back then it was Usher and JT started coming out a bit. I just thought “man that would be real cool to do” and then all of a sudden me and my friend of mine Kamy Mam, because we lived on the same road, we just self-taught ourselves through video clips. . . We just jammed in our rooms. . . Then I think not so long after that ‘You got served’ came out and that’s when it all became big, and it was just everywhere!

Josh explains that dance on screen added fuel to the fire of what could have been just another phase for him:

For like say when I started and my cousin taught me that move, and if I didn’t have anything to fuel with that after, that’s just all it is. It’s just like oh I learned a cool move, it’s a party trick. But I did that and then I was talking about how I saw the Run DMC video, and that fuelled it. It needs to happen in different ways you know?

Joe also continued his dance education through videos. He said: “So in Year 12 or 6th form was when I started. Just learning from videos and stuff that I was watching on TV and music videos”. Without classes Parris resorted to videos of popular female artists for education:

I think there wasn’t really that many classes around, of course when I was really young, like the scene was nothing like what it’s like right now. So I would just copy like video clip dances. Like Missy Elliot, Beyonce and Destiny’s child, I’d just copy that. That was kind of like my learning. So I’d just record it and just copy it when I was young.

Sophie, who has started dancing more recently, explained that her crew leader has told her about previous inspirations to the New Zealand hip hop community:

‘Cause we’re so far away from America, I feel like we get a lot of trends. Probably before like now we know people travel a lot more for dancing and stuff. I reckon it probably started like before I was even dancing like Ben and stuff always talk a lot about Phillip Geniza and stuff and how they used to like watch him and that’s how they got inspired.

Margaret expanded on what has influenced New Zealand hip hop dance in the past:

I never used to like looking at YouTube until recently. ‘Cause it’s like when that DVD went around of Formality. When there was no YouTube in 2006 . . . and everyone was like running around with that and doing things like Formality! . . . And then obviously YouTube came about and then well here we go, lots of other people for us to try and be like [laughs].

It is interesting to note that before YouTube there were definite outside influences on the scene. Movies such as ‘You Got Served’ (2004) and DVD’s of American dance crew’s were big influences on the community. This also introduces a notion that dance on screen is a large part of hip hop dance pedagogy as often these videos are noted as the first inspiration to learn the dance styles, where dancers would emulate and learn the movements they saw.

5.3.2 YouTube: Hip Hop Dance Up and Downloaded

Before YouTube was created there were other ways of accessing videos on the internet as

Josh explained:

I didn’t get involved in the scene for about two years. ‘Cause I started by myself, and I was learning by myself just teaching myself. . . this was like early 2000’s, the internet back then was when dial up was coming out I think. Or maybe when dial up was coming out for me and

there was no YouTube . . . there were a few websites out there that had a little bit of stuff like 'Style2Ouf' . . . and 'Bboyworld'. And I sort of just learned off little clips that I could download from them and because I had dial up it was really hard to get the files fast. So I had to leave my computer on like all day every day for like two weeks or whatever.

As Josh mentioned these other options were slow, and uneconomical. YouTube combined with the cheaper and faster internet that is available today has unleashed free, fast and user-friendly access to unlimited information (Hilderbrand, 2007, p. 49). With this technology came a more saturated and steadily growing source of dance videos. It has quickly become a window for New Zealanders to watch the global dance community. All the participants marked YouTube as a large influence on the New Zealand community. Josh summarized: "It's definitely a big influence . . . 'cause it gives everyone access to anything whenever they want. It's accessible now, more accessible because it's easier to learn, which means more people can get into it". Ennaolla also made a reference to accessibility because of where New Zealand is situated: "Because of where we are geographically, we're far away and it's like great because it makes the world closer". Its accessibility and the instant contact to a global audience are what have made YouTube a 'go to' source for hip hop dancers.

Other information sharing sites, such as the social network 'Facebook', are used to heighten the exposure of certain videos as Sophie explained:

Especially with Facebook 'cause then everyone will post it up on their page and everyone watches it. But there's a certain group of people that everyone follows and when it's someone else everyone's like oh! You know, it kind of just takes one person to watch someone and post it and then everyone goes crazy. But yeah I think YouTube's had a huge impact on the dance scene.

YouTube has had many effects on the New Zealand hip hop dance community. One of them is that witnessing what the world is doing has pushed New Zealand dancers to raise their level. Joe explained:

I think now, especially after YouTube and everything, you can see what other countries are doing. So that makes you wanna almost raise the bar to almost be at the same level as other people if not higher too, and other countries. So I think it's gone far beyond just a national standard.

Margaret believed that it has provided an opportunity to not only learn movement, but history as well. She said: "It's an amazing tool to learn about other people's styles, and other style's, and learn the history about stuff or appreciate!"

YouTube is not only used as a means of inspiration and a tool for pedagogy, but has come to mean much more to New Zealand hip hop dancers. When discussing YouTube with Sophie she acknowledged that posting your own videos on YouTube can be seen as an important step in your career:

Even with posting your own stuff like it's seen as quite a big step like oh you're posting now? 'Cause I guess you're getting your work out there to be watched and judged by people. Where people can write anything about it, which is quite a scary thing. Yeah I think it's had an absolutely huge impact.

Joe explained that using YouTube was a tool for marketing his crew Sound Vision as a brand and advertising their craft. He said: Yeah, so we do video projects and the main reason for those is just to get our branding out there. Get our craft out there. Just brand awareness really and to push people to see dance at a level where dancers can be considered artists themselves.

Parris explained that YouTube will be a means of bridging the gap when ReQuest relocates to America, and is a platform to showcase to the world:

So what we'll do it even though we'll be in America we'll come visit and do clips with the girls here, and we'll do clips over there, and the girls here will do clips by themselves, so that there's that exposure. I say clips as in YouTube. For us it's an opportunity for the world to see us.

5.3.3 A YouTube Identity

Though YouTube has provided these tools there have also been some repercussions. One of these is the dilution of identity. The quest to stay current within the global hip hop dance community has threatened both individual and national hip hop dance identities. Margaret explained how this had happened in her own experience:

I feel like YouTube becomes what is cool and what you should be like. And that's what I feel sucks is that you start trying to be like them. And I'm saying it because I've been there and you can't help but be almost like oh I need to be like this for people to appreciate my style, like what I teach, 'cause that's what's cool.

As a witness to growing trends Parris felt that watching videos of American dancers and worlds on YouTube has started to become the only source of inspiration for the New Zealand hip hop dance community. She explained:

I think when I look at New Zealand I look at it like a sponge and it just constantly soaks up stuff. And sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad. It's good as in its constantly evolving but I think it's bad as in sometimes it loses its identity, and crews lose their identity by being sponges and following.. . I think it's a mixture I think the influences are choreographers in America, I think people like hunt them down [on YouTube] and copy them, especially guy ones. And I think the other thing is worlds, I think they're

always highly influenced by the crews that win worlds. . . Which is sad because for me I think inspiration should come from everything, from a table to a phone to electricity. That's what your inspiration should come from. Not from watch, watch, watch.

Josh believed that YouTube has threatened the national identity by creating global trends and defining what is cool:

Issues in New Zealand I would say one issue is following trends. And I don't really like it because it gives New Zealand a sense of not having a style. I'm just worried that if we copy Americans all the time, if we copy the same people we start to lose like our own sort of hip hop identity . . . that's like our opportunity to, you know, show our native art . . . Everyone wants to do something that's cool. So it's hard for you if everyone thinks something is cool. It's hard for you to do something different. And so I think that's sort of what YouTube has sort of like taken away. . . you may watch however many video clips from Japan doing a different style, to Russia doing a different style, to America doing a different style, but if it's not cool in your neighbourhood or in your local area then you're not gonna do it.

Chris explained that YouTube has created its own popularized style and he identified the specific influencers:

It's that YouTube style, everybody's copying someone else. The main people are like Sean Evaristo, Lyle Beniga, Brian Puspos, Jun Quemado all those people. I think its good that people are looking up to them but I think that it shouldn't take away from a person's creativity and what they do.

There is a resounding worry for the loss of a New Zealand identity and personal creativity, which is a repercussion of the popularization of trends on YouTube.

The fact that anyone can upload any video at any time is one of the aspects of YouTube that draws its users. However this also means that what is being posted is not necessarily true.

Even as an educational tool people need to be wary what they take as fact from YouTube videos. Ennaolla explained:

It can be a disadvantage 'cause it's made people believe they can learn everything they need to know from YouTube . . . Even, world champs, in the rules they warn to be careful on what you watch on YouTube because it may not be the right source of teaching.

There are many YouTube videos that are responsible for the miseducation of a large portion of the hip hop dance population, and this extends to New Zealand. It is too easy to watch the wrong clip and be misguided. This opinion is echoed by some of the founders of hip hop dance such as Buddha Stretch "There are so many people now that are teaching class based off of what they've done on YouTube. It's Yin and Yang 'cause some people shouldn't be on YouTube; shouldn't be teaching class" (Austin, as cited in AshaniMfukoDance, 2011).

5.4 Competition

"What would you say dominates hip hop dance practice in New Zealand?" This was a question I posed to each of the participants in some form. Every time the answer was the same: Competitions. Competition, in particular, crew based competitions were presented as the most dominant practice. The next question I often asked was "What is the most popular competition in New Zealand?" The answers came back as 'Regionals', 'Nationals' and 'Worlds'. This chapter will discuss the participant's views on competition and the effects it has had on the practice and structure of the New Zealand hip hop dance community.

First it must be acknowledged that different 'style' communities have different practices and forms of competition. This chapter will discuss the dominant issues which were those surrounding new school hip hop dance.

5.4.1 Cultivating a Competitive Community

Hip hop dance first came to New Zealand in the form of bboying and became the dominant hip hop dance form in Aotearoa. Justin explained that the dominant style of hip hop dance has now shifted to new school, and in particular competition dancers. He said:

Yeah it's definitely changed like there was a bboying wave throughout New Zealand . . . but that changed to hip hop dancers and to street dance to competition dancers . . . Just general kind of hip hop dance, the new school style. Definitely the competition style.

Ennaolla had a similar belief to Justin and went on to say that as a competition organiser she has struggled seeing this competition focussed mentality. She said:

From my perspective SDNZ runs you know the nationals and we want everyone to participate. But I've found that most dancers or a lot of dancers only focus on nationals. Like 'I wanna go to worlds, I wanna go to nationals, I wanna do regionals!', but they don't have a clue that that's only like 5% of the dance world. There's so much more to dance and they're missing out on all of those opportunities, or creating those opportunities. So it's hard for us watching the people only focus on worlds, and at nationals if they don't make it to worlds they disappear until the end of the year, and it saddens us. That's why we have Dream because it's another outlet for some dancers at least, so it's that whole narrow focussed on that you're only a dancer if you're in a crew and you go to compete.

The competitions that have become a focus of the new school community are crew-based competitions. These require dance crews to choreograph and perform a routine with a set time frame, and are judged according to set criteria. Criteria is usually based on components such as performance quality, levels of difficulty and variety of hip hop dance styles (Hip hop International, 2012). This criteria has seeped into other areas of hip hop dance practice and

has almost dominated the way hip hop dancers think about choreography in New Zealand.

Josh explained the limitations of this:

But yeah I guess the down side of it is that criteria dictates how you should dance. So the bad thing about that is that if you want to win then you have to be prepared to curtail your dance to fit whatever the criteria is. And often that might not be your true style. Like say when you go to a competition if there's a lot of people entering odds are that the competition has a time limit for sets. So you're not gonna be able to do it as long or as short as you want. You have to go within the time limit; and you might not be able to really fully express your dance or what you're all about within that time limit. Or you know, you might need more or you might wanna do less. I mean there's a whole lot of things around criteria.

For New Zealand hip hop dancers the pressure to do well at competitions, or win, is felt particularly strongly. Margaret explained that because of this attitude she missed out on the foundations of the dance form when she was training for the world hip hop dance championships. She said: "It was never about developing myself as a dancer . . . so we learned a routine and we performed it and pretty much tried to win with it. But we didn't have the understanding of like, we still weren't developed enough". Parris also explained that "it gets people into that mentality 'if I lose, I suck'. Or 'if I do this then we're not going to win so we'll have to do this'". Ennaolla has also been a witness to the strain that this attitude has caused dancers. Ennaolla suggests that the focus does need to be on winning, however better mental preparation is needed before they compete. She said:

As a competition event manager you see a lot of kids crying when they don't get what they were hoping for. And also the emotional build up, it's a lot of pressure; physically it's such a strain and once emotions get in there it's a mess . . . What I do think perhaps they don't focus on is equipping themselves before they head into the competition, mentally as well as physically. Like in terms of up skilling and understanding the competition they're getting involved in. You know a lot of people just jump in a comp, not realising wait what does this rule mean? What does that actually look like for judges? So it's that whole, really equipping themselves before they get in. And also mentally preparing themselves. You've gotta focus on winning, you can't enter a comp and just, like you have to focus on winning. But it's what happens after to be able to prepare yourself in case you don't.

Many of these competitions are also qualifiers for an international counterpart. To travel and place well in an international competition has become an important step in proving oneself as a dancer. Sophie explained: "You're not someone until you've gone to worlds or you've come first or yeah. It's hugely competitive in terms of that. So I guess it does mean that is all about winning here".

The pressure to prove oneself outside of New Zealand and attend these competitions has also placed pressure on the dancers in order to fundraise for these travels in a short space of time. Sophie explained how much she had to fundraise:

I think it was round about, we tried to fundraise half of everyone's costs so that would have been around 70 grand or 50 grand. . . It's like worlds is the biggest thing . . . but if you go every year you know what to expect, you spend so much money and you come back broke and you have to start saving for next year.

Joe also added:

We had to raise 40 grand, back then I was like I never even thought of 40 grand in my life and all of a sudden we had to come up with this. I think we had 3 months . . . But even like 40 grand just to go over and do a competition for a week. Like you can put that money to a studio or something.

Often in order to fundraise to attend international competitions, such as the world hip hop dance championships, dance crews will produce showcases. These showcases exhibit how the competitive choreographic process extends to other areas of their practice. Justin explained:

It's definitely a drive . . . I'd just like to see some good quality hip hop shows. And doing it in different creative ways. Because fundraising towards a competition, it's generally going to be a competition performance type show . . . Yeah I just really, I'm just curious to know what it looks like I'm keen to try and make something as well. That's funded through creative NZ and try and work within the community.

Parris voiced her frustration that showcases are predominantly used for fundraisers. She said: "Just ask how many showcases there are just to showcase. There's none. So it's very competition based". Josh added that it's not all bad, as it creates the opportunity to be creative. However he went on to say that due to the competitive choreographic process sometimes showcases become a product of a 'quantity over quality' philosophy:

Say for Hopskotch, we went to the world hip hop champs last year, but I felt like the end result – we might not have performed as well as we wanted to, but all the stuff that we did in the middle leading up to that created a lot of opportunities for different experiences. All the fundraising; we had to come up with showcases, and ways to interact with different crowds through the way that we dance. And we wouldn't have had that opportunity to dance to different audiences like schools and wherever if we hadn't had that opportunity to go over to a competition. . . But then a lot of crews they don't have, maybe, the thinking that we may have. So they might have a different thinking; just based on what I see from what the outcome is of the showcases I've seen. A lot of showcases the crews just end up doing similar routines to what they would do in the competition anyway. So it's not like some of the crews are really learning more about the choreography, it's just they're making more choreography.

Other than the influence on choreographic practice, crew based competitions have also impacted the way crews are structured. Parris explained how this has affected her own crew:

Doing other things in life and in dance it makes you realize there's just so much more than competitions. . . we've only had 8 because you can only compete with 8, so now that we're not only doing competitions I want to turn ReQuest into something more of a company. You know and have like 15 to 20 girls in it.

Besides the issues that have arisen from competition culture, there have also been many benefits. Such as the reputation New Zealand now holds in global competition scene. (Videofile, bboyworldasia, 2012). For example the world hip hop championships provided Parris with a platform that has been beneficial to her own career. She said: "I know we wouldn't be who we are today if we didn't compete . . . We'll keep sending crews every year to worlds, cause I think for me that just keeps giving more and more opportunities to a new group of kids every year". Josh also believed there have been benefits from these competitions, he said:

Basically the good thing is that it helps push the level 'cause I feel like the level in hip hop dance has crazily blown up because of competition here in New Zealand. . . So I feel it's made the increase in skill much faster than any other dance style, because of that battle aspect or competitive aspect. . . it's almost like ingrained, it's part of the culture.

Competition is said to be an important part of hip hop culture. As said by Hoch (2006) "Battling is a key component of hip-hop aesthetics. It signifies resistance, rebellion, mastery of skill, and competition" (p. 361). It was also said to be a key factor in the evolution of bboying (Chang, 2007a) Therefore in some ways it is a natural and a necessary component of hip hop dance culture. However what is needed in New Zealand is diversity. As Josh explained:

I think it's important for a scene to grow and to have it grow in different areas. Because then that way not only does it grow the skills that we have in the scene already but it invites people in different ways.

Parris added:

I don't think we need to move passed competitions, I think competitions are really helpful and healthy, but I think we need to expand from competitions. There's so much more than that, and everyone knows that but there's always fear. . . I think there always needs to be like a diversity or platform for how we express our dance. So I think for the dance to get better, people need to understand how to articulate the dance through different mediums. So I don't think it's good for a place to just be focussed on competition. I think people are too scared to do this or do that, you know? Once New Zealand gets over that fear and that pride of actually learning and failing and not being good at something and then getting good I think then our community will grow.

In order to create new platforms and mature the New Zealand hip hop dance community and the art it produces, there needs to be a diversification in opportunities for hip hop dance expression. Whether that be showcases, different forms of competitions, or something completely new. What happens next is up to this generation. To conclude, Joe put his thoughts quite simply on the issue. He said:

I mean if the only people you can look to are doing competitions that's what you do. . . So that's what most people know dance to be which is not our fault it's just the way it's been. It's on us now to change that if we want it to be changed.

5.5 Issues of Age and Career

Many of the participants discussed that age has presented them with different issues as dancers and that there are restrictive perceptions surrounding age that have cultivated a young hip hop dance community in New Zealand.

Ennaolla explained that the attitude towards longevity in hip hop dance. She said: "Once you're 18; you gotta go get a job and that's your real life and then you stop dancing. It's like almost the big mentality in New Zealand". Parris had similar thoughts and said: "Cause I think a lot of peoples mindsets here is that when you get to a certain stage or adults

[division] 'I just have to stop because there's nothing else.'" Sophie also acknowledged this attitude and explained:

Like everyone's saying "oh I'm getting so old . . . Yeah there's definitely a thing where you get to 20 it's like you're getting old. Where it's really like, that's the start of your career . . . I think it would be when they stop being in a crew and maybe they'd just do a class here and there. . . I think from around the age 20 to like 25 people will start to fade out."

While the idea of what age is considered old varies; it is evident that the bracket of 18 – 25 years of age is where people start to fade out of the hip hop dance community. This could be for many different reasons; such as the pressure to find work, as mentioned above. The participants offered more explanations of the possibility of why such a young culture has been cultivated in hip hop dance in New Zealand. Josh explained there is little opportunity for paid work in hip hop dance in Aotearoa:

You've sort of gotta ask yourself how serious you are, like do you still wanna do it as a hobby 'cause you like other things too . . . Yeah because dancing is really hard to be professional. So when you get older naturally you become more family orientated. You know you start a family, have kids, and I just feel like for a lot of hip hop dancers there's not a lot of incentive to stay if you wanna support your family.

Justin had similar thoughts:

Cause heaps of people love it so much but they can't sustain themselves financially or their parents are like "what do you do for a job?" kind of thing . . . I wouldn't be dancing if I wasn't paid for it. I think I'd be jumping over to youth work.

Margaret believed that there aren't enough older dancers leading the way. She said: "I think people just see their peers all the time. They don't see people older than them that are going and doing stuff. Like Justin for instance I think it would be awesome for him to be more involved with his stuff". Ennaolla explained that there is little on offer for adult hip

hop dancers. She said: “Like what is there for adult dancers? . . . Like there are certain things but I think there could possibly be more. . . I just see that yeah after 18 it’s like things slow down, where it should kind of start . . . I really think 30’s your peak”.

Time, money, peers, opportunity, lack of examples leading the way; are all viewed as issues that drive dancers away from hip hop dance as they get older. Yet age and the perceptions of age within the hip hop dance community are important for many reasons. Firstly if one addresses hip hop dance exclusively as youth culture, this leaves those who are getting older than the defined youth age bracket in a predicament: Can they still be a part of the culture they may have spent much of their life in? Many workshops, shows, and competitions are aimed exclusively at youth. Whilst this is an excellent start in growing hip hop dance culture in New Zealand it can leave a perception for those getting older that there is nothing left for them. This is heightened by attitudes from peers and parents who see hip hop dance as a hobby and when it comes to finding work; it is time to get serious.

In addition to this, Margaret explained that there is a perception that being good young dancer is aligned with being naturally talented or becoming talented fast. She said:

I think that it’s yeah obviously you get more props for being the bomb when you’ve only been dancing for a year or something. Which is understandable. But it’s like there’s nothing wrong with dancing for a long time and honing your craft! . . . I think yeah, there’s definitely a slight disrespect from the younger generations sometimes, but maybe they just don’t get it or know.

With this comes the perception that if you spend time “honing your craft” as you get older the skill set acquired this way is less valued. This is an issue that needs to be addressed

within our community in order for hip hop dance as a craft to grow and be respected amongst the wider dance community. Whilst hip hop dance is predominantly a youth culture, the art form and it's aesthetics are still able to produce high quality art.

Hip hop dance as an art form needs to be taken more seriously. On the topic of age, and older dancers still prospering, Justin offered this question; "Imagine if hip hop and contemporary's worlds were swapped over and there was funded hip hop dance and contemporary wasn't funded I think for a lot of people it would be the reverse". I would also argue that a solution to providing mature role models would be to start getting more hip hop dance funded programmes and shows and start building more opportunities for those older hip hop dancers to show there is a future in the dance form. Then the quality of work and the quantity of mature and skilled hip hop dancers are able to grow. In order to do this though our community also needs to start putting more value on the art form. We do need to keep our youth, and our competition but we can also value the craft. As Hoch (2006) said:

The reason for this is hip-hop's battle aesthetic. Battling is a key component of hip-hop aesthetics. It signifies resistance, rebellion, mastery of skill, and competition. But if hip-hop artists continue to look at hip-hop simply as a 'game', then we devalue our culture . . . If hip-hop is to have artistic longevity, it cannot remain in sport or pastime. If grassroots activists continue to disqualify, or refuse to acknowledge, the gangster rappers' 'bling', and if hip-hop industry moguls ignore, or do not support, the work that grassroots hip-hop artists and activists are doing, then both sides have already lost the battle. Hip-hop must transcend the battle, by reappropriating it. (p. 361)

5.6 History and Foundation: Is it important?

The terms history and foundation refer to the knowledge of hip hop history and foundational movement vocabulary and style. Foundation is what gives dancers the tools

needed to freestyle. This is often considered the most important ability in old school hip hop dance. Due to the growth of crew culture and crew related competition as discussed earlier, this element I have found, is often missing in New Zealand.

One of the issues that arose amongst the participants was the importance of knowledge of hip hop culture and dance, and their histories. When asking them if they thought hip hop history was important each participant agreed that it was; followed by an explanation that it was something that was greatly missed in the New Zealand hip hop dance community; why it's important; and possible reasons why we've missed out.

Each participant acknowledged that there was something missing and that it has left some sort of gap in hip hop dance education in New Zealand. Sophie discussed this as an issue that she had when she first started which is still present, she said:

I called myself a hip hop dancer for maybe two years before I started to even know what it was . . . I'm sure that a lot of people that I teach don't even know enough about it, I don't even know enough about it. You know? Yeah it's definitely lacking, like knowledge of foundations and where it comes from and stuff . . . That is a big problem because how are you ever going to succeed in something when you don't even know what it is . . . It's like building a house on a foundation.

This suggests that if dancers do not understand the history of the dance then the dance loses its meaning. Chris and Josh also had similar messages to Sophie. Chris said:

I think that some things have been missed. . . You could almost say it's like foundation. As if someone's just skipped up to level 5, without knowing level 1, 2, 3 and 4, and I think at the end of the day if someone had to be asked why they do what they do, I don't think they could answer. Cause yeah if you don't have that backing behind your dance then later bo! [laughs].

Josh explained his opinion:

I think history is really important, because you gotta know like the relevance of what you're doing . . . It's just like for me as a person, if I had no relevant thought about who I was and where I came from like who am I you know? This is like your dance like if you don't know . . . Of course it's hard to draw parallels in that sense because I mean when you're first starting it's fun. You're just doing whatever and if you're just a casual person then yeah you don't need to know history you just wanna move your body and you might just wanna do it for exercise. But when you get into it and it's becoming a part of who you are and you're representing it, and people ask you "are you a hip hop dancer?" and you're like "yeah man!" and that sort of thing then it's important to know how the dance has come around . . . It also empowers your movement I always teach history if I know it with the movement. Because then it makes you feel like 'oh man there's something behind this', like the move becomes a symbol, it means something. It's not just like oh this is this random move.

Josh introduced the notion that hip hop dance has a history behind its identity, and if one is to claim that identity then it is vital to understand where that's come from. Another issue raised by Josh is putting history into practice, as he mentioned teaching the history behind movement. Ennaolla explained this quite simply; "That's another thing that I find lacks in New Zealand in 1: understanding foundations, and 2: actually training in it". This suggests that not only is New Zealand missing out on the information, but that the community have not put this knowledge into practice.

Chris explained that to call yourself a hip hop dancer one should be well versed in history and the practice of foundation; "I think a hip hop dancer should be someone who should learn foundation in each [style]. Or not even each one but takes what they know and tries to figure out where they come from".

Another reason why it is important to learn the history is to respect those that came before, as Ennaolla explained: "I'm very careful when I say hip hop dance because I pay respect to a lot of the people who created hip hop and they have very specific views".

The knowledge of hip hop history, as well as the foundational movement of hip hop dance styles, is something that is evidently lacking in New Zealand. As someone involved in many parts of the community, I would suggest that this is mostly true for the new school hip hop dance community. Underground scenes, such as bboying, seem to hold this as one of the top priorities in order to be included in their community. However the lack of knowledge and its contradicting evident importance leads to the question; if this is so important to hip hop dance practice, then why aren't people in the community more well versed in history and foundation? The participants discussed many opinions on this.

Ennaolla professed it was down to her own ignorance at first before she learned about the importance of the history:

You know I have to admit that I was very small-minded for a very long time. It wasn't um when did I start asking people about stuff? . . . 2010 . . . But what I found was that I was able to learn so much more perspectives and I came back realising oh my gosh man I had such a wrong perspective of styles, of what history is, of teaching, of being in classes. I had a very wrong perspective. Only because I was brought up you know gotta be in a crew da da da, don't need to upskill just keep in your crew, just chorey, watch YouTube get inspired, you know so that was what I learned.

As mentioned earlier this was a similar viewpoint to Sophie where at first she didn't acknowledge a history of the dance form. Josh had also discussed earlier that when people first start it isn't a big issue for them as it's just something fun to do.

The participants also explained that this fundamental history is missing from Aotearoa because of deficient resources and examples. Margaret explained this in comparison to her travels:

Oh man we missed out on so much, I feel like I've missed out on just learning. . . That's why I love New York, because you had the originators who were telling us who were giving us what happened with them in the clubs! And they were just dancing with each other and that's how they were teaching the new moves, it was not even in a class setting, it was like with their friends and watching where the music was going and just following each other.

Chris and Parris had similar thoughts on the issue. Chris said:

There's not enough people schooled up in the hip hop elements out there for them to learn off. I think because a lot of people try to get the next best thing rather than the one who started all of this. . . There's a lot of people's stories on how it all began here in New Zealand but there's not enough as a collective to get all that information, to actually find out who did what.

Parris said:

I think that there's a lot of controversy all the time about new school/old school da da da but I think I just have a huge appreciation for all styles. . . I wish that there was founders here but we don't live in America and we don't live in Europe. . . so a lot of the time we just have to make do. . . I feel like you can't just love one thing in hip hop. I feel like if you love hip hop you gotta love it all.

Ennaolla also added:

We're isolated, or it's not that we're isolated but we're isolated from teachers. We do lack good teachers, we do have you know a few, but not enough to be able to really push the scene here in that sense. And also I guess we are isolated from a lot of teachers who have learned from the founders or from the OG's because then that filters through. And so we don't have that access and a lot of people rely on YouTube, but not knowing that what they're watching might not be correct. Or also you can't capture much from YouTube.

In my own opinion I would agree with the participants of this study, but I would also suggest that while the importance of knowledge is felt, there has not been enough action to value that importance. While New Zealand is geographically separated from the founders of hip

hop culture, we are living in the technological age, where that sort of information is becoming easier to access every day. New Zealand hip hop dancers are also travelling more to areas where founders do teach workshops. So we are running out of excuses to not know our history.

Ignorance and laziness have also had a large contribution to this issue. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, when I first started hip hop dance I was ignorant to its history.

Hip hop dance is a journey, one will never stop learning and this attitude needs to be adopted into the way we practice hip hop dance in New Zealand. Pioneers such as Buddha Stretch have said that even as founders that were there at the inceptions of the dance forms, they are still learning. He said:

How did I learn these things? I asked. I studied. I learned a whole style of dance from my daughter. I learned how to do the style it's called 'get light'. I learned all the steps from my kid. I learned how to jerk from my kid . . . There's a saying; a closed mouth doesn't get fed. Well a closed mind gets no information. (Video file, bboyworldasia, 2012)

5.7 Meanings and Messages

Hip hop dance has different meanings to different people. As most of the participants have been involved in the community for more than 4 years, and still plan to be in future, many of them have strong feelings about the culture in their different style niches. I have provided their meanings in full list form as their words best describe their connections to the dance.

For Justin hip hop dance means creativity and expression, having fun within a community:

What is hip hop to me? Oh shucks. I don't know, the music, the culture, movement, dance, bboying, street dancers. Yeah. Graffiti, DJing, People. It's also cool like just a pathway to be creative and expressive. . . So just being able to express and have fun doing it alongside other people as well. It's always just seemed like a community. Like bboying by yourself you'd soon die out. It even brings friends together and creates friendships even tight buddies man. Family. Entertainment too.

Chris believes in a hip hop lifestyle, and within that Krump has given him a means of expression:

If I have to say anything, it would be a lifestyle. . . It's changed the way that I look at life and everything that I do. [On Krump] For me personally it would be just ah, it's the first dance style that I could ever express myself with, however I felt I could do it."

Hip hop dance for Sophie means writing her story through movement:

I feel like what we do in dance is so much more than anyone else would ever feel when they do something [smiles]; and you can't put it into words. . . as a teacher and a choreographer I love it because I use it as a means to connect with people and to show, I guess it's kinda like you're constantly telling your story, learning other people's stories, and then rewriting your story in a way. . . I could go on forever with what hip hop means to me. And it's constantly changing. One day it will drive me wild, I get so frustrated sometimes 'cause I can see where I wanna be but I'm not there. I know what kind of pieces I want to create but I can't get there yet. But I guess that's what it's like for an artist.

Margaret had similar views to Sophie. She explained that hip hop dance represents struggles in a rewarding journey:

[intakes breath] Ok. Hip hop dance to me means a huge struggle. Just to be honest it means a huge struggle to me. 'Cause I love music. So when I think of hip hop, for me hip hop dance, it all comes from the music that I love. It's like I love the music and my body wants to move to the music, and then I struggle. [laughs] That's why it's a struggle. That's why I have such a love hate relationship with it. . . it's a very personal thing that I wish I could . . . That I wish I could be how I feel about it. In my head I see myself like doing these things, like entering in a bgirl comp or something [laughs] but my body just doesn't go there!

Parris was quite metaphoric in her expression of what hip hop dance means to her:

I think hip hop is, I think for me hip hop is freedom. . . I feel like it's the language that I speak, I feel like the more fluent I get in it the more I really appreciate it. . . I feel like it's so much easier to speak when I choreograph. . . I always joke about it if I go to say something and I can't really say how I feel I always joke 'cause I always have the line like 'if I could just do a dance for you right now, that would be perfect' . . . I feel like it's a magic power.

Joe on the other hand gave a short and sweet explanation: "Hip hop dance for me is the music, it's the culture, it's the feeling of the moves when you do a groove".

Josh explained that it was about identity, or an extension of the self rather than dictating who he was. He explained that hip hop dance was something from within:

I think it gives me a bit of an identity. It's not completely who I am but it's a part of me. . . Hip hop dance for me means the freedom to express yourself as corny as that sounds. But not complete freedom, like freedom within aesthetic boundaries. I mean I see hip hop I guess like, I see hip hop as being rocking; it's an old form of dance from back in the day before bboying. And the basic ethos behind rocking is; being yourself. So I see hip hop dance as just being yourself. . . Because a lot of dances that we have are based by people bringing in their own culture; so hip hop dance to me is I guess like the accumulation of that. And the summary is the feeling, it's like that vibe. Like rocking, it's just an extension of yourself; it's just being yourself. And if that's yourself then that's your hip hop dance to me.

For Ennaolla hip hop dance is an opportunity for outreach to youth and has also been the vehicle for her self-growth:

So to me I am passionate about dances that came from the streets, so you know the whole street dance, 'cause it doesn't restrict me. And for me I guess it's been the vehicle of change I've used to help others. Because my heart is youth; and to see youth taken out from their circumstances and transition to a better place, or level, or journey in their life. And because I love dance I'm using it. If dance faded out then I'd

pick something else to use with them . . . And then for myself personally it's been an empowering . . . passion. Because when I dance I feel like I can take on the world. It makes me feel bigger than I really am; in a physical way [laughs]. So it makes me feel bigger and it's given me such a confidence because I was actually an introvert when I was growing up. So the person that people see now was definitely not the person I naturally am, like an introvert. And that's really because of the dance and the leadership I've had to learn through dance.

For the participants, hip hop dance means; identity, expression, a lifestyle, creativity, telling a story, struggle, freedom, language, magic, sense of self, a means of helping others, confidence. As a hip hop dancer I can also say it represents a journey and makes the world seem a little bit smaller as it connects together an underground global community.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to capture and present the philosophies, practices and issues of hip hop dancers in New Zealand. In order to do this, the research placed value on the voices of the 8 participants and the reflections they provided on their practice. The methodology employed was successful in gaining access to this information as well as analysing and presenting the data.

However, I do believe that by having 8 participants the magnitude of information made the process more difficult. This restricted the depth of which I could explore each issue. Though, this was still rewarding due to the multiplicity of philosophies and issues that the number of participants provided. It was hoped that this study would both be a window for outsiders to look into the culture. As well as a mirror for the New Zealand hip hop dance community to reflect on its self.

This thesis does not aim to provide solutions, but has identified key issues within the New Zealand hip hop dance community. Throughout the research process there was an overall feeling that the New Zealand hip hop dance community is at a point of change. Hip hop dancers are starting to reflect more on their practices and are realising that there are key components missing in the hip hop dance community and culture in Aotearoa. It is not necessarily about what the community needs to stop doing, but where it needs to develop. It is about maturing. The key areas in need of maturing are our practices and attitudes.

Within the New Zealand hip hop dance community there is a dominant spotlight placed on youth and on competitions. Many of the practices, events and programs are designed for youth. While this is an incredible and positive thing, it can cultivate a 'move over it's our turn now' mentality. In order to allow the craft to mature, there needs to be pathways for the youth that participate in hip hop dance to progress through. And opportunities for those who have already passed youth to make a

sustainable living from, or at the very least still be able to participate in hip hop. Competitions have proven to be effective in terms of growing the community, targeting youth, and improving skill sets fast. Yet, only relying on competitions means we will only be good at competitions. It is not that we need to have fewer competitions and more showcases; it is a need for diversity, for diverse opportunities.

“Hip hop is more universally relevant and democratically resonant in this day and age than opera, ballet classical music, or traditional theatre. Only time will tell whether hip-hop becomes ‘classical’ art in the next two hundred years” (Hoch, 2006, p. 362). New Zealand hip hop dancers are respected and recognised across the globe (Video file, bboyworldasia, 2012). However there are hip hop dancers that can’t even manage to sustain a career in their field within their own country. As Kamilah Forbes said “the art is great, but when you’re not able to support yourself, it’s very difficult” (Joseph, Forbes, Bartlow & Reyes, 2006, p. 84). In order to have longevity, the art form of hip hop dance needs to be valued and taken seriously. This applies to our own attitudes within the community as well as those of outsiders. Perhaps one of the hardest things to change would be the latter. As said by Reyes (2006):

When you say ‘hip-hop’, some see it differently. There’s no legitimacy in it. No, we’re disgracing the art. They don’t really delve into it and find the beautiful stuff. They just attach a label to it, and that’s it. Wrap and send it to FedEx, and that’s it” (Reyes, as cited in Joseph, Forbes, Bartlow & Reyes, 2006, p.85).

The Aotearoa hip hop dance community needs to value and take responsibility for one’s own craft, and in doing so not be afraid to create new identities. Dancers need to take responsibility for learning their history, their foundation, and their technique and put this into practice. There is also a need for responsibility in terms of the structure of the community. Within hip hop culture there is a constant ongoing struggle between the mainstream and the authentic. As explained by Hoch (2006); “The hip-hop generation is working inside and outside ‘the system’ in the arts, politics, business,

education, and activism. These two poles point to an inner battle within hip-hop, a battle that has made it difficult to even attempt to define the aesthetics of hip-hop” (p. 361). It is this struggle with identity that partly informs the decisions of how to practice hip hop dance. Within the hip hop culture there is also a process of subconscious devaluation of our own craft. Goddess (2006) explained “Hip-hop began under the conditions of poverty and lack of resources and we are the heirs to this poverty consciousness . . . If you’re struggling, you haven’t sold out. . . Artists who move to a place of not struggling or not wanting to struggle face a crisis of identity, or, worse, they get labelled as ‘commercial’ or a sell-out” (p. 340 - 42). The quest to remain authentic weighs heavy on many hip hop dancers’ minds and often affects the connection across the different hip hop dance style communities in Aotearoa. Does taking hip hop dance into the theatre dilute its authenticity? If hip hop dance is going to survive and gain recognition hip hop artists now “need to grow up and rethink how to build a liveable, collective-minded arts movement” (Chang, 2006a, p. 294).

From engaging in this study I believe there is much more to be investigated within hip hop dance, as well as hip hop dance in New Zealand. I particularly think that our community would benefit from comprehensive research into hip hop dance history of New Zealand. I would also suggest further research into hip hop dance pedagogy and choreographic practice. Not to mention the practices and cultures belonging to different particular hip hop dance forms. I also believe that a comparative study between New Zealand and another country where hip hop dance has been culturally appropriated would provide interesting and valuable insight into existing identities within hip hop culture.

It is my hope to continue researching in this area. The process and the outcomes have been invaluable. What I have learned most of all is; you can be current, you can be authentic and you can also be ahead of your time, at the same time. As Goddess (2006) explained: “You don’t have to

create from just one place; you can create from anywhere. You can stand anywhere. You can stand inside of poverty. You can also stand inside of wealth. And you can challenge both” (p. 346). It is now time for New Zealand hip hop dancers to take that challenge.

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APPENDICES

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(Dancers, ex-dancers, teachers, choreographers, event organisers)

Project title: *'Hip Hop Dance in New Zealand: Philosophies, Practices and Issues.'*

Name of Researcher: Katherine Walker

Researcher introduction:

Katherine Walker is a Masters Student conducting research for the degree of Masters of Creative and Performing Arts (Dance Studies) at the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, The University of Auckland.

Project description and invitation:

In seeking deeper understandings of New Zealand hip hop dance processes, pedagogy and practice and how the community might develop in future, this research investigates where New Zealand hip hop dancers want to take their dance. This is done by collecting stories, insights and information from ten experienced, mature hip hop dancers living in New Zealand.

The research will primarily focus on collecting the stories of ten people involved in the New Zealand hip hop dance community, aged eighteen and over, with at least five years experience in hip hop dance. I wish to invite you to be involved in my Masters research as I believe you fit these criteria.

Please read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not to participate. If you do choose to participate, I thank you. If you decide not to participate there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and I thank you for considering my request and taking the time to read this information.

Project Procedures:

The research involves individual interviews with participants, as well as observational and photographic documentation of participants in their dance classes, rehearsals and performances. Should you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to:

- Take part in 2 x two hour interviews with the researcher (Katherine Walker). The interviews will be conducted over a two month period at a convenient and comfortable location that you may select.
- You will be available to check a full transcript of your interviews.
- Give permission to be observed and photographed during your dance classes, rehearsals or performances over a two month period for up to 4 hours.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use:

The interview/s will be audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed by the researcher. All data, tapes, photographs, transcripts and written documentation, will be securely stored in a locked cabinet of the

researcher's for a period of six years before being destroyed. You will be offered the opportunity to check your transcripts and correct and discuss any inaccuracies with the researcher. You will also be offered the opportunity to review photographs, have a copy of your interview tapes and photographs, and have a final draft of the written thesis.

Right to Withdraw from Participation:

Participants are free to withdraw their participation from the research at any time, and to withdraw any data from the research up to three months after the data has been collected.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

This research is not anonymous as it intends to collect philosophies, values and experiences in full. Your name will be used and identifiable information will be included in the research. No anonymity or confidentiality can be given to participants; however, the participant's privacy will be respected by allowing only the researcher and the supervisor (Associate Professor Ralph Buck) to have access to the data. Only the researcher will be present during the individual interviews with participants. Only the researcher will observe in your rehearsal/dance class/performance as part of this research. The data collected from interviews and observations will provide the basis of a Master's Thesis. The data may also be used in future related peer reviewed publications and articles, conference presentations and seminars.

Contact Details

Researcher:

Katherine Walker
Masters Student, Dance Studies, NICA, The University of Auckland
Email: katwalka@gmail.com
Ph: 027 425 8901

Supervisor:

Associate Professor Ralph Buck
Head of Dance Studies, NICA, The University of Auckland
r.buck@auckland.ac.nz
Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext: 82529

Head of Department

Associate Professor Ralph Buck
Head of Dance Studies, NICA, The University of Auckland
r.buck@auckland.ac.nz
Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext: 82529

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 10/11/11 FOR (3) YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER: 2011/7656

CONSENT FORM

(Dancers, ex-dancers, teachers, choreographers, event organisers)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: *Hip Hop Dance in New Zealand: Philosophies, Practices and Issues*

Name of Researcher: Katherine Walker

I have read the Participant Information Sheet; I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research.
- I understand that the research will take place between 1st October 2011 and 31st January 2012.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to three months after the data has been collected.
- I understand that the research is not anonymous and that I will be identifiable.
- I agree for my name to be used in the research and for identifiable details to be used in the final written thesis of this study, conference and seminar presentations or subsequent publications of this research.
- I agree to take part in 2 x two hour interviews.
- I agree to be observed by the researcher for up to 4 hours in dance class, rehearsal or performance.
- I agree to be audio-taped during the interviews.
- I agree to be photographed during dance class, rehearsal or performance.
- I understand that these photographs may or may not be used in the final thesis.
- I understand that the researcher will transcribe the interviews.
- I agree to be available between 1st October 2011 and 31st January 2012 to view the data for accuracy, to have the opportunity to add/change or delete any part of this data.
- I wish / do not wish to have my tapes or photographs returned to me.
- I wish / do not wish to receive the summary of findings.
- I understand that participation or non-participation in this research will bear no negative effect on the participants.
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I understand that no remuneration will be offered for participation in this research.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 10/11/11 FOR (3) YEARS, REFERENCE NUMBER: 2011/7656