

EPIK Dance Company

DANCE LOVERS FIND COMMON GROUND



By Rachel Hawkinson

On any given Sunday, a group of dancers are filling a studio with laughter and infectious energy. But as soon as the music starts and they begin to move, movement and passion take over, making witnesses realize they aren't just watching dancers--they're watching EPIK Dance Company.

EPIK Dance Company is built on a passion for music, movement and the world of performing arts. Formed in 2007, it's currently led by Artistic Directors Luis "Weezy" Eggurolo and Sarah "Saza" Dimmick. Veterans of the Arizona dance scene, the longtime friends sought out other dancers who shared their passion for the arts and whose training would add diversity to the company. Their hope was to create a group of strong, multifaceted dancers trained in disciplines ranging from contemporary to breaking. The resulting combination of technical training, raw talent and incomparable showmanship, make up a street-fusion dance company that has opened for acts such as Jay Z and Mary J. Blige. Other performances include the opening for the show, "America's Best Dance Crew" in 2008 and a halftime performance during a WNBA Phoenix Mercury game.

On Nov. 20-21, the dancers of EPIK will host their first self-presentation show titled "Common Ground" at the Herberger Stage West Theater in Phoenix. The performance will showcase the artistic spirit and creative foundation of EPIK Dance Company and its members while telling a variety of stories choreographed by the dancers themselves, and feature genres of dance including contemporary, jazz, breaking, punking, and hip hop. Those in attendance can expect to hear music by a range of artists including Usher and Fabolous. Each piece is centered on a giant playground swing, and conveys the message that no matter how different people may seem, there is always something that can bring them together--it's just a matter of taking the time to find it.

"Each individual's experiences in life may differ, but they all take place on common ground," Dimmick explains. "One common place--in this case, a simple swing--can evoke emotions, memories, and responses that can be different from person to person, but they all share that swing."

Eggurolo feels that the concept of the show is a perfect representation of EPIK Dance Company. "We all have such different backgrounds, different training, and even different looks," he says. "When you bring us all together in a performance, it's really amazing to see how that diversity can create something so beautiful and so powerful."

EPIK Dance Company is a non-profit organization that relies heavily on public donations and fundraising efforts. In addition to preparing for their upcoming show, they have been busy hosting their twice-weekly open company classes and monthly workshops. The workshops are geared more toward non-company students and are available in varying levels to accommodate age group and experience. Dimmick hopes that the success of "Common Ground" will allow EPIK to spend more time working with local schools and charities, as well as on next year's performance.

Rachel Hawkinson is a member of the Board of Directors for EPIK Dance Company.

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