

## 'Chicken Noodle Soup' May Not Be Mmm, Mmm Good

Contributed by Erin Evans - Black College Wire  
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Some say dance is a minstrel show

Ten years ago Harlem shakers were at the height of their childhood. After a cold and rainy day at school, Mom would save the day with a bowl of chicken noodle soup.

Now a little older and wiser, the kids have grown up and decided to let it rain and clear it out.

The Chicken Noodle Soup dance, a recent Internet phenomenon, was created by Harlem's DJ Webstar as a rap song with female MC, Young B.

Junior African American studies major Courtney Javois has embraced the dance with one good foot forward. While standing on a stairway at a party, she rushed to the dance floor as the song blasted over the speakers.

As she hopped down the last few stairs, to her disappointment, she injured her ankle, missing out on her new favorite dance step.

Although several dancers, as seen on YouTube and 106 and Park, enjoy the dance, there are critics that tie the Chicken Noodle Soup dance to minstrel shows.

Several blogs, including Nobody's Smiling, say "the end is near with the minstrel show of the Chicken Noodle Soup dance."

Since artistic expression is a constantly changing facet of life, new fashion trends, music styles, technological advances and dance moves alter African American culture everyday.

For several years, different regions of the nation have spawned their own signature dance moves.

Between the C-walking West, Bankhead bouncing South and Harlem shaking East, dances became staples at family reunions, weddings, clubs and parties in the 1990s.

"Dance is such a vital part of urban culture it's understandable why there are so many out there but as the times change, the significance of the dances begin to change as well," said senior advertising major Sherrine Mathews.

"Nowadays I honestly think [music] artists are coming up with moves as a joke, something funny and catchy to go along with a song and people are running with it," she said.

This century has birthed styles such as leaning and rocking in Atlanta, getting hyphy in the Bay area, krumping and juking in Chicago and Wu-Tanging in Philly.

"I just think people were running out of dances to do," freshman biology major Naima Blakes said. "I don't know if I'd consider it minstrelsy, but it does seem like an old-time dance. None of the new dance trends are anything original."

A modified version of the toe wop, which is also out of Harlem, the Chicken Noodle Soup consists of the dancer pulling his arms back and swinging out his legs.

"I never really thought about it in a bad sense," said junior finance major Ameer Sherard. "It's just a dance. I think people are looking too deep into it."

Not everyone agrees with Blakes and Sherard. Trained dancer and senior mathematics major Cherryn Wilder can see why the dance is compared to Minstrel shows.

"I've been trained in Ballet, Modern and some Hip-Hop and from what I can see there isn't a whole lot of technical aspects to the dance but I have seen people try to get creative and switch their moves up which takes some skill. It's more of a dance than leaning and rocking," Wilder said.

"The basis of the movements appear to come from the era of shucking and jiving, however I think the reason is to take what was once seen as something negative and make it positive," she said.

No matter how deep people look into the dance, one vital thing cannot be left out: a soda on the side.

{moshaloscan noodle\_dance} Erin Evans writes for The Hilltop, Howard University's student newspaper, which originally published this article. Posted Feb. 22, 2008