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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Campus hip-hop group rocks the stables



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By Alicia Balderrama

Four Elements Hip Hop Organization took over Cal Poly Pomona's University Plaza on Tuesday for its third annual hip-hop show, Rock the Stables.

The two-hour performance, which drew a crowd of about 50 people, exhibited various styles of hip-hop and rap music, including freestyle, old school, acapella and hip-hop dance. The performers were current students and

alumni who performed original songs written and produced by club members. Each performer or group of performers played between two and four songs with a live DJ.

Patrick Braddock ('15, music) explained that hip-hop is more than just rap music.

"[People] think hip-hop is a genre of music, but it's a culture, it's a lifestyle, and it encompasses all these different things like dance, fashion culture, production, the beats [and] the emceeing," said Braddock. "Technically there's nine [elements], but we go by the main four."

Braddock, who works on campus, helps out with the club as a mentor and a guide for new members. Braddock helps educate new members about the different aspects of the club and the various options available for the students to participate in.

"Anybody can rap," said Braddock. "You can rap. I can rap. Anybody I can point a finger to can rap because at the end of the day we all have a story. Some of us have been through more than others, but I don't think that takes away from the importance of anyone's story or anyone's journey."

Four Elements Hip Hop Organization was established in 2012 by two former students, OJ Custodio and Vince Beard, to "promote, produce, record and bring some of Cal Poly Pomona's most talented hip-hop artists together," according to Jesus Martinez, a third-year civil engineering student and the club's scheduler.

The club hosts one to two events each quarter and meets weekly to discuss hip-hop culture and hold workshops to help members develop and grow as artists. The club represents four main elements of hip-hop: emceeing, producing, graffiti art and b-boying, a type of breakdance.

Some of the club's other events include open mic nights, the FENDOM tour and various showcases and collaborations with other campus organizations.

Rock the Stables and the other events give participants an opportunity to hone their craft and get a taste of what it is like to work professionally in the hip-hop industry. These showcases also give them the opportunity to express themselves and demonstrate their growing abilities as artists, Martinez said.

"Hip-hop is a lot more than just music to us," said Martinez. "It is a movement and a culture growing internationally that influences a plethora of aspects of our lives. This is what drives many of our members to volunteer and perform because hip-hop has had a great impact and meaning in their life."

Tyrone Stokes is another alumni mentor to the Four Elements Hip Hop Organization. He found out about the organization in the spring of its first year, just as he was about to graduate with a degree in communication.

As a mentor, Stokes helps students develop as artists. He also runs a recording studio in Pomona called The Dope Spot that he co-founded with his hip-hop group, Dope By Design. He lets the club members work in the studio whenever they need to.

Aside from the strong alumni presence in the club and a shared passion for hip-hop, most of the members have another thing in common: they write their raps from personal experience.

"Most of [my inspiration] is my life experiences," said Stokes. "Sometimes it's storytelling about what I've seen or what I've experienced or what a friend has experienced." My motivation to keep going is understanding that my

music actually affects people, that you kind of have power by what you're saying, so that's how I'm inspired and what keeps me going."



Alicia Balderrama / The Poly Post

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