

# THE REPTILEZ



**Who are The Reptilez and why the name Reptilez?**

SPARKZ: Reptilez is a family in the dancing industry. Tshepo Mokone founded the Reptilez on 26 August 2007. We chose the name Reptilez because you will never know when a Reptile will strike and we are like that; we are unpredictable.

**What type of Hip Hop dancing do you do and why that genre?**

MINI: We practise all genres like technical dancing, flowing, locking, ticking, etc, to show our versatility.

**How many members does The Reptilez have and who are they?**

The Reptilez have ten members namely: Tshepo, Sparkz, Pops, Bee, Mini, Linda, Tisetso, Siyabonga, Mandla and our 1st lady Ntswaki.

**What influences your dancing and inspires you to dance?**

BEE: My crew plays a part because I look up to them oh... and Chris Brown (he laughs)

SPARKZ: Beats, feeling the music, Timbaland makes me dance. Shane Sparkz is the best choreographer and I look up to him.

TSHEPO: RnB music. I remember the first time I saw and heard Omarion he inspires me to this day. My crew also inspires me to pursue what I want.

POPS: Movies influence my dancing. My favourite artist is Nayo, but the crew teaches me a lot too.

MINI: Concerts, imitation, choreographer Dave Scott inspires me.

**What impact does dancing have on your life and how do you benefit from it?**

SPARKZ: Our lives have changed in a positive way.

MINI: The community does not treat us the same way as they did before. Obviously, we have people who hate and love us; we do what we are best at and haters just make us stronger!

Story and images by Kutlwano Smith

South African Hip Hop has evolved throughout the last decade. Hip Hop has many facets from rap to dancing, etc. We had the pleasure of meeting one of SA's top Hip Hop dance crews - The Reptilez.

These young, vibrant, passionate, enthusiastic entertainers grew up in Soweto and today they are one of the top dance crews in South Africa. They were recently recognised by international artist Keri Hilson when they performed and finished in the top 4 at her International Dance Competition!

Let's have a chat with them and get to know them better...

"OUR LIVES HAVE CHANGED IN A POSITIVE WAY."

### What is the South African Hip Hop scene like?

SPARKZ: South Africa's flavour is big and has a unique style though sometimes our downfall is that we have the same concepts as the U.S.A. Reptilez is different and we hold our ground!

### Why is the Reptilez affiliated to the Junior Reptilez?

BEE: we have expanded our crew because we are growing and we want the Reptilez to live forever.

SPARKZ: Many people want to be part of the Repz but it is hard to find people who meet the criteria. We affiliated to Jnr Repz because we realized that there are people who would love to be part of this family.

MINI: we want to see the way we perform through them and to be proud and leave a legacy.

POPS: There is a lot of work and sometimes things tend to be hectic and we cannot make it to events or meetings so by expanding our crew we can lobby and share the responsibilities.

### What was the first hip-hop dance competition the crew entered and how was the experience?

TSHEPO: It was the IDCC, International Dance Championship Competition late in 2007. It was nerve wracking but we were all ecstatic about it and we had a lot of fun.

### What has been the highlight for the crew so far?

TSHEPO: Being part of the Keri Hilson ultimate dance competition and being in the top four crews!

SPARKZ: When we came 2nd at the Masters of Rhythm.

BEE: Finally, yet importantly, when Club 9 was interested in us. People started to recognize the Repz!

### What obstacles have the crew faced?

SPARKZ: we do not get paid, empty promises. FUNDS... we also get tired from performing without being paid. We grow and we want to support our families. People just do not want to pay.

### How do you handle fame?

BEE: We treat everyone the same, we are not big headed (he laughs).

SPARKZ: We are not doing it for fame but for passion and we just do not entertain things that come along with fame.

MINI: If dancing did not go along with fame, we would still be dancing.

### What is your long-term goal?

We want to start Reptilez as a brand. We want to invest, grow and cater as a modeling agency, setting events for people. We come from Soweto and 'Bujwa' dancing does not get as much exposure as we do so we would love to be their helping hand.

### The Reptilez auditioned for the "Keri Hilson Ultimate dance Competition", how was the experience?

Yeah that was the best experience so far...it was one of the most difficult dance competitions we have ever entered. We enjoyed ourselves and we are proud of how far we went!

### Did you think that you would go that far, I mean you guys were in the top four crews?

SPARKZ: Honestly... I did not!

BEE: We believed in ourselves (he laughs).

### What is it that your fans do not know about you that you would like them to know?

SPARKZ: People think that we are from the suburbs and we are from SOWETO!

MINI: We dance Hip Hop, We live Hip Hop - WE ARE GHETTO WISE!

TSHEPO: We are crazy! Not mentally though! (laughing)

Reptilez are literally moving and shaking South African stages; so let's keep supporting them and WATCH THIS SPACE!

