

# STEPPING OUT

Back in the 1990s, I was a regular contributor to Vibe magazine, photographing artists such as Tupac and Biggie. In 2002, along with the hip-hop pioneer and visual artist Fab 5 Freddy, I was sent to Chicago to document its famous steppin' scene, which started in the city's black communities in the 1970s. Fab 5 Freddy was writing about it for Vibe.

The direct ancestor of Chicago steppin' is the bop; it's a kind of dance where the flyest moves and most intricate footwork are often reserved for the men. We went to the V103 Steppers Ball at the Hyatt Regency hotel, Chicago's biggest steppin' event. There was a huge crowd on the dance floor, so I set up my lights and 5x4 field-camera to the side of the grand ballroom and invited some of the couples to show me their moves there.

The whole scene was thrilling: great music and people were dressed to the nines. "To watch steppers simultaneously rise, grab partners and sail into motion when the right song comes on is like seeing people walk on water," Fab 5 Freddy wrote in his piece. "A dreamlike, transcendental, rhythmic elegance prevails, and the cool stepper's attitude overtakes the room like the fall of night."

*Dana Lixenberg is a photographer and film-maker based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands*



V103 STEPPERS BALL AT THE HYATT REGENCY HOTEL, CHICAGO 2002