

Martial art kicks to music

Brazilian Capoeiristas place emphasis on music and dance

Chris Matthews
for the Index

The Capoeira (cap-uh-WAY-uh) Club celebrates Brazilian culture with a unique martial art.

At the Student Recreation Center, men and women of all ages and levels of experience can participate in Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art that combines music and dance with self-defense and acrobatics.

Junior Marshall Edwards, head officer of the Capoeira Club, said he has practiced Capoeira for two years and is a member of Axé Capoeira, a professional Capoeira group in Kansas City. He said Capoeira is a distinct traditional martial art with an emphasis on music.

"It's really its own thing," he said. "Music is a huge part of Capoeira. Music tells you what game's being played, how fast the game's being played, whether it's aggressive or slow and playful or ritualistic."

Edwards said Capoeira is performed by two capoeiristas surrounded by other capoeiristas in a circle called a roda. He said the two performers challenge each other playfully and aggressively while surrounding members clap, chant and sing along with the flow of the music and action.

Edwards said the performance is more of a dialogue between the two capoeiristas than a physical fight. He said when one capoeirista challenges the other with a kick, for example, the defending capoeirista will dodge the attack and then try to catch the other off guard.

"There's a lot that has to do with mental awareness ... but it's not quite the same as Asian martial arts," he said. "A lot of Asian martial arts are based on honor. In Capoeira, what is

prized is trickery. It's sort of like chess where you're trying to anticipate what they're going to do three moves ahead."

Tom Capuano, professor of foreign language, teaches Spanish and Portuguese and is the faculty adviser of the Capoeira Club. He said he worked with Edwards last summer when Edwards was researching Brazilian history and Capoeira.

Capuano said he received a Jepson grant to improve instruction and lived in Brazil from 1995 to 1996. He said he stayed in Recife, Brazil and witnessed Capoeira in person, which he said has grown into an international practice since his initial trip to Brazil in the mid-1970s.

"In the '70s, I lived there for three years, and I don't ever remember seeing Capoeira when I was there," he said. "In '95 and '96 when I was back, right down the street from where I was staying, there was a Capoeira group."

"I didn't feel self-conscious or uncomfortable just jumping right in."

Ryan Heggs
Senior

Capuano said people of all ethnicities in Brazil and around the world practice Capoeira. Senior Jason Douglas said he helps Edwards instruct the Capoeira Club on campus and is a member of Grupo Forca Rara, a Capoeira group in Kansas City. He said that Capoeira is physi-

cal and exciting. "When all the instruments are playing and the roda — the people in the circle — are clapping all together, it creates this atmosphere of energy," he said. "Basically, it gets you really hyped-up."

Douglas, who plays football for Truman, said performing Capoeira has practical physical benefits. "It's incredible for flexibility, stabilizing muscles, balance, agility," he said. "Basically, you're constantly moving the entire time that you're playing. It's a complete total-body workout. It will definitely get you in shape."

Senior Tom Ekuni said he has been doing Capoeira for about six months at Truman, but he originally practiced it in Spain. He said the Brazilian music is a defining characteristic of the martial art.

"Capoeira has flow, it's more of a sequence of many different moves," he said. "Of course, you can have [sequences] with many different martial arts, [but] since Capoeira goes with the music, it flows naturally."

Ekuni said he has been involved in the Asian martial arts judo, karate and tae kwon do, and Capoeira is different from most Asian martial arts. "[Karate] is more rigid, because karate is supposed to be [that] it takes only one hit, one punch [or] one kick to finish a fight," he said. "[Capoeira] is more acrobatic. If you see more advanced capoeiristas, they are amazing. They are pretty much half the time in the air."

Senior Ryan Heggs said he saw the Capoeira club in the Student Recreation Center, and the action caught his attention. "I do a little bit of break dancing back home, and I was watching what they were doing, [and] the rhythm's different, but fundamentally there's a lot of the same movements," he said. "Actually I had heard that a lot of what we call break dancing now was derived from some Brazilian fight dance. I didn't know it was Capoeira."

Heggs said he began doing Ca-

peira about a month ago and continues to attend meetings because of the dynamics of the group.

"I felt that is was a real cool atmosphere," he said. "I didn't

feel self-conscious or uncomfortable just jumping right in. They were really cool about teaching me right away." The Capoeira Club meets

from 7:45 to 9 a.m. Mondays, 9 to 10:30 p.m. Wednesdays and 9:30 to 10:55 p.m. Thursdays in the Aerobics Room at the Rec Center.



Photo Illustration by Chris Waller
Junior Marshall Edwards, head officer for Truman's Capoeira Club, illustrates the Brazilian martial art. He has been practicing Capoeira for two years.

New ROTC students overcome challenges, work on leadership

David Hatfield
for the Index

Some University freshmen are being all they can be.

The Army Reserve Officer Training Corps program offers contracted students scholarship money while training to be an officer in the Army. Seven freshmen have signed up for the program this year.

Maj. James Hirner, the scholarship and enrollment officer at Truman, said a contracted student has an eight-year commitment after school. A cadet can go on four years of active duty and four years on the Individual Ready Reserve. He said the other option is to go six years in the Guard Reserve Unit and two years on Individual Ready Reserve.

Upon graduation, an ROTC cadet earns the rank of Second Lieutenant and a guaranteed job in the Army.

Freshman Kyle Martin, like some other freshmen enrolled in the ROTC program, plans to make a career in the military after he graduates, hopefully in military intelligence. Martin made his decision after spending a year in the Army Reserve.

"I will probably be career military," Martin said. "It gives me a lot of advancement options."

He said he hopes being involved in military intelligence will open doors to opportunities outside the Army.

"That will lead me later in life to work for one of any kind of federal agency, like CIA or FBI," Martin said.

Martin said he was offered an ROTC scholarship at another school but chose Truman because of its class sizes. He said the small class sizes are reflected in the ROTC program as well.

"I know five or six superior officers almost personally and I'm just a freshman," Martin said. "You can go to bigger D-I

schools and ask them, 'Do you know your superior officers?' and they'll say, 'No, I haven't talked to them.'"

Martin said issues like the war in Iraq have not deterred him from continuing to participate in the ROTC program.

"Everybody asks me if I'm scared to go over there," he said. "No, that's my job. That's what I'm supposed to do."

Major James Hirner said he is thrilled about the potential in the ROTC freshman class.

"We're excited about the students we brought in," Hirner said. "We have a good mix of scholars, athletes and leaders."

Hirner said it is important to get athletes and leaders because all of his Cadets are scholars.

"We're looking for well-rounded students," he said.

Truman's ROTC Instructor Sergeant David Beach said he was pleased with the way Truman's first and second teams performed at the Ranger Challenge in Ft. Leonard Wood, Kan., on Oct. 14, 15 and 16.

Beach said Truman's first team placed second behind the University of Illinois-Champaign, but out-performed many Div. I schools. Truman's second team placed eighth.

"I'm really happy with second," Beach said. "We always want first, but there's not a lot we could have done better."

Martin is not the only freshman who is planning to start a career in the Army after completing school.

Freshman Jake Carlson said he planned to enlist in the Army after high school, but his mother persuaded him to get an education first.

"I figured if I was going to make a career, I might as well have my education paid for," Carlson said.

Cadets earn a military science minor for completing the program, and most



Nick Corich/Index
Freshman ROTC member Jake Carlson works out in the Student Recreation Center on Tuesday morning.

Truman Military History

Alumnus General John J. Pershing graduated in 1880. He was a four-star general, commanded the American Expeditionary Forces in France during World War I and was one of only two generals given the title of General of the Armies.

other military science courses fit into a student's schedule as an elective, according to Truman's ROTC Web site. ROTC courses do not interfere with other college courses.

In addition to receiving an education, the Cadets must put themselves through a daily physical training regimen.

Referring to practicing football twice a day in high school, Carlson said, "The closest thing I've ever done would be like football two-a-days, and this is like two-a-days every day."

Carlson said even though his favorite part is the exercise, he knows he is learn-

ing other skills he will be able to use later in his career.

"I would like to be an infantryman, but with my computer background and major, I will probably be behind a computer doing something," he said.

Freshman Josh Tomlinson said that so far he does not think the program has been too difficult except for the training. Tomlinson competed for Truman's first team at the Ranger Challenge. He said he had to do special training to prepare for specific events.

"It was really time consuming and really hard," he said. "I had to push

myself, but I liked it a lot."

Tomlinson said he plans to start his career in the Army when he graduates.

"I plan to do the same thing as [Martin]," Tomlinson said. "I've talked to him about it."

Tomlinson said he will continue to participate in all the competitions and hopes to gain more leadership responsibility before he graduates.

He said the reason he came to Truman was because of the instructors.

"They are pretty laid back right now," he said. "They're pushing us further than you think you can go."