

BRIDE & GROOM ARE READY TO RHUMBA IN 'RECEPTION'

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CLIPS OF WEDDING couples shaking it in sync to Sir Mix-a-Lot's "Baby Got Back" and Michael Jackson's "Thriller" are a familiar sight, but now TLC has created a whole show around the phenomenon of the choreographed wedding dance. It's called "Rock the Reception."

The show, which starts July 15 at 8:30 p.m., stars choreographers Tabitha and Napoleon D'Umo, who have been married for 10 years and are appearing together on Fox's "So You Think You Can Dance" and MTV's "America's Best Dance Crew."

The duo meets betrothed couples just before their wedding day and puts together a fast-paced routine for them to perform at the reception and surprise their guests.

"The whole concept is fun, it's hilarious and it's heart-warming," Tabitha D'Umo told the Daily News. "I think it's something these couples will look back on and say, 'I can't believe we actually did that.'"

That's just what New York couple John Eddey and Rachel Epstein are hoping for. The pair intended to pull off a dance by themselves, but a fast-approaching date stalled their efforts until Epstein noticed "Reception's" casting call. They submitted a tape and Tabitha was on her way to the city.

"She came to our apartment, and one of the first things she did was try to get us to dance for her in our living room," said Eddey. "Rachel had been pretty frightened of that moment, but Tabitha was able to get her to jump up on the couch and do a little dance and some air guitar. I think she was impressed."

Before their Saturday wedding, the couple endured three five-hour rehearsals with D'Umo. Eight members of their wedding party also were included in their performance of Katrina and the Waves' "Walking on Sunshine."

"We chose that song because we wanted something that was upbeat, but also something that everyone would be able to sing along to," said Epstein.

"We had a little bit of an older crowd, so if we picked a Beyoncé song, they'd be like, 'Why are you booty-shaking?'"

The D'Umos, who are used to working with professional dancers, say people who have never taken a jazz or tap lesson life are a test of patience, but they're willing to put in the time and effort to make the couple's day special.

"To me, what it shows is that the couples are not selfish about their wedding," said Napoleon. "They want it to be about their guests and not just themselves."

Warm, fuzzy feelings and memories to last a lifetime aside, at least now Epstein can incorporate some new moves into her former arsenal of one.

"My favorite dance move, which is my only dance move, is the slippery fish," she said. "It's like you're holding a big, wet fish and you're trying to catch it, so you keep moving your hands and moving them toward you because it's like the fish is slipping out of your hands.

"You can only get away with that move for about three seconds before it becomes old, but I have to do it all night."