

Hip-Hop Theater

What it is...

"Hip-hop Theater is... theater that uses at least one of the four elements of hip-hop culture MC-ing/rapping
 DJ-ing/turndabing
 Breaking/Dancing
 Graffiti/Tagging to tell a story"

-Plays from the Boom-Box Galaxy

"Any production that captures the energy and feeling and drive of this hip-hop generation, its issues and concerns, its larger cultural aesthetic, is hip-hop theater."

-Holly Bass, Writer/Performer

"Hip-hop theater must fit into the realm of theatrical performance, and it must be by, about and for the hip-hop generation, participants in hip-hop culture, or both."

-Danny Hoch, Playwright/Actor

"For something to be truly a hip-hop theater piece it has to contain certain elements of schizophrenia and rebellion, creativity and destruction"

-Robert Alexander, American Theatre

Elements of Hip-hop Theater:

The Griot:

The story-teller. The Narrator. The Emcee.

Sometimes one character. Sometimes a group. Sometimes the entire ensemble.

The Ritual:

A celebration of culture and origins. A connection of individuals with their communities – performers with the audience. An integration of sound and body and text. A transcendence beyond the immediate psycho/emotional reality.

The Re-mix Aesthetic:

A mix of reality and the myth. Of past and present (and future). Time-frames permeable and historical truth is maybe not. The past can be “re-visioned.”

Mix-Tape Structure:

Stories can be non-logical. Following an emotional rather than a narrative line. The frame can hold a variety of styles. A mash-up.

The Beat

Governs everything.

It is the rhythm that binds the rhyme of the spoken word rap.

It is the logic of the physical language of the dance.

The beat of drums is the heart beat of the African diaspora.