

BAM 2019 Winter/Spring Season

In honor of National Poetry Month, BAM presents its 15th annual celebration of spoken word and hip-hop—*Word. Sound. Power. 2019*—in two nights of electrifying performances focusing this year on Sankofa, Apr 5 & 6

Hosted by acclaimed hip-hop artist Baba Israel with groundbreaking performances by poets Mumu Fresh, La Bruja, Timothy DuWhite, and Gabriel Ramirez; dancers BRAT and Rocka Jamez; musician YAKO 440; and sets by DJ Reborn

Word. Sound. Power. 2019

BAM Fisher (Fishman Space, 321 Ashland Pl)

Fri, Apr 5 & Sat, Apr 6 at 7:30pm

Tickets: \$20

Ages 14+

Brooklyn, NY/ March 8, 2019—In honor of National Poetry Month, BAM presents its 15th annual celebration of spoken word poetry and hip-hop with *Word. Sound. Power. 2019*, on Fri, Apr 5 and Sat, Apr 6. Acclaimed hip-hop artist **Baba Israel** hosts and directs a stunning line-up of groundbreaking poets, musicians, and dancers who demonstrate the vitality of hip-hop and spoken word. Featured performers include poets **Mumu Fresh, La Bruja, Timothy DuWhite**, and **Gabriel Ramirez**; dancers **BRAT** and **Rocka Jamez**; and musician **YAKO 440** and **DJ Reborn**.

This year's showcase features performances inspired by Sankofa, from the Akan-Twi language spoken in Ghana, West Africa, meaning "look to the past to inform the future." The artists will explore stories of the African diaspora and issues of race, identity, and cultural celebration using the transformative power of hip-hop and spoken word poetry. Joining the artists will be six student poets from Brooklyn public schools, including Expeditionary Learning, Teachers Preparatory High School, Performing Arts and Technology High School, Cultural Academy for the Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn School for Music and Theater, and Brooklyn Preparatory High School. The student poets all participated in BAM's Brooklyn Reads in-school residency program which is designed to build students' literacy through creative writing, poetry analysis, and individual performance.

Also in honor of National Poetry Month, BAMkids will present additional music and poetry programs that explore the range and spectrum of spoken word and hip-hop as it speaks to and with a younger audience. The daytime, family-friendly concert *Get Up, Stand Up! 2019* (Sat, Apr 13) returns with the high-energy, world music band **Brown Rice Family** alongside DJs, student poets, and host **Mikal Amin**. Preceding the daytime concert are two family

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workshops. **Word. Sound. Movement. Workshop** (Apr 13 at 10:30am) will introduce kids ages 8—11 to music and dance styles across the African diaspora and the **Get Up Family Workshop** (Apr 13 at 1pm) will explore the sounds of world-roots music through the basics of jazz, Afro-beat, reggae, rock, Latin, hip-hop, and funk.

BAMkids April 2019 programming

Word. Sound. Movement. Workshop

BAM Fisher (Hillman Studio, 321 Ashland Pl)

Apr 13 at 10:30am

Tickets: \$15

Ages 8+

Kids are invited to explore the journey of African drumming and dance and its influence on hip-hop culture with BAM teaching artist Jashua Sa-Ra and Brown Rice Family vocalist/percussionist Okai.

Get Up! Family Workshop

BAM Fisher (Hillman Studio, 321 Ashland Pl)

Apr 13 at 1pm

Tickets: \$5

Ages 8—11

This groovy music workshop, led by master instructor Jashua Sa-Ra, is fun and interactive and will teach kids the basics of jazz, Afro-beat, reggae, rock, Latin rhythms, hip-hop, and funk.

Get Up, Stand Up! 2019

BAM Fisher (Fishman Space, 321 Ashland Pl)

Apr 13 at 2pm

Tickets: \$10

Ages 8+

Voices will rise in this family-friendly concert celebrating the power of spoken word poetry and the infectious spirit of hip-hop. Featuring the high-energy, eight-member band Brown Rice Family and Brooklyn-based MC Mikal Amin, alongside local performers, DJs, and student poets.

To purchase tickets call 718.636.4100 or visit bam.org/literary/2019/word-sound-power

For press information, contact Cynthia Tate at ctate@BAM.org or 718.724.8022.

About the Artists

A practicing Muslim, born in Baltimore and raised in DC, R&B singer Maimouna Youssef aka “**Mumu Fresh**” is experiencing an explosion of attention thanks to an [NPR Tiny Desk concert](#) that has so far garnered over 560k views and counting. Since receiving a Grammy nomination for her vocal contribution to the hit song “Don’t Feel Right” by The Roots, the singer, emcee, songwriter, activist, mentor, and workshop facilitator has been making waves in the international indie music scene as a solo and accompanying artist. Mumu Fresh has shared stages with music giants such as Sting, Nas, Common, Erykah Badu, Lauryn Hill, Ed Sheeran, Queen Latifah, Bobby McFerrin, Jill Scott, D’Angelo, Aloe Blacc, Bruno Mars, Fred Yonnet, Dave Chappelle, Yasiin Bey, Angélique Kidjo, Lalah

Hathaway, Femi Kuti, and more. She has traveled the world as a supporting vocalist for legends such as Congolese vocal acapella group Zap Mama and Grammy Award-winning hip-hop/neo soul band The Roots.

Caridad de la Luz, aka "**La Bruja**," is a performing artist who has explored the arts of poetry, writing, music, and acting. La Bruja has long been regarded as one of the leading American spoken word poets. With the release of albums such as *Brujalicious* and her off-Broadway musical *Boogie Rican Blvd* she joins the ranks of artists such as Mos Def who infuse acting and music with the power of spoken word poetry. Since her auspicious debut at the famed Nuyorican Poets Cafe in 1996, La Bruja has appeared on HBO's *Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam* and performed internationally at countless respected venues including Joe's Pub, The Nuyorican Cafe in Puerto Rico, SOBs, the American Museum of Natural History, El Museo del Barrio, and the Bronx Museum of Art. Her most famous poem, "Nuyorico," was featured in a Levi's print ad. Her acting credits span television, theater, and film, including her major motion picture debut in Spike Lee's *Bamboozled* (2000), and her scene stealing performance in the 2004 Sundance winning feature *Down to the Bone*. As a recording artist, La Bruja has worked with Fat Joe, Vivian Green, Jadakiss, Don Dinero, the Jungle Brothers, Black Ice, B-Real, Tony Touch, Afrikaa Bambaataa, Chingo Bling, Hurricane G, Boy Wonder, and the X-ecutioners. A dedicated artist-activist, she frequently performs at schools, universities, hospitals, and community centers around the country. She's the creator of the "How Can I Change the World?" writing workshop for the East Harlem Tutorial Program.

Timothy DuWhite is writer, poet, playwright, and performance artist. Much of his work is about being Black, queer, HIV-positive and having to either navigate or evade varying state apparatuses to remain alive. DuWhite's work has been featured at the United Nations/UNICEF, Apollo Theater, Nuyorican Poets Cafe, La MaMa ETC, and Dixon Place. He has made appearances and keynote speeches at San Diego State University, Columbia University, Oregon State University, and Columbia College Chicago.

Gabriel Ramirez is a queer Afro-Latinx poet, activist, and teaching artist. He is an alumnus and youth mentor at Urban Word NYC and has received fellowships from the Conversation Literary Arts Festival, Palm Beach Poetry Festival, the Watering Hole, and Callaloo. Ramirez has performed at the New Amsterdam Theatre, United Nations, Lincoln Center, Apollo Theater, and other venues around the world. He has been featured in *Huffington Post*, *VIBE Magazine*, *Blavity*, *Upworthy*, *The Flama*, and *Remezcla*. Ramirez's work has been featured in multiple publications, including *The Volta*, *Winter Tangerine*, *Blueshift Journal*, *Wusgood*, *Drunk in a Midnight Choir*, *VINYL*, *African Voices*, *¡MANTECA!: an Anthology of Afro-Latino Poetry* (2017), and *Bettering American Poetry Anthology* (2017). His most recent work has been anthologized in *What Saves Us: Poems of Empathy and Outrage in the Age of Trump*.

BRAT is a professional choreographer/dancer with Grenadian Nevisian roots living in New York City. Traveling to the West Indies and back again, she developed a love for dance at an early age. BRAT attended the Harlem School of the Arts, Dance Theater of Harlem's Community Program, and Columbia College in Chicago, all of which helped her evolve into a professional dancer. Witnessing performances by such companies as Urban Bush Women and Quasar profoundly changed her perception on using movement from one's cultural and technical background to share a story. As a choreographer, BRAT added color to her movement pallet by studying different dance techniques, including bhyrata natyam, contact improvisation, capoeira, burlesque, aerial dance, and breakbone. BRAT is the winner of the Midwest Dancehall Queen Competition (2009) which led to her competing in the International Dancehall Queen Competition. Since then she has performed at Coachella, Hot

97's *On Da Reggae and Soca Tip*, and the US Open. She also had a career changing experience performing with Rihanna for the *MTV Video Music Awards* where she showcased her mélange of styles.

Born and raised in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, **Rocka Jamez** is a professional dancer with experience in hip-hop, krump, contemporary, modern, ballet, and freestyle. Accomplishments include competitions at the Apollo Theater, collaborations during Fashion Week, and working with Madonna, Wyclef Jean, Mikky Ekko, Mr. Vegas, Fatman Scoop, Sean Paul, and ASAP Ferg. His dance group, NUU Knynez, made its contemporary dance debut in *Dapline*, a piece by interdisciplinary artists André Zachery and Lamont Hamilton, which was included in *The New York Times* list of "Best Dance of 2015."

YAKO 440 is a musician, beat maker, graffiti writer, and graphic designer. He attended Berklee College of Music, and his musical skill set includes human beatbox, bass, guitar, keys, turntables, and drums. YAKO 440 has toured and created original music for acclaimed hip-hop artist Baba Israel's shows *Boombap Meditations* and *The Spinning Wheel Keeps Turning*. He performed and composed a beatbox score for the play *How to Break* by Aaron Jafferis, and traveled with the improvisational hip-hop theater troupe Playback NYC. YAKO 440 has released several joint albums with Baba Israel, including *Force of Life* (2003), *Beatbox Dub Poetics* (2006), and *Highest Degree EP* (2012). He has also produced for many artists in New York City's music scene. YAKO 440 is a scholar and teaching artist with an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College and has experience leading music and visual art workshops with all age groups.

DJ Reborn is a Brooklyn-based DJ who has been moving audiences for more than a decade with her mellifluous blend of soul, hip-hop, reggae, house, Latin, electronic, and Afrobeat. She has spun at shows by artists including The Roots, Common, Talib Kweli, John Legend, and India.Arie, and at museums including the Whitney, Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum, and Brooklyn Museum. DJ Reborn has also spun exclusive events for Maxwell, Metallica, and Lauryn Hill, as well as for visual artists Kara Walker and Wangechi Mutu. She has appeared on BET's *Rap City* and served as the 2004—05 international tour DJ for Russell Simmons' *Def Poetry Jam*. She was musical director and DJ for actor/playwright Will Power's off-Broadway hit *Flow*. As a youth mentor and arts educator with Urban Word NYC, DJ Reborn created a workshop for teenage girls that explores the art of deejaying, creative writing, and critical analysis of women's images in media culture.

Baba Israel was raised in New York and has toured across the US, Europe, South America, Australia, and Asia, performing with such artists as Outkast, The Roots, Ron Carter, and Afrika Bambaataa. He began his career as an arts educator in Australia and has gone on to be a leading educator and consultant working with organizations such as Urban Word, BAM, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He worked as a cultural ambassador with the State Department and served as artistic director and CEO of Contact Theatre in Manchester, England from 2009—12. Israel is the co-founder and artistic director of Playback NYC Theatre Company, which brings theater to under-represented communities. He has also served as a lead teaching artist for the Brooklyn Reads education program at BAM. His debut solo show *Boom Bap Meditations* was supported by the Ford Foundation and the Hip-Hop Theater Festival. Israel is a core member of hip-hop/soul project Soul Inscribed and has an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College.

The Brown Rice Family creates organic world-roots music that stems from jazz, Afro-beat, reggae, rock, Latin rhythms, hip-hop, and funk. Based in Brooklyn, the band features eight members from

around the world—Japan, Jamaica, Haiti, Nigeria, South Africa, and the US. The members' diverse national backgrounds set the stage for their unique coexistence and musical creativity.

Credits

Leadership support for literacy programs provided by The Emily Davie & Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation

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General Information

BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, BAM Rose Cinemas, and BAMcafé are located in the Peter Jay Sharp building at 30 Lafayette Avenue (between St Felix Street and Ashland Place) in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn. BAM Harvey Theater is located two blocks from the main building at 651 Fulton Street (between Ashland and Rockwell Places). Both locations house Greenlight Bookstore at BAM kiosks. BAM Fisher, located at 321 Ashland Place (between Lafayette Ave and Hanson Place), houses the Judith and Alan Fishman Space and Rita K. Hillman Studio. BAM Rose Cinemas features first-run independent and foreign film and repertory programming.

Subway: 2, 3, 4, 5, Q, B to Atlantic Avenue – Barclays Center (2, 3, 4, 5 to Nevins St for Harvey Theater) D, N, R to Pacific Street; G to Fulton Street; C to Lafayette Avenue
Train: Long Island Railroad to Atlantic Terminal – Barclays Center
Bus: B25, B26, B41, B45, B52, B63, B67 all stop within three blocks of BAM
For ticket information, call BAM Ticket Services at 718.636.4100, or visit BAM.org.

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