BAM Presents *Word. Sound. Power. 2021*, a Live Virtual Hip-Hop and Spoken Word Concert, April 23 at 8pm EST

One-Night-Only Featuring New Music by Atlanta-based MC Sa-Roc with Performances by Okai, Nejma Nefertiti, Peggy Robles-Alvarado, and Jade Charon

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor

*Word. Sound. Power. 2021*
Sa-Roc, Okai, Nejma Nefertiti, Peggy Robles-Alvarado, Jade Charon, Baba Israel, and DJ Reborn

BAM.org/wordsoundpower
Apr 23 at 8pm EST
Tickets: Pay-what-you-wish starting at $10
Ages: 14+

"...an amazing celebration of hip-hop and spoken word." —BK Reader

April 8, 2021/Brooklyn, NY—Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) presents *Word. Sound. Power. 2021* an electrifying hip-hop and spoken word concert featuring a stunning roster of artists — emcees Sa-Roc, Okai, and Nejma Nefertiti, poet Peggy Robles-Alvarado, and dancer Jade Charon— on Friday, April 23 at 8pm EST. MC Baba Israel returns as host with music provided by DJ Reborn as this year’s annual showcase brings the elements of hip-hop to BAM’s virtual stage for a one-night-only concert. Tickets are available now at BAM.org/wordsoundpower.

The show will take on the form of an interactive 70-minute hip-hop showcase featuring music, spoken word, and dance performances as the artists perform around the theme of rejuvenation across the African Diaspora. Atlanta-based emcee Sa-Roc appears on the heels of her recent album, *Sharecropper’s Daughter*. The illustrious emcee will perform an exclusive medley of songs from the acclaimed album. The set will also include a first-time-performance of her yet-to-be-released single "Wild Seeds," a celebration and remembrance of women whose strength, resilience and tenderness inform the fortitude and fragility of the culture. Brooklyn artists Okai, Nejma Nefertiti, Jade Charon, and Bronx poet Peggy Robles-Alvarado round out the dynamic lineup. The show finishes with a 20-minute Q&A with the artists.

This year’s annual celebration of spoken word and hip-hop returns as a virtual production allowing audiences from around the world the opportunity to connect with artists and new content designed and directed for screen. The performances will be powered by cutting-edge innovations in virtual
design and live mixing. For its first live virtual production, BAM will team up with ViDCo (Virtual Design Collective), innovative designers who create live performances through virtual platforms.

At one time, a counter-culture, to some, and now the world's most powerful musical genres and cultural influences, hip-hop retains its radical roots and is closely attuned to social and political discourses. *Word. Sound. Power.* artists use beats and lyrics to offer exhilarating messages for the moment. With ferocity and compassion, the performers address issues of our time with intensity unique to the hip-hop and spoken-word style.

Tickets for *Word. Sound. Power. 2021* are on sale now through April 23 at 6pm. Tickets are pay-what-you-wish, starting at $10. Visit BAM.org for more information.


For press information, contact Cynthia Tate at ctate@bam.org

**About the Artists**

Arguably one of the most vibrant MCs in the world today, **Sa-Roc**'s crisp articulation, fiery delivery, and elevated and insightful lyricism have often placed her within the same conversation of some of hip-hop's most notable artists. Once dubbed by *Okayplayer* as "one of the most formidable microphone mavens in the game," **Sa-Roc** is an artist for a socially conscious generation.

A renaissance force to be reckoned with, Brooklyn-born hip-hop vocalist and percussionist **Okai** is influenced by the music of his Haitian-American upbringing and his roots in gospel music. Blending the sounds of jazz, kompa, and rumba with hip-hop, he creates a soul-stirring, mood-setting style of melodic rhythms that spans the African Diaspora.

**Nejma Nefertiti** is a powerful hip-hop artist and daughter of many lands, from Iran to North Africa, with Indigenous American roots. She utilizes hip-hop and technology as cultural weapons to empower, uplift, inspire, and unite both youth and elders, the oppressed, and for the freedom of all political prisoners. Her radical matriarchal legacy is to create awareness, inspiration, and social change throughout the entire world.

Hailing from the Bronx, **Peggy Robles-Alvarado** is a literary force whose work combines poetry and Afro-Caribbean spiritual practice in the name of healing. Robles-Alvarado's "raw-truth style" has seduced audiences with verses relating to identity, sensuality, and spirituality and has earned her multiple awards, including the 2020 Atticus Review and BRIO award.

**Jade Charon** is a groundbreaking Interdisciplinary artist, choreographer, and filmmaker whose work explores how dance can be used as a ministry to uplift people of color and heal all people. Charon's spirited and soulful movement style earned her the coveted Chuck Davis Emerging Choreographer Fellowship at BAM. She's an Assistant Professor at Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn, New York. Her dance film, *Recharge*, speaking directly to the racial dialogue happening in Black America, received critical acclaim when it premiered online in 2020.

Hailing from New York City, **Baba Israel** is a multitalented emcee whose parents were core members of the Living Theatre. He's shared stages with musical heavyweights, including Outkast, The Roots, Ron Carter, and Arturo O'Farrill, and is a core member of the Hip-Hop/Soul project Soul Inscribed. He has toured as an emcee, beatboxer, and theatre artist across North and South America, Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia. Baba Israel has served as the host of *Word. Sound. Power* for more than ten years.

**DJ Reborn** is a trailblazing, international DJ, sound collage artist, hip hop theater musical director, and arts educator. She has spent the last two decades utilizing her passion for music and her skills as a DJ within these worlds to make an impact. Her ability to rock sets for diverse crowds and events ranging —clubs,
galas, weddings — allows her to continue to build a unique and dynamic resume that sets her apart from many in her field. She is also the opening DJ for the legendary Ms. Lauryn Hill's world tour. DJ Reborn has served as house DJ for *Word. Sound. Power.* for ten years.

**ViDCo** is a collection of designers innovating new ways to tell stories and create communities online. Using virtual platforms, ViDCo generates entirely live performances with heightened design elements that bridge theater, TV, and cinema tricks into a new online hybrid form. We strategize to use the strongest elements of every discipline to inspire the artistic community to use their tools while we provide them the platforms to tell their stories.

**Credits**

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