



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

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 and director 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. Images [here](#).

Speaking to the production of this year's concert, MC and BAM Education Manager **Mikal Amin** said, "The process of putting together our first live, virtual show is like nothing we've ever

done before at BAM. We have some exciting plans that are sure to excite fans of *Word. Sound. Power.*, especially our hip-hop fans, whether here in Brooklyn or connecting with us virtually around the world. This year's guiding light is around celebration and rejuvenation. Peggy Robles-Alvarado and Nejma Nefertiti are as fierce in their joy as they are in their rhymes and poetry, while Okai's music is truly medicine for the soul. Sa-Roc is a true emcee and world-class artist who embodies the culture's raw power and craft. And Jade Charon's movement and passion further uplift the message that we're here, and we'll be here, celebrating and replenishing ourselves through our creation."

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.

This year BAM'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.

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.

Word. Sound. Power. 2021 includes closed captioning and ASL interpretation.

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

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the Season Sponsor

Leadership support for off-site programs provided by the Howard Gilman Foundation

Leadership support for BAM Access Programs provided by the Jerome L. Greene Foundation

Major support for *Word. Sound. Power. in the Classroom* provided by The Emily Davie & Joseph S. Kornfeld Foundation

Leadership support for every season provided by the BAM Board of Trustees, led by Nora Ann Wallace, Chair & Vice Chairs William I. Campbell, Natalia Chefer, and Tim Sebuya

Leadership support for BAM's programming and initiatives provided by: Cheryl & Joe Della Rosa; Aashish & Dinyar Devitre; Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation; Jeanne Donovan Fisher; Judith R. & Alan H. Fishman; Ford Foundation; Charles J. & Irene F. Hamm; The Harkness Foundation for Dance; The Hearst Foundation, Inc.; The Rita and Alex Hillman Foundation; Anne Hubbard & Harvey Schwartz; Robin & Edgar Lampert; Leon Levy Foundation; Toby Devan Lewis; Diane & Adam E. Max (in memoriam); Richard & Ronay Menschel; Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust; The Fan Fox & Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Inc.; The SHS Foundation; The Shubert Foundation, Inc.; Axel Stawski & Galia Meiri Stawski; The Thompson Family Foundation; John L. & Eva Usdan; The Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust; Alex & Ada Katz

The BAM facilities are owned by the City of New York and benefit from public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs with support from Mayor Bill de Blasio; Cultural Affairs Commissioner Gonzalo Casals; the New York City Council including Council Speaker Corey Johnson, Majority Leader Laurie A. Cumbo, Finance Committee Chair Daniel Dromm, Cultural Affairs Committee Chair Jimmy Van Bramer, and the Brooklyn Delegation of the Council; and Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams. BAM would also like to thank the Brooklyn Delegations of the New York State Assembly and New York State Senate.

####

