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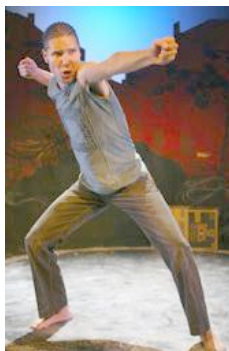
A *CurtainUp* Review

Flow

By Amanda Cooper

The words, rhymes and beats all *flow*.

Will Power's presence is felt even before his mouth makes shapes and sounds. DJ Reborn (a fabulously slick female DJ!) creates a prologue of sorts, introducing the audience to the nuances that constitute solid spinning, while she provides a hip-hop theater version of an orchestral overture. Though the message of the performance (we must continue to tell our stories; pass on our lessons) is as clear as daylight, and plot progress is almost always obvious, this one-act is consistently entertaining and heartening.



Will Power (Photo: Joan Marcus)

Power's energy level throughout is astounding. I kept expecting him to ask for a time out in order to catch his breath, or to turn the attention to the DJ for more than just a couple thirty-second breaks. Clearly, being writer, performer and conceiver of this performance is becoming on Power, and immediately infectious. He enters the stage clapping -- and moments later, so is the audience. His movements have a relaxed awkwardness that is strangely endearing on his wiry frame.

The narrator of the evening is an incarnation of Power -- a rapper/actor living in the neighbor('hood). Quickly he joins forces with six others, who together constitute the community's storytellers. There is the drunk, the teacher, the preacher, the oldest town resident, the cultural dancer, the freestyle rapper, and Will Power. As they disperse to tell their specific stories, small yet significant life lessons are tossed towards the audience, smoothly entering our eyes and ears with rhymes and rhythms.

The performance is like a train that picks up speed steadily; then, reaching the point of just too fast, gives the body a reason to tense, and resist the forward motion. Then the pace slows down and prepares for a clean stop. By the end, Power again has us ready, willing and able -- jumping at the chance to clap along, or just clap. This fast pace fuses each aspect of this show. The 80-minute run had upwards of 150 light cues, and DJ reborn seemed to constantly be spinning different records while simultaneously taking charge of all sound cues.

First presented this summer as part of the New York City Hip-Hop Theater Festival, *Flow* then stuck around PS 122, being co-produced by the Hip Hop Festival and New York Theater Workshop. Originally developed by Will Power and Danny Hoch (the festival's founder and artistic director) as part of NYTW's new Jonathan Larson Lab, the renowned and established NYTW kept up its partnership. Interestingly, the NYTW crowd is an older bunch, and not the Hip Hop Theater going type. But these former hippies were enthused by the music, by the acting. A standing ovation was given by all, and those over 60 seemed first to jump up.

FLOW

Written and performed by: Will Power
Directed and Developed by: Danny Hoch

Scenic Design: David Ellis
Costume Design: Gabriel Berry
Lighting Design: Sarah Sidman
Additional Composition: Will Hammond
Additional Movement: Robert Moses
Musical Direction: D Reborn

Running time: Approximately 80 minutes

A co-production of The New York City Hip-Hop Festival

PS 122, 150 First Ave. at East 9th Street. (at East 9th Street) 212/ 477-5288 --\$30

From 6/12/02; opening 6/26. Tuesday - Saturday at 8:30PM, Saturday at 3PM and Sunday at 5PM.

Reviewed by **Amanda Cooper** based on 6/29 performance

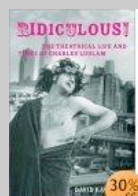
A second limited run of the show begins at New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (Bowery/Second Avenue) 212/239-6200 9/05/03 to 10/05/03. Performances: Wed through Friday at 8pm, Sat. at 3 and 8pm and Sunday at 3 and 7pm. Tickets are \$35



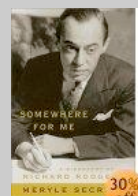
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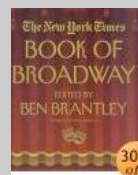
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