

RUSSELL SIMMONS

ONE WORLD

WHAT IS URBAN

ROSARIO
DAWSON

& THE
ROCK
HOLLYWOOD
BY SHUFFLE

MALIK YOBA

Leo Fitzpatrick
Forest Whitaker
Mark Ronson
Luis Guzmán
Panjabi MC

**Pulp
Fiction:**
The Leo
Felton Story

BA THE BAADASSSS ISSUE
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And Introducing...WILL POWER

POWER SURGE

Actor/playwright **Will Power** serves up a hip-hop cocktail of modern-day realisms

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"**THERE WERE SEVEN STORYTELLERS** in the neighborhood," begins playwright/actor Will Power's one-man show, *Flow*. The lilt and beat of the DJ accessorize a collection of grassroots, one-word everyday stories; ones you may know yourself, only you don't know you know. *Flow* chronicles the daily exchanges that create people's beliefs and points of view, using seven characters with a varied range of humorous, yet sobering voices.

"When you hear 2Pac or Nas or anyone talk about the neighborhood, they're taking on the same role [as storytellers]," he explains on a hot day before showtime. "Twenty or 30 years ago, it was the rock 'n' roll or blues player. Every generation, the vibe changes, and right now, it's hip-hop. But it all comes back to telling stories and reflecting your environment in a certain way."

Power grew up in San Francisco and prides himself on an ability to blend and move in circles that would otherwise consider him an outsider. "I've been mistaken for Egyptian, Puerto Rican, Moroccan, Creole. Now if I could just learn Spanish, I could move, just move." Translation? Power's seemingly ambiguous heritage allows him to be heard, virtually baggage free. "No one is just white or black. Even if you're real, real dark, you probably have some white blood in you. The whole idea of a race is kind of funny. But my thing is, I like to help, and teach and build bridges.

"Danny Hoch and I developed and directed

this piece; it's really fast," Power continues. "I think that's really attractive to young folks, especially the hip-hop generation. I think Shakespeare is an incredible writer, but it was written in a different time period. They didn't have TVs and cell phones and that kind of stuff. Dudes went to the play and just kicked it. But these days, things are on remote control; that's why the form of theater I do, is fast, like a series of samples. It's a theater that speaks to a reality of cell phones, beepers, the Internet."

Stories of urban woe, family angst, cockroaches, beer, veggie juice, an angry woman behind the wheel of a car—these are modern stories with ancient themes of heroes, the enemy on the block, even vegetarianism. The hip-hop folk-song cocktail acts as a local MC. Hoch says, "In theater, audiences don't want to be preached to about serious shit. They also don't want some dumb, 'we are the world' shit. You walk the line by being honest, and knowing that humanity exists in three dimensions, not the one or two that TV and film would have us believe." Hoch met Power through spoken-word *maestra* Sarah Jones and became an "instant fan." Power went on to perform at Hoch's first NYC Hip-hop Theater Festival.

Is *Flow* political or just entertaining? "It's about using these stories to continue to survive, to celebrate life," Power says, green tea in hand. Spin the bottle however you want; Will is a power outlet. Plug in and get a high voltage piece of the neighborhood. •