

BAMUTHI

Living Word


International Flavor

NET WT: SOLID




red, black and GREEN: a blues

conceived and created by Marc Bamuthi Joseph
produced by mapp international productions



“It is a hard and obvious truth that people of color are under-represented in the environmental movement. It is also a hard and obvious truth that violent crime and poor education pose more of an imminent danger to most poor neighborhoods than environmental crisis. I personally am of the belief that the movement for social change and environmental accountability are one and the same, that focusing on steps to sustain the planet ultimately force us to envision a pathway to sustaining humanity.”

- Marc Bamuthi Joseph

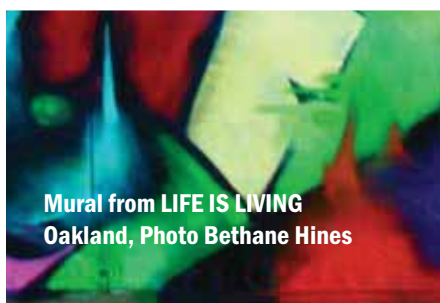


red, black and GREEN: a blues (rbGb), a full-length, multimedia theater work written by Marc Bamuthi Joseph, emphasizes that “green living” is not possible without valuing your own life, and the life of your community as the first step to valuing planet Earth. Landing at the intersection of green economics and black psychology, *rbGb* aims to jumpstart a conversation about environmental racism, social ecology, and collective responsibility in the climate change era through a ground-breaking work of contemporary theater.

Joseph and collaborator Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi (creator of the films for *the break/s: a mixtape for stage*), are using a community-based research process to generate stories, interviews and poems that will serve as the basis for *rbGb*'s script and stage set. This research process is embedded in a series of day-long eco-equity community gatherings called LIFE IS LIVING, organized by Joseph's Living Word Project with local groups in urban parks around the U.S. Each LIFE IS LIVING is a mix of art and activism, with performances of poetry, music and dance; a graffiti battle where artists create environmentally themed tags using the word “LIFE;” and demonstrations and exhibits from local green organizations and activists. At each LIFE IS LIVING, the artists are collecting stories, interviews, images and film which will feed into the creation of *rbGb*.

The collaborative team for *rbGb* includes acclaimed director Michael John Garcés, choreographer Stacey Printz, designers James Clotfelter and David Szlaza, musicians DJ Excess and Tommy Shepherd (all of whom contributed to *the break/s*); as well as visual artist and performer Theaster Gates. *red, black and GREEN: a blues* will be developed over two years with an anticipated premiere in Spring or Fall 2011. This project is a 2009 recipient of The MAP Fund, a program of Creative Capital supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

MAPP is currently seeking co-commissioning partners for *rbGb*.



Mural from LIFE IS LIVING
Oakland, Photo Bethane Hines

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Aesthetically urban, pedagogically Freirean, I derive personal performed narratives out of interdisciplinary collaboration. This work as writer and performer reflects an evolving aesthetic that integrates spoken word poetry with contemporary movement to birth a new theatrical form based on hip hop aesthetics.

My work changes, but philosophically my goals do not.



The approach is populist, intentionally instructive, and demonstrably experimental in terms of literacy and literary form.

The aesthetic is principally non-European or “alt-white,” which is to say that I challenge models of classicism from both cultural and environmental perspectives.

I seek to create space for ritual magic AS performance, and also ritual magic IN performance.

I EXPLICITLY seek to present art that reflects and inspires transformation on personal and collective levels, and that constructs safe space for this transformation to take place.

-Marc Bamuthi Joseph



MARC BAMUTHI JOSEPH

Marc Bamuthi Joseph is one of America's leading voices in performance, arts education, and artistic curation. In the Fall of 2007, Bamuthi graced the cover of *Smithsonian Magazine* after being named one of America's Top Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences. He is the artistic director of the 7-part HBO documentary *Russell Simmons presents Brave New Voices* and an inaugural recipient of the United States Artists Rockefeller Fellowship, which annually recognizes 50 of the country's "greatest living artists". He has entered the world of literary performance after crossing the sands of "traditional" theater, most notably on Broadway in the Tony Award winning *The Tap Dance Kid* and *Stand-Up Tragedy*. His evening-length works have been presented throughout the United States and Europe and include *Word Becomes Flesh*, *Scourge*, *De/Cipher* and *No Man's Land*. Bamuthi's current solo piece, *the break/s*, co-premiered at the Humana Festival of New American Plays and the Walker Arts Center in the Spring of 2008.

His work has been enabled by several prestigious foundation awards including grants from the Ford Foundation, the Center for Cultural Innovation, Creative Capital, the National Performance Network Creation Fund, the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation, the Creative Work Fund, the Rockefeller MAP Fund, the NEA, the Hewlett Foundation, and a Dance Advance award from the PEW Foundation. A gifted and nationally acclaimed educator and essayist, he has lectured at more than 200 colleges and universities, been a popular commentator on National Public Radio, and has carried adjunct professorships at Stanford University, Mills College, and the University of Wisconsin. A resident at ODC Theater, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco, Bamuthi's proudest work has been with Youth Speaks where he mentors 13-19 year old writers and curates the Living Word Festival for Literary Arts. He proudly served as a featured artist for the NAACP's Centennial Anniversary Celebration during President Barack Obama's Inaugural Exercises.

artistic collaborators



Michael John Garcés (Director) is the Artistic Director of Cornerstone Theater Company in Los Angeles, California. Directing credits include *The Falls* by Jeffrey Hatcher (The Guthrie Theatre/Cornerstone); *dark play, or stories for boys* by Carlos Murillo and *Finer Noble Gases* by Adam Rapp (Humana Festival); *Light Raise the Roof* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Force Continuum* (Atlantic Theatre Co.) and *Snapshot Silhouette* (Children's Theatre, MN) by Kia Corthron; *N.E. 2nd Avenue* by Teo Castellanos (Miami Light Project; Edinburgh Fringe Festival - Fringe First Award); *Kissing Fidel* (INTAR), *The Cook* (Hartford Stage and INTAR), and *Havana is Waiting* (The Cherry Lane) by Eduardo Machado; *The Dear Boy* by Dan O'Brien (Second Stage); *Grace* by Craig Wright (Woolly Mammoth); *Cradle of Man* by Melanie Marnich (Florida Stage); *Finer Noble Gases* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre); *La próxima parada* by Carmen Rivera (Repertorio Español); *Forever In My Heart* by Oscar Colón (INTAR); *September Shoes* by José Cruz Gonzales (Geva Theatre); *¡Siempre México con nosotros!* in collaboration with Sna Jtz'ibajom ("The House of the Writer") in Chiapas, Mexico; and *King Without a Castle* by

Cándido Tirado (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre). Plays he has written include *Los Illegals* (Cornerstone Theater Company), *points of departure* (INTAR), *Acts of Mercy* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre), and the short plays *on edge* and *the ride* (2007 Humana Festival - "The Open Road"), *agua ardiente* (The American Place); *audiovideo* (Drama League Director's Project), *kapital* (Estrogen Fest, Chicago), *god* (Cornerstone), *Adelaide* (The Production Company - "The Australia Project"); *tostitos* (Shalimar Productions); and *sandlot ball* (Mile Square Theatre - "7th Inning Stretch"). Michael is the recipient of the Princess Grace Statue Award, the Alan Schneider Director Award, and a TCG New Generations: Future Leaders Grant. A member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, he currently serves on the Executive Board of the organization. Michael is a resident playwright at New Dramatists.

Theaster Gates is a Chicago-based artist and community organizer whose practice covers performance and installation, Urban Planning and Design, and the traditional fine arts. His varied works in clay, performance, installation art and public intervention offer a platform that opens up challenging issues by presenting them, not as acute encounters, but as invitations to engage hard information creatively.

His current exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), *Temple Exercises*, examines the relationship between eastern philosophy and the Black Church. Built of wooden boards recycled from a factory in Chicago's post-industrial heart, the Temple encourages people to see these discarded materials not only in the light of Modernist Art, but to reflect on cultural traditions that depend on scrap for survival. The installation houses performances by the Black Monks of Mississippi, a music ensemble which Gates founded and composes for, whose singing in a blues form further articulates the Temple's message.



Gates' other performances, installations, and ceramic exhibits include *Black Monks & the Gospel of Black*, (Van Abbemuseum, Netherlands); *Black Monks of Mississippi—If You See Jesus Tell Him Where I Am* (Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago); *Branded Alongside the Cabinet of Curiosities* (Milwaukee Art Museum); *Tea Shacks, Collard Greens & the Preservation of Soul* (Center for Proliferation of Afro-Asian Artifacts, Chicago); *Plate Convergence* (Yamaguchi Institute, Chicago); *Speaking of Passage* with Taiwanese poet, Kelly Tsai (Chicago); *Mississippi Houses* (Inax Ceramic Museum, Japan); and *The American Negro: Too good to be true* (St. George Cathedral, South Africa).

Gates received an interdisciplinary Master's in Urban Planning and Public Sculpture from Iowa State University in 2005. He is currently Arts Programming Coordinator for University of Chicago, Division of the Humanities, and an Adjunct Faculty member in the Dept of Visual Arts.

artistic collaborators, cont.



Eli Jacobs-Fantauzzi (Filmmaker) is a graduate of UC Berkeley and received his MA from Tisch School of the Arts at NYU in 2004. Before graduation, he won the prestigious juried Student Film-maker Award from the Pan African Film Festival for his documentary *Inventos: Hip-Hop Cubano*, a film he shot, directed, edited, and produced. Jacobs-Fantauzzi has traveled extensively in the Caribbean and Africa and produced and directed several shorts and music videos, including the award winning music video from Ghana, *Besin*. His first film, *i of MOTION us of MOVEMENT* chronicled the life of four women hip hop artists in the San Francisco Bay area. *Inventos* is the first in-depth look at hip-hop culture in Cuba, which premiered in Havana Cuba and at the H2O International film festival in New York in November 2003, and has since shown across the U.S. to great reviews. Jacobs-Fantauzzi has been featured in *Anthem Magazine*, *NRG Magazine*, and the *Libertad Journal* that wrote, “*Inventos* embodies the true spirit of hip hop, which is to build a powerful and useful mechanism out of what is seemingly impossible.” Currently, Jacobs-Fantauzzi is in production on his next film entitled, *HomeGrown*, a unique documentary on hip-hop in Ghana, West Africa. He is a powerful filmmaker, whose philosophy is built on experiences of struggle, and who is dedicated to craft coupled with commitment to social justice and awareness.

David Szlasa (Video and Set Designer) is committed to producing art and artists with a conscious desire to affect social change. Szlasa has created, directed and produced three original interdisciplinary performance pieces: *Dissection* (1997), *Light* (2000), and *GADGET* (2006), an immersive, media-based performance based on a series of original interviews conducted with living members of the Manhattan Project. Szlasa’s next piece, *My HOT Lobotomy*, is currently under development as part of STREAM/fest, a program of Counter Pulse Theater in San Francisco. Szlasa is the



Managing Director and part of the curatorial team at the Z Space Studio in San Francisco, an organization dedicated to the development of new theater by Bay Area artists. From 2002-2004 Szlasa was the Production Manager and Designer in Residence at the Culture Project @ 45 Bleeker where he opened *The Exonerated* (Obie Award), Sarah Jones’ *Bridge and Tunnel* (Lortel Award), and Red Bull Theater’s *Pericles*, among others. Previously, Szlasa was the Production Manager and Designer for Theater Artaud in San Francisco. As a designer, Szlasa has collaborated with Bill “Crutchmaster” Shannon for the past 6 years and played venues including the Edinburgh Fringe, Walker Arts Center, The Kitchen, and Sydney Opera House. In 2001, Szlasa toured to the Harare International Festival of the Arts in Zimbabwe with Universal Arts’ *the Beat*. Other design credits: Rennie Harris Puremovement’s *Facing*

MeKka (lights), Synaesthetic Theatre’s *The Trial of K* (set), Deb Margolin’s *Index to Idioms* (lights and video), Marc Bamuthi Joseph’s *Scourge* (video), Encore Theater’s *Five Flights* (lights). Szlasa is the production designer Sara Shelton Mann’s *Telios/Telios* and *Inspirare*. Szlasa holds a BFA from Tisch School of the Arts and MA in New Media and Performance from the Gallatin School, NYU and has been a teacher of design for Playwrights Horizon’s Theater School, a division of NYU.

James Clotfelter (Lighting and Set Designer) is a New York based lighting designer committed to the creation of collaborative and socially conscious work for theatre and dance. He is the Resident Lighting Designer and Production Manager for Miro Dance Theatre, an Artistic Associate with Pig Iron Theatre Company, and a co-founder of Mlab, a laboratory for innovations and design technologies in the live arts. James has had the pleasure of collaborating with artist and choreographers such as Johannes Wieland, Rennie Harris, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Dan Rothenberg, Bill Shannon, Reggie Wilson, Antony Rizzi, and Thaddeus Davis as well as companies such as Dayton Contemporary Dance, Southern Repertory Theatre, Z Space Studios, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Peoria Ballet, and Lubelski Teatr Tanca. His work has been seen at the Walker Center, Yerba Buena, Jacob’s Pillow, Bates Dance Festival, Fall for Dance OC, The New Victory Theatre, The Kimmel Center Philadelphia, Queen Elizabeth Hall, The Pleasance London, Whitney Museum Altria, and The Philadelphia Museum of Art.



artistic collaborators, cont.



Stacey Printz (Choreographer) is artistic director of the Printz Dance Project (PDP) and a Bay Area based choreographer, dancer and educator. Printz received her sociology and dance degrees from UC Irvine. In addition to teaching at San Francisco Dance Center, she has been on faculty at St. Mary's College, Sonoma State University and RoCo. She has taught master classes and workshops for Universities and studios across the United States as well as internationally in Amsterdam, Belgium, Russia, Lithuania and Ireland. Founded in 1998, her company has performed extensively in California with home seasons at the Cowell Theater in SF, and has toured all over the U.S. being presented in such places as New York, Los Angeles, Memphis, Arizona, Colorado, and internationally in Lithuania, Russia and Ireland. Printz has been commissioned to choreograph for many companies in California and has received numerous awards and grants from organizations such as the Zellerbach Family Foundation, the W&F Hewlett Foundation, Fort Mason Foundation, and is the recent recipient of the New Work Fellowship from the Marin Arts Arts Council. Highly interested in collaborative experiences, Printz had the pleasure of co-choreographing Marc Bamuthi Joseph's previous piece, *Scourge* and creating new work with live music and spoken word for

Intersection for The Arts 40th Anniversary. From joyous to playful and sensual to fierce, Stacey's musically driven choreography "blends dance techniques that include modern, jazz, ethnic, and hip-hop with a flow that motivates eye, energy and spirit" (Marie Beneat, Attitude Magazine) Visit www.printzdance.org for more information.

excerpts from early writing

red, black and GREEN: a blues

Let me tell you about Georgia red clay
Iron oxide based
Betrays centuries of blacktop in regress
A clear indication of the universe's fetish for fingerpaint
Beneath your fingers it melts like warm of a woman in the heat of undress
Burnt dreams and soft yams red
Santana black magic sienna Hendrix hallucination red
So different from the gumbo dark delta soil
Georgia's clay is the earth I first honored

Muddy water turned firm
And blushing...

I'm a city kid
In Atlanta I learned land

My sister calls them my shepherd years
Georgia red clay
Black people deep south
A young man, I was green...

...

In the end
The earth has her justice
What will we do when there's nothing left to eat but money and regret
And the fungus and the stench of a bitter future black bagging us in the night for
The right to breathe clean air?

Maybe instead of rain they're Begging the skies to release Mumia
Praying justice roll down like thunder
Apocalypse in the midst in the misting
In the hunger

Deliver us
Let faith settle under our feet secure in its foundation like red clay
Soft in its surrender like the earth under rain
Under god
Indivisible

press

“Marc Bamuthi Joseph is an artist who makes you want to bow down in admiration or curse the gods for bestowing him with so many talents. He’s a poet. He’s a singer. A dancer. An actor. An activist. It doesn’t seem fair that one human being should possess so many gifts, even when he uses them for the benefit of others by revealing truths about environmental destruction, human devastation, and the experience of fatherhood.” – *The SF Bay Guardian*

“Joseph is the real deal, swinging with such confidence that you grasp for adjectives to capture his skills.” – *Star Tribune*

“Rarely do word and movement mesh so seamlessly and elegantly that the audience is left with the thought that drives them. But such is the case with Marc Bamuthi Joseph whose stories put sound and gesture on a single continuum of expression...” – *The Washington Post*

“You should go see *the break/s* if you like hip-hop. You should go if you want to know more about hip-hop. You should go if you think hip-hop is not a vehicle for those high art ideas and emotions, because you will be converted, and the sooner the better. You should take friends, you should settle in, you should open your eyes and let this ride take you.” – *Mpls.St.Paul Magazine*

“What emerges from this polished show is how necessary it is to have mess, to have spaces in the culture where interesting things emerge. Joseph does it so well you want to give him a shout-out.” – *Star Tribune*

“One of the brightest lights in hip-hop theater, Marc Bamuthi Joseph blends art forms as deftly as a DJ mixes samples.” – *San Francisco Chronicle*

“*[the break/s]* is fresh because it is so different from the corporate hip-hop that is dominant today.” – *Star Tribune*

“Marc Bamuthi Joseph belongs to the rare breed of artists who can kindle political and cultural awareness while delivering a highly entertaining performance.” – *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“The hip-hop sensibility is in the potent mix of body and word and in the ease of transitions, the way [Joseph] moves from scene to scene with the sure timing of a DJ gauging breaks in a dance beat.” – *The Washington Post*

“Joseph’s words can take an audience’s breath away, then coax out sighs, exclamations of approval, and finally drawing them to their feet.” – *The SF Bay Guardian*

“...[H]e continues to excel as a cutting edge artist forging his own hybrid medium--an amalgam of rap music, poetry, movement, and theater. . .he’s an electrifying performer and a great storyteller.” – *The Seattle Times*

“Joseph could do for rap poetry what Savion Glover did for rhythm tap...stunning transformations, passionate dancing and intense volleys of verse...it’s powerful religion.” – *The Houston Chronicle*

the break/s

premiered march 2008

produced by
MAPP International Productions

“Joseph is the real deal, swinging with such confidence that you grasp for adjectives to capture his skills.”
-Star Tribune

A multimedia excursion across planet hip-hop, *the break/s* dramatically realizes the living history of the hip-hop generation through the performed personal narrative of poet Marc Bamuthi Joseph. *the break/s* is a deeply honest investigation into the conflicts between Bamuthi’s public identity as successful spoken word artist, and his private identity as young man coming of age in our globalized, multi-everything era. A life-long performer, he leaves it all on stage—simultaneously devouring the space with everything from shamrocks to attitude turns and eloquently spitting rhymes spoken from the heart.

In *the break/s*, the medium is also the message. In this “mixtape for the stage,” Bamuthi performs in a call-and-response format with turntablist DJ Excess, and beatboxer and percussionist Tommy Shepherd (aka Soulati). The multiple layers of meaning in their exchange are intensified by video projections, created by filmmaker Eli Jacobs Fantauzzi, composed of interviews and documentary footage of hip-hop culture throughout the world.

Bamuthi drew inspiration for *the break/s* from Jeff Chang’s 2005 American Book Award winning publication, *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop*, which definitively captures the birth of hip-hop as a local movement inspired by a generation’s longing to make culture that impacts the world.

A remarkable team of artists and creative advisors contributed to *the break/s*, led by director Michael John Garcés, and including dramaturg Brian Freeman, choreographer Stacy Printz, video and set designer David Szlaza, lighting designer James Clotfelter, and composer Ajayi Lumumba.

The Living Word Project/ Marc Bamuthi Joseph

directed by Michael John Garcés

Lead commissioning and development support for *the break/s* was provided by the Humana Festival/ Actors Theatre of Louisville, Walker Art Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and National Black Arts Festival. Additional residencies were held at Painted Bride Art Center; University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Z Space. The project has received generous support from the Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, Zellerbach Family Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, Creative Capital, The James Irvine Foundation, Ensemble Theatre Collaborations Grant Program, The MAP Fund, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Emerging Playwrights 2006 Initiative, and Association of Performing Arts Presenters Ensemble Theatre Collaborations Grant Program, a component of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Theatre Initiative.

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Facts

Educational Serving: Morehouse College, BA; English, San Francisco State University, MA; Secondary Education.

Artistic Facts: National Poetry Slam Champ; Russell Simmons Def Poetry; The San Francisco Bay Guardian's GOLDIE award winner; MeccaUSA national ad campaign; Youth Speaks mentor and Living Word Festival curator; Inaugural International Spoken Word Festival -Tokyo, Japan

Fat Publications:

Playz from the Boom Box Galaxy-An Anthology for the Hip Hop Generation
"Word Becomes Flesh" / TCG (Paperback) 2007

Total Chaos: Next Elements

"(Yet another) Letter to a Young Poet" / Basic Civitas (Paperback); 2006

Line Breaks: A Source Guide to Hip Hop Theater

Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Editor / University of Wisconsin Press, 2008

Total Residences: Stanford University - "Spoken Word from GI Scott Heron to Rennie Harris," New York University - Independent Study Professor, "Playwrighting," Mills College - "Body as Text," University of Wisconsin -Madison - "Hip Hop Aesthetics"

Performance Protein: Word Becomes Flesh

Scourge

The Breaks

(based on Cunt Stop, Won't Stop by Jeff Chang)

In Spite of Everything

No Man's Land

International Theater Institute's Borges Pro

Quotable Calories:

"Electrifying performer and a great storyteller"

- *The Seattle Times*

"Rarely do word and movement mesh so seamlessly and elegantly that the audience is left with the thought that drives them. But such is the case with Marc Bamuthi Joseph whose stories put sound and gesture on a single continuum of expression."

- *The Washington Post*

"Joseph's story spills out in the rhythmic stomp of feet, a fusillade of drumbeats, aching vocals, and vivid poetry that captures the issues and emotions of assimilation with a potent urgency."

- *The Boston Globe*

"eloquent. . . seamless. . .and remarkable"

-*The New York Times*

FOUNDATIONAL INGREDIENTS: National Performance Network Creation Fund; The Wallace A. Gerbode Foundation; Creative Capital; The Creative Work Fund; The Rockefeller MAP Fund; The National Endowment for the Arts; The Zellerbach Family Fund; The Ford Foundation; The New England Foundation for the Arts; The Hewlett Foundation; The Pew Foundation, Inaugural United States Artists Fellowship

Neo-Folklore for Body and Soul



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