

BABA ISRAEL, LEO KAY / UNFINISHED BUSINESS, AND YAKO 440

THE SPINNING WHEEL

“The Spinning Wheel combines spoken word, Hip Hop, and experimental performative techniques in a way that is both revolutionary and yet utterly endearing.” –The Public Reviews, UK

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photo: Joel Chester Fildes

Hip Hop artist and musician Baba Israel remixes and reinterprets the life and work of his late father, Steve Ben Israel, an actor, musician, and countercultural activist.

Using a fusion of Hip Hop, jazz, projection mapping and spoken word, Baba’s interconnected stories take audiences through 1980s New York, to Brazil on tour with the iconic Living Theater, and to his father’s den, where his efforts around economic disparity and social injustice take on new significance in today’s America.

Incorporating his father’s sound and video archives, Israel relays fascinating and humorous stories of the past, including how he discovered his own passion for performing, and the ways theater and music can respond to real-world issues.

The Spinning Wheel remixes past and present, reuniting father and son, inspiring us to look to the generations before us—and be transformed by those legacies we inherit.

The Spinning Wheel can be performed as a full theatrical show with video projection, or as a more informal performance, featuring excerpts threaded together by music from Israel’s band, Soul Inscribed.

For more information:

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Running time: Approx 90 minutes
Open Availability

Tour management by **mapp international** productions

artist biography

Baba Israel (Writer/Performer/Deviser) was raised in New York by parents who were core members of the Living Theatre. He developed as a young artist exploring spoken word, Hip Hop, and experimental performance. He lived and worked in Australia working on major community theatre projects and Hip Hop festivals. He has toured as an emcee, beatboxer, and theatre artist across North and South America, Europe, Africa, Australia and Asia. He has shared the stage with artists such as Outkast, The Roots, Rahzel, Lester Bowie, Afrika Bambaataa, and Vernon Reid.

His solo show *Boom Bap Meditations* (2008) was supported by the Ford Foundation and The Hip Hop Theatre Festival. He has worked on sound design for theatre and dance projects such as Renita Martin's *It is the Seeing* and Rha Goddess's *Meditations with the Goddess*.

He was Artistic Director and CEO of Contact Theatre in Manchester from 2009- 2012. Contact is a leading international organization at the intersection of the arts and youth leadership. During his tenure he created flagship festivals, directed and produced touring productions, and programmed seasons that focused on innovative and diverse work.

He is co-founder and Artistic Director of Playback NYC Theatre Company who are developing projects to support immigrant communities in Long Island. He is an educator and consultant working with organizations such as Urban Word, BAM, and the University of Madison. He has also worked as a cultural ambassador with the State Department delivering workshops and performances across South East Asia, the South Pacific, and in Gambia and Turkey.

He is currently in residence at BRIC House as part of their Fireworks Residency developing *The Spinning Wheel*, inspired by his late father Steve Ben Israel in collaboration with Leo Kay (Unfinished Business) and Yako 440. Baba is in the studio recording the debut album for his new band Soul Inscribed who have been chosen by the American Music Abroad to tour in 2016 as cultural ambassadors.

Baba Israel and Leo Kay created the work in close collaboration with musician Yako 440. Video: Richard Ramchurn; Dramaturg: Talvin Wilks; Lighting Design: Mark Distin. *The Spinning Wheel* was developed in Bradford (UK) and in New York throughout 2013/14 and was supported by Theatre in the Mill, Bradford and Arts Council England. The piece was also supported by an Artist Residency at BRIC Arts Media in 2015.



photo: Joel Chester Fildes



MAPP International Productions is a nonprofit producer of major performing arts projects that raise critical consciousness and spark social change. We support all phases of an artist's creative process, from concept and production to premiere and touring, while also engaging audiences in the issues behind the art. Through this heightened focus, we support an evolving and elite cadre of creators whose work ignites communities worldwide. Come With Us.

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crossing borders / taking risks / creating dialogue / opening minds