

A CHRONOLOGY OF HIP HOP THEATRE:

Hip Hop Theatre is theatrical performance that incorporates one or more of the four "original elements" of Hip Hop that originated in New York in the 1970s. These four elements are graffiti, DJing, B-Boying (also known as breakdancing) and rap (also known as MCing). It may also include additional Hip Hop aesthetics, such as call and response, magic or illusion, competition or battle, and the use of African and Caribbean performance traditions. According to Hip Hop Theatre Artist Danny Hoch, to be Hip Hop Theatre a piece must also "be by, about and for the hip-hop generation, participants in hip-hop culture or both."

1989



Members of the Rhythm Technicians (including *Syncing Ink* choreographer Gabriel "Kwikstep" Dionisio and *Syncing Ink* actor Adesola A. Osakalumi) and the Rock Steady Crew join forces to create GhettoOriginal Productions Dance Company. They present the first Hip Hop musical called *So What Happens now but* are best remembered for the Drama Desk nominated *Jam on the Groove*, which toured nationally and internationally after it premiered in New York. The show was credited for the resurgence of b-boying, popping and locking stateside and worldwide and praised for its emphasis on storytelling and using the forms in ways that had not been seen previously.



1992

Dr. Rennie Harris founds the Hip Hop dance company Puremovement in Philadelphia. Puremovement creates dance theatre with a Hip Hop aesthetic, including the popular *Romeo and Jewels*, a Hip Hop version of *Romeo and Juliet*.



1998

Danny Hoch's one man show *Jails, Hospitals, & Hip-Hop* premieres in New York. Hoch portrays many characters from different backgrounds, using the language of Hip Hop not to "transcend" these differences, but to honor them. The play is later published and produced as a film.



1999

Will Power's *The Gathering*, exploring the gathering places of Black men, is showcased at the National Black Theatre Festival. Power goes on to create *The Seven*, an adaptation of Aeschylus's *Seven Against Thebes*, which premieres in San Francisco then plays New York's Hip Hop Theater Festival, and *Flow*, directed by Danny Hoch co-produced by the Hip-Hop Theater Festival and featuring *Syncing Ink's* DJ Reborn as DJ and Musical Director. Power is currently the Playwright in Residence with the Dallas Theater Center.



1999

A Rhyme Deferred, which Kamilah Forbes wrote while a student at Howard University, is developed by the Hip-Hop Theatre Junction in Washington DC. It is subsequently performed at the African Continuum Theatre Company's Hip Hop Theatre Fest and at the National Black Theatre Festival.



1999

The Bomb-ity of Errors by the Q Brothers premieres Off-Broadway then transfers to London and tours cities around the world. The show is an "ad-rap-tation" of Shakespeare's *A Comedy of Errors*. The Q Brothers go on to create numerous Hip Hop adaptations of Shakespeare, including their *Othello: The Remix*, which is currently running in New York.

2003



Word Becomes Flesh by Marc Bamuthi Joseph premieres in Oakland then tours the country. The work is a series of letters to the author's unborn son that addresses race and gender in America.



2004

Bridge and Tunnel by Sarah Jones premieres Off-Broadway then later moves to Broadway. The solo performance explores the diverse immigrant population of New York City with Jones playing a wide array of characters. She wins an Obie Award and a Tony Award.



2001

Universes, a Hip Hop and spoken word group, gains national attention when their play *Slanguage* is produced in New York. The show incorporates a variety of poetic forms, including Spanish boleros, rap, blues, and jazz, loosely structured around a subway ride from Brooklyn to the Bronx. Their *Party People*, about the Black Panthers and the Young Lords, played in New York this past fall.

2008



Herstory: Love Forever Hip-Hop by Goldie Patrick premieres at the DC Hip-Hop Theater Festival. The work explores six women's evolving relationships with Hip Hop in spite of the challenges posed by misogyny and exploitation in the genre.



2008

The Hip-Hop Theatre Explosion is first presented by Vortex Repertory Theatre and UpRise! Productions in Austin, TX. It is a series of music, dance, MCs, and spoken word, hosted by Zell Miller III. It continues to be curated annually.



2014

Holla If Ya Hear Me, a jukebox musical featuring the music of Tupac Shakur, with book by Todd Kreidler, opens on Broadway starring poet Saul Williams.

NSangou Njikam begins writing *Syncing Ink*.



2015

Hamilton by Lin Manuel-Miranda premieres off-Broadway then transfers to Broadway. The musical uses Hip Hop to dramatize the life of American Founding Father Alexander Hamilton. The show received 16 Tony nominations, winning 11. It won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album. It continues to play to sold-out houses in New York and Chicago with a national tour launching this year.