

REDCAT

ROY AND EDNA DISNEY/CALARTS THEATER

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
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Hip-Hop Dance Theater Confronts Environmental and Social Justice

red, black & GREEN: a blues

By Marc Bamuthi Joseph/The Living Word Project

Directed by Michael John Garcés

Set & Installation Design by visual artist Theaster Gates

Produced by MAPP International Productions

Los Angeles Premiere

January 31–February 3, 2013

at REDCAT



LOS ANGELES, CA—REDCAT, CalArts' downtown center for contemporary arts, presents the Los Angeles premiere of Alpert Award-winning hip-hop theater artist Marc Bamuthi Joseph

and visual artist Theaster Gates' acclaimed collaboration *red, black & GREEN: a blues (rbGb)*, a visceral and moving hybrid performance that merges incisive writing and urgent choreography to confront issues of race, class, culture and the environment. The four-performance run of *rbGb* will be presented at the Roy and Edna Disney/ CalArts Theater Thursday, January 31 through Sunday, February 3, 2013.

Directed by LA-based theater artist Michael John Garcés, the work draws upon hip-hop's interdisciplinary foundations, with Marc Bamuthi Joseph and a magnetic and a multitalented cast of performers delivering powerful verse and impassioned songs to examine notions of "living green," and what that might mean to communities under social and economic duress. Within an evolving modular stage that doubles as an art installation—an interactive shotgun cabin constructed from reclaimed materials by celebrated visual artist Theaster Gates—a combination of dance, poetry, music, and visual art blend seamlessly to create a soul-stirring performance and a kaleidoscopic investigation of collective responsibility in an era of climate change.

This deeply collaborative creation was shaped by stories gathered during urban eco-festivals organized by Marc Bamuthi Joseph in cities across the U.S. The interactive stage set/installation designed by Theaster Gates is a full character in the piece, with vivid films by Eli Jacobs Fantauzzi bringing the outside world into the theater. Additional collaborators include choreographer Stacey Printz, musician and composer Tommy Shepherd, lighting designer James Clotfelter, media designer David Szlasa, and costume designer Mai-Lei Pecorari. Joseph is joined onstage in the performance by Shepherd, dancer/actor Traci Tolmaire, and vocalist Yaw.

"It is a hard and obvious truth that people of color are under-represented in the environmental movement," remarks Joseph when discussing the original inspiration for the piece. "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 forces us to envision a pathway to sustaining humanity."

With passion and energy, intelligence and sweat Marc Bamuthi Joseph and his fellow cast members lead the audience through four seasons in four cities -- summer in Chicago, fall in Houston, winter in Harlem, and spring in Oakland. The narrative exists in a poetic and ephemeral space, toggling between the realities of shotgun houses, subway cars, park benches, and father-son conversations, to more figurative spaces of collective memory, hallucination, dream and lament.

Aiming to inspire new definitions of sustainability which lead to compassionate and humane action in the real world, *rbGb* offers the audience tales of survival and the complex beauty and struggle of human interdependence that give way to new and inspiring definitions of sustainability.

The critical response to the work has been enthusiastic throughout the U.S.:

"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*

"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 four performers are magnetic, the dance is electrifying, and the impressively evolving set is a full participant in the action.... Going green meets and mates with the urgency of achieving environmental justice in *red, black & GREEN: a blues*. The result is a piece as smart and provocative as it is breathtakingly beautiful." —*The San Francisco Chronicle*

"[*red, black and GREEN's*] heart is in the joyous, ingratiating performances and the music of its language..." —*The New York Times*

The artists involved in the production are available for interview. To request press accommodations, interviews, additional information, media or images, please contact Diana Wyenn at 213 237-2873 or dwyenn@calarts.edu.

To visit the event webpage on REDCAT.ORG:

<http://www.redcat.org/event/marc-bamuthi-joseph-the-living-word-project>

To learn more about the production and creative team:

<http://www.mappinternational.org/programs/view/214/>

To watch a trailer for *rbGb*:

[Vimeo] <http://vimeo.com/42851726>

[Youtube] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhjrgwaVe5k>

To watch videos documenting the developmental process for *rbGb*:

Part 1: Belief | <http://vimeo.com/27204468>

Part 2: Community | <http://vimeo.com/30501808>

Part 3: Ecosystem | <http://vimeo.com/37618196>

Part 4: Collaboration | <http://vimeo.com/38792509>

Part 5: Audience | <http://vimeo.com/45435800>

To learn more about the urban eco-festivals Marc Bamuthi Joseph organized:

<http://www.lifeisliving.org/>

To learn more about visual artist Theaster Gates:

<http://theastergates.com/home.html>

The performances of red, black & GREEN: a blues at REDCAT are funded in part with generous support from The Herb Alpert Foundation. The Alpert Award in the Arts, a fellowship program that supports innovative practitioners in the fields of dance, film/video, music, theater and visual arts, is administered by CalArts on behalf of The Herb Alpert Foundation.

red, black & GREEN: a blues is co-commissioned by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts at University of Houston, Walker Art Center, Lehigh University, and The America Project, a program of MAPP International Productions with support from the Ford Foundation and the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

Developmental residencies have been provided by Carolina Performing Arts at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Critical production support for rbGb has been provided by the Technical Residency Program at Z Space.

red, black & GREEN: a blues has received generous support from The National Endowment for the Arts; The New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Boeing Company Charitable Trust; The MAP Fund, a program of Creative Capital supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation; East Bay Community Foundation, with matching support from United States Artists; Panta Rhea Foundation; and Zellerbach Family Foundation.

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TICKETS & INFORMATION

Marc Bamuthi Joseph/The Living Word Project: *red, black & GREEN: a blues*

Date(s)/Time(s):

Thursday, January 31 at 8:30 pm

Friday, February 1 at 8:30 pm

Saturday, February 2 at 8:30 pm

Sunday, February 3 at 3:00 pm

Ticketing:

\$20–25 general (\$16–20 students & members)

Seating is general admission and tickets are available for purchase in-person at REDCAT Box Office, by phone at 213-237-2800, or online at www.redcat.org.

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ABOUT REDCAT | THE ROY AND EDNA DISNEY/CALARTS THEATER

REDCAT, CalArts' downtown center for contemporary arts, presents a dynamic and international mix of innovative visual, performing and media arts year round. Located inside the iconic Walt Disney Concert Hall complex in downtown Los Angeles, REDCAT houses a modular theater, a 3,000-square-foot gallery space and a lounge. Through performances, exhibitions, screenings, and literary events, REDCAT introduces diverse audiences, students and artists to the most influential developments in the arts from around the world, and gives artists in this region the creative support they need to achieve national and international stature. REDCAT continues the tradition of the California Institute of the Arts, its parent organization, by encouraging experimentation, discovery and lively civic discourse.

GENERAL INFORMATION

For current program and exhibition information call 213-237-2800 or visit www.redcat.org.

Location/Parking: REDCAT is located in downtown Los Angeles inside the Walt Disney Concert Hall complex with a separate entrance at the corner of West 2nd and Hope Streets. Parking is available in the Walt Disney Concert Hall parking structure. \$9 event rate or \$5 for vehicles entering after 8:00 pm on weekdays.

Street Address: 631 West 2nd Street, Los Angeles CA 90012

THE LOUNGE | Open to the public six days a week, the Lounge is a great place to spend an afternoon or grab a drink pre- and post-performance.

Lounge Hours:

Tuesdays–Fridays from 9am until 8 pm or post-show;

Saturdays from noon until 8 pm or post-show;

Sundays from noon until 6pm or post-show

THE GALLERY | REDCAT's Gallery presents 5 major exhibitions each year, and publishes artist books and catalogues. Admission to the Gallery is FREE.

Gallery Hours:

Tuesdays–Sundays from noon until 6 pm or through intermission

THE THEATER | Tickets for programs held in the theater are available through the REDCAT Box Office, by phone 213-237-2800 or online at www.redcat.org. Group, member, student and CalArts faculty/staff discounts available.

Box Office Hours:

Tuesdays–Saturday from noon until 6 pm or two hour prior to curtain

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MEDIA CONTACT

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Image caption: Photo by Bethanie Hines.