

## EVENT

# Hip-hop workshop battles stereotypes

*Mix with theater speaks to students, professor says*

"It's like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under."

— Grandmaster Flash, "The Message" (1982)

By Laura Allen  
For the Gazette

**D**IG A little deeper into the lyrics of "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the real-life drama that has always existed in hip-hop culture is apparent.

It's a social commentary, written almost as a lamentation about the cocaine craze that swept through the early '80s Bronx ghettos. Nowhere in this track are there derogatory references to women or calls to violence. It's about a guy trying to deal with being poor and black; two things which recent events prove remain major issues in this country.

Yet it's the stereotypical aspects of hip-hop that many latch onto as representing an entire spectrum of music and culture.

That is all the more reason events like "48 Hours of Hip-Hop Theater" on Saturday at West Virginia State University in Institute are needed, says Daniel Banks. The New York University drama professor will present the workshop from 1 to 4:30 p.m. at the Davis Fine Arts auditorium on the campus.

"There are many misconceptions about hip-hop due to media exposure and that creates un-



"Hip-hop is a culture that is deeply connected to performance, so it's a small step to use the elements of hip-hop to make theater," says Daniel Banks, who leads Saturday's workshop in Institute.

necessary tension around communication between generations," Banks said, in an e-mail interview from San Francisco earlier this week.

"Hip-hop is a culture that is deeply connected to performance, so it's a small step to use the elements of hip-hop to make theater."

For WVU drama professor Susan Marrash-Minnerly, the workshop brings to campus an event that will speak to many of her students. Acknowledging the immense popularity of hip-hop

and combining it with theater provides students with a more contemporary experience. "This is something that is more relevant to my students' everyday lives," she said. "I felt that it was important that they realize this is out there."

Workshops like this one also help to eliminate the stereotypes around hip-hop, giving it the legitimacy that she hopes will find a place on campus permanently. "My goal is for State to one day have a small hip-hop theater ensemble on campus," she said.

NEXT WEEK



The Friends of Old Time Music and Dance Fall Fest kicks off the fall season with constant music, dance, workshops and food in the hills of West Virginia. Next week's gazz profiles this communal, cultural happening, which this year has been represented in all its richness by a signature artwork (above) by Charly Jupiter Hamilton.

IF YOU GO

"48 hours of Hip-Hop Theater" is a workshop and presentation featuring present and former students of Daniel Banks in performance from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Saturday in the auditorium of the Davis Fine Arts Center at West Virginia State University in Institute. Contact Susan Marrash-Minnerly at 766-5110.

**"My goal is for State to one day have a small hip-hop theater ensemble on campus."**

Susan Marrash-Minnerly,  
drama professor,  
West Virginia State University

For Banks, the workshop is about understanding and awareness.

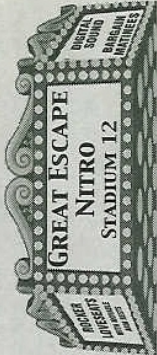
"There are two or three generations of trained actors who also have emceeing, beatboxing, and breaking skills that are fundamental to who they are," he said. "Hip-Hop Theater" presents these as legitimate forms of expression, storytelling and theater making."

Laura Allen hosts and produces "In Touch with the Arts" and "Music in the Afternoon" for West Virginia Public Radio. E-mail her at [leh668@hotmail.com](mailto:leh668@hotmail.com).



FOR CONVENIENT  
HOME DELIVERY

CALL 348-4800  
or (800) WVA-NEWS



Nitro Market Place  
Cross Lanes Exit 47 off I-64 behind Wal-Mart  
Free Refills on Large Popcorn & Drinks!  
Buy Tickets Online!  
[www.greatescape theatres.com](http://www.greatescape theatres.com)  
\$5.00 ALL SHOWS BEFORE 6  
WQBE Movie Hotline: 304-769-0405

THE MAN  
PG13

★★ Park Place  
Showtimes 9/9-15 STADIUM CINEMAS  
WASHINGTON & SUMMERS ST.  
\$5.00 BEFORE 6PM \$ .75 PARKING  
EXORCISM OF EMILY ROSE (PG13)

TEAYS VALLEY  
170 Erskine Lane  
Scott Depot, WV  
Founded 1871  
Full of Fun, Full of Life

MARQUEE  
Theater