

Half Moon

www.halfmoon.org.uk

***Locked In* by Fin Kennedy**

Resource Pack

This pack is divided into four sections and has been developed to support the study of *Locked In* as part of a GCSE, or equivalent, course of study.

Drama Activities

- Pg 2 Bringing to life the offstage events 1 – *still image, role play*
Bringing to life offstage events 2 – *hot seating, thought tracking, marking the moment*
Using *forum theatre* to explore Zahida's shooting
Reporting the events of the play – *monologues, duologues*
- Pg 3 Perform a unit of the play
- Vocal characterisation
- Objectives and obstacles
- Using the soundtrack
- Create a design
- Pg 4 Cultural connections 1, global and religious unrest – *cross cutting, still image*
Cultural connections 2, women and hip hop – *hot seating*
- Pg 5 Reviewing *Locked In*
- Re-enacting – *cross cutting*
- Mis-en-scene discussion.
- Example review and guidance

The Play

- Pg 7 Synopsis
Pg 8 Unit by unit breakdown
Pg 10 Glossary of terms used in the play
Pg 12 Extract a/ The Shooting of the Newsagent
Pg 13 Extract b/ Blaze, Tariq and Zahida's School Life
Pg 15 Extract c/ School Fight between Rahman and Wilco
Pg 16 Extract d/ Zahida's Monologue
Pg 17 Extract e/ Women and Hip Hop
Pg 19 Extract f/ Tariq's Monologue
Pg 20 Extract g/ Blaze's Monologue

Interviews with the Creative Team

- Pg 21 Composer: DJ Biznizz
Pg 21 Director: Angela Michaels
Pg 22 Actors: Ashley J, Ambur Khan, Kim Lee Hardy
Pg 24 Choreographer: Sean Graham
Pg 24 Designer: Yasuko Hasegawa, plus photograph of model box

Further Reading

- Pg 26 Women in hip hop – from www.childrens-express.org
Pg 28 Photojournalism – from www.wikipedia.org
Pg 29 Hip hop dance. Breaks with tradition – from www.independent.co.uk

Drama Activities

Bringing to life the offstage events 1

Create **still images** that are then developed as **role-plays** of the offstage events using descriptions from the script as a stimulus:

- The Shooting of the Newsagent. (Extract a)
- Blaze, Tariq and Zahida's School Life. (Extract b)
- School fight between Rahman and Wilco. (Extract c)
- Tariq's Monologue. (Extract f)

Thought track students playing Blaze, Tariq or Zahida as they observe these events. **Cross-cut** these improvised scenes with extracts from the script.

Bringing to life offstage events 2

Explore Blaze's choice to take the package from Rob using **role-play, hot Fseating, thought tracking, marking the moment**. Create a series of scenes that show the events that happen offstage during units 4, 5 and 6. Prepare the actors by hot seating the characters before the scenes. Thought track Blaze in each scene. Mark the moments where Blaze could have made other choices.

- Scene 1 Rob's phone call
- Scene 2 The meeting where Blaze collects the package.

Consider what kind of character Rob is, what promises or threats would he make to Blaze? Would he be alone? Where might the meeting be?

- Scene 3 Blaze buying the camera
- Scene 4 Arriving back at the studio

Using *forum theatre* to explore Zahida's shooting

Use **forum theatre** to explore unit 11. A group of students should prepare the unit for performance. This doesn't need to be a verbatim performance but should include all the major action. Decide what each character wants from the scene – what needs to change for Zahida not to get shot. Look back through the play and look at other moments when this could have been prevented – re-run those moments as forum scenes.

Reporting the events of the play¹

Consider different ways that the shooting could be reported, and present:

- as if you were a reporter for BBC news,
- as if you were a DJ on a pirate radio station,
- as if you were a young person telling your friends,
- as if you were a grandparent telling your grandchildren,
- as if you were a reporter for the Times newspaper,
- as if you were a reporter for The Voice newspaper.

¹ Reading *The Street Scene* by Bertolt Brecht will support this exercise.
(Brecht On Theatre. Translated by John Willett. Pub: Methuen.1986. pgs 121-129)

Perform a unit of the play

In groups of three, ask students to select, rehearse and perform a unit of the play using the synopsis and breakdown as a reminder. Encourage them to select units from throughout the play in order for the final sharing to reflect the play as a whole. It will be important to emphasise that you are not expecting them to repeat the production that they saw but rather to demonstrate their own interpretation. The following activities can support their rehearsals:

Vocal characterisation

Consider the different vocal qualities your character has when talking to different people. Make a list of all the people your character talks to in the play and practice meeting and greeting each of them. For example: friends, teachers, parents.

Objectives and obstacles

Consider what your character 'wants' from the unit. Identify the obstacles they face. Identify the actions they take to achieve that 'want'.

Example: Blaze in unit 5.

Blaze 'wants' to impress Zahida by shaming Tariq.

His obstacles include: Zahida seems to like them both. Tariq is his friend.

His actions include giving Tariq English words to read when he knows he reads Arabic and has poor literacy.

(This can be supported by reading Augusto Boal on the will, and C.Stanislavski on objectives.²)

Using the soundtrack

Choose three different pieces of music from the soundtrack that represent different energy levels. Now run the prepared scene three times, once for each energy level, with the music playing. Consider the appropriate levels for different moments and characters in the scene, select the most appropriate piece of music for the scene.

Create a design

Prepare a sketch, model box, or collage for a set and costume design that would support the performance. Consider both the themes and setting of the play in the design.

Perform

Ask each group to perform their unit in chronological order to the rest of the class.

² An actor prepares. By C.Stanislavski. Pub: Methuen.1980. pg 121-126. Games for actors and non actors. By A Boal. Pub: Routledge. 1992. pg 51 – 59.

Cultural connections 1, global and religious unrest

Cross-cut moments from the play that represent its setting in East London with improvised scenes or **still images** that represent global and religious unrest. Discuss how the writer has brought this into the play. Refer to units 6, 9, 10 and 11.

Cultural connections 2, women and hip hop

Hot seat students in role as Zahida about the role of women in hip hop. In preparation the actors should read extract e and the article Women in hip hop taken from www.childrens-express.org.uk.

Reviewing *Locked In*

Give students the review of *Little Sweet Thing* and the accompanying notes.

The following exercises may aid the writing of a review of *Locked In*.

Re-enacting

Ask students to create a series of images of the dramatic highlights of the play. Share and discuss the images. Select music from the soundtrack to support each image. **Cross cut** the images with text from the prologue:

Life

Man issa long ting

Issa takin yu time ting

Issa knowin each other since time ting

Issa keepin yu bredrins tight ting

Issa seein a path fru da dark in da heart of da night ting

Issa sweat in da palm a yu hand as yu holdin on tight ting

Mis-en-scene discussion

Show students the photograph of the model box and the design overview provided by Yasuko Hasegawa from page 23 of the pack.

"Perhaps what was most difficult to define was the balance between real and un-realness of space and objects."

Ask them to identify the signifiers of real and unreal in the design and to discuss the impact of the Perspex gun, knife and camera.

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Example review

***Little Sweet Thing* by Roy Williams**

Review by Steve Orme. British Theatre Guide www.britishtheatreguide.info
Eclipse Theatre at Nottingham Playhouse and touring. 2005

A lone youngster mimes taking shots at a basketball hoop. He appears to miss. The more he misses, the more angry and frustrated he becomes. A teenager, unidentifiable because he wears a hood, which covers his face, offers the player a real basketball - a symbolic reference to his former life. He resists - but for how long? That's the start of Roy Williams' new play, a gritty, earthy look at the temptations facing young people today as they grow up in a world in which bullying, violence and gun crime are never far away. *Little Sweet Thing* is the third play in the Eclipse initiative, which aims to develop the profile of national and regional black theatre. But director Michael Buffong points out that Williams' latest offering is not a "black" play because it catalogues the problems faced by all adolescents. Williams, whose productions have so far played only in London, has come up with a clever, incisive script and has accurately captured the dialogue and culture of today's kids on the streets. Buffong has assembled an enthusiastic troupe who are keen to put over Williams' message that there are limits to what you should do to look good in your mates' eyes. Marcel McCalla throws himself totally into his role as Kev, just out of prison and determined not to return to his old ways, even if that means taking a menial job and suffering ridicule from his peers. Equally as impressive is Seroca Davis as Tash, Kev's sister. She's the insolent, manipulative schoolgirl who comes over as tough and selfish because that's how she thinks she ought to behave. As she matures she begins to adopt a different attitude as she realises she needs friendship more than she'll admit.

The rest of the cast are just as ebullient although a couple of the actors didn't project as well as they might have done and some of their lines were lost. On the whole, though, it's a terrific production with some exceptional moments, none better than a nightclub shooting which is acted at normal speed, then in reverse and finally in slow motion. Ruari Murchison's set is simple yet extremely effective, with projections onto the basketball backboard astutely pointing up each new scene. The only disconcerting part of the evening was the audience's reaction to what was happening on stage. It was good to see so many youngsters enjoying *Little Sweet Thing* but they tended to find humour where the actors and director were trying to emphasise the tension in a scene. The ending is quite distressing and involves a brutal act of revenge. It was skilfully done and almost took your breath away. Yet many of the youngsters cheered at the outcome. Eclipse Theatre has made great strides in a short time. *Little Sweet Thing* will boost its reputation further. *Little Sweet Thing* scores because people of all ages can recognise the problems faced by today's adolescents whatever their colour.

Guidance

This review includes:

- Name of production company
- Title of the play
- Name of playwright
- Venue
- Reference to the themes: *"bullying, violence and gun crime"*
- Descriptions of action: *"a nightclub shooting which is acted at normal speed"*
- Acting notes, positives and criticisms: *"throws himself totally into his role"*
- Notes on the writing: *"clever, incisive script"*
- Notes on the set and costumes: *"because he wears a hood which covers his face"*
- A quote from the director
- The reviewer's opinions on the plays social and cultural significance
- An overall opinion on the plays effectiveness

When reviewing *Locked in* you could add:

- A drawing or sketch of the set and costume design with significant aspects highlighted
- Your thoughts on how sound/music were used to create atmosphere
- What you would want to change and why?

The Play

A Synopsis

Blaze (a Caribbean MC) and Tariq (a Bengali DJ) are both 16 and live in London's east end. They have known each other since primary school when Blaze used to stick up for Tariq when he got bullied. Together, they are now known as the Two Wise Men and wag school together to run a hip hop phone-in on a local pirate radio station Exile FM where they rap about the issues that affect them. They are in their last year of school but they don't care about their exams - they've got a demo out and they're trying to turn professional.

However, as they've got older, Blaze and Tariq have noticed that their different backgrounds are starting to come between them. Blaze's black Christian mates don't approve of him hanging round with a Bengali Muslim, and Tariq's Bengali crew don't like Blaze either. There are often fights at school between these rival gangs, and though Blaze and Tariq try not to get involved, the two of them come under pressure to stop being friends.

Then Zahida arrives on the scene as a new girl in school. She's mixed race Pakistani-Trinidadian and both boys fall for her. Blaze invites her onto their show and she turns out to be a good MC as well. The boys compete for her attention, which becomes a confrontation in which Blaze shows Tariq up on-air by showing that he can't read English.

Meanwhile, a local gangster, Rob (an offstage character), has paid Blaze to look after a package for him because he's getting some heat from the police. Blaze tries to impress Zahida by using the money from Rob to buy her an expensive camera for her photography course at college. Blaze sees the job from Rob as a test for joining Rob's crew and doesn't want to screw it up, but Tariq opens the parcel and it turns out to be a gun. The gun becomes an evil fourth character in the room, exerting its power and influence over the boys. Meanwhile, Tariq has started hanging around with his Uncle Samir again (another offstage character) who has some pretty extreme radical Islamic views, which Tariq becomes interested in. The boys argue about this, but the presence of the gun, as well as a knife Blaze carries, makes the debate potentially deadly.

As things get heated, Zahida tries to come between them and mediate, but in a scuffle she is accidentally shot. At that moment the police knock at the door and the station is busted. As she is dying, Zahida urges the boys to shoot the camera not the gun, and repeats what she has been saying all along – that only by trying to find non-violent solutions to their problems will the boys ever get what they want.

Unit by unit breakdown of *Locked In*

Locked In isn't broken up into scenes, Fin Kennedy explains;

"For a show of this scale (i.e. small) you can't really have any changes of location because big scene changes would get in the way, so all the action has to happen in one place. This was fine because the pirate radio studio provided a perfect 'hub' through which all sorts of information could flow about the outside world, giving a sense of an offstage world. There are different scenes within *Locked In*, but they aren't marked 'End of Scene One' or 'Start of Scene Two'. This is because I wanted the play itself to be more like a piece of music, or a real pirate radio broadcast, both of which happen without interruptions. For example, we might have a scene in the studio, then move away to a 'monologue' in the form of a solo rap from one of the characters, then go back to the studio. In this way it's clear that time has passed. I've also added some 'direct address' lines from Blaze where he talks directly to the audience and says things like: 'Next Fursday, Riqi come to da studio. Din't kna if he was gonna ...' which sets the scene just by telling us. I wanted the characters to have an awareness of the real theatre audience as if they were the listeners to the show, because pirate DJs and MCs talk directly to their audience all the time, so I thought it would be fine to set the scene like that. But most of all I wanted to keep the pace and energy of the play up, because clunky scene changes can be really distracting and break up the flow and tension, which in a play like *Locked In* are really important."

Unit 1 A Prologue

Unit 2 In which we are introduced to the three central characters and the pirate radio station where Tariq, Blaze and Zahida are when they should be at school. We discover about the shooting of a Bengali newsagent.

Unit 3 In which we hear, through a caller to the station, about a fight between Black and Asian youths at school that threatens Blaze's and Tariq's friendship. Zahida uses the mike to make her case as a woman of dual heritage. Zahida refuses to be labelled as a *ho*, and doesn't want to be a backing singer, she says she can make it on her own. Tariq and Blaze argue over which one of them Zahida likes best.

Unit 4 In which Blaze agrees to hold a package for Rob, a local gangsta, for £200. Zahida wants to be a photographer and they compete to buy her a camera, Tariq from his earnings at Burger King or Blaze as a *gangsta*. Zahida doesn't want anything from gangsta money.

Unit 5 In which Blaze shames Tariq because he can't read English and Zahida is disgusted with him for treating Tariq so cruelly and walks out.

Unit 6 In which we learn about how Tariq has become interested in Islam through his Uncle Samir.

Unit 7 In which Blaze returns to the station with the package and after smoking a spliff, fantasises about being a gangsta and winning an award at the MOBO's. (Music Of Black Origin)

Unit 8 In which Tariq and Blaze are at the studio together. Tariq describes his new Islamic lifestyle and we find out about the increasing racial tension at their school.

Unit 9 In which Tariq takes the mike for the first time and expresses a radical Islamic philosophy. Tariq discovers the package and unwraps it to reveal a gun. Then Rob phones and tells Blaze to dispose of the gun.

Unit 10 In which Zahida brings news that the Bengali newsagent has died and the police are everywhere. Tariq wants to use the gun to shoot Rob, in the confusion the gun is fired. Blaze gives Zahida the camera. Zahida starts a debate on air about religion, fate and making your own decisions. They cuss each other's god and religion and unite against her atheism. It ends with Tariq and Blaze threatening each other with eternal damnation, a knife and the gun.

Unit 11 In which Zahida makes a political argument and says she will capture the truth with the camera. She returns the camera when she discovers it was purchased with gangsta money. Zahida takes photos of Blaze and Tariq posing with the gun. They realise it was stupid and struggle to get the camera back. The gun is fired again, hitting Zahida by accident.

Unit 12 In which armed police surround the studio. Zahida slowly dies and asks Blaze and Tariq to take the camera not the gun – choose a peaceful route to achieve their ambitions and not be tempted to fall into a world of crime.

Unit 13 The epilogue

A Glossary of terms used in the play

Aight	=	Alright (used as either Hello, OK or Right)
Bad mindin	=	thinking bad thoughts about someone, being suspicious
Bare	=	very, lots
Bashment	=	a mix of reggae, dancehall and rap (Caribbean in origin)
Batty	=	backside, arse
Beef	=	grudge or feud (Is it beef? = Is it war?)
Bhangra	=	traditional Bangladeshi music
Bins	=	Bass bins ,speakers
Blaze	=	to smoke (usually weed)
Bling	=	ostentatious jewellery, also money
Blud	=	mate
Brap	=	no particular meaning, just an appreciative sound
Bredrins	=	mates, clan
Buff	=	sexy
Bun	=	smoke weed, kill, shoot, or forget about (from 'burn')
Bust	=	to rap
Busted	=	caught doing something you shouldn't
Chirps	=	to chat up
Choong	=	sexy
Click	=	friends, gang (from 'clique')
Crew	=	friends, gang, often specifically a DJ-MC group
Crib	=	home
Cussed	=	insulted (from 'cursed')
Cuz	=	mate (from 'cousin')
Deck	=	DJ's turntables
Desi	=	Mix of south Asian music with hip hop and reggae
Dirty	=	really good
Diss / dissin	=	disrespect
Dread	=	term of affection, like mate
Eighth	=	one eighth of an ounce of marijuana
Ends	=	your part of town
Fassy	=	derogatory term, usually describing a weak man
Fine	=	sexy
Fit	=	sexy
Five-o	=	police
G	=	mate
Garms	=	clothes
Gat	=	gun
Green	=	marijuana
Grime	=	sub-genre of UK garage music
Haps	=	cool, happy
Heavy	=	cool
Ho	=	whore
Homies	=	friends, gang (from 'homeboys')
Hood	=	the ghetto (, from 'neighbourhood')
Hustle	=	to make money from something shady or illegal
Inshallah	=	God willing (in Arabic)
Jam	=	chill out, or stay

Jammin	=	playing music, either on the turntable or the microphone
Manor	=	your home or area
Mans	=	people
Massive	=	group
Merk	=	kill or beat up
Nang	=	cool, good
Nine	=	gun
On deck	=	DJing
On mix	=	DJing
On road	=	on the street
Paper	=	money
Phat	=	cool
Pie you in	=	beat you up
Piece	=	gun
Pop	=	shoot (a gun)
Poppin	=	happening
Regs	=	standard quality marijuana (from 'regular')
Riddim	=	rhythm
Scud	=	joint of marijuana
Seen	=	OK
Shook	=	scared
Shottin	=	selling drugs
Sick	=	really good
Since time	=	from a very long time ago
Slew	=	to cut someone down in their prime, from 'slay'
Slice	=	stab
Slow jam	=	smooth slow RnB
Smacked it	=	Good, great
Spag	=	means anything, like 'stuff'
Sparked	=	beaten up
Spittin	=	rapping
Spliff	=	joint of marijuana
Squids	=	quid, pounds (as in money)
Star	=	term of affection, like mate
Swag	=	crap, bad
Ting	=	Thing
Token	=	smoking marijuana
Ton	=	one hundred
Tru say	=	it's the truth
Truss	=	trust
Twice	=	beat up, attack
Wah gwan	=	what's going on
Wasted	=	stoned, or killed
Wasteman	=	slacker, loser
Whack	=	kill
Wifey	=	girlfriend, special lady

Extracts from *Locked In*

Extract a/ The Shooting of the Newsagent

BLAZE We was in da Exile studio

TARIQ Fursday afternoon

BLAZE Settin up for da show, juss like normal

TARIQ Weren't nuttin like normal

BLAZE Only cos you was bitchin at me blud

TARIQ It was serious shit

BLAZE Only cos you was wantin to start a war

TARIQ *(To us)* Night before yeah, dis Bengali got shot on Whitechapel
Road after morning prayers

BLAZE He din't die or nuttin

TARIQ Dat ain't da point!

BLAZE He was juss some newsagent

TARIQ He was a Muslim bredrin!

BLAZE Yeah iss sad whatever but dat's juss how tings are

TARIQ Everyone knew who done it

BLAZE Nah man dat's dirty gossip

TARIQ It was Rob's crew

BLAZE Yu don't know dat

TARIQ Da black v da brown y'kna m'sayin

BLAZE What it was yeah, I'd invited Zahida in, dis buff new gel in
school

TARIQ She was so fine

BLAZE An Riqi was jealous innit

TARIQ I was not man!

BLAZE Yeah yu was

TARIQ Yu wanted to burn all my credit - again

BLAZE We was tryin a get hold a Squarehead on da roof

TARIQ He's our engineer innit, sets up de aerial an dat

BLAZE But Riqi was showin off tryin a front me

TARIQ *(whiny voice)* Blaze yu was riskin da whole station juss so as yu
could chirps

BLAZE Yu hear day whiney voice? Dat's how he went, juss like dat.

Extract b/ Blaze, Tariq and Zahida's School Life

TARIQ Arright! Hold tight all da mans in deir ends knows what time it is!

BLAZE And for dose dat don't, we gon tell yu – yo!

TARIQ Is it home time?

BLAZE & TARIQ No!

TARIQ Is it full time?

BLAZE & TARIQ No!

BLAZE It's school time!

TARIQ One time!

BLAZE Do we care?

BLAZE & TARIQ No!

BLAZE Aight hold tight Miss Kashmiri!

TARIQ Big up big up!

BLAZE We should be in Science now, sorry bout dat!

TARIQ Got more important fings

BLAZE More *important* tings goin on

TARIQ To be doin on

BLAZE To be chewin on

TARIQ Like crewin dis show

BLAZE Yu won't *miss* us Miss

TARIQ I don't fink so

BLAZE Cos all we do is cuss in yu class

TARIQ Make a fuss

BLAZE Never ever gettin higher dan a

BLAZE & TARIQ D Plus!

BLAZE So Miss yu'll be glad to see da backs of us

TARIQ And anyway we got issues

BLAZE & TARIQ To discuss!

BLAZE Yeeeeeeah da East End raised us crazy

TARIQ Growin up fru shit like a daisy

BLAZE Early memories a bit hazy

BLAZE & TARIQ So all we wanna do now is get lazy!

BLAZE Kicked outta school for token in class

Said to da Headmaster: Do I look arsed?

He said go an get a job, stop sittin on yu arse

No point in exams cos you'll never ever pass

Shoulda put da Head's head fru a pane of glass

Cos I gotta C plus in Drama an Art!

TARIQ Yeah never grew up I was dragged up bare

Fucked up family an in an outta care

But always had a faith dat's what got me through

So ma family now is my Muslim crew

BLAZE Yo I still got me Mum an she's cool but square
Makes sure her kids are fed wiv da school bus fare
But never met me Dad he just vanished in thin air
Apparently from Africa but don't know where
Mum's Caribbean so her spirit's full throttle
Gotta lock her in her room if she finishes da bottle

TARIQ Yo I came to da UK da usual route
Free years old huddled in a car boot
My uncle Samir took us in as requested
Taught us da Quran till da bruvva got arrested
Den one day at school dey took us away
Told us we weren't goin home dat day
Said he couldn't care for us – only took a minute
Took us all off to da children's home innit
At least in there I learned to hustle, learned to rhyme
Learned to fight on ma feet cos I didn't have time
To be a little kid, so I quickly got rid
Of ma accent and became da baddest boy in da crib

BLAZE First day at school we was age like, four
Saw dis Asian kid gettin knocked to da floor
Fought it weren't fair cos his English was poor
So I stepped right in an I broke a few jaws
Like a four-year old enforcer of playground law
Den I took da bwoy aside an I gave him half me Twix
Taught him how to fight an a few uva tricks
Like how to stand yu ground an never run off
And most important of all – how to say:

Their phones are ringing

Extract c/ The School Fight between Rahman and Wilco

BLAZE'S answers his phone.

BLAZE Yo caller yu live on da Two Wise Men!

CALLER #2 Yeah wah gwan Blaze it's Scratchy

BLAZE Big shout out to da Scratchmaaan! Wah gwan blud?

CALLER #2 Seen seen, just checkin in to arks why yu jammin wiv DJ Jihad.
Yu DJ man he's a terrorist innit.

ZAHIDA Hey!

BLAZE Shut up Attitude!

TARIQ Yo Scratch yu wan know da meanin a terror I'll send my click
round your click –

CALLER #2 Ah I'm shook blud I'm shook

TARIQ Yeah? Yu fuckin will be man!

ZAHIDA *(To Tariq)* An you can shut up an all Riqi!

TARIQ Attitude you ain't even *here* gel

ZAHIDA I'm here blud, yu betta believe it!

CALLER #2 Who is dat?

ZAHIDA Scratchy don't yu be comin on air chattin no rudeness bwoy!

CALLER #2 Who da hell *is* dat?

TARIQ No-one!

BLAZE Listen Scratch –

ZAHIDA No-one?! I ain't no-one! I'm da biggest someone in dis room!

CALLER #2 Who's dat gel?

BLAZE It don't matter

ZAHIDA Yo I matter big time dread.

BLAZE Look Scratch don't be dissin ma DJ man –

CALLER #2 Blaze yu know we don't like his type

BLAZE We close bredrins

CALLER #2 Yeah?

TARIQ Yeah!

CALLER #2 Well me an da resta da crew tink yu sound stupid spittin over
dat bangra shit

BLAZE What?

TARIQ Zarbal³, Scratchy

ZAHIDA Yeah shut up wit yu shit stirrin Scratch

CALLER #2 Would someone shut dat gyal up?

ZAHIDA Ain't no-one shuts ME up dread

BLAZE Attitude shut up

CALLER #2 Listen up Blaze, shit's poppin – Riqi's bredrin Rahman bitch-
slapped our bredrin Wilco dis lunchtime while yu was shakin yu
batty on yu radio show.

BLAZE Oh man

TARIQ Go Rahman!

CALLER #2 Da clip's goin round da whole school innit

TARIQ Big shout goin out to da Muslim massive!

ZAHIDA Shut up Riqi

BLAZE Yeah shut up man

³ Bengali = 'get out of my face'

Extract d/ Zahida's Monologue

ZAHIDA uses BLAZE's phone like a mike

ZAHIDA Yo gimme dat bhangra riddim Riqi!
Harder blud!
Bigger!
Arright!
Dat's more like it!
OK massive holler goin out to all da mixed race massives locked in!
Dis one's for you, check it

Yo I'm Lady Attitude
People say I'm rude
But I don't see no point in chattin shit dat ain't da truth
Always speak my mind an people fink I'm cra-zee
But ma thoughts is hotter dan a jalfrezi
Cos dat's half where I'm from - Dad's from Pakistan
Mother's Caribbean an I'm from Tottenham
Yu gotta problem wiv dat den get outta me face
Cos da future's multi-coloured an it's called Mix Race
New generation da face of a nation
Tearin yu right apart like a cross-examination
Mixin up da blood
Turnin into mud
Da categories dat dey liked to tell us couldn't budge
Genetic DJing – makin mixin an art
Head from Pakistan but a Caribbean heart
I'm da best of yu both, da sum is greater dan it's parts
Ain't no illusion I'm a logical conclusion
Da 21st century's about fusion
Causin confusion? I don't fink so
Cos take away da con an fusion is day way to go

So your click and his click
Don't click
Better pack a knife and go flick flick
Get each uvva's heads an go kick kick
Cos de only fink dat matters is who's got da biggest dick
An who chats da most shit an chirps da most chicks
Well lemme tell yu now dis chick don't fink yu sick
Your click my click
Who gives a shit?
From where I'm sittin you're path-et-ic!

Extract e/ Women and Hip Hop

BLAZE I reckon wiv a bit more practice
Well quite a *lot* more actually
But wiv da right MC trainin, from da right teacher, y'get me, yu
might – ain't
sayin for definite – but yu might be good enough to join dis
crew

ZAHIDA Who says I wan do dat?
TARIQ Yeah man dere ain't room for more dan two
BLAZE Why not?
TARIQ Well what we gon be called? Da Two Wise Men an Some Gel?
ZAHIDA Yo I ain't just any gel
TARIQ Dat sounds shit
BLAZE Nah I don't mean as no MC or nuttin
ZAHIDA What? Why not?
BLAZE Cos we need a backin gel innit
TARIQ Oh yeeeeeah
BLAZE Yeeeeeah jus lookin all sweet in da background
TARIQ Yeeeeeah
ZAHIDA Nah way man!
BLAZE What?! Are you turnin down da chance of a lifetime?
ZAHIDA What to bump an grind behind you? I don't fink so
Let me tell yu little suttin bout how it goes
Gimme a little funky riddim now Riqi
Yeah dat's nice
Now listen up – I gotta little suttin to say ...
Yo hip hop loves to hate me
But first it tries to date me
Treats me right, like some white knight
But then it tries to break me

BLAZE What?
ZAHIDA Yeah hip hop loves to hate me
Finks its charms sedate me
Says sexy garms don't mean no harm
But wivout em it won't rate me

BLAZE Nah it ain't like dat
ZAHIDA Yo hip hop loves to hate me
It reaches out to take me
Like I'm some ho seduced by dough
Well hip hop yu mistake me

BLAZE Nah hip hop ain't like dat – it ain't dat tough
Just wear a little less an yu'll look a little buff

ZAHIDA Look I ain't gon be another Lil Kim
Braggin bout my tricks wiv a Coca-Cola tin
Da gangsta's bitch ain't no life for me
Plastic chest an a lobotomy
Might be adored but I'm bored
Cos I ain't a cheerleader I'm a centre forward

BLAZE Hey don't hate da playa hate da game
But dere's money to be made an fame
Hip hop's got a place for gels
Just lie across da bonnet an play wiv yu curls

ZAHIDA Well what sorta choice are yu offerin me?
A ho wivout a voice or invisibility
An yu expect me to rejoice dat I can be yu property?
Bouncin up an down in yu Audi A3?
Well blud yu deluded if yu take me for a fool
Gonna make it on me own or not at all

BLAZE But sis yu get to hang wiv da best
All da baddest boys wiv all da bling across deir chest
Hangin on road wiv serious pride
No-one ever messin wiv a crew by yu side

ZAHIDA Yeah it's all about yu crew an yu homies an yu tribe
Ain't no room for sistas on a feminine vibe
Well dis ain't da West Coast an I ain't Foxy Brown
Famous for screwin da biggest gangsta in town
Nah dat ain't for me
Cos if yu a laydee yu'll always be a maybe
An dat just ain't enough for a force like me baby
Poundin yu chest an sayin yu a killa
Well da streets might be a jungle but yu ain't a gorilla

Extract f/ Tariq's Monologue

TARIQ Saw her comin out after me, but I was outta dere. Down da side street, past da bins, ma head boilin like a stuck kettle. I coulda killed dat boy dere an den. But gotta put violent foughs outta me head. Calm is what I need now an I know exactly where to go.

Soon as I step fru da door a da mosque I feel fine
Never come here before on me own so it's about time
Give a nod to da bredrins dat knows me, say a *Salaam*
Don't know what it is bout dis place but it makes me feel calm
Wash ma hands, change ma shoes, den go to da prayer hall inside
Dere's a new imam dere an he's doin a speech about pride
Says pride doesn't come from inside a no single man
Dat kinda pride in yusef ain't part a da plan
Cos real pride is derived from bein a Muslim collective
Shared an unspoken, it gives yu a different perspective
Together we're stronger to fight da American beast
Dere's a new star dat's risin – it comes from da Arabic East

An I'm listenin an finkin an wishin I still had my Mum
Cos I don't know what's right an I don't know what's wrong
Like a cork on da ocean I'm bobbin along
An I wanna feel smart an I wanna feel strong but I can't
Cos I've spent ma life aimin headlong into nuttin
An no-one has ever been dere, never cared never shared, just left
in midair
Like a bird in a cage I mastered da trick of stayin alive but I've
always been fick
An supressin ma rage makes me dizzy an sick
An I'm whoopin an wheezin an suckin in air
Forget where I am as da people all stare
Cos I'm chokin an cryin on da floor a da mosque
Den a voice up above me says:
'Brother ... you're lost'

Look up an it's him - my uncle Samir
Don't know him at first, ain't seen him for years
But I can't hardly move cos everyfing's numb
Tryin a speak but da words won't come
Den a hundred hands lift me back onto ma feet
Like suddin was missin but now its complete
Lookin around at ma brothers in arms
All friendly faces, sayin *Salaams*

Den my uncle he takes me and leads us in prayer
An I feel dis connection to everyone dere
Den when it's all over he takes both my hands
Says 'Welcome home son, now you're a man'

Extract g/ Blaze's Monologue

BLAZE Aight London Town
 We havin a little chill session
 Takin it down
 Gon spin a few tracks, have a little toke
 An fink about da future in a cloud a smoke
 I'm at da MOBOs an I'm doin ma speech
 Best album, best single, got award for each
 Got me best garms on, I'm lookin pretty nifty
 Wiv me bling an me charms on I'm phatter dan Fifty

He picks up the brown package and it becomes his award. Then he steps up like he's delivering a speech

Yo I'd like to fank God and ma producer Steve
An all da haters out dere who neva believed
Dis one's for you, check it
All da teachers who told me yu need qualifications
Well I hope dis proves ta dem dat all yu need is dedication
Da pirate scene is where I got ma education
So sendin dis award to da whole black nation
To Exile FM, ma radio station
Bless
I did dis on ma own, comin up from da street
Started out wiv nuttin, even shoes on me feet
But talent gets spotted, ends up where it should
Cos it's betta dan da ghetto an it's bigga dan de hood
Yeah life might deal yu a lousy hand
But yu gotta keep it real yeah an always undastand
When times get tough God shows you da way
Cos He's got tomorrow mapped out from today
Legal illegal – it don't matter man
Cos yu gotta grab da future whateva way yu can
In da Kingdom a Heaven, God will understand
We all make mistakes, dat's all part a His plan

The sound of applause, distant and echoey like in a dream

Den everybody's clappin an I luv dat sound
So I do a bit a rappin den I feel a little tappin
On ma shoulder, turn around
An who should be dere - da buffest gels yu ever seen!
One's from Reebok de uvva Versace
Says to me: 'Blaze yu da best we ever seen'
Kisses both cheeks an shakes ma hand
Says 'Can we put yu face on our new brand?'
Cos dere's gonna be a trainer called da Reebok Blaze
Hittin all da shops in just a few days
Wiv ma face on all billboards whereva yu gaze

Dere's a new megastar an his name is BLAZE

Interviews with the creative team

Composer: DJ Biznizz

I understand this is your first composition for theatre, what challenges does it present you?

"Well actually it's my first composition for spoken word and rap type theatre, but I have been composing for dance theatre for a few years now.

As for the type of challenge it presents me, it's the type I relish. This project is the type that gives me the opportunity to delve into musical genres I may not ordinarily try my hand at.

Music in general allows me a creativity and freedom to express my passions and visions for different challenges I may encounter."

Director: Angela Michaels

What do you think are the main themes and issues in *Locked In*?

"The main themes and issues are to do with the struggle for identity or finding one's true voice, choice and friendship: "coming of age" in a world where (given the characters troubled backgrounds), falling into the stereotype can seem to be the only option.

As a piece that deals with a certain lifestyle, that of hip hop and pirate radio, my first challenge (apart from refreshing my personal knowledge), was to find a creative team – composer, choreographer, and rap consultant who were engaged in the current hip hop scene. This was crucial as hip hop is a very specific and immediate medium. Hip hop fundamentally deals with the present and "has proved itself better able to respond to cultural and philosophical change than any other strain of contemporary music".⁴

Then there was the task of finding a designer who could work in an abstract way so that I could interpret the play moving between naturalistic acting, stylised movement elements and dance to heighten particular aspects of the story. I also had to find very versatile actors who had rap skills and could also move well. Hip-hop, traditionally consists of four elements (the DJ, MC, dance and graffiti art) and I wished to realise this as much as possible within the given context of *Locked In*.

Within the piece itself the challenges were to ensure that the three characters' voices carried equal weight and that the characters were fully rounded, with the actors developing complete back stories to ensure that the characters that they play are not only recognisable, but also complex and with their own rationale for making their own specific choices, whether or not we agree with them.

There are three potent symbols in the play: a camera, gun and knife. It was crucial to ensure that the actors invested these with equal weight, that they

⁴ The hip hop years. Alex Ogg and David Upshal

were all equally seductive, so that the audience comes to see that ultimately the potency comes not from these instruments but the choices we make about how we use them.

Zahida, the character who contains the voice of reason and has the broadest perspective on life, is the casualty of this "hot-house" atmosphere and implosion. Dealing with this dramatic loss without sentimentality and then the transition back to the present day presented the biggest challenge as at this point we are at the end of the play, with very little dialogue. Ultimately the challenge was to realise the legacy of hope that the play leaves us with, showing that the two boys have broken from the constraints of their limited thinking and have made positive choices in their lives."

Actors:

How did you approach and develop your character in the play?

Ashley J (playing Blaze)

"I have researched hip-hop and the grime genre as well as the lifestyle, looking at artists such as Kano, Wiley, JME, Eminem, 2pac, Nas, Mitchell brothers. Being from and growing up in east London has helped immensely with the dress sense, and issues that face young Black teenage males today. I also looked at two films: Kidulthood and 8mile."

Kim Lee Hardy (playing Tariq)

"First of all the most important thing I try to remember is that the script holds the key to unlock the first door to building a character, I read it over and over, cover to cover without trying to learn anything. I look at all the characters individually. In this play, there are three characters so I look at the interaction between all the characters and write down my initial thoughts. This could be anything from simple statements (for example, Tariq likes to DJ), to questions that may not be answered until much later in the process (for example, why does Tariq threaten Blaze with the gun?)

I like to flesh out a character in my mind from all the evidence in the script (for example, where he lives, what's his background) - this is the fun part and being an actor you get an excuse to day dream, all of this can be changed of course as nothing is set in stone, rehearsals help with this discovery. It's important to learn your lines as quickly as possible. Line learning can seem hard, so I use a few techniques to get me going (for example, physicalising the script, saying the lines and moving). It doesn't have to be naturalistic, I even find it better using an abstract approach. It's good to be quite familiar with the script before rehearsal starts.

The rehearsal is for you and how best you're going to serve the play. That's my biggest goal, I used to come in to rehearsals with all this energy and no clarity. Now, I take time, using the time given carefully and yet still having fun. I like to explore and keep exploring and deepening my character until the end of the run.

I'm the first to jump on my feet. I always find that in rehearsals. I always want to go faster and get to the playing and exploring time, but I've found that if you research your character's life and background with facts then you begin to feel at ease in rehearsal because the choices you make become informed by your research, so you can play and rely on your instincts to be strengthened by truth more easily.

Truth. Listening to yourself and what you need to do to feel safe on stage.

I like to work out which aspects of my character are like me and what I need to do to strengthen the areas that aren't. I went to a mosque and read books about Islam to understand Tariq's faith.

I sometimes look at the way animals move to get inspiration for the characters physicality. This is very import because getting the script into the body is fundamental to feel what you say."

Ambur Khan (playing Zahida)

"In order to approach and develop Zahida, the main issue was being able to recreate what it is like to be a 16 year old girl again and how they would feel about life's issues.

We carried out a lot of research like watching the film 'Kidulthood' and I would just sit and observe young adults on the train or bus and seeing their characteristics, as a real challenge for me was getting to grips with the body language that Zahida would have. The choreographer really helped me with this by getting me to really trust my own movement and I just had to practice a lot by watching myself in the mirror.

The great thing about Zahida is that she is a really strong girl and knows what she wants so I have had to engage with that passion and bring it to life. For example, I have a great passion for dancing so I would use that to show how Zahida would feel for photography.

Every day I have learnt new things about Zahida just by exploring different situations and how she would approach it and then seeing what would fit best."

Choreographer: *Sean Graham*

How is choreographing for this theatre piece different from choreographing for a dance piece?

"I have always been fascinated by the live fantasy of theatre. What can be experienced through a live performance cannot be experienced on TV. Dance has heightened this experience by adding the endless possibilities of the human form that speaks stories without words.

When choreographing a pure dance piece, I search for what the body can say and make an audience feel without being literal. Dance often magnifies basic emotions such as joy, anger, pain and enlightenment. I just try to serve these emotions as honestly as possible hoping that the movement will follow.

Having a good understanding of vocabulary helps a lot. My approach to dance technique has been quite lateral in thinking. I experienced a wide range of styles and their vocabulary, just enough in each to understand what a ballet dancer is talking about when they mention things like an 'adage' or 'arabesque' and what a break dancer is talking about when he talks about doing an 'invert' and an 'air-flare'. This knowledge helps me communicate my visions much clearer.

Finding movement is about setting tasks and finding problems to solve. New things are often found this way, as the brain pushes boundaries. I often design these tasks in direct relationship to the piece's theme.

When creating contemporary dance, the above rules apply mostly for me. When doing street and hip hop I'm more focused on using rhythms, musicality and technique, alongside good choreographic mathematics, timing and positioning.

The difference in choreographing for this piece is that the script comes first and words are spoken. What is essential is to realise that the movement is there to complement the story. The problems, at times, will be not to make things too literal or mime like. Another issue would be not to make it musical theatre but to stay as a servant to the cultural context of the piece.

I have directly been involved in hip hop theatre and have created several solo pieces. As I have followed the scene it has helped me find grounding and confidence in my interpretations and expressions of it."

Designer: Yasuko Hasegawa

How did you approach and develop the design for the play?

"*Locked In* is a play that contains a strong sense of space that is alive and evolves from moment to moment - from enclosed/compressed to exposed/explosive, motion to stillness, reality to fragmentation of reality. It has its own veins and pulses.

Some of the key images that became our starting point were floatation of this room set on the twentieth floor of an abandoned tower-block - a sense of fragility and tension of being 'on edge' - and the sense of anatomical space, for example, at a point of shooting, it feels like seeing a skeleton of a body. These led to the use of exposed structures of building and creating a space that felt abandoned and isolated from the surrounding, with all the 'overflowing' mess contained within.

Perhaps what was most difficult to define was the balance between real and un-reality of space and objects. Angela and I spent a long time discussing and developing this until the very last stage of design. Our decision on creating the deck out of mixed junk but still rooting in reality, use of splash paint which gives a sense of graffiti but in a non-specific, more abstract way was a result of this."

Photograph of the *Locked In* model box.



Women in hip hop

This month, an extraordinary conference is taking place. Academics, community activists, music industry professionals and hip hop fans are meeting to discuss the effect hip hop has had on feminism, sexuality, female body image and gender stereotyping.

The conference is being held at the University of Chicago, and more than 1000 people from around the world are attending. It has made headline news in America, where black culture magazine *Essence* is also running a year long series called "Reclaim the Music", analyzing hip hop's depiction of women. But what about in the UK? Do the young people who are the consumers care about the messages they are paying to hear? What affect does it really have on them? We talked to a range of young people and industry professionals to find out.

Dowa, 14, a street dancer, says: "I don't like the way women in skimpy clothes dance around men in hip hop videos. It makes all women seem ho-ish."

Bonnie, 16, says: "The rappers are talking about all girls out there. They don't know who's a ho and who isn't."

But Christopher, 17 disagrees. "The lyrics only refer to certain women; like the ones the artist came across." When asked how he would feel if the lyrics were about a female member of his family, he admitted: "Vexed and upset."

Female rapper LyricL says her lyrics are inspired by artists who let their feelings show through their music: "Rap is about expressing yourself. So if you're dissing women, you're therefore NOT excluding your mother, sisters, aunty, grandma, female teachers and other positive female images in your life."

She believes that as an artist you should represent your life honestly and keep things real, if you want respect.

While this argument rages back and forth, male rappers get rich on a culture that states it's cool to be a pimp, and females go along with it by getting naked in the videos for money and a chance at fame.

Lyrics such as: "We slapping the hell out of her 'coz we can, prostitute" (D12, Pimp Like Me) and "All the independent women in the house, show us your **** and shut your *****'mouths" by the same band, are just a mild example of the general attitude towards women in gangsta rap.

Can boys who idolize rappers and their lifestyles be expected to be immune to the messages given out by respected rap superstars?

1Xtra DJ Letitia says: "I think young girls are affected and I think young boys are affected. I think if you hear something over and over again, you begin to believe it."

18 year old Daniel, who likes Jay Z because of the star's arrogance, and describes himself as a "lyrics person" says: "If you think rappers saying 'b's and hos' is discriminating against women then you'll be bothered every time you hear a hip hop song."

The double impact of sexist lyrics and near X rated videos can make the situation worse.

DJ Letitia says: "I think the videos affect boys more because men are very visual creatures. Boys will posture and recite lyrics, just to look tough. But when they see videos with girls in bikinis they think you become a balla' if you treat women like they should be on the other end of a lead.

"So I think the lyrics are bad enough but with boys it's the videos that reinforce the image that women are just something to put in a bikini and high heels and bash a bit of ice round their necks."

Rappers fuel a fantasy for boys about what you should do when you have money - the kind of women you can "have" and the life you can lead.

Daniel says: "Everyone wants to live that lifestyle they see in the videos; pretty women and a lot of money."

Speaking from her experience of boys in her area, Cassey, 14, says: "Boys watch the videos and then think they can treat girls like that because it's right."

While DJ Letitia admits that some young people are old enough and smart enough to know what can be taken on board and what can't, she said: "I do think the lyrics aren't applicable for young children to be listening to and I do think it will affect you as a female.

"Some of the songs I hear, I think 'My God!' It affects me and I'm an adult. So I think yes it affects young girls and boys and how the sexes see each other."

LyricL agrees: "Negative, sexually explicit, disrespectful hip hop everyday for a year will affect the strongest minds regardless."

There are very few positive role models for girls, and the entire industry is to blame.

DJ Letitia says: "You can't say there's one particular rapper who is worse. They're all to blame. You have one naked woman in your video, or one reference to bitches and hos in your song and you're all as bad as each other." She added: "Until you have an artist who believes (and this is the hard part because everyone wants the dollars,) his work is good enough without having a naked woman in the video, or whose skills are good enough that he can make a tune that doesn't diss women, it will stay."

Perhaps the answer lies with young consumers. In America, one group stopped rapper Nelly from coming to campus for a fundraiser. They were protesting against his "Tip Drill" video in which he tosses money at women's crotches and slides a credit card in a woman's thonged bottom.

All the young people we spoke to at first said they would still buy the records. But after thinking about what their money was funding, some changed their minds. Not buying gives a message to the industry that just might be powerful enough to make things change.

This story was produced by Sonti Ramirez, 13, Ebony Goodin, 13 and Charlotte Lytton, 13. It was published by Reach for the Sky April 1, 2005. This article can be found at: www.childrens-express.org/dynamic/PUBLIC/women_hiphop_280405.htm

Field Code Changed

Photojournalism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Photojournalism is a particular form of journalism (the collecting, editing, and presenting of news material for publication or broadcast) that creates images in order to tell a news story. It is now usually understood to refer only to still images, and in some cases to video used in broadcast journalism.

Photojournalism is distinguished from other close branches of photography (such as documentary photography, street photography or celebrity photography) by the qualities of:

- *Timeliness* — the images have meaning in the context of a published chronological record of events.
- *Objectivity* — the situation implied by the images is a fair and accurate representation of the events they depict.
- *Narrative* — the images combine with other news elements, to inform and give insight to the viewer or reader.

Photojournalists must make decisions instantly and carry photographic equipment under the same circumstances as those involved in the subject (fire, war, rioting)—often while being exposed to the same risks. Photojournalism as a descriptive term often implies the use of a certain bluntness of style or approach to image-making. The photojournalist approach to candid photography is becoming popular as a unique style of commercial photography. For example, many weddings today are shot in photojournalism style resulting in candid images that chronicle the events of the wedding day.



Battle of Cable Street 1936 picture from www.anl.org.uk

Hip-hop dance: Breaks with tradition

Hip-hop dance has moved up from the streets and into the mainstream. So Matilda Egere-Cooper thinks it's about time we knew a body-pop from a pirouette

Elements of hip-hop have invaded every facet of popular culture, and hip-hop dance has now entered the sophisticated dance world, its vibrancy and adaptability changing choreography in the process. Street dance thrived in the US alongside the birth of hip-hop in the late Seventies, and has evolved from breakdancing in the Bronx (also known as breaking or B-boying) to krumping or clowning, the hip-hop dance from Los Angeles depicted in Madonna's "Hung up" video and David LaChapelle's documentary *Rize*. In London, street-dance classes are ten a penny. *Rumble*, a body-popping headspin on the tragic Romeo and Juliet story by the German company Renegade Theatre, was a smash hit at the Edinburgh Festival in 2004 and began a national tour last week. The same week, Impact Dance and ZooNation also teamed up for a double bill of urban tales using street dance at the Peacock Theatre.

Breakin' Convention, the annual festival of hip-hop dance and theatre, intends to score a hat-trick this April at Sadler's Wells, and Robert Hylton's Urban Classicism company is doing another run of *Verse & Verses* at the South Bank in May.

"We're living in a hip-hop generation," says the choreographer Jonzi D, the curator of Breakin' Convention. His latest graffiti-themed show, *TAG... Me vs the City*, comes to London in March, having also begun its tour last week.

"Hip-hop culture and hip-hop forms are massive now, all around the world. So it should be in the theatre, just like any culture can exist in the theatre. It's just movement in a black box. It's lighting in a black box. It's sound in a black box. And once we have those components, then you do what you do."

Jonzi D is arguably Britain's leading advocate of hip-hop dance. Beginning his career as a rapper and breakdancer in the Eighties, he graduated from the London Contemporary Dance School, studying European ballet as part of his training. It was his objective to combine his love for hip-hop dance with the prestige of classical theatre, and ever since his critically acclaimed show *Aeroplane Man* in 1999, he has seen hip-hop dance become more accepted. "Theatre was getting a bit dry, particularly dance," he says. "And the vocabulary of this new type of work is technically very interesting. Hip-hop dance offers options to choreographers. So I think the feeling within the theatre world is that this dance form and discipline is pushing the realms of contemporary dance."

And it's not just appealing to those in the world of hip-hop. "Because hip-hop culture and the graffiti scene are everywhere, people who are not in the scene don't know how to approach it," explains Markus Michalowski, the director of *Rumble*. "But when it's brought to them in the form of a story, they have access to the characters and the world they live in. What we're

amazed about is how far the audience goes. There's an interest throughout society; a desire to understand it, and to learn to appreciate it."

Hip-hop choreographers stay faithful to the original culture, and employ techniques such as the moonwalk, uprocking (which uses salsa moves, foot shuffles, turns and jerky body movements) and body-popping or locking (the sudden contraction of muscles to the beat). Then there's the marvellously intricate breakdancing, the original folk dance of hip-hop. Its spontaneity and energised aggression are what make it so attractive.

"Contemporary dance has been stunted," says Robert Hylton, the director of Urban Classicism. "With B-boying, people have created a new vocabulary from being on their backs and in awkward positions. What B-boying does is add quality, strength and massive power. I think contemporary dance is enjoying it, but there's pressure there for them."

"We've seen the repercussions already," adds Michalowski. "Quite a few modern dancers have come to the performances and say they have had to go back and rethink a few things, and are inspired by it - or frustrated."

As well as making their mainstream counterparts a little nervous, hip-hop dance directors are breaking out of the confines of teaching classes to develop professional organisations. Impact Dance, created by Hakeem Onibudo, started as a street-dance class and has since taken on projects for the BBC, Nickelodeon and the Barbican. Onibudo wants street dance to be used as a vehicle to relay social and political commentary. In his latest production, *Underworld* (inspired by the horror film), themes of integration and cultural opposition are central. "The emotion is best portrayed through hip-hop/street dance," he says. "But the story and the choreography go hand in hand. It's not just about the dance. We've got to take it to another stage and use all the elements."

Likewise, ZooNation's recent *Into the Hoods* is inspired by the Sondheim musical *Into the Woods*, and features Cinderella as a DJ named Spinderella, a hoodie-wearing Lil' Red, and Prince Charming as a quintessential "playa", or ladies' man. The director, Kate Prince, was aiming for a witty tale that would also showcase the versatility of hip-hop dance, despite the music's negative connotations based on misogyny, materialism and violence. "Hip-hop as music has had a bad press from people that don't know about it," she says. "But, as in everything, there's a positive side to it. Hip-hop shouldn't be about the violence and the fighting. It should concentrate on the positive things, like dance."

The only potential setback to the continued growth of street dance is financial support. A large number of classes exist around the country, but when companies attempt to put on performances, many have to settle for the outskirts of the West End. And making ends meet can be a major issue for some companies. "I would like to think that there's a huge future for hip-hop dance," says Prince. "I would like to think there's the space to have hip-hop shows doing tours and growing, but it needs funding. I know as a company we don't have funding, and there's so many things we'd like to do that we can't afford."

Hylton suggests that street dance can have longevity in the mainstream, providing it plays an active role in the lives of young people. In Prince's production, 21 kids are cast alongside professional dancers, and this, Hylton

argues, is beneficial to its future. "Hip-hop dance gets kids off the streets and it gives them a healthy life," says Hylton.

Otherwise, it is a matter of investors taking more chances, says Onibudo.

"Change is something that people don't want to accept. It takes someone brave and confident in what they've seen to set the ball rolling," he says.

"People who have the power to put us in the theatre should realise that hip-hop dance has an audience. We sold out nine days before - 1,700 tickets. Anyone in their right mind cannot deny that there's now a market."

To the long-term supporters of hip-hop dance, three productions opening in the same week is only the beginning. "I can't see any real reason this form should stop," says Jonzi D. "As long as there's hip-hop-heads around that love this stuff, we'll keep it going. And a large community of people with a strong desire to keep it going will open doors for other people."

Elements of hip-hop have invaded every facet of popular culture, and hip-hop dance has now entered the sophisticated dance world, its vibrancy and adaptability changing choreography in the process. Street dance thrived in the US alongside the birth of hip-hop in the late Seventies, and has evolved from breakdancing in the Bronx (also known as breaking or B-boying) to krumping or clowning, the hip-hop dance from Los Angeles depicted in Madonna's "Hung up" video and David LaChapelle's documentary *Rize*. In London, street-dance classes are ten a penny. *Rumble*, a body-popping headspin on the tragic Romeo and Juliet story by the German company Renegade Theatre, was a smash hit at the Edinburgh Festival in 2004 and began a national tour last week. The same week, Impact Dance and ZooNation also teamed up for a double bill of urban tales using street dance at the Peacock Theatre.

Breakin' Convention, the annual festival of hip-hop dance and theatre, intends to score a hat-trick this April at Sadler's Wells, and Robert Hylton's Urban Classicism company is doing another run of *Verse & Verses* at the South Bank in May.

"We're living in a hip-hop generation," says the choreographer Jonzi D, the curator of Breakin' Convention. His latest graffiti-themed show, *TAG... Me vs the City*, comes to London in March, having also begun its tour last week.

"Hip-hop culture and hip-hop forms are massive now, all around the world. So it should be in the theatre, just like any culture can exist in the theatre. It's just movement in a black box. It's lighting in a black box. It's sound in a black box. And once we have those components, then you do what you do."

Jonzi D is arguably Britain's leading advocate of hip-hop dance. Beginning his career as a rapper and breakdancer in the Eighties, he graduated from the London Contemporary Dance School, studying European ballet as part of his training. It was his objective to combine his love for hip-hop dance with the prestige of classical theatre, and ever since his critically acclaimed show *Aeroplane Man* in 1999, he has seen hip-hop dance become more accepted.

"Theatre was getting a bit dry, particularly dance," he says. "And the vocabulary of this new type of work is technically very interesting. Hip-hop dance offers options to choreographers. So I think the feeling within the theatre world is that this dance form and discipline is pushing the realms of contemporary dance."

And it's not just appealing to those in the world of hip-hop. "Because hip-hop culture and the graffiti scene are everywhere, people who are not in the scene don't know how to approach it," explains Markus Michalowski, the director of Rumble. "But when it's brought to them in the form of a story, they have access to the characters and the world they live in. What we're amazed about is how far the audience goes. There's an interest throughout society; a desire to understand it, and to learn to appreciate it."

Hip-hop choreographers stay faithful to the original culture, and employ techniques such as the moonwalk, uprocking (which uses salsa moves, foot shuffles, turns and jerky body movements) and body-popping or locking (the sudden contraction of muscles to the beat). Then there's the marvellously intricate breakdancing, the original folk dance of hip-hop. Its spontaneity and energised aggression are what make it so attractive.

"Contemporary dance has been stunted," says Robert Hylton, the director of Urban Classicism. "With B-boying, people have created a new vocabulary from being on their backs and in awkward positions. What B-boying does is add quality, strength and massive power. I think contemporary dance is enjoying it, but there's pressure there for them."

"We've seen the repercussions already," adds Michalowski. "Quite a few modern dancers have come to the performances and say they have had to go back and rethink a few things, and are inspired by it - or frustrated."

As well as making their mainstream counterparts a little nervous, hip-hop dance directors are breaking out of the confines of teaching classes to develop professional organisations. Impact Dance, created by Hakeem Onibudo, started as a street-dance class and has since taken on projects for the BBC, Nickelodeon and the Barbican. Onibudo wants street dance to be used as a vehicle to relay social and political commentary. In his latest production, *Underworld* (inspired by the horror film), themes of integration and cultural opposition are central. "The emotion is best portrayed through hip-hop/street dance," he says. "But the story and the choreography go hand in hand. It's not just about the dance. We've got to take it to another stage and use all the elements."

Likewise, ZooNation's recent *Into the Hoods* is inspired by the Sondheim musical *Into the Woods*, and features Cinderella as a DJ named Spinderella, a hoodie-wearing Lil' Red, and Prince Charming as a quintessential "playa", or ladies' man. The director, Kate Prince, was aiming for a witty tale that would also showcase the versatility of hip-hop dance, despite the music's negative connotations based on misogyny, materialism and violence. "Hip-hop as music has had a bad press from people that don't know about it," she says. "But, as in everything, there's a positive side to it. Hip-hop shouldn't be about the violence and the fighting. It should concentrate on the positive things, like dance."

The only potential setback to the continued growth of street dance is financial support. A large number of classes exist around the country, but when companies attempt to put on performances, many have to settle for the outskirts of the West End. And making ends meet can be a major issue for some companies. "I would like to think that there's a huge future for hip-hop dance," says Prince. "I would like to think there's the space to have hip-hop shows doing tours and growing, but it needs funding. I know as a company

we don't have funding, and there's so many things we'd like to do that we can't afford."

Hylton suggests that street dance can have longevity in the mainstream, providing it plays an active role in the lives of young people. In Prince's production, 21 kids are cast alongside professional dancers, and this, Hylton argues, is beneficial to its future. "Hip-hop dance gets kids off the streets and it gives them a healthy life," says Hylton.

Otherwise, it is a matter of investors taking more chances, says Onibudo.

"Change is something that people don't want to accept. It takes someone brave and confident in what they've seen to set the ball rolling," he says.

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Locked In Resource Pack

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Half Moon runs an extensive programme of participatory activities for young people. We work in partnership with schools, arts organisations and community groups throughout Tower Hamlets and across London.

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