



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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NYC's Hip Hop/Theater Artist BABA ISRAEL Named Artistic Director of Major Theater in Manchester, England! ISRAEL Continues to Integrate Hip Hop, Theater, and Youth Arts

New York City - - Hip Hop/Theater Artist **BABA ISRAEL** announces today that he has accepted the position of Artistic Director at **Contact Theater**. Contact is a pioneering theater in Manchester, England and one of the most successful theaters for young people in that country. It has a world-wide reputation for producing exciting new work and nurturing young diverse audiences. **Charles Lauder**, Contact's Chairman says "This is a thrilling appointment at a pivotal time for Contact. Baba Israel has an international pedigree and has undertaken remarkable work for and with young people. He brings a range of attributes and talents that make him ideally suited to inspire and lead the young people who are at the heart of Contact's activities as well as its vibrant management team. We are hugely excited at the prospect of Baba taking us on the next stage of Contact's continuing development." Baba Israel shares in the excitement: "In 2005, when I came to Contact, I was blown away and returned to New York describing the place as a model venue for cutting-edge art where young people feel at home, take risks, and grow as people. I have worked there in many capacities and I am now honored to become the Artistic Director of such a forward thinking organization."

ABOUT BABA ISRAEL

Born and currently living in New York, Israel is a poet, emcee, theatre artist, beatboxer, director, producer, and author. He has toured extensively across the United States, Europe, South America, Australia, and Asia, performing with artists such as **Outkast, The Roots, Vernon Reid, Rahzel, Afrika Bambaataa, and Bill Cosby**. As a teacher, he has worked in a wide range of disciplines and with several cutting-edge arts organizations, including **Urban Word, BAM, Arts Horizons, New World Theatre**, among others.

As a director, Israel's work includes *Project 2050* (New World Theatre), *Maxwell Golden* (UK) and *Sharpening Saws* (UK). He is also Co-founder and Co-Artistic Director of Playback NYC Theatre Company which aims to bring theater to under-represented communities.

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No stranger to Contact, Baba Israel has performed there previously. Last year, he performed in *Process* and *Boombap! Showtime* to rave reviews. “This is a revolutionary moment,” Israel comments. “A Hip Hop-based artist moving into a position of sustained leadership with the purpose of energizing the lives of young people through the arts is major. I bring a background and perspective that is grounded in not only Hip Hop but in theatre, jazz, poetry, and other genres.”

Baba Israel will start the new position at Contact this summer and plans to maintain his career as a hip hop performance artist. For more information, please visit www.babaisrael.com

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