

## Haleem “Stringz” Rasul Ar-Rasheed

727 W. Grand Blvd. #251

Detroit, MI 48216

Haleemrasul@Yahoo.com

313.721.3355

Greetings,

My name is Haleem “Stringz” Rasul, and I am a dance performing artist, choreographer and artist educator. I am well versed with many popular urban dance forms; however, I am proficient in breakin’, house dance and a Detroit cultural dance style known as jit.

I discovered my passion for the arts and hip-hop at an early age. Growing up in Detroit came with its own unique challenges that served as motivators that manifested into creative and business ventures following graduating from Western Michigan University in 2001. I established Hardcore Detroit as a brand dance company and fashion label. The motto “hardcore,” represents success after struggle and overcoming hardships to achieve victory. By 2010, Hardcore Detroit was voted best dance company in the Real Detroit Reader’s Poll.

I learned discipline through the trials of everyday life and the intense ridicule of b-boyin’s only teacher: the cypher. I have instructed dance workshops internationally, judged and participated in dance tournaments throughout the nation gaining international respect, organized dance-related events in my hometown and produced relevant merchandising materials. I am currently a recipient of two distinguished grant foundations (Kresge and Knight Arts foundations) earning the title of dance ambassador of Detroit.

After exploring dance in other communities, I gained more appreciation for Detroit’s own innovations: and by March 2009, I tracked down the Jitterbugs, the group recognized for developing the Detroit Jit in the 1970s. Compiling exclusive interviews with them and other pioneers, I released a DVD illustrating the history of the jit through oral narratives, images, and never-before-seen footage. This historical project is complimented with a groundbreaking how to jit instructional. My creative direction was highly driven by the look and feel of Crazy Leg’s (Rock Steady Crew) film production entitled *The Freshest Kids*. His documentary embodies the story of the rise of the b-boy in a paramount fashion.

Jit, is a combustion of standing high energy footwork precision and arm syncopations that could be taken to the floor to create a dynamic aesthetic. The history of jit runs directly parallel with the original hip-hop dance form of breakin’. Both are creative expressions spawning out from the funk era and landing on the inner city streets reflecting conditions of their time. Breakin’ emerged from outside park jams in the Bronx, while Detroiters formed their steps at night under the streetlights and at basement parties. Both disciplines began to fuse various movements throughout its evolution. This artistic fusion is vital, placing jit underneath the umbrella of hip-hop, synonymously with other regions across the nation, each having their own unique narratives. These social links push innovation and ultimately becoming the arch of my teaching philosophy.

In 2012, I became the gateway for jit’s inclusion within the entertainment lineup for the Detroit Pistons that is greatly dominated by hip-hop culture. Jit became an instant programming favorite. For multiple seasons, I have shared the stage with classic hip-hop acts such as: MC Hammer, Doug E. Fresh, Vanilla Ice, Salt N’ Pepa, Naughty By Nature, Fat Joe, Black Sheep, Busta Rhymes and many others.

In August of 2015, the Zimbabwe Cultural Center in Detroit (ZCCD) working collaboratively with the Jibilika Dance Trust, sponsored a dance residency in Harare, Zimbabwe. During my month stay, I conducted research and interviews, led workshops in Mutare and other various towns. I was a guest judged for the annual Jibilika hip-hop dance competition held in Bulawayo. I collaborated with a selected group to perform for the opening dance act of the festival with jit set as the leading form of the entire piece. I was able to present my experiences and findings at the US embassy in Zimbabwe then later again this past December at the Skype and Mix Party held inside the N'namdi Gallery in Detroit. During my lectures, I used my own story of success and struggle to promote positive ideas that established the platform in which I was speaking from.

One Step At a Time (OST), is one of my simple approaches when engaging younger kids about dance. In my workshops, I encourage youth to take a physical first-step, then building up. Reflecting back on my previous accomplishments, I found that the first-step was the most difficult and one major step for me was applying for Red Bull Beat Riders in 2006 –

“Beat Riders brings together a handpicked international group of 30 of the best up-and-coming urban dancers to train and study with the founders of contemporary urban culture and dance.”

The beat rider's period allowed me to gain invaluable essentials from key pioneers of the hip-hop movement enabling me to reach further heights in my art and career path that I am now able to share with others.

# Haleem “Stringz” Rasul Ar-Rasheed

## EDUCATION

B.F.A. in Graphic Design, Western Michigan University, 2001.

## DANCE EDUCATION

Over twenty years of B-Boying (break-dancing) and eighteen years of Detroit Jit.

## DANCE ACHIEVEMENTS

*Hardcore Detroit Breaking Crew, 2001 - Present*

Founder/Booking Manager and Lead Choreographer.

Established troupe in 2001 to provide urban dance programming locally and abroad.

2019 - Presented with The Cropperfoot Award for choreography - Wayne State University.

2018 - Artist educator for Beats2Borders held in Windsor, Ontario - Meridian International Center.

2018 - Served as a King • Chavez • Parks Visiting Professor at The University of Michigan.

2018 - Guest presenter for the B-Series convergence at Columbia College Chicago.

2017 - Eastern Michigan University guest faculty dance instructor in 2016 and 2017.

2017 - Guest performer for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture.

2016 - Indonesia residency - Next Level Hip-Hop Diplomacy promoting cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

2016 - Kurdistan dance residency through Yes Academy and American Voices.

2016 - Jit workshop series guest instructor at California State University 3 week intensive.

2015 - Zimbabwe dance residency spearheaded by the Zimbabwe Cultural Centre in Detroit.

2014 - Released a one-of-a-kind jit documentary entitled “The Jitterbugs: Pioneers of the Jit.”

2013 - Knights Arts Challenge Grant - recipient of 12,000.

2012 - Collaboration with the Hinterlands Ensemble. Performed in China at the 9th Shanghai Biennale.

2012 - Instructed Jit dance workshop in Beijing, China.

2010 - Kresge Artist Fellow - recipient of 25,000.

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS & VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

*“Sokunge: shadows of resistance”, 2018 & 2019*

Live performer for a research based work around various forms of cultural resistance and the use of symbolism and meaning to modify power and contest domination.

*“Footsteps in the dark, Journey of Hip-Hop Movement”, 2017 & 2018*

Showcases the work of American and International dancers of Muslim backgrounds that specialize in various contemporary forms of dance connected to Hip-Hop culture.

*Outreach for Fela - Detroit high school tour, 2012 & 2013*

*Sponsored by Jay Z and Will and Jada Smith*

Dancer for innovative series of educational outreach appearances in local High Schools which gives young people a connection between Fela’s music and his human rights activism through live music and dance which helps tell the story of this charismatic musician/activist.

*Detroit Pistons Entertainment, “D-Town” Hip-Hop Dancer 2011 -2012*

Main choreographer | performed during timeouts and halftimes with various musical guests acts.

*House Dance Conference, New York, NY, 2008 - 2009*

Invited to perform and instruct workshops.

Judged international house dance competition.

*“Buck ‘N’ Grind,” Stockholm, Sweden, 2007*

Invited to perform at demonstrations and instruct at dance workshops.

Conducted interviews with local radio stations and biography featured in Swedish magazine.

*Red Bull Beat Riders, New York, NY, 2006*

Selected out of thirty international applicants.

Studied with leaders and innovators of contemporary urban dance.

Dialogued with fellow dancers on progressing the future of urban dance movements.

*Detroit Summer, Detroit, MI, 2005 - Present*

Used as a creative alternative outlet where I managed free weekly practice sessions twice a week.

Assisted with developing proper dance techniques.

*Jit vs House, Detroit, MI, April and October of 2017*

Joint effort with house dance icon from New York - Brian "Footwork" Green.

Aimed to highlight two intricate street dance forms through selective competitive interaction.

*Detroit House Dance Conference, Detroit, MI, August, 2009*

Organizer for the House Dance Conference in Detroit for the first time.

Collaborated with New York and Detroit house dancers to create a successful event.

*Jit vs. Juke, Detroit, MI, 2007*

Organized an unique competition promoting regional dance dialogue between two opposing dance forms.

Transformed a Detroit vs Chicago conflict into a non-violent high energy positive exchange.

Produced successful DVD attracting international attention.

## **1ST PLACE COMPETITION**

Standing O BDay Bash - 2018, Rhythm to Freedom 2017, 2X2 Hip-Hop Fest - 2017, Street Grand Prix China - 2016, Flowhio - 2015, UDEF Champions Series Top 100 - 2015, Awake ATL - 2014, Midtown Throwdown Cypher King - 2013, King Michigan - 2011 & 12, Wreck Room - 2006, Hip Hop Olympics - 2002&2003, Battle Cry - 2002, RPM Import Slam - 2001 and EB 2000 - 2000.

## **COMMERCIAL VIDEO**

Black To Techno - A film by Jenn Nkiru

Mike Ellison - Covalence | Discover Detroit's Techno Roots

2020 Ford Escape Press event Production

Wil Black - "Urban Ambiance"

JunesFlow - "The Jit"

Vanguard World - "Enter The Circle" - w/ ALTA pro 2+263CGHT

Charlie Puth, Ty Dolla Sign - "One Call Away" Atlantic Records

J Dilla & Esham - "Big Thangs" - Dir. Nic Notion

Mike-E (Afroflow) - "Stamina" - Dir. Tom Carleton

DJ Fluff - "Jit Arena"

Bizarre (D12) - "Hip-Hop"

Hawa - "Heart Quaker" - TandB Films LLC

<b>PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE</b>	
Celebration of Muslim Artists/American Islamic College - 2017	The Legacy Continues (A Tribute to Michael Jackson), 2009
Footsteps in the Dark Washington DC - 2017	Comerica City Fest - 2007 - 2009
Detroit Music Weekend - 2017	Cultural fusion, Splendor of the East - 2008
Side Walk Festival - 2017	Detroit Westin Book Cadillac Opening - 2008
Charles H. Wright Museum MLK - 2017	Stage play Fatherhood produced by Angela Dunlap, 2008
Cranbrook Kingswood MLK edition - 2016	MOCAD, Urban Arts Explosion, 2008
Detroit Fire House Back to School Bash - 2016	Allied Media Conference, 2008
Toledo Museum of Arts - 2016	Campus Martius Park, Summer in the Park - 2007
Detroit Institute of Arts - 2004, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2012 and 2017	Target Fireworks, VIP Rooftop Party - 2007
Concert of Colors - 2011 and 2012 Collaborators: Mike Ellison	Greek Town Casino - 2006
Red Bull Art of Motion - 2011	North American Auto Show, Cadillac Escalade - 2006
African World Festival - 2011	Channel Fox 2 News commercial (Project Safe Neighborhoods) - 2004

## References

### **Charyse “Mahogany Jones” Bailey**

Hp-Hop Educator/Emcee  
21530 Kelly Rd. Apt.102  
Eastpointe, MI 48021  
248.752.1524  
mahoganyjo@gmail.com  
www.MahoganyJones.com

### **Chido Johnson**

Zimbabwe Cultural Center in Detroit  
5440 Cass Ave. #901  
Detroit, MI 48202  
313.610.1240  
yes@chidox.com  
www.zccd.org

### **Plot Mhako**

Projects Director  
JIBILIKA DANCE TRUST  
+263-773591356  
nfo@jibilikadance.org  
www.jibilikadance.org

### **Amirah Sackett**

We’re Muslim, Don’t Panic  
1322 West Arthur Ave Apt. 1  
Chicago, IL 60626  
amirahsackett@gmail.com  
612.850.3240

### **Piper Carter**

The Foundation of Women in Hip-Hop  
646.246.1429  
PiperCarter@gmail.com  
www.thefoundationofwomeninhiphop.com

## Links

### **China (Jit)**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWExpHET4EY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWExpHET4EY)

### **Indonesia**

<https://vimeo.com/208921997>

### **The Jitterbugs; Pioneers of the Jit**

<https://vimeo.com/109421034>



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