

Global Hip Hop Studies  
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## SHOW & PROVE

### BOO 'DJ BOO' RECITAS

DJ and Musician

# Trinity International Hip Hop Festival and the evolution of hip hop culture

### ABSTRACT

*Like any culture, hip hop evolved as it spread across the globe and passed on to future generations. As someone who was raised throughout the 1980s and 1990s, DJ Boo has witnessed its evolution. As a participant in the culture he has had the opportunity to travel abroad to work with and perform alongside artists who have adopted hip hop as their own and found a voice in its culture. These opportunities have also allowed him to document some of that work as seen in the photograph of Amirah Sackett during her performance at the 2019 Trinity International Hip Hop Festival.*

### KEYWORDS

hip hop  
evolution  
culture  
global impact  
international festival  
DJing

### ARTIST STATEMENT

What started as a back to school jam thrown by DJ Kool Herc in the summer of 1973 has over the past 50 years evolved into a worldwide movement. Being born in the 1970s and raised throughout the 1980s and 1990s, I can clearly remember hearing on the radio early hits like 'Rapper's Delight' by The Sugarhill Gang, 'White Lines' by Grandmaster Flash & Melle Mel, and 'Basketball' by Kurtis Blow. I remember the early years of music videos and

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Figure 1: Amirah Sackett. Photography taken by Boo Recitas during the 2019 Trinity International Hip Hop Festival.

seeing on MTV Blondie's 'Rapture' where Debbie Harry references Fab 5 Freddy and Grandmaster Flash in her verse.

After seeing movies like *Beat Street* and *Breakin'*, I went through my little breakdance phase. In the 1990s my brother and I started a DJ crew with a few of our friends. Back then the music made us feel good, breaking made us look cool and DJing got us into parties for free. Throughout that time, we were not concerned with hip hop's global impact and never imagined it becoming this worldwide cultural juggernaut.

Today hip hop is everywhere, from Nova Scotia to Nepal, and one event that has showcased the global reach of hip hop has been the Trinity International Hip Hop Festival. Starting in 2006, this annual festival has brought to the US hip hoppers from around the world to share how the culture has impacted them, whether it be through music, dance, or documentaries.

My personal involvement with the festival spanned from 2006 to 2022. During that time my role was to DJ the main concert, providing music for the audience and performing with any artist that required my talents as a turntablist. My photography was not taken because of an official role but done for my own personal reasons. DJing this event allowed me to share the stage with so many great artists and was a great opportunity to capture them in their element.

For this issue of *Global Hip Hop Studies (GHHS)*, the editors selected a shot I took from the 2019 festival. The shot was of Muslim American dancer/choreographer Amirah Sackett as she performed her piece 'Love Embraces All'. This piece is based on the poem 'The Alchemy of Love' by Rumi and recited by Aja Black of The Reminders under the production of DJ Kevin Hersch. Using a combination of traditional dance, and popping and locking, Amirah interprets the words of the Sufi mystic poet into movement.

Witnessing and capturing her performance was a firm reminder of how hip hop as a form of expression bridges genres and cultures. By sampling and remixing Rumi, Amirah makes something old into new, makes something

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esoteric a little more familiar. At the same time, it allows her to personalize the expression of her culture.

Her performance is also an example of the evolution and proliferation of hip hop culture. Watching Amirah's performance, I see her use hip hop dance movements that were once used to flex against a rival dancer in a battle to interpret a Sufi mystic poem.

If that is not evolution, then I am not sure what is.

### **SUGGESTED CITATION**

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### **CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS**

Boo is a New York-based Filipino-American DJ and musician. He has shared the stage with the likes of Ghostface Killah, Talib Kweli, KRS-One and DJ Kool Herc. He has backed wordsmiths like Eternia, The Juggaknots and Omar Offendum. As DJ for The Nomadic Wax Collective and cultural ambassador for the US, he travelled to Nepal, Mozambique and Swaziland, facilitating DJ workshops on the American Music Abroad Tour. Boo was house DJ for the historic One Mic: Hip Hop Culture Worldwide, the first hip hop festival at The Kennedy Center. For over a decade he was the house DJ for the Trinity International Hip Hop Festival. He also helped produce and performs in the award-winning holiday show The Hip Hop Nutcracker featuring Kurtis Blow.

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