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## **Old Globe Will Reach Out to Students with New Hip-Hop Musical *Kingdom* in 2009**

By Kenneth Jones

The Old Globe in San Diego will produce the new hip-hop/rock musical *Kingdom*, with book and lyrics by Aaron Jafferis and music by Ian Williams, directed by Ron Daniels, for 14 performances, Feb. 12–22, 2009.

Old Globe will offer eight free student and public performances of *Kingdom* and workshops in classrooms and in the community for students and area hip-hop artists.

Performances will play The Lincoln High School Center for the Arts (Feb. 12-15) and at the Old Globe Theatre (Feb. 19-22).

*Kingdom* "fuses hip-hop and rock music to create a truly original score that chronicles the lives of Andres and Juan, two inner city friends who join the Latin King and Queen Nation searching for honor, power and respect," according to The Old Globe. "When tragedy upends their lives, the struggle for leadership of the Nation tears the two friends apart with devastating results. Inspired by true stories of gang culture, *Kingdom* is a groundbreaking new musical that gives audiences a unique view into the world of two young men caught in a cycle of violence — helping to understand their lives, their hopes, their struggles, and the choices they make."

This production of *Kingdom* is part of The Old Globe's first year of artistic programs in southeastern San Diego.

The Globe recently acquired its 43,000-square-foot Technical Center at 5335 Market Street, "and this has served as the springboard for an artistic hub in the community, with the creation and implementation of new plays, performances, partnerships and training programs for and with area students, residents and artists."

According to Old Globe, students and residents "will be given the opportunity to work with the author and Old Globe teaching artists to explore the art and story of *Kingdom* and explore elements of playwriting as hip-hop poetry, monologues and scenes. Students will also have the opportunity to create and perform their own original work." Earlier developmental versions of *Kingdom* have garnered numerous accolades, including a 2008 Richard Rodgers Award, the Most Promising New Musical award at the 2006 New York Musical Theatre Festival.

The production was chosen to represent the United States at the 2008 International Community Arts Festival in the Netherlands last March. It also received acclaim at the 2007 NAMT (National Alliance for Musical Theater) Festival of New Musicals showcase.

"When I saw the showcase at the NAMT Festival last year, I knew that this wonderful, well crafted musical represented a great opportunity for the Globe to connect with a new audience," stated Old Globe executive producer Louis G. Spisto. "What's really exciting is that this new work, which has garnered so much acclaim throughout its initial development, is going to be performed both at the Globe and at a new state-of-the-art 750-seat theatre in southeastern San Diego. The partnership between Lincoln High School and our creative team and staff will result in some amazing programs, as students, teachers, community residents and artists will work together throughout the development and performance schedule of *Kingdom*. Students and artists in southeastern San Diego will be mentored by professional hip-hop theatre artists and create their own work as part of the residency."

Jafferis (book and lyrics) has performed his acclaimed hip-hop poetry at Madison Square Garden, the Kennedy Center, and the National Poetry Slam Championships, where he was the 1997 Open Rap Slam champion. His solo hip-hop play *No Lie* has been seen at the Nuyorican Poets Café, H.E.R.E., Passage Theatre, The International Festival of Arts & Ideas, and at high schools and colleges across the country. His hip-hop play *Shakespeare: The Remix* (music by Gihieh Lee) was commissioned by TheatreWorks (Palo Alto) and performed by TheatreWorks, St. Louis Black Rep, and Collective Consciousness. He wrote the book and English lyrics for Ruben Flores' Latin American Songbook series at Joe's Pub. He is currently working on *The Weird Sisters*, a hip-hop opera about young women surviving in the city. In 2007, he was named one of "50 to Watch" by The Dramatist.

Williams (music) has written several original musicals, including *Kingdom*, *Story of an African Farm*, and *SkidZoeFranNya*, as well as writing original music for several plays. He received his BM in music composition from Eastern Washington University, and his MFA in musical theatre writing from New York University.

Director Daniels was born and brought up in Brazil, where he was a founding member of the renowned Teatro Oficina, in São Paulo. He is an honorary associate director of the Royal Shakespeare Company and a former artistic director of The Other Place Theatre, the RSC's experimental theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. His work over 15 years with the RSC includes many productions of Shakespeare plays such as *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, two productions of *Hamlet* (the first with Roger Rees and the second with Mark Rylance), *Richard II*, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Pericles* and *Timon of Athens* as well as major new works by contemporary British playwrights David Edgar, David Rudkin, Pam Gems, Paula Milne, Naomi Wallace, Paul Thompson, Stephen Poliakoff and Anthony Burgess, with whom he collaborated on an adaptation of *A Clockwork Orange*, which had music specially written for the production by Bono and The Edge of U2.

For more information, visit [theoldglobe.org](http://theoldglobe.org).