

I work primarily within a Jewish narrative form called the wonder tale. These complex, highly patterned stories represent the virtuosic repertoire of Ashkenazi folklore, and were traditionally the province of itinerant storyteller-historians called *magids*, or wonder rebbes, who also served as a grassroots media for isolated Jewish communities. Rich in imagery and combining music, theatre, and audience participation, the form flourished among the Ashkenazi Jewry from the 16th-19th centuries. And in the US, the traces of this form can clearly be seen in the works of artists & organizers such as Lenny Bruce, Allen Ginsberg, Abbie Hoffman, & Saul Alinsky.

But I'm also a beatboxer. Beatboxing (if you've never heard of it before) is the art of making rhythms & beats using the human voice. This "fifth element of hip hop" originated in the early 80's- on street corners, in stairwells, schoolyards, and small clubs, and has been underground for years. Now, in the same way that DJ'ing and turntablism swept the world in the 90's, beatboxing is exploding. It's also integral in my life. I help run an organization for beatboxers, The Vowel Movement. I work with beatboxers in my theatre company, Everyday. And I'm a serious beatboxer of the highest order, one of the only people in the world who can beatbox on a flute. At every step for the last 7 years, the cadence rhythm of the beatbox has strengthened my dreams and aspirations.

Beatboxing is a part of who I am. But so is being a traditional Jewish storyteller. So I'm trying to "come correct" as the b-boys say. I'm bringing a rigorous practice of craft as a hip-hop theatre artist. But I'm also coming as myself- trying to bring who I am to the table. A *magid* in a line of *maggidim*. Because for me the work is about more than just getting ahead. It's about using theatre as a space to change the world, as a form of grassroots media, & as an active method of resistance. And in the end, it's about using theatre as a space to create hope. Or at least, that's the hope I have.

bread & roses
Tim Barsky