present

The Hip Hopera of 5P1N0K10

By Tarish Pipkins a.k.a. Jeghetto

The Club
74a East 4th Street
March 23-26, 2023
The Hip Hopera of 5P1N0K10

Created by
Tarish “Jeghetto” Pipkins

Original Score by
Hip Hop producer Hir-O

Performed by
Tarish “Jeghetto” Pipkins
Divine Pipkins
Tarin Pipkins

Light Design by Federico Restrepo
Stage Manager Nathan Fosbinder

Running time 40 minutes with no intermission
Tarish “Jeghetto” Pipkins (Creator) After working for years as a poet, visual artist, and barber, Tarish Pipkins was inspired to take up the art of puppetry after a conversation with Fred Rogers of Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood. He chose the stage name “Jeghetto,” a portmanteau of Geppetto and ghetto, to reflect his childhood in the projects of Pittsburgh, and their influence on his artistic vision. Using only recycled materials, he has created a world of astonishing 21st-century puppets, which include a dinosaur, a dreadlocked cellist, the Beast, and an Afro-futurist breakdancing android who wants to be a real boy.

Growing up in Clairton, a steel-mill town south of Pittsburgh, Tarish’s gift for puppetry was evident in the playthings he fashioned out of found objects. “I was always creating, as young as I can remember,” he recalls. By his late teens, Tarish had moved to Pittsburgh and found work as a neighborhood barber. He was also an emcee and a spoken-word performer, and later joined the Bridge Spotters, an artist collective. When Tarish met Rogers, he discovered how to integrate his varied abilities: balancing the spectacle of puppetry with the heart he saw in Rogers’s work. Tarish created his first puppet a few months later to emcee a poetry event with the Bridge Spotters. “I used to do these wire sculptures—make a shape, twist it around until I got forms,” he says. “I called it 3D scribble.”

After moving to North Carolina in 2005, Tarish further honed his craft, noting, “I discovered that most puppeteers don’t build and perform their puppets, they do either-or…. [I]n that respect I was ahead of the game.” His creations out of recycled materials quickly drew the attention of the acclaimed puppetry collective Paperhand Puppet Intervention in Saxapahaw, and he began to collaborate with them shortly thereafter.

Tarish’s puppets have appeared alongside such celebrities as Missy Elliot, Pharrell Williams, and Alec Baldwin. He also created The Hip-Hopera 5P1N0K10 (rhymes with Pinocchio) with Pierce Freelon, a Durham emcee; successful early performances earned them a 2018 Jim Henson Foundation grant to develop the show. Despite his national success, Tarish believes his most important work lies in connecting with a generation of kids who see themselves in his art more fully than they do in solely hip hop or Sesame Street. He taught at Durham’s Just Right Academy for six years, where he used his puppets to teach social and academic skills to special needs students through creative communication. Building puppets himself takes talent and creativity, but for Tarish, bringing them to life is the true work. “It’s a craft to build a puppet, but it’s a gift to actually breathe life into it.” According to Tarish, he does not control the puppets but rather suggests their motions and guides their organic actions. “Puppetry is high art,” he says. “It’s like composing an orchestra in 3D.”
Divine Pipkins (Performer) is Jeghetto's son, and older brother of Tarin Pipkins. He is an actor/singer/fitness enthusiast from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He’s been signed with the kids unlimited talent agency for almost a decade, and he starred in an independent film called There’s My Angel produced by Wake Media Productions based out of Raleigh, North Carolina at the age of 12. He has co-starred in several productions at Chapel Hill High School and did two musicals for the Summer Youth Conservatory Program at Playmakers Repertory in the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill’s campus. The two musicals that he performed in was Cabaret in 2018, and Bright Star which he co-starred in 2019, playing the role of Jimmy Ray. Currently, Divine is working on becoming a personal trainer and plans to continue performing after a hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be Divine’s second time performing with Jeghetto.

Tarin Pipkins (Performer) is the youngest son of Jeghetto and Divine’s younger brother. He has been performing puppet shows since he was 4 years old; his first shows were street performances with Jeghetto. He did his first major puppet show when he was 8 years old with the Paper Hand Puppet Intervention. He has been traveling the country and performing 5p1n0k10 since we’ve started.

Omari Hall, aka Hir-O (Original Score) is a producer from Detroit, Michigan. As one of the city’s rising hip-hop artists, Hir-O has branded his music with splashes of electronic swells, jazz, soul, live instrumentation and other realms of music that all come to form a cohesive hip-hop force. His projects with DaJaz1, Doss The Artist and Red Pill, along with his instrumentals such as The Voyage Home, reflect the true prowess and versatility of his work, and with future projects coming soon, Hir-O is a name you should remember.

This program is supported in part by Cheryl Henson and The Jim Henson Foundation.
A full program with information on this production can be found on the *The Hip Hopera of 5P1N0K10* page of the La MaMa website.

In addition you can scan the QR code Poster located in the theatre lobby for access to the digital program.
La MaMa's historic, landmark building at 74 East 4th Street is undergoing an urgently needed complete renovation and restoration to preserve the historic façade, create building-wide ADA accessibility, and provide much needed performance, exhibition and community space for decades to come.

La MaMa, founded by Ellen Stewart in 1961, has been on east 4th Street since 1967. La MaMa embraces every person in its community and is legendary as the place where new artists of all nations, cultures, races, and identities are given opportunities. It is the place where art begins.

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The Club

A Scream in the Dark
March 23 - April 2, 2023
The Downstairs

ICELAND
March 24 - April 2, 2023
Ellen Stewart Theatre

La MaMa Kids:
Tarish “Jeghetto” Pipkins
March 25, 2023
The Community Room

La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival
April 6-30, 2023
All 3 La MaMa Venues

COMING SOON

Forced Beauty
Part of La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival
April 7-9, 2023
The Downstairs

Lunch with Sonia
Part of La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival
April 12-16, 2023
The Club

Shared Program: Nora Alami, Jadd Tank,
Leyya Mona Tawil/Lime Rickey International
Part of La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival
April 13-16, 2023
Ellen Stewart Theatre

Shared Program: Baye & Asa, Wendy Perron
and Morgan Griffin
Part of La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival
April 14-16, 2023
The Downstairs

Broken Theater
Part of La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival
April 20-30, 2023
Ellen Stewart Theatre