

FROM SOUTH EAST TO THE MIDDLE EAST: OPUS AKOBEN'S HIP HOP SOJOURN

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2006FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2006***FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2006***

Sub-Z – vocals, electronics, slides
Kokayi – vocals and electronics

Jared Ball – Interview moderator
Bobby Hill – Opening/interlude/post DJ sets

7:00 PM - \$15 @ Sangha (301-891-3214 for directions)

7014 Westmoreland Avenue, Takoma Park, MD, just three blocks east of the Takoma Metro Station, @ the corner of Carroll & Westmoreland. Adjacent parking available.

*"...we take it place to place, the only vibe to grace,
we maintain that pace, to keep it live y'all."
(Opus Akoben*)*



a section of the infamous Israeli apartheid wall © Adam Nieman

A.I.M.B.ient – (A)vant (I)mprovised (M)usic & (B)eats Productions is pleased to present a discussion and performance by **Sub-Z** and **Kokayi** of **Opus Akoben**, who will be speaking on the group's 2006 workshop and performance tour of the Middle East. The discussion, which will include pictorial reflections of their travels, will be moderated by Jared A. Ball, Professor of African American and Media Studies at the University of Maryland and Frostburg State University. Bobby Hill, long-time host of WPFW radio's The Other...side, will DJ the musical interludes around the discussion and performance.

Between February and March of this year, Opus Akoben traveled the Middle East, conducting workshops and performances of the group's unique blend of music, poetry, and lyrical improvisation in the Middle Eastern countries of Bahrain, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. The Middle Eastern tour both challenged and expanded the group's cultural perceptions and expectations.

The Middle East is a long way from Sub-Z (aka Terence Nicholson) and Kokayi (Carl Walker)'s early 90's beginning's in S.E. Washington, D.C., as original members of the Freestyle Union, an ongoing workshop that, while dedicated to the elevation of rap through rhyme, placed greater emphasis on sound/flow aesthetics, eschewing the genre's more

traditional antagonistic verbal battling and aggression. The improvisational freestyle skills (i.e., rhyming off the head) spawned through the Freestyle Union were further developed through lyrical associations with artists such as saxophonist Steve Coleman, Cuban pianist Omar Sosa, and pianist Andy Milne. Opus Akoben, as a group, has released two recordings - Art of War (BMG/France) and Raw Life (Label-Bleu).

Jared Ball, in addition to being a PH.D'd professor, is co-founder of CBC Monitor, co-host of WPFW 89.3's The Blackademics, and is the founder/creator of FreeMix Radio: The Original Mixtape Radio Show, which can be found at voxunion.com. Prof. Ball will conduct and moderate the interview with Sub-Z and Kokayi on their Middle Eastern sojourn.

Bobby Hill is a 23-year and counting host and producer of WPFW's The Other...side, where he mixes avant improvised jazz, beats and verse each Saturday night at midnight. Hill is also a founding member of Transparent Productions, a Washington-based, not-for-profit presenting organization, dedicated to the live presentation of cutting-edge jazz by both national and international artists. Details can be found at www.transparentproductions.org.

*An "Opus" is a piece of music; "Akoben" is the African Adinkra symbol for 'warhorn'.

