

# HIP HOP

## DANCE ALMANAC VOL.1

Edited by  
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**FEATURING:**  
Botis Seva

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# COPYRIGHT

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# BOTIS SEVA

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**IA: Morning Botis. The idea of self-care and care within the Hip Hop community. How do you care for yourself and ensure that you are the best you can be?**

BS: So more how I do it as an artist?

**IA: Yeah.**

BS: That's a good question you know.

**IA: That's the first one!**

BS: That's just the first one! I think for me, my development would be...for me further on the development would be loads of workshops not based on dance stuff. Kinda like the acting stuff I'm into. Loads of workshops and development to develop myself in that way. Most of the other times, it's speaking to other artists, thinking about how they're developing other things. And just reading to be fair. Choreographing...it's difficult to just be in your work and I don't want to take myself out. It's about reading, talking to people and finding as much as I can to be involved in. A lot of the time I want to be dancing with someone else as well that's important. I think that's my care.

**IA: When you are reading, what kinds of things are feeding your brain?**

BS: It depends what I'm reading. It's weird you asked me this because now I'll have to think of the process I go through. A lot of the time it's creative books, creative process that I read. I look at stuff that has happened before in history. Historical terms. That sometimes helps. In order to understand the past you sometimes have to go to the future. It's quite hard to answer this question you know! It's really difficult because I'm like 'What do I actually do?' Because I just do it, but explaining it...I read articles and different kinds of things... [noise off] keep it down. Lads?! Oi! Safe bruv. Never mind.

**IA: That's for the self. How do you care for the company and people who are in Norm's orbit?**

BS: Interesting...

**IA: This is coming from Hip Hop in its broadest sense, how it has developed an alternate kinship where there are intense relationships with people in crews, or particular styles.**

BS: I totally agree.

**IA: I'm interested in how you've developed that. How do you develop and nurture and care that kinship between your people?**

BS: I would say my main thing for them, my main care...it might be weird but it's letting them out to experience other stuff. I think that's important. I can give them all the knowledge I have but sometimes it's not enough. They have to go out and experience different things. I let them get into trouble for certain things and not tell them. I think for me, it's a care thing, because I've learned from a certain thing but sometimes telling them, sometimes my experience also, my care thing is letting them learn for themselves and then coming back like 'Yeah you were right.' My care thing is more like an alternative father. Letting them get in trouble for certain things and letting them learn for themselves rather than teaching them certain things.

**IA: The origins of Norm. The first group of dancers that came into Norm. Can you talk about how they emerged?**

BS: How Far From the Norm is now?

**IA: No. Your first group of people.**

BS: Our first group that came by? OK. First group was all girls. All females. It was good actually, all calm. How it originally came about was just from a youth club. I was teaching at a youth club in

**March  
2018**

Southbank  
Centre

Dagenham and then Sharlene who started in the company she knew a lot of people that danced, who were female and she wanted to bring them through and that's kind of how it just started. It started from her knowing other dancers who were interested in doing it. It was quite brief really. I only knew two of them at the time. One of them went to my school and the other one I knew from another dance workshops we were doing.

**IA: How does the company look now?**

BS: It looks completely different. Completely different. More rooted in a sense. It was still...commitment when we started it but the commitment is different now. Now they want to do this as a life thing. Because before we didn't know it was going to be a life thing. Some people wanted to do fashion things, but now there's a real push in the same direction. More rooted in a sense. We understand what we want as a company.

**IA: Who is responsible for those roots?**

BS: I'm responsible.

**IA: What are those roots?**

BS: Oh gosh. I think one is, making sure we can connect with people in terms of what we wanna say. I want the language of my work to go on forever. Even when I've passed. What I've developed (which still has a long time to go) will be left as something important, not just dismissed at the side as some kind of Hip Hop thing. That it's important. It's historical. What else? Um. What else? What's the root of it? Bloody hell.

**IA: If we cut you in half, what would be there?**

BS: Ian you're killing me. This is good. Bloody hell nobody else does this. Say the question again just so I can get my...

**IA: It's about the roots, the language and what it is. You mentioned your language and being in history but what is the essence of what you're trying to say?**

BS: I think what I'm trying to say is, you can...I think you can do what you want. I think this is the only art form we have freedom in. Freedom's a big word. But as performers and people I work with, understanding how humble you can be. Not getting too excited and too much ego in terms of what you're doing. Showing people and performers I work with. That's kind of rooted. You have to be humble to be able to work with me...but you have to be patient and humble and not too over yourself. That's one thing. I'm trying to think of other stuff.

**IA: Why is that important to you?**

BS: Because there's too many arseholes in the world man! There's too many...you can't like, and I think some people get confused with this thing. I think people think artists are arseholes because of the way they approach things. We're not arseholes. Just some people put that persona on. But you can learn different ways of being an artist. You don't have to be a mad artist to make genius work. You can be the quiet person, and make the most amazing work. I'm learning that now from looking at historical work. Look at Tupac for example. People say yeah he was so passionate

and everything but I think people keep imitating artists that have been there before. You look at artists that have been made and it doesn't work for everyone. There's so many arseholes I can't deal with that. It's just finding another way. We're cool people, we're cool people. Yeah when we get into our work we can be a bit [growls] but we're good people. That's important to me, that we don't live the same way people been living for many years and that has to change as well. When I do go - long time haha - it's leaving that thing as part of my work. He was a great artist, he might have been crazy when he was making work but he's a deep rooted humble guy. I think that's important and that has to be rooted in the work.

**IA: If we're talking longevity, history and archives what are you doing to preserve yourself and your creations?**

BS: At the moment I'll be honest I'm doing nothing about it. And that's quite bad. The whole archive thing. I don't archive and I think...memories...I need to do it. I was thinking in my head I'm not really doing it, I'm not archiving enough of what I'm doing. I've had a little bit of keeping up with it at the beginning but now it's lost its way a bit; what I wanna do is properly archive things. The process, from the beginning, right to the end. Just so we have that in six or seven years time there's new dancers and there's new people, we can go back and see how the world was then. Which is obviously why you're doing this, which I think is important. But I don't do it, I think we just get caught up in the moment. I think when you're making it, when you're doing things, you're not really thinking about these things.

So, I need to do it.

**IA: What would you want to archive? Works, process, philosophy? What is important to you that is here after you are not?**

BS: Everything to be fair. The beginning of something, the thoughts, the idea. Sometimes I just have a conversation with myself, even if I just recorded that conversation I have with myself is the beginning process of what happens. The conversations I have with people, the

names. I would. I don't even bloody care. I'm going to talk about a process I'm going through now actually. I'm doing a process. I'll say it...whatever. I'm working on a circus and dance collaboration, and it's working with four international organising bodies. My issue with this project is no one cares about the artists who are making it. It's just about 'The work is this, the work is that, the work will look good for us so it'll make us happy.' But the makers are not happy and the dancers are not happy and it's a big issue within. I understand

**"People offer you a commission but there's not a support with it. They see you making other work and they're like OK that works for them this is great, let's bottle you in this way."**

dialogue. Then of course the process I go through with collaborators, the dancers and even the process of what I deal with organisations. That's important, because sometimes you deal with crap and it's important that crap needs to be said to people, so they don't go through the same rubbish. For me it would be breaking it down. From the beginning all the way to the end.

**IA: Talk to me about the crap. What do you have to deal with?**

BS: I'm not going to mention it.

**IA: You don't need to mention names.**

BS: I'm not going to mention

how to market my work. I want it to be marketed in a certain way. I don't want it to look like it's a commercial cheesy show. I understand that they want to sell tickets, I understand that, I get that. But if we don't sell tickets, I don't care. If 10 people's there I don't care but obviously I understand for money, financial blah blah. But I don't give a damn about all the money stuff. You commissioned me knowing I started with 20 people in a 300 seat venue...sooooo? That's how I work. I've lost money from the beginning of making work. That's a little bit of crap you deal with. People offer you a commission but there's not a support with it. They see you making other work and they're like OK that works for them this is great, let's bottle you in

this way. At the end of the day, you take the work and don't feel happy so. It's important to know about before you step into that realm.

**IA: So you make your own work.**

BS: Yeah yeah yeah. I make my own work.

**IA: But you also accept commissions?**

BS: Yeah I also accept commissions. (laughs)

**IA: I'm interested in how you view and how you execute those things. You've just said, people see you and want a piece of you. They see what you've just made and think 'I want a piece of that...'**

BS: Yeah yeah yeah. I enjoy commissions when they're straight to the point. When you're working with people and they say 'This is what it is, this is what we want you to do.' This kind of thing.

**IA: What is the difference in your approach?**

BS: When I'm making my work, I'm making my work. I'm calm. I'm happy. The commission side of you, it's a different side of you. I put on a different hat. Sometimes I put a polite hat. I have to approach it differently. It's not about the work but the people, how I approach them when they commission me. Not all commissions are bad some are lovely.

**IA: Talk to me about a great one.**

BS: A great commission? [moans] Oh bloody hell. A great commission?

**IA: Come on Botis.**

BS: Trying to think of ones I've done because some are just meh. I dunno I think, maybe the short ones actually. We just done one for the BBC, commission for civilisation and war. It was a very short process actually. We kind of got to do what we got to do which was inspired by someone else's inspiration. Someone gave us inspiration in terms of what they was feeling and we had the freedom to delve into a different world. So that was a good commission.

**IA: What was the output?**

BS: The finished thing was just a nice four-minute piece. A four-minute thirty piece actually. Nice gallery space, surrounded by paintings. So, you see, lovely, good job. I enjoyed that. I think it was the short thing I enjoyed. Trying to think...ah Wildcard. Wildcard was a good experience. I think that was probably one of my best commissions. Again, it was straight to the point. We was in meetings and they understood that I don't like to be disturbed when I'm making work. So they didn't disturb me. They only disturbed me when we got to the end of the week. The week of the show and they were like 'OK what are we doing now?' Which is nice, because you know you just get to the end of the process. But I enjoyed that because it wasn't the pressure of 'What you doing? Can we sneak into rehearsals?' rah rah 'Oh what's happening?' It was literally you've been given this process. Yeah it was a smooth process. And that stuff I enjoy.

**IA: So how is the work you make on your own company different? Can you talk about that?**

BS: It's different just because logistical things. If I say I want 25 dancers for a section I'm not going to get questioned on it. They might panic a bit and go 'Oh we got to pay them...' but no just pay them on my money...those things get people worried. If I want to use a baby in a thing on Channel 4 I had to go through a long process just to use my own child. It's just long. So those kinds of things just make it easier for me I can say a yes thing and have it happen right away.

**IA: It's about control?**

BS: Yeah you can just do it and not worry about this fee, and is everyone happy and yeah it's a longer process for me but...

**IA: Can you talk about two big things? Where does class, and where does race sit in your work?**

BS: Why you doing this man? [laughs] It's good that you did it. Class and race man. Ian, why do you do this? I'm laughing because this is just all the thoughts we have as artists. Let me start with class. Can you give an explanation of class. Because sometimes I get confused with class and I don't want to get it wrong.

**IA: Social classes: working, middle, upper. Where is that in your work?**

BS: My experience with class and the experience of it in my work is...it's really hard to put that on a ruler or timetable. Because when you look at a class and my work, I use the word savage. I have this feeling that when some people watch my work they feel so many thoughts. Bloody hell man, bloody hell. It's quite hard to dip into race as well. I

use the word savage because especially in the reviews we've been having, I hate using the word racism but there's a lot that, it's happening all the flipping time. I think it gets identified when I'm making a certain piece of work that didn't even have anything to do with race. When I don't make it specifically to do with race and people still call it out. I think where are we? You just seen my work and...I think class affects people in that they feel devalued. Sometimes when people watch my work they feel like they're not a part of it maybe because they're not Black. I feel that all the time. People feel scared. When we did Reck in BDE, a lot of people came up and were like 'I was scared cos you guys were pointing gun fingers at us'. OOOH! People came out. They was scared. They was like 'It was too violent for me.' I'm like whoa...like violent...where? And so many reviews. You had to break it down. People say things in a code way. But we know what it means. I think someone basically said there was monkeys running around on stage doing monkey chants. And it was a bad stereotype of Black people. It was sexually bad because it was looking at the body of Black people in a sexual way which wasn't right. And it makes you look at some people and you think these are the thoughts you already have in your body and your mind and it comes out through your words. It's shocking because we never made it to look like that. When we break it down and look at the work, I can understand a little bit... but I can't understand the full picture. I feel threatened with it. It's a threatening thing. Upper class, middle class people, I don't even think they'd come to watch my

work. Even if it was at Sadler's, I don't think they'd just walk in like 'Oh yeah I'm going to watch this Hip Hop dance thing.' They come around and turn around and it's like some crazy thing. To be fair, I am not that bothered with it man. I don't care. I just want to make my work - it'll piss people - you can pee people off. I like that. I want my work to do that stuff. People need that kick up the arse. In terms of race? Bloody hell man. Ack! Bloody hell man. I think it's interesting. I feel like this is another route. For me the issue with race, is...I'm talking of a Black perspective. I think when we as Black artists keep making work about Black things, it's long sometimes. We keep telling the same story. Saying the same things. People are suffering. I think people are focusing on American culture of what's happening in America instead of the UK. Racism in America is totally different to racism in the UK. But as artists when we're making work, we're not really thinking about this kind of thing. We over generalise, certain things we don't know about. I think slavery is a big massive thing, but it's just slavery we don't break things down within slavery. Not all White people were bad to Black people. Some White people wanted to help Black people. But we don't see that in work. We just see people suffering. Oppressed. The same crap. It's not going to evolve. If we keep talking about Black people oppressed it's not going to evolve. We're just going to teach people we're oppressed. That I'm not interested in. And when people see the work, people get offended by certain things, but when they keep offending people by 'The White man did this...' or 'Black people did that...' It's

important history facts but saying it in different ways so people understand it. Theatre is a clever tool, and we need clever things to help people understand certain things. When we're talking about racism we need to find other ways of talking about certain things not just that we're being oppressed. Oppressed is a big thing but it's how

## **"If we keep talking about Black people oppressed it's not going to evolve. We're just going to teach people we're oppressed."**

we speak about it. Another thing I'm not interested in is speaking about how Black I am. I'm already Black man! It's not gonna change. When I walk in the room I'm the Black guy. You see me. I'm right here! That's why I don't label myself as a Black artist. I don't want to. I don't believe in that, I'm already that person. Watch my work. They say it in the reviews! They already know I'm a Black artist! You see my work...you see Black bodies. That's where I'm probably a bit different to other artists with the race thing. I see it in a totally different way. Also with a different perspective. And with my partner, people see it from a different perspective because my partner's White. We have different debates about these different things, especially about race. I have to understand it from her perspective too because I can't just keep saying 'My side...it's this.' Sorry. I went on different roads but in terms of the race that's where I kind of stand on it. That's another thing in the history I want to leave - how people

understand and can see race in another way. How they can challenge it in another way. Not just the same things. Always oppressed, oppressed, oppressed. It's been going on for years. Jonzi's era. I think the eras are different. Ours is different. Yeah we're oppressed but when you look at the world - again the Black artist thing, I can't just

look at the world in a narrow way. When you look at the big massive world like it's a crazy place of being oppressed. And it's mad.

**IA: What's your perception of the different generations? The Jonzi generation vs 20 years later.**

BS: What's different? Trying to think what's our difference now. I think we learn much more from their mistakes. We learn from what they've done. We respect them of course, and what they've done because they're legends. I dunno. I feel like we can do the opposite way to what they did and not feel like we're stepping on their shoes. In terms of what Jonzi spoke about we can still speak about now, but we got to find different ways to talk about it. What Jonzi went through is very different to what we went through. It's massively different...might be same links but we can talk about it in a different way.

**IA: How would you talk about what you're going**

**through at the moment?**

BS: OK. I hate to talk about racism all the time. Maybe not racism, but maybe the Blackness in me. All the time and the conversation when we go out to certain places. That's all we get back.

**IA: Is that what people say?**

BS: Yeah. Especially a particular piece Reck. When we did Reck in London I didn't really hear anything. Well we did it at The Place and one person said something. But when we started taking it outside...

**IA: You took it to Aerowaves...**

BS: Yeah we took it to Aerowaves, and I spoke to Eddie (Nixon) about it and he was like 'What's everyone talking about?' It caused this big massive thing. This is what stepping outside of London looks like, but the thing that it caused for me was the Black thing. Obviously it was like... Black, Black, Black, Black. Obviously the guys/company loved it. We loved it. Like you know, laughing over this. Because it's funny, it's funny for us. We don't get offended for this stuff. All of this stuff we got already and we're making art about it. Some people get angry and are like 'Aargh why they doing this?' We LOVE IT. It's bloody great spirits. I find it hilarious. It caused this massive thing, still to this day I tried to find why.

**IA: Going back to the micro. I'm interested in networks and connections between people. Who are the three people you go to and value and why do you value them?**

BS: Who do I go to? It's funny actually because I haven't

mentored anyone in a while, which is quite sad. Who do I value? One person I would say, because I worked with Ivan Blackstock, I worked with Ivan before. He tells the truth. If something is good it's good. If something is rubbish it's rubbish, but I value him because he tells the truth. Being truthful I think is quite important. And he makes amazing work as well. Another two's gonna be difficult. Who do I most value? I don't go to him as much any more but probably Tony Adigun. But I don't go to him as much any more. Don't really speak much. Just see him at shows like 'Hey' But I do value him because he was the first person I saw doing something that I wanted to do. At the time he was making the work and stuff and he was my first teacher so I still value him. I still want to say his name because he's been there for other people and I respect that. Someone else? Who else?

**IA: If there's no one else?**

BS: There might be...no.

**IA: I'm interested in this. If you're not seeking others, why is that? Is that an active choice?**

BS: It's weird because in Hip Hop sometimes it depends... the community is quite weird. Sometimes you make a show, people come to it and everyone's acting a little weird. And that's why I say Ivan. He's honest. Ivan will say 'Nah that work needs stepping up, I need to step up.' It's a competition thing. A healthy competition thing. Other people sometimes you don't know what they're thinking or if you done something wrong... maybe I'm just paranoid about what they think about me.

In terms of seeking that, it's not a busy thing, because busy thing is an excuse. And we don't really connect but I dunno sometimes you think people are doing their own thing and you don't want to bother them. Give them distance. The only person I've heard offer their support is Ivan. He offers it on Facebook. He says 'You wanna chill. You want support?' Not much will offer that. Sometimes you're in your own shell but I think it's really important to talk to people. Especially for artists. When I was in Artists4Artists I remember talking to them a lot about process and things that helped massively, just because of their history in terms of what they were teaching us. I don't know actually...I don't know why we don't do it. Why I don't do it as much as I should. Sometimes I do it when I'm doing sharings and stuff, but I don't do it as a basis of just go and talk to an artist. Maybe I'm just a bit paranoid that they're doing their own thing and I'll just leave them alone. You know.

**IA: What is the current health of the scene at the moment?**

BS: It's healthy I think. Everybody's eating well! From the outside perspective, when I'm looking in, it looks healthy. Everybody's putting work out there in terms of Artists4Artists stuff, people are getting the chance to put work out there. It looks good from where I'm sitting. It looks...it does look good. But I don't know what's happening on the inside. You never know. From the outside it can look amazing but from the inside it can still be a bit broken. But I can't know that until I go out and speak to artists a bit more.

**IA: Talk to me about your**

**relationship with Torben (Lars Sylvest)?**

BS: Mr Lars? He's my dude.

**IA: He's a repeated collaborator over many years. I'm interested in why you keep working together, why you keep going back. I'm interested in that long term relationship.**

BS: He's a cool guy, man, such a cool guy. Mr Lars. He is, in terms of collaboration he knows what he wants, I know what I want, we find this thing in the middle, it's simple. Sometimes there's...ah ha... there's this. Not arguments, just good productive chats about how we want something to come alive. I think he understands how to work with people. How to work with me in a sense. Certain stuff he knows I don't like it but I might use it again, and the same with him I think. It's an open relationship, open collaboration that we're still building now. But I feel like it's very straightforward. There's no complications. He makes great music, we got to make a little bit of decent art [laughs] and we work good together.

**IA: What do you think he does, as a composer of sound/ the sonic, to compliment, enhance or challenge the visuals you're creating?**

BS: What do you mean by that?

**IA: When you've got a vision for a piece do you go to him and say 'I'm thinking this, I want people to feel this, so I want you to either compliment that or not do that.' I'm interested in how you work together.**

BS: When it's about

something, one idea, I give him sometimes less, because I don't want him to...I give him an idea OK, this is what I'm thinking about, this is what it is, it'll be very blunt. Because I want him to start thinking about it. I want him to create his own imagination for what it is. I use the word freedom but it's about him using his own thought processes for what it is, something that I might not think about necessarily. Sometimes I think about the sound in a particular way but I have to tell myself let that part go, and sometimes I might not like it but he does the same thing. Sometimes he sends things he's been thinking about and says 'Oh I been thinking about this...' He does his own research. And he talks to me about where he gets his own research from, and I go 'Oh well I didn't know about that.' And it's good communication in terms of the research. He does his research, I do my research and we communicate back to each other. It's good.

**IA: Can you talk about your prolific nature of generating works? It feels like in the last three years there has been a lot of works for indoors & outdoors. How is that for you as the author and conceiver of those? Does it feel like that?**

BS: Yeah it does. I think one thing also that I want to do and trying to do. Obviously if you've seen my work before you'd be like 'That's Botis' work, that's Botis' work.' But eventually I want to make a work that you don't think it's me. Which I like. I want to be that maker who 'Did he make it, did he have a contribution to this?' You find out that he actually made it... ah...ooh...a surprise. That's what I'm interested in. In terms

of the outdoor work and the indoor work, and stepping into those different places. That's something I want to do. And not because...cos a lot of times you hear people talking and saying no just be good at one thing, what's it called a master of um? When people say just...

**IA: Jack of all trades, master of none.**

BS: Yeah. I don't believe in that stuff. Again, with outdoor stuff what's different is audiences, the people that watch the work. Some of the HoH, the football stuff, created such interesting debates with people just started talking about their lives and I'm like wow. You're not going to come to the theatre. It's just different responses. You got outdoor work and indoor work, and you got different people. In those different places, people tend to just stay in one particular place. And you learn different things as well. So much different skills.

**IA: What have you learned?**

BS: Perspective. I think when we done HoH the lighting stuff. You don't have no lighting. You can't hide. So first of all if you go round and change something they can see you. So first of all there's more effort, more work in thinking about detail. If I go round and changing costumes, it has to be part of the performance. Working out where people standing, and someone might walk through your performance. How do you even deal with that as a performer, do you follow them? Do you chase them? We did that as part of the thing 'Go on go on get out.' Whereas on stage that's not going to happen, you know no one's gonna walk out. Outdoor

is really cool because it shows you people can do what the flip they want. It's a different, different world.

**IA: Are you feeling any burnout? Or thinking you've got stacks of ideas you want to keep realising?**

BS: The burnout. I think the burnout only happens when I do a commission I don't wanna do. The commission I'm doing now, bloody hell that's burning me out. Completely it's breaking me because of the organisation, because of the people. That's what breaks me because it's like everyone in the studio is unhappy.

**IA: Because you're taking it...**

BS: Because I'm taking it and I'm making something I don't even want to make now. And that's when the burn comes. You're making what you don't want to make, and everyone else in the organisation is happy because they're going to get a premiere and that pisses me off. That's a burn

**"I fail all the time. It's weird because failure is like... what's failure like? I fail every day. I'm a failure now."**

because then you're dealing with crap. That's when you don't enjoy making that work and that's a shame. Because you didn't sign up with that.

**IA: Can you talk about international stuff? You've travelled a lot with your work...**

BS: International is better. Because there's no expectations. The response

is always different. The energy feels different. I feel like it's different maybe because I'm used to London. I don't know if I just started working international and I forgot about London or UK? People still try and claim you as UK artists even if you try working international, I dunno I think that's true. But if I just started working international there'd be a massive shift in the UK scene.

**IA: Let's talk about expectations. What sort of expectations do you encounter when there's something new?**

BS: I don't know if in London there's like...it has to be good. Because these kinds of work can't be crap. I mean it can be, but I try not to make it crap. I think the age where I'm at. I had a conversation with a guy 'So how you getting all this stuff. You're kinda young and I just keep seeing your name doing all these things.' I was like whoa man! Whoa bruv. What do you mean? I've been working! I feel

it as well...How is he getting all of these things? How is it happening? What is the secret code behind it. He's getting big money commission, nah bro. That's where I find myself sometimes. I think there's expectation of yeah, the age I'm at and people think I'm getting things thrown at me. It looks like that. Social media lies. You know? It's not true.

**IA: The idea of failure. On the**

**opposites side do you feel like you can't fail?**

BS: I fail all the time. It's weird because failure is like...what's failure like? I fail every day. I'm a failure now. I can fail. But maybe it's labels as well. I just ascribe different labels on it. Because failure...people failing, sometimes I set myself up to make sure I'm rubbish at something and make sure I make a good mistake. But for people to be like 'Oh he can't fail.' I don't think about that. I can't think about that.

**IA: What is your relationship to history and the foundations of Hip Hop?**

BS: Let me think about it...OK. To be honest with you. When I started dancing I didn't really care about this history stuff. I didn't really care. I just wanted to dance, just wanted to do my thing. My relationship now is a bit different. I find out as much as I can about it. But I don't stick to it biblically. I don't go bible bang. I go back to it for references. I think about what's going on now and go back to it all the time. But yeah I'm connected to the history of it, and the root of it is to what I'm doing now. I keep to the root of it but I still try and find my own way and my own language from that source. But I'm not religiously sticking to it.

**IA: You mentioned Tupac earlier...**

BS: Yeah. Those things always go back to...I have to go back to those. I know its difficult to be inspired by certain music now in terms of Hip Hop music, even for artists it's hard to label what Hip Hop music is. For me the Hip Hop thing, it's difficult to define what they are now. But going back to Tupac,

even to Tupac interviews it's useful to go back and look at all those things.

**IA: How would you define what it is you do? You have words on your website, you have words in previous interviews. I'm interested in how you define what you do now.**

BS: I do what I want. I make what I want. That's what I do. I dunno. I do what I feel is right when I'm making work. It has to come from head mind kind of thing and it's a heart thing. When I feel it, I feel it. When I don't, it's just not there. So, define in terms of labels in terms of styles, no I just can't do it. Yeah it's rooted in Hip Hop stuff and history. But it speaks for itself. I can't put a label on the work I do. I refuse to do that. When you watch it you can say it's contemporary, someone said yeah Reck was contemporary and I was like what you talking about - but I took contemporary in an original, awesome way, not what the word contemporary means. I can't label it. Never. No.

**IA: How do you think others perceive you?**

BS: It's like 'What's he doing with this Hip Hop thing?' 'I see some foundations in there but what's he doing about it.' Yeah. I experimented with it! I think some people perceive it as contemporary, because doing stuff at Sadler's, so some people might say it's more contemporary. I think we're in a more weird inbetween place, where our dancers are connected to the underground scene in a different way. We don't have to battle but we like to go to a dance hall or event. I feel like we're just in the middle people. Just like 'We're

theatre people.' They think it's Hip Hop but sometimes when they watch it they're a bit confused because they don't understand what we've done with the language.

**IA: Is there something we haven't talk about so far that you want to talk about?**

BS: Um. I think, there's something about this thing I've been talking to Lee (Griffiths) about. About people feeling entitled. What I'm talking about is people want to work...want to work with organisations. A bit like me I think, start complaining about how things are rolling 'Oh we don't like...' I see a lot of people going into institution places and not understanding how they work. I think it's important to understand how they work, and spend time understanding why they do what they do. And how it works for you as an artist to go into that place. I won't mention names but some people have gone into organisations and complained about how they work. I want to say 'Because you didn't study them as an organisation and why they do what they do.' I think that's an important thing for people to understand. We're not owed anything. If I go somewhere to an organisation, I'm going to you, why am I entitled to anything. Why am I entitled? I don't think we should be entitled. Some people might disagree with me, but why should we be. I don't believe in it.

**IA: What is the structure or the environment that enables you to make the best work you can make?**

BS: I'm left alone. Don't bother me. That's it.

**IA: Why do you need to be alone?**

BS: Because having people in the studio is difficult. When it's a sharing that's different. But when it's just people sitting there I don't like that. I have no connection to that. My connection is to the people in the studio making the work. For me it doesn't work, even if you're a nice positive person watching. You're still eyes watching. We have eyes anyway. Someone is always watching and when I have another eye in the studio it's not nice. I don't like it.

**IA: The idea of a dramaturg or an additional person...**

BS: No that's different when it's a collaboration. We've had dramaturgs in the space before. Sometimes it just doesn't work. At the moment we got a rehearsal director, which is a little bit difficult for me because she's giving me 'Botis, what do you think about that?' It's a little bit like 'Whoa.' Because you're not used to that. But it's someone who wants to enrich the work. And it's a bit different because I know the person as well. I'm not against collaboration thing, I'm not against that especially if it's making the work better. But not just random people.

**IA: What is happening outside of London?**

BS: What is happening outside London?

**IA: In terms of Hip Hop. What is happening outside London?**

BS: I don't know because I haven't had my head outside of that. Which is bad. I feel like things are happening, I'm

going to mention Southpaw, because I always hear things are happening. That gives me hope as well, because I don't know so much. I know where work is happening. I just don't know who and where and what kind of thing. Actually, I don't know. What is happening?!

**IA: What is the philosophy of Botis? What is it?**

BS: You should have told me this question. I'd have come with some stuff. The philosophy of Botis?! OK! Maybe not everything, I need to think about generally. Do you just mean my thoughts on things, or how I perceive things? I don't believe in failure. I think that word that we've adopted from our parents or our childhood or whatever. And my approach on this is how we perceive things. Especially the word failure, you can change how you see things. For yourself and fail until you figure out how you can change. You can read a book and it's like failure. Is this failure? Is that? For me that's bull crap as well because someone created that. And ideas about certain things someone might be doing also. Same for me as Shakespeare. Shakespeare obviously created things everyone loves, and is amazing. Shakespeare's amazing and we know that but in the next 500 years what else are people going to create? This is bloody difficult you know. It's bloody difficult! Damn! Hip Hop definitely being seen in a different light. I dunno man my brain is like bugging, because it's such a big thing you know? So my philosophy on Hip Hop...people making Hip Hop work. Theatre work. It has to change. People will find their own language. Like in 20 years time, I'm not saying it won't be called Hip Hop but

another artist might have found another word for it that still describes that same thing, but keeps the root. I believe in still keeping the root of it, but maybe creating another word for it. As artists, performers and people who work in it, it goes back to adopting from artists and not being an arsehole. My philosophy is you don't have to be an arsehole to make creative work. You can be the quietest person and still make genius work. I ain't got any more. I'm gonna write all these down and send them to you. I got loads man.



