

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Northwest Dance Project Moving In

Finds home at Mississippi Ballroom

The Northwest Dance Project has a new home and performance space opening in the heart of the Mississippi district.

An innovative, internationally recognized leader in the creation and premiere of dynamic new dance works, the dance project is moving into the historic Mississippi Ballroom at 833 N. Shaver St.

"This has been nearly a three-year process for us," says Scott Lewis, the

company's executive director, "but the patience and persistence has definitely paid off."

The organization will start dancing in the space on June 15 working on new creations for our all-world-premiere shows Aug. 14 and 15 at the Newmark Theatre.

"I fell in love with the space when I first saw it one summer night on Mississippi Avenue," says project Artistic Director Sarah Slipper, the acclaimed dancer, mentor and choreographer who founded the company in 2005. "It has a very romantic, old world charm you just don't see anymore and it's centered in one of the most vibrant and cre-

ative districts in the city."

The owners of the building, the Kuriso family, were key to securing the deal and eager to see dance return to the ballroom and to have a major arts organization become part of the Mississippi community.

"We finally have the space and time to really dive into our various programming elements," Slipper says. "We can offer more diverse classes, do more workshops for dancers, provide more youth outreach and create even more original works. We can also support other local dance companies and artists who are in need of rehearsal and performance space — the local community



The Mississippi Ballroom at 833 N. Shaver St. will be the new home for the Northwest Dance Project, a Portland dance company dedicated to the creation and performance of new dance works from established and emerging artists.

has been so supportive of us and we are excited to be able to give back."

Rappers Embellish Bad-Boy Image

Fiction often gets mixed with reality

(AP) -- Rick Ross sold hit albums rapping about selling crack cocaine but a revelation that he once worked as a prison guard threatened to end his career.

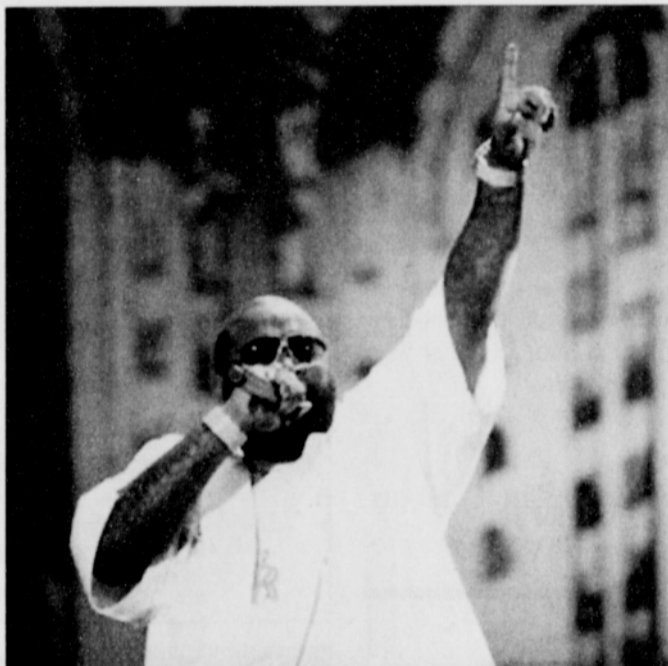
For a rapper cultivating a bad-boy image, a uniform put him on the wrong side of the law.

U.S. rappers often sell songs about drugs and guns based on "real-life" stories, but increasingly some of those stories are being exposed as embellishments aimed at helping them build successful careers, experts say.

"Some of the stories are fabricated and some of it is reality, and what they are doing is mixing the two," music executive Devyne Stephens said. "When you say you shot and killed somebody and you put it on a CD, nine times out of 10, you really didn't shoot and kill anybody."

Ross is a bearded, burly Miami rapper who brags of a cash-fueled, drug-boss life. His real name is William Leonard Roberts II but he takes his stage name from a drug trafficker.

So he was publicly humiliated when pictures surfaced of him last year through The Smoking Gun website looking clean-cut



Rap artist Rick Ross performs at the 8th annual BMI Urban Awards at the Wilshire theatre in Beverly Hills, Calif.

in a correctional officer's uniform.

Ross at first denied his past, then admitted it but maintained his drug-dealing tales of the street were true.

His third album, released in April and featuring titles such as "Rich off Cocaine," still sold well.

Stephens, who has been hailed as an image branding king and has worked with artists including Mary J. Blige, Usher, Sean "Diddy" Combs and Nelly, said many rappers mix lines in their songs that aren't literally true but draw from real experiences or stories they

have heard.

He says "probably 85 percent" of rappers embellish stories in songs and calls the current trend "reality music" which, like reality television, is something of a misnomer.

Stephens helped groom another successful U.S. rapper, Akon, who has had hits like "Locked Up" and "Ghetto." Akon was ridiculed last year and accused of dramatically enhancing claims of belonging to a car theft ring and having served prison time.

The new crop of rappers want to emulate the success of rappers-turned-moguls like

former New York drug dealers Jay-Z and 50 Cent, who both sold albums based on their transformations from street hustling to popping champagne.

"You formulate that story to make it just as interesting as the Jay-Z story," Stephens said, describing an outline of: "I am a hustler, I came from nothing and now I am on yachts in St. Tropez."

Jay-Z, married to superstar Beyonce Knowles, is now one of the world's wealthiest musicians, having signed a deal reportedly worth \$150 million with concert promoter Live Nation.

50 Cent, whose album and film "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" was based on his past as a crack dealer who was shot nine times, now runs a multimedia empire. He banked about \$100 million after taxes when his stake in Glaceau, creator of Vitaminwater, was sold to Coca-Cola, Forbes reported.

Both depart from that image at times. Jay-Z has promoted bicycles with New York's Mayor Michael Bloomberg and 50 Cent recently stood alongside entertainer Bette Midler to promote parks and gardens.

"Image would be people's perspective," 50 Cent told Reuters when asked what his old fans would think. "It might not coincide with what I am doing, but this is who I am."

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All- Bollywood Dance Party

DJ Anjali, Portland's primary advocate for the many varied electronic sounds of the South Asian diaspora, is taking over the Someday Lounge for a night of Bollywood music. From vintage Bollywood rock'n'roll, to Bollywood funk and disco, up to today's pastiches of techno, hip-hop, and reggaeton, it's all in the mix for the Friday, June 19 dance party at the downtown entertainment venue located at 125 N.W. Fifth Ave.

MY FATHER'S HOUSE MINISTRIES

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