



PHOTO COURTESY OWEN WALZ

Ithica Tell (from left), Ashley Nicole Williams, Joe Gibson and Chip Sherman star in 'How We Got On,' a story about hip hop in its golden age, presented by Portland Playhouse, a local group that serves a diverse audience at 602 N.E. Prescott St. into a community theater.

Hip-hop's golden age on Playhouse stage

Portland Playhouse launches its eighth season this week with Idris Goodwin's 'How We Got On,' a story of hip-hop's late-1980's golden age.

Goodwin is a black playwright, rapper and essayist, one of the six playwrights featured in "Hands Up," an anthology commissioned by The New Black Fest theater movement in New York.

"How We Got On," tells the story of three Midwestern teens who live their beats, rhymes and dreams of stardom. Battling suburban biases, each other's

How We Got On

egos and their own self-doubt, they learn about identity, inspiration and creating the creative life.

"Hip-hop is inherently theatrical and I am a lover of spectacle," said the show's director, Jen Rowe. "Idris Goodwin is

such a skilled writer. He moves quickly, uses sharp humor, loves his characters; endows them with both resiliency and vulnerability—but most importantly brings us a fresh perspective."

Music direction is by rapper and poet

Mic Crenshaw who shines on Goodwin's mastery of rhythm and wordplay.

An all-Portland cast brings this coming-of-age tale to life with sensitivity and earnestness, portraying our teenage heroes as they try to find a way to break into the urban scene and get signed to a major label, pushing through the negativity and learning to breathe in joy.

Portland Playhouse has a mission to serve diverse audiences in Portland and provide a space to bring people together to celebrate the complexity of our shared human condition.

Opening Night for "How We Got On," is Saturday, Oct. 3 with performances continuing through Oct. 25. For tickets and more information, call the box office at 503-488-5822 or visit portlandplayhouse.org.