

Film Review: 'Fresh Dressed'

Documentary revisits the rise of hip-hop designers

By Kam Williams
For *The Skanner News*

When rap arrived back in the late 1970s, more than the music burst on the scene. The performers' outlandish costumes also had a profound effect on American culture, which proceeded to mimic everything from MC Hammer's balloon pants to Run DMC's fedoras and Adidas outfits.

As the genre matured, the more business-savvy artists opted to capitalize on their influence by launching their own clothing lines. They figured, why increase the stock of big-label designers like Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger through the roof when they could wear



The new documentary 'Fresh Dressed' focuses on the genesis of rap and its early leaders. Legendary group the #ColdCrushBrothers formed in 1978 in the Bronx during hip-hop's beginnings, when crews started to settle beefs "on the dance floor, on the microphone, or on the turntables" rather than the streets.

comers such as Daymond multi-million dollar house- John (FUBU) and Puff Dad- hold names.

Dressed, a visually-captivating celebration of the sartorial splendor which blossomed during the Golden Age of Rap. The fascinating documentary takes a delightful stroll down Memory Lane, courtesy of reams of archival footage featuring folks in garish, spray-paint-colored outfits. It also has plenty of present-day reflections on the phenomenon by plenty of Hip-Hop icons: Nas, Pharrell, Kid, Play and Damon Dash, to name a few.

The movie marks the impressive writing and directorial debut of Sacha Jenkins, who has deftly interwoven all of the above elements into an informative history lesson that's worth the investment even if you're not a fan of rap. For instance, you'll learn how to avoid getting "vicked" (Ebonics for "victimized"), which was a distinct possibility if you were dumb enough to walk through the 'hood wearing a pair of the latest Air Jordans.

Believe it or not, gangstas build their wardrobe around their sneakers, since looking "fresh" (aka "stylish") starts with the feet. As Kid reminisces, "People were killed for their shoes," so "the one thing you never wanted to hear was someone asking you your shoe size."

Back in the day, if you decided to walk a mile in a man's moccasins, you meant that literally, not figuratively. Hey, that way, you'd not only have his shoes, but you'd have a decent head start on the barefoot sucka.

Fresh Dressed is a nostalgic tribute to a materialistic generation weaned on conspicuous consumption, where capped gold teeth and gaudy clock necklaces were trendy fashion statements.

Excellent ★★★★★
Unrated

Running time: 90 minutes
Distributor: Samuel Goldwyn

Stephen "tWitch" Boss: The "Magic Mike XXL" Interview



Stephen "tWitch" Boss as Malik in 'Magic Mike XXL'

By Kam Williams
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Born in Montgomery, Ala., on September 29, 1982, Stephen Boss was always spinning and staying in motion as a child, which is how he earned the nickname "tWitch." After studying dance at Southern Union State Community, he made his Hollywood debut in the third season of the reality TV series "So You Think You Can Dance" and was runner-up in the finals in season four.

He has parlayed that television success into a film career, appearing in *Hairspray*, *Blades of Glory*, *Stomp the Yard 2* and, most notably, several installments of the *Step Up* franchise: *Step Up Revolution*, *Step Up: All In*, and *Step Up 3D*. And since April 2014, he has been featured on "The Ellen Degeneres Show" as a guest DJ.

tWitch is married to his "So You Think You Can Dance" co-star, Allison Holker.

Here, he talks about his latest outing, acting opposite Channing Tatum and Jada Pinkett Smith in *Magic Mike XXL*.

KW: So, what interested you in *Magic Mike XXL*?

StB: I had never worked with anybody doing the film before, which was great. And then when I heard that they were doing a sequel, I just put it out there that I was going to be a part of it. And I was excited.

KW: Editor/Legist Patricia Turnier asks: How would you describe the character you are portraying?

StB: Malik is the guy that kind of inspires Mike to mind his p's and q's in order to be able prove that he's still a top notch dancer.

KW: How do you prepare differently to play a stripper than to play the street dancer in *Step Up* or the fraternity step dancer in *Stomp the Yard 2*?

StB: Well, a lot of it has to do with the choreography. Once you're on set with the extras who are ready to throw dollars and excited that you're actually taking your shirt off, it's pretty easy to get into character. Our choreographer, Alison Faulk, helped tremendously to make sure we were still bringing it.

KW: When you're cast alongside so many other great dancers, what do you have to do to stand out and put your personal mark on a movie?

StB: Honestly, by just getting down the only way that I can, which I think I did with my first solo team. That was basically me free-styling. And when I free-style, that's just the way that I dance. Nobody else dances like that. So, I think that's enough, doing me to the fullest.

KW: What message do you think people will take away from the film?

StB: [Laughs] It depends on what message you are open to taking. There's the underlying buddy theme to this film about taking a road trip with your boys for your last hurrah, and having a good time and being open for anything. There are a lot of unexpected twists and turns and relationships formed due to unforeseen

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Why increase the stock of big-label designers like Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger through the roof when they could wear their own labels onstage?

their own labels onstage? Subsequently, industry new- comers such as Daymond John (FUBU) and Puff Daddy (Sean John) kickstarted brands which became multi-million dollar household names. That surprising development is the subject of *Fresh*