

# In da House

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## **KHALED SABSABI**

Where The Studio, Sydney Opera House

When October 14, 2pm

How much \$15 plus booking fee

Bookings 9250 7777

**Khaled Sabsabi** is bringing hip-hop to an unlikely venue, writes PERRIE CROSHAW.

Hip-hop in the Opera House? Sure, says **Khaled Sabsabi**, who admits to being a little intimidated by the venue.

**Sabsabi**, a non-English-speaking background community outreach worker in Liverpool, has been working in the arts community for 15 years, but rapping much longer. He is performing at a hip-hop concert at the Opera House as part of the Global Sound Series, which is part of Carnivale.

"I'm not into gangsta hip-hop. It's more about entertainment [and] access to people who want to think about what they are listening to," he says.

"As for the music - I could play something ambient from Brian Eno and drop a beat over that. Maybe put in some Coltrane, improvising. Create something new from old. Use a bit of opera with a traditional Arabic drum or tambourine as rhythm."

Then there are the lyrics.

"I write all the stuff myself. It comes out of political things happening here in western Sydney, say, based on the media hype about the young Arabic people here. We're not all gangsters, you know, like the media make out."

**Sabsabi** pays homage to the Last Poets, rappers of the US civil rights era who brought together music and the word. The band's name came from a poem by South African poet Willie Kgositsile: "When the moment hatches in time's womb, there will be no art talk. The only poem you will hear will be the spearpoint pivoted in the punctured marrow of the villain. Therefore we are the last poets of the world."

Expect **Sabsabi's** lyrics to be as raw.

"I've spent my life working in detention centres, running alternative education programs out in areas where the young people are isolated. There's high unemployment and policing issues."

During Carnivale, he is running workshops for kids from the Green Valley, Liverpool and Miller areas. These aim to "skill up youth that are already in the hip-hop youth subculture by [giving them] the opportunity to work with experienced artists working with the hip-hop medium", **Sabsabi** says.

"I help set up portable studios for these young kids using hip-hop to [reach] them. I teach kids how to do this sort of stuff. Anybody can write a rhyme. Anyone can put a beat together. It's really important that these kids learn how to express themselves."