

**'I wanna  
do my  
part  
to fuel  
the fire'**

**TONIGHT** GRAHAMSTOWN

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PICTURES: ANTOINE DE RAS

Does hip-hop hibernate when it's National Arts Festival season? HELEN HERIMBI is still wondering after seeing one sweet hip-hop-based production as well as one that left her sour.

**SHOWING THE WAY:** Ian "Ewok" Robinson, above and below right, encourages the audience to search their souls and question everything they see in his show, *Spitfire*.

**T**here are five elements of hip-hop: Emceeing, DJ-ing, B-Boying, Graffiti and Knowledge Of Self.

In *Spitfire*, Ian "Ewok" Robinson brilliantly epitomises them all. The 26-year-old is a familiar face and name in South African hip-hop and in his thought-provoking one-man show he shifts society's perception of hip-hop from being about baggy jeans and big chains to big ideas.

Impressively playing – among a plethora of others – the role of a street vendor selling ideas, a boon-docks-inspired old man who represents the old school as well as the graf writer who educates the community through his art, Ewok encourages the audience to search

their souls and begin to question everything we see.

"I see *Spitfire* as a well-spoken truth," Ewok tells me after the show.

"*Spitfire* is also a metaphor for how mo'fire from the audience feeds the performer and then everyone in the room is ablaze," he continues.

This fire is meant to challenge everyone to take off the veil that is cast over our eyes by our governments, the media and even the status quo.

"When you gonna learn, man, that Hollywood's burning. I wanna do my part to fuel the fire," he chants as each scene fades into another.

Then he strikes the match of fury against all the misconceptions

people have against the hip-hop culture, but also against the culture of accepting being hoodwinked. Being fake is in vogue it seems, he says.

How we teach our children that plastic surgery is better than being authentic, that toy-gun-toting boys should aspire to become trigger-happy men, about the webs of propaganda weaved by "leaders" like Bush, Mugabe, Zuma – it's all in *Spitfire*.

Within this play Ewok (who is also a graf artist) "marries the old with the new school" and gets resounding praise from the audience. The point of the play can be found in one of his lines: "You might not be happy being human, just be happy to be you, man."

