

Daughter of Malcolm X Hip Hop Activist Record for Alex Haley

Written by Robert ID2930

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The Roots of X: Daughter of Civil Rights Icon & Hip Hop Activist Record for Alex Haley

Ilyasah Shabazz, daughter of world leader Malcolm X, recently recorded a new radio PSA with Canadian hip hop personality Raoul Juneja (a.k.a. Deejay Ra), to commemorate the 85th birthday of "Roots" author Alex Haley on August 11th.

Ilyasah's PSA was recorded as part of Deejay Ra's "Hip-Hop Literacy" Campaign to also encourage reading of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" amongst students of all cultures. 2005 marked the 80th birthday of Ilyasah's father, whose autobiography is now considered one of the most important books of all time.

"The Autobiography of Malcolm X" was created through Alex Haley's 1964 interviews with the civil rights icon later known as El-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz, and was released shortly after his assassination in 1965.

Completing the autobiography's epilogue about his friend's Africa unity messages is said to have inspired Haley's subsequent ten year effort to compile his next book, which would go on to win the Pulitzer Prize. Alex Haley's "Roots" was translated into over 32 different languages, and the 1977 TV series was watched by two out of every three American viewers at the time.

Closing episodes of a 1979 "Roots: Next Generations" TV sequel featured James Earl Jones portraying Alex Haley, and a 1981 "Death of a Prophet" film cast Morgan Freeman as Malcolm X. Twelve years later, Denzel Washington would iconize Malcolm X to the "Hip-Hop Generation" through Spike Lee's "X" film in 1993.

Recent TV adaptations of Alex Haley's unfinished books have also gained significant attention amongst today's youth, in part due to creative casting. A "Queen" TV movie in 1993 saw Halle Berry featured as Haley's grandmother, and Queen Latifah, Mario Van Peebles, Cicely Tyson and Blair Underwood were featured in "Mama Flora's Family" in 1998, said to be the final TV production based on Haley's work.

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Ilyasah Shabazz's autobiography, "Growing Up X", was released in 2002 and received endorsements from Maya Angelou, Spike Lee and Ruby Dee among others. Ilyasah is currently supervising the opening of a new Educational Center highlighting the legacy of her parents, entitled "The Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz Memorial."

Deejay Ra's "Hip-Hop Literacy" campaign was launched early 2004 to encourage movie and music themed books to students uninterested in reading, as alternative literacy developing methods. Additional "Hip-Hop Literacy" radio PSAs feature "Roots" actor Dorian Harewood, "Mississippi Masala" actress Sarita Choudhury and "Ali" actor Giancarlo Esposito among others.

For more about Alex Haley, Ilyasah Shabazz, or Deejay Ra visit www.KinteHaley.org , www.IlyasahShabazz.com and www.LyricalKnockout.com respectively. And be sure to check out www.dkv.columbia.edu/kiosks/malcolmx for a preview of the Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz Center.