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AfroFlow performs at IIT to packed crowd, M.A.D.D. Rhythms is 'amazing,' Chicago poets compete

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The heavy rain in Chicago didn't affect the packed house of students, parents, grandparents and fans of AfroFlow. Avoiding heavy traffic from the White Sox game going on a few blocks away, the crowd was in full force at the Illinois Institute of Technology at 7 p.m., Sat., May 8, in Hermann Hall Auditorium, 3201 S. State St. to see the hip-hop music group.

After a competition with spoken word artists Steven Green (South Shore Leadership High School), Joshua Turner (George Washington High School), K-Love and Sharone Ivey (Marshall High School) for prizes from the American Cancer Society, HBO's "Def Poet"—a spoken word artist—Triple Blak performed a poem for the audience pondering the question, "What if Jesus came back and was black?" Then came [M.A.D.D. Rhythms](#), a tap dance group who performed to [Kanve West's](#) "Amazing."



AfroFlow tour bus

As soon as the curtains closed for the anti-smoking, poetic group to hit the stage, people started chanting "AfroFlow!" Not long after, [AfroFlow](#) came on stage with Mike-E looking around at a sitting, anxious audience.

"Y'all act like you've never been to an AfroFlow show before," Mike-E said. "The livest people, come to the front."

Immediately audience members poured out of their seats dancing, cheering and clapping along to AfroFlow performing. The group includes drummer Sowandé Keita, singers Pathé Jassi and Kenny Watson, and DJ Invisible. After performing several songs on their CDs "[AfroFlow](#)" and "[AfroFlow II](#)," Mike-E continued his tour tradition of encouraging audience members who would stop smoking to come to the stage.

"Let's put an end to legalized genocide," said Mike-E. He stopped to hug several people as they lined the stage, cigarettes in hand.

AfroFlow is sponsored by [Pelle Pelle](#) and the [American Cancer Society](#). But AfroFlow doesn't just combat cigarettes. He talked to the crowd about the dangers of marijuana, too.

"Have any of you ever asked yourself how does paper this thin burn this slow?" he said. "Weed's got chemicals, and it's killing you."

Audience members let out collective "hms" and clapped when the smoking quitters smashed their cigarettes under their feet and tore them apart.

After the performance was over, the audience flocked to the tables in the lobby of Hermann Hall for free T-shirts, free "[AfroFlow II](#)" CDs, to take photos with the group and chat about the performance.

"I loved it," said Gwen V., 51. "It was fantastic, every moment from beginning to end."

Oci Dunkin, 17, who was guarding a stack of AfroFlow T-shirts for his friends, agreed.

"I think it was a great performance," Dunkin said. "It was electrifying and Afrocentric at the same time."

AfroFlow has several more performances in Chicago, Aurora, Evanston, Peoria, Rockford, Springfield and Waukegan before heading out of state again. Their tour wraps up on June 19 (Juneteenth) in Des Moines, Iowa.



Illinois Tour Dates:

- May 11, Tues., Aurora Community Outreach (time and location pending)
- May 12, Wed., Evanston Community Outreach (time and location pending)
- May 13, Thurs., Waukegan Community Outreach (time and location pending)
- May 15, Sat., Evanston Technology High School Community Concert, ETHS Auditorium in Evanston (7 p.m. to 9 p.m.)
- May 16, Sun., Chicago Walk & Roll Concert, Upper Hutchinson Field, Grant Park (11:30 a.m.)
- May 19, Wed., Rockford Community Concert (time and location pending)
- May 21, Fri., Glen Oak Amphitheatre in Peoria (6 p.m. to 8 p.m.)
- May 22, Fri. (time and location pending)
- May 23, Sat., Hoogland Center for the Arts in Springfield (6 p.m. to 8 p.m.)

For more info:

["AfroFlow 2010 tour comes to Chicago in May, Mike-E releases 'AfroFlow II' CD"](#)

["AfroFlow releases second CD in spring 2010, music review"](#)

["AfroFlow blends hip hop and spoken word, anti-smoking artist Mike-E on the mic"](#)

[AfroFlow in Pelle Pelle clothing](#)

["AfroFlow's Mike-E fights tobacco industry through music"](#)

["AfroFlow performs in Chicago's Illinois Institute of Technology" \(photo gallery, 43 photos\)](#)