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CONTACT: ph (626) 344-9077 digitalrainfactory@gmail.com

1968 Comes Alive for a New Generation in Artist Rasheed Ali's Music/ DVD Release "1968: Soul Power!"

Recent police shootings and following demonstrations in Ferguson and Baltimore have prompted a lot of observers, analysts and even the cover of Time magazine to question "What has changed and what hasn't in America" since 1968. Artist Rasheed Ali has captured the sites, sounds and feel of that era for a new generation in his latest CD/DVD release titled "1968: Soul Power!"

The piece is rich with funky, soulful, original songs written by Ali. And it is more than music. It is also a multi media art piece with video documentary footage depicting the era. "I was trying to capture the soul of that era in music," he says. "I really wanted to make an album about what it means to be black in America."

As a world musician, Ali says, "I had already made songs in Spanish about what it feels like to be black in Latin America. And I made songs in Portuguese about what it feels like to be black in Brazil. So it was time for me to come home and make the music of the time and place where I grew up."

"It is a love poem to my generation to remind them they were once young and courageous," Ali says. And he also wanted to deliver that sound and the feel and energy of that time to a new generation. "It was more than wearing an Afro. It was this feeling that life had changed. The 1950s were over. Something new was on the horizon. And kids were at the center of it. Kids were the driving force."

Ali was inspired to create the project in part after hearing his young adult sons playing 70s sounding music. "I was a product of the 60s and 70s. When I started to see and hear this derivative stuff, I said 'Why don't I make an authentic record,'" he said. "Because that's what I missed. I missed the funk. I missed the unadulterated funk."

This project is infused with the funk. "I wanted to make something raw," Ali says. It includes real music from real instruments recorded on a 1970s microphone without computerized cleanup. "We've got real trumpet. We got real flute. We got real percussion. It is not enhanced," he says. And he says it is even more socially and politically relevant than expected as news cameras today capture footage of

police in riot gear using tear gas and facing demonstrators in Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, Maryland following the police shootings of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray.

"1968 stands for a time. It was kinetic, courageous, wild, freaky, it was a lot of things," he says. "My sons didn't know what it looked like or felt like. I needed to curate that for them and their generation." On top of being a funky soulful album and dvd, he says "it's a subversive way of teaching our history" to a new generation. And it is a visceral reminder to the generation that lived in 1968 of their own ongoing "Soul Power."

LINKS: <https://youtu.be/wXmnSQqum8> <http://1968soulpower.com>

ABOUT RASHEED ALI:

Rasheed Ali is an award winning musician, artist, and educator. He started playing saxophone and flute as a child and quickly mastered the family of reed instruments. He is also an accomplished keyboardist and percussionist. He has performed around the world along side some of the greatest musicians of the last century. His latest work "1968: Soul Power!" combines his artistry as a music maker and film editor into a new form that might be called docu-music.

Ali grew up in the projects in New York City "where we didn't have a telephone or a car, but we had a strong sense of community" he says. He attended the famed Music and Art High School. In the early 1970s, he created his first band, Natural Essence. He signed his first record deal as a teen. As a young adult he opened for music industry icons like Isaac Hayes, Donny Hathaway and Herbie Hancock. Ali surrounded himself with friends and mentors among the giants of jazz including Wayne Shorter, Cannonball Adderley and Hancock. The sons of Nat Adderley and Theloneous Monk became his band mates. The basement of the famed Apollo theater became their rehearsal space. Beatles producer Sid Bernstein promoted them.

Ali moved to Los Angeles and worked as a side man and studio musician.

Ali went on to a solo career that delved into rhythms from across the globe. He released seven records with his group Rain People. He hosted his own world music podcast drawing more than 200,000 listeners.

After creating acclaimed albums in Spanish and Portuguese with Caribbean, African and World Music sounds, his newest contribution "1968: Soul Power!" brings him back home -- in time and space --to his roots in soul and funk.

FOR INTERVIEWS, IMAGES, SOUNDS AND MORE CONTACT:
digitalrainfactory@gmail.com