



CARNEGIE HALL
Weill Music Institute

In the Artist's Own Words

The souls of South Africa's people embody freedom. From the struggles and eventual defeat of apartheid to the joyous celebrations of overcoming those struggles, one can feel gratitude and rejoicing in the air. That beautiful dichotomy is exemplified on **NYO Jazz's** sophomore release, *Live in Johannesburg*, recorded at the historic Market Theatre during the ensemble's first tour to South Africa.

As the audience assumes its position as an additional member of the band, the fourth wall is broken, leaving no separation between the musicians and the listeners. This communal feeling can be experienced throughout the album; it's as if we're all in a gospel church being anchored by an all-powerful presence bigger than anyone in the room. The 16 to 19 year-old musicians who make up NYO Jazz celebrate the depth of togetherness and the power of unity, while the sold-out audience takes the baton in a circular relay, of sorts, around a theater originally constructed in 1976 to "give voice to the voiceless."

Featuring several standards like "Shiny Stockings" and "A Time for Love," NYO Jazz proves that it is steeped in tradition, while simultaneously displaying its modernity with new works written and arranged for the band. The album's commissioned piece, "ISIGQI SUITE," is brought to us by South African pianist and composer **Sibusiso Mash Mashiloane**, who wanted to honor "the essence of South African jazz and the profound emotional connection to our collective musical heritage." Mexican-born composer and arranger **Jhoely Garay** also offers her stunning new arrangement of "Trane," a tribute to the legendary **John Coltrane** written by Grammy Award-nominated saxophonist **Lakecia Benjamin**. And "Rejoice," written by famed composer and pianist **Billy Childs**, shows off the band's astonishing virtuosity.

NYO Jazz has a tradition of featuring some of the most stellar vocalists of our time, and this performance is no exception when the incredibly soulful and diverse voice of **Alicia Olatuja** joins the band. Her set features all new arrangements of pieces selected specifically for this collaboration, including the Afrobeat-inspired "Kadara," which she co-wrote with **Michael Olatuja**, and **Laura Nyro's** "The Confession," arranged by Billy Childs. Alicia also gives us an exquisite version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," and reminds us on "Under the Moon and Over the Sky" that "the universe is waiting for us to live a life that's happy and free." With a dynamic voice and a style that moves from R&B to West African rhythms, she takes us on a beautiful journey that connects the continents.

That connection was also palpable while sharing the stage with our two South African guest artists for these performances—bassist **Romy Brauteseth** and saxophonist **Linda Sikhakhane**—who lend their voices to **Mary Lou Williams's** "New Musical Express" and **Thelonious Monk's** "Evidence," respectively.

Live in Johannesburg reflects the synergy between the United States and South Africa: Struggles of identity and longing for freedom uniquely tie our countries together as the people unite to lift the spirits of humanity. We see ourselves in South Africa, and they in us. In this spirit of unity and togetherness, we offer what I believe will be an album for the ages, one that uplifts the human spirit in the name of jazz, the greatest sonic depiction of democracy we have.

—Sean Jones

Tracklist

NYO Jazz

Live in Johannesburg

Sean Jones, Artistic Director, Bandleader, and Trumpet | Featuring **Alicia Olatuja**, Vocals

With Special Guests **Romy Brauteseth**, Bass and **Linda Sikhakhane**, Tenor Saxophone

1. **Theme from *The Asphalt Jungle* (Duke Ellington)**
feat. Jasper Zimmerman (4:07)
2. **Evidence (Thelonious Monk, arr. John Clayton)**
feat. Miles Oppinger, Bishesh Paudel, Isaac Hanson, Ethan Kasparian Weisman, Linda Sikhakhane, Alex Hong, Skylar Tang, and Preston Rupert (10:17)
3. **ISIGQI SUITE (Sibusiso Mash Mashiloane)***
feat. Theodore Peebles, Isaac Hanson, and Benjamin Schwartz (6:38)
4. **Trane (Lakecia Benjamin, arr. Jhoely Garay)**
feat. Miriam Goroff-Behel (6:32)
5. **A Time for Love (Johnny Mandel and Paul Francis Webster, arr. Todd Bashore)**
feat. Sean Jones (7:29)
6. **Rejoice (Billy Childs)**
feat. Carter Bryan, Gustavo Cruz, Vincent Maclauchlan, and Benjamin Schwartz (11:04)
7. **New Musical Express (Mary Lou Williams)**
feat. Jordan Klein, Preston Rupert, Priyanka Magavi, Romy Brauteseth, and Paloma Ximena (7:47)
8. **Shiny Stockings (Frank Foster)**
feat. Lucas Rivero and Carter Bryan (5:25)
9. **The Confession (Laura Nyro, arr. Billy Childs, orch. Jim McNeely)**
feat. Alicia Olatuja, Skylar Tang, and Jasper Zimmerman (7:18)
10. **Kadara (Alicia Olatuja and Michael Olatuja, arr. Etienne Charles)**
feat. Alicia Olatuja (4:42)
11. **Somewhere Over the Rainbow (Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, arr. Christian Sands, adapt. Kyle Athayde)**
feat. Alicia Olatuja and Vincent Maclauchlan (5:42)
12. **Under the Moon and Over the Sky (Angela Bofill, arr. Michael Olatuja, adapt. Jim Pugh)**
feat. Alicia Olatuja, Sean Jones, and Ethan Oliver (7:57)
13. **We're Still Here / He's Alright (Wycliffe Gordon)**
feat. Sean Jones (6:16)

*Commissioned by Carnegie Hall

CARNEGIE HALL
Weill Music Institute

NYO Jazz

Sean Jones, Artistic Director, Bandleader, and Trumpet

Featuring **Alicia Olatuja**, Vocals

with Special Guests **Romy Brauteseth**, Bass and **Linda Sikhakhane**, Tenor Saxophone

Miriam Goroff-Behel, Alto Saxophone

Isaac Hanson, Alto Saxophone

Gustavo Cruz, Tenor Saxophone

Paloma Ximena, Tenor Saxophone

Ethan Kasparian Weisman, Baritone Saxophone

Alex Hong, Trumpet

Theodore Peebles, Trumpet

Lucas Rivero, Trumpet

Preston Rupert, Trumpet

Skylar Tang, Trumpet

Jordan Klein, Trombone

Priyanka Magavi, Trombone

Bishesh Paudel, Trombone

Ava Siu, Bass Trombone

Carter Bryan, Piano

Jasper Zimmerman, Piano

Vincent Maclauchlan, Guitar

Miles Oppinger, Guitar

Ruby Farmer, Bass

Rayah Thomas, Bass

Ethan Oliver, Drums

Benjamin Schwartz, Drums

Credits

Produced by Sean Jones. Co-produced by Paul Boothe. Recorded live at The Market Theatre in Johannesburg, South Africa on July 26, 27, and 28, 2024. Live audio and recording engineered by Paul Boothe with Abdul Burton, Vusumzi Keith Nakiwe, Kamohelo Tlou, and Sichumile Tutu Duna. Mixed by David Boothe at Boothe Bros. Sound Solutions. Mastered by Ted Jensen at Sterling Sound. Mastered for Dolby Atmos by Adam Grover at Sterling Sound.

Linda Sikhakhane appears courtesy of Universal Music Group.

Illustration artwork by Yay Abe.

Lead Donors: Hope and Robert F. Smith, The Kovner Foundation, and Beatrice Santo Domingo.

Global Ambassadors: Michael ByungJu Kim and Kyung Ah Park, Hope and Robert F. Smith, and Maggie and Richard Tsai.

Major support has been provided by Veronica Atkins, Mercedes T. Bass, Ronald E. Blaylock and Petra Pope, Clive and Anya Gillinson, The Pershing Square Foundation, Melanie and Jean E. Salata, Sarah Billingham Solomon and Howard Solomon, and Joyce and George Wein Foundation, Inc.

United Airlines®, Airline Partner to the National Youth Ensembles.



Additional support has been provided by the Alphadyne Foundation, Sarah Arison, Stella and Robert Jones, Martha and Robert Lipp, Beth and Joshua Nash, and David S. Winter.

NYO Jazz is made possible, in part, by an endowment grant from the Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme Foundation.

Credits as of summer 2024.

Promotion

Lydia Liebman

lydia@lydialiebmanpromotions.com

carnegiehall.org/NYOJazz

facebook.com/NYOJazz

instagram.com/NYO.USA

youtube.com/NYOUSA

CARNEGIE HALL
Weill Music Institute