

HARLEM 100



FEATURING MWENSO & THE SHAKES

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Harlem Renaissance

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS BRIANNA THOMAS,
MICHELA MARINO LERMAN, AND VUYO SOTASHE



OCTOBER 14

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2019 • 7:30 PM
PEACE CONCERT HALL

Produced by

IMG Artists

JMG Live

In Collaboration with

National Jazz Museum in Harlem

Creative Director

Shariffa Ali

Scenic Design

You-Shin Chen

Costume Design

Christelle Matou

Rodrigo Muñoz Molina

Bandleader

Michael Mwenso

Vocals

Vuyo Sotashe
Brianna Thomas

Drums

John Lumpkin

Bass

Russell Hall

Piano/Keys

Mathis Picard

Saxophones

Julian Lee
Ruben Fox

Tap

Michela Marino Lerman

Tour Manager/Audio

Taylor Roig

Lighting

Matt Hottinger

Harlem 100

100 years after one of the most culturally significant periods in human history, Harlem is in the midst of a resurging creative movement sparked by the centenarian embers left by the wildfire that was the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance has since proven to be an unrivaled period of brilliance in both profound intelligent expression and preeminent entertainment.

Created in collaboration with the National Jazz Museum in Harlem and JMG Live, this multimedia show captures the sights and sounds of Harlem when legendary artists such as Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Langston Hughes, and Billie Holiday made the neighborhood the cultural center of the country. Hosted by Michael Mwenso, *Harlem 100* presents the most exciting Harlem musicians and dancers in a modern variety show and pays homage to the presentations made famous in the Apollo Theater, the Cotton Club, and other celebrated venues of the Harlem Renaissance.

Featuring the music of Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, and Ethel Waters, as well as a nine-piece band with three dancers, *Harlem 100* celebrates one of the most influential artistic movements of our country and gives insight into Harlem then and now.

Michael Mwenso

Michael Mwenso was born in Freetown, Sierra Leone, but spent his teenage years hanging out at the legendary jazz club Ronnie Scott's in London, where he was exposed to musicians such as Benny Carter, Elvin Jones, Ray Brown, and Billy Higgins. In his youth, Mwenso started honing his talents as a trombonist, singer, and performer, playing in jump bands, reggae, and Afrobeat horn sections and at hard-bop sessions. Mwenso's talent as a performer caught the attention of many, which subsequently led him to meet James Brown, who allotted space for him to sing and dance at his London shows.

In 2012, friend and jazz musician Wynton Marsalis brought Mwenso to New York City to serve as curator and programming associate at Jazz at Lincoln Center, where he also booked nightly sets at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola. Over the next few years, Mwenso booked and performed with the likes of Cécile McLorin Salvant, Jon Batiste, Aaron Diehl, Sullivan Fortner, and Jamison Ross.

Through these performances at Dizzy's, Mwenso began to collaborate with a wide variety of Juilliard-trained musicians that soon became known as The Shakes. This unique group of global artists presents music that merges entertainment and artistry with a formidable timeline of jazz and blues through African and Afro-American music.

Brianna Thomas

With "a strong voice and a big range" (*The New York Times*), NYC singer and bandleader Brianna Thomas draws on the influence of the great blues-women of our past. Beyond a healthy serving of sass, Sarah Vaughn's influence contributes to Thomas' style, communicating a myriad of moods and feelings. Add to that a coyness reminiscent of Nancy Wilson, an Ella-esque skill and enthusiasm for scatting, and the stylistic breadth and vocal grandeur evocative of Dianne Reeves. Thomas' talents have propelled her to many successful performances at the Montreux, North Sea, and Umbria Jazz Festivals. She has performed across the country from New Orleans to Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center, including appearances with Fred

Anderson, Von Freeman, Houston Person, and the Barber Brothers. Thomas was a resident in both the 2001 and 2002 Betty Carter Jazz Ahead Programs and was awarded High School Jazz Vocalist of the Year by *DownBeat* magazine in 2001. Notably, at the age of 13, Thomas was the youngest person ever to be inducted into Peoria's African-American Hall of Fame.

Michela Marino Lerman

Michela Marino Lerman is a globally sought after tap dance artist, performer, choreographer, educator, and all-around creative spirit. *The Huffington Post* has called her a "hurricane of rhythm" and *The New York Times* has called her a "prodigy" and has described her dancing as "flashes of brilliance." She has studied with Buster Brown, Gregory Hines, Leroy Myers, and Marion Coles, and has performed with many masters such as Wynton Marsalis, Savion Glover, Jon Batiste and Stay Human, Roy Hargrove, Cecile McLorin Salvant, Benny Golson, Marcus Roberts, and many more. In 2017 Lerman conceived, choreographed, and starred in *This Joint is Jumpin'*, which debuted in Andrew Lloyd Weber's new London West End Theater, The Other Palace. Lerman is often a bandleader at some of New York's greatest music venues such as Jazz at Lincoln Center, Smalls, Ginny's Supper Club, and Joe's Pub.

Vuyo Sotashe

Young South African jazz vocalist Vuyo (Vuyolwethu) Sotashe moved to New York City in 2013 after being awarded the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to pursue a Master of Music at William Paterson University. Since then, he has gone on to win first prize at the very first Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival Vocal Competition in 2014 and performed on the festival's main stage the following year. More recently, he won the Audience Prize Award and placed second overall at the Shure Montreux Jazz Voice Competition in 2015, held at the annual Montreux Jazz festival in Switzerland. In the same year, he placed third in the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute International Jazz Vocal competition, where he was the very first male vocalist ever to place in the competition's finals.

Program content provided by company.

Harlem 100 appears by arrangement with IMG Artists, LLC, 7 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019. 212-994-3500

