

# Igmar Thomas' Revive Big Band Releases *Like A Tree It Grows*



Igmar Thomas' Revive Big Band has dropped *Like A Tree It Grows*. The band's first album comes after 14 years of the collective playing together and finding a contemporary way to meld jazz and hip-hop. The late Meghan Stabile launched the Revive Da Live concert series back in 2010 with this goal, and Igmar Thomas collaborated with her to make it happen, and the Revive Big Band was born. Wayne Shorter, Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, and Gangstarr are honored on the album, which has a mix of original songs and classics. There are guest appearances from Bilal, Talib Kweli, Nicholas Payton, Myron Walden, Terrace Martin, Jean Baylor, Marcus Strictland, and more. Shorter's "Speak No Evil" is retooled as a brisk but snazzy jubilee that keeps the integrity of the original. The band's cover of Gang Starr's "Words I Manifest" features emcee Raydar Ellis providing the late Guru's rap as they glide through Dizzy Gillespie's "Night in Tunisia." The jazz-to-hip-hop cultural flow is seamless, and the presence of music from Gang Starr comes three decades after Guru completed the same mission with his *Jazzmatazz* series. Thomas's band plays everything with an exuberance that lets you know that their music is their ministry. *Like A Tree It Grows* is unique for its big band lens of hip-hop, and the energy of the music is the latest proof that the conversation between jazz and rap is not over.



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**R.I.P. Quincy Jones**



Music giant Quincy Jones died November 3rd at age 91 after battling pancreatic cancer. Jones' career spanned seven decades, starting in the 1950s' as a jazz arranger. He began recording solo albums in 1955 after touring Europe with multiple jazz orchestras and almost starving with his own band, The Jones Boys. By the late '50s, Jones had met Frank Sinatra, and six years later he started arranging and conducting the bands on his albums. The '60s also gave Jones the opportunity to produce hit pop records for singer Lesley Gore. He started scoring for films and wrote soundtracks for *The Pawnbroker*, *In the Heat of the Night*, *In Cold Blood*, *The Italian Job*, and the 1975 cult classic *The Wiz*, where he met Michael Jackson. There were many other films he created music for and he famously produced *The Color Purple* in the '80s after discovering Oprah Winfrey. Television was another arena that benefitted from his music. Jones wrote the theme song for *Sanford and Son* and composed for the *Roots* miniseries and *The Bill Cosby Show*. No other African-American had the job of musical director and conductor of The Academy Awards before Jones. Mercury Records made him the first Black music

executive when he was hired as the musical director of the company's New York division.

The American public always connects him to his production work on Michael Jackson's most important solo albums, *Off The Wall*, *Thriller*, and *Bad*. *Thriller* has gone down in history as the best-selling album of all time. The '80s was the era when he released his album, *The Dude*, that had appearances from his goddaughter singer Patti Austin and James Ingram. It was Jones who brought together the biggest names in pop music for the "We Are The World" recording session to raise money for the Ethiopian famine in 1985. His trailblazing ways touched the world of hip-hop when he released his *Back on the Block* album in 1989, which had appearances from rappers Ice-T and Big Daddy Kane. Thirteen-year-old R&B singer Tevin Campbell got his big break singing the Jones' "Tomorrow (A Better You, Better Me)" on the album. Quincy Jones' reach expanded into television production in the '90s when he produced *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, which was Will Smith's first acting job, and *In the House*, which starred LL Cool J. He also produced *The Jenny Jones Show* and the comedy show *Mad TV*. In 1993, Jones co-founded *Vibe* magazine with David Salzman. In his seven-decade career, his reach was felt in multiple genres of music and media. He even appeared as himself in several television shows. He was just as committed to his humanitarianism by lending his support to the NAACP, GLAAD, AmfAR, Peace Games, and Maybach Foundation. His We Are The Future project launched in 2004 to help poor children survive and pursue their dreams. Jones' accomplishments are too many to list because his contributions to pop music and culture are unlike any other artist before and after him. He opened up his life to the public by publishing his autobiography in 2001, *The Complete Quincy Jones* in 2008, and the 2018 documentary, *Quincy*. In 2022, he published a book of life advice, *12 Notes: On Life and Creativity*.

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# Dave Guy: Ruby Album Stream



Trumpeter Dave Guy releases his debut album, *Ruby*. Guy's work as a supporting musician is usually with The Roots on tour and *The Tonight Show*. He also counts Lizzo, Amy Winehouse, Sharon Jones, and Pharrell as past employers. On his first solo album, he blows lines of fluffy, weightless notes on a purely instrumental jaunt. He has some of the sass and soul of Freddie Hubbard, who also played his horn with a purposeful delicateness rooted in the blues. "Droney Boy" belongs in a drama or mystery film for its sly rhythm movements and pensive lingering notes. Guy knows how to create moods with his instrument and that includes the celebratory nature of "Footwork," which infuses the air with playful phrases to incite dancing and partying. The palette of his emotions is not always so clear-cut, as "Pinky Ring" sounds like cool driving music or the backdrop to anything happening in everyday life, a musical morning stretch. Dave Guy's *Ruby* is his first major recorded step from band member to leader and it is a contemporary triumph of post-bop jazz traditions, including the West Coast school of chill.

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# Igmar Thomas' Revive Big Band Pays Tribute To J.Dilla & Thelonius Monk With The Talib Kweli-Assisted Thelonius



Igmar Thomas' Revive Big Band honors rap and jazz innovators J.Dilla and Thelonius Monk with "The Thelonius," featuring Talib Kweli. The two-part suite is a reimagining of Dilla's instrumental "The Thelonius" from Common's *Like Water For Chocolate* and Monk's bebop standard "The Thelonius." Summerstage commissioned Thomas in 2016 for *A Journey Through The Legacy Of Black Culture*, and he debuted "The Thelonius" at Rumsey Field in Central Park. Thomas, who is the music director of Lauryn Hill's touring band, guides the Revive Big Band and Talib

Kweli through a lazy swinging beat and a commanding brass section on the second single from the band's forthcoming album. Thomas explained "Thelonius" in a press release:

*"'Thelonius' demonstrates exactly how closely related jazz and hip-hop are and how they can once again easily evolve into one another. It brings together the best of two musical worlds... To take the energy even further, I composed an original final section of the song that explodes into a high-octane hip-hop Big Band shout chorus."*

"Thelonius" will appear on Iqmar Thomas' Revive Big Band's *Like A Tree It Grows* album, due to drop on October 25th. The album is a tribute to Megan Stabile, the founder of the Revive Music Group, whose vision of connecting younger rap fans and traditional jazz snobs helped create the Revive Big Band.