

Jazz Trio Nite Bjuti Launches Debut Album



Nite Bjuti's eponymous debut album (pronounced Night Beauty) taps into women's legacies, freedom, magic and love with ritual jazz, blues and the electronic blessings of Sun Ra. The Black woman trio of vocalist Candice Hoyes, bassist Mimi Jones and percussionist Val Jeanty named themselves after a Haitian folk tale about a deceased girl who reclaims her

skeleton to recapture her life. Hoyes' prayerful utterances, Jeanty's remixing of ceremonial rhythms and Jones' agile bass does sound like avant-garde jazz for the dead at times. They are the first group of its kind and improvisation is at the center of their creative process that excavates ancestral memories with a balance between the linear and the abstract.

The deeper conceptual moments found in "Witchez" and the rumbling rhythm and poetry of "Mood (Liberation Walk)" is akin to Shabazz Palaces' celestial hip-hop funk. Zora Neale Hurston's letter to W.E.B. Dubois proposing a cemetery for eminent Black artists and Carrie Mae Weems's Kitchen Table Series of photographs are referenced on the album that moves more like a single composition instead of individual songs. Hoyes says, "We are expressing the kind of pillaging, the uprooting of women in ways personal, intergenerational, familial, sexual, past and present." "Stolen Voice" protests the erasure of Black women's history and reclaims it at the same time with Jeanty's whirlwind sequences, Jones' trancey bass grooves and Hoyes' piercing notes. The layers of intensity are felt in Hoyes' vocals expressing sorrowful wails commemorating past wrongs but quickly morph into furious condemnation after striking decibel shifts. The trio is living somewhere in the same universe occupied by Ursula Rucker, Robert Glasper, Flying Lotus, Burnt Sugar, The Last Poets and Kendrick Lamar but they have their own unique space. Nite Bjugti's official debut inventively combines protest, healing, love and truth-telling into an enchanting movement of sound.

[Nite Bjugti by Nite Bjugti](#)

Nite Bjudi Demand Recognition For The Illustrious Negro Dead



Nite Bjudi's "Illustrious Negro Dead" is an urgent request to preserve storied Black legacies and is the second single from their debut album. The trio was inspired by Zora Neale Hurston's 1945 letter written to preeminent Black intellectual W.E.B. DuBois suggesting he create a cemetery to honor all Negro celebrities. Candice Hoyes fervently recites bits of Hurston's proposal as Val Jeanty and Mimi Jones's percussion and bass create a spooky nighttime kind of vibe. Hoyes is concerned about Black artists not dying in "conspicuous forgetfulness." She elaborates, "Although we improvised these words in the studio on Sept 21, they resound this week. Art is meant to break the cycles of oppression and offer new ways of being."

Nite Bjudi's plea happening at the time of the year when Black music fans and critics share opinions on the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame nominations recognizing prominent Black artists. This is also a period where the Hip Hop Alliance is working to raise its profile to further the mission of having all hip-hop and R&B artists fairly compensated with benefits. Hurston's issue almost eight decades ago is still relevant when superstars like Beyoncé are used to bring ratings to Grammy Award Shows but can't take home Album of the Year after four nominations. Or when Michael Jackson's game-changing *Thriller* album 40th Anniversary Tribute gets canceled at the American Music Awards. "Illustrious Negro Dead" is an observation that all Black creatives of note are still not being fully acknowledged for their work. Nite Bjudi's newest release is a prayer to remember, honor and sustain the legacies of those artists both living and dead. The group's full-length album comes out on April 14th.

**Watch: Nite Bjudi Mood
(Liberation Walk)**



Credit: Maciek Jasik

Candice Hoyes, Val Jeanty and Mimi Jones are Nite Bjugi. They are an Afro-Caribbean Brooklyn-based trio having chosen their name from Haitian folklore called “Night Beauty” about a girl who sings for justice in the afterlife. Their debut in 2018 at Jazz at Lincoln Center to celebrate International Women’s Day was followed by performances at the NYC Winter Jazzfest, Nublu Jazz Fest, WBG0 and The Schomburg. Today they share their first single [“Mood \(Liberation Walk\).”](#) The avant-garde musing flips the “Miss Mary Mack” nursery rhyme into a slightly eerie modern fusion. Hoyes questions false feelings of freedom as Jeanty’s drumsticks click like a bondage chain. The visuals are a montage of them taking the walk, jump-roping and performing as they are seen through a psychedelic filter. Some scholars have pegged the rhyme as originating from a game

created by slave children. Hoyes explained the imagery of them jump-roping in a statement:

“What good is freedom if you don’t really feel free? Black girlhood maturation brings a range of evocative contradictory experiences. In ‘Mood (Liberation Walk)’ we express the sudden sensation of a girl jumping/jumped into puberty, roped into a new emotional reality, physicality and societal positionality. As explored in the music video, she jumps through the portals of her own design right until the foreboding street lights flicker. Jumping is tied to shared childhood experiences, embodies connectivity and the chasmic leaps of growth in the Black womanly experience.”

Watch Nite Bjusti’s Afrofuturist breakdown of contemporary questions of Black freedom in “Mood (Liberation Walk).” The trio are currently working on their full-length album after becoming recipients of the 2020 NYC Women’s Fund In Jazz.