

Nicky Schrire - Composer Biography 2022

Nicky Schrire is an inventive British-South African vocalist and composer whose work has seen her likened to Joni Mitchell, Norma Winstone, and Joan Baez. The Boston Globe's Jon Garelick noted that "though her approach has earned her comparisons to Gretchen Parlato and Becca Stevens, the similarities are superficial...she's got her own thing, and it's very much worth listening to."

A graduate of the University of Cape Town and the Manhattan School of Music, she has performed in the USA, Europe and her native South Africa at venues like Jazz At Lincoln Centre and events including the 2018 Cape Town International Jazz Festival. She has released three critically acclaimed jazz albums, the latter being a duo album, which featured Grammy-nominated pianists Gerald Clayton, Gil Goldstein and Fabian Almazan. The Ottawa Citizen's Peter Hum described the recording as "fifty minutes of emotionally eventful, richly crafted music". Most recently, Schrire was the recipient of a Canada Council for the Arts grant that will support her next recording.

A keen lyricist, Schrire has penned lyrics for other vocalists and for instrumental works in order to encourage singers to explore new repertoire. She was commissioned by South African/Belgian vocalist Tutu Puoane to write words to the tune "Sunsong" by Belgian trumpeter Bert Joris. The song appears on Puoane's 2014 album "iLanga". In 2018, Schrire started writing lyrics for several works by South African pianist Bheki Mseleku. These imaginings of Mseleku's music have been sung by several South African vocalists, including Mihi Matshingana who performed Schrire's version of Mseleku's "Closer To The Source" with Marcus Wyatt's ZAR Jazz Orchestra at the 2019 Joy of Jazz Festival in Johannesburg, South Africa. Most recently, Schrire wrote lyrics to music by French vocalist Lois Le Van which will be released on his album "VIND 2.0: out on Cristal Records on 21 October 2022.

In 2020, the South African choir VOX premiered and recorded Schrire's a capella choral composition "Caged Bird", featuring Maya Angelou's poem as the text. Her contemporary classical suite "Escape: The Ingrid Jonker Suite" will have its Dutch premiere at the 2022 String Quartet Biennale in Amsterdam, where Schrire will perform the work with the Dutch string quartet Matangi and award-winning South African poet and author, Antjie Krog. The suite is part of a programme entitled *Trilogy/Trilogie*, which also features premiere works by female South African composers, (Ivy) Priaulx Rainier and Amy Crankshaw.