

Nicky Schrire - Long Biography 2021

Nicky Schrire is a multitalented and inventive British-South African vocalist and composer based in Toronto, Canada. Her work has seen her likened to vocalists Joni Mitchell, Norma Winstone, and Esperanza Spalding with The Boston Globe's Jon Garelick noting 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 South African College of Music and New York's Manhattan School of Music, she studied with Anthea Haupt, Peter Eldridge, Theo Bleckmann, and Dave Liebman. Schrire has performed in New York, Los Angeles, Boston, London, Dublin and South Africa, with musicians including Ben Wendel, Gerald Clayton, Fabian Almazan, Nir Felder, Nikki Iles, and Florian Hoefner. She released three critically acclaimed jazz albums-2012's "Freedom Flight", 2013's "Space and Time", and the 2014 EP "To The Spring"-which earned her comparisons to songwriters like Joan Baez and Mary Chapin Carpenter. Her duo album "Space & Time" 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".

Schrire's 2015 singer-songwriter EP "An Education" was released on the London folk label Wild Sound Recordings and led the Birmingham Review's Ed King to write that "when Nicky Schrire has something to say, she is on superior form...after listening to [An Education] a few times, especially in context to her previous recordings, it no longer feels like such a chasm between one genre and the other – more the landing in a place [she] could always have stood."

Returning to her jazz roots, Schrire took to the stage with her quintet at the 2018 Cape Town International Jazz Festival. She also performed her contemporary classical suite *Escape: The Ingrid Jonker Suite*, which sees Jonker's poems set to music arranged for string quartet and voice, at the 2018 Suidoosterfees, the 2018 Franschhoek Literary Festival, and to a sold-out audience at the Norval Foundation in 2019. The suite will receive its Dutch premiere in 2022 at the String Quartet Biennale in Amsterdam. Schrire will perform the work with the Matangi String Quartet and award-winning 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.

Schrire was delighted to be awarded a Canada Council for the Arts grant that will support her next album, to be recorded in 2021. She will collaborate with her Canadian peers for the first time and the project will be produced by Grammy-nominated producer Oded Lev-Ari.

Often praised for her choice of repertoire, *Hardbop Jazz Journal* described her as "clever and understated" while *All About Jazz UK* wrote that "in the crowded world of jazz vocals it helps to have a distinctive voice or a distinctive repertoire. Schrire scores on both counts."