



# SPAZA | s/t

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*Conceived in the Mushroom Hour Half Hour lab, SPAZA is a band with no permanent personnel, with each line-up assembled for the express purpose of recording completely improvised or workshopped material. For this, the initial salvo, SPAZA was put together from a group of musicians with individual and collective links to Johannesburg's jazz, afro funk and experimental electro scenes.*

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There is a heightened and sustained sense of intuition running through this recording whose sonic palette is so wide it captures - through soundscaping, invocation, lament, impressionistic vocal weaving - not only the transient and hybridised nature of life in Johannesburg, but also the heaviness of the air at the time of its recording. More ambient, controlled swirl of rhythm and experimental mixing than incessant groove, the album is an outpouring of a range of expressions that exist between the supposed binaries of indigenous forms of music and the electronic experimentation Johannesburg is known globally for. Between Gontse Makhene (percussion) and Ariel Zamonsky (upright bass) on the bottom end of the scale and Joao Orecchia (electronics) and Waldo Alexander (eclectic violin & FX) on the nebulous end of it, vocalists Nosisi Ngakane and Siya Makuzeni (who also plays trombone) marshal a vocal experiment that is as tense as it is playful.

There is an intelligence to the vocal sculpting that gives structure and coherence to the music, creating a sonic monolith that honours various aspects of South African life, including divination, burial rites, as well as the precariousness of a simple trip to the cornerstone.

At times opaque, and at others direct, SPAZA is always unyielding and propulsive. This could be the sound of the city turned inside out, ruminating on its troubled history and ever morphing present. There are pensive and celebratory streaks crisscrossing the album, not to mention a vulnerability that is in keeping with the spontaneous ethos of Mushroom Hour Half Hour. The results, shaped in the Pan African milieu that is Johannesburg, is a freewheeling representation of continental astral travel.





“SPAZA sounds equal parts incantation and cosmic message, with shades of Arthur Russell in its rolling congas and staccato strings

## NOTABLE QUOTES / ONLINE PRESS

*The trombone, violin, and electronically warped vocals resemble futuristic R&B one moment, Sun Ra at his most spacebound the next” **Best Experimental Albums of 2019 on Pitchfork***

*“A remarkable South African album launches today” **Gwen Ansell***

*“SPAZA sounds equal parts incantation and cosmic message, with shades of Arthur Russell in its rolling congas and staccato strings” **The Quietus***

*“A spellbinding mix of spiritual jazz and New Age that pays homage to black South African culture” **Album of the day on Bandcamp***

*“Their cyclical patterns may call to mind the steady tread of an evening walk in the woods, the comforts of nature and the danger of darkness closing in around you” **New York Times***

*Exclusive stream of the SPAZA album on **The Wire***

*“SPAZA defied all categorization and fearlessly explored a rarefied new space” **The Best Albums of 2019 on Bandcamp***

*“Magical and spiritual but never oppressive, Spaza’s debut captures the spirit of a ceremony at the crossroads of the everyday and the mystical” **Bass Magazine***

*“A beguiling, expansive album, that explores metaphysical discussions, whilst somehow leaving fingerprints and humanity over everything, SPAZA is a rewarding, refreshing sequence that deserves attention” **Popbollocks***

## AUDIO










## MUSIC VIDEOS

Live performance of “Ice Squinchies (Waiting for You)” by SPAZA - **WATCH HERE**





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## CREDITS

Ariel Zamonsky – upright bass  
Gontse Makhene – percussion and vocals  
João Orecchia – synthesisers & electronics  
Nosisi Ngakane – vocals & FX  
Siya Makuzeni – vocals, FX & trombone  
Waldo Alexander – electric violin with FX pedal  
Guest Feature on Stametta Sput: **Nonku Phiri** – vocals

Performance recorded live at the Spaza Art Gallery, Troyeville,  
Johannesburg on 17 May 2015  
Performance curated by Andrew Curnow & Nosisi Ngakane  
Performance recorded by Andrew Curnow and Nhlanhla Mngadi  
Sound Engineering for performance by Tebogo Laaka  
Recordings mixed by Dion Monti  
Recordings mastered by Norman Nitzsche at Calyx Mastering  
Recordings edited and produced by Monti & Curnow  
Cover Art and Design by Graeme Arendse  
Executive Produced by Andrew Curnow  
All songs published by Mushroom Hour Half Hour

To the memory of Bra Peter Makurube.

lovingly presented to you by Mushroom Hour Half Hour

