



## LAUREN KINHAN

The first thing you notice is her voice, and then her savvy choices. Lauren Kinhan possesses a rare and beautiful instrument, tough and tender, clear and fine-grained in every register, she dips down into husky chest notes and ascends into silvery head tones. Whether on her own highly-acclaimed solo albums, 29-year member of the internationally acclaimed vocal group **New York Voices**, or as co-founder of two diverse and inventive supergroups, **Moss** and **JaLaLa**, the singer and composer has always forged her own path as a performer, composer and improviser.

With her latest album on her *Dotted i Records*, ***A Sleepin' Bee***, Kinhan once again steers herself in unexpected directions that is at once the first all-standards collection of her career, a loving tribute to legendary vocalist Nancy Wilson, and unmistakably a Lauren Kinhan album – with all the unique perspective and idiosyncratic personality that has come to imply. In particular Wilson's collaborations with Cannonball Adderley and George Shearing proved the jumping-off point for Kinhan, who utterly transforms these classic and obscure numbers with the help of pianist/creative partner Andy Ezrin and veteran producer Elliot Scheiner as well as a stellar band featuring bassist Matt Penman, drummer Jared Schonig and special guest trumpeter Ingrid Jensen. *“Every single song in this collection hits a sweet spot of a different sort, but the most pleasing aspect of the recording is how it uncovers the stripped-down, soulful side of Kinhan's voice,”* All About Jazz. And Downbeat crowned the recording with 4 1/2 stars, a near perfect rating from their discerning ears.

Her remarkable journey with **New York Voices** since 1992 has contributed to their full color catalogue of recorded works, logging millions of touring miles, and created an educational division that is highly respected across the globe. Recent recordings celebrate their 30th Anniversary...the first, collaborating with the **Bob Mintzer Big Band** to create ***Meeting of Minds*** for the MCG Label in 2018. And in the fall of 2019 they released the stunning ***Reminiscing in Tempo*** on Origin Records. Dedicated to compositions by Dave Brubeck, Chick Corea, Duke Ellington, Ivan Lins, Fred Hersch and the Beatles and a sprinkling of a cappella Cuban Dances by Ignacio Cervante and a few originals by the members, this album is the typical varietal bouquet we've come to expect from this group who so often color across genres and use the voices to paint so liberally.

New to Lauren's resume is the role of being a presenter. In 2018, with her co-partner Janis Siegel, they began curating a monthly live vocal centric salon called **Vocal Mania**, made up of the amazing talent in boroughs near and far and showcased them at the Birdland Theater and the Zinc Bar. This popular event became a wonderful place to hear stars and unknowns alike and celebrate the vocalist. When the pandemic hit, they took this idea, rebranded and launched **Vocal Gumbo**. Partnering with Laurie Green, Janis and Lauren made their homes into recording and video editing studios and their kitchens broadcast sound stages. They produced collaborations with artists from all over the world and created a way to stay connected and creative while sequestered. To learn more about Vocal Gumbo, visit, [VocalGumbo.com](http://VocalGumbo.com)

Along with Lauren's writing and recording career, joining the adjunct faculty of NYU in 2018 has expanded her educating passion and given her a home to practise and perfect it. Co-directing the jazz and contemporary vocal jazz ensemble with Janis Siegel has grown quickly into a coveted group to join and in 2021 the NYU Village Voices were recognized in the Downbeat Student Music Awards for the first time for NYU.

Lauren's other solo albums include, **Circle in a Square** (*Dotted i Records*), 2014's vivid collection capturing and distilling the emotional currents of everyday life. Rooted in jazz's improvisational imperative, she celebrates the music in her own image, a self-contained emotional narrative driven by her unerring musical taste. *Jazz Journal* called it a "Tour de Force" and *Jazz Times'* Christopher Loudon said "Kinhan has never shone brighter."

**Avalon** precedes CIAS with all the wonder and curiosity of how parenthood might effect one's life. Basic recording began in 2001 upon discovering she was pregnant. That strategic recording session became the place marker for her to find her way back to finishing the record over the next 8 years, chipping away on the writing and recording while collaborating with longtime bandmate and producer Ben Wittman. "Sweet surprises lurk around every corner, says Loudon of *Jazz Times*, *shaping a pastiche that is hip, intelligent and vibrant.*" And the love song she wrote to her daughter Ella, "Here is My Avalon," enjoyed her 5 year old cameo vocal appearance. Released on EOne Records in 2010, its an important piece in the puzzle of understanding Lauren's mosaic musical.

During these dense touring and parenting years, two other super groups were formed. In 2006, the collective made up of some of Jazz's most cutting edge creative vocal thinkers began meeting up to eat and play around with musical ideas which led to the super group **Moss**. **Luciana Souza** and **Peter Eldridge** came up with the idea while on the NYC transit and soon **Theo Bleckmann**, **Kate McGarry** and **Lauren Kinhan** were gathered in Lu's upper west side apartment pushing around notes. The vocal vision was meant to have a looser script on vocal arranging and utilize modern tonalities, vocal looping and planing to expand on what these 5 voices could create. **Moss**, Produced by Ben Wittman and released on *Sunnyside Records* in 2008 to rave reviews, *Downbeat Magazine* included it in their "**Best of the 2000s**" issue.

And an invitation in 2008 from jazz chanteuses **Janis Siegel** brought together her prior bandmate in **The Manhattan Transfer, Laurel Masse'** and Lauren to create a new trio inspired by the great female vocal groups of yore, **JaLaLa**. Paying tribute to Johnny Mercer's songbook and shining the trio format to a high gloss, they produced "***That Old Mercer Magic***" which came out on Dare Records in 2009.

Lauren's debut recording resulted from one night right out of the story books. In 1999 at New York City's storied The Bitter End, she delivered a set of originals with her commanding band, a full house - including **Ornette Coleman** with whom she recently toured and recorded with - and legendary music producer **Phil Ramone**. Offering her a deal with N2K Records right on the spot, Ramone told her to change nothing! ***Hardly Blinking*** (2000), while the most singer/songwriter driven project of her catalogue, tips the hand to her deep blues influences, her rich melodic painting, her lyrical mining and limber, soulful voice. Phil called her "*a true songstress, like Phoebe Snow.*"

Along with Lauren's many projects, other wonderful opportunities as a special guest allowed her to offer her voice to projects throughout her career. Two of note are in 1997 she recorded and toured with **Ornette Coleman**, culminating with participating in his retrospective at Alice Tully Hall in 1997, "Civilization," playing along side Ornette, Billy Higgins, Charlie Haden and Geri Allen. And she was also one of the fortunate singers that lent their voices to **Bobby McFerrin's** Grammy award winning masterpiece, ***VOCAbuLarieS***.

New York Voices launched their **New York Voices Vocal Jazz Camp** in 2008 at Bowling Green State University and it is still going strong at Western Michigan University, home of the amazing vocal jazz ensemble Gold Company. And in 2016, NYV premiered their annual International vocal jazz camp in partnership with the Bayerische Musikakademie in Germany.

In all of Lauren's work, mentoring and guiding young artists is a passion. Coaching high school students in preparation for college auditions and using the Vocal Mania and Vocal Gumbo platform to create performance opportunities for young artists are commitments to she believes in paying it forward. Community through creation, growth and evolution through raising one another up are through lines in everything she does.

To learn and hear more about Lauren, New York Voices, Vocal Gumbo, Moss, and her guest artist works, visit [www.laurenkinhan.com](http://www.laurenkinhan.com)