



ANAÏS MAVIEL

MUSIC & SPIRITUALITY

BY ADAM DAVIDSON

Speaking with vocalist-composer Anaïs Maviel is almost as unique an experience as listening to her music or watching one of her performances. The French-Haitian is like a whirlwind with a deep-rooted energy and passion for music and spirituality that carries you along with her. Following the release of the eight-part suite, *listen to the rain*, Maviel is feeling like a nomadic spirit. Catching up with the musician over the phone while she overlooked the beach in California, the temporary escape from NYC city life was evidently giving her a clear mind with fresh perspectives.

From a young age, growing up in France with a Haitian mother, the worlds of music and spirituality were intrinsically connected, providing Maviel with a unique perspective on the transcendental power of music. “I was born into a very spiritual and holistic type of house where there were no taboos. We could talk about multi-dimensions all day. It was fun and weird, as that’s not the vibe in France,” says Maviel, who had her first transcendental experience as a teenager. At that time, her mother, who was also a musician, hosted a group of people from various ethnicities, who practiced Shona music in their house. Up until that point, her relationship with spirituality was through her mother and her experiences through earthbound spiritual traditions and practices. However, it was during one of those rehearsals of Shona music at home that she had her first out-of-body experience. “It’s special when you access your own relationship with the invisible and magic, which is beyond what you can explain rationally. That was that day; I heard voices,” she recounts. “I had that experience...something at the vibratory level was being activated. It was not normal and felt bigger than me and opened a portal to something that was incredibly powerful.”

This transcendental moment was something that had a profound impact on Maviel and was a feeling that she tried to recreate and experience through music and performing. The intertwined worlds of music and spirituality can be felt most deeply in *listen to the rain*. What is essentially a meditation was an ambitious collaboration with the string quartet The Rhythm Method, inspired by Chinese energetics and the Taoist concept of the eight forces. “I am a student of life. I love cosmology, spirituality and things that relate to the relationship between humans, the environment and the cosmos. There are our physical experiences and then the invisible. To me, music is where these things come together and that is where I operate as a musician. I want to make spiritual concepts available to the senses,” she explains. *listen to the rain* is a distinctively personal project, as she incorporated her love and passion for Taoism and spirituality into her music. However, as it was a collaborative project with The Rhythm Method—Leah Asher, Marina Kifferstein, Carrie Frey and Meaghan Burke—she had to connect with the quartet on a deeper level before embarking on the odyssey together. “I was having different conversations with them to understand what would be the angle for each

of them to enter my world. I really wrote the music thinking about them in a personal way with the intent to feature them and their own unique world view and set of skills,” Maviel says. “It was my own study of the eight forces and five elements, yes. But it was also my study of them as people and artists. Everything that is being played is absolutely meant for them.”

Past collaborations of Maviel’s include projects by William Parker, as well as pianist Mara Rosenbloom’s Flyways trio and a voice/bass duo with Michael Bisio. When discussing Maviel with recent musical partners such as trumpeter-bass clarinetist Matt Lavelle and saxophonist-flute player Ras Moshe, her ability and power as a musician becomes evident. Moshe remarks that she is able to “elevate the music” and create something distinctive in her own style. After collaborating with her at two Arts for Arts events, Lavelle is awe-struck by Maviel’s ability and declares that she has a voice that “touches the sky....It was then that I knew she was the voice I was looking for in my 12 Houses Orchestra. Anaïs is very multifaceted, and in the 12 Houses she is a 21st-century extension in the rare tradition of singers who can use sound without lyrics, such as Kay Davis and Alice Babs with Duke Ellington.” He adds: “Not only is she on that level, she has moved past it! Singing is such a personal and human experience. There are many people who sing around the world, but I rarely hear singers who have a range like Anaïs’ that is just so natural for her. I truly believe her to be one of the rare human beings who was *born to sing*.”

Although Maviel grew up around rural France, she was always fascinated with the African American jazz scene in the US and wanted to move here to “find her place.” In contrast, she didn’t feel there was a place for her in France at the beginning of her career, perceiving that classical music was the tradition most upheld and protected. “In Europe, we have classical music and people are much more protective of the tradition and won’t let you mess around with it too much. But, with jazz, as it’s not our tradition, people are a little more careless,” she reckons. “Then, you go to the US...it’s the opposite. People are much more protective of the jazz tradition. That’s the classical music of the US. But, when it comes to European classical music, it’s less precious.”

The freedom to express herself is crucial to how Anaïs Maviel operates and wishes to be perceived, and it’s through this unrestricted creative expression that she hopes to impact the audience in their own life journeys too. She concludes: “The function of my music is holding space for other people to have their own experience so they can find their own answers. I’m hoping that it can bring people into that space where they can access truth from all kinds of angles and all forums.”

For more info visit anaismaviel.com. Anaïs Maviel and The Rhythm Method’s *listen to the rain* album release concert is at The Blanc Dec. 13. See Calendar.

Recommended Listening:

- Anaïs Maviel — *hOULe* (Gold Bolus Recordings, 2014)
- Anaïs Maviel/Michael Bisio — *Abstractions of the Human Kind* (s/r, 2015)
- Ras Moshe Burnett & Music Now! — *Live at Scholes St. Studio* (Nendo Dango, 2017)
- Anaïs Maviel — *In The Garden* (Gold Bolus Recordings, 2018)
- Anaïs Maviel and The Rhythm Method — *listen to the rain* (Protomaterial, 2021)
- Flyways (Mara Rosenbloom, Anaïs Maviel, Jordyn Davis) — *Mutualism* (Daily Music, 2024)

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DECEMBER 2025 JAZZ CALENDAR

TUESDAYS 8–11 PM
Weekly Jam Session
House Band: Diego Voglino
with guests

WEDNESDAYS 8 & 9:30 PM
Sebastien Ammann
Gaia Quartet (12/3)
Kayvon Gordon Trio (12/10)
Hannah Marks Quartet (12/17)

THURSDAYS 8 & 9:30 PM
Adam Kolker + Jeremy Stratton with guests:
Leo Genovese (12/4)
Bob Sheppard (12/11)
Billy Mintz/Roberta Piket (12/18)

FRIDAYS 8 & 9:30 PM
Peter Kronreif with Neta Raanan (12/5)
Mark Turner Quartet (12/12)
Alvaro Torres Trio (12/19) Anwar Marshall (12/26)

**NO
COVER
ONE DRINK
MINIMUM**

**SATURDAYS 6 - 7:30 PM DUET SET(S),
followed by 8 & 9:30 PM sets:**
Allan Mednard (12/6) Mark Turner (12/13)
Elsa Nilsson (12/20) Caleb Wheeler Curtis (12/27)

CONTEMPORARY EAST PRESENTS

Kaoru Watanabe



Max Whittaker

Kaoru Watanabe’s solo work “Incense” with Japanese flutes, percussion, zithers and voice interwoven with electronics. Incense becomes convergence of ancient and modern technologies, sound and spirit.
Guest percussionist: **Satoshi Takeishi**

Yoon-Ji Lee



Estro Studio, Haksoo Kim

South Korean composer Yoon-Ji Lee’s new improvisational piece seeks to reveal universal human sensibilities and emotions through imagination and sound.
Yoon-Ji Lee electronics **Leo Chang** electronics & piri
Shoko Nagai accordion & piano **Satoshi Takeishi**
percussion **Dan Lippel** electric & acoustic guitar
Bang Guel Han visual art

Dec 16, 8pm Roulette 509 Atlantic Ave Brooklyn

TICKETS \$25 advance/\$30 doors/\$20 Student, Senior
Founded in 2022 by Yuko Fujiyama, Contemporary East highlights the beauty and depth of Eastern Expressions in improvisational music.

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