

Lauren Kinhan

When legendary Phil Ramone discovered and signed Lauren at a Bitter End performance in NYC in 1997, people began to really take notice of her fiercely creative voice and original music. With influences steeped in jazz, followed closely by her love of the great singer/songwriters, she has morphed a style that borrows from both disciplines while moving the original song forward in new and unexpected ways. Any way you look at it, she's a jazz vocalist with a broad imagination and an appetite for mixing things up. Phil called her a true songstress.

Many agree that veteran vocalist and composer Lauren Kinhan is at the peak of her form as shown on her 2014 project, **Circle in a Square**. **Jazz Journal** called it "a vocal tour de force," and the Midwest Record said, "this set sounds familiar but like nothing you've heard before... giving us a nu kind of jazz thrush without the tortured artist effect." **Jazz Times** simply said, "Lauren has never shone brighter." Partnered with the great engineer and producer Elliot Scheiner and seed money from a successful Kickstarter campaign, she has unleashed 12 exquisitely crafted songs that push boundaries and buttons. Written primarily through the jazz lens, Lauren set the songs on a traditional jazz trio and punctuated it throughout with many special guest performances from Randy Brecker, Romero Lubambo Donny McAslin, Chuck Loeb, Joel Frahm, and Gary Versace. "These twisting, unpredictable tunes seem to offer up more on each repeat listen," said Jazz Journal, "with Kinhan's supple voice running at full pelt through a broad musical palette. **Circle in a Square** was released January 7, 2014. "It simply does not get much better than this. 5 Stars!" shouts Bop-N-Jazz.

On deck in 2017 is recording her tribute to the great jazz vocalist, Nancy Wilson, who is celebrating her 80th birthday this year. Tentatively titled "A Sleepin' Bee – A Nancy Wilson Sonnet", the project focuses primarily on her recordings from 1958-1965, including the iconic "Nancy Wilson/Cannonball Adderley." Lauren has created a program with her longtime pianist/collaborator, Andy Ezrin, reimagining the repertoire Nancy underscored with her soulful, swingin' style. Recording it at her alma mater, Berklee College of Music, with Grammy Award Winning producer and mixer, Elliot Scheiner, Lauren remembers an artist that helped begin her love affair with jazz, singing and interpreting the standards. Stay tuned for the release schedule.

Since 1992, Lauren has been a member of the internationally renowned vocal group **New York Voices**. Their career has taken them all over the world working with many of music's gems like Nancy Wilson, George Benson, Bobby McFerrin, Paquito D'Rivera, Jon Hendricks, Annie Ross, Ivan Lins and The Manhattan Transfer. In 2013 NYV celebrated their 25th Anniversary with two new releases, **New York Voices Live with the WDR Big Band** and their long anticipated Holiday CD, **Let it Snow**. Their ever growing list of programs keep them busy with world class symphonies and big bands and their successful educational division has grown from offering Master Classes and Workshops all over the world to producing the annual **New York Voices Vocal Jazz Camp** hosted at Ithaca College in upstate New York. In the summer of 2016, they debuted their International Vocal Jazz Camp in Ptuj, Slovenia.

New York Voices shares two Grammy awards for their featured work on Paquito D'Rivera's **Brazilian Dreams** in 2003 and the Count Basie Orchestra's **Live at the Manchester Craftsman Guild** in 1997. They continued to use the choral canon as the backdrop for their voices as evidenced in their 2007 release, **A Day Like This**.

Christopher Loudon of Jazz Times wrote about Lauren's acclaimed 2010 release **Avalon**, "Sweet surprises lurk around every corner shaping a pastiche that is hip, intelligent and vibrant." Lauren describes it as her

“getting back on her bike CD.” “Parenthood changes everything, from the way you look at life, at yourself and at your personal goals and limits,” says Lauren. **Avalon** was made over an 8 year time span, the first tracking date occurred when she was newly pregnant and then put aside for future reference. “*Dory and a Single Oar*” was an important outgrowth of that tracking session, cementing a new approach to melding jazz and singer/songwriter sensibilities in her writing process. While the CD meanders a bit more broadly than **Circle in a Square**, all signs pointed to her being on the right path. Jewels like “*Here is my Avalon*,” string hued “*Here After*,” and “*There Alone Go I*” are some of the standouts. Jazziz publisher Michael Fagien said “*I can’t stop listening to it. She mines deep reservoirs of emotion and experience throughout.*”

Lauren’s versatility as a composer is shown in her contributions on **New York Voices** CDs over the years, and co-founding two other super groups, **Moss** and **JaLaLa**. Moss, made up of Luciana Souza, Kate McGarry, Theo Bleckmann, Peter Eldridge and Lauren, released their self titled CD, **Moss**, in 2008 to rave reviews. In 2010, it was included in DownBeat’s ‘Best CDs of the 2000s’ issue. **JaLaLa** is short for Janis Siegel (The Manhattan Transfer), Laurel Massé (founding member of The Manhattan Transfer) and Lauren Kinhan, and they released their tribute to Johnny Mercer **That Old Mercer Magic** in 2009.

Most recently, Lauren offered up three sets of lyrics to Japan’s pop crossover artist **Senri Oe’s** latest outing. After spending his youth as a pop sensation, he attended the New School in New York and developed his own jazz composition style. Aligning his talent with other great singers and lyricists for his 2016 release, **Answer July**, it features Sheila Jordan, Theo Bleckmann, Becca Stevens, Lauren Kinhan and Dylan Prymak. And another upcoming collaboration with Jazz great, **Janis Siegel**, who is producing part two of Phillipine composer, **Jose Mari Chan**, has asked Lauren to add a lyric and her performance to one of his pieces.

Her debut solo project, **Hardly Blinking**, was produced by Phil Ramone, Frank Filipetti and Rob Mounsey, and showcases that historic set that Phil heard at the Bitter End in 1997. It references the influence that Stevie Wonder, Carole King, Bonnie Raitt and Joni Mitchell played in her early writing. Expect categories to be dashed once again with rock anthems sitting next to art pieces and bossa novas. “*Ask Amelia*,” “*I Saw Love Today*,” and “*Heaven and Earth*” are particular high notes.

You can hear Lauren’s voice on the Grammy Award winning Bobby McFerrin project, **VOCaBuLaireS**, and Ornette Coleman’s 1996 release, **Sound Museum, Three Women**. She toured with Ornette, and was asked to join the line up of his 1997 Lincoln Center retrospective, “**?Civilization**” featuring Billie Higgins, Charlie Haden and Gerri Allen. In 1996, Lauren and Japan’s star guitarist/producer Jiro Yoshida teamed up to release **Guitar and the Moon**. This stellar quartet project, featuring Eddie Gomez, showcases her personal take on the standards.

Along with all her performance and writing projects, Lauren is on the Adjunct faculty of the New School in New York City and LIU Post on Long Island, NY for Applied Jazz Voice. Her in demand workshops, artist in residence features and directing solo and vocal jazz choirs round out a robust career. In addition, her growing choral arrangement offerings are finding a new audience.

Lauren served on the Board of Governors for the Recording Academy’s NY Chapter from 2008-2010. She has continued her work on the Grammy Career Day committee. She is a graduate of Berklee College of Music.