

# The Music Of Nina Simone

## featuring Jaguar Wright and Gerald Veasley

«*I feel more alive now than I ever have in my life. I have a chance to live, as I've dreamed.*» Nina Simone More than a concert, *I Got Life* is an event that explores the powerful music and empowering messages of Nina Simone. The presentation moves through four aspects of Ms. Simone's songbook: **Quest, Passion, Fury and Hope**. Vocalist **Jaguar Wright** and bassist **Gerald Veasley** lead an ensemble that re-images Nina Simone's work with inventive energy.

### JAGUAR WRIGHT

Jaguar is an artist who cannot be defined by genre. She is a Renaissance woman, as comfortable performing with rap mogul Jay Z as she is with jazz drummer extraordinaire, Terry Lynn Carrington. Jaguar was a breakout artist in Philadelphia's Black Lily scene created by Questlove and The Roots which spawned the careers of Jill Scott and other major Neo-Soul and Hip Hop artists. She released two critically acclaimed albums and also appeared on Veasley's «Velvet» cd, performing a rendition of the soul classic, «Let's Do It Again».

### GERALD VEASLEY

Veasley is well regarded as a recording artist with several solo albums to his credit. As a bassist, he has worked extensively in the jazz, gospel and R&B genres. His resume includes collaborations with a wide range of artists: Dianna Reeves, Kirk Whalum, The Dixie Hummingbirds, Teddy Pendargrass, Zap Mama. He counts among his mentors two groundbreaking artists: **Grover Washington** and **Joe Zawinul**, from whom he developed an appreciation for the balance between innovation and tradition.

### Why «The Music Of Nina Simone»?

While the world is starting to understand the brilliance of Nina Simone, Jaguar has known it all along. She has long been a student of her music and has been inspired by her life story. Veasley recognized Jaguar's potential for channeling Nina Simone before the two even spoke says Veasley, «*I knew Jaguar had that same intensity and fire before I heard her sing a note of Nina Simone's music.*» Together they share a deep appreciation for Ms. Simone's music and her desire for social justice. As a result, «*I Got Life*» speaks to our current turbulent times with honesty and raw beauty. Veasley and Wright understand there is no better time to present this timeless music.

### The Ensemble

This is a musical conversation between two seasoned artists: an accomplished jazz musician and a fiery soul singer. The gourd is rounded out by **Aaron Graves**, a keyboardist who served as Little Jimmy Scott's musical director and **Marcus Myers**, a standout musician among the new wave of drummers. Together they present the songbook in organic, dynamic arrangements that are fresh yet maintain the essence of the original versions.

*I got Life* brings together two internationally acclaimed artists who were launched out of the vibrant Philadelphia jazz and soul scenes. However, the performances by these collaborators defy category and are in the adventurous spirit of Ms. Simone. As the iconic artist said, «*Jazz is not just music, it's a way life, it's a way of being, a way of thinking*». Well said, Ms. Simone, well said.