



Moonlight Benjamin

Wayo

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Moonlight Benjamin's third album Wayo is a spellbinding 'cry of pain' which showcases her thundering vocals and lyrical themes on faith, energy and our connection to the source. These eleven tracks from Haiti's Vodou priestess delve deep, immersing her philosophical messages in heavy blues rapture, killer riffs and hand-clapping, foot-stomping percussion with influences as far reaching as Dr John, Malian singer Oumou Sangare and Alabama Shakes

Making her mark in 2018 with her exhilarating debut album, Siltane, followed in 2020 by the explosive Simido, Moonlight Benjamin returns with Wayo, a hard-hitting, blues-infused, whirlwind of a record from the 'Vodou Priestess of Blues-Rock'. Working alongside long-time collaborator Matthis Pascaud, Wayo marries Moonlight's electrifying vocals with Pascaud's heavily saturated guitar riffs, this time enlisting the help of producer and percussionist, Raphaël Chassin (known for his work with the likes of Joon Moon, Hugh Coltman, Vanessa Paradis and Salif Keita), adding a fresh twist to the album's rhythmic presence.

Haut là haut, the first single from the album, is bewitching. Released at the end of 2022, Moonlight will be performing it for a Tiny Desk concert as part of New York's globalFEST in January where she has been invited to take part for the festival's 20th anniversary, which will also double up as a first public listen/watch of other tracks from the new record.

The album title, Wayo translates from Haitian creole to 'cry of pain'. Much like the beginnings of blues music itself, born of resilience in the face of adversity, the songs on this album are powerful, cathartic and intense.

"It's about asking a spiritual guide for help when life is at an impasse and you can't cope" which as Moonlight sees as necessary to "move forward".

Her mystifying musical blend — likened to Alabama Shakes or The Black Keys meets Angelique Kidjo — has gained her international recognition; touring and playing for festivals on both sides of the Atlantic, Moonlight has received airplay from DJs Iggy Pop and Cerys Matthews and was a cover star of Songlines Magazine.

Until now, Moonlight's muse has always been her motherland, the Caribbean island of Haiti, but on Wayo, the Vodou priestess changes her tune; "There are still a few songs about Haiti, of course, but the writing, the story, the common thread in this album, it's more universal. It deals more with the philosophical side of things... Our anchoring to the earth, our connection to the

source.”

Born to Vodou parents in Haiti's Port au Prince, Moonlight spent her childhood in a Roman Catholic orphanage where she was adopted by Reverend Doucet Alvarez after her own mother died in childbirth. Raised on gospel music, it was only in her late teens that she began to explore her Vodou roots, before leaving Haiti in 2002 to begin jazz training in France. It was in 2017 that Moonlight met artistic director and guitarist, Matthis Pascaud, the collaboration from which her unique, volcanic sound was born.

The unanticipated musical combination which put her on the map has undergone quite a transformation since the duo's collaboration began. Siltane, composed in both French and Creole, alternated the classic rock band set up with traditional drums and stripped-back, Vodou-inspired chants; Simido did away with the assortment of styles, zeroing in on the winning formula of Moonlight's signature Creole vocals over pure, unadulterated rock. Now on Wayo, she delves into a deeper sound, tracing the rock genre back to its roots: blues music.

Bafon the album's second official single, is a bold message of hope; Moonlight's defiant vocals recount the story of Baron, spirit guardian of the dead and master of the cemetery, as he addresses the grieving masses present for Haiti's funeral to announce that she is not dead, that Haiti still carries life within her. Taye Banda transports us with its foot-stomping, frantic drums, driving home the message that it is our thoughts that create reality — the power to make or break, the power to cultivate positivity, lies in our minds. The lilting riffs on Ouvè Lespri pull us into a lighter, uplifting tonality, the lyrics imploring us to open our minds to change.

Band member

Anerilles, Alexis	Keyboards
Chassin, Raphael	Drums, Percussion
Loriot, Nathalie	Back Vocals, Upright Bass
Medinat, Fabienne	Back Vocals, Upright Bass
Moonlight Benjamin	Vocal
Pascaud, Matthis	Guitars, Bass, Lap Steel & Philicorda Keyboard

Mixer

**Studio Mercredi 9, Fred
Carrayol**

Mastering

**Brian Lucey, Magic Garden
Mastering**

Tracklist

1.	Wayo	04:38
	M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	
2.	Haut là haut	04:02
	M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	
3.	Taye banda	03:30
	M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	
4.	Ouvé lespri	02:33
	M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	
5.	Pè	04:59
	M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	
6.	Freedom fire	02:55
	M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	

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7.	Limyè M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	04:20
8.	Bafon M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	03:00
9.	Lilè M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	03:30
10.	Alé M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	02:44
11.	Pwenn fè M: Moonlight Benjamin/Matthis Pascaud/Raphael Chassin T: Moonlight Benjamin	02:24