

# It starts now.

#### Welcome Rock Stars!

We made this album for YOU. We made it for you to feel proud of who you are. We made it so you could learn to be a super friend for someone else. We made it to remind us ALL of how this world is ours to change. We get to take good care of each other. We can notice when things are not fair and say, "Wait. Stop! We can do better." Let's all do better.

This album reminds us to RISE, like the sun each morning. It reminds us to SHINE our light and lift each other up. It reminds us to be WOKE by waking up to injustice and doing everything we can to stop it. This music helps us to imagine a world where EVERYONE feels safe and loved.

Imagine that you have the power to make people around you feel welcome and know they belong. You do! Imagine that you have the courage to speak out and stand up for justice. You do! Imagine a world where we all feel free to be our true selves. This is the world we are making, rock stars!

As you listen to Rise Shine #Woke, learn the words, and ask questions about what they mean to you, and what they mean to other people. When a song really speaks to you, hang it up on your wall to remind you of your power! Don't be afraid to make up your own dance moves, too.

With love and hip hop, the Alphabet Rockers Crew

### **Contents**

- 1 The Nitro
- 2 Turn On The Lights
- 3 Rise
- 4 Questions (Interlude)
- 5 I'm Proud
- 6 My Light
- 7 Shine
- 8 What Are You?
- 9 Walls
- 10 Stand Up for You
- 11 Sway

### The Mitro

© School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd, Jerry Lordan [sample of Sugarhill Gang "Apache (Jump on It)"]

Whatcha gonna do when the rockers come through? I'm gonna have some fun!
What do you consider fun?
Fun, natural fun!

We get up get up we stand up stand up We get up get up stand up! We get up get up we stand up stand up We get up get up stand up!

Put your rocks up, rock stars
Put your rocks up, rock stars
Put your rocks up, rock stars
And go rock—star
Yea just make a rock with your hand and go rock-star!

Yes our rock means together
Our rock means we must
Stand up together
We love and trust
Our rock means unity
You and I thats (UNITY)
So come on let it rock like stars everywhere
If you're feeling energized put em up in the air
Say...
Oh yea oh yea...
Oh yea oh yea...

So come on let it rock like stars one time If you're feeling energized and you see the light Say...
Alright— alright

Alright – alright

Oh yea oh yea... Alright— alright Oh yea oh yea... Alright— alright Just wave em wave em wave em in the air Wave em wave em like you just don't care Bring it down to the floor,
Stomp it out you want some more.
Just wave em wave em wave em in the air Wave em wave em like you just don't care Bring it down to the floor,
Stomp it out you want some more.

Now it's time for us to shine
Through our beats our moves and rhymes
You got me and I got you
Now we're a crew we got work to do

So let's move— Are you ready?

It's time to rock!!





### Turn on the Lights

© 2016 School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd

Turn on the lights We need you Turn it up make it loud #I'm proud

It's easy to say/ that we're all the same/ and that for the most part we're equal That's not what we see/ we know the secret/ there's new ways to think than that prequel How about—be proud of our culture take part in our heritage celebrate differences Love and respect is what we protect especially in justice instances We know that we're young/ but we can take it Drama in the world and we can't shake it / Uh uh we can't shake it /Can't shake it All these lessons and all these questions / That y'all have been teaching us since birth you don't want me to get hurt/ but all this pain is making me work Help me see what you see?

Close my eyes, make believe, just pretend— life is easy Open wide, see the light Truth in life is what we're seeking We need you Turn it up make it loud #improud We are the light

[CHORUS]
Lights
Turn on the lights
We turn on the lights
Turn it up loud hashtag i'm proud—right
Turn on the lights

Oh-We see things right We be turning on the lights

(Love) I love that you love me so much (Hugs) The hugs and the kisses and such So show me the world that I need to see So I don't lose touch Pinch my cheeks cuz I'm cute I am the living proof I am the love of your life the heart of your dreams & I need you to tell me the truth (I'm gonna change the world!) Yes I can be president Yes I can follow the rules Yet all my answers to questions get questioned and second guessed And that ain't cool What I see is not fair to me I don't see myself on TV Now look me in the eye Answer me carefully

Close my eyes, make believe, just pretend— life is easy Open wide, see the light Truth in life is what we're seeking We need you Turn it up make it loud #improud We are the light

[CHORUS]





#### © School TIme Music LLC

Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd. Music by Derrick Okoth, Torrance Esmond.

With excerpts from "America is Black" by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou, and speech by President Barack Obama

If you can't fly, what can you do? RUN
If you can't run, what can you do? WALK
If you can't walk, what can you do? CRAWL
If you can't crawl, what can you do? ROLL
Whatever it is we got to keep it moving— Rise!

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."

-President Barack Obama

I have a dream
I have a dream
Yea I float like a butterfly sting like a bee
Gonna be the change in the world that we gotta see...
Yes I fall down, time and time again
I fall down time and time again I fall
But still I rise. Rise, rise, rise

#### Still I rise

People say amazing things People do amazing things People are amazing beings You are what amazing is

[POEM - Tatyana Fazlalizadeh]
America is black
It is native
It wears a hijab
It is a spanish speaking tongue
It is migrant
It is a woman
It is here—has been here
And it's not going anywhere

#### [CHORUS]

You are born to touch the sky
You are here to live that life
Dream high— dream with all your might
Cuz you are born to touch the sky

You may get me with your words
You may cut me with your eyes
You may hurt me with your hatefulness
Nonetheless still I rise
You may get me with your words
You may cut me with your eyes
You may hurt me with your hatefulness
Nonetheless just like air still I rise

If they call us bad names— look them in the eye
If they push us down— be a true ally
If they try to build a wall, we won't comply
Cuz when they go low, we go high

They go low, we go high They go low, we go high They go low, we go high

If you can't fly ,what can you do? RUN If you can't run, what can you do? WALK If you can't walk, what can you do? CRAWL If you can't crawl, what can you do? ROLL People say amazing things People do amazing things People are amazing beings You are what amazing is If you can't fly ,what can you do? RUN If you can't run, what can you do? WALK If you can't walk, what can you do? CRAWL If you can't crawl, what can you do? ROLL People say amazing things People do amazing things People are amazing beings You are what amazing is

#### **CHORUS x2**

You may get me with your words
You may cut me with your eyes— I rise
You may get me with your words
You may cut me with your eyes— I rise



## Questions

© School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd

What is my color? What is my skin tone? What is its history? What is its culture?

What is my culture? What is my color? What is a skin tone? Why do we label?

What do I stand for? Who do I stand for? What does it mean to you? What does it mean to me?

What is my history? What is my legacy? What does it mean to you? What does it mean to me?

Let's talk about it.





### 9'm Proud

© School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd

Proud to be who I am and to be a good friend Gotta know that you're you and I'm me And together we can understand That there's more to us Than what you see Listen up Right here right now you'll see

I got the power
I got the strength
I got the love of those, who come before me
Who made me who I am
I got the courage
I got the drive
I got the magic forming inside me
It makes me who I am

#### [CHORUS]

Look to the left say it loud: HEY, I'M PROUD Look to the right say it loud: HEY, I'M PROUD Look to the crowd say it loud: HEY, I'M PROUD Never look down, cuz we livin' UP Look to the left say it loud: HEY, I'M PROUD Look to the right say it loud: HEY, I'M PROUD Look to the crowd say it loud: HEY, I'M PROUD Never look down, cuz we livin' up!

Me - It's easy to be
But only when you see me and let me be exactly
Who i'm meant to be
A rising star
An open heart
When we need change
Right now

I got the power
I got the strength
I got the love of those, who come before me
Who made me who i am
I've got the courage
I got the drive
I got the magic forming inside me
It makes me who I am

#### **CHORUS**

I got the power and I use it—when I speak my mind I got the strength and I prove it— I prove it every time

See me - I never give up

And you - you never give up

And we lift each other up

We are the power—get your power
We are the strength—get your strength
We are the love—get your love
We are the courage—get your courage
We are the drive—get your drive
We are the magic—get your magic
It's our life! Go get your life!
It's our life! Go get your life!

So we can keep living up

#### **CHORUS x2**





Right here I'll start

### My Light

#### © School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd

I shine
I shine
You shine
You shine
We shine
We shine
Let's shine
Let's shine

#### [CHORUS]

I'm gonna step into
My light my light my light my light
Cuz I'm the main player in
my life, my life, my life, my LIFE!
So I'm gonna step into
My light my light my light
Cuz I'm the main player in
my life, my life, my LIFE!

Upstage downstage step onto the spike mark Lonestar in my life everybody plays a part HEY I like your moves, YEA I got em too WOW-BRAVE you wanna see how I do?

Yes, I'm learning 'bout my business Yes, I'm moving yes I'm in this HEY the time's right YES I shine bright WOW— GO Gotta do it how I like

OH---I got what I need OH---It's all a part of me

#### **CHORUS**

Speak up, speak out gotta get my voice heard No matter what's happening you know I can take a turn HEY, I make a choice, YEA, I use my voice WOW— BRAVE, listen up ain't it nice?

Trust I got this, trust I need you Trust I'm listening, trust I see you HEY we're stepping up, YES we're on the ups WOW— Go it's gonna take all of us

OH---I got what I need OH---It's all a part of me

Oh- When it's our turn we shine like no one else— you know what else
Oh- there is no question we will find our light— you know that's right

#### **CHORUS**





### Shine

© School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd, Genevieve Goings

Let the sunshine in (SHINE)
In my beautiful skin, I (SHINE)
Cuz its from within
And you can see me glow every time I... (SHINE)

#### **VFRSF**

When they catch a good glimpse of what I'm really on I will get some followers
Prolly like a million
Smile so big that it's lookin' like the ceilings gone
You be like is that the sun?
Nope it's just the bright one
Shades on, take a look (look) at this complexity
Not just a star I'm-a (I'm-a) I'm-a galaxy
I'm the big bang written in the black stars Everything
that's beautiful has me up at the start
My dreams are awakening everybody's sleepin in
Follow my light to the life we should be leadin
My imagination is the fire earth is my knowledge
Wind is my word— flow like water
(That's my) that's my power

Let the sunshine in (SHINE)
In my beautiful skin, I (SHINE)
Cuz its from within
And you can see me glow every time I... (SHINE)

Watch me shine [x6]

I've known rivers
Designed pyramids
I mean...I...can fly
Like Pharaoh and Cleopatra did
I sing loud and yes, I speak clearly
When it's about my skin, my hair, my prayers, my family
I'm a bird in the sky— not like a bird caged
Carving out a true path— right up to center stage
Making my voice a tradition not a holiday
More than a month, man my history is everyday

And everyday I pray 5 times, and yes I do, I pray for you That you'll tie it up tight, in a pair of my shoes
Or my skin, my hair, my clothes, my rights, my life or the light on my skin and we can

Let the sunshine in (SHINE)
In my beautiful skin, I (SHINE)
Cuz its from within
And you can see me glow every time I... (SHINE)

[Instrumental]

Let the sunshine in (SHINE)
In my beautiful skin, I (SHINE)
Cuz its from within
And you can see me glow every time I... (SHINE)





### What Are You?

© School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd

When they ask you, what you are
You respond— I'm a star
They don't really know what they do
It's no secret that you are you
When they ask, what you are
You respond— I'm a star
They don't really know what they do
It's no secret that you are you
You are you— what?
You are a star

When you look at me, eye to eye
Hope you see just how I ride
My destiny, it's all in me
My history and my family
from around the world and across the seas
Just like you, we're not just one thing
Traits and places, colorful spaces
Musical languages, beautiful faces

When they ask you, what you are
You respond— I'm a star
They don't really know what they do
It's no secret that you are you
When they ask, what you are
You respond— I'm a star
They don't really know what they do
It's no secret that you are you
You are you— what?
You are a star

It's no secret I'm just me
A star in the night and its galaxy
Might not see it yet but I belong
Might see me one day beyond this song

How constellations shift and shed light Help you see new things that are already bright There are no limits, there are no labels There's no stopping us, we're turning tables When they ask you, what you are
You respond— I'm a star
They don't really know what they do
It's no secret that you are you
When they ask, what you are
You respond— I'm a star
They don't really know what they do
It's no secret that you are you
You are you— what?
You are a star

You are you
I am me
You and me
Eye 'n eye
We are X
We are Z
We decide who's family
Why me?
Because I got you So get me
You know I got you
So get me







### Walls

© School Time Music LLC

Written by Juan Amador, Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd, Xavier Mosley (Chief Xcel of Blackalicious), Timothy Armstrong

Ask yourself are we the people Are we the people that That we wanna be?

#### [CHORUS]

We know we all belong
We know this is our home
These walls can't stop the love
These walls can't hold us down

Not a border, not a wall/ not a line in the sand/ could devise a plan/ to divide us again/ No hay pared/ que puede parar/ communidad/ humindad/ paramos juntos/ no pueden amenazar todos nosotros no somos solos we are familia my parents lead a life to feed us right even when sometimes all that we can eat is the beans & rice it's like we take pride with our food my abuelita's recipes in her accent telling me this your culture mijo.. never be ashamed but nowadays/ they wanna detain/ cause of your name/ or the color of your face/ I wish I could explain why are people calling us bad things/ when we're looking for the same, as you/ play a game or two, feel safe at school/ why you wanna make us move/

#### **CHORUS**

I wanna keep dreaming grow up and still believe in/ whatever I can see I can be that/ Nobody to say no not today/ You gotta stay, gotta stop/ this is too steep to pass/ Lo mismo que sentia mi mama when se iba a una tierra que no sabia buscando una vida mejor cruzando a pesar del dolor esto se necesita para su hija y su hijo para su gente, for her people I want to see those/ beautiful faces smiles with no trace of fear or dismay from a wall to make shade with/ Love beyond borders Florida to California Never be a wall tall enough to hold us Back from our greatness and focus/ We're the ones we have waited for/ The dreams we have chosen

#### **CHORUS**

[Our friends from across the country and around the world sent us in our languages: "We are the people" and "We belong here." Languages: Tagalog, Spanish, Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, Kurdish, Haitian Creole, Finnish, German, Japanese, Korean, Greek...]

We are the people We belong here



### Stand up for You

© School Time Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd

It's time to be WOKE!

**CHORUS:** 

I'm-a stand up for you! (x6)

Step back and listen
Be allies
If it's not about you
Then you know why
Everyone is different
No one's the same
From gender to color to how we pray.

Ask yourself is the world really fair?
Ask yourself what's going on over there?
Ask yourself who's really alright?
Ask yourself how can i open my mind?
Ask yourself who do I stand up for?
Ask yourself do I wanna do more?
Ask yourself - am I woke?
If you're woke then stand up speak up!

#### **CHORUS**

To be together
and stand as one
Gotta wanna know each other
Everyone
It takes mad courage
And that fierce love
To bravely stand up and
Defend someone

Ask em now do I say your name right?
Ask em now are you really alright?
Ask em now did you get your turn?
Ask em now is there more for me to learn?
Ask em how can I stand up for you?
Ask em how can I do more for you?
Ask yourself - am I woke?
If you're woke then stand up speak up!

#### **CHORUS**

We are the ones we've been waiting for!
And we gotta change things now.
Right now. Not some other time.
I don't look like you, but I still got your back.
I don't look like you, but I still got your back.

Do something. Make a difference. Don't wait.





### Sway

#### © School TIme Music LLC Written by Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd

I see you- I see you I like it – I like it You look good—you look good Let's move- OK Sway

I hear you— I hear you I like it - I like it Sounds good – sounds good Let's move- OK Sway

I see you- I see you I'm different – I'm different You shine though - You shine though True-True Sway

1: I'm standing up for you. 2: For who?

1: For you

1: I'm standing up for you. 2: For who?

1: For you

2: I'm standing up for you. 1: For who?

2: For you

2: I'm standing up for you. 1: For who?

2: For you Sway

They try to hold me down? But I'mma hold u up They try to say i'm wrong? But you're right... what's UP Sway

Hey now I'm stepping up And now I'm stepping back And now I'm speaking up I'm listenin' right back Sway

I see you- I see you We're different— we're different We rock though—we rock though That's how we do- that's Sway

1: I'm stepping up for you. 2: For who?

1: For you

1: I'm stepping up for you. 2: For who?

1: For you

2: I'm stepping up for you. 1: For who?

2: For you

2: I'm stepping up for you. 1: For who?

2: For you

Sway

I rise. I shine.

We woke.





# Alphabet Rockers make music that makes change

People often want to know what brought a "white girl from Harvard" (Founder Kaitlin McGaw) and a "black drummer/actor/beatboxer from LA" (Music Director Tommy Shepherd) together to make Alphabet Rockers. In a country that struggles with inequality, this question makes sense - the duo perhaps are from different worlds by place/gender/race. But the music that moved them was the same.

They both wanted to raise up voices for change. They both believed in the power of children to be tiny changemakers. Their passion is to create positive messages and modern beats to help children love who they are, fight bias, and celebrate difference. Based in Oakland, CA, this dynamic team has brought joy to tough topics through hip hop since 2007.

Alphabet Rockers are known as the premiere children's hip hop artists who focus on social change and racial justice. Partnering with thought leaders on anti-bias and child development from U.C. Berkeley and World Trust, they create empowered, engaging concerts and activities for young children, families, and educators. This group is consciousness in motion, working to build a platform for institutional change through children's media.

Alphabet Rockers have a fresh, contemporary sound. This is due, in part to working with artist incubator, Zoo Labs and Grammy-winning producers in Oakland, CA.

Their new album, "Rise Shine #Woke" raises critical and joyful conversations around social justice for our kids and families. Emmy-winning comedian W. Kamau Bell (CNN), states that this music is the "soundtrack for the lives of the future people that we want in the world. It creates the culture that is the reality of the world we want." This follows the successful path of previous release "The Playground Zone," which was featured on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle, hit the charts with KidsPlaceLive on Sirius XM, and inspires thousands of children each month to speak up about how they can change the world. Their vision and impact attract financial support from funders including the East Bay Community Foundation, the Akonadi Foundation, the City of Oakland and the Clorox Company. Funders who want to hear new works reflecting the brilliance of our young children, partner with Alphabet Rockers to make a soundtrack for the peaceful and just world we want to see.

From national stages like Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts to community engagements, the group performs hundreds of shows annually. Each performance is an energetic, authentic hip hop experience.

Alphabet Rockers define hip hop as a "freedom culture" and each concert is an opportunity for positive change. People come to the concert with a common goal of entertainment and find they leave as a community, seeing and celebrating their differences. In addition to concerts, recordings and videos, the Alphabet Rockers teaching artists dedicate thousands of hours of educational services to schools. libraries, and communities.

Get moving to music that moves you. Engage in the conversation with Alphabet Rockers through community, connection, and hip hop.

Press and radio contact: **Beth Blenz-Clucas**, Sugar Mountain PR. 503-293-9498. beth@sugarmountainpr.com

#riseshinewoke

"Hip Hop **Spells** Success: **Alphabet Rockers** tackle issues of race, diversity, and kindness while instilling a love of hip hop."

-San Francisco Chronicle



**Rise Shine** # Woke is an album made in collaboration with thought leaders, activists, educators, children and families dedicated to challenging our biases and creating a safer world for us all. Every word, poem, melody and beat is a reflection of you and our shared mission. We are allies committed to raising changemakers.

# Join us in this brave space.

Songwriting: All lyrics and music written by Kaitlin McGaw (Letter Kay ASCAP) and Tommy Shepherd (Felonious Music ASCAP). Music by Torrance Esmond (Track Or Die Music, BMI) (all but 12), Derrick Okoth (All Family No Friends / This All We Got Music, BMI) (all but 3 & 12), Brandon Miller (Real Chance Publishing/This All We Got Music BMI) (3), X.Mosley (Obrafo Music ASCAP) and T. Armstrong (Okami Tone Music ASCAP, T. Underdue/Underdue Entertainment ASCAP) (12). Guest Songwriters: Genevieve Goings (Sounds Like the Single, SESAC) (9), Juan Amador (12), and introducing 9 year olds Tommy Shepherd III and Kali de Jesus (10). "Rise" includes excerpts from "America is Black" by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou, and speech by President Barack Obama. "Power" includes an interpretation of Joan Baez's "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around."

Produced by Street Symphony (Torrance Esmond) (1, 3-7, 9, 11, 14, 15), D.O. Speaks (1, 4-7, 9, 11, 14, 15), Real Chance (3), Chief Xcel (12), Kevin & Geoff McCann (8, 13, 16), Tommy Shepherd (2, 10) and Teeko (17). All arrangements by Tommy Shepherd, Kaitlin McGaw, with Kevin and Geoff McCann (8,13,16). Mixed by Jeff Kolhede (all but 12) with Jason Villaroman (3), Rick Vargas (4), Chief XCel (12). Mastered by Colin Leonard at SING Mastering, Atlanta GA using SING Technology® (Patented). Engineered by Jeff Kolhede, Kevin McCann, Jason Villaroman and J. Michael Neal. Interlude dialogue recorded at Young Gifted and Black rehearsal by Tommy Shepherd. Additional instrumentation from: Wonway Posibul (DJ), Kevin & Geoff McCann (Moog, Bass, Guitar, Keys), Jeff Kolhede (Saxophone), Tommy Shepherd (Beatboxing and Percussion), and on "Walls," Timothy Armstrong/Okami Tone (Keys) and Teak "The Beatsmith" Underdue/Hallway Productions (Bass). "The Nitro" includes samples of the Sugar Hill Gang's version of Jerry Lordan's "Apache," used with permission from Sunflower Entertainment.

Featured Vocalists: Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd, Genevieve Goings (4, 9), Lily Ellis (6), Tossie Long (7), Zion Angeles (10, 11, 15), Tommy Shepherd III (10, 11, 15), Kali de Jesus (10), Kimiko Joy (11), Kat Evasco (12), Juan Amador (Wonway Posibul) (12), Backing Vocalists: Zoe Ellis (6), Tossie Long (6), Lynn Johnson (7), Carla Gallardo (12).

Interludes feature: Laroilyn Davis, Hodari and Candice Davis, Young Gifted and Black, Tommy Shepherd III, Zion Angeles. "Rise" features Genevieve Goings, with Secret Agent 23 Skidoo, Mista Cookie Jar, Aaron Nigel Smith, and youth poets Aissa Negus and Omari Diltz. "Walls" includes the voices of our community across America and refugee camps in Greece.

Rise Shine #Woke Models: Tommy Shepherd III, Kali de Jesus, Duy de Leon-McCalla, Eric Rosario and Kaia Marbin. Álbum Art: Ratha Nou. Layout: Stefanie Liang Chung. Communications Manager: Allison Kenny. Photography: Steve Jennings. Live Show Director: Dan Wolf. Choreographer: Samara Atkins. Advisor: Dia Tschirki-Penning. Gratitude to Spotlight:Girls, Abundant Beginnings, Boomshake Music, Destiny Arts Center, Katherine O'Sullivan See, Nathalie-Andree Muzac, Dr. Allison Briscoe-Smith, Mariah Rankine-Landers, Constance Moore, Hodari Davis, Candice Davis, Laroilyn Davis, Cathy Fink, Devin Walker, Aston & Aushlee Motes, Jyothi & Seth Marbin, Brad & Erin Dollar, Ellen Sebastian Chang, Vinitha & Dave Watson, Kat Evasco and our families Anna Maria Luera and Adhi Nagraj for collaboration and support. Recorded at Zoo Labs, Oakland, CA.



