

Hip hop children's album from *Alphabet Rockers* is the soundtrack for our time

RISE SHINE #WOKE - FOR YOUNG CHANGE MAKERS AND FAMILIES IS NOW AVAILABLE

Oakland, CA, September 2017 – Music and activism have always changed culture in positive and powerful ways. Brilliant artists like **Marvin Gaye**, **Erykah Badu** and **The Roots** move people to sing and dance while lifting consciousness. Alphabet Rockers are making similar social waves with their songs for children and families.

A nationally touring kid- focused hip hop group out of Oakland, Alphabet Rockers address complex issues around identity and social justice through their hip hop music. Their new album **Rise Shine #Woke** (released September 1, 2017) offers a set of songs to get kids moving while sparking discussions in homes and classrooms. “We want families to become allies and to join us in making change,” says Kaitlin McGaw who, along with Tommy Shepherd, are the two core members of Alphabet Rockers. Tommy adds, “Being woke is nothing new, but right now it’s crucial for folks who are too comfortable in their lifestyles to get involved in this movement. This album is an entry point.”

Last year’s award-winning Alphabet Rockers EP **The Playground Zone** featured a song called “Gimme Some Skin,” which literally asks kids to examine the color of their own skin in relationship to the world around them. In **Rise Shine #Woke**, the song “Questions” digs deeper, asking listeners to really think about questions like, “What is my skin tone?” “What is its history?” and “What is my culture?” “What is my legacy?” **Jill Scott** and **Mary J. Blige** vibes come through in songs “What Are You?” and “I’m Proud,” which invite families to use new language around gender and cultural identities.

Indeed, from the **Lauryn Hill** inspired first track, “Don’t Wait (Interlude),” which features the compelling voice of Laroilyn Davis of Oakland’s **Young Gifted & Black**, this album presents a distinct departure from the usual nostalgic vibes of a children’s album. In place of the expected “we are all a rainbow” message, Alphabet Rockers repeatedly ask listeners to “wake up” and deal with the human rights issues happening every day, right in front of them. In the upbeat and positive songs like “The Nitro,” “Rise,” “Turn on the Lights” and “Shine,” the messages of awareness and the need to become a social justice ally run throughout, with sounds reminiscent of **Outkast** and **Kendrick Lamar**. “Walls” humanizes the undocumented experience and invites families to empathize as a nation of many immigrants. Listeners are called to action with pop and dancehall songs like “Stand Up for You” and “Sway.” Sampling is everywhere, including **Maya Angelou**’s poetry, **Sugarhill Gang** breaks; and **President Barack Obama**’s inspirational words: “We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

Rise Shine #Woke features collaborations with family music trailblazer **Genevieve Goings** (Choo Choo Soul) and hip hop producer **Chief Xcel** (Blackalicious), along with music production from two-time GRAMMY winning producer **Torrance Esmond** (aka Street Symphony, whose credits include 2 Chainz, Lecrae, Ludacris, and G-Eazy). Children’s voices and dozens of other artists and allies contributed to this album, which is packed with dance singles that bring social justice language to the home and classroom. As McGaw says, these songs allow people to “put consciousness in motion. We want to help parents raise the next generation of changemakers. We’re here to ignite their courageous conversations. Our music is part of a movement.”

Alphabet Rockers plan to release music videos and a conversation-starting game for families. After a summer East Coast tour, their busy fall performance season will include an album release event at Freight & Salvage in Berkeley in November and family workshops around racism and difference throughout Northern California.

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[#riseshinewoke](https://www.instagram.com/riseshinewoke)

“This is important music. It creates 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.”

—W. Kamau Bell

TRACK LISTING

1. Don't Wait (Interlude)
2. The Nitro
3. Turn On The Lights
4. Rise
5. Questions (Interlude)
6. I'm Proud
7. My Light
8. Power (Interlude)
9. Shine
10. On the Corner (Interlude)
11. What Are You?
12. Walls
13. Different (Interlude)
14. Stand Up For You
15. Sway
16. Woke (Interlude)
17. BONUS TRACK: Rise (Teeko Remix)

Album Talent: Kaitlin McGaw, Tommy Shepherd, Torrance Esmond (Street Symphony), Derrick Okoth (D.O. Speaks), Brandon Miller, Xavier Moses (Chief Xcel), Genevieve Goings, Juan Amador (Wonway Posibul), Kevin McCann, Geoff McCann, Teeko, Jeff Kolhede, Rick Vargas, Jason Villaroman, Colin Leonard, J. Michael Neal, Tossie Long, Kimiko Joy, Kat Evasco, Zoe Ellis, Carla Gallardo, Laroilyn Davis, Hodari Davis, Candice Davis, Cactus Skidoo, C.J. Pizarro, Aaron Nigel Smith, Ratha Nou, Stefanie Liang Chung, Steve Jennings, Allison Kenny, Dia Tschirki-Penning

Youth Talent: Tommy Shepherd III, Kali de Jesus, Zion Angeles, Lily Ellis, Aissa Negus, Omari Diltz, Young Gifted & Black, Eric Rosario, Kaia Marbin, Duy de Leon-McCalla

Alphabet Rockers use hip hop to shift the way people see themselves and each other—it’s music that makes change. Their shows, school assemblies, and family workshops bring joy to tough topics. The group, led by Kaitlin McGaw and Tommy Shepherd, creates brave spaces for parents, educators and children to shape a more equitable world through hip hop. Get the latest news via alphabetrockers.com