

Moses Boyd

Live from the Barbican

Start time: 8pm

Approximate running time: 60 minutes, no interval

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change.
This performance is subject to government guidelines

Moses Boyd discusses the power of performance with Michael Appouh.

For Moses Boyd, music's capacity to embody freedom, prescience and politics is evident. The Catford born drummer-composer, whose Mercury Prize nominated album *Dark Matter*, released February 2020, conjures the possibilities of diasporic sound with each strike of his drumstick. Describing it as, 'an extension of black music', he creates vistas that marry the energetic rigour of London's underground grime, house and jungle scenes with the foundations of jazz and Afrobeat.

A graduate of the prestigious Trinity Laban Conservatoire and student of Gary Crosby's Tomorrow's Warriors, Boyd already had enviable achievements before the nomination, receiving awards from MOBOs, Jazz FM and Gilles Peterson's Worldwide Awards for his self-released project *Displaced Diaspora* (2018), and a number of his collaborative albums with saxophonist Binker Golding under Binker & Moses. It should be no surprise that Boyd's music seems to awaken something in its listeners, as the influence of the West Indian churches he grew up in tinge his sound with a divine euphoria that feels at home in a jazz venue as well as a nightclub. Pulling from the prominence of artists of his youth such as Dizze Rascal and N*E*R*D, as well as the inimitable soulfulness of Bob Marley or Fred Hammond, Boyd explores the boundaries of his influences on this latest record *Dark Matter*. The album, which he will perform live at the Barbican, explores those worlds with a calculated freedom.

Boyd, who started playing drums at thirteen, is a ten-year veteran on the jazz circuit, but remains excited by the possibility of performing again, after his most recent tour concluded just before the beginning of a national lockdown in March 2020. 'I've always known music is important to people but seeing how important it is to people's spiritual wellbeing when it's gone is amazing. It's definitely renewed my sense of appreciation for that responsibility when you do get together and make music for people. It's just incredible being reminded how important music is to people.' Boyd offered, 'I've definitely missed it for sure, this is the longest I've done without [touring]. Looking back, we were really lucky *Dark Matter* came out on Valentine's Day - we finished touring the EU in London on March 12th. And then, March 13th was when all the concerts got cancelled.'

Despite his passion, the opportunity to refocus on a love for collaboration has been welcome for Moses, seeing it as a way to stay creative through songwriting, producing and exchanging music with musicians in a similar situation to him. Performing though, still takes primacy in his mind. 'This is the first time I've been able to step back and be like, "Well, when we do get to go back how are we changing things?" Because we're all eager to get back on stage and do stuff, but what am I doing? Right now, everything is super important, so when we get back on stage what are we saying? How are we presenting it? How can we elevate this in every detail, whether that's lighting, guests, programme, all sorts - I've really got time to do it. And I know, with the technical side of it, the Barbican and the production team are really going in and really trying to make a really incredible experience.'

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Although it's unlikely Boyd would have otherwise played a live-streamed show in the style of his upcoming performance at the Barbican, he remains excited about the possibility of sharing the world of *Dark Matter* and replicating the energetic exchanges of live music through this new medium. 'In the same way I poured myself into the album, I try and pour myself into every performance. Given the circumstances and where we are now, the fact that I can still perform is a blessing. So hopefully that transmits and that radiates. The beauty of my music is that every song is a new opportunity. I can play the same song 100 times and it will always sound different. I think it's that honesty and eagerness to get on stage because I know music is important to people. And although we can't collectively gather, people are tuning in and they'll feel something. It's not like doing a pre-record – you know people are listening. There's something about it that's quite special. They're there with me in spirit.'

Dark Matter has only grown both in stature and relevance since its release: as evidenced by nominations for the Mercury Prize and AIM Independent Music Awards. 'I didn't expect it, it's still kind of a surprise to me really. I was really proud of it. And for me, that's enough. I'm really grateful that it hit the people it was meant to reach, because I poured everything into it, and it was a really honest body of work.'

After the livestream stay tuned for a Q&A between Moses Boyd and Errol of *Touching Bass*.

Performers

Moses Boyd drums, bandleader

Artie Zaitz guitar

Renato Paris keys

Donovan Guy Haffner alto saxophone

Quinn Oulton tenor saxophone

Nathaniel Cross trombone

Produced by the Barbican



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