

BACKDROP AND SPECTRE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT...



MICHAEL OLATUJA 'SPEAK'

Speak, the title of bassist Michael Olatuja's debut album, holds deep personal meaning for its creator, exemplifying in a single word the album's underlying themes of hope, encouragement, inspiration and positivity. The album, which will be released on July 28 on **Backdrop**, **ObliqSound**'s sub-label focusing on modern electronic and groove-based music, tells the story of the British/Nigerian artist's musical and personal journey. The ten songs on *Speak* find Olatuja stepping out of his role as sideman and finally presenting his personal vision as producer and composer. With musical influences and guests from around the world, the album touches on each spot Olatuja has hit, including childhood in London and Lagos, Nigeria, and professional years in London and New York. *Speak* is clearly the album Olatuja has been working toward his entire career and points to a strong future.

Chances are you've already heard Olatuja's extraordinarily creative musicianship. His work has enlivened the performances of Terence Blanchard, Patti Austin, Lisa Stansfield, Stevie Wonder, Chaka Khan, the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, Gretchen Parlato and many others. Olatuja, 28, began crafting the music that would become *Speak* as long ago as 2003. Olatuja called upon a large cast of musicians to assist him in realizing the self-produced project, including several singers who alternate on lead vocals: **Eska Mtungwazi**, **Andrew Roachford**, **Terri Walker**, **Onaje Jefferson**, Michael's wife **Alicia Olatuja** and the late neo-soul artist **Lynden David Hall**.

On *Speak*, Olatuja finds commonalities among the various genres that have shaped his artistry, beginning with the indigenous, traditional sounds that formed his roots during his youth in Nigeria. "I grew up in a church that sang Yoruba Christian songs and played Yoruba style music," he recalls. "I honed my skills playing in many Yoruba music bands. So when it came to songwriting this influence came out naturally." Olatuja incorporates hallmarks of traditional African music as the talking drum and hand drums (conga and djembe), call-and-response vocals and the Yoruba language, while working comfortably with music more familiar to Western ears: neo-soul balladry, hip-hop, modern jazz and deep groove. Olatuja's deep spirituality and unshaken belief in the power of the positive lies at the heart of every track on *Speak*. It makes perfect sense that Michael Olatuja titled the album as such: *Speak* speaks volumes, and it speaks to everyone.

"Speak unquestionably speaks the potent language of music on a soulful level. Highly recommended listening." - SoulTracks.com

"What a curious cocktail of African music, jazz, soul, and gospel Michael Olatuja has cooked up on *Speak*... Olatuja (is) an excellent composing talent with a great future " - All Music Guide

****FOCUS TRACKS #1, 4, 5****
GOING FOR WORLD ADDS 7/28!!

For more info contact:

Dave Sanford 503 790 9000 or email dave@spectremusic.com
www.obliqsound.com/backdrop
www.myspace.com/olatuja