

## Eight African artists join #YouTubeBlack Voices Music Class of 2022

YouTube has announced a roster of 54 artists, songwriters and producers selected to join the #YouTubeBlack Voices Music Class of 2022. Among the acts from Australia, Brazil, Canada, USA and the UK are eight African artists based in Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya.



Supported by the #YouTubeBlack Voices Fund, the #YouTubeBlack Voices Music Class of 2022 is a development programme designed to directly support and mentor Black artists, songwriters and producers worldwide. The addition of songwriters and producers to the 2022 class demonstrates the continuation and expansion of YouTube's efforts to support Black artists on the platform.

With the aim of equipping up-and-coming Black artists, songwriters and producers with the resources to succeed on YouTube, the class will be grouped into two programme streams: one for artists and one for songwriters and producers. Class participants will each receive dedicated partner support, seed funding to invest in the development of their channels, and opportunities to participate in training and networking programs focused on production, fan engagement and wellbeing. Over the next six months, they will also get opportunities to develop their catalogues and collaborate with other global artists, songwriters, and producers who have also been selected to take part in the programme.



YouTube Music opens 2022 applications for #YouTubeBlack Voices Fund

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Commenting on the significance of the programme, YouTube's head of Music, Sub-Saharan, Addy Awofisayo, says, "African music is taking the entire world by storm and the #YouTubeBlackVoices Fund is an opportunity to both celebrate and nurture African artistry and help songwriters, producers and artists share their craft with global audiences."

“Black culture is expansive and ever-changing and YouTube Music is committed to celebrating that experience through music,” she adds.

South African DJ duo Major League DJz, who started as event promoters, say that they are inspired by the people of Africa and they hope that this YouTube Black Voices journey will help ease the pandemic’s burden on artists like them: “As artists, we were the hardest hit by the pandemic. The funding will help us ensure we continue the trajectory to take Amapiano to the world. We will continue to travel and immerse everyone and anyone who crosses our path in this beautiful African sound,” they say.

R&B singer Elaine, whose music is a warm, honest, and pure representation of the hopeless romantic she is, became an artist because of her love for iconic black women such as Whitney Houston, Beyoncé, Lebo Mathosa and Brenda Fassie. “My dad also played a huge role in my love and admiration for music. I’m constantly inspired by my experiences and my deep love for turning my feelings into art. The fund will give me – a Black South African girl – the platform to be heard, seen and celebrated on a global stage,” she adds.

DJ Lag, who joins the class as a songwriter/producer, describes his music as an extension of his personality. “Everything that I am has been influenced by the need to express myself through music and my ambition to create almost a language to communicate my identity. I would describe my sound as an African take on techno and a fusion of various genres with a taste of South African township life,” he says.

The full list of African artists and songwriters/producers admitted to the #YouTubeBlack Voices Music Class of 2022 is as follows:

| ARTIST                           | CATEGORY              | COUNTRY OF RESIDENCY |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <a href="#">Azawi</a>            | Artist                | Kenya                |
| <a href="#">CKay</a>             | Artist                | Nigeria              |
| <a href="#">DJ Lag</a>           | Songwriter / Producer | South Africa         |
| <a href="#">Elaine</a>           | Artist                | South Africa         |
| <a href="#">Major League DJz</a> | Songwriter / Producer | South Africa         |
| <a href="#">Omah Lay</a>         | Artist                | Nigeria              |
| <a href="#">P.Prime</a>          | Songwriter / Producer | Nigeria              |
| <a href="#">Telz</a>             | Songwriter / Producer | Nigeria              |

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