



Credit: Evelyn Freja ([Download High Res](#))

“Vibe Provider not only whips up quite the celebration to the memory of a friend, but may just be Cohen’s first classic recording” – [All About Jazz](#)

September 11, 2024: Critically acclaimed pianist, composer, and bandleader **Emmet Cohen** recently released [Vibe Provider](#) via Mack Avenue Records. The album hit **#8 on the Traditional Jazz Albums chart** and **#10 on the Jazz Albums chart**. Emmet also holds the **#1** position at NACC Jazz and **#2** on the JazzWeek radio chart.

Through the years, Cohen has traveled the world with his sold-out performances, created the “most highly watched regular online jazz show in the world” ([The Guardian](#)) with [Live From Emmet’s Place](#), and has served as an ambassador for most essential principles of the jazz tradition. However, it’s his friendship with the Harlem-based creative **Michael Funmi Ononaiye**, the original “Vibe Provider” per his lovingly earned nickname, that most profoundly shaped his musical journey.

[Listen to Vibe Provider](#)

On *Vibe Provider*, Cohen presents a masterful blend of original compositions and beloved classics, dedicated to the memory of his late friend and mentor, alongside an all-star band including **Bruce Harris** (trumpet), **Tivon Pennicott** (tenor saxophone), **Frank Lacy** (trombone), **Cecily Petrarca** (koshkah), **Philip Norris** (bass), **Joe Farnsworth** (drums), and **Kyle Poole** (drums, producer).

Michael Funmi Ononaiye, who died of cancer in December 2023, worked as a chief programmer for Jazz at Lincoln Center, a DJ and an A&R executive, among other professional roles. But more than anything, the worldly Nigerian-born New Yorker was an omnipresent force of positivity and

spiritual healing — “the mayor of Harlem,” Cohen says, whose generous presence could elevate any gig, festival or dancefloor.

But Ononaiye was no mere cheerleader. Opting not to own a smartphone, he practiced and preached a message of authentic experience. “He often used to talk about how we’re too clogged up with information,” Cohen recalls. “Too much news consumption, too much phone, too much everything, and we don’t leave enough space for possibility.”

Cohen first encountered Ononaiye over a decade ago, not long after the young pianist had relocated to New York and started working steadily. “It was one of the first times I realized how much better musicians play when they’re engaged appropriately with the audience,” Cohen remembers. “[Funmi] brought this old-school spirit of respect, love and enthusiasm to every gig.”

A friendship blossomed, and deepened over the years. When the pandemic hit and Cohen developed the *Live at Emmet’s Place* concept, Ononaiye would often be the lone audience member; his exuberance was so powerful that the band still felt as if they were gigging in a packed club. As the series gathered steam (the live streams and videos have accumulated over 36 million views on YouTube alone), Ononaiye became an invaluable resource, suggesting lineups and making connections.

“Funmi was the vibe provider, but he taught us that we all have that inside of us,” Cohen says. “We all have the ability to brighten a room or to change someone’s world for a minute or a lifetime—with music, vibrations, energy or even just a smile. And those things are important. So I wanted to get some of his favorite musicians together and make a beautiful statement in tribute. That was the concept of this album.”

Named “heir apparent to the neo-traditional jazz mantle” by *The New York Times*, Cohen is an American Pianists Association award winner, and has been praised by [Good Morning America](#), [Associated Press](#), and many more. Cohen has been consistently recognized in *DownBeat’s* annual Critics and Readers polls, achieving #1 Rising Star Pianist in 2022.

Tracklisting:

1. Lion Song
2. Surrey With the Fringe on Top
3. Vibe Provider
4. Unblock the Love
5. Henei Ma Tov
6. If This Isn’t Love
7. Everlasting
8. Time on My Hands
9. Emmet’s Blues

US Tour Dates:

- 9/22: Pittsburgh, PA – Pittsburgh International Jazz Festival 2024
- 10/3 – 10/6: New York, NY – SMOKE Jazz Club
- 10/11 – 10/12: Philadelphia, PA – Chris’ Jazz Cafe (w/ Joe Farnsworth and “Time To Swing”)
- 10/14: Hilton Head Island, SC – Jazz For All Ages Jazz Festival (feat. special guest Kurt Elling)
- 11/03: Lexington, KY – Otis A. Singletary Center for the Arts
- 11/04: Cincinnati, OH – Caffè Vivace
- 11/07 – 11/10: Chicago, IL – Jazz Showcase
- 11/13: New York, NY – Dizzy’s Club (w/ Joe Farnsworth and “Time To Swing”)
- 11/15: Minneapolis, MN – Dakota
- 11/16: Germantown, TN – Germantown Performing Arts Center

11/17: Indianapolis, IN – The Jazz Kitchen
11/19: Columbia, MO: Whitmore Recital Hall (“We Always Swing” Jazz Series)
11/20 – 11/24: St. Louis, MO – Jazz St. Louis
12/3 – 12/7: New York, NY – Birdland
1/10: Miami Beach, FL – South Beach Jazz Festival (feat Georgia Heers and Tivon Pennicott)
1/13: New York, NY – Birdland (Celebrates Miles and Coltrane w/ Bruce Harris & Tivon Pennicott)
1/16: Boulder, CO – Boulder Theater
1/18: Tucson, AZ – Rialto Theatre
1/27: Coral Gables, FL – UM Maurice Gusman Concert Hall
1/28: Fort Lauderdale, FL – The Jazz Cruise
2/04: Fort Lauderdale, FL – Botti at Sea '25
2/20: Baton Rouge, LA – Manship Theatre
2/22: Richardson, TX – The University of Texas at Dallas
2/28: Mamaroneck, NY – Emelin Theatre
3/21: Sarasota, FL – Sarasota Jazz Festival
3/30: Scottsdale, AZ – Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts
4/4: Santa Monica, CA – CA Broad Stage
4/5: Costa Mesa, CA – Segerstrom Center for the Arts (feat. Anat Cohen and Terrell Stafford)
4/10 – 4/13: Seattle, WA – Jazz Alley (feat. Houston Person)
5/16 – 5/17: Boston, MA – Scullers Jazz Club
5/18: Buffalo, NY – Art of Jazz

