

## MIC CHECK

## WASSUP - Geoffrey Korio

# JAY MAU MAU

JAY MAU MAU IS A KENYAN RAPPER KNOWN FOR HIS POWERFUL SOCIO-POLITICAL LYRICS AND DEEP-ROOTED CONNECTION TO AFRICAN HERITAGE. BLENDING HIP-HOP WITH TRADITIONAL INFLUENCES, HE USES MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR ACTIVISM, STORYTELLING, AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION, WRITES **MOLLY CHEBET**

Jay Maasai, also known as Jay Mau Mau, was born in Mombasa, Kenya. He spent much of his childhood with his grandfather, a teacher and political enthusiast who inspired him to be a voice for his community.

His grandfather's passion for social justice influenced his outlook, motivating him to use his platform to speak for the voiceless.

Initially drawn to football, Jay discovered his talent for music through freestyle sessions with friends, which led him to embrace hip-hop as a tool for storytelling and cultural representation.

Now based in Austria, Jay blends his Kenyan roots with global hip-hop influences, emphasizing conscious lyrics and socio-political themes.

His love for Swahili literature helped shape his lyrical style, allowing him to craft impactful messages that reflect the realities of life.

Since his debut album, 'Minyororo ya Haki' (2010), Jay has continued to release music addressing African socio-political issues, including 'Uhuru Africa' (2012), 'Hewani' (2012) and 'Continental Scares' (2015).

His work has been recognized internationally, including an invitation by former Chief Justice Willy Mutunga to perform at Kenya's Supreme Court in 2016.

His latest release, 'Mtongwe', calls for a return to authentic hip-hop with meaningful lyrics that resonate with people's everyday struggles.

Collaborating with West African artistes, he incorporates traditional instruments like the African guitar and flute, creating a unique fusion of African and hip-hop sounds.

He also reunited with longtime friend Nyota Ndogo, producing a powerful track that bridges Kenyan and Austrian influences. His music videos, shot in both Austria and Kenya, capture the essence of his dual cultural experience.

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His collabora-

## BEYOND BORDERS

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tions with Austrian, Swiss, Spanish, and other European artists have expanded his reach, fostering a global movement of conscious hip-hop.

He has worked with a variety of musicians, including Tobias Tillian, Laura Healy, and Jot Kosmos, leading to performances alongside legends like Mobb Deep and Talib Kweli.

Beyond music, Jay is deeply involved in community-building and activism. He believes in music as a tool for social transformation and works to integrate marginalized voices into socio-political discussions.

His work is inspired by international artistes such as Common, Nas, and Salif Keita, as well as critical thinkers like Credo Mutwa and Dr. Sebi. His lyrics are shifting toward spiritual and philosophical themes, exploring the depths of human consciousness and societal issues.

For Mtongwe, Jay traveled to Kenya to ensure authenticity in his storytelling. The music video begins with a mystical shot at Baobab Creek, a lush area near Mombasa's Kilindini Harbor, before transitioning to Mtongwe Beach, where the story of the local community unfolds.

The visuals, combined with an African guitar riff and a floaty hip-hop beat, immerse the audience in the spirit of his homeland.

Now based in Graz, Austria, Jay is an active figure in the diaspora community. He participates in cultural events, hip-hop workshops for young people, and university lectures on music and activism.

He also collaborates with African musicians in Vienna and Graz, supporting cultural festivals and initiatives that promote African heritage. These efforts have connected him with policymakers and cultural institutions, further amplifying his mission.

He remains dedicated to using hip-hop as a bridge between cultures and a platform for meaningful conversations. His music continues to evolve, reflecting his journey, his heritage, and his vision for a world where hip-hop is not just entertainment but a force for change.

### Dwson and Beatsbyhand Live

Round off the March madness with a great big dance as event outfit Magna and KODA come together to bring deejays and producers Dwson and Beatsbyhand at KODA tonight. Currently shaking up the dance music scene with their extensive catalog of deep house, house and 3-step, the two acts bring all the musical treats they have been working on. Entry is Sh1,000.

### Black and White with H\_Art the Band in Meru

Scotch brand Black and White hosts celebrated boy band H\_Art The Band for a night of great scotch, music and vibes at Checkmate Lounge, Meru tomorrow. The experience will feature live music performance by H\_Art The Band and VJ Kay-gee Karuga. Attendees will also enjoy a curated cocktail experience, along with other memorable moments courtesy of the brand. There is no cover charge. Indulge responsibly.

### Love and Money Festival

This is a one-day live event that brings to life the concepts of love and money on stage, how they co-exist in our lives, and the way they impact our happiness. These two most important aspects of adult living, which were never taught how to navigate in adulthood, will be explored in storytelling, stand-up comedy, and podcast discussion at Jain Bhavan, Loresho, tomorrow. Charges are from Sh2,500.

### The Jazztified

The eclectic East Africa's premier jazz fusion band, the Jazztified, host its trademark live music performance this and every Friday at Geco Café, Nairobi. There is no cover charge.

### KODA's Concerts

Tomorrow, KODA in Nairobi presents a showcase of the finest local talent starring Vidza, Onedown and Kamushez in Room 1 while Euggy and KNVL in Room 2 all night long. Charges are Sh500.

### Saturdaze at Cavalli

Saturdays are for making memories, and Cavalli @ The Manor is the place to be tomorrow with an unbeatable lineup featuring Sami Flinch, Redbone, Joy Njoki, Dee Chee, and Hawt Dawg. The party starts tonight with live performances from Roy Teeboy, Benitez, Nanjie Galgalo, Sparky Nderu, and Maktejah.

### The Retro Rewind

Get ready to rewind time. The Retro Rewind is back with its second edition at Paradise Gardens, off Kiambu Road tomorrow. Relive the best of the 90's featuring CNG, Dream, Andre and KK. This is the ultimate throwback you can't miss. Gate charges are Sh4,000.

### Back and Forth Garden Edition

Join funlovers for a daytime hang with friends, great music from deejays Supafly, Maurice, Forest and delicious food at Rosedale Gardens, Nairobi, tomorrow. Prepare for an awesome experience featuring the best old school jams from the 80s, 90s and early 2000s. Entry is Sh2,000.

### Heartstrings' 'Excess Baggage'

Multi-award winning theatre outfit Heartstrings Entertainment continues its 2025 calendar with a rib-cracking life changing play dubbed 'Excess Baggage' at Alliance Française Auditorium, Nairobi this coming week. Sammy Mwangi is the director. Entry is Sh1,000.

### The Oasis of Frozen Waters

This is a film screening about Fadila, an emergency physician who marries Kader for love. They were on the verge of divorce when Kader was diagnosed with a fatal cancer. He was, for Fadila, the most disturbing case of her life. The screening goes down at Alliance Française Auditorium, Nairobi, tomorrow.

### Kamene, Bonez at Embassy Bistro

Media personality Kamene Goro celebrates her birthday with a special live performance from deckman Bonez at the Embassy Bistro, Nairobi, tomorrow. There is no cover charge.

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