



44th Annual Arts Awards Jesse Hameen II

Drummer Jesse Hameen II is a musician with a mission. He is dedicated to entertaining and inspiring others to attain a higher level of spiritual consciousness. Driven by his desire, he encourages others to know that life's conditions can be changed and improved. Jesse is a “Human Excellence Advocate”

Born in New Haven, CT, as *Jesse Kilpatrick Jr.*, his family upbringing and his background in Gospel, Afro- Cuban, R&B and Jazz prepared him to begin successful road tours in 1963. He has since traveled and performed extensively throughout the world. He has been leading his own group, Elevation, since 1976.

Some of Jesse’s New Haven mentors are: Dickey Myers, Houston Person, Vernon Biddles, Frankie Williams, Curly Glover, Sonny

Williams, Count Steadwell, Leo Stevens, Johnny “Hammond” Smith, Bobby Coles, Willie Ruff and Charlie Smith.

“Cheese”- as he is called by many of his peers and friends because of his spirited smile - has performed, recorded and/or appeared with the following artists on stages and national TV:

Ruth Brown, Charles Brown, Grover Washington Jr., George Benson, Ms. Irene Reid, Gloria Lynne, Stanley Turrentine, Tommy Turrentine, Curtis Mayfield, & The Impressions, Ruby & The Romantics, Charles Earland, Jimmy McGriff, Jimmy Witherspoon, Hank Crawford, Lou Donaldson, Etta Jones, Lena Horne, Tommy Flannagan, Rodney Jones, Leon Thomas, Pharaoh Sanders, Jimmy Scott, Blue Mitchell, Kenny Burrell, Brook Benton, Arthur Prysock, Jimmy Ponder, Melvin “Sparks” Hasan, Major Holly, Doug Carn, Jean Carn, Bobby Watson, Harold Vick, Albert Daley, Walter Bishop Jr., Christian Sands, Freddie Hubbard, Jamil Nasser, Dr. Lonnie Smith, David “Fathead” Newman, Kenny Baron, George Adams, Benny Powell, Hamiet Bluiett, Curtis Fuller, Ronnie Mathews, Billy Larkin, Eddie Buster, Bobby Buster, Russell Malone, Odean Pope, James Spaulding, Rusty Bryant and Sonny Fortune.

Jesse has performed with countless musicians. This partial list is far from complete. His professional career, which spans more than 60 years continues to today.

Being an educator, Jesse has taught components of music as an adjunct professor at The Hartford Conservatory of Music, Betsy Ross Arts Magnet Middle School in New Haven, CT, ECA (Educational Center for The Arts) HS, in New Haven, CT, Clara Muhammad School in Corona NY, and Jazz Mobile In NYC. Jesse has also been a Guest Clinician at Juilliard and has taught classes at Wesleyan University. He presented seminars and assembly programs in NYC public schools, libraries and in other cities nationwide for over fifty years.

Presently, Jesse is on the faculty of Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, CT., as a private instructor and Director of the NMS Summer Jazz Program. Jesse has served as Chair of the NMS Jazz Department for twenty years. NMS is the largest nonprofit community arts organization in the state of CT and one of the 10th largest in the US. Jesse co-teaches a course on “The Development of Black Music in America” at Gordon College in Wenham, MA.

He is also a recipient of the prestigious 2023 “Ellington Fellows Award” for Jazz Masters, from Yale University. Additionally, He served as a Commissioner of Arts and Culture for the City of New Haven.

Jesse also was the Dixwell Community Representative for the New Haven Arts council’s “Regional Cultural Plan” under the direction of Bitsie Clark.

As a Jazz preservationist, Jesse is one of the founders of the rejuvenated New Haven Jazz Festival (2008- 2017). He is on the Board of Directors for Jazz Haven, which has been the presenting organization for the Jazz Festival. Jesse implemented the inherent policy that every Jazz Haven Festival must have a residual effect by featuring youth artists and sponsoring a Guest Clinician at the NMS Summer Jazz Program each year.

Jesse is President and Founder of **Inspire Productions** Recording Company. The company has produced two releases for the Savant Record Label, “**Thanks To You**” and “**Moving Out**” by vocalist Ms. Irene Reid. “**Give Your Life to God**” and “**Sign Of The Times**” by Jesse Hameen II, “**Why Don’t You Say, Yes Sometime?**” by trombonist Benny Powell and “**Hit It**” by the Neo Bass Ensemble. Website: jessehameenii.com