

## José James Biography

Born and raised in Minneapolis, José James came of age with the sounds of Prince, hip-hop and Modern jazz. Discovering an early passion for both music and creative writing, José combined these through performance - singing jazz standards, originals, and the works of John Coltrane with his quartet throughout the Twin Cities. Becoming a member of the groundbreaking avant-garde performance poetry and jazz ensemble Ancestor Energy, José was determined to devote his life to music, community, and spiritual unity.

Moving to New York City to attend The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, he was mentored by and recorded with both the legendary drummer Chico Hamilton and the pianist Junior Mance. There he also met his first ensemble that would form the studio and international touring band for his 2008 debut album "The Dreamer" (Jan 2008, Brownswood).

A chance meeting in London with international tastemaker and DJ Gilles Peterson led to a record deal on Peterson's Brownswood Recordings label. Drawing upon diverse influences such as Freestyle Fellowship and Rahsaan Roland Kirk, "The Dreamer" was an international critical success, with José performing at venues such as the North Sea Jazz Festival, Billboard Live Tokyo, The Hermitage Museum, and Central Park Summerstage. "The Dreamer" was voted #21 Critic's Pick of JazzTimes Top 50 Jazz Albums of 2008.

His sophomore release "BLACKMAGIC" (Feb 2010, Brownswood) explored the worldwide underground, featuring production from Flying Lotus, Moodymann, Taylor McFerrin, and DJ Mitsu the Beats. "BLACKMAGIC" also featured James's live band in new territory, covering dubstep pioneer Benga's "Emotions" and exploring a soul/hip-hop version of the R&B classic "Save Your Love For Me." "BLACKMAGIC" toured in over 30 countries, at venues such as the Montreal Jazz Festival, Ancienne Belgique, Melkweg, and Lincoln Center.

Signing to Verve/Universal in 2010, James's third studio album "For All We Know" (May 2010, Impulse!) was released on the legendary "Impulse!" label, home to many of John Coltrane's masterworks. Largely recorded in a single day at the famed Galaxy Studios in Belgium, "For All We Know" is a deep and timeless duo album of jazz standards featuring Jef Neve on piano.

Winner of both the Edison Award and L'Académie du Jazz Grand Prix for best Vocal Jazz Album of 2010, "For All We Know" was James's most intimate project to date, with performances in premiere concert halls such as L'Olympia, Royal Festival Hall, and De Roma, as well venues such as the Umbria Jazz Festival, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola and Cotton Club Tokyo.

The collaboration between James and Jef Neve continued with an ambitious ongoing live project "Facing East: The Music of John Coltrane." Conceived and directed by James "Facing East" made its worldwide debut at Ancienne Belgique, Brussels, and continued on to venues such as the North Sea Jazz Festival, Nice Jazz Festival, New Morning, and Ronnie Scott's.

As a featured guest José has recorded albums with Junior Mance, Chico Hamilton, Nicola Conte, Bassment Jaxx, Jazzanova, Toshio Matsuura, J.A.M., DJ Mitsu the Beats, Timo Lassy, Taylor McFerrin, and Flying Lotus.

Recent projects include guest performances with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra's "A Tribute to Billy Strayhorn" at Rose Theater, as well as touring internationally with McCoy Tyner's "The Music of John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman."