

Jesse Davis

Alto saxophonist Jesse Davis is one of the new, young lions of jazz coming out of New Orleans, where he was born 1965. He follows in the tradition of the Marsalis family and other Jazz musicians from the Crescent City currently attracting so much attention. Not surprisingly, he studied with Ellis Marsalis at the New Orleans Centre for Creative Arts.

Jesse showed signs of musical talent at an early age: when he was eleven, his brother Roger (an accomplished tuba player) bought Jesse a saxophone and taught him how to play it. He went on to study with Ellis Marsalis, whose teachings inspired him to become a music student at North-Eastern Illinois University on a full scholarship. Eventually, he transferred to William Patterson College in New Jersey and then to the New School in New York City, enrolling in their Jazz and Contemporary Music Program. There he was a student of noted Jazz historian Ira Gitler, who says that "...Jesse stood out in the crowd". Through his college years, Davis won awards as outstanding soloist at Jazz Festivals, including Notre Dame, Wichita State, New York University, Southern University and Loyola. In 1989 he won the prestigious "Most Outstanding Musician" award at the Down Beat Music Fest in Philadelphia.

As a sideman, Jesse has gained experience with Jack McDuff, Major Holley, Cecil Payne, Illinois Jacquet, Jay McShann, Chico Hamilton, Junior Mance, Kenny Barron, Tete Montoliu, Cedar Walton, Benny Golson, Tana Reid, the Newport All Stars, Roy Hargrove, The Malboro Super-band and a long list of top jazz artists.

In 1993 Jesse toured Europe fronting his own quartet. In his more than 50 European appearances Jesse has received the best of reviews from the critics in Spain, France, Italy and the UK. Other European tours followed in 1994 and 1995. In July of 1996 Jesse toured Europe once again with Phil Woods, Charles McPherson and Gary Bartz, as part of the Sax Machine package.

Equally influenced by Charlie Parker, Cannonball Adderley and Sonny Stitt, Jesse contributes a flawless technique and a natural feeling for the blues to every one of his performances. His music has been described as "neo-bop" but, as he says, "... all I wanna do is play beautiful music." That he does...with a passion.

An exclusive Concord Artist, his albums "Horn of passion" (1991), "As we speak" (1992), "Young at Art" (1993), "High standards" (1994) and "From Within" (1996), are currently available.

Between 1994 and 1997, Jesse has enjoyed a fruitful musical co-operation with his "homeboy" Nicholas Payton: Verve Records' release "Gumbo nouveau" (1996) features the classic tunes of New Orleans Jazz of the twenties and thirties seen from the scope of a modern Jazzman. 1996 also saw Jesse's debut as an actor in the celebrated Robert Altman movie "Kansas City".