

# JACK DEJOHNETTE

## PROFILE



Born in Chicago in 1942, GRAMMY® winner Jack DeJohnette is widely regarded as one of jazz music's greatest drummers. Music appreciation flourished in DeJohnette's family. He studied classical piano from age four until fourteen, before beginning to play drums with his high school concert band and taking private piano lessons at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. DeJohnette credits his uncle, Roy I. Wood Sr., who was one of the most popular jazz DJ's in the South Side of Chicago, later vice president of the National Network of Black Broadcasters, as the person who initially inspired him to pursue music.

In his early years on the Chicago scene, he led his own groups and was equally in demand as a pianist and as a drummer. He played R & B, hard bop, and avant-garde and was active with the experimentalists of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) in its early days, with the likes of founder Muhal Richard Abrams, Roscoe Mitchell and Joseph Jarman. In 1966, he drummed alongside Rashied Ali in the John Coltrane Quintet. International recognition came with his tenure in the Charles Lloyd Quartet, one of the first jazz groups to receive cross-over attention, which also alerted the world to Keith Jarrett's skills.

Jack DeJohnette has collaborated with most major figures in jazz history. Some of the great talents he has worked with are John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, Sonny Rollins, Sun Ra, Jackie McLean, Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Stan Getz, Keith Jarrett, Chet Baker, George Benson, Stanley Turrentine, Ron Carter, Lee Morgan, Charles Lloyd, Herbie Hancock, Dave Holland, Joe Henderson, Freddie Hubbard, Abbey Lincoln, Betty Carter and Eddie Harris, who is responsible for convincing DeJohnette to stick with drums because he heard DeJohnette's natural talent.

It was in 1968 that DeJohnette joined Miles Davis's group in time for the epochal upheaval marked by *Bitches Brew*, an album that changed the direction of jazz. In his autobiography, Miles Davis said, "Jack DeJohnette gave me a deep groove that I just loved to play over." Jarrett soon followed DeJohnette into the Davis group, and the drummer's first ECM recording, the duet *Rutya and Daitya* was made in 1971. Working with Miles also brought about collaborations with John McLaughlin, Chick Corea and Dave Holland.

In 1968 he recorded his first album as a leader on the Milestone label, called *The DeJohnette Complex*, where Jack played the melodica along with his mentor Roy Haynes on drums. In the early 70's he recorded *Have You Heard* in Japan and two albums for Prestige, called *Sorcery* and *Cosmic Chicken*. These early sessions united Jack with Gary Peacock, Bennie Maupin, Stanley Cowell, Miroslav Vitous, Eddie Gomez, Alex Foster and Peter Warren.

Jack began to record as a leader for ECM, with each of his successive groups Directions, New Directions, and Special Edition making important contributions to the evolution of jazz. The New Directions band featured two musicians who would have long-term associations with DeJohnette: John Abercrombie and Lester Bowie. A friend from Chicago days, Bowie played intermittently with DeJohnette until the end of his life. Most notably, Lester and Jack collaborated on a duo album called *Zebra*, which was a world beat influenced video soundtrack and CD. Abercrombie continued to work with DeJohnette in the Gateway Trio, along with Dave Holland. Special Edition, with its rotating front line, helped introduce the sounds of David Murray, Rufus Reid, Howard Johnson, Arthur Blythe, Chico Freeman, Greg Osby, Michael Caine,

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Lonnie Plaxico, Gary Thomas and John Purcell to a wider audience. Jack most recently worked with Abercrombie on another long-time collaborator's album, John Surman's *Brewster's Rooster* (ECM, 2009).

DeJohnette has recorded as a leader on Columbia, Landmark, MCA/GRP, and Toshiba/EMI/Blue Note, but the bulk of his recordings are on the ECM label. He also has a growing catalogue on his own imprint, Golden Beans Productions, since the label's launch in 2005.

While continuing to lead his own projects and bands, DeJohnette has also been a member of the immensely popular Keith Jarrett/Gary Peacock/Jack DeJohnette Trio which will celebrate a 30 year anniversary in 2013 with a new live recording and several performances around the globe. DeJohnette has appeared on more ECM albums than any other musician; his recordings display his subtle, powerful playing and the "melodic" approach to drums and cymbals that makes his touch instantly recognizable.

Jack is also known for his cutting edge collaborations; his *Parallel Realities* CD, with Herbie Hancock and Pat Metheny toured successfully and received much acclaim. Another major collaboration was a CD called, *Music for the Fifth World*, inspired by Jack's studies with a Seneca native elder, named Grandmother Twylah Nitsch. This project brought together the likes of Vernon Reid, Will Calhoun, John Scofield, traditional Native American singers, Michael Cain, and Lonnie Plaxico. DeJohnette's drumming, though originally influenced by masters including Max Roach, Art Blakey, Roy Haynes, Elvin Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Art Taylor, Rashied Ali, Paul Motian, Tony Williams, and Andrew Cyrelle, has long drawn from sources beyond "jazz." More than thirty years ago, he was already describing his work as "multi-directional music."

"As a child I listened to all kinds of music and I never put them into categories. I had formal lessons on piano and listened to opera, country and western music, rhythm and blues, jazz, swing, whatever. To me, it was all music and great. I've kept that integrated feeling about music, all types of music, and just carried it with me. I've maintained that belief and feeling in spite of the ongoing trend to try and compartmentalize people and music."

DeJohnette has also composed soundtracks for both TV and video. These include a soundtrack in collaboration with Pat Metheny for a PBS play called *Lemon Sky*; a soundtrack for a documentary called *City Farmers* by Meryl Joseph and a video production with fellow percussionist Don Alias on Homespun tapes, *Talking Drummers*, which includes a documentary that was made of the whole process. Jack also enjoyed a cameo appearance as a member of the "Alligator Blues Band" in the Blues Brothers 2000 movie.

Beyond his own groups, some of DeJohnette's most wide-open playing can be heard in his recordings of spontaneously improvised music with Keith Jarrett (*Always Let Me Go*, *Inside Out*, and *Changeless*); John Surman (*Invisible Nature*, *The Amazing Adventures of Simon Simon*, and the transitional sequences in Surman's music for reeds, drums, piano and brass ensemble, *Free and Equal*); Michael Cain and Steve Gorn (*Dancing With Nature Spirits*); and Don Alias, Michael Cain, and Jerome Harris (*Oneness*).

In 2004, DeJohnette recorded and toured with two GRAMMY®-nominated projects, *The Out of Towners* with Keith Jarrett and Gary Peacock (also known as the 'Standards Trio') and *Ivey Divey* with Don Byron and Jason Moran.

While continuing to tour the world with the Keith Jarrett/Gary Peacock/Jack DeJohnette Trio in 2005, DeJohnette launched and toured with three new projects of his own—the Latin Project with Don Byron, Giovanni Hidalgo, Jerome Harris, Edsel Gomez and Luisito Quintero; the Jack DeJohnette Quartet featuring Danilo Perez, John Patitucci and Jerome Harris; and Beyond Trio, a group celebrating the works of Jack's friend and master drummer Tony Williams, featuring John Scofield and Larry Goldings—and founded his own imprint, Golden Beams Productions.

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On April 26, 2005, Jack DeJohnette opened his musical world up to his fans with the simultaneous release of two singular projects on his label: a stunning duet with the revered Gambian Kora player Foday Musa Suso called *Music from the Hearts of the Masters*; and a sublime recording for relaxation and meditation entitled *Music in the Key of Om*.

*Music in the Key of Om* is a seamless, one-hour piece created for relaxation and meditation featuring DeJohnette on synthesizer and resonating bells, a new line of instruments that he developed with the Sabian cymbal company. It was nominated for a GRAMMY® in Best New Age Album category.

*Music from the Hearts of the Masters* is a scintillating collaboration with Foday Musa Suso, the innovative Mandingo Griot and master of the Gambian Kora. This stunning duet contains deep, mesmeric grooves and passages of inspired improvisational dialogue which crosses and transcends musical genres.

In October of 2005, Jack released *Hybrids* (Golden Beams), a remix album by The Ripple Effect, DeJohnette's collaborative project featuring Foday Musa Suso; multi-instrumentalist John Surman, one of the key figures of the European jazz scene for the past four decades; Marlui Miranda, the most acclaimed and recognized performer and researcher of Brazilian Indian music; producer, engineer and guitarist Big Al; and sound engineer, multi-instrumentalist, and mix master Ben Surman, who produced the album with DeJohnette. *Hybrids* blends shades of African jazz, reggae and dance music to launch jazz into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

On February 8, 2006, Golden Beams released *The Elephant Sleeps But Still Remembers*, a live recording documenting the first meeting of Jack DeJohnette, "our era's most expansive percussive talent" (*JazzTimes*), and Bill Frisell, "the most important jazz guitarist of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (*Acoustic Guitar*) at Seattle's Earshot Festival in 2001. The album features 11 mind-blowing tracks covering a breadth of sonic territories, created from the prepared themes and on-the-spot compositions. Adding to the breathtaking guitar and drum artistry are live sound manipulations, such as Frisell's delay/sampler/looper and DeJohnette's electronic hand percussion, and some tasteful post-production (bass lines, ambient sounds and so forth) by mix master Ben Surman, DeJohnette's collaborator on his electronic project, The Ripple Effect's *Hybrids*. The group toured in fall 2006 as a quartet, adding Jerome Harris, the multi-instrumentalist, singer, and published author, who is internationally known for his versatile and penetrating style on guitar and bass guitar to the line-up. The *Elephant* tour coincided with the release of *Golden Beams Collected, Vol. 1* (October 2006), a collection of highlights from the Golden Beams label, including a never released duo track with the late Don Alias and a brand new remix of tracks from The Ripple Effect's *Hybrids* by DJ Logic.

DeJohnette has kept his long-standing relationship with ECM with the June 6, 2006 release of *Saudades*, a live recording of "Lifetime and Beyond: Celebrating Tony Williams" concert at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall in 2004. DeJohnette conceived the project in a conversation with guitarist John Scofield regarding the importance of Tony Williams' influence on them both, both musically and as a bandleader. To echo the instrumental format of Lifetime—drums, guitar, and organ—they brought in Larry Goldings, a fellow admirer of Tony, and dubbed the group Trio Beyond. The 2-CD set, nominated for a GRAMMY® for Best Instrumental Jazz Recording, revisits material once played by Tony Williams, John McLaughlin, and Larry Young, as well as Tony's early days with Miles Davis, and Trio Beyond's original compositions and improvisations.

Jack's wide-ranging style, capable of playing in any idiom while still maintaining a well-defined voice keeps him in constant demand as a drummer, bandleader, and as a sideman. In 2007, Jack launched the "Intercontinental" project with the South African singer Sibongile Khumalo, capping a successful European tour with a performance at the Capetown Jazz Festival in South Africa. He appeared on the late Michael Brecker's posthumously released last album, *Pilgrimage* (Heads Up, 2007), and Bruce Hornsby's jazz debut, *Camp Meeting* (Sony Legacy, 2007), with Christian McBride, the latter supported by a US tour. He toured North America with Trio Beyond; Japan with Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, and Ron Carter; and Europe with The Ripple Effect.

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2008 had been a busy year for DeJohnette – with high profile tours with Bobby McFerrin and Chick Corea; Keith Jarrett and Gary Peacock; the Alice Coltrane tribute concerts; “Intercontinental” in Europe, and numerous recordings, including his latest release, *Music We Are*. Recorded during a snow storm near his home in Upstate New York, the album was released on April 7, 2009 on Golden Beams. Produced by DeJohnette and co-produced by John Patitucci and Danilo Perez, *Music We Are* combines strictly composed pieces, organically developed in the studio by the trio, with spacious collective improvisations to showcase the three virtuosos performing double-duty: DeJohnette on drums and melodica; Patitucci on upright and electric basses; and Perez on piano and keyboard. The album included a bonus DVD, providing a rare look at the trio’s friendship, intimate working relationship, and their recording process, and is also available in vinyl.

With *Peace Time*, Jack DeJohnette won the GRAMMY® for Best New Age Album in 2009. The hour-long continuous piece of music composed and performed by Jack features “flights of flute, soft hand drumming and the gently percolating chime of cymbal play, moving the piece along a river of meditative delight. Subdued layers of overtone singing and the distant drones of sitars waft in and out like comforting and familiar spirit guides that manifest themselves in sound” (eMusic).

In addition to the GRAMMY®, Jack has received many awards for his music, including, *New Directions* which received the prestigious French “Grand Prix du Disque” and “Charles Cros” award in 1979. *Album*, *Album* and *Special Edition* both won “Album of the Year” in the annual Downbeat readers' polls. *Audio-Visualscapes* became album of the year in the Downbeat annual critics' poll 1989. *Parallel Realities* won album of the year in Japan. In 1991, *Earth Walk* won album of the year and recording of the year in Japan. Jack has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Berkley College of Music in Boston in 1991. There is an extensive list of awards for drumming, including over 20 years of the *DownBeat* polls, the NY Jazz awards, and the Jazz Central on-line awards, along with many international awards. He is the winner of both *DownBeat* magazine and *JazzTimes* magazine’s Readers Polls for 2008 Drummer of the Year and Best Drums, respectively. He won *JazzTimes* magazine’s Readers Poll for the previous two years as well and *DownBeat* Magazine's Readers Poll consecutively since 2005. In 2010, he was inducted into the Percussive Arts Society's Hall of Fame. In 2012 DeJohnette was presented with the honorary Copenhagen Jazz Award and The Distinguished Jazz Legends Award at the Monterey Jazz Festival by Clint Eastwood.

In 2010, he introduced his latest working band, The Jack DeJohnette Group, featuring Rudresh Mahanthappa on alto saxophone, David Fiuczynski on double-neck guitar, George Colligan on keyboards and piano, and Jerome Harris on electric and acoustic bass guitars.

In December of 2011, Jack was honored to perform at the Kennedy Center in tribute to his good friend and inspiration, Sonny Rollins.

Jack celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2012 and received a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master Fellowship, the highest U.S. honor for jazz musicians; recognized for his extraordinary life achievements, contribution to advancing the jazz art form and for serving as a mentor for a new generation of young aspiring jazz musicians. The year-long celebration was capped with multi-performances at the famed Monterey and Newport Jazz Festivals, a tour of Europe with the Jack DeJohnette Group and several 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Concerts with Chick Corea and Stanley Clarke.

Add to that another crowning achievement: DeJohnette’s latest album, *Sound Travels*. The album is a superb genre-spanning, nine-song collection that grooves with Latin rhythms and West Indian energy, muses with meditative tunes, and buoys with straight-up jazz swing. The album also features an array of collaborators, including vocalists Bruce Hornsby (on the funky, bluesy tune “The Dirty Ground” that has AOR hit potential), Bobby McFerrin and Esperanza Spalding. Also on board are emerging talents such as trumpeter Ambrose Akinmusire and guitarist Lionel Loueke (and Spalding, who plays bass on seven of the tracks) and established jazz stars such as saxophonist Tim Ries, percussionist Luisito Quintero and, on one track, pianist Jason Moran.

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