



JOSÉ JAMES

The Dreamer

Released on Brownswood Recordings

28th January 2008



Live at the Vortex, London
Wednesday 9th January 2008

Brooklyn based jazz singer **José James** took a pretty direct route to getting Gilles Peterson's attention. He flew over to London went out clubbing and slipped the hugely influential DJ and prescient A&R man a copy of his demos! Intrigued by the hip young singer's attitude, Gilles took a listen, and blown away by his stunning vocal version of Trane's classic tune *Equinox*, immediately signed him to his thriving young indie label **Brownswood**. Early tracks (including an IG Culture remix) were circulated by word of mouth and on the internet, and earlier this year Cargo in trendy Shoreditch was crammed to the rafters as the slightly built young man with the smokey baritone had a packed house hushed in appreciation.

James is more than just another cool stylist though, still in his mid-twenties, he is a young singer committed to pursuing a deeply soulful, vocal jazz tradition which includes the likes of Babs Gonzales, Billie Holiday, Joe Williams, Mark Murphy, Jon Lucien and Leon Thomas, and his live shows find him as likely to scat his way through Moanin' as to present his own richly sonorous music. Indeed his debut album, **The Dreamer** reveals him as a growing songwriter and composer, who rather than plunder the Great American Songbook prefers to tell his own tales of love and life. Seven of the ten songs on his debut album are self-penned including the haunting trumpet flavoured beauty of the title track and the low-slung groove of *Love*. Elsewhere on the album his version of the Freestyle Fellowship's *Park Bench People* shows his love of contemporary hip hop (an influence that like pianist Robert Glasper he wears lightly) while his take of Rashaan Roland Kirk's *Spirits Up Above* has an emotional depth and spiritual force reminiscent of the great Andy Bey.

The Dreamer was recorded in New York with Jose's regular band and guests, including legendary pianist Junior Mance who he met while studying at the prestigious New School for Jazz & Contemporary Music NY. He works with a broad range of collaborators including pianists Nikki Yeoh and Elan Mehler, as well as label mate Ben Westbeech and internationally recognised producers/composers Nicola Conte and Basement Jaxx.

The Dreamer is released on Brownswood, January 28th 2008. The first single, *Spirits Up Above* is released on January 14th and includes remixes by London based producers Simbad and Yam Who? *Park Bench People* will be the second single released in April, when Jose revisits the UK for more dates.

Jose James performs at the Vortex Jazz Club on January 9th 2008.

11 Gillett Street, London, N16. Ticket Reservations call 020 7254 4097



For more information, press tickets contact

Julie Allison at Riotsquad Publicity 01273 475980 || julie@riotsquadpublicity.com

Kerstan Mackness at Riotsquad Publicity 020 8541 3175 || Kerstan@riotsquadpublicity.com

JOSÉ JAMES

The Dreamer

Biography

Hailing from Prince's hometown of Minneapolis, **Jose James** grew up around music. His mother, a music loving child of the hippy era, is of Irish descent and is his father a Panamanian working musician. At High School, while listening to the likes of A Tribe Called Quest, he discovered Duke Ellington; "those dark, early, Cotton Club recordings" he recalls. Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker followed, then, Nat King Cole, Mingus and Monk. And then, to top it all he discovered John Coltrane.

"When I heard 'Equinox' I was transported... that's when I seriously started writing lyrics... man, I must have played that tune two thousand times!"

At that time James was initiated into the post 'Black Arts' movement of the late Sixties by poet, educator and activist of African and Native American heritage, Louis Alemayehu. Through his involvement in Ancestor Energy - Alemayehu's award winning spoken word and jazz ensemble -- the young singer gained a deeper insight into what the Art Ensemble of Chicago defined as Great Black Music. As James says, "It was heavy! They changed my whole conception of music."

In 2000, as with generations of jazz musicians before him, James travelled to New York City to "make it". It was a totally disheartening experience. Numbled by an inability to make those vital connections and confronted with the sheer lack of interest, his passion for singing evaporated. For three whole years he abstained and channelled his creative juices into writing. Even his girl friend had no idea of his vocal skills. In fact, it was only when they moved back to Minneapolis and James started collaborating and gigging with his mentor and former high school teacher, Dennis Malmberg, that she heard him sing. She flipped!

Once back in NYC she urged him to get back on track. In 2004, he participated in the Thelonious Monk International Vocal Competition and then successfully applied for a partial scholarship to the prestigious New School For Jazz & Contemporary Music. The New School, whose alumni includes the likes of Roy Hargrove, Robert Glasper and Brad Meldau, boasts a great roster of working musicians as tutors including pianist Junior Mance (who plays on James's debut album) as well as such seminal figures as Charles Tolliver, Andrew Cyrille and Reggie Workman.

While James maintains a small band of regular collaborators in NYC, who appear to enjoy a virtually telepathic musical relationship with the singer, he is developing working relationships with many other musicians, including label-mate Elan Mehler, French eastender, DJ/producer/saxophonist, Simbad, and UK artists Neville Malcolm and Nikki Yeoh.



For more information, press tickets contact

Julie Allison at Riotsquad Publicity 01273 475980 || julie@riotsquadpublicity.com

Kerstan Mackness at Riotsquad Publicity 020 8541 3175 || Kerstan@riotsquadpublicity.com