

UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL MISSOURI.
SCHOOL OF
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
AN ALL-STEINWAY SCHOOL

UCM Music Presents

Kevin Jones
Guest Artist Concert
Hart Recital Hall
Thursday, April 24, 2025
7:00 p.m.

In consideration of the performers, other audience members, and the live recording of this concert, please silence all devices before the performance.

Fanga

Nigeria
Babatunde Olatunji

Aire Pionéré

Congo
Celebration Rhythm

To be announced

Solo - Kevin Jones

To be announced

Duet - Kevin Jones and Alex Smith

Kou Kou

Guinea
Celebration Rhythm

BIO

[Kevin Jones](#) is a percussionist, band leader, producer, educator. A native of Englewood, New Jersey, Kevin grew up in a household immersed in jazz, soul, gospel and blues, from Charlie Parker and Lou Rawls to Nat King Cole and Mahalia Jackson, along with the pop and R&B legends of the times. Reportedly, Kevin's grandmother, Maggie Walker Jones, once played with (and maybe even recorded with) Bessie Smith. The arts of all types were nurtured in the Jones household and piano lessons were a requirement, not an elective.

Jones traces his percussion expertise to the age-old 'academy of the streets.' Over the years Kevin has evolved an increasingly comprehensive approach to percussion, commanding respect from artists such as the Isley Brothers, Whitney Houston, Winard Harper, and Reggie Workman.

At age 10 began Kevin showing interest in playing hand drums. Neighborhood drummers were prone to testifying on front lawns and park benches, hand drums and various percussive enhancements in tow; their massaging, pulsating, skin-on-skins thoroughly hooked the impressionable youngster. Among these master drummers were Marvin "Bugalu" Smith (Sun-Ra, Archie Shepp, Mal Waldron), Earl "Buster Smith (Eric Dolphy, Sun-Ra), Karl Potter (The Isley Brothers, Pino Daniele) and Babatunde Lea (Pharoah Sanders, Leon Thomas), who all spent time with and made a long-lasting impression on the young Kevin's life.

At 18 Kevin was asked to record an album with alto saxophonist Charles McPherson at the urging of Kevin's long time friend Charles "Chuck" McPherson Jr. Kevin and Chuck recorded "Free Bop" in the summer of 1978. Soon to follow was Kevin's tenure in Archie Shepp's Attica Blues Big Band in 1979 when he recorded a double album. Just a couple of months later Kevin was asked to join iconic and legendary soul and R&B group, The Isley Brothers; a relationship that lasted for 13 years with multiple tours and 9 different recording projects. In between that time Kevin was able to join forces with Whitney Houston for 4 glorious years touring and making many television appearances.

Kevin continued to study his craft and learn from whoever he could while working in all sorts of settings. From Reggie Workman and Winard Harper to Randy Weston and Luisito Quintero, Kevin stretched the boundaries of his craft.

In 1999 Kevin started to focus on teaching as a passion by working with The Bronx Arts Ensemble to Arts Horizons and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Rhythm Road Jazz Ambassador's project.

During his career he has had the opportunity to share the stage or recorded alongside of Hilton Ruiz, Walter Bishop Jr., Harold Vick, Grady Tate, Frank Wess, Jamil Nasser, Ray Copeland, Joey DeFrancesco, Teodross Avery, Ameen Saleem, Pat Martino, Jim Rotundi, Eric Alexander, Vince Ector, Papa John DeFrancesco, Melvin Sparks, Art Blakey Jr., John Benitez, Bebe and Cece Winans, Jermaine Jackson, Angela Winbush, Norman Simmons,

Luisito Quintero, Billy Hart, Frank Lacy, Luis Perdomo, Alex Blake, Randy Weston, Winard Harper, Jimmy Owens, Billy Harper, Reggie Workman, Steve Turre, Michael Dease and Bob DeVos.

Kevin recorded his first solo project in 1999 with producer and pianist Kelvin Sholar Marvin Smith, Chuck McPherson along with saxophonist TK Blue called "Land of Eternal Tranquil Light". It was an eclectic mix of music. Kevin and Kelvin then put together a collaborative band called Tenth World to play some local gigs. The sound turned out to be innovative and expressive. The sound blended elements of Jazz, R&B and World Music to create a unique sound that had to be recorded. They swiftly started to produce an iconic album called simply Tenth World. The group Tenth World included saxophonist Brian Horton, trumpeter Kevin Louis, drummer Jaimeo Brown, bassists Damon Warmack and Josh David Barrett. On occasion were joined by flautist George Makinto and percussionist Luisito Quintero. The core of the group remained the same for years. They toured all over the world and Kevin was signed to a contract with Motema Music. They produced another Live CD simply called "Tenth World - Live".

Currently, Kevin resides in West Michigan where he is now faculty at MSU's Percussion and Jazz Studies Area. Besides being faculty at MSU he also has served as a percussionist for the Dance Department at Western Michigan University as well as an Artist In Residence at the Jazz Studies Department. He also works as an accompanist for West African Dance classes at Grand Valley State University. He is also the Artistic Director and Curator of Music at West Michigan's only Jazz Club; GRNoir Wine & Jazz. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the West Michigan Jazz Society as the Chair of the Education Committee. Kevin also continues to teach children in underserved communities; a passion in which he relentlessly pursues.

This program is made possible by:

