

The Queen of Jaounce:



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAHSAANA ISON

A Fusion of Jazz & Bounce Multitalented Rahsaana Ison Creates a New Musical Sound

By Anita Oubre

Rahsaana Ison is a jazz vocalist, actress, playwright, director, teacher and comedian.





She has taken her talents as a jazz vocalist and not only invented a new sound, but also coined and trademarked this sound with the name of Jaounce. This self-proclaimed “Queen of Jaounce” is excited to introduce this sound to the world and even more excited for the next generation to get on board, master the music and make sure it stays alive for generations to come.

As she explained, “Being from New Orleans and a student of jazz, as well as growing up in the era that bounce was created, I’d say that Jaounce is the combination of jazz and bounce music.”

There was an excitement in her voice as Rahsaana broke down the beats one hears as they listen to bounce. “What makes me so unique is that I am not a rapper,” she stated emphatically. “I am a jazz vocalist singing jazz with jazz music and then you hear that beat. That bounce beat.”

Rahsaana was never one to do the standards. She always steered toward the

different and unique. As a child growing up in the neighborhood between the 6th and 7th Wards, Rahsaana was not only singing in church but also in nightclubs.

Her father, the late attorney Richwell Ison, was an accomplished jazz trumpeter and flutist. “My father came from a line of jazz musicians,” Rahsaana said. “I am the fourth generation. My late Great-Uncle Porky Jones and my grandfather were great jazz musicians.”

Rahsaana’s parents divorced early in her life. As she recalled, “Music was my babysitter when I spent the weekends at my dad’s house.” Listening to albums that Rahsaana would select from her father’s record collection opened up a whole new world for her. Even when the Baptist preacher insisted that a certain kind of music was forbidden, Rahsaana found a way to explore and embrace the sounds that were calling to her.

“My mother was friends with the talented Sharon Martin and the next thing you know I was going into barrooms and lounges and was invited to sing with Sharon,” Rahsaana said. “I went to Corpus Christi School across the street from a bar called the Winner Circle. Ms. Sharon thought that if it was okay with my mother for me to be in there singing it was certainly all right with her. I call Ms. Sharon my fairy jazz mother to this day.”

To Rahsaana it was normal to have a houseful of young jazz musicians on a Sunday afternoon. Her mother, the late Eartha Harris, could cook a pot of red beans and a gumbo that people talked about for days afterwards. “The food brought us together but the music kept us there. It was a jam session,” she recalled.

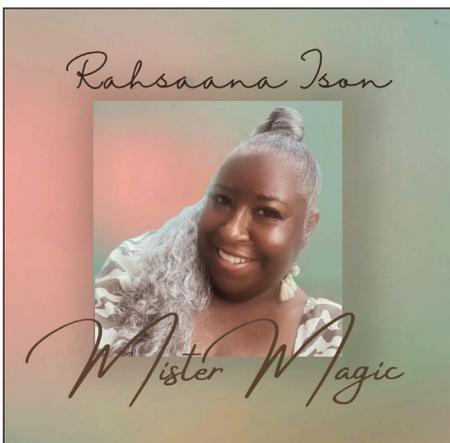
From an early age, Rahsaana realized how much she enjoyed performing. Whether it was in church, a nightclub or at a festival, she would eagerly take to the stage. Her mother was in front, managing the logistics and offering encouragement.

“It was meant to be because my namesake was taken from the late, great Rahsaan Roland Kirk,” Rahsaana explained. “He was

this amazing saxophonist and activist who could actually play three saxes at once and he was blind. Dad wanted a boy but he got me so he added the letter A to the end of the name and here I am.”

While in school, Rahsaana thrived in dance, music and theatre. She attended Warren Easton Fundamental High School and completed her B.A. degree at the University of New Orleans where she majored in drama and communications with a minor in Music. It was under the leadership and guidance of musical legends, Ellis Marsalis and Harold Battiste, that Rahsaana studied jazz vocal performance. She was also blessed to train vocally with Leah Chase-Kamata and she was elated when appointed as Music Ambassador. This afforded her an opportunity to travel abroad under the program and perform in Europe.

“My musical journey has been a wonderful ride,” reflected Rahsaana. “Growing up in New Orleans, you take music for granted because everybody who I’m around can sing or play. I can truly say I am grateful for all that has been poured into my life.”



As Rahsaana continues to reinvent herself and soar musically she makes sure she gives back and nurtures the next generation. She has taught countless children within the New Orleans Public School System, as well as fostered and developed performance skills in many youth through private lessons. Ison Acts, LLC, is the performance-driven acting and arts company that she founded.

In the meantime, Rahsaana spends countless hours a day as a speech, debate and theatre teacher. For her the reward for long days is the passion she is helping instill in the youth entrusted to her.

“I’ve seen a lot of kids in my 27-plus-year career of teaching and there is always someone who stands out,” Rahsaana continued. “Whether it’s a child with a speech impediment who blossoms when they are praised and told they are worthy

or a child who is socially awkward and after weeks and weeks of rehearsals the transformation is real and tangible. I’ve seen kids feel nervous and afraid at the start of the session and by year’s end they are saying they are ready for Disney.”

Rahsaana has one published book under belt, “Gorgeously Gray Guided Journal: For Black Women Who Are Embracing Gray Hair.” She is currently working on her memoir, to be titled, “The Queen of Jaounce.”

She was the first female vocalist to ever sing on a Second Line album. For her, the experience with the Soul Rebels was unforgettable. She also enjoyed appearing in movies and stage productions. She’s a proud member of IATSE 478 as a “Studio Teacher to the Stars.”

Every success story has a team who believes in them. The dream team behind the world hearing Jaounce on the airwaves are DJ Ron Ward, Donald XL Robertson, Carlos Stephens, The Adoni and Sess 4-5.

Rahsaana is immensely proud of her



two children, The Adoni and Kassidy. Her son is an artist, songwriter and creative producer, and her daughter dances and is a serial entrepreneur.

Rahsaana’s advice is simple: “Whatever it is you want to do, just do it! “Speak it into existence and just try it. You might just like it.”

Listen to Rahsaana’s single, “Mister Magic,” on all platforms. Her “Gorgeously Gray” book, calendar and clothing, as well as Jaounce clothing, can be found on Etsy. Visit Rahsaana on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube.



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