

Janae Yates — Long Biography

Janae Yates is a drummer, composer, bandleader, educator, and music industry professional. Born in Pensacola and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, she received her first keyboard at age six and began studying classical percussion at LaVilla School of the Arts at eleven. After joining the school's jazz band, the documentary *Chops* helped her recognize that the drums could become her voice. She continued developing her musicianship at Douglas Anderson School of the Arts and The New School's Summer Jazz Intensive, where she studied with Jimmy Owens, James Francies, Matt Wilson, and Jeremy Dutton.

Now based in New York City, Janae has taken her craft to new limits. She holds a Master of Music in Jazz Drums from The Juilliard School, where she studied with Kenny Washington and Billy Drummond, and a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance from Florida State University, where she studied with Leon Anderson Jr. Her development has also been shaped by mentors John Lumpkin Jr. and Ulysses Owens Jr.

Janae's career has taken her to stages across the United States and abroad. In 2026, she performed in Lincoln Center's *Summer for the City* and Natalie Brown's musical adaptation of *For Colored Girls* in collaboration with Lincoln Center's *American Songbook* series. She also toured the Midwest and East Coast, appearing at venues such as Dizzy's Club, the Appel Room, Alice Tully Hall, The Django, Chris' Jazz Café, Jazz Showcase, and Blues Alley. Other performance highlights include Teddy Adams' *Future of Jazz Concert*, the Jacksonville and Alexandria jazz festivals, International Jazz Festival Bern, Music for All, the Midwest Clinic, and the Jazz Education Network Conference. She also completed a week-long residency with the Aidan McKeon Quartet at Marians Jazzroom in Bern, Switzerland. Her collaborators have included Ernie Watts, Teddy Adams, Wycliffe Gordon, Sean Jones, Mike Moreno, and more.

As a composer, Janae has written scores for films presented at the Art of the Score Film Festival at Lincoln Center, the Bali International Film Festival, and film schools in New York and London. She also composed original music for a nine-part P.C. Richard & Son advertising campaign distributed across WABC, Hulu, and regional television. In 2023, Janae was selected as a Jazz Composition Fellow at the Ravinia Steans Music Institute, where she studied and performed with artists including Billy Childs, Rufus Reid, and Steve Wilson. The experience broadened her approach as both a drummer and composer while allowing her to develop new work in a collaborative setting.

Her industry experience includes serving as Music Assistant for George Clooney's Tony-nominated Broadway production of *Good Night, and Good Luck*, booking and managing an international jazz residency, and participating in the Power 2 Inspire Summer Internship and Mentorship Program.

Janae has taught young drummers and led masterclasses in composition, performance, and music business through the Jazz Discovery Series. She is an alumna of Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra Jazz, a Jerome L. Greene Fellow, and an endorsing artist with Dragonfly Percussion. Through her work, she aims to bring diverse communities together, create honest music, support other artists, and expand opportunities for Black women across the music community.