

# Dr. Gene Aitken Brief Bio

**Dr. Dr. Gene Aitken**, Grammy Award Winner and Fulbright Scholar, is considered one of the most exciting and energetic jazz educators and clinicians globally. He is recognized as a visionary in both jazz education and computer technology.

His activities as a conductor, performer, composer, adventurer, clinician, adjudicator, and producer of educational events have led him to all corners of the globe. As founder of Jazz Education Abroad (JEA), a United States 501c3 non-profit organization formed in 2012, Dr. Gene led JEA to share his know of jazz music with 26 countries in South America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. In addition, JEA assists individuals with disabilities and offers scholarships to refugees in countries where jazz workshops are held. JEA has received funding from many organizations and embassies throughout the world, as well as from the United States Department of State and the European Union.

Since 2016, Dr. Gene is on the three-member peer-evaluation team for the US Department of State reviewing grant proposals submitted for funding under the United States Fulbright Specialist Program - Education.

Dr. Gene served as the United States Department of State Cultural Envoy to several countries, including Nepal in 2008 and Chile in 2013. Both appointments were made to help improve relationships with the United States and to promote the values of jazz education and performance in American Jazz, the United States of America's only indigenous musical art form.

On April 15, 2011, the United States Department of State, on behalf of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, announced Dr. Gene was the recipient of a Fulbright Specialist Award to assist in developing a Jazz Studies program and curriculum at Fu-Jen University in Taipei, Taiwan.

Dr. Gene was awarded *DownBeat* magazine's Jazz Educator of the Year in June 2007, and inducted into the *DownBeat* magazine's Hall of Fame. In addition, in 1995, he was the 32nd member inducted International Association of Jazz Educator's Hall of Fame along with Ella Fitzgerald and Doc Severinsen, joining luminaries such as Count Basie and Duke Ellington. Dr. Gene is one of only four individuals in the world who have received induction into the Hall of Fame of both organizations.

In June 1997, the National Education Association published a chapter in their book, "Music in the Twenty-first Century" authored by Dr. Gene. The topic of the chapter was the future of music education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The State of Colorado in 1992 awarded Dr. Gene the Colorado Artistic Award of Excellence, the highest honor given to any Colorado artist. It is the only time this honor has been presented to an individual in the field of music.

The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences awarded Dr. Gene and the University of Northern Colorado Vocal Jazz Ensemble the prestigious 1985 Grammy Award. It is the only Grammy Award ever presented to a vocal jazz ensemble in an institution of higher education in the United States. To date, Dr. Gene has produced more than 50 CDs from the University of Northern Colorado, the Taipei Jazz Orchestra, and other professional instrumental/vocal jazz ensembles.

Dr. Gene has authored more than 30 articles for national and international journals on jazz education and computer technology, including vocal jazz arrangements published by Kendor Music.

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