

The Honorary Graduand: Levi Roots

Levi Roots is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters.

The phenomenal rise of Rastafarian musician Levi Roots is one of the most heart-warming business success stories to date. Levi made the big time from producing his Reggae Reggae Sauce, a delightful mix of barbecue and jerk sauce that won an exclusive contract in 2007 and was soon stocked in almost every Supermarkets across Britain.

Prior to that, Levi had been making the sauce from his home kitchen, and selling the sauce at various small outlets in London. Levi's secret recipe was inspired by his grandmother Miriam Small who taught him how to cook from the age of nine in Clarendon, Jamaica. Levi first started producing it in the 1990s and first sold it at the Notting Hill Carnival from his food stall called the 'Restaurant'.

But that all changed 2007 when he was featured on the hit TV show *Dragons' Den*. Two of the five judges were sufficiently impressed with Levi's charming presentation which included a song whilst strumming on his guitar, that they committed £25,000 each for a return share of 20% in his company.

His late entry into the culinary field came because of commitments to music. Levi was enjoying himself touring around the world, performing with icons such as James Brown, Maxi Priest and Lee 'Scratch' Perry. He was nominated for a MOBO award in 1998 as Best Performer. He sang 'Happy Birthday' to Nelson Mandela when the South African icon visited Brixton and also played football with the King of Reggae music Bob Marley.

The rapid popularity of Reggae Reggae Sauce has seen an expansion of the brand, to include a wide range of soft drinks, ready meals, and other products. His first cookery book, *Reggae Reggae Cookbook* was published by HarperCollins in June 2008. *Caribbean Food Made Easy* was published in August 2009 and was accompanied by a BBC2 series of the same name. Many more cookery books then followed.

Levi has also published a business book entitled *You Can Get It If You Really Want* (2011) which charts his success and provides tips to new and young entrepreneurs on how to get ahead in business.

Levi is a regular face on TV, features in newspapers and magazine cookery pieces and he is an incredibly charismatic and motivational keynote speaker.

The philanthropist in Levi sees him giving back to the community and the young people in the UK today by visiting hundreds of schools, universities and prisons as part of his School of Life Tour. Levi is also a proud ambassador of The Prince's Trust and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme which sees Levi visiting Buckingham Palace on regular occasions speaking and awarding medals to young people.

Levi was voted in as Chairman of the St Pauls Carnival in Bristol and helped to make the 2023 celebrations one of the biggest and best in the Carnival's history. He is also heavily involved in the UK's first National Windrush Museum as Chairman of its development Council and lead Ambassador.