



KENNY WERNER

COMPOSER. PIANIST. EDUCATOR

Biography

Kenny Werner is a world-class pianist and composer. His prolific output of compositions, recordings and publications continue to impact audiences around the world.

Kenny was recently awarded the 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship Award for his seminal work, *No Beginning No End*. *No Beginning No End* is a musical journey exploring tragedy and loss, death and transition, and the path from one lifetime to the next. Utilizing over 70 musicians, Kenny's third album for Half Note Records is an expansive composition featuring Joe Lovano, Judy Silvano, Wind Ensemble, Choir and String Quartet.

Born in Brooklyn, NY on November 19, 1951 and then growing up in Oceanside, Long Island, Kenny began playing performing at a young age, first recording and appearances on television at the age of 11. Although he studied classical piano as a child, he enjoyed playing anything he heard on the radio. In High School and his first years of college he attended the Manhattan School of Music as a classical piano major.

His natural instinct for improvisation led Kenny to the Berklee School of Music in 1970. There he sought tutelage of the renowned piano teacher Madame Chaloff. Her gracious wisdom and inspiration became a driving force in Kenny's conception: music conscious of its spiritual intent and essence.

From Boston, Kenny traveled to Brazil with the saxophonist Victor Assis Brasil. There he met Victor's twin brother, Brazilian pianist Joao Assis Brasil. He studied with Joao, who provided another piece of the puzzle for Kenny's conception that would lead to *Effortless Mastery*, his landmark work on how to allow the master musician from within to manifest.

Kenny started his own trio in 1981 with drummer Tom Rainey and bassist Ratzo Harris. The Kenny Werner Trio matured for fourteen years, wowing audiences in America and Europe and recording four albums along the way.

Kenny had written many original compositions featuring trios and other small group configurations, but in the mid 1980's, he became the pianist for the Mel Lewis Orchestra (currently known as the Village Vanguard Orchestra). Challenged by Mel and Bob Brookmeyer to write for the band, he produced his first compositions and arrangements for Jazz Orchestra, consequently leading him to write for the major bands in Europe including the Cologne, Danish, Stockholm Jazz Orchestras, The Umo Jazz Orchestra of Finland and several times as the guest composer and soloist with the Metropole Orchestra of Holland. Since then Werner has had many commissions to write for large ensembles such as jazz orchestras, full orchestras and most recently, wind ensemble, choir and string quartet as featured on his latest CD, *No Beginning, No End*.

Several outstanding musical partnerships began in the 1990's. Playing duo with Toots Thielemans, the legendary harmonica player and for twenty years has played with and arranged for Betty Buckley, a Broadway legend. She has sung his arrangements for small band and orchestras all over the world. They also have a long history of playing duo and have made six CDs together. He has had a nearly forty-year friendship and musical collaboration with Joe Lovano. They have recorded on a number of each other's projects.

In 2000, Kenny began performing with Ari Hoenig on drums and Johannes Weidenmueller on bass. They played nearly a decade together and released three albums, with Kenny acting as composer, arranger, and pianist. Their last album, *Peace - Live at the Blue Note*, released in 2004, began a wonderful relationship with Half Note Records, the recording arm of the Blue Note Jazz Club. He created three CDs before the release of his masterpiece, *No Beginning No End*. In 2007, Kenny Werner released his first album for Blue Note Records. *Lawn Chair Society*, featuring Chris Potter, Dave Douglas, Scott Colley, and Brian Blade, received critical acclaim for its fusion of electro and acoustic elements.

Kenny's groundbreaking work on Improvisation, *Effortless Mastery - Liberating the Master Musician Within*, was published in 1996. Using his life experiences as a microscope into the artist's mind, *Effortless Mastery* is a guide to distill the emotional, spiritual, and psychological aspects of an artists' life. Today it is one of the most widely read books on music and improvisation. The book is a required reading at many universities. Werner, without intention, touched off a revolution of inspiring musicians to do inner work on the mind, body, and soul in attempt to upgrade their musical experience from the mundane to the profound. The book is also popular with artists of other mediums and business professionals. Kenny continues to teach and give clinics in the United States and abroad. He is currently an Artist-in-Residence at New York University.

Kenny Werner's influence is unsurpassed. He has impacted an entire generation of musicians and artists. Despite his creative output, Kenny is still focused on the music. "I am still more and more aware of the true purpose of the music and the people who play it: to heal and unite the planet."

Awards



- 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship Award.
- 1995 Grant awarded by NEA to compose a piano concerto dedicated to Duke Ellington, performed in February 1996 by the Cologne Radio Orchestra.
- 1985 & 87: National Endowment For the Arts performance grants.
- 1993: NEA grant to present a tribute to Mel Lewis.

Books & Articles

- *Effortless Mastery*: Published in 1996 by Jamey Aebersold Jazz, Inc.
- *Channeling Music*: Organica, Spring 1988
- *Play for the Right Reasons*: Organica, Winter 1990
- *Hostile Triads - The Piano Stylist & Jazz Workshop*, April-May 1991

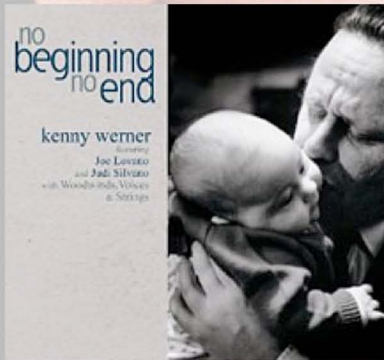
Discography as a Leader

- *No Beginning No End*: with Joe Lovano, Judi Silvano, Winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2010
- *Lawn Chair Society*: with Brian Blade, Scott Colley, Dave Douglas, Chris Potter, Lenny Pickett
- *Naked in the Cosmos*: Kenny Werner & the Brussels Jazz Orchestra (Jazz n' Pulz)
- *Democracy, Live at the Blue Note*: Scott Colley, Brian Blade, David Sanchez (Half Note Records)
- *Form and Fantasy*: Johannes Weidenmueller, Ari Hoenig (Night Bird Music, Europe)
- *Peace, Live at the Blue Note*: Johannes Weidenmueller, Ari Hoenig (Half Note Records)
- *Beauty Secrets*: Billy Hart, Drew Gress, Joe Lovano, Betty Buckley, Mark Feldman (BMG)
- *Unprotected Music*: Kenny Werner trio with Marc Johnson and Joey Baron (Double-Time Records)
- *A Delicate Balance*: Kenny Werner trio with Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette (BMG)
- *Live at Visiones*: Kenny Werner trio with Tom Rainey, Ratzon Harris (Concorde Records)
- *Paintings*: Kenny Werner, Tom Rainey, Ratzon Harris, Billy Drewes, Tim Hagans, Mark Feldman, Eric Friedlander, Cafe Edson, Jamie Haddad, Judith Silvano, Richard Martinez (Pioneer LDC, Japan)
- *Gu-Ru*: Kenny Werner Trio with Ratzon Harris, Tom Rainey (TCB Records)
- *Copenhagen Calypso*: Solo (SteepleChase Records)
- *Meditations*: Solo (SteepleChase Records)
- *Press Enter*: Kenny Werner Trio with Ratzon Harris, Tom Rainey (Sunnyside Records)
- *Live at Maybeck Hall*: Chris Potter and Kenny Werner duo (Concorde Records)
- *Live at Maybeck Hall*: Kenny Werner, solo piano
- *Uncovered Heart*: Kenny Werner Sextet: Joe Lovano, Randy Brecker, Eddie Gomez, John Riley, Edson Cafe Adasilva (Sunnyside Records)
- *Introducing the Trio*: Kenny Werner Trio with Ratzon Harris, Tom Rainey (Sunnyside Records)
- *298 Bridge St.* Kenny Werner Sextet featuring Joe Lovano, Bill Drewes, Bill de Arango, Ratzon Harris, Tom Rainey (AMF Records)
- *Beyond the Forest of Mirkwood*: Kenny Werner (Enja Records)
- *Ken Werner Plays the Music of Bix Beiderbecke, Duke Ellington, James P. Johnson and George Gershwin*: (Finnadar)

Works in Education

- Taught intermediate and advanced (his own) theory at The New School
- Artist-in-residence at Berkeley School Of Music
- Artistic director for the Banff Center Jazz Program
- Currently artist-in-residence at New York University
- Has taught and lectured in most major universities in the U.S., Europe, Japan, South Korea and Israel

No Beginning No End



“Few albums have ever so clearly demonstrated the healing power of music.”

- **All About Jazz**

“He has created a masterpiece of composition based on the deepest and most traumatic event of his life.”

- **Jazz Times**

“This CD is much more than music. It is pure sentiment, feeling, love – and the miracle is, that it transmits so flawlessly to the listener. If your goal, which I believe, was to bridge gaps between people, you have certainly succeeded. Here I sit, across an ocean, fully amazed at the closeness of this music, full of joy, sorrow, and the tranquility of this music. This CD is one deep breath and is crafted by a musical mastermind, whom I bow to. Everything falls into place.” – **Anders Koppel**

Inspired by the tragic loss of his daughter Katheryn in 2006, Kenny’s seminal work, *No Beginning No End*, is a masterpiece of creativity. A monument to his daughter’s life and a quest to reach greater understanding of life; this five-movement composition is supported by Joe Lovano, Judy Silvano, Wind Ensemble, Choir, and String Quartet. Synthesizing Jazz and Classical realms, *No Beginning No End* expresses what words cannot.

Accolades

- “Perfection. 360 degrees of soul and science in one human being. My kind of musician.”
- **Quincy Jones**
- “Kenny Werner is a total musician. He feeds my heart and my brain and pushes me into fresh territories. I am grateful that our agendas can coincide that often. P.S. He also wrote a book on how to “liberate” one’s own creativity!” – **Toots Thielemans**
- “An ebullient stylist ... his solos start evenhandedly and become wooly rides into the darkness.”
- **The Village Voice**
- “A pianist who tempers fearsome technique with a questing spiritualism.”
- **The New York Times**