

Profile

Kenny Werner has been a world-class pianist and composer for over forty years. His prolific output of compositions, recordings and publications continue to impact audiences around the world. In 1996 he wrote his landmark book; *Effortless Mastery, Liberating The Master Musician Within*. Werner has since created videos, lectured world-wide and authored many articles on how musicians, artists or even business people can allow their "master creator" within to lift their performance to it's highest level, showing us how to be spontaneous, fearless, joyful and disciplined in our work and in our life.

Kenny was awarded the 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship Award for his seminal work, *No Beginning No End*; 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, Judi 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 and performing at a young age, first recording and appearing 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 his first years of college he attended the Manhattan School of Music as a classical piano major. His natural instinct for improvisation led him to the Berklee College of Music in 1970. There he sought the tutelage of renowned piano teacher Madame Chaloff. Her gracious wisdom and inspiration became a driving force in Kenny's philosophy. From Boston, Kenny traveled to Brazil with saxophonist Victor Assis Brasil. There he met Victor's twin brother, pianist Joao Assis Brasil. He studied with Joao, who shared with Kenny deep technique and mind perfecting exercises, providing another piece of the puzzle for Kenny's conception that would lead to *Effortless Mastery*, his landmark opus on how to allow the master musician from within to manifest.

Performed and/or Recorded with:

Toots Thielemans, Charles Mingus, Michel Legrand, Gunther Schuller, Marian McPartland, Dizzy Gillespie, Stan Getz, Elvin Jones, John Scofield, Bill Frisell, Nigel Kennedy, Lee Konitz, Pat Metheny, Michael Brecker, Randy Brecker, Joe Henderson, Archie Shepp, Sonny Fortune, Dave Liebman, Bob Brookmeyer, Tom Harrell, Kenny Wheeler, Eddie Henderson, Dave Douglas, Chris Potter, Ambrose Akinmusire, David Sanchez, Joyce Moreno, Dori Cayimi, Hermeto Pascoal, Oscar Castro Neves, Ivan Lins, Mark Feldman, Bobby Hutcherson, Ron Carter, Eddie Gomez, Dave Holland, Charlie Haden, Marc Johnson, Ray Drummond, Rufus Reid, Mel Lewis, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Hart, Ed Blackwell, Paul Motian, Peter Erskine, Steve Gadd, Joey Baron, Idris Mohamad, John Abercrombie, Joe Williams, Bobby McFerrin, Lou Rawls, Joe Lovano, Betty Buckley and many more.

Composition

BBC Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, The Metropole Orchestra (Holland), Umo Jazz Orchestra (Finland), Cologne Radio Jazz Orchestra (Germany), Danish Radio Orchestra, Mel Lewis Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Orquestra Filarmonica de Minas Gerais, Bel Horizonte Symphony, New York All City Jazz Orchestra (Duke Ellington tribute)

Records

Kenny Werner has recorded 28 CDs as a leader up until this printing and over 50 more CDs as a sideman or collaborator.

Experience

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR EFFORTLESS MASTERY INSTITUTE, BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC, BOSTON, MA; – 2014-PRESENT

"The Effortless Mastery Institute helps Berklee students reclaim their inner voice and their connection to music by teaching them how to overcome physical and mental obstacles that keep them from performing at their highest levels. There can be many blocks between the musician and the music. Sometimes the pain is physical, often it's mental, emotional, or even spiritual, such as an unloving attitude towards one's self. EMI helps clear these blocks by using somatic and mindful approaches, including the principles put forth in the book *Effortless Mastery* by Kenny Werner, the institute's artistic director. The institute emphasizes complete focus when practicing; total liberation in performing; full use of body, mind, and soul; and reclaiming your love and inner connection to your music."

Responsibilities: Open classes and master classes on the concepts of Effortless Mastery. Teaching credited classes on this topic and expanding the number of classes each year. Conducted piano master classes and periodic composition master classes. Residencies with The Berklee Global Jazz Institute. Lectured in classes of many other Berklee departments to spread these concepts and practice techniques throughout the college. Worked privately with Berklee teachers.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE/ PROFESSOR JAZZ STUDIES, NYU STEINHARDT, NYC, – 2003-2014

Unofficial head of the piano department, Privately taught piano students and all instruments as an advisor. Lectured in the form of master classes for undergraduate and graduate students. Taught my own theory and composition. and devised practice and performance strategies.

PROFESSOR, NEW SCHOOL; NYC – 1987-1990

Taught piano students and all instruments as an advisor, taught my own theory and composition. Fostered student's commitment to lifelong learning by connecting course materials to broader themes and life issues. Devised practice and performance strategies.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR BANFF CENTER JAZZ PROGRAM; CANADA – 1999-2002

Artistic director setting up the entire program for three weeks every summer. Lectured composition, theory, Effortless Mastery. Private instruction to pianists and all other instruments. Devised practice and performance strategies. Fostered student's commitment to lifelong learning by connecting course materials to broader themes and life issues. Solo and band performances with peers and students.

INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER; WORLDWIDE – 1980-CURRENT

Over the last 30 years Kenny Werner has traveled to teach in world's most well known music schools, colleges and conservatories to talk about piano and Effortless Mastery. Besides that, it has shown that Effortless Mastery doesn't only apply to the musical profession but stretches broader than that. Kenny werner and EM has been of great inspiration to many different professionals in different fields. A good example is his Google Talk (April 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBnYgcmSJG8>)

Education

- Oceanside High School - Oceanside, NY – High School Diploma, 1969
- Manhattan School Of Music, NY - Concert Piano Major
- Berklee College Of Music, Boston - Performance Major

Accomplishments

EDUCATIONAL CREDITS

Taught intermediate and advanced (my own) theory at The New School. Since then I have given clinics at almost all major universities in the United States and abroad.

- Artist-in-residence at Oberlin Conservatory of Music
- Artist-in-residence at MIT
- Artist-in-residence at Berklee College Of Music
- Artistic director for the Banff Center Jazz Program.
- Artist-in-residence at New York University
- Artistic Director of Effortless Mastery Institute at Berklee College Of Music

AWARDS:

- 1985 & 87: National Endowment For the Arts performance grants.
- 1993: National Endowment for the Arts grant to present a concert in tribute to Mel Lewis.
- 1995: National Endowment for the Arts grant to compose a piano concerto dedicated to Duke Ellington, performed in February 1996 by the Cologne Radio Orchestra.
- 2001: Grammy nominated best composition: "Inspiration," from the duet CD "Toots Thielemans/Kenny Werner
- Distinguished Artist Award for Composition from the New Jersey Council of the Arts for a piece entitled "Kandinsky" from the CD, Paintings.
- 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship Award

PUBLISHED WORKS:

- "Effortless Mastery, Liberating The Master Musician Within" 1996 Jamey Aebersold, Inc.
- "Free Play" Aebersold Jazz, Inc.
- "Channeling Music" Article for Organica (publication), Spring 1988
- "Play for the Right Reasons" Article for Organica, Winter 1990
- "Hostile Triads" The Piano Stylist & Jazz Workshop, April-May 1991
- Columnist for Jazz Improv Magazine and Downbeat Magazine

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS:

- Jazz Piano Masterclass Series, Part 1, 2, 3 (My Music Masterclass)
- Effortless Mastery, The 4 Steps (jazzheaven.com)
- Effortless Mastery Rhythm Melody and Harmony (Jazzheaven.com)

Skills

Creative instruction style; Personable and approachable; Organized and detailed; Clear communicator of complex ideas; Culturally-sensitive; Charismatic; Enthusiastic; Extensive knowledge of piano skills, diagnose problems and devise practice and playing strategies for each student.

References (upon request)

Dr. David Schroeder, Director of Jazz Studies Steinhardt Jazz, NYU // Fred Harris, MIT Martin Meuller, The New School // Dave Liebman, Joe Lovano, etc.

Reviews on Effortless Mastery

**** *Herb Alpert :*

I had lost all confidence on the trumpet which I had been playing since I was 8 years old. Then I became aware of the great trumpet teacher, Carmine Caruso, who never played trumpet but understood the art of teaching and treating all students as individuals. He taught the physics of playing the instrument and that the musician is the instrument, and the trumpet is just "a piece of plumbing." Little by little things started to open up for me on the horn, but my confidence was still down. I always felt that I had my own sound but I wanted to stretch out and play more improvisational music. Then I read Kenny Werner's amazing book *Effortless Mastery*. I reached out to find his number to see if I could take a few lessons from him. We made an appointment and I met him at his home and spent the most interesting time as he demonstrated to me how you can express yourself musically, from a spiritual point of view. To demonstrate, he sat at the piano and before he played a note he closed his eyes and in a very quiet way it seemed like he was channeling or meditating. He then started playing the piano with notes that seemed to be coming from a very deep and honest place. Then we did some of his exercises and we played music together. His method helps to free the fear and the critical inner demons that block our ability to find our own unique feel, instead of analyzing what we do in relation to our favorite musicians. I wanted to find my own personal voice as a jazz artist. Kenny and *Effortless Mastery* were the keys for me. His book is tremendous. I love the feeling of inventing music as I go along and Kenny's method helped me to break the BS barrier. *Effortless Mastery* can open that door and get you in touch with your own uniqueness. The book's approach helped me find my own personal expression. *Effortless Mastery* is simple, direct, perfect...and profound.

*** *Quincy Jones*

Kenny Werner has written the definitive book on how musicians can attain freedom and inspiration and be an inspiration to their audiences. Surrendering thoughts of their own smallness, they may become a powerful force. There is a master inside everyone of us, however we understand that concept, and when a musician gets his thoughts out of the way he can tap into that wellspring. Then his music matters. then he or she is relevant. Getting that same mind out of the way, the musician can adopt a practice regimen aimed squarely at virtuosity without apology. These dual concepts of focus and inspiration, preparation and performance, are so well documented in Kenny's book, *Effortless Mastery*. Many years ago I heard him playing with Toots Thielemans and I observed that Kenny embodied many of the qualities he wrote about. There are many musicians that manifest that level of virtuosity and inspiration, but it's rare that they can describe it so perfectly as Kenny does in his book. Step by step, he describes ways of walking out of the shadows of self limitation and into the possibilities of unlimited joy and self-expression in music. There's a reason this book is popular from generation to generation. The concepts are universal and timeless. I myself am a fan of Kenny's music and ideas.

Musician and Press Quotes

"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." -- Toots Thielemans

"Mr. Werner and his trio took apart two pieces, a swinging original of his own called 'Jackson Five' along with 'You and the Night and the Music', and reconfigured them with all sorts of nearly miraculous rhythm and tempo changes....a type of rhythm section fluidity that's rarely heard.... Mr. Werner is a clear virtuoso, and when he solos there's wit everywhere, with clichés dragged out of the closet to poke fun at or rhythmic bumps added for humor." -- Peter Watrous, New York Times

"Whether soloing or interpreting, Werner takes you outside, but not by any route you've followed before. You never know where he's going, but every place he takes you is a delight." -- Keyboard Magazine

"Werner has become one of our most literate and visceral pianists." -- JAZZTIMES

"Since about 1980 Kenny Werner has been one of jazz's unsung heroes" -- Harvey Pekar

"Werner owns more chops and brains than most pianists do....Werner hardly raises his voice to make subtle points, couching his logic in neat vamps, sinewy angular lines, dizzying rhythmic double entendres." -- Down Beat

About his 2015 trio release "The Melody": *"Kenny Werner has a rare combination of qualities, playing from deep in the mainstream, but doing so with the genuinely traditional values of group communication and emotional commitment to the creative act Werner is deeply engaged in the idea of melody as he moves between well-known, if highly divergent works and his own compositions, shifting moods and densities but always maintaining concentration and interest"* – Stuart Broomer, New York City Jazz Record,

About his 2015 release "Poesia" w/ Joyce Moreno: *"One of the album's most striking and surprising moments is a florid, intense Werner solo that articulates a deeper undercurrent of inner conflict that Ms. Moreno is keeping in check and in doing so effects a wonderful expressive balance in its intimate soundscape Kenny Werner's sense of both the texts and the shading of his partner's readings gives the enterprise emotional heft to match the beauty and meaning of its deceptively simple cover drawing depicting budding and blooming flowers in repose."* – David McGee, Deep Roots Magazine

"More than an outlet for Werner's artistic exploration, the performance served another purpose: It gave the public a look at what some of jazz's brightest stars can do in collaboration.... Werner the educator knows only too well the value of leading by being excellent." – Michael Barris, DownBeat, August 2015

"Let us say it out straight: this work, which would be served by a long analysis, represents the esthetic culmination of the great pianist Kenny Werner's career and a marking stone in the history of jazz arrangement and composition; nothing quite as forceful and as profound has appeared since the work left by Gil Evans and George Russell" – Classica (About "No Beginning No End")