

Eric Reed

Eric Reed was born in Philadelphia, birthplace of many legendary jazz players. He started playing piano at the age of two, mostly in his father's church, and started formal classical training when he was seven. When he was eleven, his family moved to Los Angeles and it was there that a percussionist from church turned him on to Ahmad Jamal. "He played Ahmad doing 'But Not For Me'. I immediately soaked it right up. today Ahmad is my favourite pianist. Period." Ahmad says the same about Reed. Meeting up in Washington DC at one of Jamal's gigs, the legendary performer introduced the newcomer to the crowd as "one of my favorite pianists."

At age fourteen, Reed met Wynton Marsalis, an association he worked to maintain and one that would pay off later. While attending Cal State University Northridge (California), he played with both John Clayton and Gerald Wilson and learned to function inside a big band. He was only eighteen years old when he played his first string of gigs with Wynton in Chicago and throughout the midwest. During this time he also worked frequently with Freddie Hubbard and Joe Henderson. Eric says he learned how to play swing with Freddie and Joe. "Just playing behind Joe every night was a learning experience for me. I learned how to really Listen while I played."

At nineteen he recorded his first album, "Soldier's Hymn", for Candid Records with Dwayne Burno on bass and Greg Hutchinson on drums. An offering of originals, standards, and spiritual hymns the album brought him to the attention of MoJAZZ Records where he was quickly signed to the newly formed label. All the while Reed continued as a sideman with the Marsalis Septet and released the ambitious quintet recording, "It's All Right To Swing" in 1993. Hailed by the critics as one of the top releases of the year, the album gained Reed attention as one of the rising jazzmen of the 'new generation'. This year's trio recording, "The Swing and I", is now solidifying that place in music.

Since the disbanding of the Marsalis Septet in 1994 Reed has been leading his own band both in the U.S. and Europe. Although he still occasionally performs with Wynton in a quartet setting, Eric has expanded his repertoire playing alongside masters Benny Carter, Charlie Haden, Roy Hargrove, Javon Jackson, and Wess Anderson.

He definitely deserves to be part of the "RISING STARS" Jazz circuit 1996 in Europe which he will hit in May.