

Erly Thornton

FROM THE BEGINNING... Playing the saxophone has always been emotionally intense for Erly Thornton. Each performance is a connection that this artist and his audience mutually enjoy! Born in Nashville into a family that had artistic talent on both sides, mother being a painter and father being a trumpet player, he had no choice but to experience a double dose of creativity from birth. Starting on the sax in the 5th grade, Erly was asked to play in front of "the boys", his father's musician friends, every weekend to the music of Ray Charles.

His improvisational style started there. Erly began studying the music in his room to learn every lick he could from jazz artists such as Herb Alpert, Grover Washington Jr., David Sanborn, Najee, George Howard, Brecker Brother Band, and others, learning their works by memory. But he also felt the R&B and Funk of groups like Cameo, EWF, Zapp, Stevie Wonder, Prince, and The Time contributing to his multi-faceted style.

During the late 80's Erly started college and began playing professionally for the first time in the Nashville area. In addition to performing Nashville, Erly performed in the surrounding areas of Knoxville, Chattanooga and even spent some time on World Famous Beale Street in Memphis.

Graduating from Tennessee State University in Electrical Engineering, in the 90's Erly moved to Orlando where he began working in this field. However, leaving music behind turned out to be impossible. Very soon Erly was performing in Central Florida with several groups as well as a solo act. The unexpected breakup of one of the most successful of his Jazz groups thus far, B.One, prompted him to pursue a solo career in earnest.

Erly began writing in 2004, composing many of the songs on his first solo release. Drawing from his past he initially decided to create music using the strong bass and drums of the R&B of his youth, creating funky Jazz licks over the top. The effort was initially titled "The Old School Beat" with the songs "Call It A Day", "JJ's Bounce" and "Grooveelation". In collaboration with Veit Renn of Renn Music Productions they created songs such as "Free", "E-Class" and "Turn Off The Lights." With the project finally completed to his satisfaction, Erly performed tracks from "My Life" at his CD Release Party at The Beacon of Thornton Park in Orlando in March of 2008. Below, he shares his insights about each track with you.