

Erroll Garner

Jazz Musicians

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Erroll Garner, the Picasso of the Piano, was born on June 15, 1921 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He began playing the piano at the age of three and when he was nine years old he was playing professionally on Pittsburgh's KDKA Radio with a group named the Candy Kids.

Erroll was a self-taught musician and played by ear. He never learned to read music. Erroll made his solo concert debut at Cleveland's Music Hall in 1950. At the completion of his performance, he was given a standing ovation.

Erroll's popularity was worldwide and his recording career spanned over forty years.

Erroll worked locally in Pittsburgh until 1944 and in 1945 he joined Slam Stewarts trio for two years. In 1947 he played backup to Charlie Parker for his Cool Blues recording.

For most of his life, Erroll played either as a soloist or with his own trio. From 1950 to the late 1970s, Erroll toured the U.S. and Europe playing clubs, hotels, festivals, radio and television. He recorded numerous songs for a variety of labels including Mercury, RCA, ABC-Paramount, Columbia, MGM, Reprise, and Octave.

Some of his more popular albums are Concert By The Sea, Body and Soul, and Seeing Is Believing. His most popular tunes include Misty, Lulu's Back in Town, These Foolish Things, All of Me, The Man I Love, Moonglow, Body and Soul, and Stormy Weather.

Erroll once stated the following about his playing style, I always play what I feel. I always feel like me, but I'm a different me every day. I get ideas from everything. A big color, the sound of water and wind, or a flash of something cool. Playing is like life. Either you feel it or you don't.

Erroll Garner died on January 2, 1977 in Los Angeles, California.

Sources:

Encyclopedia Britannica

Encyclopedia Africana