

Award-winning pianist Ernest Turner has made an indelible mark on the jazz world with his captivating live performances and unique, virtuosic range. A review of his latest album, *My Americana* (2019), praises his “eclectic approach to the piano where his playing can range from cutting-edge current to old school funky and down-home soulful” (*Jazz Music Archives*). The North Carolina native’s musical training began at the age of four with piano lessons from his mother, which sparked a lifelong commitment to the art of jazz. As an experienced instrumentalist, composer, bandleader, and educator, Turner continues to expand his vision as a musical collaborator while, in his words, “searching for the ever-elusive musical truth.”

Receiving most of his formal musical training in New Orleans, Turner received his Bachelor of Music degree in Jazz Studies from Loyola University and a Master of Music degree in Jazz Performance from the University of New Orleans. While in New Orleans, Turner worked closely with New Orleans luminaries such as Adonis Rose, Jason Marsalis, and Brice Winston. During this time, he was also a member of the Delfeayo Marsalis Quintet and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra. These experiences in his early career would shape his musical direction and lasting connection to the city’s rich musical history.

Relocating back to North Carolina in 2010, Turner has been a staple of the Triangle jazz scene over the past decade, maintaining a rigorous performance schedule and an active role as a jazz educator. He has toured and played with a number of acclaimed artists, including Steve Wilson, John Ellis, Frank Foster, Neal Caine, Jeremy Davenport, Branford and Jason Marsalis, the Heath Brothers, Ron Blake, the late Paul Jeffrey, Nneena Felon, Eve Cornelious, Christian Scott, Vincent Gardner, Ron Westray, and others. Recent performances include a guest artist appearance at the Lumina Festival of the Arts and performances in “Monk@100”—a ten-day event presented by Duke University in celebrating the 100-year anniversary of Thelonious Monk’s birthday, with accompanying performances by Joshua Redman, Jason Moran, Chris Potter, Gerald Clayton, Ethan Iverson, and Orrin Evans. Turner has continually maintained nationwide recognition in jazz performance throughout his professional career. Most recently, the Ernest Turner Trio won the 2019 DCJazzPrix competition in Washington D.C. Turner also placed second as a piano soloist in the 2019 Jacksonville Jazz Piano Competition.

Turner's debut studio album, *My Americana* (2019), takes listeners on a journey into his perspective on jazz history and its lasting influence on American culture. Showing a proclivity towards thoughtful innovation within the tradition of black musicality, *My Americana* includes original compositions alongside works by Duke Ellington, Stevie Wonder, and Fats Waller, among other black composers. Traversing the boundaries between jazz and pop music, the album is Turner’s self-professed “ode to black American music.” Music journalist Jim Hynes commented *My Americana* “[b]ristles with high energy...his music is exciting, soul-stirring, and highly recommended” (*Making a Scene!*). Turner’s original composition “Return of Thanos” from the album was recently featured by Spotify’s “State of Jazz” playlist as well as in *Jazziz*

*Magazine*. Turner was also recently featured on NPR's "The State of Things" in conversation with Frank Stasio on *My Americana* in March 2019.

Additional experience as a studio musician includes work with a number of acclaimed artists from both pop and jazz music. Recent collaborations include an album with John Legend (*A Legendary Christmas*, 2018) and a feature credit on Raphael Saadiq's "Glory to the Veins" from the album *Jimmy Lee* (2019). Turner was also featured on two albums (*El Gaucho* and *Lucky 7*) with Jason Marsalis, Neal Caine, and Stephen Riley for Steeplechase Records. Regarding his work on saxophonist Brian Horton's album *Brand New Day*, music critic Sylvia Pfeffenberger commented, "Horton's spacious solos are well matched by pianist Ernest Turner, who contributes deep knowledge of gospel and New Orleans traditions" (*IndyWeek*).

In addition to his performance and studio work, Turner is dedicated to using his expertise to foster jazz education and community outreach. Over the past decade, he has conducted several lectures, workshops, and Masterclasses, including at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, and at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. He also served as a faculty member at East Carolina University in Jazz Piano from 2006-2010 and currently serves as the Director of Music at New Creation United Methodist Church.

Turner's musical development continues after more than two decades as a professional performer, recording artist, and educator. Beyond an understated virtuosity as a pianist, his ongoing commitment to reinvent the jazz tradition from within equips him with an unmatched ability for bringing jazz to an eclectic range of contemporary audiences.