

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

What The Press Says About Thug Life

Richard Elliot



Thug Life recently shot their second video "Cradle From The Grave" with Director Ricky Harris (comedian, actor, cousin of Snoop Doggy Dogg) in an abandoned Los Angeles jail. Thug Life's album, Volume 1 is quickly approaching gold status, after being released only five short weeks ago. Pictured L-R are: unidentified Homeboy, 2Pac (Thug Life), Ricky Harris (Director), Syke (Thug Life), Unidentified Homeboy, Macadoshis (thug Life, Little Macadoshis I and II, The Rated R (thug Life), and The Little Rated R.



Richard Elliot

"...Volume 1 crackles with kinetic energy." -

Entertainment Weekly
"...It's superb." -Los Angeles Times

"Thug Life moves beyond urban machismo and into real storytelling, with tales of crime, poverty, and broken childhoods taken to a very personal level." Details

"Volume 1 is a flat-out groove..."

-NY Newsday

"The way the samples are utilized without drowning the song and without overusing them makes this as good a rap album as there's been in a long time. Tupac illustrates here that he's one of the most artistic rhymer on the block." -BRE

"This group is going to be living large in the rap world..." -Yo

"Thug Life's debut album, Vol-

ume 1, is true hardcore with slammin' hard beats, deep-ass bass lines and more flow than a faucet. Skillz come in copious amounts as 2Pac's musical genius hooks up with four dope prospects to drop the ultimate megabomb!" -Crusader

"The blues guitar licks on the first single, "Pour Out a Little Liquor, are the wind behind Tupac's lyrical sails..." -Vibe

For saxophonist Richard Elliot, "the inspiration for my music doesn't come from introspection. It comes from interaction with other people. Touring and performing, seeing new things, these are important elements of what inspires me to write."

After Dark, Elliot's third album for the Blue Note Lables (and his eighth solo release overall) reflects the rich and varied experience of his 100-performance-a-year international touring schedule as well as a variety of influential collaborators--from old friends like the Tower of Power

horns, to new associates such as vocalist Jeffery Osborne and producer Todd Terry. It also marks the further development of Elliot's tenor saxophone sound, which has grown--in the ten years since the release of his first solo album--into a defining voice along the landscape of contemporary jazz and instrumental music.

"Street Beat" opens the recording, landing on the pavement of New York City. It's a place Elliot has performed in many times, first as a member of the Yellowjackets and Tower of Power, and later leading

his own bands. "I love playing in New York," Elliot says. "It's got a dynamic all its own." That dynamic is mirrored in the urgent rhythms of drummer Dave Reinhardt, bassist Naoki Yanai, keyboardist Ron Reinhardt and guitarist Richard Smith, all members of Elliot's regular touring unit.

"Song for Her" is a collaboration with songwriter and instrumentalist Cliff Downes. "Cliff has worked with me on the last two recordings," Elliot comments, "and he primarily writes vocal tunes. I asked him to write an instrumental tune with the soul of a vocal." Downes' response epitomizes Elliot's preference in ballads. "The ballads I respond to," he says, "aren't the ones that tickle your heart with a feather, they're the ones that reach in and wrench it out of your body."

"The Boys From The Bay" is an original composition, dedicated to the seminal rhythm-and-blues band Tower of Power, of which Elliot is a former member. The famed Tower of Power horns perform on the track, and Elliot is quick to credit their influence. "That was the most influential period of my career," he says, reflecting back on his beginnings.

Hooked on music during his formative years, the Scottish-born Elliot (who grew up in Los Angeles) settled on saxophone at an early age, focusing eventually on tenor sax. After landing an audition for a summer job touring with Natalie Cole and The Pointer Sisters, Elliot returned to the U.S. and spent two years with the trend-setting fusion group Kittyhawk. Elliot began getting calls to work from some of his musical heroes--Smokey Robinson, The Four Tops and The Temptations, among them.

"Miracles"

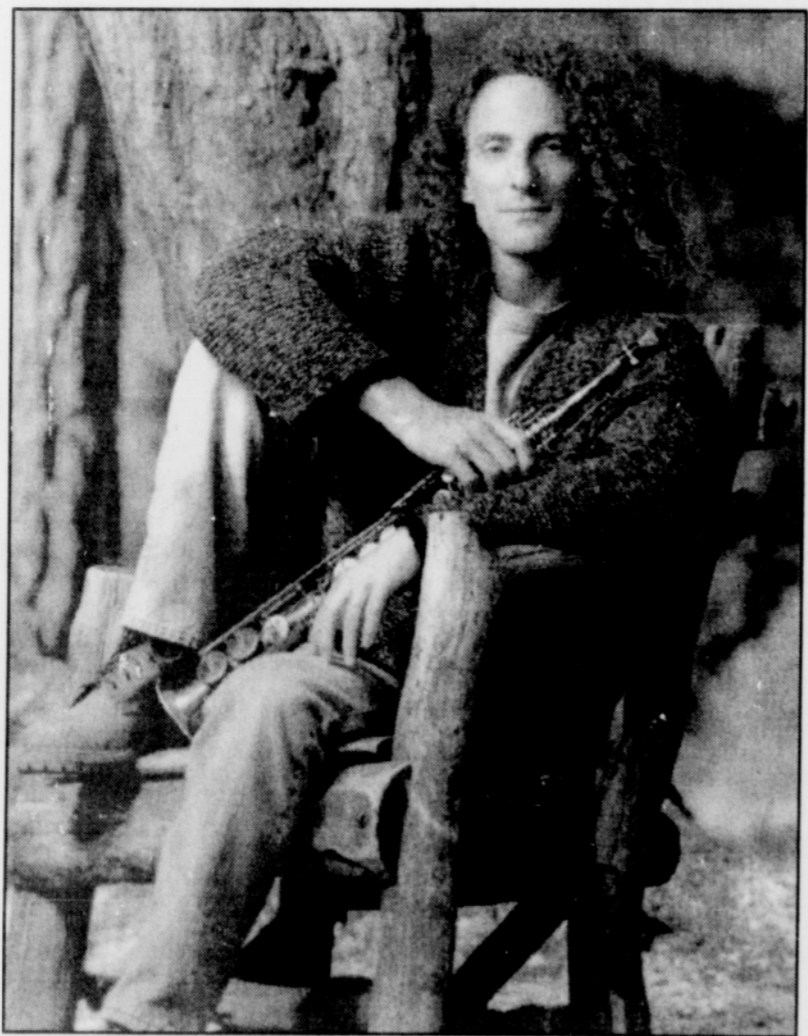
Kenny G's forte is making music people love. One of the few musicians in recent years capable of crossing over from the jazz to pop charts - with instrumentals, mind you - Kenny is a member in that rarefied stratosphere of pop musicians: #1 instrumentalist of all time. (He has accumulated record sales of over 20 million.) With this, his latest release, MIRACLES, Kenny combines his prominent sax sound to something else the whole world loves: Holiday music.

"The Holiday songs that I chose to record here, in my opinion, are some of the most beautiful melodies ever composed," says Kenny. "Their melodies are known throughout the entire world and it was an honor to be able to record them."

For his new Holiday project, Kenny wanted to look to traditional as well as original seasonal songs. Thus, the 11-song MIRACLES includes such Yuletide classics as "Silent Night," "Away in a Manger" and "White Christmas," as well as contemporary Kenny G originals, "Miracles" and "The Chanukah Song."

Kenny's trademark jazz/pop/R&B sound vibrates the seasonal melodies. From the alto sax on "Greensleeves" to his sweet, hypnotic rendition of "White Christmas," to the tenor sax on "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas," Kenny covers the winter sounds. His two original compositions, the rich and emotional "Miracles" and "The Chanukah Song," done in flowing Talmudic rhythm, are both standout tracks.

"I wanted to include a couple of originals and am proud of the way they complement the already known songs," explains Kenny. "The Chanukah Song" is very special to me as I wanted to create something that one would immediately identify with the Jewish holiday. MIRACLES is a dedication to my son, Max, and has an innocence about it



Kenny G.

that is very childlike."

Kenny's most recent album, the 1992 mega-hit Breathless, earned him numerous industry awards, multi-Platinum status and has sold well over 10 million copies worldwide. His duets with Aaron Neville, "Even If My Heart Would Break" and Peabo Bryson, "By The Time This Night Is Over" added to Kenny's career team-ups with a distinguished list of vocalists: Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Smokey Robinson, Natalie Cole, Dionne Warwick, George Benson, Michael Bolton, Celine Dion and Johnny Gill.

After graduating from the University of Washington with an accounting degree, Kenny Gorelick was hired by Jeff Lorber to join his popular Portland-based band, the Jeff

Lorber Fusion. A serendipitous gig, he spent four years with them, shining so that Arista Records (Lorber's label) offered him his own solo deal which led to the release of Kenny G in 1982.

With a subsequent move to New York, Kenny began work on his second album, G Force. Produced by Kashif and Wayne Brathwaite (Billy Ocean), the album led to the making of his third album, Gravity, which mixed vocals (such as the initial Kenny G and Kashif duet single "Love on the Rise") and instrumentals ("Japan"), as Kenny demonstrated his virtuosity on soprano and alto sax, flute and synthesizer, as well as the lyricist, an wind-activated synthesizer.

"Lou Rawls Parade Of Stars"

Celebrating Its 50th Birthday

From jazz jam to gospel fest, from rap to rhythm and blues, the hottest stars in the industry are keeping up the tradition of making the Lou Rawls Parade of Stars the best musical entertainment show on television.

This 15th birthday show will be no exception. Gladys Knight, Boyz II Men, Meshell Ndegeocell, Rachell Farrell, George Duke, Daryl Hall, Ray Charles, Andre Crouch and many more will join Lou Rawls for a celebration benefitting the United Negro College (UNCF).

The party begins January 7, 1995 for seven hours of glittering entertainment broadcast from the famous Apollo Theatre in New York City and CBS studios in Los Angeles. The show will include inspiring messages by and about students at several of our nation's historically black colleges and universities.

In its 50th year, the "Lou Rawls Parade of Stars", America's only national telethon for higher education has already raised more than \$110 million for UNCF's 41 member colleges. Last year the show raised \$11 million. Proceeds generated from the "Parade of Stars" help the College Fund provide the educational opportunities for our youth need as well as helping to upgrade facilities.

With strong support from individuals, corporations and foundations, the College fund has raised nearly \$1 billion since its founding in 1944. As UNCF's most significant fund-raising event, the "Parade of Stars" has played a major role not only in raising much-needed funds for UNCF, but in taking its message of the impact of black higher education to the nation. "The future of America depends on the future of our youth," says host Lou Rawls. "We have to help these young adults become educated, useful human beings."

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