

Erroll Garner

No One Can Hear You Read

A Film by Atticus Brady



FIRST RUN FEATURES

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Synopsis

In a triumphant career that lasted forty years Erroll Garner pushed the playability of the piano to its limits, developed an international reputation, and made an indelible mark on the jazz world. And yet, his story has never been told. Until now.

Atticus Brady's new film uses an astonishing array of archival materials interwoven with interviews with friends, family, and fellow musicians, and features commentary from Woody Allen; Ahmad Jamal; Tonight Show host Steve Allen; Erroll's sister, Ruth Garner Moore; pianist and arranger Dick Hyman; Columbia Records executive George Avakian; Erroll's bass player Ernest McCarty; Erroll's biographer Jim Doran; jazz journalist John Murph; dancer/choreographer Maurice Hines; and Erroll's daughter Kim Garner, who goes on the record about her father for the first time.

The film explores Erroll's childhood in Pittsburgh; his meteoric rise in popularity while playing on 52nd street, New York's famed jazz epicenter; the origins of his most famous album (Concert By The Sea) and his most famous composition (Misty); his singular, virtuosic piano style; and his dynamic personality, both on and off the stage.

Praise for Erroll Garner

“Erroll Garner was a giant among jazz pianists. His ability to spontaneously create great musical works at the piano while performing for an audience was legendary. His music is melodic, rhythmic, rhapsodic, and original. As a musician he was one of a kind.” - Billy Taylor, Jazz Pianist & Composer

“Garner is the single most important piano stylist of the past 35 years. He epitomizes all that makes jazz the great music of our age. To put it simply, Erroll Garner is a great musical genius.” - George Wein, Jazz Impresario

“The complete musician is what he was. He could make you cry and make you laugh and make you think. And that's what an artist is supposed to do.” - Ahmad Jamal, Pianist & Composer

“I don't think there is a jazz pianist, young or old, who hasn't been influenced by Erroll Garner.”

- Jimmy Rowles, Jazz Pianist & Composer

Cast and Crew

Directed, Produced, and Written by Atticus Brady

Featuring: Woody Allen Ahmad Jamal
 Maurice Hines Steve Allen
 Ruth Garner Moore Jim Doran
 Dick Hyman George Avakian
 Ernest McCarty Kim Garner
 John Murph

Narrated By: Nancy Giles

Camera: Vic Losick
 David Franklin
 David Dellaria

Sound: Bill Wander
 Anna Park

DIRECTOR BIO:

Atticus Brady is an editor at CBS News 48 Hours. He was a co-producer/editor of "Grave Injustice," an episode that triggered the Texas justice system to pay out \$1.2 million in compensation to a wrongfully convicted death row inmate and won a News & Documentary Emmy. He was also an editor of "Marijuana Inc. Inside America's Pot Industry," a documentary for CNBC that was nominated for a Business Emmy.

Prior to joining 48 Hours in 2007, Atticus worked in Los Angeles for seven years as an editor on various reality shows including "Survivor" and "Amazing Race." He is a native of Long Island and a graduate of Vassar College and the Columbia University School of Journalism.

Press Coverage

BIOGRAPHY

Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read ★★★1/2

(2012) 53 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features
(avail. from most distributors).

Jazz pianist Erroll Garner (1923-1977) was a legendary musician with a four-decade career that found him playing in his own dazzling style all over the world. Filmmaker Atticus Brady's *Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read* offers an excellent overview of Garner's life and accomplishments, drawing on comments from numerous interviewees who offer fascinating insights. Born in Pittsburgh, Garner was known to climb out of his crib to play piano early in the morning at the age of three. Growing up in an urban hotbed of jazz, Garner joined the Candy Kids—children who played at theaters and on local radios—and became a sensation. Soaking up influences while also under the tutelage of the same school bandleader who coached Billy Strayhorn, Garner learned to mimic his heroes at the piano, moving to New York to perform with Charlie Parker. But while he could play be-bop, Garner was his own man musically (former sidemen in Garner's band talk about how Garner would never play a tune the same way twice). Full of great anecdotes (including how Garner wrote "Misty" in his mind while enduring a frightening flight on an airplane), the documentary features comments from Woody Allen, Ahmad Jamal, Maurice Hines, Steve Allen, Kim Garner (Erroll's daughter), and others. DVD extras include a director's commentary and extended interviews. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

https://www.jazzhistoryonline.com/Erroll_Garner.html



Erroll Garner: "No One Can Hear You Read"

by Thomas Cunniffe

During an appearance on "The Tonight Show", Johnny Carson asked Erroll Garner what made his music so recognizable. Garner didn't really have an answer, so Carson directed the question to his band's pianist, Ross Tomkins. Tomkins simply replied "Happiness". While that answer lacks musicological significance, it was quite appropriate for a musician who once released an album called "The Most Happy Piano". Garner was almost entirely self-taught, did not read or write music, and his style did not fit comfortably within jazz's genres. Many pianists could mimic Garner's style, but few—save for the actor Dudley Moore—played exclusively in the Garner fashion. As a consequence, Garner, who was probably the most popular jazz pianist of the 1950s, is nearly forgotten today. In an attempt to revive the memory of this most original pianist, filmmaker Atticus Brady has crafted an hour-long documentary, "No One Can Hear You Read", which effectively balances discussions of Garner's biography and musical style.

Brady has been working on this film since 1996, and he has gathered an impressive group of interviewees, including fellow pianists Dick Hyman, Ahmad Jamal and Steve Allen, bassist Ernest McCarty, producer George Avakian, biographer Jim Doran, and fans Woody Allen and Maurice Hines. The film clips may be the biggest surprise of the documentary. To keep costs down, most jazz films avoid clips from features and excerpts from high-profile television shows like Carson's, but Brady includes bits of films like "Laura" and "Play Misty For Me" along with the Carson clip cited above, performance clips from the BBC's "Jazz 625", and concerts from Paris and Copenhagen.

Like Garner's kaleidoscopic style, Brady's well-paced film keeps the viewer engaged and never bogs down into technical discussions. Nancy Giles' narration is simple and straight-forward, and most of the interviewees offer concise sound bites. Garner's sister Ruth fills in most of the details on her brother's childhood, and Garner's illegitimate daughter Kim offers a touching memory of hearing her father in concert. To illustrate Garner's piano style, Brady effectively cuts between the vintage clips and recreations by Hyman and Steve Allen. Allen explains Garner's guitar-like approach to his left hand, and Hyman brilliantly dissects the big band/solo style of Garner's right hand, but no one describes Garner's time lag between the two hands, which was a central element of his swing (famously tagged "the Garner strut"). However, it's very easy to hear that rhythmic style in the film clips. Garner's free-form introductions are also discussed, and while there is some dissension about how Garner's sidemen were clued into the identity of the tunes that followed, once again the film clip gives a very clear example of Garner's methods. Overall, Brady's film is quite accurate on the facts. When confronted with two very

different stories on the origin of Garner's hit song, "Misty", Brady wisely includes one version in the feature and saves the other for the DVD bonus material (I would have used the bonus version in the main feature, but it's not my movie).

The rest of the DVD bonus features include extended interviews with Hyman and Steve Allen, and a brief history of the production with Brady. Unfortunately, the full performance clips are not included, and only a brief discography (without record labels or catalogue numbers) is printed on the DVD jacket. Brady's film does a great service to Garner's legacy, and one would hope that a revival of Garner's music will follow in the wake of this delightful portrait.

<http://www.indiewire.com/article/discworld-isabelle-huppert-drinks-too-much-soju-the-happy-jazzman-single-room-ensembles-and-a-neglected-cannes-winner>



Discworld: Isabelle Huppert Drinks Too Much Soju, the Happy Jazzman, Single-Room Ensembles and a Neglected Cannes Winner

BY AARON HILLIS APRIL 9, 2013

Maybe you've never heard of Pittsburgh-born jazz pianist and composer Erroll Garner (1923 - 1977), but the slick-haired, mustachioed, magic-fingered prodigy is hardly an unsung hero, even if his story has previously gone untold. Through the filter of cinema alone, Garner's 1954 jazz standard "Misty" (conceived all in his head during a flight through tumultuous weather; he was a self-taught virtuoso who couldn't read sheet music) was immortalized in Clint Eastwood's 1971 directorial debut "Play Misty for Me" and still turns up decades later ("Silver Linings Playbook," "Ocean's Eleven"). He also wrote the serenading theme to 1945's "Laura," and can be heard on five Woody Allen soundtracks. In fact, the Woodman turns up to pay his respects to the work ("likeable, accessible... melodic, full of rhythm") in Atticus Brady's jubilant, hour-long doc celebration of Garner's life and career, a straightforward but welcome collage of vintage performance footage, talking-head testimonies from fans, friends and family, and impressionistic B-roll from the streets of New York to evoke yesteryear's 52nd Street. The late Steve Allen talks about how Garner used his left hand as if he were playing a guitar, and fellow jazz pianist Dick Hyman agrees that he clustered notes together like a brass band. Most telling is one of his nine appearances on "The Tonight Show," when host and long-time fan Johnny Carson asked Garner what makes his style so distinguishable, but only his house band's pianist Ross Tomkins had the proper reply: "Happiness."

<http://www.homemediamagazine.com/first-run/erroll-garner-no-one-can-hear-you-read-dvd-review>



Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read (DVD Review)

15 Apr, 2013 | By: Mike Clark

I've always counted Fats Domino and Thelonious Monk as the two pianists most fun simply to watch play, but Erroll Garner belongs on the list as well, in that "happy" (and better, infectious happiness) is probably the word most used to describe his relationship with the keyboard. That and the fact that his playing was full of flourishes — and with no hint at all of what was coming from his lead-ins. One interviewee in Atticus Brady's long-gestating documentary notes that he once witnessed a group of audience members standing up during one of Garner's performances just so they could get a look at exactly what his hands were doing.

Self-trained apparently from age 3, according to an interviewed sister, the native of unheralded jazz-mecca Pittsburgh couldn't explain his technique and referred to it as a gift, which it apparently was. Prolific in his concerts, albums and TV appearances on all the big variety and talk shows before his 1977 death, he was often less than a critics' darling, not as influential as some and (this is one of *Read's* main themes) unjustly forgotten today. Even aside from the Garner-composed "Misty," which is about as much of a standard as there is, this last was a surprise to me: Like the best of the Sinatra or Beatles LP's, Garner's 1955 *Concert by the Sea* album is one of those albums that always seems to be playing in your mind, 41 minutes of perfection. Recorded live in Carmel (hence its title), it exists because a member of the predominantly military audience asked if he could hit the tape recorder button as a courtesy to colleagues who were unable to attend. Even by the relatively primitive standards of the day, the recording quality is hardly as elaborate as Garner's playing — but still: it either must have been some tape recorder or the guy really knew where to situate it.

Because so much Garner footage does exist (in which, more often than not, he is perspiring), Brady's portrait is rich in fruits from the archival vaults, and his on-camera admirers here include Woody Allen (briefly), Dick Hyman (exceptionally good here), George Avakian and an engagingly spry Steve Allen, whose 2000 death points up just how long this documentary was in production. Jazz lover Allen, who was a musical collaborator with Garner, calls him his favorite jazz pianist ever and had him on his variety shows countless times. The guest list on one 1960 Allen hour I own included Garner, Tony Bennett, Ginger Rogers, Henny Youngman and Bill Dana doing his funny but long culturally disreputable Jose Jimenez routine; talk about pressure-packed. In a similar way, Brady also gets a lot into a compact running time, even snagging an interview with a daughter that his never-wed subject fathered. Garner, it is noted, was quite a ladies man, which might be one reason his playing was so happy.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-giltz/dvds-good-bill-murray-gre_b_3094709.html

HUFF POST ENTERTAINMENT

DVDs: Good Bill Murray, Great Jackie Chan, So-So Barbra

By Michael Giltz | Freelance writer

04/16/2013

If you're going to talk about a jazz great like pianist Erroll Garner, you can't really go wrong with some appreciative talking heads and lots of lots of archival footage showing Garner doing his stuff. That's what you get here in this 53 minute labor of love by director Atticus Brady. I assume money was an issue but the relatively short running time would have been nicely augmented by more footage of even a complete concert, however raw the footage.

<http://www.artsjournal.com/rifftides/2013/07/dvd-erroll-garner-2.html>

artsJournalblogs

DVD Review: Erroll Garner

July 9, 2013 by Doug Ramsey

Erroll Garner, No One Can Hear You Read (First Run Features)

This compact, well-made documentary leaves the viewer a puzzle: only 36 years after his death, how can memories of a stunningly original, universally admired pianist have grown so dim? Many, perhaps most, young listeners don't know about Garner. The film's abundant performance clips provide reasons that he should be an icon —his spontaneity, his irresistible swing, the witty deceptiveness of his introductions; the joy he took in playing, which was equal to the joy he gave. Ahmad Jamal, Woody Allen, Dick Hyman, George Avakian and Garner's sister Ruth are among those who illuminate his life and career, but it's Garner and his music that light up the screen.

<http://jbspins.blogspot.com/2013/04/erroll-garner-giant-elf.html>



Erroll Garner: The Giant Elf

It is easy to do the jazz dichotomy thing for Erroll Garner. He was nicknamed “The Elf,” but he had a giant sound on the piano. During his lifetime, he was one of the most visible jazz artists on television and in concert halls, yet he has been largely overlooked by recent filmmakers attempting to tell the jazz story (do the initials K.B. ring a bell?). For a documentarian, the latter point is a golden opportunity. Atticus Brady capitalizes on the wealth of archival footage and the admiration of friends and colleagues the pianist-composer left as his legacy in the documentary-profile *Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read* (trailer [here](#)), which releases on DVD today from First Run Features.

In the latter half of the Twentieth Century, if you had only one jazz LP in your collection, it was probably Brubeck’s *Time Out*, Miles Davis’s *Kind of Blue*, or Garner’s *Concert by the Sea* (all released by Columbia, by the way). He was enormously popular, playing venues like Carnegie Hall, paving the way for Wynton Marsalis and the rise of curated jazz programming in the 1980’s.

Read nicely establishes Garner’s remarkable success and his roots in the Pittsburgh jazz scene that also produced Ahmad Jamal, Mary Lou Williams, and Stanley Turrentine. However, with his very title, Brady emphasizes Garner’s status as perhaps the last great ear-trained, non-music reading jazz greats. It is true, but it hardly seems like the fundamental essence of the man. Indeed, Steve Allen argues Garner had a remarkable harmonic sense and was woefully underappreciated as a composer. Of course, just about everyone knows at least one Garner standard: “Misty,” the inspiration for countless romances and Clint Eastwood’s directorial debut, *Play Misty for Me* (which happens to be screening this Friday and Saturday at the IFC Center).

Brady talks to a number of colleagues and experts with both musical credibility and name recognition, including Jamal, Allen, the other Allen (Woody), former Garner sideman Ernest McCarty, and Dick Hyman. More importantly, Brady has confidence in his subject, letting clips of Garner in action play for considerable lengths of time. That is the good stuff, after all.

Granted, Read never reinvents the jazz documentary, but who really wants that anyway? Brisk and entertaining, the hour-long *Erroll Garner: No One Can Hear You Read* is recommended for jazz lovers and general audiences as an introduction to the man and his music. It is now available for home viewing from First Run Features.

<http://www.needcoffee.com/2013/04/29/knight-dragon-angel/>



Headsup: The Knight, The Dragon, The Angel & More...

Erroll Garner is a name you probably don't know--but the man was a fantastic jazz pianist, and for a name as big as he is, it's amazing that this is, apparently, the first docu to cover his life and work. His style is at times classical, at times improvisational (but without sounding improvisational--at least not to me) and always joyous. Here in **No One Can Hear You Read**, out from First Run, you get a complete look: his life, his playing and an appreciation for both from everyone including Woody Allen and his cousin Steve. Steve Allen and also Dick Hyman are on tap to demonstrate what Garner's style was about--so between that and the archival footage we get an appreciation for what the man was up to. And all this from a guy who was self-taught and couldn't even read music. Just damn. Bonus bits include: extended interviews, a run-down of the long-in-production docu, and more. Jazz fans must at least rent.