

JEFF MORRISON

"With a sense of history and evolution of the saxophone, Jeff Morrison has drawn inspiration from jazz saxophone masters such as Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, and Coltrane..."

"Throughout, Morrison never lacks for intensity. He's able to express vivid film noir-like sonics during the title track while introducing introspection to a simple tango. It all adds up to an exciting debut." – Eric Searleman

Jeff was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado and adopted by a military family, his father a Navy officer. At eight months of age, they moved to Phoenix, AZ where he was raised and lived until his late 20's. Jeff was drawn to music as early as he can remember, and tried to take a vinyl LP record with him on his first day of school. Jeff began playing the alto saxophone at the age of 11, and spent 3 years in the Phoenix Boys Choir where he learned the discipline of long rehearsals and a heavy schedule of concerts throughout the city and state, performing classical pieces as well as folk and popular music. It wasn't until after high school did he hear the sound of John Coltrane, which made such an enormous impact that he immediately devoted all of his time to learning the tenor saxophone tradition, hitting every record store in town and getting lessons from as many local professional jazz musicians as he could. Some of the locals that took him under their wings were Jim "Zeke" Zoekler, Dave Cook, Charles Lewis, Darryl Larson, Tony Malaby, and Brian Sjoerdinga who became a close friend and 'big brother'. Jeff attended Phoenix College and Arizona State University where he spent some time in the jazz program, but spent more time at a local hangout called "The Melody Lounge", sitting in every Monday night with Dave Cook's "New Vanguard" Quintet until he was able to take over the tenor spot full time with the band. The repertoire was primarily the classic be-bop compositions of Horace Silver, Cedar Walton, Clifford Brown/Max Roach Quintet, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk. The Melody Lounge became such a unique place that big names dropped in when they were in town to play, such as Branford Marsalis and Joey DeFrancesco.

"The more I think about what happened there, the more I realize that it was the perfect place at the right time in that city, where many students like me got a chance to play the music, to get a real education by good jazz musicians about how the music is played, led by one of the most unique cats you'll ever meet, drummer Dave Cook. The owner, Dave Delorenzo, let the scene grow for years before people came out consistently, without those two guys, I don't think I would have had a chance to play at all, what a beautiful thing... it was the jazz scene there and we are all very fortunate it happened. I miss that place."

Jeff currently resides in Chicago, his home for the past 10 years. He has performed with his own groups and with the city's top musicians at venues such as The Green Mill, Green Dolphin Street, Pops For Champagne, Andy's, and makes the trip up to The Estate in Milwaukee from time to time. His third CD release, a quartet recording featuring pianists Rick Germanson and Steve Einerson, will be coming out soon.