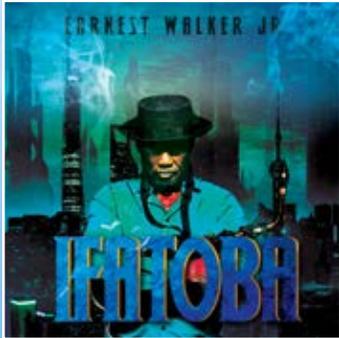


# EARNEST WALKER JR.

## SMOOTH GROOVE ARTIST

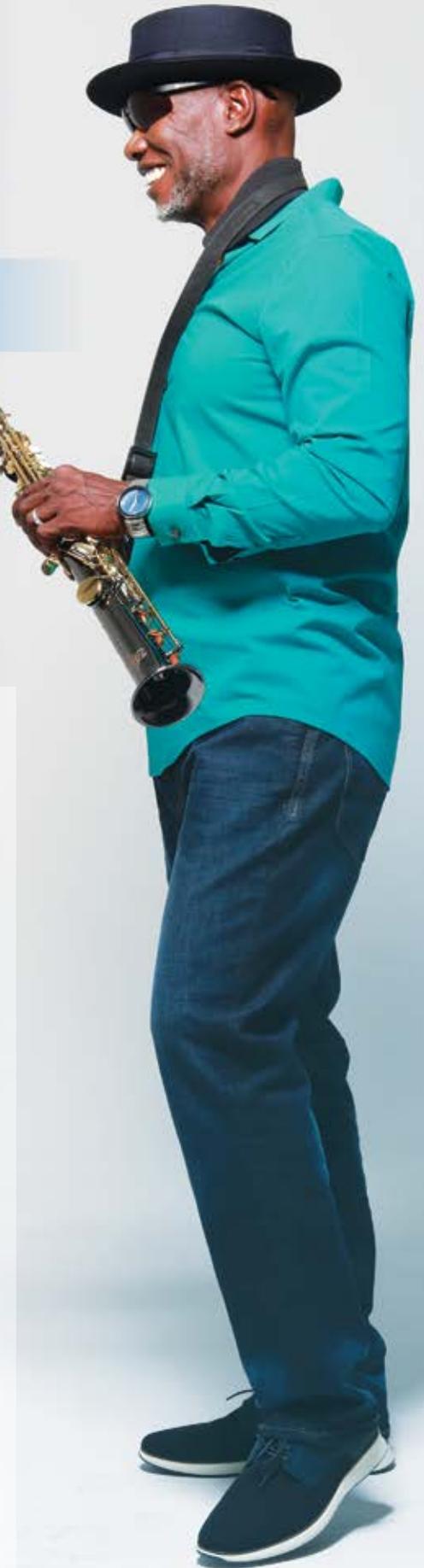


Earnest Walker Jr. spent the first 15 years of his life traveling the country with his family. The experience taught him an appreciation of different cultures and musical styles. At the age of nine, Walker started playing the guitar, but a year later he picked up the saxophone and it has been his passion ever since. When he was only 14 years old, the established musicians in Pensacola, Florida felt his playing was so essential they would sneak Walker into night clubs to showcase his talents.

Walker studied music education at Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, and later attended Florida State University, quickly establishing himself as one of the most sought-after saxophonists on both campuses and all around the state of Florida. After college, Walker joined the Air Force, where he performed with different groups in each town he was stationed. After the military, Walker toured and performed in most of the central to eastern portions of the country, including Miami, Daytona Beach, Charleston SC, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Atlanta, Tampa, Orlando and Denver. In the late 90's, he moved to Philadelphia and became a member of the prestigious smooth jazz band "Blind Date". Returning to Miami in 2003, Earnest Walker Jr is well known in the city of South Beach as a show stopper that is sure to leave the audience breathless.

**Location:** Miami, FL USA

**Influences:** Grover Washington Jr, Cannonball Adderly, Maceo Parker, Earth Wind & Fire, Gerald Albright, Ronnie Laws





## ON STAGE

As solid, compelling and in the pocket as Walker is on disc, he's best known in the jazz world as a powerhouse performer whose stage presence and creative style guarantees that every crowd is in an uproar. A seasoned session player for more than 20 years, Walker's live performances always packs a punch! He has opened for, or joined on stage, such notable performers as Boney James, Jeff Lorber, Nick Colionne, Everette Harp, Julian Vaughn, Oli Silk, Najee, Jill Scott, Mike Phillips, MusiqSoulchild, Lenny Williams, Shirley Murdock, Freddie Jackson, Johnathan Butler, Kelly Price, Christopher Williams and more.

## NOTABLE LIVE PERFORMANCES

- **Gulf Coast Summer Fest/ Jazz Edition** – Pensacola, FL
- **Gulf Coast Summer Fest/Jazz Edition Kick Off Party** – Pensacola, FL
- **NYSW Jazz Lounge** – FT. Lauderdale, FL
- **The Overtown Music and Arts Festival** – Miami, FL
- **The 32nd Annual Sistrunk Festival** - FT. Lauderdale, FL
- **Cafe Iguanas** - Pembroke Pines, FL
- **Talk Of The Town** – Durham, NC
- **Crescendo Jazz & Blues Lounge** - Miami, FL
- **Zanzibar Blue** - Philadelphia, PA
- **Jazz It Up Jazz Festival at Virrick Park** - Coconut Grove, FL
- **Grand Café** – Pembroke Pines, FL
- **6 In The Mix on NBC 6** – Miami, FL
- **First Fridays Miami** – Miami, FL
- **Jazz & Jokes Miami** – Miami, FL
- **Ashford & Simpson's Sugar Bar** – New York, NY

## MUSIC

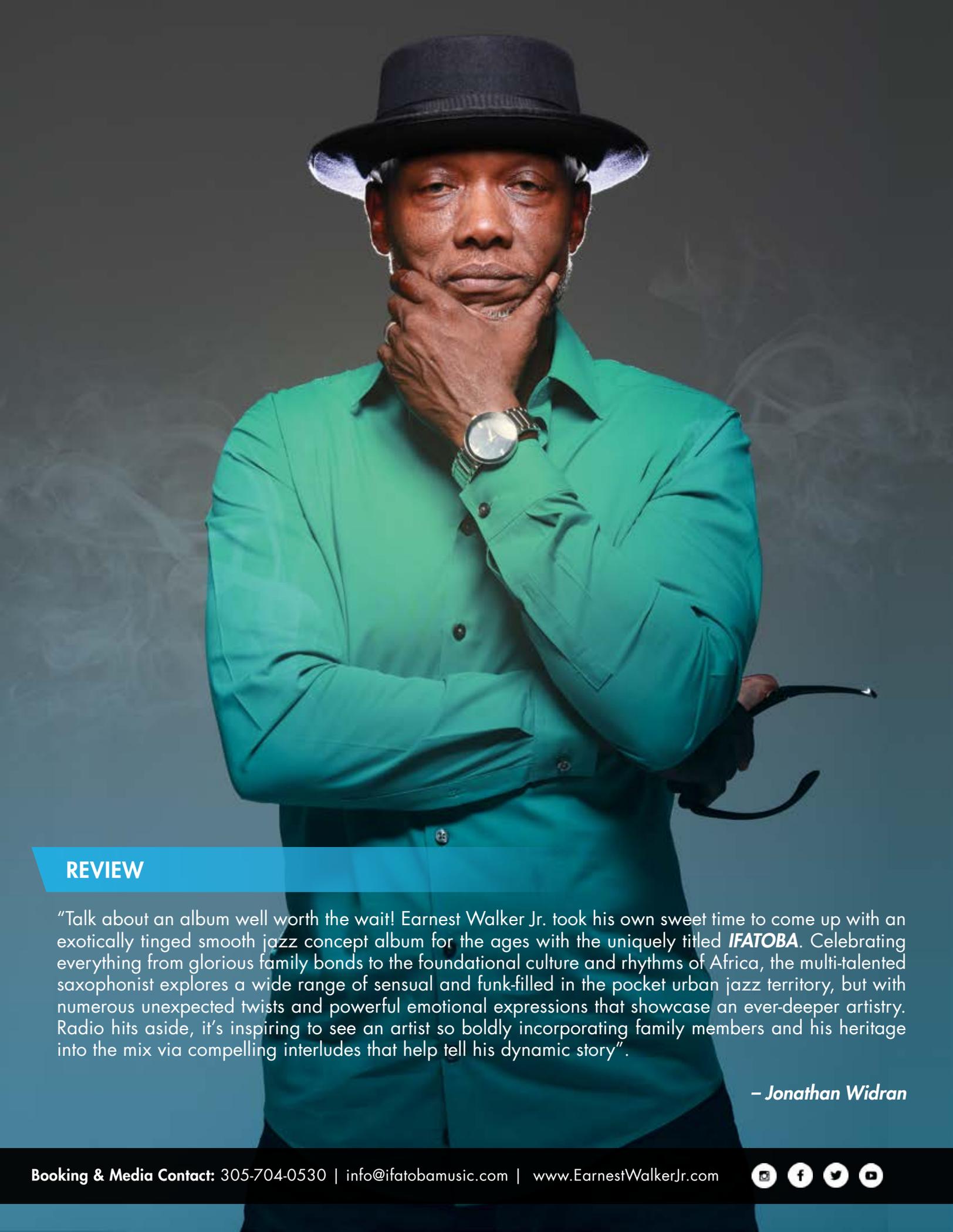
Celebrating 20 years since the release of his acclaimed debut album *Raindrops in the Sun*, versatile independent saxophonist Earnest Walker, Jr. gets back in the grooves (plural) big time with his highly anticipated album whose title, **IFATOBA**, is as exotic, compelling and bold as the eclectic, multi-faceted music itself. In the ancient West African language, it means "the king has arrived." In Walker's worldview, the album is not about pageantry and royalty; however, his take on the king is as one who humbly leads, provides wisdom and at the same time serves. His goal with this collection of ten spirited, emotionally high impact tracks and three interludes is to share his belief that the best of this universe is expressed in dance and music. Capturing the danceable, hypnotic African vibes we hear towards the end of "Chakaya's Eyes," an edgy, freewheeling funk tune dedicated to his wife and on the brief "Kalimba Interlude," he says, "Bring on your drum, we shall all sing and dance together!"

Though Walker is speaking universally, he is first and foremost celebrating his family ties. **IFATOBA** is dedicated to his mother Rebecca, a loving supporter

of his musical endeavors who passed away in 2018. The spoken word interludes feature snippets of conversation with his wife and son "Chakaya and Khalil" (his wife and son) and his daughter "Soraida." Beyond all those incredible conceptual and spiritual elements, Walker offers enormous potential in the pocket contemporary urban jazz radio hits, starting with "Palm Avenue," which evolves from a sultry and shimmering easy flowing affair into a punchier, harder grooving, horn spiced funk tune.

Walker showcases the depth of his heartfelt and urgent emotional playing on a soulful, balmy arrangement of John Legend's hit "Ordinary People" which takes the original piano/vocal arrangement to powerful new heights. Another high-octane gem is "Dimensions," which – true to its title – fuses a simmering, hypnotic soul vibe with wild African flavored percussion fills, showcasing the saxophonist's expansive musical-cultural palette all in one track. On the silkier side, **IFATOBA** wraps with the sultry and smooth sounding "Sweet Dreams," a tune grounded in old school sensibilities and featuring one of Walker's most intense, passionate sax melodies.





## REVIEW

“Talk about an album well worth the wait! Earnest Walker Jr. took his own sweet time to come up with an exotically tinged smooth jazz concept album for the ages with the uniquely titled *IFATOBA*. Celebrating everything from glorious family bonds to the foundational culture and rhythms of Africa, the multi-talented saxophonist explores a wide range of sensual and funk-filled in the pocket urban jazz territory, but with numerous unexpected twists and powerful emotional expressions that showcase an ever-deeper artistry. Radio hits aside, it’s inspiring to see an artist so boldly incorporating family members and his heritage into the mix via compelling interludes that help tell his dynamic story”.

– Jonathan Widran