

# Jo Elless

## Complete Biography

It's hard to sum up saxophonist, clarinetist, flautist, guitarist, songwriter, standup comedian and author Jo Elless into a nice neat and concise biography. She's doing too many things. As a saxophonist her trio plays occasionally in the clubs around Los Angeles, as well on the road in locations and cities like Yosemite National Park, San Francisco, San Diego, Sherman Oaks, Myrtle Beach and Santa Fe Springs. She's also worked with Christian Murphy and POW Shadowz of Raccoon Grass Studios, plays in the 17-piece Union Station Swing Band, and lends her abilities as both woodwind player and vocalist to the Rabble Strangers Band. As a standup comic she's worked almost every Hollywood Club, and is frequently heard on internet radio shows such as New Dissident Radio and has occasionally served as co-host of the Relevant Music and Muse Radio Show.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Elless has been heavily involved, as one would expect based on what she's doing now, in the arts from a young age. In addition to dance and ballet lessons, starting when she was just four, she also studied piano, all the saxophones, flute, clarinet and guitar before going to college. Her first collegiate saxophone studies were with Greg Banaszak at Kent State University, where she focused on classical saxophone technique and literature. Transferring to the Boston Conservatory she studied with Kenneth Radnofsky of the Boston Symphony and New England Conservatory, focusing on atonal contemporary music and new saxophone repertoire.

Transferring to the Berklee College of Music, Elless focused on songwriting, and jazz studies. While there she studied saxophone with George Garzone, Shannon LeClaire, Fred Lipsius and Jackie Beard. It was while at Berklee Elless began to focus on the baritone saxophone,



earning the bari chair as well as being the only female member, for an extended period, in Phil Wilson's prestigious Rainbow Big Band. While at Berklee her songwriting and composition studies led her to work with Jack Perricone, C. Pat Pattison, Henry Gaffney and Scarlet Keys. So taken with her work Elless was accepted into the Emerson College advanced senior fiction writing seminar via an arts grant.

After graduating with degrees in Baritone Saxophone Performance and Songwriting, Elless eventually moved to California where she started playing in Los Angeles area

clubs. Following brief periods in Hawaii and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina she returned to Los Angeles in 2008, this time for good. It was during this period she began to perform stand-up comedy and studied improv at the Westside Eclectic Theatre.

These days Elless is involved in writing sitcom pilots, a musical theater book and music, and a short story collection based on her travels. She appears as a musician regularly at The Cat Club, Universal Bar, Rainbow Room, Crane's, Canter's, Pig & Whistle, and the Liquid Lounge, among other venues. You can catch her doing standup frequently in the Los Feliz/Silverlake area of Los Angeles, twice a month hosting at the Airliner in downtown Los Angeles, and subbing at the Comedy Store in San Diego. Elless is also finishing up her second recording project, entitled *Copley Inbound*, which she is currently supporting with a lot of performances throughout the western part of the United States. While her name may not currently be on the tip of your tongue, it's only a matter of time until this very funny, delightful and extremely humble woman will be. §

Dr. Thomas Erdmann's complete interview with Jo Elless's is in the Sept/Oct 2011 (Vol. 35, No. 6) issue of Saxophone Journal.