

# Keith Lockhart on Jazz



You've worked with everyone from Chris Botti and Diane Reeves to the Dukes of Dixieland. What's it like when classical and jazz musicians get together?

I love working with jazz musicians. I think classical musicians and jazz musicians are essentially scared of each other; they have great respect for what the other ones can do, and a little trepidation about being on the same stage. We watch these people, with no music in front of them, go off and play for 40 minutes on incredibly compelling music, while we are trained to read these tiny little black dots off a page by the thousands. But I think we both have something to learn from each other.

Do many musicians to make the transition from classical to jazz and visa versa?

There are people in Boston Symphony who study improvisation who play non-classical, and there are people in the jazz world with extensive training as classical musicians. One who comes immediately to mind is the jazz violinist Regina Carter, who was trained as a serious violin student and found that her calling was more in jazz, but who could always fall back on her technical training that a classical violinist has.

Is the Boston Pops involved with the local jazz community?

We try to keep a close relation with all the music schools, and it's hard because there's so many of them. We do a lot of work with Boston Conservatory, and frequently have guest artists from New England Conservatory and Boston University.

Berklee is close to us – I'm looking out the window and can see it! It's a school that really teaches crossover. We've featured faculty members frequently. We've featured young ensembles, playing in our jazz café; and we've used arrangers who have come out of there. So basically we're a good outlet for their most outstanding students to get their feet wet in the profession.

Jazz and blues are the basis for so much of the American Songbook, and yet jazz seems more popular in Europe than it does here.

That's been true every since the invention of the art form...European audiences look at jazz as something special perhaps because it wasn't always part of their musical language. I'm glad that Europeans find American jazz and jazz artists compelling because it gives them a great reason to come over here to hear it.

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- by Michael P. Quinlin