

BIOGRAPHY

A distinctive trait of New York/Boston-based jazz pianist Kevin Harris is his desire to constantly grow, evolve, improve, and advance. His interest to interweave traditional and contemporary music styles, visual arts, electronic media, science, and language, is what distinguishes his music and what renders his performances unique experiences, meant to activate the audience's senses and personal curiosity.

"Participation," Harris says, *"is what keeps our souls alive."* Both live and recorded performances reflect Harris's determination to capture his audience through explorative interactions that Terri Lyne Carrington describes as *"an exciting commitment to quality."*

Harris' music education has its foundation in the degrees he has received, but equally importantly in Black Gospel and Afro-Caribbean styles of music. He possesses the unique ability to compose complex, uplifting, tempestuous, and deeply stimulating notes.

One of the captivating elements of his ensembles, from duet to orchestra setting, is the level of comfort and understanding they have with one another. Harris is known for his diving into soulfully expressive conversations and playful exchanges of ideas with his musicians, while always providing the space to improvise in the moment.

Fred Hersch talks of Harris as one who *"plays and writes with flair and real soul"* and DownBeat Magazine writes that *"Harris' compositions deal with themes of strength, love, courage, and self-awareness. It's a heavy task he's set up for himself, and he meets the challenge gracefully."*

Among his most notable collaborations are Dayna Stephens, Ralph Peterson, Ameen Saleem, Greg Hutchinson, Greg Osby, Jerry Bergonzi, George Garzone, Curtis Lundy, Caroline Davis, Bill Pierce, Francisco Mela, Avishai Cohen, Eddie Gomez, Duane Eubanks, Richie Barshay, Ben Street, Jason Palmer, Rudy Royston, Frank Lacey, Eric McPherson, and Terri Lyne Carrington.

Among his recurring International and national performances are venues such as the Blue Note (NYC, Beijing, Milan, and Boston), New York's Smalls and Mezzrow, Copenhagen's JazzHus Montmartre-Denmark, Perugia Jazz Festival-Italy, Lima Jazz Festival-Peru, Boston Wally's Jazz Club-USA, Havana Jazz Festival-Cuba, Panama Jazz Festival - Panama, Catania Jazz-Italy, to name a few.

In 2020 Harris was nominated by the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum to be a Neighborhood Salon Luminary, with the goal to exchange creative ideas and dialogue with some of Boston's most innovative artists, fostering collaborations and artistic networks while shaping Gardner Museum programming. In December of 2021, Harris releases his latest solo piano work entitled *"Doorways"* at Calderwood Hall in the Gardner Museum.

As a composer, one of Harris' innovative projects is *"Roots, Water and Sunlight: A Contemporary Octet Expedition through the Expressions of James Baldwin,"* where he put music to the renowned and significant thoughts shared by James Baldwin. The collaborative project with trumpeter Jason Palmer, *"Upward Mothers"*, aims to bring awareness about mothers who have lost children to senseless acts of violence. And, with his own project *"Griot Series"*, Harris asks his audience to broaden their perception of how the role of African Griot can be reimagined from an American historical perspective. He is currently completing a commissioned work entitled *"Pulse"*, a new work for oboe, violins, cello, acoustic bass, and piano, to be released in 2023.

As a leader, Harris has released five albums and is scheduled to release a new work with drummer/composer Fabio Rojas. Harris thrives on a courageously playful style of communication in music, a style, in his opinion, that requires a very special and sincere habit of listening and an equally patient endeavor to express oneself with enthusiastic curiosity.

Harris is in demand as a clinician, lecturer, and guest artists, consistently collaborating with both public and private organizations, nationally and internationally. He is currently on the faculty at Berklee College of Music where he coaches ensembles, theory classes, piano labs, and private piano instruction. Additionally, he is part of Berklee's Mentoring Program, and he leads the Piano Club.

He serves as a council member for JazzBoston, the New England Conservatory Alumni Council, and Berklee Soundboard. ■