



B I O G R A P H Y

Internationally recognized pianist, composer, educator, and YAMAHA Artist Kevin Harris brings curiosity and discovery to every aspect of his work. Rooted in a lifelong engagement with the musical traditions of the African diaspora, **his creative practice places music in conversation with literature, visual art, language, technology, science, and social history.** Whether performing or composing for improvising musicians, chamber ensembles, or symphony orchestra, Harris creates works that invite audiences into experiences of exploration, reflection, and active participation.

“Participation,” Harris says, “is what keeps our souls alive.”

Shaped by early experiences in Black Gospel alongside the rich traditions of Pan-African musical expression, Harris developed a musical perspective that later expanded through jazz, composition, and diverse global influences. Today, **his work moves fluidly between spontaneous improvisation and carefully crafted compositional design,** creating performances and works distinguished by emotional depth, imagination, and genuine musical dialogue.

NEA Jazz Master Terri Lyne Carrington has praised Harris for his **“exciting commitment to quality,”** while pianist Fred Hersch describes him as an artist who **“plays and writes with flair and real soul.”** *DownBeat* magazine has written that his compositions **“explore themes of strength, love, courage, and self-awareness with remarkable grace.”**

As a composer, Harris has created interdisciplinary works that engage history, philosophy, and cultural identity. His symphonic work **RESONANCE: A Contemporary Symphonic Reflection Through the Courageous Lens of Steve Biko,** premiered at the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival, brought together orchestral performance, improvisation, and spoken narrative to reflect on the enduring ideas of Black Consciousness. Other major projects include **Roots, Water and Sunlight,** inspired by the writings of James Baldwin; **Pulse,** a chamber work blending composition and improvisation; **Doorways,** commissioned by the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; the **Griot Series,** highlighting the key role of music and words; and **Upward Mothers,** a collaborative work with trumpeter Jason Palmer honoring mothers whose lives have been forever transformed by the loss of children to senseless acts of violence.

Harris has released seven albums as a leader, with his latest **Vitruvian Echoes** inspired by Leonardo da Vinci’s interdisciplinary vision, and appears on several colleagues’ works such as **Shorter Songs,** released by SteepleChase Records, celebrating the artistry of Wayne Shorter.

Throughout his career he has collaborated with leading artists across jazz and notated concert music, including Terri Lyne Carrington, Fred Hersch, Dayna Stephens, Jazzmeia Horn, Jason Palmer, Greg Osby, Jerry Bergonzi, George Garzone, Avishai Cohen, Delfeayo Marsalis, Rufus Reid, Brandy Younger, Nina Schumann, Zoran Markovic, José García Gutiérrez, Dwight Parry, Bram van Sambeek, YaoGuang Zhai, and Xandi van Dijk.

An in-demand clinician, lecturer, and guest artist, Harris serves on the faculty of Berklee College of Music, where he teaches private piano, coaches ensembles, participates in Berklee’s Mentoring Program, and founded and curates the Berklee Piano Club. He also serves on the boards of the International Society of Jazz Arrangers & Composers (ISJAC), the New England Conservatory Alumni Council, and Berklee Soundboard.

Across every facet of his career, **Harris remains committed to creating music that encourages meaningful exchange between musicians, disciplines, and audiences,** reflecting his belief that attentive listening, imagination, and openness to discovery, are among the most enduring sources of artistic and human connection.▪