

Comments by JazzBoston to the Arts & Culture Transition Team
December 14, 2013

Boston is one of the world's great jazz cities, and one of the top cities for jazz in the U.S. Our city has a history of renowned musicians and venues stretching back to the 1920's. It continues to be an incubator for jazz legends and is today a world center for jazz education.

Jazz is a vital part of our city's cultural fabric and an important contributor to its arts and entertainment economy. Many people and businesses are involved in jazz - those who create, perform, present, teach, promote, write about, broadcast, and listen to the music. There are probably 60,000 to 80,000 jazz fans in the city. We know of about 35 venues that present jazz in the city (and more than 120 in the Greater Boston area.) The city is a magnet for jazz tourists, and can be much more so.

Until now, however, our city government has not fully recognized the economic and social value of the music. It's exciting to have a mayor - that is, a mayor-elect - who believes the arts can play an important role in creating both One Boston and a Better Boston. We hope the mayor will look to each of the arts to do what it does best and collaborate with the leaders of Boston's arts communities by providing city resources and removing bureaucratic obstacles.

Since we represent the Greater Boston jazz community, we hope you will reach out to our community to help you use jazz to do what it can do best:

- Bridge racial and cultural divides. (There's a reason why jazz is called an international language and UNESCO added International Jazz Day to the world calendar.)
- Help young people develop the values and skills they need to become responsible citizens and succeed in life.
- Increase Boston's appeal to cultural tourists from all over the world.

We at JazzBoston would be pleased to work with the Arts & Culture Transition Team and the new city administration to develop practical ideas for using jazz to make Boston an even more appealing city for residents, tourists and businesses. We are an 8-year old non-profit organization, run entirely by volunteers, Boston's only jazz advocacy organization. We connect, support and promote the jazz scene throughout Boston and the Greater Boston area.

Here are a few ideas and specific projects we would like to submit for consideration:

1. Greatly expand music education, including jazz education, in the public schools. Learning music and ensemble playing communicates important values to students.

2. Make it easier and cheaper for venues to be licensed to present live music and to allow dancing. Rethink why a license is even needed for these activities when a restaurant or bar is already licensed to do business.
3. Make city-owned venues available for events by arts groups at no cost. We recognize the city has a cost for these venues, but much of that cost is fixed cost. The incremental cost for a performance is not that big.
4. Partner with MassJazz, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, and JazzBoston to promote the unique attractions of Boston's jazz scene to out-of-state and international cultural tourists. (JazzBoston has been collaborating with MassJazz since the state's jazz marketing campaign was launched a few years ago.)
5. Work with the jazz community to provide a mechanism for energizing and bonding the broader arts communities through participatory and collaborative events. As an example, we created and organized an event involving hundreds of local jazz musicians and other participants performing together in a public space, resulting in a significantly greater sense of community among those who participated. This concept could be expanded into a multi-modal participatory arts event, maybe in the context of a rally in support of the arts in general.
6. Sponsor a project envisioned by Mel King and executed by JazzBoston in partnership with King to bring interactive jazz programs to multigenerational audiences in safe, healthy, alcohol-free venues in four to six underserved neighborhoods. The program, an adaptation of JazzBoston's very successful "Riffs & Raps: Jazzin' the Generations," would make a continuous circuit of the venues selected by King. (The original program, developed for the Boston Public Library, toured all 25 branches in 2011 -12.)
7. Partner with the jazz community to create a major public event for International Jazz Day '14. This is an opportunity to put Boston on the world map for cultural tourism, and at the same time bring together, onstage and offstage, all the different nationalities in our city. The event could be a single blockbuster free public concert on the evening of April 30 or a daylong series of free events leading up to the evening concert. For the concert, JazzBoston would assemble a lineup of musicians representing the ethnic diversity of the Greater Boston area, including at least one star with international recognition. The location could be City Hall Plaza or Copley Square, or the Boston Common. The event would be publicized worldwide by UNESCO, Jazz Corner, and the

Thelonious Monk Institute. It would also be streamed live worldwide. Boston would join the jazz city pantheon of Paris, New York, and New Orleans.

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We look forward to working with the Transition Team and the new city administration to expand on these ideas and help implement them.

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