

Hall of Fame History

A Jazz Hall for Boston

Before the ink dries on the final plans for the waterfront on the East Boston side of Boston Harbor, there are many of us in East Boston and throughout Greater Boston who believe this process provides a great opportunity to reverse a long disregard for one of our region's greatest resources: it's swing and jazz musicians.

Known throughout the world for its post World War II jazz tradition, Boston has attracted jazz students and players from throughout the world to learn, teach and perform this uniquely American art form at the Berklee College of Music, New England Conservatory, Boston Conservatory and the many night clubs, dance halls and hotel lounges that until recent years dotted the Boston landscape from Roxbury all the way to Revere Beach.

Jazz has evolved into an international enterprise, and many of the region's finer players have had to move to foreign lands to be appreciated as artists, but, the fact remains that their roots are in Boston. A jazz venue and a New England Jazz Hall of Fame on the waterfront "on-going, year-round and family oriented" would not only provide an economic stimulus to our area through an increase in water travel and tourist visits, it also would be a most appropriate way for Boston to pay tribute to New England's musicians, composers and arrangers, dancers, music educators, jazz photographers, broadcasters and club owners. Virtually no other city in the world has as much of an opportunity to celebrate the swing and bebop eras and still present the music live.

This enterprise should feature people who have roots in New England or who have made New England their home and should be presented as a collaborative effort by Boston's waterfront hotels, the musicians union, music schools, the Boston Jazz Society, Boston's and the Commonwealth's tourism bureaus, the arts councils and National Boston Harbor Island Parks commission. Considering the lengthy list of outstanding New England jazz musicians past and present and the resources available for Boston waterfront development, it is hard to imagine why this idea should not be given every consideration now.