

Erica von Kleist - Long Bio

Multi-instrumentalist, teacher and entrepreneur Erica von Kleist began her career as a saxophonist and flautist in the New York jazz scene. A native of Connecticut, Erica moved to the city to study at the renowned Juilliard School and in 2004 earned the first bachelor's degree in jazz in the school's history. After graduation, Erica's next ten years were met with performances, tours and several Grammy-Nominated recordings with various artists including the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Darcy James Argue's Secret Society, Chris Potter, Sean Jones, Seth MacFarlane, Rufus Reid, The Addams Family on Broadway among others. Honored with two ASCAP Young Jazz Composer Awards, several mentions in Downbeat's annual Readers and Critics Polls, and the Martin E. Segal Award from Lincoln Center, Erica extended her scope as a bandleader with the release of three albums; *Project E*, *Erica von Kleist & No Exceptions*, and *Alpine Clarity*. As a pianist Erica has worked as musical director for Broadway stars Michael Kevin Eldred and Eric Michael Krop.

A teacher for over 20 years, Erica has always had a passion for education. Her theory text book *A Cool Approach to Jazz Theory* (currently in revisions for a second edition) has been used as a curriculum for middle and high school jazz programs across the continent. As a clinician, Erica has lectured in music business and performance at The Juilliard School, UNC Greensboro, University of Scranton, University of Montana, Stanford University, and has been an adjudicator for the Essentially Ellington Festival, and a faculty member for Carnegie Hall's NYO Jazz Program. She currently runs a studio of 20 students in Whitefish, Montana and travels regularly for education work.

After moving to beautiful northwest Montana in 2013, Erica launched two sister companies (The Montana Artist Collective and Groovetrail) that have created sustainable platforms of employment for local musicians. Having managed hundreds of paid performances for everything from weddings to nursing homes and even summer jazz camps, Erica and her companies have earned almost a quarter million dollars of revenue for the Flathead music scene over the course of their three years. Running both these for profit and nonprofit endeavors has strengthened Erica's influence as an empowered young musician who understands the ins and outs of the music industry, which is something she believes is crucial for young musicians to grasp. When not at the helm of her projects or traveling for concerts or clinics, Erica plays piano every week at a hotel in Whitefish, and performs in several duos throughout the state. Erica endorses RS Berkeley instruments.