



The Odd Couple

A LOCAL JAZZ TREASURE GIVES
CHAMBER MUSIC THE SPOTLIGHT.

Words by Crystal Hammon • Photos by Wil Foster

David Andrichik is indifferent to jabs about the well-worn interior of The Chatterbox, the Mass Avenue bar he bought in 1982 and transformed into one of Indy's most popular jazz clubs. "The building is 120 years old," he says. "We fix things as they need it, but the focus has always been on the music."

The Chatterbox has its own shabby charm, drawing regulars who love the neighborhood-bar vibe, but most people come for the music, which is jazz and/or blues six days a week. "The only day we diverge from jazz is on Tuesdays," Andrichik says.

The biggest departure happens on the first Tuesday of the month, when an ad hoc band of classically-trained musicians gets down on chamber music. They're members of the Indianapolis chapter of Classical Revolution, an international organization founded in 2006 to share chamber music in unconventional spaces.

GRASSROOTS AND GROOVY

In local parlance, Classical Revolution is known by a slightly hipper name, C-Rev. Their collective passion for bringing classical music into the mainstream makes them a perfect partner for Classical Music Indy, which promotes the group.

Most C-Rev musicians are professionals who play with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra (ISO) or the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. Others

teach music and play gigs professionally. Occasionally, a highly-gifted amateur musician will join them, too.

Anne McCafferty, a retired ISO cellist who serves as C-Rev's organizer, fondly recalls one such violinist, a full-time research physicist who worked in West Lafayette. He has since moved away, but when C-Rev was just starting, he drove to Indianapolis every month to play with them. "He owned every bit of chamber music known to man, and he would bring it by the bagful," she says. "One night Zach [De Pue, former ISO concertmaster] asked him why he drove all that way every month, and he said, 'Are you kidding? This is like shooting hoops with The Pacers.'" >





When C-Rev musicians appear at The Chatterbox, the money they earn is returned to local organizations that develop young musicians and support professional musicians in need. “The Chatterbox gives us a stipend, and we pass a tip jar to help cover the bar bill for the musicians who participate,” McCafferty says. C-Rev uses proceeds from their performances to make annual donations to the ISO’s Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, the New World Youth Orchestras, Inc., and the Distressed Members Fund of the Indianapolis Musicians’ Local 3 of the American Federation of Musicians.

THE C-REV BACKSTORY

The catalyst behind C-Rev was Juliette Javaheri, now on trial as principal violist with the Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra. Javaheri knew about Classical Revolution from living in San Francisco, where the international organization was founded.

In 2011 she was living in Indianapolis, freelancing as a violinist and teacher. Javaheri loved playing chamber music and wanted to start Classical Revolution locally. She approached Andrichik about making The Chatterbox their regular venue.

Hosting C-Rev one night a month is a no-brainer for Andrichik. “The whole concept of C-Rev that we’ve become advocates of is to bring classical and chamber music to people who either can’t afford it or have never experienced it live before, and to spread the word about our city’s incredible musical talent of all styles and types,” Andrichik says. “That is what we [The Chatterbox] do every single day. As contributors, we have these tremendous, classically-trained musicians.”



LEFT: Chris and Lesley Conrad
BELOW: Brian Presnell and
Andrea Haydon

VIRTUOSOS IN JEANS

Andrichik loves the diversity of the crowd that gathers to hear C-Rev on the first Tuesday of the month. “We’ve always been the kind of space where all are welcome,” he says. “Jazz kind of sets that standard, and I think we add the jazz reputation for inclusivity to Classical Revolution.”

C-Rev draws a mix of regular customers, random walk-ins, business tourists, music fans and musicians of all stripes. When they’re in town, Lesley and Chris Conrad, diehard classical music fans and ISO subscribers, never miss C-Rev at The Chatterbox. “We grew up on this music,” Lesley says. “These musicians are like rock stars to us.”

It also reaches its targeted sweet spot with devotees like Andrea Haydon and her friend Brian Presnell. They’re young professionals who appreciate hearing live classical music in a casual environment. “It’s a great way for couples to do something artsy and fun together without spending a lot of money,” Presnell says.



Haydon played violin as a child and loved it, but after she graduated from college and got a job, music took a backseat. A couple of years ago, she started looking for ways to play and to make music a bigger part of her life. Walking down Mass Avenue one evening, she heard chamber music floating out of The Chatterbox.

“I did this double-take, and I saw Zach De Pue sitting in The Chatterbox. I was like, ‘What? No way. This is the concertmaster at the ISO. What is he doing in here?’ He was wearing a baseball jersey and a backward baseball cap,” Haydon says. “I thought it was so cool because it was so not what you would expect, right? It was just so fun to see ▶



four or five classical musicians sitting there, just jamming out and drinking beer. I've been addicted every since."

If the crowd is eclectic, the music may be even more so. Traditional chamber music is performed side-by-side with unusual instruments (*think percussion played on bowls*) and/or original compositions.

On a rainy Tuesday in October, the first set featured a string trio playing renowned classical composers such as Bach. During the second set, the trio was replaced by a bassoon quartet. They nailed an original composition by Mark Ortwein, assistant principal bassoonist with the ISO.

For musicians accustomed to reaching for perfection in concert halls, participating in C-Rev can be a liberating experience. "Playing in this non-judgmental

environment really frees us to experiment and make mistakes, and sometimes that really connects us to the audience," McCafferty says. "The idea is to communicate—not to impress."

"I think for people who come, their expectation of a classical musician is kind of put aside," she says. "They see us in our jeans, playing music that we have a passion for, and it's up-close and personal. I think it makes a difference and adds texture to the life of the city." ■

Join us for C-Rev at The Chatterbox on the first Tuesday of every month at 8 p.m.