

I first met Keith in the late 1970's at the 100 Club in London. I was young and new to jazz and improvised music, and the intensity and relentless power of his playing made an impact like nothing else. From that day I have watched him play live whenever I could. I must have seen him play hundreds of times: as the pianist who along with Louis Moholo and Harry Miller pushed and shaped dozens of bands; the band Ovary Lodge with Frank Perry, Julie Tippetts and Harry Miller; the sensational duo TnT with Stan Tracey at the ICA; the large ensemble Ark at the Roundhouse; and many performances at Bracknell Jazz Festival with Elton Dean's Ninesense, and other ensembles such as the Dedication Orchestra with Julie Tippetts. Later in his career I caught Keith playing with Mujician and solo concerts at Café Oto. The last time I saw and chatted with him, (and teased him for complaining about his hotel room at the Hilton), was at a concert with Matthew Bourne at the Union Chapel in October 2019. His playing has always and continues to inspire my own playing of percussion and encouraged me to explore a world of sounds and textures, from a music box to a piano frame's strings.

Over the years I got to know Keith so that as a student and secretary of the Jazz and Improvised Music Society at Middlesex Poly I arranged for him to play a solo concert at Trent Park. Keith had just returned from playing in Japan. He was tired from the travel but, naturally, gave an unforgettable performance. Later in the 1980's I became seriously ill and was admitted to hospital for open heart surgery. As I began to recover a card arrived from Keith. I don't know how he had heard but this was the kind of thoughtful, generous person he was, and his best wishes helped. Once recovered I invited him and Elton Dean to play at the Makeshift Club in the back room of the Duke of Wellington on Balls Pond Road, and I was fortunate to support them in a combo with Keith.

By the 2000's I was working in Keith's neck of the woods and lecturing at the University of Gloucestershire, and it was here I set up Xposed Club. I invited Keith to perform a number of times. It was fantastic to share his amazing music with a younger generation. We continued to stay in touch and I attended another beautiful concert by himself and Julie in a chapel near to his home. Keith was particularly worried about getting an audience for these local concerts and I still have a lovely phone message he left thanking me for turning up. The thanks are all owed to him, and for a life of full of live and recorded music magic. RIP dear Keith; thank you.

Stuart Wilding