

Tim Garland: There is much more to jazz than Glen Miller

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THE word "jazz" just doesn't cut it, in the opinion of Grammy-winning musician and, yes, "jazzman" Tim Garland. Those four letters fail to encapsulate the myriad of influences that make up his own brand of music.

"It's the best word that we have but so many people come up to me after concerts and say, 'I've never been to a jazz gig before, my friend dragged me along but if this is jazz then I like it'," explains the 42-year-old saxophonist who is playing at the Philharmonic Hall with his band the Lighthouse Trio this week.

"Obviously what they've associated with the word was Glenn Miller or Acker Bilk or some black and white photographs or something which comes from a different age.

"But jazz is about change and it's about the music of the moment so you can't get a more current type of music."

Garland's own take on the genre incorporates music from all around the world, picked up on his travels with pianist Chick Corea, with whom he won the Grammy.

On the current tour as the Lighthouse Trio, with percussionist Asaf Sirkis and pianist Gwilym Simcock, he will be taking in Europe, Australia, the US, Japan, the Far East and the South Pacific.

"Whenever possible you try and pick up something local when you're there. Maybe go to a concert of flamenco music, or Borneo jungle music, whatever it might be," he says. "Jazz is the most welcoming of musical idioms in the world so it just works its way in."

Audiences are getting more used to hearing performances that tap into world music, says Garland.

"We really are living in a global village now and the way everyone is used to hearing, in this iPod age, real hybrid forms," he says.

"For me that's wonderful. It's celebrating the unity of the human race, nothing less than that."



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As well as performing in smaller groups, Garland has worked with full orchestras and hopes to work with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic at some point in the future.

"It's highly-structured music but within that the jazz soloists are encouraged to do their own thing," he explains.

"A few things don't change, like the need to communicate.

"In the Lighthouse Trio, the three of us know each other very well and that's what hooks the audience because they see the communication going on between us.

"With an orchestra, it's also possible to get that same level of communication going between everyone but with that many people the whole thing needs to be much more structured."

The concerts this week will be on a much smaller scale, but there are benefits to that, Garland adds.

"We find quite often with this trio that a certain intimacy helps. I love to get that feeling from the audience when you can actually see them rather than just looking out into the darkness.

"It's really like inviting everyone into your living room and saying – hey, let's have this party.

* TIM GARLAND and the Lighthouse Trio play the Philharmonic Hall's Rodewald Suite on Friday and Saturday.