

## Jazz Gumbo Showcase

Monday, Nov. 15 ~ Live Music 6:30–8:30 ~ Doors Open 6 p.m.

Petra Van Nuis ~ Andy Brown Quartet

Based in Chicago, Petra and Andy have honed their craft during their 10-year collaboration into one of those rare combinations where all parts seem to fit. They have developed an artful sound full of romance and soul that has satisfied audiences ranging from prominent Chicago venues to jazz festivals and clubs throughout the U.S. and abroad.

Petra is known as a “keeper of the flame”

when it comes to the art of jazz singing. Her interpretations are noted for her uniquely identifiable sound. Andy has been playing professionally for 20 years. His love of great tunes, expansive repertoire, and accompanying skills have made him a favorite



with vocalists. Rounding out the quartet are Joe Policastro on bass and Bob Rummage on drums. Both have performed with a long list of jazz luminaries and are known for their rhythmic support as well as their virtuosic soloing.

Bringing one of their most popular programs to us, they will celebrate the moon, which folklore suggests that in its fullness mysteriously conjures powerful

emotions. From the Great American Songbook, selections will range from the seductive (*Moonlight Becomes You*) to those longing for the unattainable (*I Wished on the Moon*), to familiar favorites (*Fly Me to the Moon*, *Blue Moon*).

**Dance — dine — and listen to great jazz at the Kopper Top Guest House**

634 Stocking NW (one door south of Fourth Street) — Open Seating

\$8 members; \$5 students; \$12 non-members, free if they join WMJS at this event! – Admission includes bowl of Gumbo or Chili plus salad and crackers – Refills \$2 — Food Service from 6-7:30 — Cash bar

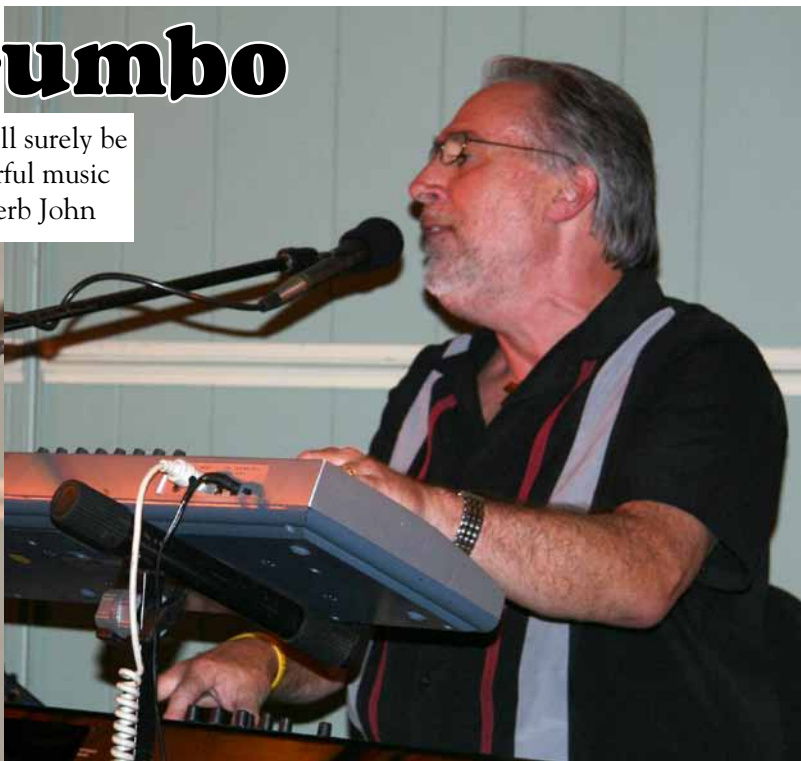


## 24th Annual Holiday Dinner Dance

Monday, December 6 at the University Club from 6:30 p.m. until...  
featuring the Beltline Big Band. Full details and reservation form on page 3.

# September Gumbo

Those attending our first Jazz Gumbo of the season will surely be back for more. The Mark Kahny Trio featured wonderful music with Mark on keys, Evan Hyde on drums and the superb John



Gist on tenor sax. Tony Reynolds was featured on vocals and bongos, emulating the genius of Ray Charles on such numbers as “Georgia” and “America, the Beautiful” and adding great narratives between numbers relating some of Ray’s bio.

But wait! Who was that doing the “Ray” thing on the boisterous, bluesy “The Mess Around” – that was Mark! All were outstanding and the audience response added to the connection, feeding energy and spirit back to the musicians. The entire program reinforced the premise that “jazz” is not definable; that it reaches

beyond easily identified parameters. As Count Basie was quoted: “If it makes you tap your foot, it’s jazz.” Maybe one of the reasons our Society is so successful is that, in our programs, we are prepared to bend these sometimes narrow definitions, including varied styles of music.





# 24th Annual Holiday Dinner Dance

**Monday, Dec. 6 — from 6:30 until...**

at the University Club, Fifth Third Bank Bldg. – 111 Lyon NW – 10th floor

*featuring*

## The Beltline Big Band



**Eat** full plated dinner, no buffet line! Salad, roast chicken dinner, dessert. **Drink** cash bar, free coffee service.

**Be Merry**  
Over a dozen FREE door prizes of jazz DVDs and CDs. Great odds for winning a special holiday gift!

**FREE PARKING:**  
enter Fifth/Third underground lot from Monroe Ave. just north of Lyon St. Tell attendant you are attending WMJS event. Covered entry to rear of bank – take elevator to 10th floor.

The Beltline Big Band is a full-size dance band playing a wide variety of swing, Latin rhythms, foxtrots, ballads, and mainstream jazz. One of its unique characteristics is the rich layering of vocals in multi-part harmonies, and most arrangements are geared for dancers. The band is comprised of some 20 members, and was formed here in

Grand Rapids in early 1999 by Steve and Marilyn Tyree. Pianist/vocalist Jack Kimmell has written dozens of special arrangements and original charts exclusively for this band, whose library contains over 500 songs. The band hosts a public dance nearly monthly at the University Club. See the website at [www.beltlinebigband.com](http://www.beltlinebigband.com).

### TABLES SEAT 8

Reservations must be received  
by **Wed., Dec. 1st**  
Call 458-0125 for info

Mail check to:  
**WMJS**  
304 Paris SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Ph # \_\_\_\_\_

Number in your party \_\_\_\_\_ X \$27.50 per person = \_\_\_\_\_

Please list names in your group if reserving a table in your name. Include yourself.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



# American Singers

by Whitney Balliett (1979)

Whitney Balliett wrote about jazz in the *New Yorker* magazine for nearly 50 years, retiring in 2002. He wrote portraits of jazz artists, letting them tell their own stories, and revealing to his avid readers the world of jazz. In “American Singers”

Ray’s own take on his singing was that he always looks for songs that he can get a feeling out of; that he had to please himself before he could sing a song in public; that it had to strike him in some way in his heart. He loved singing “America the Beautiful” because the lyrics were so vital. He tries to do numbers slightly differently each time he performs them; change a note here or there; make a twist in his voice; bend a note. That way it never became stagnant, and as long as it felt fresh to him, it would sound fresh to his audiences.



The chapter on Tony Bennett describes him as one whose sights stay high, who makes as few concessions as he can, who seeks to convey his affections and convictions for the kind of music he loves. He delights in bringing his audiences the best songs, the best musicians, the best of his singing

and showmanship; yet he is a ceaseless experimenter. He can be a belter reaching rocking fortissimos or drive a ballad as intensely and intimately as Sinatra, or be a lilting, glancing jazz singer. His voice binds all his vocal selves together with a rich, expanding quality that is immediately identifiable. It has a joyous quality that includes the listener; that lets you in on the fun.

he pays homage to the singers of jazz and popular music, and one of the 14 selected for this book is Ray Charles. Balliett’s insights were especially interesting to me, following our recent review of Ray’s biography and autobiography.

“Ray is, in his naked, powerful manner, in a class with Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, and Louis Armstrong, and in a country that has never counted jazz as one of its blessings, he is admired by every class, color, and creed. There is no one explanation for this miracle. Perhaps it is because he almost touches his listeners’ emotions with his voice; perhaps its iron honesty helps offset our haywire lives; or perhaps it is simply because he is a zealously concentrated performer whose singing, presence, and timing form a flawless hypnotic force”.

He extols Charles’ style as being fed by a seemingly bottomless emotional well; that he can shape his voice into shouting blocks of sound, reduce it to a goose-pimpling whisper, sing falsetto or creamy Nat Cole, growl, rasp and even yodel. His performances are always full of surprises; yelling asides to his band or the audience; bending and cracking and splitting notes whenever he pleases.

“I love singing too much to cheat the public”, he states. “If





I lost that spirit, my feeling for music would run right out the window. Good songs last forever, and there's a whole group out in the audience that believes that with me. When it gets perfectly still, it becomes a delicate, poetic thing. A great song does that, and it works two ways: the song inspires the performer, and the performer makes the song work."

Bennett loves working with jazz musicians. "You can let them take charge; give them room to solo. They create great warmth and feeling; their instruments are singing and they make you sing, too. You can't beat the perfection of Basie

excel at writing popular songs. You can go anywhere in the world and hear American songs."

Mabel Mercer spent most of her career singing in supper clubs, in small rooms to small audiences, about seemingly small things — a remembered spring, a broken romance, a new lover, a lost childhood. Few of the sort of special, witty, poetic songs she sang are written anymore. Of all performing artists, it seems that singers grow old most quickly. As Mercer aged she perfected a way of melodiously talking her songs, but her singing in her prime was unique, lying somewhere between the concert hall and jazz. Her phrasing was jazzlike in that she often placed her notes in surprising places and often used jazz timbres. Every song she sang seemed to be fashioned out of the fabric of her own experience, and to be an individual offering to each one of her listeners.

"I guess I know roughly a thousand songs. I learned a long time ago that you have to keep your mind exactly on what you're doing when you sing. If stray thoughts pop into your head, you're apt to forget the words, but they are always there, stored safely away somewhere in the back of my head. I think constantly of the lyrics and what they mean, and try to make my listeners feel the vision of what the words are saying. All of us know about sorrow and tears and laughter; it's my job to sing my listeners' emotions so they can take them home with them."

*Reviewed by Betty Forrest*



and his swinging band."

Bobby Short was a true cabaret pianist-singer. He held forth at the Café Carlyle in New York City for many years; the lounge room of the fancy Madison Avenue hotel of the same name—café-society type of room where the maitre'd expected a handsome tip to find you a seat even if you could spot an empty booth across the room. Short would appear at 9:30, the fashionable hour, and play whatever he felt like playing; sing whatever he felt like singing.

"Singing itself is such pure expression. The human sound is the most touching in the world; it's exemplified by someone like Ray Charles, who has that way of getting inside a song and finding something that the composer himself didn't know was there. A good performer can't be carrying on emotionally when he sings — you simply can't sing well with a lump in your throat. I worship Fats Waller, but feel inadequate with his material, but I do all the Ellington and Strayhorn I can pick up. English songs tend to be sentimental, but French songs are unique — tough, and the thirty-two bar form be damned. But it is the Americans who







The “Groovin’ in Harmony” program produced by pianist/composer/arranger/vocalist Tom Hagen (multi-instrumentalist should be added) was rated as scintillating,



clever, great entertainment. Mary Rademacher was her usual dynamic and charismatic self, and her duets with drummer Cherie Hagen were especially fun. Tom’s sense of humor was on full display on both his selections and renditions. The trumpet-playing of Chris Lawrence was cited by many as “magical,” particularly his solo on “My Funny Valentine,” ably accompanied by Dave DeVos on bass. The full house remained entranced throughout, with many commenting on the great Lamberts-Hendricks-Ross charts performed by the ensemble. Extra added attraction: our V.P. Craig Benjamin’s flute performance on “Watermelon Man.”

# Support Local Jazz Venues!

**Gilly's** at the BOB - Thursdays from 7-10 PM, Mark Kahny and guests: Tony Reynolds, Mary Rademacher, Edye Evans Hyde and others

**Mangiamo** - Lake Drive east of Diamond, call 742-0600; Jazz Wed. & Thurs. 7-10; special appearances by John Proulx Thur. Nov. 11, Dec. 2 and 23; other favorites: Hugh DeWitt, Steve Talaga, Mark Kahny and more

**What Not Inn** - Mary Rademacher and Mark Kahny, Sun., Nov. 17 and Sat., Jan. 8, 6-10 PM

**Blue Water Grill** - Tuesdays 7-10 PM; Call for schedule; see Mark Kahny, Tony Reynolds, Greg Miller, and others

**Steve Talaga**: check web for schedule at [www.stevetalaga.com](http://www.stevetalaga.com)

**What Not Inn** at M89 and Blue Star Highway Saturdays 6-10 PM; call (269) 543-3341

11/6 - Entyce and Michelle Covington

11/13 - Mike Raleigh and Ricky Hicks

11/20 - Entourage

11/16 - Mary Rademacher

12/4 - Entyce

12/11 - Tony Reynolds

12/18 - Mark Kahny Trio

Sun. 12/26 - Entourage



New Year's Eve - Diego

Monday Jams are also 6-10 PM

**One Trick Pony** - Sat., Nov. 13 - Mary Rademacher and the Hagens, 8 til 11 PM

**Jazz Vespers** - Sat., Dec. 18, First United Methodist Church features McNaughton Boulevard from 6 - 7 PM

**Noto's** 7-10 PM - Wed. the Hagens with Rick Reuther

Thurs. - Kathy LaMar and Bob VanStee

Fri. - Tony Reynolds and Wally Michaels

Sat. - John Shea Trio 7:30 PM

**John Shea Trio** at the Republic, 45 South Division, Mondays 8-11 PM; at Brick Road Pizza Company, 1017 Wealthy SE, Wed. 7-10 PM

**Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra**, 1st & 3rd Sundays - 5:30 at Founder's Brewery; **Organissimo** at Founder's Thurs., Dec. 9 from 9 PM-1 AM with Ralph Tope on guitar; Sat., Dec. 18 at Saugatuck Brewing Co., 7-11 PM

**Your Favorite Not Listed?** Google their name and find their Web page. Example - Tony Reynolds: [ynotsing.com](http://ynotsing.com)

## MEMBERSHIP

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Sandra Hillary  
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Check out our Web Page: [www.wmichjazz.org](http://www.wmichjazz.org)

# Jazznotes

Nov.-Dec. 2010

Articles, photos and comments are welcome! Send before the 20th of the month to:

**Editor, Betty Forrest**  
**West Michigan Jazz Society**  
**304 Paris S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

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## West Michigan Jazz Society Board Members

**Board Meeting: Tues., Nov. 30, 7 pm at Great Lakes Steak House**

Dona Raymer - President .....735-4744

Craig Benjamin - Vice President....233-9829

Betty Forrest - Executive Director..458-0125

Mary Rademacher ...364-6609 Barb Keller.....949-7633

Marilyn Tyree .....363-7322 Deb Snow .....243-5226

Pete Proli .....866-0147 Jim Reed .....942-0239

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 Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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Interested in working on a committee? Yes ☐ No ☐ Later ☐

JAZZ NOTES is sent to all members of the West Michigan Jazz Society to inform members of area jazz and to promote jazz in general.

Your contribution to the West Michigan Jazz Society is Tax Deductible.

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Nov-Dec 2010

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