

Jazz Gumbo Showcase

Monday, Jan. 17 — Live Music 6:30–8:30 — no seating before 6 p.m.

Swingin' in the Desert Sinatra in Vegas

featuring **Rick Reuther** with the
All-Star Tom Hagen Septet

Tom on keys, Rob Hartman on bass;
Cherie Hagen on drums; Mike Lutley tenor
sax; James Sawyer on trumpet; Paul Brewer
on trombone and Bill Vitts on percussion

Frank Sinatra, whose 95th birthday would have been celebrated last month, was fully in his element in the Las Vegas of the '60s. It was the perfect setting to bring his music out of the abstract and into the realm of flesh and blood.

His 1966 performance recorded as *Live from the Sands* was backed by the great Count Basie Orchestra with arrangements and conducting by Quincy Jones. This was the first "live" album he had ever released. His many appearances at the Sands crowned him the king of swing. He saluted Vegas with a rousing rendition of *My Kind of Town*, powered by the dynamic Basie brass section, which inspired him to new heights.

Rick's show will include some of Sinatra's most beloved classics, such as *Luck Be a Lady*, *Fly Me to the Moon*, *The Lady is a Tramp*, and *One For My Baby*. The entire show will mostly swing vigorously, with a nod or two to Frank's artistry with a ballad. This will surely be a memorable performance



with great vocals and instrumentals... one you will not want to miss.

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

Please, early arrivers: we cannot open the doors for seating before 6 p.m.... if you don't want to stand outside in the cold, please wait next door at the Kopper Top.

2010 YEAR IN REVIEW

January gave us the triumphant return of John Shea, exactly 6 years from the huge sendoff we gave him at our Jan. 2004 gumbo a few days before his departure for new career opportunities in Phoenix. A full house welcomed him back; he is happy to be home; and his career schedule is already full and rewarding.

February's gumbo was a fantastic program put together by Michelle Covington with the Scott Bell Quintet. John Gist on tenor was a great combo with Scott's exuberant work on the keyboard and vocals. Michelle's renditions of great jazz standards were impeccable, as usual.

The Tom Hagen Quintet pre-



June's Musician of the Year banquet celebrated John Shea as our 2010 recipient. John wanted to perform with his own favorite players – Chris Lawrence on trumpet, Ben Jansson on tenor, Matt Heredia on bass and Greg Sergio on drums – so along with being our guest of honor his fans got to hear him play and sing all evening. Held for the first time at Centennial Country Club, this proved to be a fine venue for such an event.

June thru August: 10th Anniversary of our Jazz at the Zoo series:

This was a very big anniversary season. Our Jazz at the Zoo programs have proven to be the most outstanding contribution our Society has made to the community, and toward fulfilling our goal of perpetuating jazz in West Michigan. From a humble beginning of 50-100 patrons weekly for 10 Monday evenings each summer, we now

have a regular attendance of over 1,000!

The June 14th opening with the ever-popular Mary Rademacher and the Mark Kahny Quartet was followed by the River City Jazz Band, with vocalist Kathy Wagner, making its first appearance for our audiences. The swinging Fred Knapp Trio with tenor saxman Ben Jansson as an "extra added attraction" to Dave Proulx's piano and vocal solos, proved as popular as ever, leading to patrons purchasing dozens of their great CDs.



sented our March gumbo attendees with a tribute to the music of George Shearing. Cameo vocal numbers were performed by Edye Hyde, Mary Rad, Cherie Hagen, Rick Reuther and Barb Keller. Tom's verbal footnotes to the history of Shearing's works really enhanced the program.

The April presentation by the Keaton Akins Jazz Ensemble gave trumpeter Keaton a great selection to choose from in paying tribute to Miles Davis. Backed by Steve Talaga on keys, Fred Knapp on drums and Matt Heredia on bass, their rendition of *Summertime* was especially moving.

Our May gumbo, the last of the season, had Edye Evans Hyde with the Terry Lower Quartet (Mike Hyde on guitar, Evan on drums, Tom Lockwood on bass) giving us a terrific selection of numbers from the Great American Songbook. Nobody has the versatility of Edye in taking you from swing to blues to ballads, and even adding a bit of Rock and Roll!



July 5th's group was very special, with the WMU Tribute Band led by drummer Evan Hyde and featuring Edye on vocals. Evan, tenor saxman Randy Gist, and pianist Keaton Royer are all WMU scholarship recipients. Bassist Jordan Richards was presented with our 2010 award of \$2,000 at this event, making the fourth member of this great student ensemble to be so recognized. This is a real tribute to the great jazz education programs offered at WMU.

Latin jazz band Grupo Aye brought the dancers onto the lawn in front of the band shell at the July 12th concert, followed the next week by the Arno and Randy Marsh Quartet with trumpeter Chris Lawrence. Arno, at age 80, still performs magnificently on tenor sax.

On the 26th Tom Hagen's Quintet repeated its George Shearing tribute performed at our March gumbo, but featured a big surprise for yours truly... giving me credit for originating the Jazz at the Zoo programs, the Board commissioned a beautiful quilt which pictures many of our performers over the past 10 years. I hang it proudly in my two-story front stairwell.

August 2nd's show featured Michelle Covington with the Scott Bell Quartet, joined by cast members from the up-coming Circle Theater production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, which added to the group's usual varied program of great jazz, blues, and pops arrangements. The Claudia Schmidt Quartet made its first zoo appearance the next week, and the season ended on August 16th with our usual closing act, the great Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra. Our largest crowd ever – estimated at 1700 – heard trumpeter James Sawyer sing a funky rendition of *Let the Good Times Roll*, and drummer Tim Froncek got a huge ovation for his dynamic solo on *Sing, Sing, Sing*. Great pictures of all these acts are on our website at www.wmichjazz.org – scroll to the September newsletter.

Our September gumbo was a smash hit! *Remembering Ray Charles* featured the Mark Kahny Trio with Evan Hyde on

drums, John Gist on tenor, Mark on keys and vocals, and Tony Reynolds performing many of the most popular Ray Charles hits, plus adding interesting stories between songs about Charles' 50-year career. October's program featured Mary Rademacher and the Tom Hagen Quartet doing a tribute to jazz vocal groups of the '50s and '60s. Mary's duets with Cherie Hagen were especially fun and our full house cheered every selection. November brought Chicago-based vocalist Petra VanNuis with the Andy Brown Trio (husband Andy outstanding on guitar), whose program of "Moon Songs" well-illustrated Petra's role as a "keeper of the flame" of jazz vocalizing.

December's 24th annual holiday dinner dance was held at a new venue – the beautiful University Club on the 10th floor of 5/3 Bank

Building in downtown Grand Rapids. The Beltline Big Band swung for dancing as well as performing an eclectic variety of vocals. Our patrons enjoyed plated dinner service rather than our usual buffet; a dozen of the BBB's following of swing dancers joined the festivities to put on a regular floorshow, and over a dozen patrons' numbers were drawn for some great jazz door prizes. A great ending to another great year... heading towards our 25th anniversary in the spring!





Sinatra: The Song is You

by Will Friedwald (1995)

This book is a chronicle of Sinatra's 50-year career, tracing the evolution of his vocal style from such early influences as Harry James in the late '30s to his last platinum-selling "Duets" disc released in 1993.

Where other singers work with lyrics and melodies, Sinatra deals with mental images and pure feelings that are strongly communicated to his audience. He makes them feel he is singing directly to them, individually, with his emotional expressiveness. His ability to tell a story got even sharper as his voice grew deeper and the textures surrounding it got richer.

Was he a jazz singer? According to big band writer Billy May, "If your definition of a jazz singer is someone who can approach a song like an instrumentalist, getting the melody across but still giving a feeling of improvisation and freshness, and do it a little bit differently every time, then Frank has it." He loved doing creative and interesting things with the rhythm; playing with the tempo. But his fundamental mission was to tell a story in the most expressive way possible.

His 1969 hit *My Way* was a perfect Sinatra anthem – an exhibition of pure ego – which became a major mantra of his career; his ability to



transform tragedy into triumph; redirect rejection into redemption. It became the centerpiece of his act for many years. Whatever deficiencies it had as a piece of music, he inflated it to an irresistible piece of theater, making the song both a summation of, and a metaphor for, his entire career.

Sinatra pioneered the "concept album" by selecting a sequence of songs that created a flow of lyrics that would tell a story. Each song was handpicked by him and had a reason for being in the album. He would also pick his orchestra according to the type of album: Billy May

for his "up" records like *Come Fly With Me*; Neal Hefti for earthy swing; Nelson Riddle for ballads. He also picked individual soloists, and was color blind in pursuit of the players he wanted, such as Basie trumpeter "Sweets" Edison and Nat Cole bassist Joe Comfort. In essence, he produced his own records almost from the start. He loved picking standard tunes such as *Night*



and Day, and coming up with new ways of phrasing in the best jazz traditions. He never stopped developing and evolving.

Friedwald's subtitle for this book is "a singer's art," and that is really all he writes about. If you can tell a book by its cover, you can surely tell a biography by its photo section. There is not one photo of any of his wives; only of other musicians or arrangers or conductors. He traces his musical moves from singing in New Jersey roadhouses to being hired by Harry James in 1939, making *All Or Nothing At All* with him, which eventually made *The Hit Parade*. Then on to Tommy Dorsey in 1940, and his hit record of *I'll Never Smile Again*. By Sept. 1941 he gave Dorsey a year's notice that he was ready to go out on his own. Billed as an "added attraction" with the Benny Goodman Orchestra at New York's Paramount Theater on



the last day of 1942, by the first day of the new year he was the hottest act in America thanks to a crowd of screaming, swooning teenage girls!

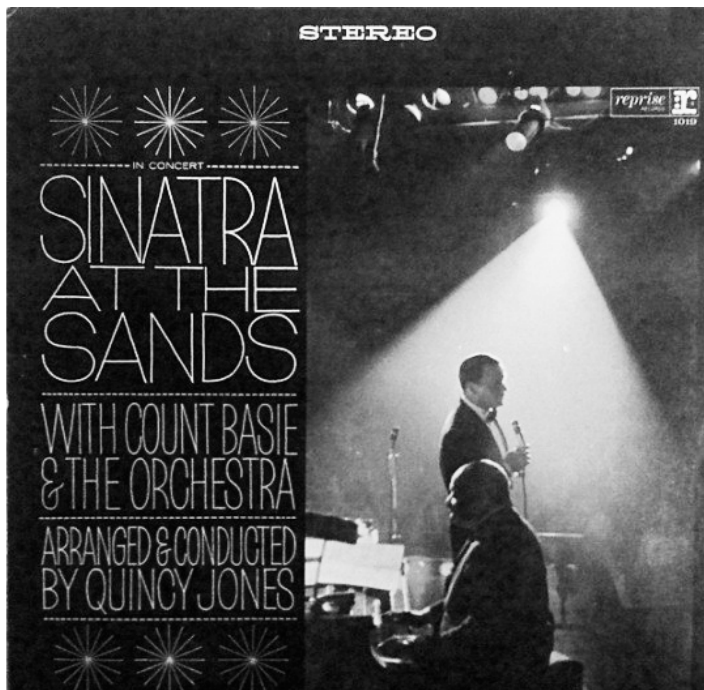
From this point on, the book is all about every arrangement of every recording. Almost nothing about his family, his love affairs, his multiple marriages. Lots and lots about the various musical directors, conductors, arrangers that he used for his varied projects.

Axel Stordahl left Dorsey with Sinatra and played a key role in his success over the next decade. His famous slump came in 1951 when Ava Gardner left him; his talent agency dropped him; his movie studio, radio program, and record-

a *Very Good Year*.

A brief retirement (1971-73) led to a change in his career from making movies, recordings and special appearances in upscale saloons to Vegas entertainer and stadium singer. By 1979 *New York, New York* was on a par with *My Way* as a “must” for every concert. In the early ’80s he got back into more jazz oriented charts, often with just an up-tempo quartet, and his late ’80s hit of *Mack the Knife*, arranged by Quincy Jones, became an instant Sinatra classic.

By ’91 the voice was deteriorating... he was 76 years old and had made no new albums since the introduction of CDs – just lots of reissues. In 1993 he did *Duets* – a trend launched



ing company all failed to renew his contracts. His Academy Award performance in the 1953 movie “From Here to Eternity” marked the beginning of his comeback, and the year he hooked up with Nelson Riddle in a working relationship that extended over the next 25 year and produced over 21 albums, mostly masterpieces (*I’ve Got You Under My Skin* from the *Songs for Swingin’ Lovers* album). The crooner of the ’40s became the swinger of the ’50s and ’60s.

However, the Riddle-Sinatra business relationship was no more exclusive than his romantic relationships. For different flavors he used different arrangers: Billy May for the driving force on such albums as *Come Fly With Me*; Nelson Riddle for his depth; Gordon Jenkins for the simple beauty of such concert treatments as *Without A Song* and his 1965 album *The September of My Years* which celebrated his 50th birthday with the dramatic *It Was*



by Natalie Cole’s sensational *Unforgettable*, done electronically with her long-deceased father. On *Duets*, Sinatra never worked in the studio with any of the other artists – they were all overdubbed numbers with such artists as Tony Bennett, Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole and Liza Minelli. The results were not great, in our author’s estimation, but it got great promotion and sold well. In making money, not art, the duet album violated the essential tenet of Sinatra’s career and was

a multimedia success that detracted from his legacy. Thus the author ends on a blue note. It’s 1994 and Sinatra is still doing concerts where audiences are still being entertained, thrilled and moved by him. It is as a musical artist that he will be remembered. No other performer ever gets listeners to feel as much as he does... and Friedwald believed that when he lost that, he (Sinatra) would know it was time to pack it in. And a short time after the book was published, he did.

Reviewed by Betty Forrest

Max Colley III CD Release Concert of My Father's World

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Support Local Jazz Venues!

Mangiamo's - Lake Drive east of Diamond 7-10 PM
 Wed. Jan. 5 - Craig Avery
 Thur. Jan. 6 - Greg Miller (and Wed. Jan. 12, Fri. Jan. 21)
 Fri. Jan. 7 - Paul Lesinski
 Sat. Jan. 8 - Steve Talaga (and Wed. Jan. 19)
 Thur. Jan. 13 - Wally Michaels (and Thur. Jan. 20)
 Fri. Jan. 14 - Mark Kahny (and Sat. Jan. 29)
 Sat. Jan. 15 - Robin Connell
 Sat. Jan. 22 - Bob VanStee
 Wed Jan. 26 - Greg Miller
 Thur. Jan. 27 - John Proulx

What Not Inn: Live music 6-10 PM
 Sat. Jan. 8 - Mary Rademacher
 Sat. Jan. 17 - Mark Kahny
 Sat. Jan. 22 - Entourage
 Sat. Jan. 29 - Christy G and the What Not Band
 Sat. Feb. 5 - Mary Rademacher
 Jazz Jams Mondays, 6-10 PM

Mark Kahny: find his schedule at markkahny.blogspot.com

John Shea:

Mon. - Republic Bar, 45 S. Division 8-11 PM
 Tues. - Big O's Cafe, 80 Ottawa NW 7-10 PM
 Wed. - Brick Road Pizza, 1017 Wealthy SE 7-10 PM
 Thur. - Fricano's, 1050 W. Western, Muskegon 7-10 PM



St. Cecilia Jazz Concerts:

Thurs. Jan. 27 - Dave Holland Quartet 7:30 PM, call 459-2224 for ticket information

Gilly's - at the B.O.B

Thursdays: Mark Kahny and Tony Reynolds 7-10 PM

Noto's - Wednesdays 7-10 PM,
 Rick Reuther & the Hagens

One Trick Pony:

Mary Rademacher - Sat. Jan. 29, 8-11 PM

MEMBERSHIP

New

Darryl Hofstra
 Dan Rademacher
 Nelda Faber
 James Saxe
 Paul Boughman & Sally Kammerand
 Ed & Carolyn Dee
 Robert & Alice Franzen
 Jim & Nancy Walters
 Max Colley III

Renewals

Peg Stoutenburg
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 C. Raber & J. Dorman (donors)
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 Joyce Racette
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 Mark Siegrist
 Mary Meade Fuger
 Kelly & Sondra Loucks Wilson
 Jerry & Judy Subar (patrons)

WMJS Board Welcomes Two New Members

James Sawyer and Darryl Hofstra were appointed to Board vacancies at our November meeting. James is Co-Director of bands for East Kentwood High School and Pinewood Middle School. He has taught for 18 years in the Grand Rapids Public School system. He has performed as lead trumpet for many well-known artists, such as The Temptations, and presently plays with the Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra. James will be taking the lead on formulating a new Jazz in the Schools program for the Society.

Darryl has worked in the Forest Hills Public School system for nearly 30 years, where his present position is that of Supervisor for Transportation. He has a passion for music, plays the piano, and sings. His special love is jazz, and his special talent is problem solving — a talent needed by every organization.

We extend a hearty welcome to James and Darryl, who are both in their forties, which make them our youngest members in an organization that is seeking more ways to reach out to youth.

Check out our Web Page: www.wmichjazz.org

Jazznotes

January 2011

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

Information from another publication used in JAZZ NOTES approved by the publisher and credited.

West Michigan Jazz Society Board Members

Board Meeting: Tues., Jan. 25, 7 pm at Great Lakes Steak House

Dona Raymer - President735-4744

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

Betty Forrest - Executive Director..458-0125

Mary Rademacher ...364-6609

Deb Snow243-5226

Marilyn Tyree363-7322

Jim Reed942-0239

Pete Proli866-0147

Darryl Hofstra648-5489

Jack Morrison949-6339

James Sawyer.....460-4433

Barb Keller.....949-7633

Address and e-mail changes: Please notify Betty Forrest at 458-0125.

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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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