

## Jazz Gumbo Showcase

Monday, Jan. 16 — Live Music 6:30–8:30 — No seating before 6 pm

**The Robin Connell – Paul Brewer Jazz Quartet**

with **Charlie Hoats, bass, and Randy Marsh, drums**

**A tribute to our jazz heroes & teachers**

What do Carmen McRae, Blossom Dearie, Eddie Russ, J.J. Johnson, Joe Williams, Shirley Horn, Abbey Lincoln, and Urbie Green have in common? They are some of the jazz heroes of husband and wife team, Drs. Paul Brewer and Robin Connell, who bring their quartet to the Kopper Top for this month's Jazz Gumbo.

Charlie Hoats will join them on bass and holding down the percussion section will be Randy Marsh, whose creativity is ever so appreciated. The quartet's performance this month will be a tribute to the jazz heroes and teachers who inspire and inform every one of their performances.

Early on in Oklahoma, it was middle school band director, J.B. Rounds (tenor sax with the Tommy Dorsey band) who inspired the young Paul when he was just getting started on trombone. Opportunities to perform with and learn from trombone greats J.J. Johnson and Urbie Green served as a continuing source of inspiration. J.J., Urbie, Carl Fontana, Frank Rosolino, Kai Winding and Tommy Dorsey are Paul's major heroes (he says he should write a check to one or the other every time he plays a gig).

For Robin, early inspiration came from studying with jazz pianist/composer, Eddie Russ, when she was a student at GVSU. A recent gig she played at HopCat with Randy turned into a tribute to Eddie and

she still plays tunes Eddie wrote that some in west Michigan will remember. While living in New York, Norman Simmons (music director for Joe Williams, Anita O'day, Carmen McRae) took her under his musical wing coaching her in the art of accompaniment. Shirley Horn and Blossom Dearie are among the singer/pianists Robin heard regularly in NYC and consider as major influences. Another hero is the late-great vocalist, Abbey Lincoln, who mesmerized Robin with 'telling the story' through song.

Randy Marsh fondly recalls his mentor, Rupert Kettle, percussion teacher extraordinaire. Rupert taught at Aquinas and was integral to the beginnings of many

area percussionists, including Randy.

For more than two decades now, passing the music on to the young is a major focus for Robin and Paul. Paul is the Director of instrumental

music at Aquinas College and Robin is co-director of Shades of Blue at Grand Rapids Community College. They met at Interlochen Arts Camp 21 years ago when both were hired on as jazz studies faculty. Their most famous student, Norah Jones (Interlochen), Paul's son, Matt, and many other talented young students continue to fill their lives with hope for the future.



Photo by Dana Freeman



**Dance — dine — and listen to great jazz at the Kopper Top Guest House**  
**634 Stocking NW (one door south of Fourth Street) — Open Seating**

Note price change: due to rising costs, new Gumbo prices will be \$10 for members and \$15 for guests. Student prices remain the same at \$5. New members can get in free when they join the night of the Gumbo (only for new members, not renewals). Gumbo refills will be \$4.

# Betty's Life Celebration

It was a superb team effort. Melvene Tardy, Betty's daughter, Dona Raymer, Jazz Society's Executive Manager, and the Kopper Top's staff, carried out a last wish of Betty's, which was to celebrate her life with a music party. Much preparation went into making it a special event.

Dona manned the entrance table passing out tickets, making sure everyone's first drink was on Betty! Throughout the afternoon, stories were shared, and many toasts given to her with raised glasses, including one from her long time friend, Jack Hoppus.

Betty requested Tom and Cherie Hagen, Elgin Vines and Mike Lutley to be "her" musicians. Many of her favorite tunes were played, and several other musicians joined in. Fred DeGennaro and Mike Hyde took turns on the guitar while



Edye Evans Hyde and Kathy La Mar added their vocal talents. Mary Rademacher Reed sang a special tribute to Betty, making it personal by changing some of the words in "I'll Remember You." The guest musicians included drummers Bob Thompson & Bill Vits, bass player Patrick Handlin, and John Shea on keyboard. Craig Benjamin, besides playing a mean flute, represented WMJS, inviting to the microphone those who wanted to say words or share stories about Betty. Melvene touched everyone with her laughter and her tears recalling memories of her mother.

Six past "Musicians of the Year", radio hosts and even a celebrity or two were in the crowd. People came from as far away as California to honor her, not only for her love of jazz, but for what she did to promote civil and gay rights.

Upwards of 150 people enjoyed tasty hors d'oeuvres, beverages and a truly wonderful party. According to her wishes, monies were given in her honor for the scholarship fund.

At this time, over \$3,622.00 have been collected!

As we say farewell Betty, we thank you for sharing so much of yourself with us, for an afternoon of celebration and reminiscing, and for the lasting gift you've entrusted to us, the West Michigan Jazz Society.

*-Donna Kahny*

## Remembering Ray by Jack Morrison 1926 – 2011

Ray Gill was a music giant in the Grand Rapids Community. He virtually spent his entire life educating new generations of students and musicians. He taught students in Jr. High and High School, and was head of the department of Jazz Studies at GRCC until he retired in 1988. Ray was very versatile, playing everything from bassoon to alto and tenor sax, clarinet, and was also a vocalist. He performed for six years in the GR Symphony. Ray had a big band that was extremely popular for over 20 years.

He was co-founder of the West Michigan Jazz Society in the late 80's and immediately formed the WMJS "Jazz in the Schools" program. A high priority as the WMJS By-laws state,

"foster greater awareness and love of Jazz among young people through support of Jazz education in area schools and provide music scholarships". Ray developed, oversaw, and performed for a number of years in this very successful program. He showed how a familiar melody could be improvised and played as a ballad, blues or up tempo swing. In later years the program began to falter. By this time, Ray approaching his 80's, "answered the bell" and came back to the WMJS Board and put new life in the "Jazz in the Schools" program. With the help of Mary Rademacher, Marilyn Tyree and Rod Coates they were performing approximately 30 programs during the school year.





I remember attending one of these programs. By then Ray was into his 80's, his back was hunched as he hauled in his instrument and training aides. Setting up, it was obvious that this was going to be an unruly group of students. Before he started, the kids were making such a ruckus they were being removed in a steady stream. It took no longer than a New York minute to see that Ray was not going to put up with this. After just a few minutes with no relief from the kids, Ray stopped and said. "I am here to show you about jazz and what fun it can be". With a stern face he said "Just give me time to play two songs and if you are not interested, then I don't want to be here any more than you do and we both can leave". Needless to say, after being exposed to this, the students settled down and enjoyed the program. Ray said this was a rare problem as at most schools the students loved a chance to learn about Jazz.



## Others Remembering Ray

Ray's standard band uniform was grey dress pants, blue blazer, white dress shirt and a bright red long necktie. Ray would carry with him a supply of extra bright red ties. If your neck tie was not bright red enough, Ray would loan you one of his for the gig. I thought that was kind of funny and picky. Now I am older (and a band leader myself) I see the wisdom in Ray's presentation of his band and try to follow his example. Ray would say "The band that looks clean and unified sends out a subliminal message to their audience that they have it all together." As Ray often pointed out, the converse is also true. Ray's band went far beyond just looking good and organized.....they WERE very good and organized. Ray demanded a high standard of excellence from his musicians and himself. I loved Ray's "old school thinking" and his "old fashion values" in preparation and presentation of his music. He was a real Pro and a gentleman. He always treated his musicians and audiences with kindness and respect. These are qualities that I admired in Ray and lessons that he reinforced in me every time I was in his presence. In Ray's honor, I now have a growing collection of the brightest red ties I can find.

*Paul Keller*

Most people don't know that Ray wrote an alternate lyric to "It Could Happen to You". He brought it to me at a gig and said "try this." I liked it and recorded this along with Stardust; Ray provided the background music. On the play back, Ray said it was real nice and he liked everything but the piano. He thought it was too loud and had way too many notes. He really put me down. I didn't touch the piano for weeks... Thanks, Ray

*John Shea*

Ray had high expectation of the musicians he hired, and expected them to be on time. He liked the band to look uniform, and always bought matching red ties for the musicians. He made it fun to play big band music. Ray was very businesslike, therefore, he treated music like a business. He was critical of tempos; he didn't expect any variation, up or down, if this happened, expect a reprimand! But he was very diplomatic. I learned from them and I am a better bass player as a result.

I had numerous conversations with Ray about his time in the military. I must say, Ray was a good friend and band leader, he will be missed.

*Elgin Vines*

Ray Gill was the quintessential musician to me - and devoted to his lovely wife, Helen. I had the pleasure of performing with him - always a pro, with a grin on his face when playing. My favorite memories are off the bandstand, when Ray would entertain us with his colorful stories. My favorite (if I remember correctly) was the one of how he acquired the bell of his clarinet - originally specially made for Benny Goodman. He was serving in Europe in 1946, saw it in a music shop window and ended up bartering chocolate and cigarettes for it. He used that bell for the rest of his life.

*Mary Rademacher Reed*



I was playing/touring with the Glenn Miller Orchestra around 1990. The Miller Bus and Ray happened to stop at the same rest area in Ohio. Ray, seeing the bus and knowing I was with the band, found me to say hello, which was

kind of a nice surprise. I always got along well with Ray and have fond memories of him. Also whenever I see a red tie, I think if Gil.

*Rob Hartman*





## 2011 WMJS Holiday Party

The candles were lit, the wreaths were hung, and the toes were tapping. Everyone was jazzin' around the Christmas tree. You can never tell what's going to happen at the WMJS Holiday Party. Bucky Love was spotted tripping the light fandango down the hallways; and it was reported the John Miller was twirling two reindeer on the dance floor which was full most of the evening. Jazz fans enjoyed the music of Tom Hagen playing keyboard, Cherie Hagen on drums and vocals, bassist Elgin Vines, Mike Lutley on saxes and flute, with song stylist Rick Reuther.

Classic holiday standards along with

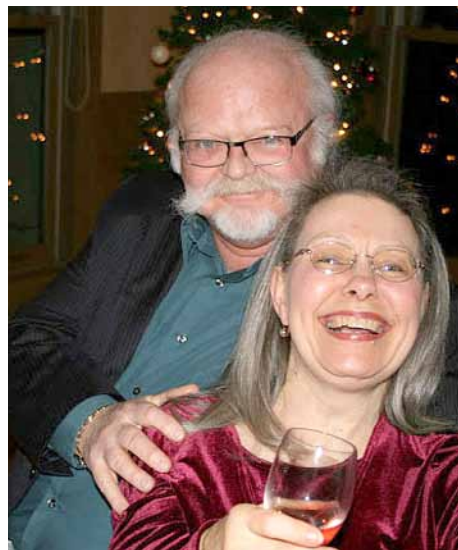


new seasonal songs made up an evening of entertaining tunes with favorites such as "The Christmas Song," "White Christmas," and "Winter Wonderland." Rick performed "Quiet Celebration," a song he wrote which filled the dance floor. Cherie also sang one of her originals; "Santa Needs a Hearing Aid," which she wrote to explain why

Santa doesn't always bring you what you ask for.

Another highlight was Brubeck's classic, "Blue Rondo a la Turk" a challenging piece, but one that Tom Hagen and the gang did a tremendous job performing. The band dedicated Count Basie's "Corner Pocket" to Betty Forrest, with Tom remarking that this was our first special event without our dear friend. Mike Lutley played the Jimmy Forrest part; Betty would have loved it. Again the dance floor filled as Mike played the head on "Harlem Nocturne."

During the breaks, WMJS President, Craig Benjamin and Vice President John Miller gave away door prizes to



lucky guests who chose C.D.'s donated by lifetime member, Reuben Smith.

Cherie Hagen channeled the famous



American jazz drummer Cozy Cole on the million seller tune, "Topsy," the only song with an extended drum solo on the Billboard Top Hundred. Bobby Thompson took over drum duty as the sweet sounds of Cherie singing "Merry Christmas Darling" filled the room. Rick sang all of our holiday favorites and as he always does, created a warmth that filled the room. And what musical evening isn't better with Elgin Vines on the bass?

The Watermark proved to be a perfect setting for delicious food, great music, and friends enjoying the festive atmosphere for one of our favorite events. Barb Keller called the evening a smashing success. And John Miller ended the evening using his own version of Jimmy Durante's line, "Good Night Mrs. Forrest, wherever you are."

*Dona Raymer*

# Mark your Calendars for Upcoming Events

Jan 13 and 14 ( 8 p.m.) and Sunday the 15th (3 pm), the Grand Rapids Symphony will present "Swingin' with Sinatra and Dorsey." Guest vocalist and Sinatra interpreter Steve Lippia will perform a number of Sinatra's hit songs. This performance will feature an evening of Jazz, Swing, Big Band, and more. At Devos Performance Hall. Tickets start at \$18 and can be purchased by calling GRS's ticket office at 616-454-9451 or from [www.grsymphony.org](http://www.grsymphony.org).

Jan 28th at 8 p.m. St. Cecilia Music Center will host "Music in the Night," a fund raiser for the Bill Reed Family Scholarship Fund for Catholic Central High School. Edye Evans Hyde, Mary Rademacher and Steve Talaga, three former West Michigan Jazz Society's 'Musicians of the Year' will be performing along with Michigan State University's cappella group, Capital Green. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the school and on line at [www.grcatholiccentral.com](http://www.grcatholiccentral.com).

## Jazz Gumbo Showcase The Family

February 20th's Gumbo will feature the Nick Ayuob Quartet, "The Family," back by popular demand, not quite a year since we experienced their first performance for the WMJS. The quartet will feature Nick Ayuob on keys and vocals, Patrick Handlin on bass, Mike Lutley on sax and flute, and Chris Bookie on drums.

Nick Ayoub began his music career playing small social engagements while still in high school. Nick is a 2000 graduate of Michigan State University. Nick can be found performing dueling pianos with a variety of local musicians. Nick's energy and stage presence is infectious. A quote taken from the website [yellowbrickroadduelingpianos.com](http://yellowbrickroadduelingpianos.com) states, "You simply ain't seen nothin' til you've seen Nick standing on top of a piano singing "Bohemian Rhapsody." Although we probably won't witness this at our gumbo, we will hear Nick's beautiful high tenor voice singing jazz favorites.

Mike Lutley is an Instrument Repair Tech at Meyer Music.



He attended Michigan State University majoring in Clarinet and flute performance. Since college he has performed over 30 years on the instruments he has mastered. He can comfortably fit in most any band combination and is one of the most in demand players in the area.

Patrick Handlin plays both Jazz string bass and electric bass. He does freelance work with jazz trios, quartets, and big bands. He performs for Circle and Civic theaters, Creative Edge productions, and other blues, rock, pop and top 40 local groups.

We hope you come and hear this highly entertaining group!

## More Gumbos

March 19 features Chris Bickley from Traverse City, sax player extraordinaire and lifetime member of WMJS.

April 6 the headliner will be Mary Rademacher. She will be singing music from the Great Gatsby era.

## WMJS Thanks Reuben Smartt

We would like to thank lifetime member Reuben Smartt, for his many years of supporting the West Michigan Jazz Society. In addition to attending many of our events, Reuben has donated many CDs and DVDs as well as artwork for our use. We have used them as door prizes, 50/50 raffle awards and silent auctions. His generosity is much appreciated and we hope to see Reuben at future events.

*John Miller, WMJS Vice President*

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**WMJS products  
now available**

Coffee mugs, canvas tote bags, and hats!  
Check them out at the next Gumbo!



# NOVEMBER'S JAZZ GUMBO

by Candice Cullen

Hearing of the caliber of musicians who would be entertaining us, the house was packed, everyone eagerly awaiting what we knew would be a memorable concert. Tony Reynolds' humor was evident as he welcomed and warmed the crowd, inducing hearty laughter before and during the performance.

They chose to start the evening with "The Blues Walk," each introducing themselves and their talents by treating us to instrumental solos with Mark Kahny on keyboards and bass, Dan Giacobassi on tenor sax, Randy Marsh on drums, and Tony Reynolds on congas.

"The Voice," as Tony is known in some circles, sang "On Broadway" George Benson style. Next, Dan's expertise was evident on the flute during "Serenade to a Cuckoo." Afterward Mark sang the

cherished "The Best is Yet to Come" with Dan on tenor sax pitching in on a solo.

Mark played softly



as Tony succeeded in seducing all the women in the audience with his first verse of "Autumn Leaves" in perfectly accented, smooth as velvet French. The ladies swooned as they all recognized the old standard when he switched to English. The rest of the band joined in and the tempo quickened.

Bob Thompson sat in on drums when Randy came out front on harmonica and also sang lead for the swinging "Doxy." Dan followed, playing baritone sax for "Bernie's Tune," while each of them demonstrated with solos exactly why we had all gathered to listen with rapt attention.

The final song of the first set was a distinctly different, ingenious and jazzy version of a very popular tune. Seasoned musicians didn't initially recognize "Moondance" that began with Afro-Cuban style drums alone. This unusual version was a particular favorite of the crowd that included Randy playing his snare with his foot. Tony's last note, held long and pure,



demonstrated his accomplishment and commitment to his art, revealing why he is in such demand.

The much anticipated second set began with the instrumental toe-tapper "James," a wonderful Pat Metheny tune wherein Mark and Dan were highlighted beautifully. The tempo then slowed and an atmosphere of romance permeated the room by means of Tony's sultry "Just the Two of Us," with Dan's sax subtly adding to the overall mood.

Dan sang for us "Early in the Morning" New Orleans style with Mark's and Dan's musicianship once again highlighted in their solos.

There is really only one word to describe the response to "What You Won't Do For Love" performed by Tony: Wow. This song showcased his remarkable four octave voice and the incredible quality of the players we were so blessed to hear.

WMJS President Craig Benjamin joined in with Dan on flute for "Swinging Shepherd Blues," throwing his whole body into it. This was a real crowd pleaser. There were cries of "Yeah!" in unison and loud applause for this upbeat, can't help but lift your mood music.

Mark slowed things down with his incredible, soul stirring rendition of "Home." Joined by Dan's flute dancing above Mark's voice and magic on the keyboards, together perfectly orchestrating the depth of longing the song was meant to evoke.

The final tune was "Song for Bilbao," in which Dan shone on flute. Mark was obviously enjoying playing

with some of the best musicians the area has to offer. Randy brought gasps from many during his drum solo that wasn't just a surprise, but a nice surprise. The crowd applauded loudly as the set ended and a standing ovation was offered to these superb musicians, the only way we could show our gratitude for the quality, passion and artistry these wonderful gentlemen shared with the thrilled audience. You can see each of these fantastic musicians at several venues in the area. As evidenced by the delighted attendees, you won't be disappointed.



# Support Local Jazz Venues!

## **Mangiamos**, 1033 Lake Drive SE

Wed-Sat 7-10pm Jazz Piano or Guitar/Vocalz session.

After the first set:

Jan 4, 18; Feb 1, 15, 29-Greg Miller

Jan 5, 25; Feb 4, 23-Steve Talaga

Jan 6, 13, 21; Feb 2, 11, 22-Robin Connell

Jan 7, 20, 26; Feb 8, 24-Mark Kahny

Jan 11, 28; Feb 10, 18-Paul Lesinski

Jan 12; Feb 3; Mar 1-Bill Huyge

Jan 14, 27; Feb 9, 25-Kathy LaMar & Bob VanStee

Jan 19; Feb 16-Ryan Limbeck

Feb 17-Bill Davidson

## **Porto Bello**, 41 Washington, Grand Haven

Jan 20, Feb 11 Tony Reynolds & Wally Michaels

Feb 17 & 18 Mark Kahny w/ Tim Johnson trio

## **Hopcat**, 25 Ionia SW 7-10 pm Sundays

"Jazz Jam", featuring West Michigan artists and jazz fans for an old school jam session. After the first set, musicians are invited to join the trio hosted by drummer Randy Marsh.

## **Shepard's Grill & Tavern**, 6246 28th St. SE, 7-11

Jan 27, 28; Feb 4, 10, 14, 25-Mark Kahny

Feb 3-Mark Kahny w/ Frank Eimer

Feb 11-Mary Rademacher w/ Mark Kahny

## **Founders**, 235 Grandville Ave. SW (616) 776-1195;

1st & 3rd Sundays each month feature GR Jazz Orchestra;

Jan 26 will feature Organissimo

## **Notos**, 28th St 7-10 Wednesdays; Tom Hagen Trio

featuring Rick Reuther

## **What Not Inn**, M89, Fennville

Monday-open Mic/Jam session 6-10 w/the What Not Band

Jan 14, Feb 4-Diego

Jan 21, Feb 18-Entourage

Jan 28, Feb 25-Christy G

Feb 11-Mike Raleigh & Blue Stars-Feb 11

March 3-Mary Rademacher

March 12 – Jazz Jam o Saturday March 17 – Mark Kahny Trio

## **Gilly's** @ The B.O.B. 20 Monroe NW 6:30-9:30pm

John Shea Trio every Thursday; Jan 4, 18, then Wednesdays in Feb, Wally

Michaels & Tony Reynolds

## **John Shea**

JW Marriott, 235 Louis St NW, Dec. 16th 7-10 pm, Dec.18, 11am-2pm.

## **The Republic**, 45 S. Division 8-11pm; every Monday-John Shea Trio

Check out maryrad.com for **Mary's** schedule and **Mark Kahny's** schedule @ markkahny.blogspot.com

## **Steve Talaga**

Jan 13, 14, 15 w/ GR Symphony @ DeVos Hall

Jan 27 w/ Grupo Aye at Pyramid Scheme

Feb 14 w/ Grupo Aye at the WYCE Jammies @ the Intersection

## **Wally Michaels & Tony Reynolds**

JU Sushi-Thursdays Jan 5-Feb 23

Jan 13, 28, Feb 4-Malarky's

Jan 11, 25-Watermark

Jan 7-One Trick Pony

Jan 27-Hennessy's (N. Muskegon)

Feb 14-Gun Lake Casino

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# Jazznotes

January-February 2012

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

**Jazz Notes co-editors**

**Dona Raymer at donamraymer@gmail.com**

**or Donna Kahny at picschick@gmail.com**

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

## West Michigan Jazz Society Board Members

Board Meeting: Tues., Jan. 31, 7 pm at Watermark Grill



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

John Miller - Vice President..... 949-7633

Dona Raymer - Executive Manager .. 735-4744

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Production and graphic design by Chuck Neller of Positive Images

Our website is designed and maintained by VanWyk Technology Consulting LLC

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