



An All-Volunteer
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Photo by Heidi Stukkie

Randy Marsh, 2013 Musician of the Year

Written by Heidi Stukkie

Marsh grew up surrounded by music. His grandfather played the banjo and guitar, and his grandmother, piano and flute. Marsh's father, tenor saxophonist Arno Marsh, is a jazz legend who played with such musical greats as

Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Harry James, Buddy Rich, and the Rat Pack, and since the 1950s, has been performing in Las Vegas.



The most memorable introduction to jazz music came from Marsh's mother Marylou, a singer. When he was 11, she gave him his first drum lesson with a pair

With Vaudeville musician grandparents and parents who performed jazz, it's only natural that Randy Marsh would learn to play an instrument at an early age. But despite growing up listening to jazz, as soon as he had his own drum set, his music of choice was rock 'n' roll. Blame it on the '60s.

Much to the delight of his fans, Marsh's rock 'n' roll phase only lasted a decade and he's been true to his family's jazz roots ever since. Now at 61, this accomplished percussionist and harmonica player has been chosen as the 2013 West Michigan Jazz Society Musician of the Year.

Check out our dates for the upcoming Jazz at the Zoo concerts on pages 6 - 7 of this issue.

Place your reservation now for the Musician of the Year Banquet on July 2nd. Tickets are \$30 each or \$240 for a table of eight. See reservation form on page 9.

Don't forget, GRandJazzFest is coming up August 17 & 18.

continued on page 2

of brushes on the back of an Art Blakey record, and from there, Marsh was hooked. He listened to every jazz album his mother had and says the drums “really resonated” with him. Some of his early influences were drummers Art Blakey and Max Roach and those who played with Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Oscar Peterson, and Dave Brubeck.

Then came the rock ‘n’ roll phase. Like many teenagers in the ‘60s, Marsh listened to Jimi Hendrix, Frank Zappa, Jethro Tull, and Cream, with each influencing his style. At 15, he began playing drums in various garage bands and in 1970, Marsh became the drummer for Aris Hamper’s band, Phlegghethon.

After that, he moved to Ann Arbor for a few years and joined a band called Stark Raven. The band members lived together and had “crazy parties” every night. Eventually, Marsh grew tired of the focus being more on parties and image instead of music and returned to Grand Rapids.



“That was my last ditch attempt at being a rock star,” he says.

Next, he played R&B and soul with the TMGs and being the “only white guy in the band,” earned him the nickname Chicken Head for the long shag haircut he wore at the time.

In 1974, Marsh met keyboardist Eddie Russ and started playing jazz music — “It was the music I always wanted to play, but hadn’t gotten to yet.”

As someone who never went to college for music, Marsh credits Russ with giving him his “formal jazz education” and in describing the experience, he says, “I learned from the school of getting my [insert expletive here] kicked.”

Mike Grace, who also played with Russ, formed his own band in 1976 and Marsh joined them when they toured Europe. In only 30 days, the Mike Grace Band did 72 performances in four countries. Marsh calls it the “Sleep Deprivation Tour” and says he slept for two days straight when he got home. Despite that, it was still the “highlight of the ‘70s” for him.

In 1981, Marsh formed a jazz-fusion band called Turning Point with Bob VanStee, Wilton Machen, Tim Ferguson, and Mike Sweeney. The band stayed together for a decade, but Marsh moved to Oakland, California in 1985.

Freelancing as a drummer there led to a job with the Tony Award winning San Francisco Mime Troupe, a left wing political comedy group, and for two years, Marsh traveled all over the U.S. and Europe with them.

He returned to Michigan in 1989 and worked wherever he could, including a stint with Jr. Valentine



and as the house drummer at Tootsie Van Kelly’s with Tom and Cherie Hagen. He also started teaching music lessons to earn extra money.

In 2000, Marsh joined Organissimo, with Jim Alfredson on the organ and Larry Barris on guitar. The funky soul-jazz band has traveled around the U.S. and internationally, receiving numerous awards. Their latest of five CDs, “Dedicated,” was released in January and is still high on the jazz charts.

Nearly two years ago in July, Marsh also started a weekly jazz jam session at HopCat. Now at SpeakeEZ Lounge, a base trio hired by Marsh begins playing Sunday nights at 7 p.m. and other musicians can join in as the night goes on. Like jazz, the nights are unpredictable, as one never knows who will attend.

In addition to the weekly jazz jam, Organissimo, and the music lessons, Marsh also regularly plays with the Jeff Hass Trio in Traverse City and the Steve

Hilger Band. He performs all over Michigan and stays fairly busy. “Though Organissimo gained some national and international



popularity, I gave up the jazz star dream a long time ago,” he says.

“But from Detroit to Traverse City, everyone knows who I am.”

On July 1, Marsh and his father will play together with a band at the weekly Jazz at the Zoo concert series and the following night is the WMJS Musician of the Year banquet. After being a musician for almost 50 years, Marsh is honored to receive the recognition, but mostly, he just really enjoys playing music.

“I live every day with a measure of gratitude and look forward to every opportunity to set up my drums or get on a mic with my harmonica,” says Marsh.

Photo by Heidi Stukkie

April - RECAP:
Monday Night Jazz
@ Bobarino's
Steve Talaga Group
featuring vocalist Diana
VandeWater

The West Michigan Jazz Society's *Musician of the Year 2008*, Steve Talaga brought his trio of seasoned veterans to Monday Night Jazz in April. Supported by bassist Tom Lockwood and drummer Scott Veenstra, the group ripped into two Talaga originals, "Dockside Way" and "Lift" to set the tone of what awesome jazz we were in store for that evening. Featured vocalist and song stylist, Diana VandeWater took the stage and offered exquisite renditions of two crowd-pleasers, "Honeysuckle Rose" and the peppy "Sweet Georgia Brown." Diana is a recent new face in our WMJS line-up. After



Photo by Donna Kahny

performing and residing in Minneapolis, Austin and Europe, we enjoyed her stunning stage persona and creative styling of such great tunes as "Why Should I Care?" and my personal favorite... the Toots Thielemans classic, "Bluesette," not often vocalized (lyrics courtesy of Ray Charles!). Talaga, Lockwood and Veenstra were masterful as their onstage interplay of chemistry and musical wit wove an unforgettable ambience to a night of great jazz artistry!

On a final note... many thanks to audio technician Kurt Ehinger for coming in last minute to save our ears and straighten out the sound system to make this group sound truly as great as they are! It really shouldn't require an advanced degree in quantum physics to operate a sound board, but apparently the one at Bobarino's does! Thanks again, Kurt and the group.

-Mark Kahny



Photo by Donna Kahny

May - RECAP: Monday Night Jazz @ Bobarino's Libby York

Libby York captivated the audience at Bobarino's with smooth and sultry vocals and an experienced band comprised of Jeff Kresler on keys, Mike Frost on tenor sax, Warren Jones on bass, and Fred Knapp on drums. Classic standards such as "Bye Bye Blackbird" and "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" wooed a full house. Her great stage presence and seasoned performance style made for a very enjoyable evening of jazz during Libby's first time as a featured WMJS Monday Night Jazz Series artist.



Photo by Noelle Frost

What a wonderful way to end to our concert series at the B.O.B. and a great segue into the Jazz at the Zoo season!

- Darryl Hofstra



Photo by Noelle Frost





These eleven free Monday night performances are held from June 3rd - August 12th at 6:30 - 8:30pm, John Ball Zoo Band Shell, 1300 Fulton Street in Grand Rapids.

June 3rd - Opening the series is the multi-award winning Northview High School Jazz Band led by Mr. Greg Wells. In 2013 alone this band took 1st place Outstanding Band at WMU; Best Section at MSU, and their Honors Combo took Best in State at the MSBOA. Prepare to be amazed by these students!

June 10th - The Paul VornHagen Quartet will perform the American Songbook of Jazz. Paul on sax/flute/ vocals accompanied by Gary Schunk on keyboard, Kurt Krahne on bass and Randy Marsh on drums. Winner of 5 Detroit Music Awards, Paul has performed at all the major jazz festivals and jazz clubs throughout Michigan as well as regular stops in Chicago, San Francisco, Toledo and Cincinnati. Go to www.paulvornhagen.com for more info.

June 17th - The Tom Hagen Summer Swingers including vocalists Mary Rademacher Reed, WMJS's Musician of the Year 2006, and Mr. Rick Ruether. This very popular West Michigan group will be playing and singing all your Swing and Rat Pack era favorites with Tom Hagen,

WMJS's Musician of the Year 2007 on piano & guitar; Cherie Lynn Hagen, drums & vocals; Elgin Vines, WMJS's Musician of the Year 2005 on bass & Mike Lutley on saxes & flute.

June 24th - Max Colley III's Sextet will present a tribute to the music of Louis Armstrong. Max Colley III on trumpet, Tim Froncek on drums, Tom Hagen on piano, Jordan Richards on bass, Dr. Paul Brewer on trombone, Tom Standsell on clarinet. Sarah Cosby, vocalist, who studied under Edye Evans Hyde, will be joining for a number. For more on Max: http://www.tijo.org/fr_maxcolley.cfm

July 1st - "Arno Marsh's 85th Birthday Tribute to a Jazz Legend" Randy Marsh, WMJS's Musician of the year 2013 will head up this group featuring Arno Marsh of Las Vegas fame on sax, Paul Keller, WMJS's Musician of the Year 2001 on string bass, Robin Connell on keys and Dr. Paul Brewer on trombone. Check Randy out at: <http://www.organissimo.org/randy.htm>

July 8th - Fred Knapp Quintet with The Fred Knapp Trio plus special guest Mike Frost, a Chicago tenor sax jazz veteran. This quintet consists of Dave Proulx on piano and vocals, Dave Rosin on bass, and Fred Knapp on drums. The Fred Knapp Quintet plays fresh arrangements of songbook standards.

July 15th - Evan Hyde Group
Evan Hyde, drums; Jordan Richards, bass; Matt Landon, guitar; Keaton Royer, keys; Chris Lawrence, trumpet. They will perform original music along with some modern jazz favorites from current composers/ musicians on the scene today, as well as some great standards/tunes from the not too distant past.

July 22nd - Paul Keller Quartet
String bassist, bandleader and 2001 WMJS Jazz Musician of the Year Paul Keller returns to Grand Rapids for a homecoming concert that will feature his AT SUNDOWN Quartet. Joining Paul will be vocalist/ clarinetist Sarah D'Angelo, pianist Duncan McMillan and saxophonist Steve Wood from Detroit.

July 29th - The Mark Kahny Group, WMJS's Musician of the Year 2012, Mark Kahny, pianist and vocalist, will lead this "special edition" quintet in a rousing performance of eclectic jazz covers from contemporary artists such as Pat Metheny, Dr. John, Crusaders and much more. Mark will be supported by this year's Musician of the Year, Randy Marsh on drums/blues harp, Carlos Melendez, guitar, Charlie Hoats on bass, and Chris Lawrence, trumpet/ flugelhorn.

August 5th - Features vocal stylist Michelle Covington and Company with Robert Pace on bass, John Gist on sax, JR Simmons on piano, Benny Keys on drums and Walt Gutowski on lead guitar. Their presentation will be All Things Jazz, a mix of jazz standards plus standards with a twist as well as some smooth and cool jazz.

August 12 - We will close this season with the ever popular West Michigan based talents of the Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra, led by Bob Nixon.

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JAZZ
ALIVE!**

MOY 2013 BANQUET



**West Michigan Jazz Society's
Musician of the Year 2013
July 2 - 6:30 p.m.**

Photo by Donna Kahny

On July 2nd we will honor our 13th Musician of the Year. The celebration will be held on the 3rd floor of the B.O.B., in the banquet room. Cocktails begin at 6:30 p.m. with a cash bar. A buffet dinner will follow at 7 p.m. and will include dessert. (Menu to be determined.)

Randy has picked an all-star group of musicians for our dancing, dining pleasure. The band will consist of Terry Lower on piano, Paul Keller on string bass, Paul Brewer on trombone, Tim Froncek on drums and Randy's father, Arno Marsh on sax.

Tickets are \$30.00 each for open seating or you may reserve a table of 8 for \$240.00. Watch for a Jazz Alert in your email inbox for more details.

Please print, fill out the form and mail along with your check to:
MOY Banquet/WMJS, PO Box 150307, Grand Rapids MI 49515

Name _____

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Phone # _____ Email _____

Number of Reservations _____ X \$30.00 = \$ _____

Please list names in your group if reserving a table.

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BAR DIVANI 7-10 No cover
June 4 Diana VandeWater
& Mark Kahny

BILLY'S in Eastown
1st & 3rd Tuesday- Jazz Jam
Hosted by Steve Talaga
2nd & 4th Tuesday Kurt Ehinger DJ's Jazz

B.O.B. Bobarino's 8-10 No cover
June 6 Big Band Nouveau

BOOK NOOK Montague 7-9 \$5 cover
Thursdays, Dave Collee & Friends
June 6, 27 Dave & Tim w/Checkers Morton
June 13 Dave & Tim w/ Lakewinds Quartet
June 20 Dave's Quartet w/ Ginny Dusseau

FOUNDERS 235 Grandville SW, 5:30-7:30
1st Sundays GR Jazz Orchestra

GULL'S LANDING Pentwater
June 26, 30 Robin Connell Quintet

LOUIS BENTON STEAK HOUSE
June 1 Steve Hilger Trio

JW MARRIOTT 7-10 pm
June 1, 8, 15, 29 John Shea

MANGIAMO'S 1033 Lake Dr. Wed-Sat 7-10
June 7, 21 Robin Connell
June 15 Kathy Lamar & Bob Van Stee
June 22, 28 Mark Kahny

NOTOS 28th St. Wed's 7-10
Tom Hagen w/ Rick Reuther
June 6, 20 Steve Hilger Trio

NEW HOLLAND BREWING CO Holland
June 2, 9, 16, 30 John Shea – 5-8

RED ROOSTER Scenic Dr. N. Muskegon
June 2nd, 5-8:30
Mary Rad Reed & Tim Johnson

THE REPUBLIC 45 Div. Mon. 8-11
John Shea every Monday

SPEAKEZ 600 MONROE, 6-9
Jazz Sundays with Randissimo
June 5 Mark Kahny

TOULOUSE Saugatuck 6:30-10
June 7, 14, 21 Libby York w/ Mark Kahny
June 8 Diana VandeWater w/ Mark Kahny

WEST SIDE INN Muskegon
7:30-9:30
June 18 Truth in Jazz Orchestra
\$8 Perch dinners, be seated by 6pm

WHAT NOT INN M89/Fennville
Sat 7-11 / Sun & Mon's 6-10
Monday Nights- Jazz Jam
June 2, 29 Mark Kahny w/ Bobby T.
June 16 Mary Rademacher Reed

ZING Douglas 7-10
June 14, 21, 28 John Shea

♪ ♪ **MORE JAZZ** ♪ ♪

June 20-23rd Elkhart Jazz Festival

June 21-22 17th annual Summer Solstice Festival,
Lansing, www.eljazzfest.com
• June 21st John Pizzarelli
• June 22nd The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra
w/Wynton Marsalis

June 30 7:30-9:30 Rick Reuther and Mary Rad-
Reed and Tom Hagen Quintet, 50 year Celebration of
Canadian Lakes in their new pavilion
www.rickreuthersings.com

August 17th & 18th will be the second annual
GRandJazzFest, a free event at Rosa Parks Circle,
downtown Grand Rapids. This year's lineup will
feature both Michigan and national groups.

Check websites for changes, updates and more!
Robin Connell www.robinconnell.com
Edye Evans Hyde www.edyeevanshyde.com
Mark Kahny www.markahny.blogspot.com
Mary Rademacher Reed www.maryrad.com





June 2013

Articles, photos and comments are welcome! Send before the 15th of the month to:

JAZZ NOTES editor
Donna Kahny at miljazz@live.com
or (616) 745-5962

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

West Michigan Jazz Society Board Members

Board Meeting: Tues., June 25th, 7 pm at Watermark Grill



John Miller - President 949-7633

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