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Is your membership  
up for renewal?  
This could be your  
last issue!

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Jazz At the Zoo begins June 9th with the first of 10 free Monday night concerts



Photo by: Katherine Asanov

*Ruslan Sirota*

**in concert, 7:00 pm May 31, 2014**

*The Wege Theater (G.R.Ballet)  
321 Ellsworth SW, Grand Rapids  
Proudly presented by the  
West Michigan Jazz Society*

Josh Groban's award winning pianist, Ruslan Sirota, is bringing his musical genius to Grand Rapids. Ruslan won a Grammy-Award from his collaboration with Stanley Clarke. Ruslan is also a composer and producer; he has toured with Chick Corea, Seal, Eric Benet, and actively tours with both Stanley Clarke and Josh Groban. He appeared on Jimmy Kimmel Live celebrating Jimmy's 2000 show, and performed the next day with Eric Benet for the Dalai Lama.

"Ruslan Sirota in full flight can stop a conversation cold. You'll just sit there, listening. That kind of brilliance is not heard every day - LA Weekly 21/04/2011

Ruslan was born in the Ukraine in 1980. His father, an active guitarist and teacher, sparked a love for music in his young son. "I would put my ear up to the door and listen for hours on end. I started playing the guitar when I was 4 years old and picked up the piano when I was 5 or 6", says Ruslan. In 1990, his family moved to Israel, where he continued to study piano at the Bat-Yam music school. At age 14, Ruslan discovered jazz, and at 16, he was the "wunderkind" keyboardist for the then-popular Israeli jazz fusion band, "Confusion". The band toured Israel and made several appearances at the Red Sea Jazz Festival.



*Photo by: Suzie Rogers*



Reservation form on page 11 and also on our web site, [www.wmichjazz.org](http://www.wmichjazz.org).

At age 18 he auditioned at Berklee College of Music in Boston where he was awarded a full-ride scholarship, and has lived in America ever since. Ruslan won his Grammy Award for his contributions on the CD, "The Stanley Clarke Band".

His debut solo CD titled "Ruslan" was released in 2011; it features Clarke, Corea and George Duke as special guests. "The wait for Sirota to step out front with his own work was near interminable."- Anthony Dean- Harris, Nextbop.com.

One of Ruslan's favorite "on the road" stories was when he performed for the Dalai Lama. "A very small group of us were fortunate enough to meet with him before the performance. As we were being introduced, the Dalai Lama shook each individual's hand. When he got to me, he looked at me and my hair and said "That's nice! May I touch it?" I said "Of course you may touch it your Holiness". At that point, everyone in the room was laughing their heads off. It really broke the ice."

There's no better proof that music truly is an art form than the life of Ruslan Sirota. In fact, if beautiful had a sound, it could be identified in the music Ruslan writes." -GLP presents Jazz News and Highlight.

Please join us for a very special evening and a "meet the artist" reception afterward. Beverages and snacks will be served. This is a fund raising event, come and support your WMJS and help us to keep the music playing!

## **A hearty welcome to our new and returning members!**

**And a HUGE thank you to our new lifetime members, donors and all those renewing their memberships.**

**Our jazz concerts continue because of the support we receive from you!**

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## Jazz Appreciation: Where “Play” Isn’t



We are part of an eternally long process of understanding how music can expand and transform us, moving us beyond our normal patterns, routines and “realities”. Greek philosophers talked about music as the pursuit and love of beauty, taking us to embrace other, higher “forms” of meaning. As Plato put it, “rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace”. Or, as Kurt Vonnegut more humorously put it, “What is my definition of jazz? Safe sex of the highest order.”

**Play:** to occupy oneself in amusement, sport, or other recreation.

Jack Kimmell, a prominent local composer/arranger/musician, reminded me recently of the words of Ray Gill, another serious local musician who was a lion for the Society. Ray addressed difficulties surrounding the concept of “playing”: musicians having to work very hard at their craft and yet appear (as the general public insists) to be doing something just for the fun of it, not as if at work.

And, it is work!

- Serious musicians labor endlessly at their craft and are often never satisfied (read last edition’s Max Colley III interview).
- Perhaps jazz musicianship starts, as Andy Richter (Conan O’Brien writer born in GR) indicates, when “some people are born with a brain that has this weird, magical mathematical thing that makes them (potentially) an amazing jazz musician.”
- Vigilance and discipline are required. As Wynton Marsalis put it, “Jazz is not just ‘Well, man, this is what I feel like playing.’ It’s a very structured thing that comes down from a tradition and requires a lot of thought and study.”
- As the player hones her skills and learns to play off others, the jazz musician emerges, as one pianist put it: “a juggler who uses harmonies instead of oranges.”
- Chicago celebrity chef Charlie Trotter drew a parallel: “A jazz musician can improvise based on his knowledge of music. He understands how things go together. For a chef, once you have that basis is when cuisine is truly exciting.”

There’s one more thing: the risk involved. Or, as Wynton put it, “that’s the soulful thing about playing: you offer something to somebody. You don’t know if they’ll like it, but you offer it.” All of this gives different meaning to Charlie Parker’s words:

Master your instrument.  
Master the music.  
And then forget all that bullshit,  
And just play

As Ray Gill says in his letter to Jack, “We must...take pride in the knowledge that what we do up on that stage is something most of our audience can’t do – in fact, something a lot of them mightily wish that they could do. We have a unique position in society; we have the power to amuse, divert and distract. While we seem to be ‘playing’, we can move our audience to tears, laughter, introspection, elation and wonder. Let us cherish that power and know that it is a positive force for the good of all of mankind.”

If music, as Plato said, “gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything”, then isn’t it seemly to admire and respect the stewards of these flights and grant them our blessings, even if we don’t yet understand the flight pattern?

Pete Proli



## MONDAY NIGHT JAZZ AT THE BOB

A bit of April showers didn't stop members and guests of West Michigan Jazz Society from enjoying a delightful evening of music from the Jeff Haas Quintet. Jeff was accompanied by super talented musicians Randy Marsh on drums, Laurie Sears on reeds and flute, Jack Dryden on bass and Chris Lawrence on trumpet and flugelhorn.

The group performed several of Haas's original pieces that showcase the proficient talents of the group. Haas explained some of his compositions that offered socially conscious messages. One tune, called "Longitivity", highlighted the human folly of making the same mistakes over and over. Reflecting the dark side of mankind, dissonant tones rang out in a progressive jazz sound. Haas spoke about his education program "Building Bridges with Music" which emphasizes how the universal language of music can teach us all about the common thread that weaves us together. This program has been successfully implemented in schools partly to discourage bullying.

Set two commenced with a romantic, upbeat number, which coaxed dancers to the front of the stage. The evening's creative air was further enhanced by improvisational artist Lisa Flahive painting water color images of the band as they performed.

The evening ended with Haas sharing a personal story, naming Hitler as the ultimate bully whose war camps claimed the lives of his grandparents just for being Jewish. Survivors of his family included Uncle Pauli, who mentored and inspired Jeff to become the great musician that he now is. His last number was a beautiful tribute to Uncle Pauli.

Shannan Denison





Photos by: Bruce Robey



## *Special notice of a new Jazz Organization*

Our neighbors in Kalamazoo have formed a new jazz organization called the Kalamazoo Jazz and Creative Institute ([www.kjci.org](http://www.kjci.org)). Headed by Benje Daneman, who along with his wife Ashley, performed at our Monday Night Jazz last year. The organization will work with Western Michigan University in assisting high school musicians pursue their love of jazz. They will hold a summer workshop, called SummerJAZZSTART on the campus of WMU from June 30-July 2.

For more information on this or other events, please go to their website. And welcome to the world of jazz kjci.

# May Jazz Around Town

## Thursday, May 1

Robin Connell on piano at the Lumber Baron Bar, Amway Grand Plaza, 6-9 pm  
The River Rogue's Jazz Band at the Whiskey River Saloon in Grandville, 6-9 pm  
Paul Lesinski at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

## Friday, May 2

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
Grupo Aye at U of Mich Latin Student Assoc., TBA  
Robin Connell at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
John Shea at JW Marriott, 6-10 pm

## Saturday, May 3

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
Monica Da Silva at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
John Shea at Noto's, 7-10 pm

## Sunday, May 4

Randy Marsh's Jazz Jam at SpeakEZ Lounge, 7-10 pm

## Monday, May 5

John Shea Trio at Republic, 8-11 pm

## Tuesday, May 6

Diana VandeWater with Mark Kahny at Bar Divani, 7-10 pm  
Chris Lawrence/Pike and Eel at the Winchester, 9:30 pm - 12:30 am

## Wednesday, May 7

Tom Hagen Trio with Rick Reuther at Noto's, 7 pm  
Michael Drost at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

## Thursday, May 8

*WMJS MUSICIAN OF THE YEAR BANQUET HONORING  
MAX COLLEY III*

Robin Connell at the Lumber Baron Bar, Amway Grand Plaza, 6-9 pm  
The River Rogues Jazz Band at the Whiskey River Saloon in Grandville, 6-9 pm  
Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
GR Jazz Orchestra at Lowell HS  
Paul Lesinski at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

## Friday, May 9

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
Robin Connell at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
John Shea at JW Marriott, 6-10 pm

## Saturday, May 10

Mark Kahny/Bob Thompson at What Not Inn 7-11 pm  
Kathy Lamar & Bob Van Stee at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
John Shea at Noto's, 7-10 pm

## Sunday, May 11

Randy Marsh's Jazz Jam at SpeakEZ Lounge, 7-10 pm  
Edye Evans Hyde/ Mark Kahny/Mark Weymouth at What Not Inn 7-11

## Monday, May 12

John Shea Trio at Republic, 8-11 pm

## Tuesday, May 13

Molly Bouwsma Schultz with Ryan Wilson at Bar Divani, 7-10 pm  
Chris Lawrence / Pike and Eel at the Winchester, 9:30 pm - 12:30 am

## Wednesday, May 14

Tom Hagen Trio with Rick Reuther at Noto's, 7 pm  
Greg Miller at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

## Thursday, May 15

Robin Connell on piano at the Lumber Baron Bar, Amway Grand Plaza, 6-9 pm  
The River Rogues Jazz Band at the Whiskey River Saloon in Grandville, 6-9 pm  
Mark Kahny at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

## Friday, May 16

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
Chris Corey at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
John Shea at JW Marriott, 6-10 pm

## Saturday, May 17

Roger Mac & Tami Hjelm at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
John Shea at Noto's, 7-10 pm

**Sunday, May 18**

Randy Marsh's Jazz Jam at SpeakeEZ Lounge, 7-10 pm  
 John Shea at New Holland Brewery, Holland, 5-8 pm

**Monday May 19**

John Shea Trio at Republic, 8-11 pm

**Tuesday, May 20**

Sylvia Taylor/Mark Kahny at Bar Divani, 7-10 pm  
 Chris Lawrence / Pike and Eel at the Winchester, 9:30 pm - 12:30 am

**Wednesday, May 21**

Tom Hagen Trio with Rick Reuther at Noto's, 7 pm  
 Freddy De Gennaro at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

**Thursday, May 22**

Robin Connell on piano at the Lumber Baron Bar, Amway Grand Plaza, 6-9 pm  
 The River Rogues Jazz Band at the Whiskey River Saloon in Grandville, 6-9 pm  
 Mark Kahny at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

**Friday, May 23**

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
 Paul Lesinski & Mary Rademacher Reed at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
 John Shea at JW Marriott, 6-10 pm

**Saturday, May 24**

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
 Paul Lesinski at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
 Kathy Lamar with the Concussions @ Founder's Brewery  
 John Shea at Noto's, 7-10 pm

**Sunday, May 25**

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 6-10 pm  
 Randy Marsh's Jazz Jam at SpeakeEZ Lounge, 7-10 pm  
 John Shea at New Holland Brewery, Holland, 5-8 pm

**Monday, May 26 - Memorial Day**

John Shea Trio at Republic, 8-11 pm ??

**Tuesday, May 27**

Mary Rademacher Reed with Mark Kahny at Bar Divani, 7-10 pm  
 Chris Lawrence / Pike and Eel at the Winchester, 9:30 pm - 12:30 am

**Wednesday, May 28**

Tom Hagen Trio with Rick Reuther at Noto's, 7 pm  
 Michael Drost at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

**Thursday, May 29**

The River Rogues Jazz Band at the Whiskey River Saloon in Grandville, 6-9 pm  
 Bill Davidson at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm

**Friday, May 30**

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
 Robin Connell at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
 John Shea at JW Marriott, 6-10 pm

**Saturday, May 31**

Mark Kahny at Marro's Italian Rstrnt., Saugatuck 7-11 pm  
 Steve Talaga & Mark Jackson at Mangiamo's, 7-10 pm  
 John Shea at Noto's, 7-10 pm

*Be sure to check for additions and changes on our website, [www.wmichjazz.org](http://www.wmichjazz.org), WMJS's Facebook, the venues as well as the musician's websites*

**DQ**

**Monday Night Dinner Special**

**\$6**

**Chili Cheese Dog**  
**Medium 21 oz. Julius**  
**Bag of Chips**

**6 to 10 p.m.**

*Orange Julius*

956 Fulton St. West

# W.M.J.S. announces their 2014 Jazz at the Zoo lineup!

## ***June 9- Byron Center HS Jazz Orchestra***

They were one of only 12 high school jazz bands from across the country, and the only one from Michigan, selected to participate in Savannah Georgia's ninth annual Swing Central Jazz High School Band Competition and Workshop. The 24-student ensemble is led by Marc Townley, who is in his ninth year at Byron Center High School.

## ***June 16- Planet D Nonet***

A down & dirty little swing band from Detroit playing the classic swing music of Ellington & Strayhorn, Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie & Benny Carter as well as more modern jazz...always with a Detroit twist. This award winning band was founded in 2007 by RJ Spangler and James O'Donnell.

## ***June 23- Wonderland Jazz Ensemble***

Led by composer/saxophonist Tom Elferdink, they have recently released their first CD, A Wish, which is garnering rave reviews. This dynamic group blends traditional jazz with original composition and innovative arrangements. (Ken Morgan-reeds, Eric Thorne -piano, Jeff Beaven-bass, Larry Ochiltree-drums)

## ***June 30-Max Colley III Sextet***

Max Colley III is West Michigan Jazz Society's 2014 Jazz Musician of the year. This multi-award winning, multi-instrument playing bundle of talent will lead this sextet and bring to our stage some of the nation's finest musicians. All the members are on the summer faculty of the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. Featured on piano is Dan Karlsberg from Cincinnati, OH, on bass is Steve Whipple living in NYC, John Hill on drums, from the Detroit area David Jensen on trombone and James Hughes on saxophones.

## ***July 7-Blue Monk Jazz***

Performing since 2009, the group specializes in the American Songbook, Bebop, Latin jazz, and jazz funk. They are committed to both preserving and exploring jazz idioms. The group is led by vocalist Susan Morris who is a professor of Philosophy at Ferris State University. (Carlos Melendez-guitar, Matt Moresi- keyboard, Mark Weymouth- drums, Rob Smith- saxes, trumpet and flugelhorn)

## ***July 14- Big Band Nouveau***

A newer big band on the Grand Rapids scene, this 16 piece group's musical presentation is a continuation of hard bop and modern mainstream jazz. Their library material covers a



variety of very modern jazz styles including some Latin along with original compositions and arrangements written by some of the musicians in the band.

## ***July 21- The River Rogues Jazz Band***

This is a toe-tapping, crowd pleasing, high energy Dixieland band that combines world class musical artistry with good "old school" professional showmanship. Jim Everhart founded the group in 1996. The River Rogues invigorates the spirit of the traditional New Orleans sound and showcases a Dixie-jazz collaborative that is enjoyed by both the seasoned and casual listener.

## ***July 28- Checkers Morton***

This venerable band of brothers has been playing music together for forty years and will present their original world and free music. (Dave Collee- bass, Dan Giacobassi- saxes and flute, Jim Beegle-trumpet, flute and congas, Bob VanStee-keys, and a newer addition is Tim Froncek-drums)

## ***August 4- Mary Rademacher and the Rad Pack***

Featuring the energetic Mary Rademacher Reed on vocals, dancing and shenagins, this group has played together for over 20 years, their tight harmonies and stage presence creates not only great music but an entertaining and fun experience. (Mark Kahny- keys, vocals and bass, Timothy P. Johnson-drums and vocals, Michael Lutley on saxes & flute. Alex Johnson will join the band for a few special guitar renditions)

## ***August 11- The Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra***

Founded in 1977 by the late Bruce Early, this premier jazz ensemble has been featuring some of the area's finest musicians for the past 35 years. Led by Mr. Bob Nixon, they play swinging original compositions and arrangements as well as traditional favorites. It has become tradition they close our zoo season!

Dear Friend of Jazz:

Our fourteenth annual season of offering free weekly jazz concerts at John Ball Zoo's band shell is fast approaching. Jazz at the Zoo has been a great success with our regular audiences of over 1200 fans enjoying local and regional musicians in a relaxed outdoor setting.

Our Summer Monday evening concerts begin June 9th and end August 11th. In keeping with our efforts to promote jazz in the high schools, our opening show will feature the Byron Center High School Jazz Band. A complete listing of performers will soon be posted on our website ([www.wmichjazz.org](http://www.wmichjazz.org)) and in our newsletter.

Once again we are reaching out to past and potential future supporters to help us fund this endeavor. Please see the sponsorship form and consider a level of support that works for you. Since we are an all-volunteer tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, all contributions are tax deductible.

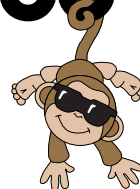
Each donor will be listed in our newsletter and all of the Jazz at the Zoo programs. You may also dedicate your contribution in someone's memory. Please advise us if you know of someone who might be interested in a corporate sponsorship.

We hope you will help us in our continuing efforts to promote live jazz in the Grand Rapids area.

Sincerely,  
Pete Proli, President  
West Michigan Jazz Society



## 2014 JAZZ at the ZOO



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Ruslan

The Wege Theater (G.R.Baller)  
321 Ellsworth SW, Grand Rapids  
Proudly presented by the  
West Michigan Jazz Society

West Michigan Jazz Society welcomes Grammy Award-winning pianist  
Ruslan Sirota for a special one-night performance.

***May 31, 2014 7:00 p.m.***

Ruslan has most recently accompanied legendary vocalist Josh Groban, as well as  
acclaimed musicians Stanley Clarke, Chick Corea and Seal.

Reservations encouraged, open seating.

Tickets \$20 for members \$25 for non-members, and \$10 for students with a valid ID.

Tickets include the performance and an Artist Reception following the concert, refreshments will be included.

There will be no physical tickets issued. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Please print clearly, fill out the form, make checks payable to West Michigan Jazz Society  
and mail to:

Ruslan Sirota/WMJS  
PO Box 150307  
Grand Rapids MI 49515

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

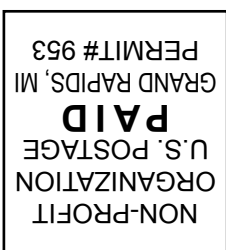
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# Jazznotes

## May 2014

Jazz Notes is the newsletter for members of the West Michigan Jazz Society.

If you would like your jazz event included in our media publications please send your schedules to [jlbasham@i2k.com](mailto:jlbasham@i2k.com) by the 15th of the month.

### West Michigan Jazz Society Board Members

Board meetings are held the last Tuesday of each month at the Acorn Grille at Thousand Oaks Country Club

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**WMJS main number . . . 616-490-9506 Email . . . [wmjs.gr@gmail.com](mailto:wmjs.gr@gmail.com)**

Shannan Denison . . . 308-6611

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