

Jingle & Mingle

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A
HOLIDAY PARTY
December 10, 2025
6 PM
Noto's Old World Italian Dining

SILENT AUCTION

Music by our MOYs
\$40-\$70 Dinner

HOSTED BY
WEST MICHIGAN JAZZ
SOCIETY

JOIN US FOR A JAZZY HOLIDAY PARTY!

DINNER OPTIONS FOR THIS EVENING INCLUDE:

\$60 8OZ NY STRIP SIRLOIN WITH CARMELIZED ONION
& 3 PEPPERCORN SAUCE, VEGETABLES AND POTATO

\$50 PRETZEL-ENCRUSTED CHICKEN WITH LIGHT
MUSTARD ROASTED SHALLOT CREAM SAUCE & 3
CHEESE MANICOTTI WITH TOMATO SAUCE

\$50 HAZLENUT WALLEYE PAN-FRIED WALLEYE IN A
SPICED HAZELNUT CRUST SERVED WITH OUR
FRANGELICO CREAM SAUCE WITH VEGETABLES AND
POTATO

\$40 PASTA ALLA FUNGHI FOREST MUSHROOMS,
SHALLOTS, SUNDRIED TOMATOES, ASIAGO, CHIANTI,
OLIVE OIL, AND BUTTER

ABOVE PRICES ARE FOR WMJS MEMBERS, NON-
MEMBERS WILL PAY \$10 MORE

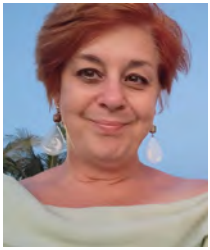
NON-DINNER GUESTS WELCOME AFTER 8 P.M.

[HTTPS://WESTMICHIGANJAZZSOCIETY.WILDAPRICOT.ORG/EVENT-6403941](https://westmichiganjazzsociety.wildapricot.org/event-6403941)

Seeking an Editor for WMJS's Jazz Notes

We are looking for a **Newsletter Editor** to join our team and oversee the creation and production of our digital newsletter. You do not have to have a strong background for this but should be a writer and able to edit materials. You will be working with a graphic designer so the layout wouldn't be your responsibility. This position could be filled by a couple of people willing to work together. For more information send an email to www.wmichjazz.org

Founders
WEEKLY
Jazz Jam
EVERY THURSDAY
7PM-10PM



News from the Chair

As we close out an extraordinary year for the West Michigan Jazz Society, I'm thrilled to share some exciting updates

and reflections from our recent Strategic Framework session. Our full board came together for a guided workshop led by **Intentional Catalyst**, and the energy in the room was nothing short of inspiring.

Together, we **re-affirmed our mission** and clarified the values that will drive WMJS into the future. Two priorities emerged loud and clear: **EDUCATION and COLLABORATION with our COMMUNITY**. These pillars will shape our programming, partnerships, and outreach as we expand our work to support jazz musicians, students, and the broader arts community throughout West Michigan.

We also welcomed **our newest board member, Juan Daniel**, whose passion for music and community engagement will be a tremendous asset to our team.

This year's **Jazz Happens fundraiser at the Riddles** was a beautiful testament to what makes our jazz community so special. Thank you to everyone who joined us in celebrating **25 years of honoring Musicians of the Year**, and cheers to this year's honorees—**Musician of the Year, Rick Reuther**, and our **Jazz Ambassadors, Jim and Peni Reed**.

As we look ahead, we need your **voice**. Please take a moment to **nominate your top picks for the 2026 Musician of the Year**. Your nominations ensure we continue uplifting the artists who shape the soundtrack of our community.

And don't miss our next celebration! Join us on **December 10th at Noto's** for our annual **Holiday Party**, featuring the **Steve Talaga Quartet** and special appearances from notable past Musicians of the Year. It's going to be an unforgettable night of great music,

great food, and great company. We'll be having a silent auction too to help with the costs.

Finally, this is the perfect time to **renew your WMJS membership for 2026**. Your support directly fuels our mission and helps strengthen the future of jazz in West Michigan. Stay tuned for an exciting announcement: **a brand-new monthly jazz program for members launching in late January**.

Thank you for your continued involvement, enthusiasm, and love for jazz. Together, we are building something meaningful—rooted in tradition, energized by innovation, and lifted by community.

With gratitude,

Shannan Denison
President West Michigan Jazz Society
Cell: 616.329.3143

*"Jazz washes away the dust of every day."
~ Art Blakey*

In This Issue

- 1 Holiday Party
- 2 News from the chair
- 3 Silent Auction
- 4-5 Memorial Tributes
- 6-7 Fundraiser Recap
- 8 MOY Nomination Form
- 8 Weymouth Memorial Fund
- 9 40th WMJS Anniversary
- 10-11 Music Schedules



facebook.com/wmichjazz



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instagram.com/wmichjazz

WMJS asks for your help to have the best silent auction ever! Please consider donating an item or an experience (ie. Ski or lift tickets, a stay at a hotel, a vacation, a dinner at a restaurant, your music for a private event, a weekend getaway, tickets to a concert or event) Your gifts are tax deductible.



SILENT AUCTION DONATION FORM
WMJS MOY & Holiday Celebration
December 10th, 2025
At Noto's

Name of item: _____
(Please provide one form per donated item)

Donated by: _____
(Name of company or individual)

Brief description of the donated item including any use restrictions on the gift:

Retail value of item: \$ _____

Suggested minimum starting bid of item: \$ _____

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Please call 616.329.3143 or email president@wmichjazz.org

Or fax the form to: 616-264-3444.



Jeff Beavan

Jeff Beavan began playing guitar in his teens with a rock band in Middleville. He moved to Grand Rapids in the late 1960s and switched to electric bass playing with 'Daze End' performing across West Michigan and

neighboring states. I met Jeff around 1972 when he was playing dinner shows with Kenny Gorden. My friend, drummer Gerald Williams, was with Jeff in a band called Powerhouse. Through him I got to know Jeff well and that led to numerous gigs and collaborations together. Through the 1970s, we played top 40, funk, and fusion gigs, then shifted toward jazz, working with noted pianists Eddie Russ and the legendary pianist Claude Black, a Detroit-based Bebop player and an amazing musician that really turned our heads around!

In 1975, I moved in with Jeff and his family and occupied his couch for over a year. A daily ritual

was Jeff coming into the living room where I was still sleeping. Holding his coffee mug, he'd open the front window drapes and looked out at the street, then at me with a big sarcastic grin he would say loudly, "There it is Marsh, your hometown". There are so many great stories from that time where we shared memorable routines and crazy late-night episodes after gigs.

Jeff had a sharp, and sometimes irreverent humor. His catchphrase was "See you in a skinute." When he would be asked what that meant, he would say it was, in the measure of cosmic time, 10 seconds less than a minute.

Jeff was truly unique and will certainly be remembered with fondness and appreciation by those who knew him. We will recall many things; his talent, his love for music and gigging, his many hilarious stories, his delightful personality and camaraderie both on and off the bandstand. Along with his passion for reading books which influenced many, including myself. His legacy lives on through countless cherished stories about time spent with Jeff.

-Randy Marsh

Max Colley Jr.

Max Colley Jr. dedicated over 40 years to music education at Northview High School, building a successful program with Marching, Concert, Symphonic and of course, his Jazz Bands, which received numerous awards. His music appreciation course was taken by hundreds of students, most not part of the instrumental music program. Max's goal was to foster a sense of belonging along with a greater appreciation for the gift of music.

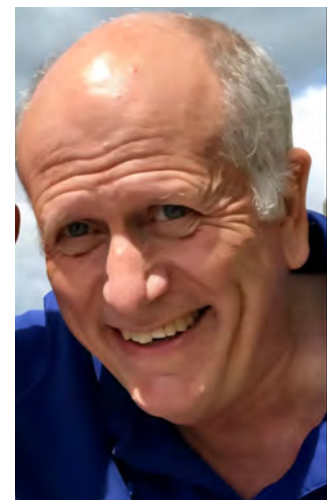
Max graduated from Godwin HS, Grand Rapids Junior College, and Calvin College. His recognitions include Northview's first Exemplary Service award (1985), MSBOA "Band Teacher of the Year" (1988), and the inaugural WMJS Dr. Bruce Early Jazz Education Award (2016). He is presently being inducted into the Michigan Competing Band Association's Hall of Fame.

His favorite jazz musician was Stan Getz. Max believed jazz as an art form is passed down by

generations. In that end, he brought in both local and national jazz artists to share their life experiences and talents with his students. Max took me to my first jazz concerts, which were Buddy Rich and Dizzy Gillespie. His example shaped my life and career both musically and personally. He was my first trumpet teacher and band director.

Max's Christian faith was the core of how he treated others, with care and inspiration. I am proud to call Max Colley Jr. my father. I know his legacy will live on for generations to come.

-Max Colley III



Kathy LaMar



Kathy was born in Grand Rapids on September 21, 1959. She began singing as a choir member of Grand Rapids' Messiah Baptist Church. After moving to Las Vegas, she entertained with

her band for 30 years. Kathy, with her emotionally drenched voice, backed up stars like Wayne Newton and Gladys Knight. She returned to Grand Rapids in 2009 where she performed with a multitude of local musicians, way too many to name. Her pianists included Steve Talaga, Robin Connell, Jim Alfredson and the late Bob VanStee among others.

Kathy had a thousand-watt smile and a warm heart; she loved everyone she met. Kathy gave hugs freely and often, she could sing Jazz, Blues, R/B and Funk equally well. There are many heartfelt tributes and memories left on her Facebook pages, here are just a few of them.

"Kathy was a gift to the jazz world, and to the world in general. She was a talented vocalist who sang as she lived, exuding pure love. To know Kathy was a pleasure, to laugh with her was a joy, and to sing with her was bliss"

-Wayne Powers

"She sang from the heart with a rare passion and genuine soulfulness borne of her deep experience in the music world".

-Ian LaVine

"I never knew anyone like Kathy. She LOVED people intensely and FELT everything so deeply. When she sang, she had the ability not just to connect with an audience, but to reach people personally and intimately. This was her gift, and she shared her soul freely".

-Paul Lesinski

That radiant smile, her big, beautiful voice and her upbeat soul will be sorely missed. Gone too soon, RIP, Kathy.

-Donna Kahny



The annual fundraiser was once again held at the Riddle estate. It was an extremely fun night, honoring our Jazz Ambassadors 2025, Jim and Peni Reed, the 2025 MOY, Rick Reuther, as well as recognizing all the living past musicians of the year who were mostly all in attendance.



The Riddle Estate



Our 2025 Musician of the Year,
Rick Reuther



Entertainment was provided by The John Shea Trio.
Many musicians joined the core band throughout the evening



Charsie and James Sawyer



President Shannan Denison presented our 2025 Jazz Ambassadors, Peni and Jim Reed, with a trophy



Seventeen "Musicians of the Year" were in attendance



Rick Reuther and Tom Hagen



Chef Tommy Fitzgerald's spread

Musician of the Year Nomination Form

The West Michigan Jazz Society invites its membership to send in their nominations for the 2026 WMJS Musician of the Year Award. This award was established in 2000 to honor outstanding local musicians and is given annually to recognize someone who has contributed over a period of time to the West Michigan scene in perpetuating a greater awareness of jazz.

CRITERIA for nominations should include some, not necessarily all, of the following:

- what the person has done to help jazz grow in Western Michigan, they are recognizable as a jazz ambassador
- has been a special asset to WMJS in performing and or promoting our programs
- the amount of their participation in the jazz scene, public recognition, community involvement, and inspires others
- furthering jazz education, has contributed to youth programs or other venues that perpetuate jazz for future generations

Please complete and submit the nomination form below.
The deadline is Friday, January 24th. You must be a current member in good standing to submit a nomination.

Fill out and mail to:
WMJS, Attn: M.O.Y. Committee, P.O. Box 150307
Grand Rapids, MI 49515

Your Name: _____

Email or Address _____

Your Nomination _____

Why do you think he/she deserves this honor?

Clark "Skip" Weymouth Memorial Fund



Carol Weymouth approached WMJS with an idea for a tribute to her husband's memory. The Clark "Skip" Weymouth Memorial honors the legacy of a dedicated musician who brought joy to seniors across the Grand Rapids area for over 20 years. As a talented pianist, Skip performed at retirement homes, nursing care facilities, and senior living communities, where residents would sing along using Skip's Senior Songbook-a special collection of songs he compiled just for them.

He also published a beloved newsletter, Musical Memories, which featured over 200 well-known selections for residents to enjoy. A committed advocate for local jazz, Skip volunteered as part of the West Michigan Jazz Society alongside its founder, Betty Forrest, sharing his passion for music and community throughout his life. Clark shared his love of music with everyone and had fun doing so.

For 65 years he was married to the love of his life, Carol, and together they raised three children. Their son Mark, a talented and accomplished drummer himself, carries on Skip's legacy and his love of music. This generous fund will be used to help students attend the Aquinas College Jazz Camp, offering half scholarships to 4 students for the next TEN years!

WMJS and the jazz community thank the Weymouth family for this generous donation.

-James Sawyer

2026 will mark the 40th anniversary of West Michigan Jazz Society!



In 1986, Betty Forrest began what later became WMJS, by establishing a support group to promote an annual Jimmy Forrest Scholarship. After Jimmy's death in 1980, Betty had established a fund through GRJO to award monies to students majoring in jazz studies. Monies for this fund were raised by presenting annual concerts that

featured popular jazz stars that Jimmy had known or played with during his 40-year career on tenor saxophone. For five years these concerts were held, 2 of those years the Count Basie Orchestra appeared.

Jimmy was the composer for the popular R&B tune, "Night Train", which was #1 on Billboard R&B in 1952 for 7 weeks. It was the 5th bestselling recording that year and is still played today by many artists. During his long career he played with such notables as Miles Davis, Duke Ellington and the Count Basie Orchestra for 7 years, and led his own combos.

There had been unsuccessful attempts before to form a jazz society in Grand Rapids. A friend of Betty's, Ray Gill, was director of jazz studies at GRJC at the time, and he had a list of 20 names of previously interested people. Letters went out to them in January of 1986, a meeting was called and a dozen interested people showed up. The nucleus of what became the West Michigan Jazz Society was formed. The founding members were Betty Forrest, Ray Gill, Jim and Nancy Gould, Kathy Swets and Bob and Ginny Taylor.

In the first year the fledgling society grew to a membership of almost 150 people. In 1986 the first picnic was held at Caledonia's Emmons Park which became their "home" for the next 15 years. Those first years, when famous jazz players were still affordable, the society booked many well-known artists. Some of those were Etta James, Clare Fischer, The Ramsey Lewis Quartet, Dave Frishberg, Gene Harris, The Four Freshmen, Diana Krall, and Kurt Elling.

For the first 25 years Betty Forrest did it all, big jobs, little jobs and everything in between. She was a force to be reckoned with! Over the years she finally began delegating the many duties to others, but at first, she really did them all. By 2001 national name acts became too expensive and WMJS began featuring our many talented locals. 2001 began the "Jazz at the Zoo series" which ran for an impressive 14 years with huge crowds in attendance. Unfortunately, the zoo needed to use the space we had occupied, and we had to move. In 2015 we secured the beautiful Ah-Nab-Awen Park located on the Grand River with downtown Grand Rapids as its backdrop. However, accessibility and parking became an issue. In 2019 we were given a wonderful opportunity to relocate to Millennium Park in Walker, where WMJS holds 10 summer concerts every year.

As WMJS continues to grow and thrive, we appreciate our members, sponsors and jazz lovers that help us keep jazz alive!

-Donna Kahny



Jimmy and Betty Forrest

December/January Jazz Around West Michigan

Venue address is provided the first time it is listed, all events in Grand Rapids are free of charge unless noted
Schedules always subject to revisions, check online at www.wmichjazz.org for changes

December 2025 Repeating weekly music events listed here:

EVERY SUNDAY

- Fred Knapp Trio and Friends at the Old Goat, 2434 Eastern, SE, 11am -2pm
- Tommy Pancy's Jazz Jam at SpeakEZ Lounge, 600 Monroe Ave NW, 6-9pm

EVERY MONDAY

- Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm
- John Shea Trio at Carolina Low Country Kitchen, 2213 Wealthy SE, 7-10pm

EVERY TUESDAY

- Robin Connell at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

EVERY WEDNESDAY

- Dutcher Snedeker at The Old Goat, 6pm
- Tony Viviano Duo at Drip Drop Lounge, 455 Bridge St. NW, 7-10pm
- John Shea at Social House, 25 Ottawa NW, 6-9pm
- Jazz 150 at Lucy's, 133 Columbus Ave., Grand Haven, 6-8pm

EVERY THURSDAY

- John Shea Trio at Sundance Grill and Bar, 151 Ottawa NW, 6-9pm
- Jazz Jam w/ The GRJO at Founder's, 235 Cesar E. Chavez, Ave., (Grandville Ave), Grandville 7-10pm
- The Jeff Haas Trio feat. Laurie Sears and Lisa Flahive at the Alluvion 414 E. Eighth St. Traverse City, honor cover at door, 5:30pm
- Travis Swanson at Mammoth Distillery, 710 Wealthy, 7-10pm

EVERY FRIDAY

- Jazz150 at J.W. Marriott, 235 Louis St. NW, 6-10pm
- Third Coast Swing at The Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

EVERY SATURDAY

- Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm
- John Shea Trio at Noto's, 6600 28th St, SE, 6:30-9:30pm

December 2025

Friday, December 5

- Holland Concert Jazz Orchestra feat. Mary Rademacher and Mark Kahny at the Dutch Winterfest, Park Theater, 248 S River Ave, Holland, 7pm. Tickets Available at HCJO.org

Saturday, December 6

- Jazz Christmas with the Tommy Pancy Octet at The Stray, 4253 S. Division, 7pm, \$20

Sunday, December 7th

- Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra at New Holland Brewing 417 Bridge St, 1 - 4pm
- Molly Konzen at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

Thursday, December 11

- Mark Kahny w/ Mary Rademacher at Testarossa, 1017 Wealthy SE 5:30-8:30pm

Saturday, December 13

- Paul Keller Quintet's "A Jazzy Christmas", at The Block, 360 W Western Ave, Muskegon, 4pm and 7:30pm shows, \$60 for balcony and tables, \$30 floor
- Mark Kahny With Tim Johnson at Portobello, 41 Washington Ave, Grand Haven, 6-10pm

Tuesday, December 16

- Teddy Spaghetti's, 513 W Pontaluna Rd, Norton Shores, 7:30pm, \$5 cover

Friday, December 19

- Phoenix Quintet at Portobello, Grand Haven, 6-10pm

Sunday, December 21

- Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra's Annual Christmas Show at Founder's, 235 Cesar E. Chavez Ave SW, 5:30-7:30pm
- Molly Konzen at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

Friday, December 26

- Mark Kahny at Lucy's 1747 Columbus Ave, Grand Haven, 5:30-8:30pm

Saturday, December 27

- Mark Kahny with Mary Rademacher and Cherie Hagen at the JW Marriott, 235 Louis NW, 6-10pm

January 2026

January 2026 Repeating weekly music events listed here:

EVERY SUNDAY

- Fred Knapp Trio and Friends at the Old Goat, 2434 Eastern, SE, 11am -2pm
- Tommy Pancy's Jazz Jam at SpeakEZ Lounge, 600 Monroe Ave NW, 6-9pm

EVERY MONDAY

- John Shea Trio at Carolina Low Country Kitchen, 2213 Wealthy SE, 7-10pm

EVERY TUESDAY

- Robin Connell at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

EVERY WEDNESDAY

- Dutcher Snedeker at The Old Goat, 6pm
- Tony Viviano Duo at Drip Drop Lounge, 455 Bridge St. NW, 7-10pm
- John Shea at Social House, 25 Ottawa NW, 6-9pm
- Jazz 150 at Lucy's, 133 Columbus Ave., Grand Haven, 6-8pm

EVERY THURSDAY

- John Shea Trio at Sundance Grill and Bar, 151 Ottawa NW, 6-9pm
- Jazz Jam w/ The GRJO at Founder's, 235 Cesar E. Chavez, Ave., SW, (Grandville Ave), Grandville 7-10pm

EVERY THURSDAY

- The Jeff Haas Trio feat. Laurie Sears and Lisa Flahive at the Alluvion 414 E. Eighth St. Traverse City, honor cover at door, 5:30pm
- Travis Swanson at Mammoth Distillery, 710 Wealthy, 7-10pm

EVERY FRIDAY

- Jazz150 at J.W. Marriott, 235 Louis St. NW, 6-10pm
- Third Coast Swing at The Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

EVERY SATURDAY

- Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm
- John Shea Trio at Noto's, 6600 28th St, SE, 6:30-9:30pm

Sunday, January 4

- Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra at New Holland Brewing, 417 Bridge St, 1-4pm
- Molly Konzen at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

Sunday, January 18

- Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra at Founders Brewing, 235 Cesar E Chavez Ave, 5:30-7:30pm
- Molly Konzen at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

Tuesday, January 20

- Teddy Spaghetti's, 513 W Pontaluna Rd, Norton Shores, 7:30pm, \$5 cover



Juan Daniel Castro joins the West Michigan Jazz Society board with a lifelong love of jazz and a belief in music's power to connect people. Rooted in his Mexican heritage and shaped by his journey from Querétaro to Grand Rapids, he brings a versatile voice that blends boleros, mariachi, tango, bossa nova, and jazz. Castro has released three recordings and continues to share his music through local venues and festivals. Beyond performance, his work in education, advocacy, and community health reflects a steady commitment to cultural preservation and collective well-being—values that resonate with the WMJS's mission.

It's Juan Daniel. I'm not the Juan!



From all of us at the West Michigan Jazz Society!

This issue of the Jazz Notes will be the last mailed edition. To cut costs and be more environmentally friendly, the newsletter will now be published only on our website. You can print the music schedules from the website. Enjoy the full color issues on line!

NOTICE!

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Jazznotes

Newsletter for members of the West Michigan Jazz Society

December 2025/January 2026

If you would like your jazz event included in our media publications please send your schedules to

Kevin Hubbard,

nominations@wmichjazz.org

by the **15th** of the month.

West Michigan Jazz Society Board Members

Board meetings are held virtually on the 4th Saturday each month, and archived on the website.

WMJS main number . . . 616-490-9506

Email . . . info@wmichjazz.org

Shannan Denison – President, Laura Ohman – Vice President

Board members: Kevin Hubbard, secretary; James Sawyer, education and scholarship;

Jordan VanHemert, programming; Jan Basham, member-at-large; Juan Daniel Castro

Other staff: James Reed, scholarship

- Students** \$20 ☐
Single \$35 ☐
Couple \$50 ☐
Donor \$100 ☐
Jazz Band (2-4 members) \$100 ☐
Patron \$250 ☐
Featured Jazz Venue \$250 ☐
 (\$250 or equivalent product donation)
Benefactor \$500 ☐
Sponsor \$500 ☐
 (\$500 minimum donation
 or equivalent product donation)
Donation Only \$ _____ ☐

If a dual membership, BOTH names must be listed

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

Phone _____

Interested in volunteering? ☐

Detach and mail with check made payable to
West Michigan Jazz Society
 P.O. Box 150307, Grand Rapids, MI 49515

616-490-9506
 (or join online)
wmichjazz@gmail.com

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December 2025/January 2026