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News from the Chair



Shannan Denison

Something exciting is taking shape at the West Michigan Jazz Society, and I wanted to share it with you. This fall, we will host our annual Musician of the Year Celebration—one of the most meaningful evenings on our calendar. This year, we have the privilege of honoring Cherie Lynn Hagen, a remarkable artist whose contributions to jazz in West Michigan have touched countless lives and helped keep live jazz thriving in our community.

Cherie's recognition is well deserved. Her career, her artistry, and her dedication to this music represent exactly what the West Michigan Jazz Society exists to celebrate. We are planning an evening worthy of her legacy—live jazz, an elegant dinner, and a celebration that brings together everyone who loves this music and believes in its future.

But the Musician of the Year Celebration is about more than one evening. Every ticket purchased, every table reserved, every sponsorship secured goes directly toward the work we do year-round—jazz education, student scholarships, community concerts, and support for local musicians. When you attend, you are not simply coming to a dinner. You are investing in the future of live jazz in West Michigan.

We are also welcoming businesses and individuals who would like to support the evening as event sponsors. This is a wonderful opportunity to align your name with one of West Michigan's most beloved cultural traditions while making a tangible difference for music education and live performance in our region.

Formal invitations will be going out soon with full details, pricing, and reservation information. Seating is limited, and we expect this year's event to fill quickly.

We hope to see you there.

Shannan Denison

President, West Michigan Jazz Society

Before It Had a Name



Juan Daniel Castro

There is a moment in the deep prehistory of our species that no historian can locate and no archive can verify, yet every musician has felt it. It is the moment before the first note. The breath before the sound. The silence that already knows it is about to become something.

Music did not begin with jazz. It did not begin with the blues or the spiritual or the drum circle or the lute or the lyre. According to Michael Spitzer, whose sweeping account of music's place in human life reads like a Rosetta Stone for the soul, music is roughly three hundred thousand years old. Older than writing. Older than farming. Older than the wheel, the city, the nation, the border, and every wall ever built to divide one people from another. Spitzer argues that music is not something humans invented. It is something humans are.

That idea stops me every time.

We spend a great deal of time in these pages talking about jazz as culture, as history, as politics, as spiritual practice. All of that is true. But this month I want to go further back than jazz. Further back than Africa. Further back than the diaspora. Further back than the civilizations whose rise and fall shaped the musical traditions we now study and

celebrate. I want to go back to the beginning. Not because the beginning explains everything, but because without it we are always arriving too late.

Spitzer draws on evolutionary biology, archaeology, neuroscience, and musicology to argue that rhythm was the first human language. Before words carried meaning, pattern did. Before syntax, syncopation. The earliest humans communicated through sound in ways that were less about information and more about connection. Less about content and more about presence. To make rhythm together was to say: I am here. You are here. We are here together, and that matters.

Think about what that means. The impulse that draws a jazz musician into a groove with a drummer she has never met. The impulse that makes an audience lean forward when a soloist touches something true. The impulse that makes a child tap her foot before she knows what music is. That impulse is ancient. It did not begin in a studio or a concert hall or a club on a Tuesday night. It began around a fire, in a body, in the dark, when being human was still a fragile experiment.

This is the foundation beneath every foundation we have ever discussed.

When we talked about jazz as architecture last spring, we were right. But now we understand that the architecture rests on bedrock older than any tradition we can name. When we talked about the wound that sings, we were hearing something real. But that wound has a

prehistory too, a time before rupture, before the Middle Passage, before slavery and colonization, when the human voice and the human body were simply doing what they had always done. Reaching toward one another through sound.

Spitzer's work invites us to hear music differently. Not as entertainment. Not as gallery art. Not even as culture, though it is all of those things. He invites us to hear music as a biological and spiritual necessity. Something the species has always needed the way it needs water and warmth and the presence of other human beings. Music is not what we do when life is easy. It is what we do to survive when life is hard. It is what we do to celebrate when survival becomes something more. It is the thread running through every human story ever told.

I want to sit for a moment in the quiet that precedes every story worth telling. I want to honor the fact that before the clave, before the blues, before the spiritual, before any of it, there was a human being who felt the pulse of something larger than herself and reached toward it with her voice and her hands and whatever she could strike or shake or blow.

She had no name for what she was doing.

She was making music.

And in doing so she was beginning everything.

Juan Daniel Castro

Board member and editor

- ☐ **Students** \$20
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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



Jazz in the Park!

WEST MICHIGAN JAZZ SOCIETY PRESENTS

JAZZ IN THE PARK

Each Monday night, our community comes together for incredible live jazz, connection, and summer fun—with attendance averaging 500–1,200 guests weekly and a growing audience year-over-year.

Address: 1415 Maynard Ave SW, Walker, MI

Remaining Lineup

August 3

Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra

August 10

Jeff Shoup Group

August 17

Big Band Nouveau

Sponsorship Opportunities

Program Sponsor — \$5,000 (2 Available)

Our premier sponsorship level includes:

- Full-page ad in the summer concert program
- Prominent logo placement throughout the season
- Recognition in social media, print, radio, and press releases
- Reserved VIP seating for 25 guests
- Full-season visibility across the entire series

Concert Sponsor — \$1,000 (10 Available)

Includes:

- Featured sponsorship of one concert
- On-site business presence (table/tent)
- Half-page ad in the program
- Stage banner logo placement
- Recognition in promotional materials

Friends of Jazz — \$500

Includes:

- Website recognition
- Half-page ad placement in the concert program



No car? No worries. A ride to the music is available.

Whether you don't drive, can't drive, or simply don't have a car — you can still enjoy Jazz in the Park every Monday evening this summer.

The Rapid's PASS Service (Passenger Adaptive Suburban Service) offers a curb-to-bus-stop shuttle that connects you to the concert and back home again. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Fare is just \$3.50, which includes your return transfer.

- Concert hours: 6:00 – 8:00 PM
- Return bus departs: approximately 8:45 – 9:00 PM

How to ride:

1. Register for eligibility at ridetherapid.org or call **616 774-1153**
2. Schedule your ride by 4:30 PM the day before the concert
3. Get picked up at your curb — and brought back the same way

Need door-to-door assistance? Ask about GO!Bus service when you call. **Questions? Contact The Rapid at 616-774-1153**

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 are always subject to change, so please check with venue or artist. Changes will be noted by date*

Repeating weekly events

Every Sunday

Jazz Jam with Tommy Pancy at Speciation, 928 Wealthy St SE, 5-8pm [VENUE LINK](#)

Live Music (variety) at Testa Rossa, 1017 Wealthy St. SE, 5-8pm [VENUE LINK](#)

Every Monday

John Shea Trio at Carolina Lowcountry Kitchen, 2213 Wealthy St SE, 6:30-9:30pm

WMJS Jazz in the Park 1415 Maynard Ave SE Walker, MI 6:30-8:30pm (*See Pg. 4*)

Mark Kahny at the Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Every Tuesday

Mark Kahny at the Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Jazz band & Jam session at Moriarty's, 802 E Michigan Ave, Lansing, 7-10pm

Every Wednesday

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Dutcher Snedeker at the Old Goat, 6-9pm

Live Music at Testa Rossa, 1017 Wealthy St. SE, 5:30-8:30pm

Every Thursday

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, 6-9pm

To Be Determined Quartet (not booked yet) at The Old Goat, 6-9pm

Live Music at Testa Rossa, 1017 Wealthy St. SE, 5:30-8:30pm

Sandy Point Jazz 6-9pm

Every Friday

Erik McIntyre Trio at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

Third Coast Swing at Testa Rossa, 5:30-8:30

LIVE MUSIC at Testa Rossa, 9-11pm in Duck's Nest (back room)

Every Saturday

John Shea Trio at Noto's, 6-9 pm

Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

Live Music at Testa Rossa, 1017 Wealthy St. SE, 5:30-8:30pm

August 2026 Schedule

Saturday, August 1

Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

Sunday, August 2

Robin Connell Trio at The Old Goat, 2434 Eastern Ave SE, 11am-2pm

Molly Konzen at The Old Goat, 5:00-8:00pm

Monday, August 3

GRAND RAPIDS JAZZ ORCHESTRA, WMJS Jazz in the Park, Millennium Park, 6-8pm

First Monday Jazz Jam! 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the Tulip City Bar & Grill in Holland. The HCJO quartet will start the evening, then bring your horn and call a tune and join the band!

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Tuesday, August 4

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Wednesday, August 5

Rick Reuther at the Alder & Iron Restaurant Patio (Railside Golf Club), 2500 76th St SW, Byron Center, 6-9 PM

John Shea Trio at Social House, 25 Ottawa NW, 6-9 pm

Walt Gutowski and the Bridge Street Band featuring Jes Slaydon at the Bostwick Lake Inn (on the deck), 8521 Belding Rd, Rockford, 6-9pm

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Thursday, August 6

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Mark Kahny at Lucy's, 133 Columbus Ave., Grand Haven, 6-9pm

Friday, August 7

LIVE MUSIC at Testa Rossa (The Duck's Nest Patio), 9-11pm

Saturday, August 8

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

Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

Sunday, August 9

GRAND RAPIDS JAZZ ORCHESTRA, Anema Friesian Horse Farm, 10388 Kalamazoo Ave, Caledonia, 5:30-7:30pm

Fred Knapp Trio at the Old Goat, 11am-2pm

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

Monday, August 10

Jeff Shoup Group at WMJS Jazz in the Park, Millennium Park, 6-8pm

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Tuesday, August 11

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Jazz Around West Michigan (Cont.)

Wednesday, August 12

Lakeshore Big Band at Lynn Sherwood Waterfront Stadium, Grand Haven (Music on the Grand concert series) 6:30-8:30pm

Laura Bennett, Wally Michaels and Mark Weymouth at The Dungeon, 3594 Chicago Dr SW B, Grandville, 6-8pm

Walt Gutowski and the Bridge Street Band featuring Jes Slaydon at the Bostwick Lake Inn (on the deck), 8521 Belding Rd, Rockford, 6-9pm

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Thursday, August 13

Lakeshore Big Band at Pomona Park, Fruitport (Dancing into Sunset concert series) 6:30-9pm

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Friday, August 14

LIVE MUSIC at Testa Rossa (The Duck's Nest Patio), 9-11pm

Saturday, August 15

Neil Gordon and Tiffany Gridiron at JW Marriott in Grand Rapids, 6-10pm

Charles Johnson Quartet at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel Lobby, 187 Monroe Ave NW, 8:30-11:30pm

Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

Sunday, August 16

Rick Reuther at the Holiday Bar Patio, 801 5th St. 1-4 PM

Fred Knapp Trio at the Old Goat, 11am-2pm

Molly Konzen at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

Monday, August 17

Big Band Nouveau at WMJS Jazz in the Park, Millennium Park, 6-8pm

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Tuesday, August 18

Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra, Meijer Gardens Music Club concert, 7-9pm [Free for Meijer Garden members, Free admission to concert with day pass to the MG

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

John Shea at Real Seafood Co. 141 Lyon NW 6-9 pm

Wednesday, August 19

Walt Gutowski and the Bridge Street Band at the Bostwick Lake Inn, 6-8:30pm

John Shea Trio at Social House, 25 Ottawa NW, 6-9 pm

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Neil Gordon and Tiffany Gridiron at Testa Rossa, 5:30-8:30pm

Thursday, August 20

Walt Gutowski and the Bridge Street Band featuring Jes Slaydon in the Grand Rapids Summer Concert Series, 433 Bridge St NW (outdoors, west of New Holland Brewery), 6-7:30pm

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Friday, August 21

LIVE MUSIC at Testa Rossa (The Duck's Nest Patio), 9-11pm

Saturday, August 22

Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

Sunday, August 23

Fred Knapp Trio at the Old Goat, 11am-2pm

Steve Talaga at the Old Goat, 5:00-8:00pm

Monday, August 24

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

Tuesday, August 25

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Wednesday, August 26

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Thursday, August 27

Laura Bennett and Wally Michaels at Sandy Pointe Beach House, 7175 Lake Shore Dr. West Olive, 6-9pm

Walt Gutowski and the Bridge Street Band featuring Jes Slaydon at Eastern Kille, 7755 Childsdales, Rockford, 6-9pm

Terry Lower Trio at Clara's on the River, Battle Creek, 6-9pm

Friday, August 28

Terry O'Brien and Mark Kahny at Lucy's, 7-10 pm

LIVE MUSIC at Testa Rossa (The Duck's Nest Patio), 9-11pm

Saturday, August 29

Neil Gordon and Tiffany Gridiron at JW Marriott in Grand Rapids, 6-10pm

Third Coast Swing at the Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

Sunday, August 30

Fred Knapp Trio at the Old Goat, 11am-2pm

Molly Konzen at The Old Goat, 5:00-8:00pm

Monday, August 31

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm



www.wmichjazz.org
www.facebook.com/wmichjazz

Jazz in the Park Scrapbook

Third Coast Swing - July 20, 2026



Jazz in the Park Scrapbook (Cont.)

Eddy Curtis Quintet - July 13, 2026



Jazz in the Park Scrapbook (Cont.)

Grupo Aye - June 22, 2026



Jazz in the Park Scrapbook (Cont.)

Tom Allport Band, July 6, 2026



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by the 15th of the month

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