JazzNotes

WEST MICHIGAN JAZZ SOCIETY

November 2026 | www.wmichjazz.org

Edye Evans Hyde and Mike Hyde
Fountain Street Church

Pg. 2 *Where Genius Had No Other Door*

Pg. 3 *Jazz Around West Michigan*

Pg. 5 *The Backpage Gallery*

News from the Chair

Laura Ohman

Hello from your WMJS Vice President, Laura Ohman. Our multi-talented President is visiting Ireland to celebrate 25 years of marriage to Kevin Hubbard and his birthday, so I will do my best to fill her shoes for this month's greeting.

We have had a wonderfully jazzy fall, beginning with our 2026 Musician of the Year celebration honoring Cherie Lynn Hagen. It was a memorable evening of jazz, great friends, wonderful food prepared by Chef Tommy Fitzgerald, and of course, incredible music.

We also returned to Fountain Street Church on October 20 for a beautiful night of music performed by 2011 Musician of the Year Edye Evans Hyde and 2024 Musician of the Year Mike Hyde. What a treat that was.

The music continues this fall. Please join us at Fountain Street Church on November 10 at 7pm for a lively performance featuring 2004 Musician of the Year Tim Froncek and band — Tim Froncek on drums, Rob Hartman on bass, Rob Smith on horn, and Matthew Fries on piano. Come enjoy the performance and bring someone who might be discovering our jazz community for the first time.

We are also looking forward to our holiday party on December 9 at Noto's, featuring a delicious buffet, beverages, and live jazz. An all Musician of the Year band will be performing, featuring 2026 MOY Cherie Lynn Hagen on drums and vocals, 2007 MOY Tom Hagen on piano, 2015 MOY Mike Lutley on saxophone, and 2005 MOY Elgin Vines on bass. You are going to love them.

To help cover the costs of the evening we will hold a silent auction, and this is where you can join the fun. Would you consider donating a stay at your timeshare, or offering an experience another jazz lover would treasure? A dinner, a class, a local outing, or a talent you are willing to share could become one of the evening's most memorable moments.

Thank you for encouraging jazz musicians, donating to the WMJS Scholarship Fund which supports college students in their passion for jazz studies, and for keeping jazz alive in West Michigan.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Ohman
Vice President
West Michigan Jazz Society

Where Genius Had No Other Door

Juan Daniel Castro

There is a question the official history of jazz rarely asks directly, because the answer makes certain people uncomfortable. It is not about notes or rhythms or the names of the musicians who changed the world.

Why were they there?

Why were the men and women who built one of the most significant musical traditions in human history playing in brothels, in juke joints, on street corners, in the back rooms of establishments polite society pretended not to frequent? Why did the music that would eventually fill the concert halls of Europe spend its earliest years in places those same halls would never have acknowledged?

The answer is not complicated. It is just honest.

They were there because poverty put them there. And poverty put them there because a system designed to keep Black people without property, without education, without legal protection, and without economic access left them with very few other doors to walk through. The brothels of Storyville were not incidental to the birth of jazz. They were among the institutions that paid the musicians, and for many, the best-paying work available. In a city where Black men of extraordinary talent had almost no legitimate venues for that talent, the places that would hire them often operated outside the boundaries of respectability. The music was born in the margins because the margins were where the work was.

Enrique Dussel would recognize this immediately. The logic that positioned Europe at the center of civilization and everything else at the periphery operated at the neighborhood level in New Orleans and in every American city where jazz took root. The center belonged to whiteness, to property, to inherited wealth and inherited access. The periphery belonged to everyone else. And in the periphery, as Dussel understood, something else was possible—something the center, with all its resources and all its institutions, could not produce. Because the center was too busy protecting what it had to imagine what it did not yet know.

Cheikh Anta Diop understood that the people pushed to the periphery carried something ancient and irrepressible inside them. The dispossession was real. The poverty was real. The violence that enforced both was real. But the tradition those people carried—the musical impulse Michael Spitzer traces to the deep origins of our specie; could not be dispossessed. It lived in the body. It lived in the breath. It lived in the hands that found whatever instrument was available and made it speak.

What came out of that poverty was not in spite of the conditions but in some terrible and clarifying way because of them. Not because suffering is romantic or because poverty is generative in any way we should celebrate. But because when every other door is closed, the one that remains open tends to reveal something essential. The musicians who built jazz had nowhere else to put their genius. So they put it there, in the only rooms that would have them, and those rooms became the foundation of something the world had never heard.

Jelly Roll Morton played in the brothels of Storyville not because he lacked ambition but because he was a Black man in New Orleans at the turn of the twentieth century and the brothels were where musicians worked. Buddy Bolden played for working-class Black communities because those were his people and those were the halls that welcomed his music. Louis Armstrong grew up in the Battlefield, one of the roughest neighborhoods in New Orleans, in a family so poor that as a child he sold coal from a cart to help his mother pay rent. He was already learning the cornet by then—a boy from a neighborhood the city had written off, already carrying the thing that poverty could not take from him.

This matters because the story jazz history usually tells moves very quickly from the conditions of origin to the achievements themselves, as if the achievement erases the conditions rather than emerging directly from them. We celebrate what the music became without sitting long enough with what the music cost. We hang the names on concert hall walls without asking whose labor built those walls and why those names were not allowed inside until the music itself forced the door open.

The poverty was not background. It was the argument.

Every note played in a Storyville brothel by a Black musician who had no other economic option was a negotiation between what the world had decided that person was worth and what that person actually carried inside. The world said: you are worth whatever we choose to pay you to entertain us in the places we do not wish to be seen. The music said: you have no idea what I am carrying or where it comes from or how long it has been traveling to get here.

The music was right.

And the poverty that tried to contain it only proved what Dussel and Diop and Spitzer each understood from their different angles: that what lives in the body and the breath and the ancient human impulse toward one another through sound cannot be priced, cannot be owned, and cannot be kept in any room, however small, however marginal, however far from the center the world has decided it belongs.

It always finds its way out.

Yours truly,
Juan Daniel Castro

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

Fred Knapp Trio, Jazz Brunch at The Old Goat, 11am-2pm

Solo Piano Jazz at the Old Goat, 5-8pm

Jazz Duo/Trio at Testa Rossa, 5-8pm

Jazz Jam with Tommy Pancy at Speciation, 928 Wealthy St SE, 5-8pm

Every Monday

John Shea Trio, Carolina Low Country Kitchen, 2213 Wealthy SE, 6:30-9:30pm

Solo Piano Jazz at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Big Fun or Funky Uncle (alternate weeks) at the Alluvion, Traverse City, 7-8:30pm, Donation

Every Tuesday

Jazz Band & Jam with Jeff Shoup and Guests at Moriarty's, Lansing, 7-10pm

Solo Piano Jazz at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Every Wednesday

Dutcher Snedeker at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Jazz 150/Mike Drost, Lucy's, Grand Haven, 6-8pm

Every Thursday

John Shea Trio, Legacy Winery & Spirits, 5400 School Ave, Hudsonville, 6-9 pm

Jazz Trio at Sandy Point Beach House, 6-9pm

Jazz Duo/Bands at Horrock's Market, Kentwood, 5-8pm

Jazz Duo/Trio at Testa Rossa, 6-9pm

Jazz Duo/Trio at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Jazz 4 All at The Alluvion,Traverse City, 6-8pm, Donation (Jeff Haas Trio with Laurie Sears)

Every Friday

Jazz Trio/Quartet at The Old Goat, 6-9:30pm

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

Every Saturday

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

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

Jazz Duo/Trio at Testa Rossa, 5:30-8:30pm

November 2026 Schedule

NOVEMBER 1 SUNDAY

Mary Rademacher with Tom and Cherie Hagen at Testa Rossa, 4:30-7:30pm

NOVEMBER 2 MONDAY

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

NOVEMBER 3 TUESDAY

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

Jeff Shoup with Guests, Pat Crowley and Dave Tatrow, at Moriarty's, Lansing 7-10pm

Mark Kahny, Music at Midday at Park Church, Movie Music from the Big Silver Screen, 12:15pm-12:45pm, lunch available before or after

NOVEMBER 4 WEDNESDAY

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

NOVEMBER 5 THURSDAY

River Rogues Jazz Band at Horrock's Market, 5-8pm

Michael Drost Trio at Sandy Point Beach House, West Olive, 6-9pm

Mark Kahny with the Eddie Curtis at Testa Rosa, 5:50-8:30 pm

NOVEMBER 6 FRIDAY

TBD at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Dr. Werkema/Drost/Lutley Trio at the JW Marriott 6-10 pm

Westbound Situation at The Block, 7:30pm, 360 W Western Ave 2nd floor, Muskegon, $37-57 https://westmichigansymphony.org/events/westbound-situation-chambergrass/

NOVEMBER 7 SATURDAY

Keith Hall Brazilian Jazz Trio at Horrock's Market, 5-8pm

NOVEMBER 8 SUNDAY

Big Band Nouveau the centennials of Miles Davis and John Coltrane at The Stray, 4253 Division Ave South, 5-7pm, Free admission

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

MSU Professors of Jazz with Rodney Whitaker, Carmen Bradford Erena Terakubo, Randy Napolean, Xavier Davis, Michael Reed, at Saugatuck Women's Club, 303 Butler St. Saugatuck, $25 at the door, $5 for students with ID, Tickets and Info: www.lakeshorejazzconnection.org

NOVEMBER 9 MONDAY

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

NOVEMBER 10 TUESDAY

WEST MICHIGAN JAZZ SOCIETY PRESENTS Tim Froncek and friends at Fountain St. Church, 7-9pm, members $10, non-members $15 at the door. Handicap parking code available

Mike Lutley Trio, Music at Midday at Park Church,12:15-12:50pm, lunch available before or after. P'king in church lot (usually fills up)

Jazz Around West Michigan (Cont.)

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

The Music of Slide Hampton with Aidan Clark and Miles Cole, at Moriarty's, Lansing, 7-10pm

Holland Concert Jazz Orchestra with Altin Sencalar, Trombone, in a side by side concert with the Holland, Holland Christian, West Ottawa, and Zeeland HS jazz bands, 7pm, DeWitt Auditorium, Zeeland EHS, 3333 96th Ave, Zeeland, $20 adults, students FREE, hcjo.ludus.com

NOVEMBER 11 WEDNESDAY

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

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

NOVEMBER 12 THURSDAY

Scott Pellegrom Trio at Sandy Point Beach House, West Olive, 6-9pm

Western MI Univ Jazz Orch and Jazz Lab Band: 42nd Annual Big Band Tribute, Dalton Center Recital Hall at WMU, 7:30 pm, Tickets $18, Senior $14, Faculty/Staff/Student $6 — purchase tickets

NOVEMBER 13 FRIDAY

Airmen of Note Big Band, Dalton Center Recital Hall at WMU, 7:30 pm, Free admission and tickets are required - reserve tickets

NOVEMBER 15 SUNDAY

Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra at Founders Brewing Co, 5:30-7:30 pm (reimbursed parking in their lot)

NOVEMBER 16 MONDAY

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

NOVEMBER 17 TUESDAY

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

Truth in Jazz Orchestra, Teddy Spaghetti's, 513 W Pontaluna, Norton Shores, 7:30pm, $10 cover/Students free

Paul Keller and Sarah D'Angelo with Ralph Tope, at Moriarty's, Lansing 7-10pm

NOVEMBER 18 WEDNESDAY

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

NOVEMBER 19 THURSDAY

BPM Jazz at Sandy Point Beach House, West Olive, 6-9pm

Dave Stryker at Jazz in the Crawl Space, Kalamazoo, 7 and 9pm shows, $20/$10

NOVEMBER 20 FRIDAY

John Shea Trio, Grattan Irish Pub, 11817 Old Belding Rd. Grattan, 7:30-10:30pm

Cat Daddy Jazz Trio at Horrock's Market, 5-8pm

NOVEMBER 21 SATURDAY

Fabiola Mendez at The Alluvion, Traverse City, 7:30-9:30pm, $30/$35

Candid Antics jazz fusion at Horrock's Market, 5-8pm

Neil Gordon and Tiffany Gridiron at the J.W. Marriott, 6:00 to 10:00 pm

WMU Advanced Jazz Ensemble, Dalton Center Recital Hall at WMU, 7:30 pm, Free

NOVEMBER 22 SUNDAY

Neil Gordon Trio at The Old Goat, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

NOVEMBER 23 MONDAY

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

NOVEMBER 24 TUESDAY

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

Sean Lebita Quartet at Moriarty's Pub, Lansing 7-10pm

NOVEMBER 25 WEDNESDAY

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

NOVEMBER 27 FRIDAY

John Shea Jazz Trio at Horrock's Market, 5-8pm

NOVEMBER 29 SUNDAY

The Alluvion Big Band performs 'Basie' at The Alluvion, 3pm, Traverse City. Directed by Bill Sears featuring vocalist Carmen Bradford. Donation at the door

NOVEMBER 30 MONDAY

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

WMU Jazz Combo Showcase, Dalton Center Recital Hall at WMU, 7:30 pm, Free

Join us for the WMJS Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 9, Noto's Restaurant

Featuring live music by Cherie Lynn Hagen, Tommy Hagen, Rob Hartman, Mike Lutley

Details and information coming soon. We hope to see you there!

The Backpage Gallery

Fountain Street Church for WMJS Jazz concert with the Edye Evans Hyde and Mike Hyde duet

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