



WMJS Board Members meet for the first in person board meeting since pre-COVID

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News from the Chair



Shannan Denison

Our final Monday night brought us beautiful weather, a stellar turnout, and a fantastic performance by Big Band Nouveau. It was exactly the kind of evening that reminds me why this series—and this jazz

community—is so special.

A huge thank-you goes to our super sound man, Kurt Ehinger, who added a little extra excitement to the evening by putting out a matching donation challenge for new and renewing WMJS

members. You answered the call, and together we added another \$450 to our coffers! Thank you, Kurt, and thank you to everyone who joined, renewed, donated, volunteered, brought a friend, or simply showed up this summer to support live jazz.

A New Chapter for the WMJS Board

August also marked another milestone: our first in-person WMJS Board meeting in years! It was wonderful to sit around the same table again, share ideas, laugh, plan, and talk about where we want to take this organization next.

We are especially delighted to welcome Vicki Travis to the Board. Vicki will be stepping into the role of Treasurer, and we welcome her with open arms! She is a longtime WMJS member

who brings many talents, great energy, and—most importantly—a genuine passion for the West Michigan Jazz Society and its future.

And speaking of our future, we decided it was time for WMJS to have a little more musical identity of its own!

The Board selected Jimmy Forrest's "Night Train" as our new theme song. And Jan Basham came up with a wonderful idea for a closing theme: "Isn't It Nice We Could All Get Together?"

How perfect is that for WMJS? Because at the end of the day, that is what jazz—and this organization—is all about: getting together.

Stay tuned. You may be hearing a lot more of both!

Next Stop: Celebrating Cherie!

Now we turn our attention to one of our favorite traditions: celebrating our 2026 Musician of the Year, Cherie Lynn Hagen, on September 8 at Fountain Street Church.

There is something wonderfully full-circle about gathering at Fountain Street Church to honor Cherie as we also look ahead to our Tuesday night jazz series returning there this fall. WMJS has always been about honoring the people

who built our jazz community while creating places for the music—and the next generation of musicians—to continue.

I hope you'll join us September 8 to celebrate Cherie, reconnect with your jazz family, and help us kick off the next chapter of WMJS.

From Jazz in the Park to Fountain Street and whatever comes next, thank you for continuing to Advance, Uphold and Sustain Live Jazz

through Promotion, Performance and Education.

And, as our possible new closing theme reminds us...

Isn't it nice we could all get together?

With gratitude and a whole lot of jazz,

Shannan Denison
President
West Michigan Jazz Society

A Hundred Years of Becoming



Juan Daniel Castro

One hundred years ago, two men were born who changed how we hear music. Miles Davis arrived May 26, 1926, in Alton, Illinois. John Coltrane arrived September 23, 1926, in Hamlet, North Carolina. We mark their centennials this month, not as nostalgia but as recognition. Nostalgia looks backward with longing. Recognition looks backward to understand what's still unfolding.

What's still unfolding: the music these two men made keeps breathing.

In a centennial year, everyone reaches for busts and plaques, for the language of legacy. The comparison to Bach and Beethoven comes automatically. There's truth in it, but the framework carries assumptions worth examining. It was built to center one version of history and push others to the margins.

The philosopher Enrique Dussel spent his career arguing that modernity didn't originate in Europe. Europe positioned itself as the center, he said, by erasing what came before. The ancient, the indigenous, the African weren't prologue to Western civilization. They were civilizations in their own right. Europe didn't discover a new world. It covered an old one.

Music followed the same pattern.

When Spitzer puts music at 300,000 years old, he's not adding a footnote. He's pulling the assumed starting point out from under us. The music Coltrane and Miles carried didn't

originate in New Orleans at the turn of the twentieth century, though it flowered there with extraordinary power. Its most direct roots reach deep into West and Central Africa, carried forward by the Yoruba, Fon, and Kongo peoples whose descendants built this music. And Spitzer reminds us that those roots reach back 300,000 years, to the very beginning of what it means to be human.

Calling jazz Black music isn't just a political claim, though it's that too. It's a historical one. The people who created jazz inherited the world's oldest continuous musical tradition, carried it across the Atlantic under conditions of extraordinary brutality, and transformed it through suffering and genius into something the world had never quite heard and hasn't stopped hearing since.

Coltrane carried that knowledge in his body. His later recordings, the ones that still unsettle and illuminate, don't sound like a man extending a tradition. They sound like a man returning to something. A Love Supreme isn't a jazz record in the conventional sense. It's a devotional act, closer to ancient sacred music than to anything the Western conservatory produced. Listening to Coltrane, you hear someone who traveled so far forward that he arrived somewhere very old.

Miles arrived differently, which made their conversation so generative. Where Coltrane moved toward the devotional, Miles moved toward the present moment. He had a constitutional restlessness, a refusal to let the music harden into something safely archivable. He watched what happened when institutions absorbed Black creativity. He had no interest in becoming a monument while he still breathed.

Together they held a tension that remains unresolved and productive. Coltrane pulling toward the eternal. Miles pulling toward the immediate. Between them, the full argument for what jazz has always been. Not a genre. Not a chapter in American cultural history. Not the classical music of any particular civilization. A living practice rooted in the oldest human wisdom, shaped by the specific and irreplaceable experience of Black life, capacious enough to hold grief and joy and protest and prayer and silence all at once.

A hundred years measures a long span in one sense. In another, almost nothing. The pulse that moved through Coltrane's saxophone and Miles's trumpet was already ancient when they were born. It will keep moving long after the centennial tributes are written and the commemorative concerts conclude.

We recognize them this month not just because of their greatness, though that's undeniable. We recognize them because they understood what they carried and chose to carry it anyway, with everything they had, for as long as they lived.

The music has always asked that of the people who play it.

It still asks.

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

Jazz Jam with Tommy Pancy at Speciation, 5-8pm

Live Music (variety) at Testa Rossa, 5-8pm

Every Monday

SOLO piano/vocal at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Every Tuesday

Jazz band & Jam at Moriarty's, Lansing, 7-10pm

SOLO piano/vocal at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Every Wednesday

Dutcher Snedeker at The Old Goat, 6-9pm

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

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

Every Thursday

Live Music (variety) at Testa Rossa, 5:30-8:30pm

DUO or TRIO at The Old Goat, 5:30-8:30pm

Every Friday

TRIO or 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

Live Music at Testa Rossa, 5:30-8:30pm

September 2026 Schedule

Tuesday, September 1

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

Wednesday, September 2

John Shea Trio, Social House, 6-9pm

Big Fun Unplugged [Quintet], Faro, Northport, 6-8pm

Thursday, September 3

Rogues Jazz Band, Horrocks Market, 5-8pm, outdoor Beer Garden Cafe

Greg Scheer and Outside Pocket, The Old Goat, 6-9pm

Friday, September 4

Ravi Coltrane Quartet, The Alluvion, Traverse City, 7pm and 9pm shows, \$50/advance, \$55/door

Saturday, September 5

Detroit Jazz Festival [Fri/Sat/Sun]

Sunday, September 6

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

Tuesday, September 8

Musician of the Year Party [Honoring Cherie Hagen], Fountain St Church, 6:30-9pm, \$25-75 Tickets

Wednesday, September 9

Robin Connell Trio, Faro, Northport, 6-8pm

Thursday, September 10

Nelson Oliva-Ben Schmidt-Swartz Quintet, Jazz in the Crawlspce, 315 W Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, 7pm and 9pm shows, \$20 Adult / \$10 Student [Day of \$25 / \$15]

Greg Scheer and Outside Pocket, The Old Goat, 6-9pm

Jeff Haas Sextet, The Alluvion, 5:30-8pm, 'Honor' Cover [no tickets]

Friday, September 11

Mark Kahny Trio at Park Congregational Church, 190th Church Anniversary Reception, 6-9pm

Sunday, September 13

GRJO [Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra], Friesian Horse Farm, 10388 Kalamazoo Ave, Caledonia, 5:30-7:30pm

Mark Kahny at The Old Goat, 5-8pm

Monday, September 14

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

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

Tuesday, September 15

John Shea Trio, Real Seafood Co., 6-9pm

TJO [Truth in Jazz Orchestra], Teddy Spaghetti's, 513 W Pontaluna, Norton Shores, 7:30pm, \$10 cover

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

Wednesday, September 16

John Shea Trio, Social House, 6-9pm

Big Fun Unplugged [Quintet], Faro, Northport, 6-8pm

Thursday, September 17

Jeff Haas Sextet, The Alluvion, 5:30-8pm, 'Honor' Cover [no tickets]

Friday, September 18

Nate Smith Quartet, The Alluvion, 7pm and 9pm shows, \$50/advance, \$55/door

Sunday, September 20

GRJO [Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra], Founders Brewery, 235 Cesar Chavez Ave SW, 5:30-7:30pm

Jazz Around West Michigan (Cont.)

Holland Concert Jazz Orchestra at the VanderLinde bandshell (Kollen Park), Lake Macatawa, Holland, 3pm

Jazz Brasileiro, Saugatuck Woman's Club, 303 Butler, Saugatuck, MI 4pm, \$25. Presented by the Lakeshore Jazz Connection

Monday, September 21

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

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

Tuesday, September 22

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

Wednesday, September 23

Jeff Haas Trio, Faro, Northport, 6-8pm

Thursday, September 24

Jeff Haas Sextet, The Alluvion, 5:30-8pm, 'Honor' Cover [no tickets]

Friday, September 25

Tiffany Gridiron Quartet, Red Cedar Spirits, East Lansing, 7:30-10:30pm

Saturday, September 26

Neil Gordon and Tiffany Gridiron, JW Marriott, 6-10pm

Leelanau Uncaged [Street Festival], Northport

Robin Connell - Paul Brewer Quintet, 2:30pm

OTHER jazz groups (Times TBA):

Organissimo, Interlochen, **Jeff Haas Nonet**, NMC Jazz Band

Sunday, September 27

GRJO [Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra], 1st Presbyterian Church, Grand Haven, 4-5pm, FREE

Monday, September 28

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

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

Tuesday, September 29

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

Wednesday, September 30

John Shea Trio, Social House, 6-9pm

Big Fun Unplugged [Quintet], Faro, Northport, 6-8pm

- ☐ **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** \$_____

Become a member of WMJS

Name

If a dual membership, BOTH names must be listed

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

Phone

Interested in
volunteering for
the WMJS?



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



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

Jazz in the Park Scrapbook

August 3
Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra



Jazz in the Park Scrapbook (Cont.)

August 10
Jeff Shoup Group



Jazz in the Park Scrapbook (Cont.)

August 17
Big Band Nouveau



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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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by the 15th of the month

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