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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GRandJazzFest announces opportunity for jazz students to join fest lineup

GRandJazzFest's Steve Hilger and TrioJazz will hold "jam" sessions to audition student talent

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – FEB. 27, 2013 – GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation announces a special opportunity for jazz-performance students to be considered for the 2013 festival lineup by "auditioning" as part of jam sessions put on by TrioJazz, led by local jazz artist Steve Hilger.

"We're looking for the top student talent from the region to showcase at GRandJazzFest," said Hilger, who is part of the festival's artist selection committee for 2013. "Those students who are selected will be invited to participate in special performance that we are including in our festival lineup."

Students high school age and up are eligible to "audition" by joining Hilger and other members of the TrioJazz band for informal jam sessions every second and fourth Thursday night starting at 7 p.m. at Noto's Old World Italian Dining, 6600 28th St. SE.

"One of our goals in year two of the festival is to increase the educational aspect – to broaden awareness of jazz as a great American art form to diverse audiences and to provide a platform to celebrate up-and-coming jazz talent," GRandJazzFest Founder Audrey Sundstrom said.

Hilger's The Steve Hilger Jazz Quintet performed at the 2012 GRandJazzFest. He and other TrioJazz members – Steve Talaga on keyboard, and Randy Marsh or Evan Hyde on drums – will play back-up for the students who join them at the improvisational sessions at Noto's. They will evaluate the top student talent over the next several months (between now and the end of June), ultimately selecting between five and 10 students for the special performance at the 2013 GRandjazzFest.

"The basic requirement is that the student is pursuing some kind of jazz studies at the high school, college or personal-instructor level and is still an amateur performer," Hilger said. "We're encouraging both young people as well as 'non-traditional' students who might have started playing jazz later in life."

Those who are interested in participating can show up at Noto's. High school students should be accompanied by a parent. There is no sign up and no charge.



“Students don’t need to show up every time – just enough for us to get to know them. This is a great opportunity for students to showcase their talents and perform in front of a large audience,” Hilger said.

A drum kit, keyboard and amplifiers are provided. Students are welcome to bring their own guitar, bass or horns.

Hilger, a Grand Rapids attorney, brings his own experience and memories to the “competition.” He attended high school in New Jersey for several years where his band director played “gigs” in nearby New York City. The band director personally knew such jazz greats as Count Basie and Doc Severinsen and would arrange for these legends to hold jazz clinics with her students – Hilger among them. Hilger played trumpet in high school and picked up guitar in college.

More information on GRandJazzFest – including the upcoming schedule and sponsorship/volunteer opportunities – can be found at www.grandjazzfest.org, and at the festival’s Facebook and Twitter sites – www.facebook.com/grandjazzfest and www.twitter.com/grandjazzfest.

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About GRandJazzFest

GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation is a community event of the nonprofit organization “GR and Jazz” founded in 2012, with the purpose of promoting and bringing awareness of jazz and related arts to new and diverse audiences through educational programs and community events. GRandJazzFest 2013 is a FREE weekend-long event that runs Saturday, Aug. 17, from noon until 10 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 18, from noon p.m. to 7 p.m., featuring jazz artists who are primarily Michigan-based. GRandJazzFest brings together notable jazz performers as well as highlights up-and-coming artists for diverse audiences. GRandJazzFest is being held at Rosa Parks Circle, a central location in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, where attendees can enjoy music, support local businesses and visit other Grand Rapids attractions. The festival is FREE. More information at www.grandjazzfest.org.