



Saturday, August 18, 2012
Rosa Parks Circle, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Media Contact:
Molly Klimas
616-443-4647
klimas@intentpr.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grand Rapids, West Michigan get ready for first GRandJazzFest

Organizers, entertainers release schedule for full day and evening of FREE jazz performances slated for Saturday, Aug. 18

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – AUGUST 7, 2012 – Organizers of GRandJazzFest, presented by DTE Energy Foundation, have announced the schedule for the inaugural GRandJazzFest being held in downtown Grand Rapids at Rosa Parks Circle on Aug. 18:

- 12 noon – Festival starts
- 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. – Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra with Edye Evans Hyde
- 2 p.m. - 3 p.m. – Walt Gutowski & The Bridge Street Band with Michelle Covington
- 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. – Grupo Ayé
- 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. – The Steve Hilger Jazz Quintet
- 6:45 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. – Phil Denny
- 8:15 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. – Tim Bowman (headline act)
- 10 p.m. – Festival concludes

Emceeding GRandJazzFest is WZZM 13's Eddie Rucker. A huge jazz fan, Rucker is known in West Michigan for her work producing WZZM 13's Take Five program. She is also a member of the Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority's Community Inclusion Group.

2526 Summit Ridge Drive NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505
Website: grandjazzfest.org Email: grandjazzfest@gmail.com Phone: 616-617-7720



Saturday, August 18, 2012
Rosa Parks Circle, Grand Rapids, Michigan

“We’re thrilled to have Eddie emceeding GRandJazzFest,” Festival Chair Audrey Sundstrom said. “With her expertise and enthusiasm, she is the perfect choice.”

Renowned guitarist Tim Bowman of Detroit will headline GRandJazzFest. Bowman, an extraordinary contemporary jazz guitarist who headlined the 2007 Guitars and Saxes Tour, was named Billboard’s 2009 Top 10 Smooth Jazz Artist of the Year and, at the Dubai International Jazz Festival, was named Best Guitarist of 2010.

Grupo Ayé, formed by percussionist Robert Mulligan, brings Latin jazz and more to the stage. Grupo Ayé specializes in Afro-Cuban music, which blends salsa, Latin jazz, bachata and merengue. Joining Mulligan will be Oscar Gonzalez, Daniel Montejo, Steve Talaga, Tom Lockwood, James Rodriguez, Brad Fowler, Peter Nelson and Jordan Richards.

The Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra for more than 35 years has been one of Michigan’s premier jazz ensembles, featuring some of the finest musicians in the area playing swinging original compositions and arrangements as well as traditional favorites. **Accompanying GRJO will be well-known vocalist Edye Evans Hyde**, who delights audiences of all ages. GRJO is led by Manager Bob Nixon and Musical Director Tim Froncek.

The Steve Hilger Jazz Quintet of Grand Rapids plays versions of jazz standards as well as original works. Steve Hilger, who heads up the band, has been a singer-songwriter since the mid-1970s; he’s joined by John Gist, Steve Talaga, Randy Marsh, Charlie Hoats, Paul Brewer, Chris Lawrence and Rob Mulligan.

Saxophonist Phil Denny is another major performer in the GRandJazzFest lineup. Denny, of Lansing, was a featured performer at the 2012 Dubai International Jazz Festival. In July he released his first album, Crossover.



Saturday, August 18, 2012
Rosa Parks Circle, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Walt Gutowski & The Bridge Street Band, accompanied by vocalist Michelle Covington, will perform at GRandJazzFest. Joining Gutowski and Covington on stage will be Mark Weymouth, Robert Pace, JR Simmons, Walt Gutowski III, Isaac Norris and Don Newton.

“We hope festival-goers will enjoy the musical journey with these diverse Michigan-local artists, and take time between sets to experience some of the wonderful restaurants, bars, shops and museums that downtown Grand Rapids has to offer,” Sundstrom said.

In addition to presenting sponsor DTE Energy Foundation, sponsors include the Downtown Development Authority, GR and Jazz, IntentPR, Hilger Hammond, Downtown Alliance, Ferris State University, Gilmore Collection, Grand Rapids-Kent County Convention/Arena Authority, Meijer, MikeJuly.com, ShutterWerks Media, Swift Printing, WGVU and the West Michigan Jazz Society. The complete sponsor list and Friends of GRandJazzFest can be found at <http://grandjazzfest.org/sponsors/current-sponsors/>.

GRandJazzFest is organized by GR and Jazz, a nonprofit organization founded and led by Sundstrom and a board dedicated to jazz in Grand Rapids. GR and Jazz also has collaborated with a team of additional jazz aficionados including local business and community leaders and the West Michigan Jazz Society.

More information on GRandJazzFest 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.

###



Saturday, August 18, 2012
Rosa Parks Circle, Grand Rapids, Michigan

MEDIA:

- An Electronic Press Kit, including images of performers and GRandJazzFest's logo, poster and program, will be posted in our online newsroom at <http://grandjazzfest.org/newsroom/>.
- Please contact Molly Klimas at 616-443-4647 or Klimas@intentpr.com if you would like to set up interviews with any of the GRandJazzFest performers and/or the festival organizers.
- **RESERVED PARKING FOR MEDIA DAY OF FESTIVAL TO BE FORTHCOMING FROM MOLLY KLIMAS.**

About GRandJazzFest

GRandJazzFest 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 is a FREE one-day event on Saturday, Aug. 18, 2012, from noon until 10 p.m., featuring jazz artists who are 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. GRandJazzFest has collaborated with the West Michigan Jazz Society (WMJS), which is the 501(c)3 fiduciary organization for the festival. More information at www.grandjazzfest.org.

About West Michigan Jazz Society

The West Michigan Jazz Society (WMJS) is one of the most successful jazz societies in the United States. With stable membership well in excess of 500, the WMJS is responsible for the organization of more than 20 major jazz concerts and events in Grand Rapids each year. The late Betty Forrest (former wife of the great saxophonist Jimmy Forrest) formed the WMJS 26 years ago as a mechanism for the promotion of live jazz and a means of supporting and fostering young jazz talent. For the past quarter of a century, the WMJS has carried out this mission with indubitable success, regularly employing hundreds of West Michigan's talented jazz musicians, and supporting dozens of student musicians through scholarships and performance opportunities. The major focus of the WMJS as promoters of live jazz over recent years has been the Jazz at the Zoo Series, which presents 10 weekly concerts throughout the summer in John Ball Park to audiences of 1,200-1,500 each night; and the Jazz Gumbo Series, which features monthly concerts through the winter. In addition, the WMJS arranges a live jazz holiday party and the Musician of the Year event each year. More information at <http://www.wmichjazz.org/>.