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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Get ready for the FREE GRandJazzFest Aug. 15-16 in downtown Grand Rapids

***Festival organizers announce schedule, have more in store
for 4th annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy
Foundation***

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – JULY 29, 2015 – **GRandJazzFest** presented by DTE Energy Foundation brings 10 diverse jazz performance acts to the Rosa Parks Circle stage in downtown Grand Rapids this Aug. 15-16 at West Michigan's only free, weekend-long jazz festival.

The schedule is posted on GRandJazzFest's brand-new website at <http://grandjazzfest.org/>.

This year's headline act brings together three internationally acclaimed musicians – Paul Brown and Nate Harasim with special guest Deon Yates – under the billing “The Producers.” Nine additional artists and bands perform over the course of the free two-day festival, bringing all kinds of jazz music to the Rosa Parks Circle stage. The performers were announced April 29 on the eve of International Jazz Day.

In addition to the music, organizers are excited to announce new opportunities for fun at this year's festival.

2526 Summit Ridge Drive NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505
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"The fourth annual GRandJazzFest has something for everyone – a Family Guitar Tent, free face painting for the kids, an After Party at The B.O.B., not to mention all kinds of jazz music. Best of all, GRandJazzFest is free – and the ability to keep the festival free and expand it to include additional activities is thanks to our generous sponsors," GRandJazzFest Founder Audrey Sundstrom said

Since the festival's inception, **DTE Energy Foundation** has been the presenting sponsor.

"GRandJazzFest is one of the most diverse and well-attended events in West Michigan. As a major event, it has established its own name on the jazz scene in Michigan and the Midwest," DTE Energy Regional Manager Roger Royer said. "DTE Energy Foundation is proud to support the diversity and vibrancy that GRandJazzFest brings to downtown. We've been so pleased with the past three GRandJazzFests and look forward to the fourth annual event!"

More than 10,000 people attended the 2014 festival.

The **City of Grand Rapids** named GRandJazzFest one of its City-co-sponsored events in 2013, the festival's second year. It's been a co-sponsor ever since.

Recently, GRandJazzFest along with ArtPrize was recently named a **Signature Event by Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI)** for having wide appeal and attracting significant numbers of people to downtown. The events "include aspects that provide a significant public benefit to the community," DGRI said. (To learn more, read the DGRI memo: <http://grandjazzfest.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/DDA-05-Signature-Event-Sponsorships-1.pdf>.)

Here's what's in store for this year's GRandJazzFest in addition to the 10 jazz performance acts over two days:

Family Guitar Tent and drawing for two guitars

A special guitar tent will be stocked with guitars provided by the Godin and Cordoba guitar companies where people can learn about guitars and try them out. GRandJazzFest performing artist Bryan Lubeck will be there between shows to meet and greet, do demonstrations and give some tips and tricks – all ages and skill levels can drop by and try out a guitar for the first time or even jam if experienced. Godin and Cordoba are each donating a guitar for which GRandJazzFest attendees can enter a drawing



for them at the tent. Drawings will take place on Saturday and Sunday during the festival and the winners must be present to win.

Free face painting for the kids

The kids can get their faces painted for free by Fancy Faces. This year, there will be two face-painting artists at Rosa Parks Circle.

The B.O.B. hosts a GRandJazzFest After Party

Gilmore Collection is one of GRandJazzFest's major sponsors and Gilmore Collection venue The B.O.B. – just a block away from Rosa Parks Circle – hosts a GRandJazzFest After Party on Saturday, Aug. 15. The fun starts after the last performance act at Rosa Parks Circle ends its set (around 10 p.m.). On tap at The B.O.B. will be some food and drink specials, a chance to win a dining tour of the nine Gilmore Collection restaurants (a \$400 value) and a jam session with the Mike Frost Project 2.0 band.

Bike racks and cold bottled water for those who pedal to the fest

Bike racks provided by the Greater Grand Rapids Bicycle Coalition will be at the Rosa Parks Circle venue so bike riders can stow and self-lock their bikes. Bike riders will receive a ticket for a free bottle of water from the main festival tent when they stow their bike at the corral. Those who are riding bikes can check out these links for helpful info:

- <http://www.bikegrandrapids.org/>
- <http://beta.downtowngr.org/get/biking>

More tips

Get there early

Festival organizers recommend getting there early – especially if you love big band music. Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra with Edye Evans Hyde kicks off the festival, which starts at noon on Saturday, Aug. 15. The festival continues with all kinds of jazz – Latin, contemporary, straight ahead and more – going until about 10 p.m. that night. The festival continues Sunday, Aug. 16, starting at 1 p.m. with more big band style music by Big Band Nouveau and an array of other diverse acts and jazz styles. On Sunday the festival goes until about 7 p.m. Download the complete 2015 GRandJazzFest schedule at <http://grandjazzfest.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2015-GRandJazzFest-Handbill.pdf>.



Plan your visit

If you're coming from out of town – or even if you're from West Michigan – here are some links to plan your visit:

- GRandJazzFest's Plan Your Visit page - <http://grandjazzfest.org/plan-your-visit/>
- Experience Grand Rapids - <http://www.experiencegr.com/>
- Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. (DGRI) - <http://beta.downtowngr.org/>
- Pure Michigan - <http://www.michigan.org/events/grandjazzfest/>

Plus, it's Restaurant Week during GRandJazzFest! Learn more about Restaurant Week at <http://www.experiencegr.com/restaurants/restaurant-week/>.

What to bring

Bring **lawn chairs**, **mini-coolers** if you want, and **sunscreen** – the venue is a sunny, open area with some shady areas around the perimeter. The fest's main tent will have bottled water for sale, and there are plenty of places surrounding Rosa Parks Circle to grab a quick bite and beverage.

Also: Bring your **smart phone** if you have one – GRandJazzFest has launched a new website that automatically “optimizes” to mobile phones and tablets, which makes it easy to find the fest schedule and more.

Make a weekend of it!

The **Amway Grand Plaza Hotel** – also a GRandJazzFest sponsor – is offering a special GRandJazzFest rate of \$149/night available for Friday, Aug. 14, Saturday, Aug. 15, and Sunday, Aug. 16. Fest-goers are encouraged to book their rooms before they're gone – there are a number of other events occurring in Grand Rapids the same weekend. Book with the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel at <http://bit.ly/1MgfuZA>.

View all of GRandJazzFest's sponsors and friends at <http://grandjazzfest.org/sponsors/>.

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.

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About GRandJazzFest

GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation is a community event of the nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization “GR and Jazz”

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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 2015 is a FREE weekend-long event that runs Saturday, Aug. 15, from noon until 10 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 16, from 1 p.m. to 8 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.

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