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## 5th annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation announces 2016 dates

- *Lineup of this year's performers to be revealed at H.O.M.E. at The B.O.B. on April 27, part of International Jazz Day celebrations*
- *GR and Jazz (the nonprofit, all-volunteer-run producer of the festival) collaborates with GRAM to create GRandJazzFest VIP area at the 2016 festival*

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – MARCH 2, 2016 – **GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation returns to Rosa Parks Circle in downtown Grand Rapids, Mich., this Aug. 20 and 21**, for the fifth annual festival. The popular family-friendly festival, which attracted more than 10,000 people last year, is West Michigan's only free, weekend-long jazz festival. **The two-day festival will again be free** because of Presenting Sponsor DTE Energy Foundation, the City of Grand Rapids and other sponsoring organizations and individuals.

"Grand Rapids and West Michigan have embraced GRandJazzFest," Founder Audrey Sundstrom said. "We're proud to say GRandJazzFest is one of the most diverse, community-oriented festivals for people who live here, who travel here, and who want to enjoy two days of great live music in a vibrant downtown setting. THIS is what community is all about."

Each year, GRandJazzFest has been held at Rosa Parks Circle in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids to enable festival-goers to take in all that downtown has to offer: restaurants, clubs, museums, microbreweries and shops. The festival typically occurs during [Restaurant Week in Grand Rapids](#). The festival's location provides easy access to those who ride the bus, walk or bike, and is also close to parking.



DTE Energy Foundation returns as the Presenting Sponsor for the fifth year in a row. “We relish the opportunity to support the communities we serve, and are proud to make this weekend of great music in downtown Grand Rapids free for the public. GRandJazzFest not only brings world-class jazz music to West Michigan – it also is a great opportunity to show off all that Grand Rapids and West Michigan offer, which helps the community prosper,” said Mark Stiers, president and chief operating officer, DTE Gas.

**GR and Jazz (the non-profit, all-volunteer-run producer of GRandJazzFest) is pleased to announce a special collaboration with the Grand Rapids Art Museum:** Under an agreement with GRAM, the festival’s VIP area will be located on the GRAM front terrace where refreshments and snacks will be provided. The VIP area is for sponsors of GRandJazzFest. Additionally, GRAM will have an outdoor bar area set up at the base of its front steps adjoining Rosa Parks Circle for attendees who would like to purchase and consume refreshments and enjoy the festival.

**The 2016 festival lineup will be announced on April 27 at the House of Entertainment and Music (H.O.M.E.) at The B.O.B.** That night at H.O.M.E., the band *Evidence* led by saxophonist Michael Doyle takes the stage. *Evidence* performed at the 2014 GRandJazzFest.

“Although our festival is one weekend out of the year, we love how jazz is really a year-round passion around West Michigan, including at places like The B.O.B. We’re excited about a fun evening and a great way to reveal our 2016 lineup to jazz fans on April 27,” Sundstrom said.

Like last year’s reveal, festival organizers will coordinate with leaders at [International Jazz Day](#) to include GRandJazzFest’s reveal announcement as a sanctioned International Jazz Day event.

At the 2016 festival in August, 11 diverse jazz artists and bands will perform, including a student jazz band and two major headline acts.

Free face painting by Fancy Faces will be available for kids and, if lines aren’t too long, for “kids at heart.”

“DTE Energy Foundation is proud to support the diversity and vibrancy that GRandJazzFest brings to downtown,” said DTE Energy Corporate and Government Affairs Regional Manager Scotty Kehoe. “The past four GRandJazzFests have been amazing, and we look forward to the fifth annual event! It’s become one of the main events of the summer in West Michigan!”

Grand Rapids city commissioners approved GRandJazzFest as one of 24 events that it will co-sponsor in 2016, a distinction only given to events that have proven to be successful and enrich the community. GRandJazzFest 2015 received distinction as a Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. Signature Event along with two other festivals, ArtPrize and LaughFest.



In addition to DTE Energy Foundation, the City of Grand Rapids, and GRAM, sponsors for the 2016 event to date include GR and Jazz, IntentPR, Gilmore Collection, Comcast, Hilger Hammond, Amway Hotel Corporation, Experience Grand Rapids, ICON Sign, Meijer, Moxie Men Incorporated, Hungerford Nichols, WGUV, Steelcase and Clark Hill. Sponsorship opportunities are available at <http://grandjazzfest.org/sponsors/>.

“We are so grateful to all of our sponsors for their support – we could not do it without them,” Sundstrom said. “We’re seeking additional sponsors to help us bring a full weekend of FREE, family-friendly live jazz performances to West Michigan!”

People can get a taste of past GRandJazzFests by viewing the “recap” videos here: <http://grandjazzfest.org/newsroom/video/>

More information on the 5<sup>th</sup> annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation can be found at [www.grandjazzfest.org](http://www.grandjazzfest.org), and at the festival’s Facebook and Twitter sites – [www.facebook.com/grandjazzfest](http://www.facebook.com/grandjazzfest) and [www.twitter.com/grandjazzfest](http://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” 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 2016 is a FREE weekend-long event that runs Saturday, Aug. 20, from noon until 10 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 21, from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., featuring notable jazz artists, including many who are Michigan-based. GRandJazzFest brings together acclaimed jazz performers as well as highlights emerging 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](http://www.grandjazzfest.org).

#### **About the DTE Energy Foundation**

The DTE Energy Foundation is the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy, continuing the legacy of community support and involvement of its electric and natural gas utilities, which serve 2.1 million electric customers in Southeast Michigan and 1.2 million natural gas customers across Michigan. In 2015, the DTE Energy Foundation provided \$15 million in grant support to nonprofits throughout the company’s service territories. As one of Michigan’s leading corporate citizens, DTE Energy is a force for growth and prosperity in the 450 Michigan communities it serves in a variety of ways, including philanthropy, volunteerism and economic progress. <http://www.dteenergy.com/foundation>.