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Electronic press kit with performers' photos, bios and more: <http://bit.ly/2pdB0d0>

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GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation announces 2017 lineup

> *Saxophonist Richard Elliot to headline 6th annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation*

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – April 26, 2017 – GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation has announced the performance lineup for the sixth annual festival being held Saturday, Aug. 19, and Sunday, Aug. 20, at Rosa Parks Circle in Grand Rapids. Festival organizers announced the lineup at a Lineup Reveal Party held April 26 at H.O.M.E. at The B.O.B. in downtown Grand Rapids as part of International Jazz Day.

Eleven diverse acts are on tap for West Michigan's only free, weekend-long jazz festival coming up the third weekend in August. Saxophonist Richard Elliot headlines the festival. The complete performance lineup for the August event in order of appearance:

SATURDAY, AUG. 19

1. Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra with Edye Evans Hyde, 12:30 p.m.
2. Terry Lower / Jazz Expedition Sextet, 2 p.m.
3. Ed Stone and the Flowmasters, 3:30 p.m.
4. Tumbao Bravo, 5 p.m.
5. Bryan Lubeck, 6:30 p.m.
6. **HEADLINER - Richard Elliot, 8 p.m.**

SUNDAY, AUG. 20

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Website: grandjazzfest.org Email: grandjazzfest@gmail.com Phone: 616-617-7720



1. Jazz Student Band - Blushing Monk, 1 p.m.
2. The Isaac Norris Project, 2:30 p.m.
3. organissimo, 4 p.m.
4. Four80East, 5:30 p.m.
5. Nate Harasim & NILS featuring Brandon Willis, 7 p.m.

"We're thrilled to have Richard Elliot headline the sixth annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation!" GRandJazzFest Founder Audrey Sundstrom said. "He's a huge name in the jazz and R&B world. We can't wait for the energy that he'll bring to the stage!"

Scotland-born, L.A.-based Elliot is one of 11 performers and bands who will play throughout the two-day weekend. The eclectic array of jazz performances includes genres from big band to straight-ahead, contemporary to Latin-Cuban and more.

"We have music for everyone," Sundstrom said. "The great thing about jazz is there are so many types. Our goal is to spread the love of jazz in all its forms."

In addition to kicking off the festival as always with the acclaimed Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra and Edey Evans Hyde performing vocals, several acts make return appearances at GRandJazzFest: Tumbao Bravo, organissimo, Nate Harasim and Bryan Lubeck. A student jazz band also will perform.

"GRandJazzFest has truly become one of the region's most important cultural and community events, and DTE Energy Foundation has been a proud sponsor since the beginning," said Mark Stiers, president and chief operating officer, DTE Gas. "Not only does the festival bring world-class music to West Michigan, it supports the economy in so many ways. Our investment in GRandJazzFest is one of the wonderful ways we show our commitment to the communities where we live and serve."

GRandJazzFest announced this year's lineup on April 26 as part of International Jazz Day celebrations taking place worldwide honoring the great American art form. The Steve Hilger Jazz Quartet – which has performed at past GRandJazzFests – played April 26 at H.O.M.E. Learn more about International Jazz Day at <http://jazzday.com>.

The two-day GRandJazzFest festival will again be free thanks to presenting sponsor DTE Energy Foundation, the City of Grand Rapids, Gilmore Collection, GR and Jazz, IntentPR, Corporate Live, Grand Rapids Art Museum, Amway Hotel Corporation, Experience Grand Rapids, Icon Sign, Matt Huizenga Videography, Meijer, MoxieMen, Steelcase, Configura, Fancy Faces, Grand Rapids Community College, Hilger Hammond, Kitchen 67, Levens Strand & Glover, Rick and Mary



Stevens, Rockford Construction, Swift Printing, WGVU, and other sponsoring organizations and individuals. Sponsors are still needed – please see <http://grandjazzfest.org/give/> for more information on how to be a sponsor.

People can get a taste of past GRandJazzFests by viewing the “recap” videos here: <http://grandjazzfest.org/newsroom/video/>. More information on the 6th annual GRandJazzFest presented by DTE Energy Foundation 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, AUG. 19 – LINEUP:

HEADLINER – RICHARD ELLIOT

Scotland-born, Los Angeles-raised veteran saxophonist **Richard Elliot** is the 2017 GRandJazzFest headliner, taking the Rosa Parks Circle stage Saturday, Aug. 19, at 8 p.m. Long known as the “James Brown of Contemporary Jazz” for the intense soul inspirations of his recordings, Elliot has added GRandJazzFest to his relentless tour schedule. Audiences love Elliot’s joyfully exhausting onstage performances, digging deep into his R&B and jazz roots. Infectious melodies and funky grooves flow and follow a two-word mantra – *Rock Steady* – the name of his highly anticipated debut on Artistry Music. With a bestselling discography of more than 15 recordings since 1986’s *Initial Approach*, thousands of live dates spanning over two decades and one of the largest and most loyal fan bases in contemporary urban jazz, it’s incredible to hear Elliot declare: “What I’m doing now, enjoying this upward trend in my career, is seriously the most fun I have ever had.” The multi-talented tenor-man, composer and producer has been on one of the most incredible rolls of his career since the 2005 release of *Metro Blue*, which debuted at No. 2 on Billboard’s Contemporary Jazz chart. More at <http://www.richardelliott.com/>

GRAND RAPIDS JAZZ ORCHESTRA WITH VOCALIST EDYE EVANS HYDE

In keeping with tradition, GRandJazzFest opens its sixth annual festival with **Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra with vocalist Edye Evans Hyde**. For more than 36 years, the Grand Rapids Jazz Orchestra 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. 2011 West Michigan Jazz Society Musician of the Year Edye Evans Hyde has been singing jazz, blues and pop music for more than 30 years in West Michigan, Los Angeles, Asia and Europe. Over the years, Evans Hyde has shared the stage with world-renowned blues singer Linda Hopkins, pop singer Michael Bolton, vocalist Maria Muldaur, actress Connie Stevens, the late Ray Charles and Cuban trumpet player Arturo Sandoval. More at <http://www.grjo.com> and <http://edyeevanshyde.com>.

TERRY LOWER / JAZZ EXPEDITION SEXTET



Terry Lower / Jazz Expedition Sextet is next in the Saturday lineup at the festival. Lower, a virtuoso jazz pianist, has been a fixture on the Michigan jazz scene for over 30 years. He's also performed outside the USA including stints on Carnival and Costa Cruise Lines and two concert tours in Italy. In 2016, Terry was named West Michigan Jazz Society's Musician of the Year. Joining Lower on the Jazz Expedition Sextet will be Rob Smith on trumpet, Michael Dease on trombone, Jim Hayward on saxophone, Ray Tini on bass and Larry Ochiltree on drums. More at <http://www.terrylowermusic.com/>.

ED STONE AND THE FLOWMASTERS

Ed Stone and the Flowmasters also performs Saturday at GRandJazzFest. Stone, a jazz guitarist and vocalist, has played in numerous Top 40 groups and brings his songwriting and music to national audiences. Joining Stone are the Flowmasters, with bass, drums and a keyboard for a smooth jazz show. They've performed at the New Center Park Summer Music Series, Idlewild Music Festival, Belle Isle Jazz Concert Series and at many other venues nationwide. More at www.edsterlingstone.com.

TUMBAO BRAVO

Tumbao Bravo returns to the GRandJazzFest stage for an encore performance after rain – and even a tornado! – cut short the group's performance at the 2016 festival. Formed in August 2003 by reedman Paul VornHagen and conguero Alberto Nacif, the band is an exciting Cuban jazz combo that has released four critically acclaimed CDs. Winner of the 2005, 2007 and 2013 *Detroit Music Awards* for Best Jazz Recording and Best World Music Band, this combo has performed at all of the major Michigan jazz/music festivals. More at <http://www.tumbaobravo.com/>.

BRYAN LUBECK

No stranger to the GRandJazzFest stage, **Bryan Lubeck** returns to the fest for a repeat performance of Spanish guitar and urban grooves. Lubeck, who performed in 2015 and also brought with him a special Family Guitar Tent, plans to do the same at this year's festival. Fiery guitar and pop vocals fueled by his seven-piece Latin-urban band make Lubeck a rousing favorite with diverse audiences. His sensitive instrumental ballads coupled with the exciting flamenco styles from critically acclaimed albums have proved to a new generation of music lovers that the contemporary elegance of Spanish guitar is more powerful today than ever before, especially when combined with the grooves of his Latin-urban band. More at <http://www.bryanlubeck.com/>.

SUNDAY, AUG. 20 – LINEUP:

JAZZ STUDENT BAND – BLUSHING MONK

Blushing Monk – the band selected to perform during GRandJazzFest 2017's Student Showcase – is led by Dutcher Snedeker, a Grand Rapids-based pianist with a long history of live-jazz performance. Snedeker hails from a musical family where he



grew up surrounded by a variety of music styles. A current master's student at Western Michigan University and a GVSU graduate, he is an active part of the West Michigan music community, with multiple nominations at the local WYCE Jammies and a jazz award from ArtPrize 2013. Joining Snedeker as part of the Blushing Monk band are Brad Fritcher on trumpet, Caleb Elzinga on saxophone, Joe Vasquez on bass, Jordan Otto on drums and Olin Clark on guitar. More at <https://www.dutchersnedeker.com/>.

THE ISAAC NORRIS PROJECT

The Isaac Norris Project is an assembly of Grand Rapids-area musicians who represent themselves individually as jazz, gospel, blues and R&B artists. Collectively under the direction of Isaac Norris, these musicians seek to develop and perform original smooth jazz and soul-inspired compositions. All have been great supporters of Norris by lending their talents for recording and performance of his original compositions in his latest CD release, *Something to Say*. The group includes Debra Perry on keyboard, Tom Cutts on guitar, Dee Washington on drums, John Parker on bass and Isaac Norris on saxophone. Washington and Norris are also new GR and Jazz board members. More at www.isaacnorrismusic.com.

ORGANISSIMO

organissimo returns for an encore after rain and a tornado cut short the group's performance at the 2016 festival. Formed in 2000, organissimo's music leaps over fences and satisfies a diverse range of tastes. Their sound is instantly identifiable yet constantly evolving, infusing elements of funk, gospel, blues, progressive rock and Latin rhythms into a solid foundation of jazz. Shifting meters, deep grooves, melodic finesse and tight ensemble interplay are hallmarks of the organissimo sound. The latest CD, *Dedicated*, hit No. 5 on the JazzWeek charts and stayed in the Top 10 for eight weeks. More at <http://organissimo.org/>.

FOUR80EAST

Four80East joins the Sunday lineup for GRandJazzFest 2017. The band is an electro-jazz collective that's all about the groove. Mixing jazz with soul music and electronic production, the Canadian producer duo of Rob DeBoer and Tony Grace have created a signature bass-propelled sound that entrances listeners of their recordings and enthralls audiences at their live shows. Since breaking out with their critically acclaimed first release *The Album* in 1997, Four80East has been a mainstay on contemporary jazz radio and touring circuits with hits like "Eastside" and "Noodle Soup" and six subsequent albums. As a production team and as artists, DeBoer and Grace have had global success. They've won every major music award in their native Canada, from a Juno to a MuchMusic Award to a Canadian Radio Music Award. More at <http://four80east.com/>.

NATE HARASIM & NILS FEATURING BRANDON WILLIS

The trio **Nate Harasim & NILS featuring Brandon Willis** takes to the GRandJazzFest stage on Sunday night. Harasim, a Grammy nominee and Soul Train Award recipient, is a producer, composer, keyboardist and multi-instrumentalist whose many live performances have included President Barack Obama's Inaugural Ball, the Dubai International Jazz Festival and the 2015 GRandJazzFest. The Michigan-based artist's album *Rush* debuted on the Billboard charts at No. 17 and was the No. 6 album



of 2011 on SmoothJazz.com. Joining Harasim at GRandJazzFest is NILS, an L.A.-based guitarist whose talents are featured on the contemporary jazz hit “Impact” produced by Harasim. Rounding out the trio is Brandon Willis, a saxophonist featured on “Impact.” Willis is a rising star from Newcastle, Washington, who brings a soulful sound and charismatic persona to the northwest jazz scene. His eagerly anticipated debut album *First Time* was developed with the likes of pianist/arranger Eugene Bien, Kenny G’s touring guitarist John Raymond and keyboardist Doneya Goodman. More at <http://www.nateharasim.com/> and <http://brandonwillismusic.com/>.

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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 2017 is a FREE weekend-long event that runs Saturday, Aug. 19, from noon until 10 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 20, 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.

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 2.2 million electric customers in Southeast Michigan and 1.3 million natural gas customers in 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>.