



November 25, 2025

Contact: Michael Sundermann, MSU College of Music Communications Office, 517-353-2043, sunderm7@msu.edu

René Marie Brings Creative Vocal Style to MSU Jazz Residency

Celebration of MSU Jazz Studies' 25th Anniversary continues with a weeklong residency and performance at Fairchild Theatre.

EAST LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan State University College of Music continues its **25th anniversary celebration of the Jazz Studies Program**, led by renowned bassist and director Rodney Whitaker, with the second artist of the 2025–26 MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) Jazz Artist in Residence series. On **Sunday, December 7, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. in Fairchild Theatre**, MSU Jazz Orchestras will perform with René Marie, the GRAMMY-nominated jazz vocalist celebrated for her fearless artistry, emotional depth, and genre-blending creativity.

Now in its 13th year, the MSUFCU Jazz Artist in Residence program has brought nearly 50 leading jazz performers to campus since 2013. Each guest spends a week mentoring students through masterclasses and workshops while also touring with MSU jazz ensembles to middle and high schools across Michigan—providing invaluable educational outreach to communities rarely visited by artists of this caliber. The residency culminates in a public performance featuring the guest artist with MSU's nationally recognized jazz orchestras.

“This series is all about bringing in artists who can connect, challenge, and inspire,” said Whitaker, MSU Director of Jazz Studies. “René is the real deal, musically she's fearless and personally she's generous. Our students will be enlightened by the moments they spend with her, and I know audiences will feel that energy in the concert too.”

Known for her powerful storytelling and expressive delivery, Marie has released 11 acclaimed recordings and performed worldwide. Her work blends jazz tradition with elements of soul, blues, folk, and Americana—resulting in a sound that is both timeless and boldly personal.

“René brings an authenticity and emotional presence that is rare,” said Carmen Bradford, MSU associate professor of vocal jazz. “She's a true master of communication—her voice, her phrasing, and her spirit draw audiences in. Our students will gain so much from her generosity and artistry, and I know this will be a performance to remember.”

Marie follows trumpeter **Sean Jones**, who launched this year's residency series in October. The remaining artists featured later in the academic year include **Harvey Mason** (jazz drums, Mar. 15, 2026), and **Anat Cohen** (jazz clarinet and saxophone, Apr. 18, 2026), continuing a season-long tribute to the Jazz Studies program at MSU, celebrating 25 years under the leadership of Whitaker.

The \$1 million MSUFCU endowment supporting the residency program is the largest investment in the College's jazz program. It provides essential funding for the series, enabling guest artists and MSU Jazz Ensembles to engage communities across Michigan through concerts and educational outreach each season.

Reserved-seating tickets at the door are \$19 for adults, \$17 for seniors (age 60 and older), and \$9 for students with ID and anyone under 18. Tickets may also be purchased online (music.msu.edu/events) or by calling (517) 353-5340; a processing fee of \$1.50 applies.

The residency schedule for Marie, along with details about remaining guests are continued on the next page.

2025–2026 Jazz Artists in Residence Schedules

René Marie, voice, December 1-7, 2025

For a full bio, visit: <https://renemarie.com/about/>

- **Mon, Dec. 1 – 6:00 PM:** *Blue Mondays*, MSU Federal Credit Union
- **Wed, Dec. 3 – 6:30 PM:** Workshop/Concert, MSU Community Music School, Detroit
- **Thu, Dec. 4 – 7:00 PM:** Hackett Catholic Prep High School, Kalamazoo
- **Fri, Dec. 5 – 7:30 PM:** Ann Arbor Pioneer High School, Ann Arbor
- **Sat, Dec. 6 – 3:00 PM:** West Ottawa High School Performing Arts Center, Holland
- **Sun, Dec. 7 – 3:00 PM:** Concert with MSU Jazz Orchestras, Fairchild Theatre, East Lansing

Harvey Mason, drums, March 9–15, 2026

For a complete bio, visit: <https://harveymasonmusic.com/bio/>

Harvey Mason is one of the most recorded and in-demand drummers in contemporary jazz. His decades-long career includes founding the group Fourplay, performing with Herbie Hancock’s Headhunters, and contributing to hundreds of recordings across genres. Beyond his instrumental mastery, Mason has also produced, composed, and scored works for film and studio, making him a versatile force in jazz and popular music.

Anat Cohen, clarinet and saxophone, April 13–18, 2026

For a complete bio, visit: <https://www.anatcohen.com/about>

Anat Cohen is an internationally celebrated clarinetist and saxophonist known for her expressive virtuosity and blending of jazz, Brazilian choro, and traditional styles. Born in Tel Aviv and trained at Berklee, she has won multiple awards, performed globally, and built a reputation for joyful, dynamic performances. Whether leading her own bands or collaborating with others, Cohen brings warmth and inventiveness to every stage.

###