



College of Music  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

ARTIST-FACULTY AND GUEST RECITAL SERIES  
Sponsored by WKAR

# Professors of Jazz

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## **MSU Professors of Jazz**

Carmen Bradford, voice

Xavier Davis, piano

Michael Dease, trombone

Randy Gelispie, drums

Kevin Jones, drums

Randy Napoleon, jazz guitar

Anthony Stanco, trumpet

Erena Terakubo, saxophone

Rodney Whitaker, bass

Friday, February 20, 2026

Murray Hall, 7:30 p.m.

# PROGRAM

Everything Happens to Me	Matthew Loveland “Matt” Dennis (1914–2002) lyrics: Thomas Montgomery “Tom” Adair
Nica’s Dream	Horace Ward Martin Tavares Silver (1928–2014)
Days of Wine and Roses	Henry Mancini (1924–1994) lyrics: Johnny Mercer
Just in Time	Jule Styne (1905–1994) lyrics: Betty Comden and Adolph Green
Valse Hot	Walter Theodore “Sonny” Rollins (b. 1930)
Prince Albert	McKinley Howard “Kenny” Dorham (1924–1972)
Cool Blues	Charles “Charlie” Parker, Jr. (1920–1955)
Whims of Chambers	Paul Laurence Dunbar Chambers, Jr. (1935–1969)
Fungii Mama	Richard Allen “Blue” Mitchell (1930–1979)
Young and Foolish	Albert Hague (1920–2001) lyrics: Arnold B. Horwitt
Tea for Two	Vincent Millie Youmans (1898–1946) lyrics: Irving Caesar

# ARTIST-FACULTY BIOS

**Carmen Bradford** is jazz royalty, a 2024 Grammy Award winner for “Basie Swings the Blues – the Count Basie Orchestra”. She has been nominated five times for a Grammy Award and is the recipient of the Los Angeles Jazz Society’s Jazz Vocalist Award. With her body of work, which reflects her vast experience, versatility, and technical brilliance, she has carved out her place in jazz history, and she continues to contribute to the preservation of this uniquely American art form. She was discovered and hired by William “Count” Basie when she was just 22 years old and went on to be the featured vocalist with the legendary Count Basie Orchestra for nine years. Bradford has performed and/or recorded with countless artists around the world. She has also performed with the Dallas Symphony, the Dani Felber Big Band, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and many other organizations. Bradford has loaned her inimitable voice to stage productions and the music of Hollywood films, cartoons for television and radio commercials, and the theater. Bradford also is CEO and Artistic Director of Carmen Bradford Productions, Inc. and an artist with Earthworks Audio. Professor Bradford is currently a Jazz voice faculty member at Michigan State University’s College of Music Jazz Studies program in East Lansing, Michigan.

Grammy winning artist **Xavier Davis** began his career as pianist with the legendary vocalist Betty Carter. Xavier has since appeared on over 120 albums. His most recent release, “Rise Up Detroit”, on Detroit Music Factory, reached the top ten in the JazzWeek charts. Xavier has been seen working with Regina Carter, Jeremy Pelt, Christian McBride, Steve Turre, Black Art Jazz Collective, Tom Harrell, Stefon Harris, Abbey Lincoln, Freddie Hubbard, Jimmy Heath, Usher, Yolanda Adams, Joe Lovano, John Faddis, Nat Adderley, Nicholas Payton, Al Foster, and Russell Malone, among many others. After six years of teaching at The Juilliard School in New York, Xavier joined the stellar faculty of the Michigan State University jazz program in 2014, where he is currently the Associate Professor of Jazz Piano.

**Michael Dease** is an acclaimed jazz trombonist, composer, and educator whose warm tone, lyrical phrasing, and commanding swing have earned international recognition. A prolific recording artist, collaborator, and 2025 Guggenheim Fellow in music composition, he has released numerous albums as a leader and appeared alongside leading figures across modern and straight-ahead jazz. Dease serves as the Red Cedar Distinguished

## ARTIST-FACULTY BIOS (cont.)

Professor of Jazz Trombone at Michigan State University, mentoring the next generation of artists through performance, scholarship, and community engagement. Equally at home on stage and in the classroom, he continues to shape contemporary jazz through expressive improvisation, thoughtful composition, and a deep commitment to artistic excellence in all endeavors.

**Randy Gelispie** has traveled on the road with Wes Montgomery, Sonny Stitt, Dinah Washington, Etta Jones, Lou Donaldson, and Gene Ammons. He has performed with Joe Williams, Nancy Wilson, Dizzy Gillespie, Tommy Flanagan, Barry Harris, Oliver Jones, O. C. Smith, Al Hibbler, and most recently with Geri Allen, Jimmy Witherspoon, John Lee Hooker, Big Maybelle, Donald Walden, Marcus Belgrave, Perry Hughes, Rodney Whitaker, Gary Schunk, Rick Roe, Marian Hayden, Bill Heid, Andrew Speight, and Wycliffe Gordon.

Emerging from Englewood, NJ's artistic core, percussionist **Kevin Jones** was immersed in Jazz, Soul, Gospel, Blues, and Pop from childhood. By eighteen, he had recorded with Charles McPherson, followed by European tours and collaborations with Archie Shepp. Soon after, he joined the Isley Brothers for recordings and toured for three years with nine-time GRAMMY award winning vocalist Whitney Houston. Jones' percussive genius has graced projects with musical giants across a multitude of genres: jazz greats Reggie Workman, Hilton Ruiz, Grady Tate, Winard Harper, Luisito Quintero, and Norman Simmons; vocalists Angela Win-bush and Gloria Gaynor; and world music innovators Babatunde Olatunji and Benny Powell. He also shaped house music with Louie Vega, Kenny Dope, and Kevin Hedge; R&B with Angie Stone; and world music with Soukous Stars and Francis Mbatia. His influence as a Cultural Ambassador for the Department of State was recognized with a White House invitation in 2009 for the Global Cultural Initiative. Leading his ensemble, Tenth World, he masterfully blends Jazz and R&B with African Diaspora rhythms. He has curated GRNoir wine and Jazz events and now enriches Michigan State University's Jazz Studies and Percussion departments.

## ARTIST-FACULTY BIOS (cont.)

A celebrated figure in the realm of jazz guitar, **Randy Napoleon** has garnered acclaim as a gifted instrumentalist, composer, and arranger, distinguished by his extraordinary proficiency and significant contributions to the genre. Born in Brooklyn, New York, on May 30, 1978, he relocated to Ann Arbor, Michigan, at the age of two. After an initial attempt into the violin, Napoleon discovered his passion for the guitar, subsequently rising to prominence within the jazz realm. His career includes extensive tours alongside musicians such as Freddy Cole, Benny Green, and Michael Bublé. Furthermore, he demonstrated his arranging mastery by contributing to several of Cole's albums, notably the Grammy-nominated "Freddy Cole Sings Mr. B". Beyond his performance and composition endeavors, Napoleon imparts his knowledge as an associate professor at Michigan State University Jazz Studies, where he cultivates the next generation of jazz guitarists through instruction and master classes. His artistic reach extends beyond the recording studio, leading his own ensembles and gracing numerous television programs and studio sessions. Napoleon's distinctive playing is marked by a smooth, resonant timbre and a masterful finger-style execution, drawing comparisons to the iconic Wes Montgomery.

**Anthony Stanco** is a trumpet virtuoso from Southeast Michigan whose artistry is rooted in Detroit's rich musical legacy. Mentored by Marcus Belgrave and Rodney Whitaker, he has emerged as a dynamic performer, bandleader, and educator, leading his own quintet and touring internationally with appearances at the Java Jazz Festival, Cairo Jazz Club, and beyond. As a U.S. State Department cultural ambassador, Stanco has shared his music throughout South Africa, Indonesia, and more. His 2024 release, *Stanco's Time* (Origin Records), features an all-star lineup including Joe Farnsworth and Rodney Whitaker, and his 2025 live album, *In the Groove: Live at The Alluvion*, captures the energy and spontaneity of his band onstage. Stanco is Assistant Professor of Jazz Trumpet at Michigan State University, a Bach Trumpet endorsing artist, and a 2024 Jazz Road Tours grant recipient. Learn more at [www.anthonystanco.com](http://www.anthonystanco.com).

## ARTIST-FACULTY BIOS (cont.)

**Erena Terakubo** is an internationally acclaimed saxophonist, flutist, clarinetist, composer, and educator from Sapporo. Known for her expressive artistry and technical brilliance, she has performed worldwide alongside jazz legends such as Kenny Barron and Ron Carter. Her debut album *North Bird* topped Japanese jazz charts, launching a global career featuring major venues and festivals. Terakubo earned degrees from Berklee College of Music and Manhattan School of Music. She currently serves as Assistant Professor of Jazz Saxophone at Michigan State University while inspiring students worldwide through performance and education.

**Rodney Whitaker**, a titan of jazz at Michigan State University, reigns supreme in the genre. As a distinguished jazz double bassist, Director of Jazz Studies, an acclaimed Origin Records artist, and a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, his influence has shaped jazz for decades. His recent MSU Community Engagement Scholarship Lifetime Achievement Award underscores his unwavering commitment. Whitaker's legacy, forged through collaborations with jazz giants like the Roy Hargrove Quintet and Wynton Marsalis Septet, and his current roles as bandleader, educator, and mentor, showcase his profound and lasting impact. He is actively molding the future of jazz by nurturing a thousand mentors, each poised to inspire others as he has. Beyond his performances and teaching, his recordings with ensembles like the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra have garnered significant praise, cementing his reputation as a sought-after and inventive collaborator. Since earning tenure at MSU in 2003, Professor Whitaker's achievements, under Dean James Forger's visionary leadership, have significantly enhanced the prestige of the College of Music and the University. As Director of Jazz Studies, he has consistently championed excellence and progress. His tenure has seen the jazz program flourish, expanding its faculty to nine and experiencing a dramatic rise in student enrollment, now with 70 undergraduate and 14 graduate Jazz Majors.

# The Jazz Club

## 2025-2026 Season

The Michigan State University Jazz Studies Program aims to be the best training ground in the nation for aspiring jazz musicians. Private contributions help ensure our ability to provide an environment that nurtures the highest level of excellence and inspires the next generation of jazz musicians. Gifts support student scholarships, fellowships, outreach activities, student travel, the opportunity to bring guest artists to campus to enhance the student experience, and other crucial areas that make MSU Jazz Studies the outstanding program that it is.

With grateful appreciation, we acknowledge the following members of The Jazz Club at Michigan State University beginning July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025.

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Information and rates: **Cookey Whitaker**, [WHITAK48@MSU.EDU](mailto:WHITAK48@MSU.EDU)

 College of Music  
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**Special thanks to our 2025-26 Jazz Concert Sponsors:**

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If you are interested in becoming a member of The Jazz Club please send your check, made payable to Michigan State University, with The Jazz Club listed on the memo line, to:

College of Music Advancement Office

333 W Circle Drive, Room 153

Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824



For information about The Jazz Club or concert sponsorships, please contact the College of Music Advancement Office at (517) 353-9872 or e-mail [music.giving@msu.edu](mailto:music.giving@msu.edu).

# UPCOMING JAZZ STUDIES EVENTS

3/15 Sunday

MSUFCU Jazz Artist in Residence

**Jazz Orchestras with Harvey Mason, drums**

Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center, 3:00 p.m. \$

4/16 Thursday

**Jazz Nonets**

Murray Hall, 7:30 p.m. \$

4/17 Friday

**Jazz Swing Dance**

Large Rehearsal Hall, 7:30 p.m. \$

4/18 Saturday

**Jazz at Lincoln Center: Essentially Ellington**

**High School Jazz Band Regional Competition**

8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Murray Hall, Music Building, free

4/18 Saturday

MSUFCU – Jazz Spectacular

**Jazz Spectacular Finale Concert**

Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m. \$\$\$

*Please visit our **official, secure ticket website** to purchase tickets:*

***music.msu.edu/events***

*Avoid fraudulent sites by always using this link.*

## TICKET PRICES

**\$** \$14 Adults, \$12 Seniors (age 60 and older), Students with ID and anyone under age 18 are free but require a ticket for admission.

**\$\$** \$19 Adults, \$17 Seniors, \$9 Students with ID and anyone under age 18.

**\$\$\$** \$24 Adults, \$22 Seniors, \$14 Students and those under age 18.

Please note: *All events scheduled in Murray Hall are general admission seating.*