

News from the Ludington Area Arts Council

Jazz It Up with MSU and Mardi Gras 3rd Annual Winter Fundraiser Ludington Area Center for the Arts

**Saturday, February 20, 2009
7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.**

A Swinging Saturday Night with MSU Jazz and Mardi Gras at Center for the Arts Fundraiser

The third annual “Jazz It Up” winter fundraiser for the Ludington Area Center for the Arts, February 20, presents one of the leading jazz double bass players and teachers in the U.S., Rodney Whitaker, conducting his Michigan State University Jazz Orchestra I, which is comprised of MSU’s most advanced music students.

The Saturday night event will also feature a Mardi Gras party along with the performance at the Ludington Area Center for the Arts from 7-10 pm. Tickets for the event are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door.

“This is a rare treat for music lovers in West Michigan,” said event organizer Ted Malt. “Rodney Whitaker and his jazz ensemble are truly professional-level musicians and we’ll enjoy a memorable night of music. We’re very fortunate to have them perform here.”

Malt, director of bands and jazz ensemble leader at Ludington High School, and a highly accomplished jazz saxophonist himself, convinced Whitaker and the Jazz Orchestra to add Ludington to their schedule of performances.

As with the previous years’ event, there will be multiple opportunities to donate funds for the renovation and operation of the area’s new Center for the Arts in downtown Ludington. In addition to the live musical entertainment, the event will also feature a tempting array of Cajun goodies, and.....

More about the musicians

Rodney Whitaker, conductor of the Jazz Orchestra I, is professor of double bass and director of jazz studies at the Michigan State University College of Music.

Whitaker is one of the leading performers and teachers of jazz double bass in the United States. He is a member of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, and received national recognition performing with the Terence Blanchard Quintet. Whitaker has also toured internationally as a featured performer with the Roy Hargrove Quintet. In addition, he has appeared and presented master classes at the International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) conferences. Featured on more than 100 recordings - from film to compact discs - Whitaker's film score, *China*, directed by Jeff Wray, was released on PBS in 2002.

In 2006, he was nominated for the Juno Award, Canada's equivalent to the Grammy, for his work on “Let Me Tell You About My Day,” produced by Alma Records. Whitaker collaborated with musicians Phil Dwyer and Alan Jones on the album, which was nominated for Traditional Jazz Album of the Year.

A proven and committed jazz educator, Whitaker has presented numerous master classes across the nation at locations such as Duke University, Howard University, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, the New School (NY), Lincoln Center, and the Ford Detroit Jazz Festival. In addition, he is a consultant with the Detroit

Symphony Orchestra in the development of a jazz education department, and has served on the faculties of University of Michigan and Juilliard Institute of Jazz.

Whitaker attended Wayne State University, and studied with Robert Gladstone, principal bass with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and trumpeter Marcus Belgrave.

Jazz Orchestra I

The nineteen-piece Jazz Orchestra I (The Be-Bop Spartans) is a young, swinging college band playing the repertoire of the great jazz masters as well as a wide range of soul, swing, blues, and gospel. The group's instrumentation includes saxophone, trombone, trumpet, bass, drums, piano, guitar, and vocalists.

The orchestra has appeared at many venues throughout Michigan, including the Detroit International Jazz Festival, the Detroit Symphony Club Series at the Max.

Sidebar:

Jazz It Up

3rd Annual Winter Fundraiser at the Ludington Area Center for the Arts

Saturday, February 20

Nationally renowned MSU Jazz Orchestra in concert at 7 pm

Mardi Gras-themed party in the gallery at 8 pm

Hors d'oeuvres and cash bar provided

Tickets are \$25; buy them online at www.ludingtonartscouncil.org or at the door.

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