

## THE WEEKEND

FRIDAY



The "Just Push Play Tour" features rock veterans Aerosmith, accompanied by special guests Fuel, 7:30 p.m. at the DTE Energy Music Theatre, Independence Township. Tickets \$33-\$80.50, call (248) 645-6666

SATURDAY



Stunning animation comes to life on the big screen in "Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within" now playing at metro area movie theaters.

SUNDAY



Bon Jovi blazes into town with openers Eve 6 (pictured) 7:30 p.m. at the DTE Energy Music Theatre, Independence Township. Tickets \$29-\$68, call (248) 645-6666.



Kathy Sandberg is one of 430 exhibitors showing their work at Art in the Park noon to 7 p.m. Friday, July 13; 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, July 14; and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, July 15 in the streets of downtown Plymouth. Free shuttle from Compuware Arena on Beck Road north of M-14. For directions and more information, call (734) 453-1234

## MICHIGAN

### JAZZ



PHOTO BY RICHARD LARSON

Swing time: Trumpeter Johnny Trudell and Big Band members Bill Lympert, Jose Carretero and Ray Tini take to the Cohen/Moro stage 9 p.m. Sunday, July 15.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Matt Michaels seems a little uncomfortable talking about the Michigan Jazz Festival committee's decision to honor the many years he's devoted to performing and teaching. The Southfield pianist doesn't think he deserves any more credit than the rest of his Wayne State University jazz studies colleagues.

But judging by the number of musicians performing at this Sunday's festival who either work, play or have studied with Michaels, he's definitely influenced metro Detroit's jazz scene.

Of the more than 184 musicians performing at the festival Sunday, July 15,

at Schoolcraft College in Livonia, more than 40 have ties to Wayne State University and Michaels — mainly because he co-founded its jazz studies program with Dennis Tini and Jim Hartway in 1979.

#### Developing talent

"Matt is a tremendous artist and educator, a mentor for the students in the program," said Tini, WSU music department chairman and a Farmington Hills resident. "He knows how to communicate the basics yet allows them to develop their own voice. He has a great sense of humor and can take a difficult situation for a student and help them get over the hump in learning and get to the next step."

Michaels would rather talk about the program than his accomplishments as an educator and professional musician. Yes, he's proud of playing with legends like Peggy Lee, Al Hirt, Doc Severinsen and Barbra Streisand. But he's nothing less than enthusiastic about working with jazz musicians like Tini, Chris Collins, co-director of the jazz studies program, and Larry Nozaro, an adjunct faculty member, because they help develop new talent. All three musicians, along with Michaels,

and the WSU Septet, will perform at the festival, which features 26 groups and five big bands. Tini plays with his quintet and with groups headed by Pistol Allen and Chris Collins.

"In the early '80s it was exciting because the jazz studies program was so new," said Michaels. "We had two big bands and brought in Dick Shear from the Stan Kenton Band to take over one of the big bands, and by 1980 Dennis and Midge Ellis (a Livonia jazz lover and festival committee member) went to Switzerland with the band for the Montreux Jazz Festival." Michaels took over the WSU Big Band in 1985.

#### Holding on

Unfortunately, financial cutbacks in the mid-1980s forced reductions in the program, but Michaels held on.

He taught every course and the program began to grow. This year's 60 jazz majors have plenty of opportunities to perform with three bands, three guitar bands, a jazz trombone ensemble,

ble, a vocal jazz group led by April Arabian-Tini and five to seven combos. In

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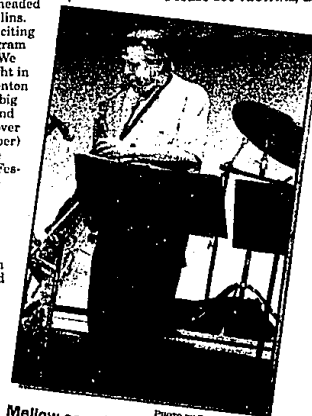


PHOTO BY RICHARD LARSON  
Mellow sound: Larry Nozaro plays selections from his CD, "Warm," at 7:30 p.m. on the Lear Stage.

In tribute: This year's Michigan Jazz Festival is dedicated to Matt Michaels, a longtime jazz pianist and educator.

## THEATER

### Secret affair leads to murder in picture-perfect suburbia

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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Jennifer Rembisz rushes in breathless and 15 minutes late for an interview. She'd been clowning around for 6-year-olds at a birthday party in West Bloomfield.

Rembisz, a law student, and founder of Jack-in-the-Box Productions, doesn't plan to slow down even though she's not taking classes this summer.

In addition to directing *Murder in Green Meadows*, which opens Friday, July 20, at the Livonia Civic Center Auditorium, she was cast as an extra in a video to show police officers how to execute a warrant. It seems Rembisz just can't get away from the law.

#### Edge of the seat drama

"I like to do shows not done very often," said Rembisz, who founded Jack-in-the-Box Productions in 1996 after graduating from Mercy High School in Farmington Hills. "The title caught my atten-

tion. The story twists and turns. The audience thinks they're safe and then the rug gets ripped out from under them. It keeps you on the edge of your seat like *Death Trap* or *Dial M for Murder*."

Set in an upper class subdivision on the outskirts of Chicago, *Murder in Green Meadows* leads the audience through a maze of secret affairs, past and present. New neighbors become lovers and before long a jealous husband forces his wife to commit murder.

Theresa Cisco, a Plymouth resident; Judy Lyons, Canton; Chad D'Aigle, Westland; and Bryon Harvey, Dearborn, portray the couples involved in the tangled web.

"It's been great to work with four actors and see the bond between them and the tension grow," said Rembisz, who leaves for a theater directors' workshop at the Ensemble Studio Theatre in New York City after *Murder in Green Meadows* closes.

"The challenge for a murder mystery is you have to keep the suspicion level growing."



New neighbors: Theresa Cisco (left), Bryon Harvey, Judy Lyons and Chad D'Aigle get to know each other after meeting in what seems like picture-perfect suburbia.

Rembisz warns some of the content is not suitable for children.

#### Disturbing character

"It's nothing worse than you'd see on prime time TV," said Harvey, who plays the possessive husband, Thomas Devoreaux. "It's adult subject matter with

a little bit of violence and sexual content."

"My character could be frightening to children. He's the bad guy. He seems OK on the outside but as we delve into his character he seems a little disturbed. He has a lot of rage and is very controlling and manipulating."