

MUSIC

# Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival reaches maturity

BY KEELY WYGONIK  
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Now in its 21st year, the Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival's not a kid anymore. Organizers of the annual Labor Day weekend festival, formerly known as the Ford Montreux Detroit Jazz Festival, promise to "light up Detroit for four days" with powerful, electric headliners like Nancy Wilson, Abbey Lincoln and Dr. John.

"Every stage is hot," said Ed Love, festival senior program consultant. "This festival is loaded."

Others headlining the 125-net, five-stage festival include Poncho Sanchez, Barry Harrison, Terence Blanchard, Rufus Harley, One for All, Michael Wells, Jazz Time Superband, Caribbean Jazz Project, Uptown Vocal Jazz Quartet and Brasil Brava.

"Deeply rooted in our vision at Music Hall is the belief that our service to the community as presenters of the Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival is as important as the festival's incredible artistry," said Peg Tule, Music Hall president.

## Jazzy festivals

- **V98.7 Smooth JazzFest** - Friday-Sunday, June 2-4, on The Green in front of the Southfield Civic Center (Evergreen at Civic Center Drive). Advance tickets \$15 for Friday evening, \$20 at the gate. Saturday-Sunday tickets \$25 per day in advance, \$30 at the gate. Gates open 3 p.m. Friday with performances beginning at 3:30 p.m. and continuing to 10:30 p.m. Saturday-Sunday gates open at noon, performances start at 12:30 p.m. and continue to approximately 10 p.m. Performers include George Benson, Dave Koz, Kimmie Horn and Kelko Matsui. Call (248) 855-2400 for more information.
- **Michigan Jazz Festival** - Sunday, July 16, noon to 10:30 p.m. at Schoolcraft College in Livonia (Haggerty between Six and Seven Mile). Event features 24 bands performing on four stages including four big bands: Johnny Trudell, Brookside Jazz Ensemble, Ed Nuccelli, and Larry Nozoro. Call (248) 474-2720 or (734) 459-2454 for information.
- **Birmingham Jazzfest 2000** - Thursday-Saturday, July 20-22 in Shain Park and downtown Birmingham restaurants. Opens 7:30-9 p.m. Thursday, July 20, in Shain Park with Alexander Zonjic & Friends. Line-up includes Chuck Mangione, Chataqua Express, Straight Ahead, and Kenny Garrett. Call (248) 644-5832 for more information.
- **Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival** - Friday-Monday, Sept. 1-4, Hart Plaza, on the river front, downtown Detroit. Call (313) 963-7622 for more information, or online www.musicall.org beginning in June.

This year's festival line-up and poster were unveiled Wednesday, May 17, at Music Hall Center for the Performing Arts in Detroit. "It's a great pleasure to see we've reached adulthood. I hope we make it to middle age," said Robert McCabe, who has been involved with the festival since its beginning. "Then it was part free and part paid, now it's all free," said McCabe, thanking the more than 40 other corporate sponsors, including Plymouth-based Absopure Water Co., Absolute Vodka, Hammel Music, and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

The festival's new name "more accurately represents the festival. Detroit has taken ownership of the festival," said Elliott Hall, vice president of Ford Motor Co. dealership development, and newly elected festival chairman. "We have a rich history of pure jazz in this city. It promises to be exciting. We're pleased with the evolution of the festival, and we hope you'll be in town."

This year, for the first time, local National Public Radio affiliates WEMU and WDET will broadcast the festival to NPR

stations nationwide. WWJ-Channel 62, will televise a prime time special featuring Straight Ahead, 9-11 p.m. Friday, Sept. 1. Absopure will sponsor the radio broadcast, and, according to William Patrick Young, vice president of advertising, is "pleased to bring cold water and cool jazz" to the festival. Absopure has been a sponsor for the past eight years.

This year's poster design will be featured on bottles of Absopure, to be sold at the festival. Rebecca Radtke, a multi-media designer at J. Walter Thompson, designed this year's colorful festival poster.

"I wanted it to be clean looking and chose to feature a trumpet player because it's just a little bit different," she said.

Choosing the design to be featured on bottles of cool Absopure, festival T-shirts, and posters is a "pretty exciting experience," said Daniel Cerullo of Livonia, a senior partner and creative director at J. Walter Thompson. The design process is like jazz he said - "there's a lot of craziness, improvisation and creativity."

There were nearly 50 entries this year, and Radtke's design, Cerullo said, "captures the personality of the event, and the excitement of jazz."

The Montreux Jazz Festival, scheduled Saturday, Aug. 6 at Pine Knob in Independence Township, is being presented by a national touring company that features Al Jarreau, Roberta Flack and others.



Winning poster design: This year's Ford Detroit International Jazz Festival poster was designed by Rebecca Radtke of Ferrindale, a multi-media designer for J. Walter Thompson.

# Mahler's masterpiece evokes deep passions

BY LANA MINN  
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Gustav Mahler's wonderfully complex symphony of rage, death and acceptance is a challenge embraced by French horn player David Everson.

"Mahler created very difficult, but very good pieces for horns. They're quite enjoyable to perform," said Everson.

Everson, a Troy resident, will play first horn this weekend for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's three performances of Mahler's symphony, *Ninth*, conducted by world renowned Music Director Neeme Järvi at Orchestra Hall.

Järvi is one of the world's most recorded conductors with nearly 350 titles in his discography and appears annually with the New York Philharmonic and Philadelphia Orchestra.

Joining the DSO in 1999, Everson was raised around the sounds of music - his parents were both music majors.

Growing up in Livonia, he hoped to learn saxophone, but his parents convinced him to try the French horn - and he fell in love with it. He played principal horn in the Flint Symphony, assistant principal horn for the Toledo Symphony before becoming principal horn with the Kansas City Symphony.

Missing the Michigan landscape and his family, Everson looked to return to his home before making it with the DSO. In fact, he was once beaten out by close friend Mark Abbott, the DSO's current assistant principal horn.

The performance of *Ninth* will be the DSO's first in nearly 20 years. Everson, however, took part in the 99-minute symphony in more recent years while working in Kansas.



Conductor: Neeme Järvi is music director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

What: Music Director Neeme Järvi will conduct the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Gustav Mahler's *Ninth* symphony. Where: Orchestra Hall, Detroit When: 8 p.m. Thursday & Friday, May 25-26; 8:30 p.m. Saturday, May 27 Tickets: \$19-550 with a limited number of box seats available from \$62-\$66. Students/seniors can purchase \$15 or \$10 RUSH tickets at the box office 90 minutes before showtime. Call (313) 576-5111 or at www.detroit-symphony.com

NOTE: Ford ConcertTalks - informal discussions about music and music-making - begin one hour prior to the performance with host Charles Greenwell

"But it doesn't get easier to play," he laughed.

Everson has been practicing the *Ninth* for several months. He can be heard quite distinctively during a solo passage and then in a duet with a flutist during the first movement.

"They're very nice rather unusual solos," he said.

The entire symphony itself, however, could be called more "ironic" than nice.

Beautifully powerful, *Ninth* was written in 1910 while Mahler was not only mourning the death of his four-year-old daughter Maria, but also struggling with his own deteriorating health.

The *Ninth* is often characterized as a triumph of peace and acceptance of mortality. Mahler takes the listener from a funeral march in movement one to despair and anger in two and three and finally through a serene hymn in four.

Superstition that no composer after Beethoven would survive past their own Symphony No. 9, Mahler tried to beat destiny by titling it, simply *Ninth*.

However, fate soon played its role as Mahler died while creating Symphony No. 10 less than one year later.

*Ninth* was first performed in 1911, after Mahler's death.

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