



St. Cecilia Music Center CHAMBER JAZZFOLK

2024/25 SEASON
ANNUAL REPORT



The War and Treaty, 2025

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A NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE + ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

St. Cecilia Music Center's 2024/25 season was one for the record books! In its 141st year as a cornerstone of the West Michigan arts community, **SCMC served more than 11,000 music enthusiasts** through excellent, educational, and accessible music programs.

The 2024/25 Presenting Series featured incredibly memorable, sold-out concerts from the world's best chamber, jazz, and folk artists. The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center impressed with programs like *Schubert's Trout Quintet*, increasing audiences over the previous year. The Jazz Series grew to add a fourth concert and featured the outstanding Josh Redman, Julian Lage, Cécile McLorin Salvant, and Christian McBride. The Folk Series welcomed Michigan-born duo The War and Treaty, legends like Del McCoury and Judy Collins, and many more. **In all, the Presenting Series welcomed 7,500 audience members** to enjoy an inspiring evening of music in Royce Auditorium.

The School of Music, led by SCMC Education and Community Engagement Director Cyndi Betts, engaged more students than ever before via SCMC's youth ensembles with 175 participants. Additionally, SCMC's *In the Classroom* program Strings to Schools expanded to a second school, serving 44 Sibley and Dickinson Elementary students with free in-school strings instruction. Feedback highlights the overwhelmingly positive impact of music participation for students. One educator offered,

"I have seen students in this program bursting with pride and also becoming much more focused on their studies, and better at relating to their peers. It's been absolutely AMAZING for the Dickinson students!"

Our donors continue to show their unwavering dedication to SCMC's mission, with our annual Meijer Match campaign seeing incredible results, thanks to our partnership with the Meijer Foundation.

More than 140 years after a pioneering group of nine women founded SCMC, their hopes for Grand Rapids' "Home for Music" feel more relevant than ever. Please enjoy learning more about this eventful season and we will see you at a concert soon!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cathy Holbrook". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and elegant.

Cathy Holbrook
Executive + Artistic Director

2024/ 2025 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



SIERRA HULL OPENS THE SEASON AND RHIANNON GIDDENS RETURNS

Accomplished mandolin player Sierra Hull opened SCMC's 2024/25 season to a **sold-out crowd in our 625-seat Royce Auditorium**. Returning to SCMC as a part of the Folk Series in May 2025 was Rhiannon Giddens. The two-time Grammy winner created a remarkable band in Old-Time Revue, which featured an array of American musical traditions.



NEA RECOGNIZES THE JAZZ SERIES

In 2024, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded SCMC a grant of \$20,000 to support the 2024/25 Spectacular Jazz Series. **"Projects like St. Cecilia Music Center's Spectacular Jazz Series exemplify the creativity and care with which communities are telling their stories, creating connection, and responding to challenges and opportunities in their communities—all through the arts,"** said former NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD, of the award.



ONGOING BUILDING PRESERVATION

Given SCMC's 130-year-old building, ongoing facility maintenance remains essential to preserve our venue. **During the recent weatherization process of our exterior brick, workers discovered a remarkably well-preserved painted advertisement from the 1960s** that had been concealed beneath, demonstrating how historical renovations can yield unexpected treasures.



RECORD NUMBER OF YOUTH ENSEMBLE PARTICIPANTS

SCMC School of Music youth and adult ensembles had 310 participants during the 2024/25 school year. Our Sinfonia, Concert Orchestra, and Philharmonic youth orchestras **provided opportunities for 175 young artists**. "The healthy combination of work and fun provides for a very unique experience," said one youth ensemble member.

HELEN DeVOS LEGACY AWARD HONORS KATE PEW WOLTERS

In May 2025, we honored **Kate Pew Wolters** with the **Helen DeVos Legacy Award** for her incredible contributions to arts and advocacy in West Michigan. On May 10, we celebrated Kate with a spirited evening featuring a jazz performance from Edye Evans Hyde, Mike Hyde, and Robin Connell followed by a delightful dinner and award presentation.



13 YEARS OF CMS AT SCMC

SCMC's partnership with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS) saw a successful season, which featured three exceptional programs curated by CMS co-artistic directors Wu Han and David Finckel. Overall, the CMS series was attended by 1,654 individuals, with 229 being students who received free and reduced-cost tickets. **The CMS series saw a 15% increase in attendance.**



STRINGS TO SCHOOLS EXPANDS

SCMC Education Director Cyndi Betts established partnerships with two new Grand Rapids Public elementary schools to host Strings to Schools: Sibley and Dickinson. **44 students in grades 1st - 5th participated.** Both programs culminated in a final performance held in SCMC's Royce Auditorium in May.



MEIJER MATCH EXCEEDS GOAL

SCMC's annual Meijer Match campaign is a valued collaboration with the Meijer Foundation, featuring a generous \$50,000 matching gift that inspires community support from mid-May through June 30. **The 2025 campaign exceeded its overall goal and increased donations by 17% over the previous year.** SCMC extends profound gratitude to the Meijer Foundation for their continued partnership.



IMPACT

OUR MISSION

Since 1883, the mission of St. Cecilia Music Center has been to promote the appreciation, study, and performance of music in order to enrich the human spirit and enhance the quality of life for the residents of West Michigan.



Philharmonic concert, 2025



Strings to Schools concert, 2025

ACCESS TO MUSIC

We reduce significant barriers to high-quality arts experiences by offering accessible ticketing options, bringing performances to schools and centers for older adults, and offering financial support for School of Music participants. We partner with local music educators and community organizations to provide free and reduced-cost tickets. “So grateful for this opportunity. Been going through a rough time financially and **the chance to go to a concert like this for free? A night out at little or no cost? An absolute blessing.**” said one concert-goer.



Valerie June, 2024

BROAD ARTISTIC PERSPECTIVES

SCMC is dedicated to broad representation and welcoming programming in our Presenting Series and School of Music. **Representation in our featured artists is paramount.** For example, the 2024/25 season featured artists like Valerie June who describes her perspective as “multidimensional Blackness steeped in laughter, truth, magic, delight, and interdependence.” Musical styles are also varied, including everything from “Carolina piedmont blues” with Rhiannon Giddens & Old-Time Revue to “Haitian Creole jazz” with Cécile McLorin Salvant.



CMS post-concert reception, 2025

CONNECTION THROUGH MUSIC

At SCMC, we take our responsibility to provide welcoming, accessible, and memorable experiences very seriously. SCMC’s volunteers are exceptional and offer vital support to patrons. “I don’t know how you do it, but these concerts are some of my favorite events of the year. **It’s an intimate setting. The feel is friendly and warm. The ushers are delightful and helpful. What a gem of Grand Rapids!**” said one concert attendee. Post-concert receptions are held following each Presenting Series concert, allowing attendees to chat with artists and each other.

THE 2024/25 PRESENTING SERIES

SIERRA HULL - FOLK

September 17, 2024

JOSHUA REDMAN GROUP - JAZZ

October 4, 2024

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Virtuoso Winds

November 7, 2024

AN EVENING WITH VALERIE JUNE - FOLK

November 12, 2024

DEL McCOURY BAND - FOLK

December 5, 2024

CÉCILE McLORIN SALVANT - JAZZ

February 20, 2025

THE LONE BELOW - FOLK

March 8, 2025

JUDY COLLINS - FOLK

March 13, 2025

JULIAN LAGE - JAZZ

March 18, 2025

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Schubert's Trout Quintet

March 20, 2025

THE WAR AND TREATY - FOLK

March 28, 2025

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE AND URSA MAJOR - JAZZ

April 22, 2025

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Souvenir de Florence

April 24, 2025

RHIANNON GIDDENS & THE OLD-TIME REVUE - FOLK

May 13, 2025

7,498

tickets sold for the
2024/25 Presenting
Series.

817

community members
served through free
and discounted ticket
opportunities.

299

student attendees.



Del McCoury Band, 2024

“It was a wonderful uplifting evening with fun, stellar musicians. **Such a warm evening and positive vibes!**”

- Del McCoury Band concert attendee

“**It’s a comfortable and top notch venue**, easy in and out, and the music is great.”

- Cécile McLorin Salvant concert attendee



Cécile McLorin Salvant, 2025



Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, 2025

“The musicians are exceptional--**the best there is**--and they come to us in Grand Rapids!”

- Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center concert attendee

ILLUSTRATING IMPACT: School of Music

St. Cecilia Music Center (SCMC) provides opportunities for young people and adults to experience the many benefits of music, engaging more than 3,000 students, families, and community members through School of Music (SOM) programs each year. Programs include youth and adult performance ensembles, youth summer camps and In the Classroom music education opportunities that happen in local schools. Music instruction fosters a more holistic approach to education, and research demonstrates the numerous benefits of music participation for both adults and young people.



Stella Royce Piano Camp participants and instructors, 2025

“I saw some good music and some good people playing music!”

-School of Music Jazz and Folk Assembly program participant, 2025

YOUTH ENSEMBLES

SCMC’s School of Music youth ensembles include Sinfonia, Concert Orchestra, and Philharmonic. During the 2024/25 school year, these groups provided opportunities for 175 young artists to build their confidence and challenge themselves by collaborating with excellent instructors and youth players from throughout the region.



ADULT ENSEMBLES

Conducted by Shannon Shaker, adult ensemble Beer City Winds performed in June and July 2025, creating a unique instrumental community that emphasizes technical precision, musicality, and emotional depth. Adult ensemble Grand Strings emphasizes having fun and learning classical and popular music in a non-competitive atmosphere.



IN THE CLASSROOM

We've recently sought to better understand the impact of SOM programs through a more extensive survey process. The response has been encouraging.

Strings to Schools is SCMC's longest-running *In the Classroom* program. Strings to Schools provides 40+ Sibley and Dickinson elementary students with free beginning strings instruction onsite at their school three times per week throughout the school year. Our recent survey of Strings to Schools participants, parents, and educators showcased how music supports young people holistically:

At the beginning of the school year, **20%** of Dickinson students said that they thought learning to play music would be 'boring.' By the end of the year, **100%** of students reported that learning to play music was 'fun.'

71%

of students made a new friend in strings class.

77%

of parents with students in the program saw an increase in their child's confidence.

"I have seen students in this program bursting with pride and also becoming much more focused on their studies, and better at relating to their peers. It's been absolutely AMAZING for the Dickinson students!" offered one educator.

We also asked the 419 students from Brookside, Dickinson, and Ridgemoor Park Montessori who participated in the *Jazz and Folk Assembly* program about what they learned:

"I learned that jazz is beautiful."

"I heard the different types of music and different styles. I also saw how they all worked together to play and how challenging it can be to play an instrument."

"I learned that when you are playing an instrument, you destress."



"Many of my students experienced their first live concert in this type of setting. For some that may be the only time they experience this in their childhood. The students were exposed to new genres of music and horizons were expanded."

- Jazz and Folk Assembly
program educator



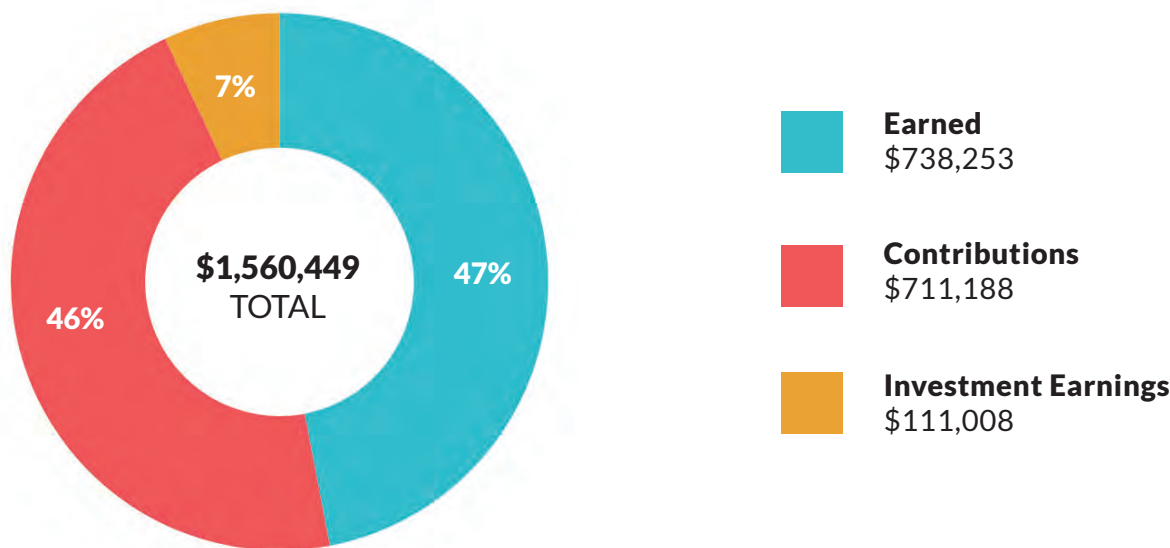
SCMC FY25 BUDGET

SCMC's finances are overseen by a finance committee that is made up of staff, board, and community members who meet monthly to review SCMC's current fiscal status, discuss cash flow projections, implement policy, and keep the full board apprised of the overall financial position. The committee also works on the annual budget for board approval and conservatively sets goals so that the organization is working toward realistic expectations. An investment subcommittee monitors SCMC's \$3M Endowment Fund, a crucial piece of the organization's long-term sustainability.

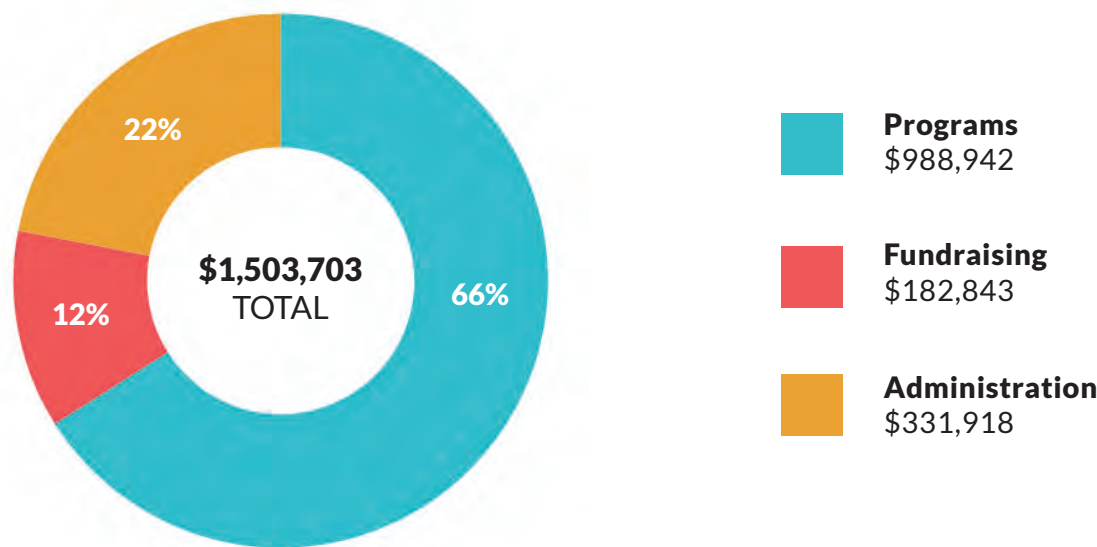


Christian McBride, 2025

FY25 REVENUE



FY25 EXPENSES



Fiscal year net revenue is added to St. Cecilia Music Center’s Building Reserve Fund, which supports both scheduled and unplanned building maintenance to ensure that unexpected maintenance expenses do not interfere with SCMC programs.

24 RANSOM AVENUE



St. Cecilia Music Center building exterior

Maintaining our historic venue remains a vital component of SCMC's ability to achieve our mission. The majority of our programs take place in-house, including our Presenting Series concerts and School of Music rehearsals and concerts. Additionally, our space serves as a community gathering place with more than 100 community events, from performances to weddings, happening at SCMC each year.



Royce Auditorium

To support our 130-year-old building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, we are currently seeking contributions to support SCMC's Building Reserve Fund, which will ensure that unexpected building repairs do not impact programming. See the adjacent list of current projects to learn more about SCMC's capital repairs.



FACILITY UPDATES

Thanks to support of grants and private donations, SCMC is making investments to help preserve our historic building and ensure visitors safely enjoy their time here.

Exterior Repairs

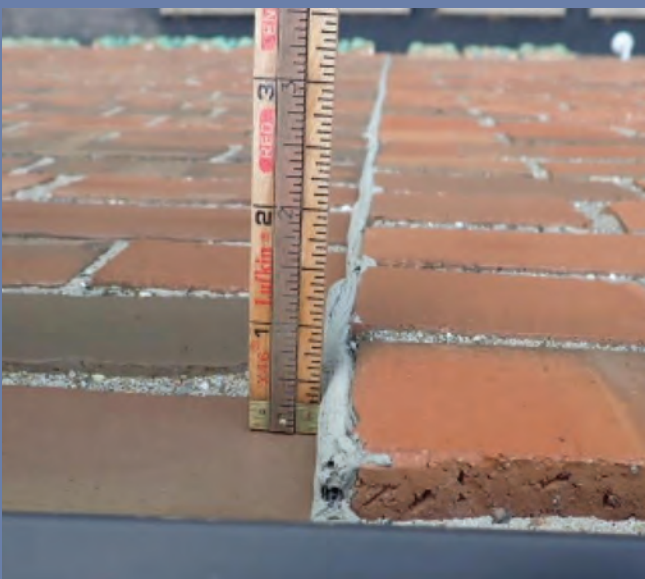
In the summer of 2025, SCMC began work to secure a section of bulging brick located on the south elevation of the building, which was caused by moisture seeping in the wall.

- Bricks were removed and existing bricks were salvaged.
- Bricks were cleaned, replaced, and secured to the existing wall.
- Entire south elevation underwent tuckpointing.
- Wall was cleaned to match existing brick and ensure a weather-tight seal.

Stone repair, window sealing, and tuckpointing also took place on the front facade.

Artist Lounge

- Walls and fixtures in the Artist Lounge, which is used by artists and by guests who rent the building, were painted.
- Furnishings were updated and replaced.
- Artwork featuring hand-drawn blueprints of the building were hung throughout.



LOOKING AHEAD



Joy Oladokun



School of Music Philharmonic ensemble member, 2025

ST. CECILIA MUSIC CENTER: YOUR HOME FOR MUSIC

The 2025/26 season promises to be truly extraordinary, showcasing the remarkable power of music to unite communities and inspire generations. Having just completed our strategic planning process, the SCMC board and staff are ready to embark on this exciting journey with a clear vision for the future. Our Presenting Series lineup features incredible chamber, jazz, and folk artists – from the incomparable Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center to jazz legend Branford Marsalis to one of folk music's most compelling new artists, Joy Oladokun – each bringing a unique voice to create unforgettable musical experiences.

This celebration of artistic excellence extends beyond our Presenting Series as SCMC's School of Music youth ensembles will begin an exciting partnership with Grand Valley State University, collaborating with GVSU music student mentors to foster the next generation of musicians. SCMC's future is bright thanks to our dedicated community, which believes in SCMC's mission and understands the profound impact that music can have on people's lives.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024/25

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Jeff Ott
Vice President

Ed Meyette
Treasurer

Julie Croll
Secretary

Jeffrey Cook
Immediate Past President

Ellen Arlinsky

Lori J. Baker

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Merrin Bethel

Dr. Sookkyung Cho

Xavier Davis

James Eardley

Timothy Elms

Rayvene Farnum

Terri MacLachlan

Christopher Martin

Matthew Miller

Dr. James Moses

Tim Raymer

Taggart Town

Lazaro Vega

Joy Walczak

FINANCE COMMITTEE 2024/25

Ed Meyette
Chair

Jeffrey Cook

Saralyn Coupe

Julie Croll

James Eardley

Dan Lupo

Tom Mathison

Terri MacLachlan

Jeff Ott

Tim Raymer

Taggart Town

ARTISTIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2024/25

Christopher Martin

Rob Reinhart

Lazaro Vega

WITH GRATITUDE

We extend our deepest gratitude to our 2024/25 donors, partners, staff, board members, volunteers, students, and audiences who make the work of our mission possible. For a full list of donors please see our 2025/26 program book and/or visit www.scmcgr.org.

RHAPSODY LEVEL

\$25,000 and above

Jeffrey and Caroline Cook
Rosemary & David Good Family Foundation
Meijer Foundation
Michigan Arts and Culture Council
Steelcase Foundation
Wege Foundation

CADENZA LEVEL

\$10,000 - \$24,999

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DeVos Family Foundation
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Family Foundation
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KRW Foundation
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HARMONY LEVEL

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Paul and Maria Hesse
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Shafer-Tuuk Family Foundation
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Taggart and Lisa Town
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MELODY LEVEL

\$3,000 - \$4,999

John and Janet Boyles
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Louis M. Dexter Memorial Foundation
Linda Gill
Timothy A. Grice Charitable Gift Fund
Frank and Sharon Van Haven

ACOUSTIC LEVEL

\$1,500 - \$2,999

Anonymous (2)
The Ballor Family
Marcella Beck
Merrin Bethel and Erik Jacobson
Linda Bolton
Dr. Alicia Córdoba and George Blanchet
Scott and Jennifer Crowley
Gather-d Boutique
Dick and Samantha Gauthier
Michael and Linda Hampton
Marilyn Heiss
Paul B. Henry Foundation
In honor of Cathy Holbrook
Scott and Kim Huizenga
Margaret Idema
Win and Kyle Irwin
The Korff Foundation
Hung and Elsie Liang Fund for Music
Mark and Terri MacLachlan
Bob and Mary Malone
In honor of the Royce Family
Wendy and Edgar Marty
Mark and Valerie McAleenan
Jan and Ed Millermaier
Jacqueline and Matthew Morse
Dr. James and Kathy Moses
Tim and Dona Raymer

Angie and Charlie Royce
Karen Henry Stokes
Trillium Foundation
Lazaro Vega and Lesley Van Leeuwen-Vega
Clare Wade

TEMPO LEVEL

\$500 - \$1,499

Anonymous (3)
Lori J. Baker, CPA
Robin Bowles
In memory of Margaret Bowles
Paul and Janice Braman
Bill and Margie Darooge
Gil and Pat Davis
Carol Dawe
Abby Dilley
In honor of Ann and Newt Dilley
Jennifer Drake and John Guichelaar
James Eardley
Timothy and Jennifer Elms
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Dr. Cynthia Hingtgen and Grant Nicol
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Barbara Stanton
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Kim and Geron Turke
Lewis and Norma Van Kuiken
Anne and Rodney VanTol
Roger Webb
In memory of his wife Susanne Elrod
Bob and Mary Younger
The Zylstra Family

2024/25 SEASON SPONSORS

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Meyer Music
Nmble Hiring Solutions
NPF
PNC
Rotary of Grand Rapids
Saugatuck Brewing Company
United Bank
Varnum LLP
Warner Norcross & Judd LLP
West Michigan Piano
WGVU
Williams Kitchen and Bath



FRONT PAGE: Julian Lage, 2025 BACK PAGE: Rhiannon Giddens & the Old-Time Revue, 2025

St. Cecilia
Music Center
CHAMBER
JAZZFOLK