

# Grammy Award-winning Robin Eubanks brings commanding flavor, style to Idlewild

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Much like the genre it celebrates, the 2008 Idlewild Jazz Festival embraces an array of eras, artists and melodic styles. Slated for Saturday, Aug. 2, in Idlewild, Mich., from 1:30 – 9:30 p.m., this year's event remains true to its eclectic tradition, synthesizing established and emerging musicians into an ear-pleasing daylong line up. Festival acts range from big band to fusion, providing enough versatility to suit the breadth of any jazz enthusiast's eight-track/LP/CD collection.

Leading this year's Idlewild Jazz Festival is jazz trombonist Robin Eubanks and Mental Images. Eubanks includes Art Blakey, Elvin Jones, Eddie Palmieri, Sun Ra, Barbra Streisand and The Rolling Stones among his collaborations. He also won Grammys for his performances on Michael Brecker's "Wide Angles" and Dave Holland's "What Goes Around."

Eubanks boasts a style that embraces swing, funk and Latin and other evidences of his varied musical experiences. He is brother to Kevin Eubanks, music director for The Tonight Show, and will be joined by their other brother, trumpeter Duane. They'll perform at 3 p.m.

For festival organizers, the day is about more than notable names and big crowds. The hope is to make the Idlewild Jazz Festival a proving ground for stellar artists poised for breakout success.

Thus, joining Eubanks will be Michigan's own Flat River Big Band (1:30 p.m.), the critically-acclaimed piano-led Dan Cray Trio (4:30 p.m.), saxophonist Eric Alexander and In the Pocket (6:15 p.m.), and renowned vocalist Shahida Nurullah (8 p.m.).

All that great music hearkens to Idlewild's heyday when everybody who was anybody made an appearance by the lake, and people in the know had front row seats. Still its own paradise, Idlewild serves as more than backdrop to the jazz fest. Consider it the metronome that keeps the music coming.

Those who venture to Idlewild for the jazz fest can enjoy other events as well:

The Jim Crow Museum on the campus of Ferris State University will be open from 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. on Aug. 2. The museum houses artifacts and memorabilia depicting racial and stereotypical images. Humanities Professor Susan Booker Morris will make a formal presentation from 11 a.m. - noon entitled "Jazz and Race: Social Dissonance and Human Improvisation." Morris earned her PhD at Southern Illinois University and is a philosopher of aesthetics and race and gender theory. Her most recent work on Bamboozled is being published by the West Virginia University Philological Papers.

The Jim Crow Museum is located in the Starr Classroom Building in room STR 314. Dr. Morris's presentation will be in STR 322. The most convenient entrance to the museum is through the lobby of G. Mennen Williams Auditorium. The parking lot for the Auditorium and Starr Classroom Building is on the corner of State and Cedar Streets, just north of the main entrance to the Ferris campus in Big Rapids, MI. For museum information, visit <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow> or call 231.591.5873.

The DuBois-Chesnutt Writing Institute was named for one-time Idlewild patrons W.E.B. DuBois and Charles W. Chesnutt. Day long workshops at the festival provide aspiring writers and authors an opportunity to explore their craft and exchange ideas in Northern Michigan's "Black Eden";

Michigan's own Elizabeth Atkins, bestselling author of White Chocolate, Dark Secret and Twilight (penned with Billy Dee Williams), will deliver personal insights as keynote speaker at the event. Author Renee Alexis and poet Karen Williams will join Atkins and others on the program. Alexis will conduct a workshop entitled "Some Like It Hot – Penning Classy Sizzle & Spice." Her works include the novels Gotta Have It and He's All That, and her short story, Mr. Everything, in Zane's Chocolate Flava 2 anthology. Williams, a poet, writer, instructor, and Cave Canem African-American Poetry Fellow, is the author of Elegy For a Scarred Shoulder. Her critically-acclaimed poetry provides the foundation for her workshop, "Rhythm and Words – Poetic Principles That Can Make Your Prose Sing";

Workshops run from 1 – 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 2 and also cover the topics of writing socially conscious fiction and wading through today's Christian fiction market. For workshop information, visit <http://www.stefanieworth.com/08workshop> or call 248.893.4553.

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The New Works: Encore Program supports the presentation of jazz compositions that were originally commissioned through Chamber Music America and the Doris Duke Jazz Ensembles Project, made possible with generous funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Chamber Music America's jazz programs support the commissioning and performance of new works by composer-led jazz ensembles, provide incentives for subsequent performances of those works, encourage community-based residencies, and foster international exchange.

Chamber Music America, the national service organization for the ensemble music profession, was founded in 1977 to promote artistic excellence and the economic stability of the field, and to ensure that chamber music, in its broadest sense, is a vital part of American life. With a membership of over 8,000, including musicians, ensembles, presenters, artists' managers, educators, music businesses, and advocates of ensemble music, CMA welcomes and represents a wide range of musical styles and traditions. In addition to its funding programs, CMA provides its members with consulting services, access to health and instrument insurance, conferences, seminars and several publications including the bi-monthly magazine, Chamber Music , and website [www.chamber-music.org](http://www.chamber-music.org).

The Idlewild Jazz Festival is made possible with the support of the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

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