



## Michèle Ramo World Jazz Orchestra celebrates Kerrytown Concert House anniversary

By Carolyn Darr, Daily Arts Writer

Published September 21, 2014

This year, the Kerrytown Concert Hall is celebrating its 30th anniversary. In 1983, the house's founder Deanna Relyea was looking for a studio to develop her singing and piano skills and was shown the historic house on Fourth Avenue. Relyea transformed the gutted house into a unique space that has hosted local and international acts of all genres since that first spring in 1984.

### Michèle Ramo World Jazz Orchestra

Friday September 26, 8:00 p.m.

Kerrytown Concert House

\$5 (student tickets)

---

The new executive director Lynne Aspnes was one of the first acts the House showcased.

“I started teaching at the University in the fall of 1985 and I was looking for a place to do a concert,” Aspnes said. “Someone said you have to talk to Deanna and look at Kerrytown so I came down and we talked and set up a program for January 1986. That was the first time I worked here. It feels like it was just yesterday, it’s just been a blink of the eye and it’s 30 years later.”

The House occupies a unique niche within the Ann Arbor music scene. In addition to concerts, the House hosts benefits, student recitals and meetings for groups like the Ann Arbor Piano Guild. The teaching studios on the second floor provide space for private lessons for young artists to

develop their skills.

“It’s very personal,” Relyea remarked. “It’s a place you become personally attached to. You feel like you’re part of the evening when you sit in an intimate hall and hear something that’s unique. It’s a place where people can do their creative work that’s accessible, that’s not booked a year in advance and is flexible. It’s a community, a village.”

The genres showcased at the House have evolved through the years.

“When I was first playing it was mostly classical and chamber music,” Aspnes said. “What’s really interesting is moving from that into this incredibly edgy jazz that’s very front line, sort of emerging groups and artists and genres.”

One of those groups is the Michéle Ramo World Jazz Orchestra, which will be playing today, Friday, Sept. 26. Ramo, an international classical and jazz sensation, was born on the coast of Sicily. At age 12, he began playing mandolin, then guitar, then violin, all within a six month period. He played with barbers in the piazza and was eventually sent to the conservatory for music to train in the violin. He was the youngest in the history of Italy to make a major symphony orchestra without having finished his degree, but left for the United States in 1987 to study jazz. Ramo’s wife and musical partner Heidi Hepler, a singer and lyricist, studied with the Michigan Opera and Theatre Department at Interlochen and has performed at jazz festivals around the world. Together the pair have performed their innovative jazz across the globe.

“We’ve done everything from coffee shops to Carnegie Hall and everything in between,” Ramos remarked.

Both artists come from classical backgrounds, which adds a unique element to their jazz.

“His violin is unbelievable because he has this deep classical training (and) then went into jazz with it,” Hepler said. “It’s not easy to switch from classical to jazz. I think when something really feels natural and the fire is in your belly for it and you do it for the love of it, it becomes a part of you. He’s from classical and I’m from classical, and we branched out beyond

that so it was like love at first note.”

This Friday’s performance will be a selection of Latin Jazz featuring a wide variety of instruments.

“The type of repertoire will cross between jazz, original Brazilian and gypsy jazz and traditional Brazilian, which is called Choro,” Ramos said. “Choro means music for the people on the street and we are the only group in Michigan that plays it.”

The set will feature Ramos on the mandolin, guitar and violin, Hepler singing and Howard Alden, a jazz guitarist from New York, on guitar and banjo. Traditional Brazilian instruments such as the pandeiro, a small tambourine and the cuica, a small hand bongo, will also be utilized to transport the audience into the Brazilian jungle. As stated by Ramos, “it will be an international level of musicianship that night,” and one that no one should miss.

**0 Comments**

Sort by **Oldest**



Add a comment...

 Facebook Comments Plugin

The Michigan Daily • Edited and managed by the students at the University of Michigan since 1890.  
ISSN 0745-967 • Copyright © 1998-2016, all rights reserved.