

Midtown Jazz Crawl 2026

Presented by Detroit Institute of Arts and the Carr Center

In collaboration with Cathedral Church of St. Paul and the Detroit Historical Society

May 1 Detroit Institute of the Arts

May 2 Cathedral Church of St. Paul

May 8 Detroit Institute of the Arts

May 9 Detroit Historical Museum

Over two weekends, these four performances will delve into humanity, resilience, and spirituality of African American culture through the lens of Jazz. This music performed by the Gathering Orchestra and seasoned professionals often symbolized survival, spiritual awakening, protests, prayer, and good times. The music served as a means of expressing our emotions as we navigate life's challenges, attempting to comprehend our predicament. The music is romantic, forgiving, and helps us to find our way. As Rev Dr. Martin Luther King said, "The blues speaks to everyday life and meaning."

Friday May 1 2026 – Detroit Institute of Arts - 07:00 PM

Saturday May 2 2026 - Cathedral Church of St. Paul (4800 Woodward Ave.)

07:00 PM

One phenomenal group. Two completely different performances! In two very different settings!

The Midtown Jazz Crawl is clearly leaning into top-tier artistry for 2026, and the **Xavier Davis New York Quartet** fits that bill beautifully. A New York quartet with serious depth with leader and pianist, **Xavier Davis**, who is one of those pianists who can shift from elegance to intensity in a heartbeat. His writing and playing always feel both grounded in tradition and alive with modern energy. **Greg Tardy** brings a warm, expressive tenor sound and a mastery of woodwinds that adds color and dimension. **Vicente Archer** is one of the most sought-after bassists in New York—deep groove, impeccable feel, and a melodic sensibility that elevates any group. **Quincy Davis** on drums brings clarity, swing, and a beautiful musical approach to rhythm.

The set will deliver Jazz classics that will be interpreted with the kind of nuance and spontaneity that only seasoned New York players bring. There will be original compositions that showcase the quartet's collective voice—expect rhythmic sophistication, lyrical moments, and plenty of interplay. The sound will be a modern New York blend of Jazz with the warmth and accessibility that festival audiences love. This lineup gives the weekend a distinctly cosmopolitan flavor, balancing the Detroit-Chicago-Philly energy with a polished New York aesthetic. It's the kind of programming that turns a jazz crawl into a true musical journey.

Friday May 8 2026 - DIA Concert - 07:00 PM

Saturday May 9 2026 – Detroit Historical Museum - 07:00 PM

Enjoy the music in the surrounds of the Riveria Court and the *Streets of Old Detroit*

Friday May 8 2026 – Detroit Institute of Arts

07:00 PM

Part two of the MIDTOWN Jazz Crawl concert series event will include the **Gathering Orchestra**, a powerhouse big band composed of individuals from many universities in Michigan and beyond with special guests from the Rodney Whitaker Detroit-Chicago-Philly Group. This dynamic gathering of young and seasoned professionals will seamlessly blend the spirit of East Coast jazz with the soulful resilience of the Midwest.

This dynamic program will honor the composers who have shaped America's musical landscape. With this special lineup of season professionals and a rhythm section that drives like a locomotive, the ensemble will delve into the sharpened edge of swing, intricate harmonies, and fearless experimentation that defined the Jazz scene of New York, Detroit, Chicago, and beyond. Complementing the classic songs are a few original compositions chosen specifically for this show. These selected pieces will blend the ensembles' collective voice with modern textures and rhythmic twists, creating a sound that resonates with both a rooted and forward-looking audience. The result is a vibrant, high-energy performance that bridges the gaps between eras and geographies, celebrating the depth, variety, and ongoing evolution of American big band Jazz.

Saturday May 9 2026 - Detroit Historical Museum – *Streets of Old Detroit*

5401 Woodward Ave. 07:00 PM

The last night of the **Midtown Jazz Crawl** event will feature **the Rodney Whitaker Detroit-Chicago-Philly Group**. **Rodney Whitaker** brings that unmistakable Detroit bass tradition—soulful, grounded, and rhythmically rich. **Tim Warfield** on tenor sax adds a smoky, expressive East Coast edge. **Dwight Adams**, one of Detroit's finest trumpeters, brings fire and lyricism. **Dana Hall** on drums is a rhythmic architect, expect intricate textures and driving swing. **Brendon Davis** on piano ties it all together with harmonic depth and modern flair. **Rockelle Whitaker** adds a vocal presence that can shift from intimate to soaring.

The group has a special blend of classic jazz standards, the kind that invites nostalgia but leaves room for fresh interpretation. There will be original compositions that showcase the band's individual voices and collective synergy. This concert will be a set that moves between groove, swing, and expressive ballads, keeping the audience engaged from start to finish. It's the kind of night where you can feel the lineage of Detroit jazz while also hearing where the music is headed next. If you're planning to go, you're in for something special.

Come to the museum early and check out *LENI: Looking Through the Lens* captures the vanguard sound of jazz and the scene in our region by highlighting a selection of her images featuring jazz musicians and performances.