

SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

Grand Rapids Federation of Musicians/AFM Local 56

Welcome to our 25 new members who have joined Local 56 during our 2024 membership drive!

THION CHARITY

Drums

"My dad joined AFM Local 56 in May of 1949 and was a lifelong member. We're both drummers, and it was important for me to join 75 years later to carry on the Local 56 tradition in my family."

ERIN DOWLER

Clarinet

"I just finished my first season as Second Clarinet with the Lansing Symphony Orchestra. Coming from a union family, I am excited to join AFM Local 56."



KENNETH BOS

Organ, piano, harpsichord

"I have been making music in the Grand Rapids area for almost 50 years, and I'm delighted to finally be joining the Federation. It is a privilege to be a member alongside so many musicians that I respect so very much."



ERIKA PURCELL-WILLIAMS

Bass guitar and drum set

"Greetings, all!
I am excited to learn more about the AFM, and I look forward to taking advantage of future opportunities offered through this great organization. Hope to hear from you sometime—literally!"



DAVID TEMPLE

Classical Guitar

"So excited to be making music as a Local 56 AFM member, playing classical, flamenco, and folk guitar in Holton, Michigan, and at large!"



JOSHUA DREYER

Percussion and drum set

"I'm very excited to finally be a part of an organization that has done so much to improve the lives of working musicians and enhance the spirit of live music in West Michigan over the years."

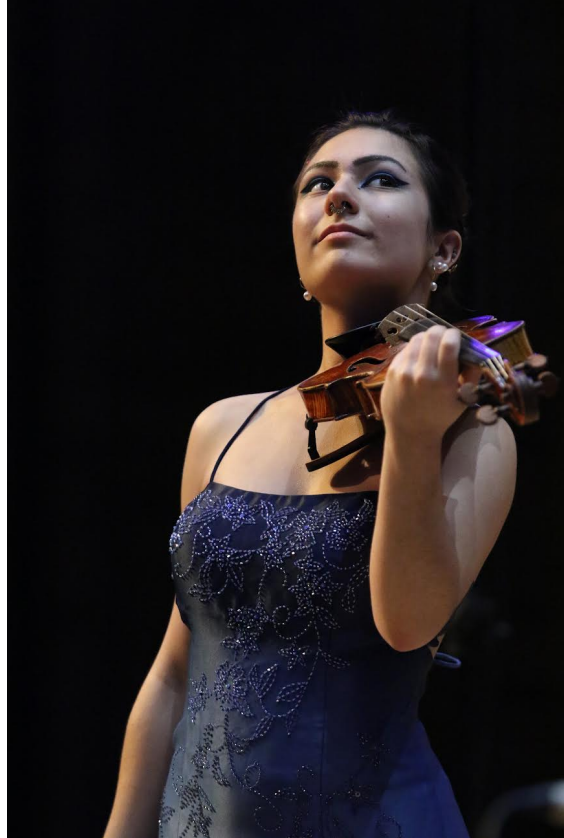




JOHN SCHOLTEN

Trombone

"Since joining in February, I was honored to play some Music Performance Trust Fund gigs right away with Krystal Kleer and Local 56 President Bennie Keys. I had a blast!"



EMILY HAUER

Violin

"I am proud to be a new member of AFM Local 56, especially as a recent '24 violin performance graduate from the University of Michigan, and I am very excited to grow in the Local as a tenured musician in the Lansing and Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestras."



BEN TRAVERSE

*Guitar, Banjo, Mandolin,
Upright Bass, and Vocals*

"I'm so excited to join the ranks with all of you incredible working musicians and to work for better conditions for freelance artists across the country."

ANTHONY "TONY" GANT

Guitar and Vocals

"I joined the Union since retirement from the food service industry, and the social aspects are positive. Glad to have a chance to enjoy music and share it with others."



MARK DAVIS

Trumpet

"I'm thankful for all the union does. I am excited to be a part of it and continue making music, as well as with the Detroit Opera as a member of Local 5."



ZACHARIAH REED

Horn and Wagner Tuba

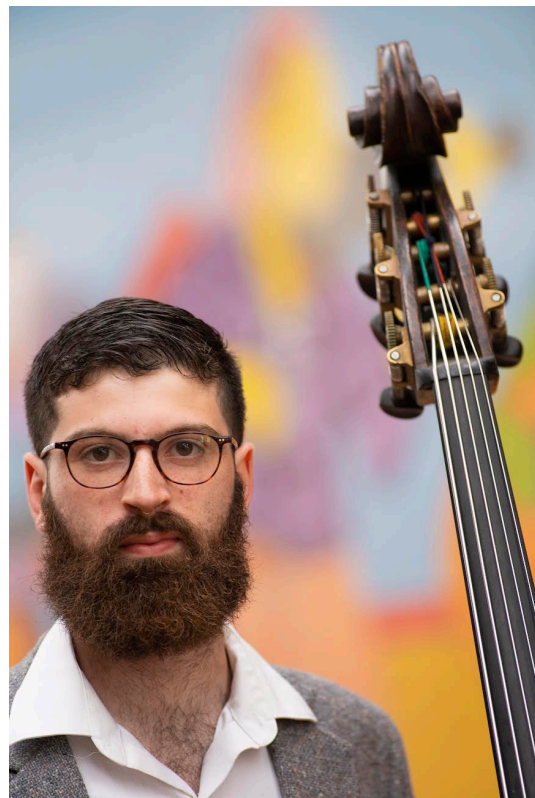
"I am delighted to join AFM Local 56 and am excited to work together with so many fellow musicians! Thank you for having me!"



DR. ADAM HAR-ZVI

Double Bass

"Thanks so much to all the past and current members of Local 56 for helping to create a professional environment and fair wages for us! I'm proud to become part of this organization."





HERMAN MARSHALL

Bass Guitar

"I'm happy to be a part of AFM Local 56, and I am looking forward to playing again."



JAE WON SEO

Violin

"Thank you very much for having me in Local 56. I'm looking forward to being a part of this wonderful community of musicians!"

WILLIS KOA

Cello

"Extending a simple hello and glad to be a part of AFM Local 56."





DONALD NEWTON

Drums and Vocals

"Hello my brothers and sisters in music. God has given us a talent. Don't forget to use it for Him along with the rest."

HENRY BRANSDORFER

Flute, Piccolo, and Alto Flute

"Having studied flute and composition both in the States and in Japan, I am regularly reminded of the importance of having a solid agreement in place before agreeing to perform or write for an organization. By joining AFM Local 56, I hope to work together with other musicians without losing sight of our value as professionals."



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BENNIE KEYS

I want to thank all of you who have participated in the membership effort thus far, recommending people and helping this to be one of the most successful membership drives to date for Local 56!

Every new member is most welcome to come to meetings and participate with us to get the maximum out of their membership. We have all kinds of great things to offer.



If you are doing recordings, let Paul in our office know so that we can get you the proper paperwork. Any time you have a question or concern, just give us a call. If you are a casual player, we have lots of resources to assist you with your musical career. Make sure you read the monthly AFM magazine *International Musician*, as it has a lot of good advice and programs for you to help you with any engagement.

Make sure you file a contract on your playing work. This way, if you have any legal problems, we can help you out. Also, we can help with getting going with the AFM Pension Plan. This can benefit those of you who play every week somewhere, such as church, or somewhere else on a regular basis. We can help you get this going.

Once again, I want to welcome all of our new and returning members!



NOTES FROM OUR SECRETARY-TREASURER PAUL AUSTIN

It has been heartwarming to see the success of our 2024 membership drive! With 25 new members, Local 56 has grown by more than 10% since January 1st.

But it isn't just the numbers that make me proud. I treasure the two musicians on the cover of this issue for several reasons.

When Thion Charity stopped by the Local 56 office to join, he told me that his dad had been a member years ago. Within minutes, I found the application for membership that James Charity had completed in May of 1949, almost to the day that Thion joined 75 years later. Giving Thion a copy of his dad's membership application for his family records was so satisfying. His dad passed away in 2019, and we appreciate that James Charity was a life-long and valued member of Local 56.

Last March, Erin Dowler attended the Zoom meeting that we offered to the musicians of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra to answer questions for anyone who was considering Local 56 membership. We had a great conversation, and she revealed that her parents were members of the teachers' union in New York. Erin grew up witnessing the importance of union membership, and it is wonderful to see that she continues in the family tradition.

There were some new members who must be camera shy, as they did not send a photo for this issue. But we want to recognize and welcome them to Local 56 too: Sarah Boerema (violin), Mary Ellerbee (piano), Morgan Kochanowski (clarinet), Larry Rhodes (electric bass), William Thain (violin), Curtis Woods (guitar), and Kristina Zeinstra (viola).

Our membership drive continues through July 30th — spread the word!

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Local 56 Executive Board has planned a special membership meeting that you won't want to miss! It will include guest speakers who will be addressing topics of interest, such as finances and credit ratings, plus the unveiling of our new website. This membership meeting will have a festive atmosphere, with live music occurring between each presentation. You won't want to miss this excellent opportunity to mingle, get to know other members, and discover the value of being a part of the Grand Rapids Federation of Musicians, AFM Local 56.

When? Tuesday, July 9th, beginning at 4:30pm

Where? The Stray, 4253 Division Avenue S, Grand Rapids MI 49548

The Stray describes themselves as a "comfortable, coffee-shop environment, where guests can enjoy artisan foods, espresso, and pastries, all while they take in the sights and sounds." Check out their website: www.thestraycafe.com

Local 56 will be providing the fees for the presenters and musicians, and we ask for you to cover your own bill for food and drink this time. Here is a link to their menu: <https://www.thestraycafe.com/menu-1>

We hope to see you there for this informative event for Local 56 members! We also invite any professional musicians who may be interested in joining Local 56 to attend this meeting and consider taking advantage of the final weeks of our membership drive, which will end July 30th.

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