

# JAZZ

## IT UP AROUND THE REGION

### Grammy-winner Patti Austin headlines VU jazz fest next week

BY TIM SHELLBERG  
Times Correspondent

**J**effrey Brown, coordinator of jazz studies at Valparaiso University, says it took a while for his university's annual jazz festival to become established on a national level.

"When I first started booking this years back, I had to explain where Valparaiso is," he said. "Interestingly, over the last four, five to maybe six years, when I would talk to artists, they would say 'oh yeah, I've heard of the festival.' It's established a reputation for offering an excellent level of musical entertainment."

Kicking off April 13 and running through April 18 at VU's Harre Union, this year marks the 24th running of VU's Jazz Fest. In the last quarter century-plus, VU has hosted jazz greats such as Clark Terry, Maynard

Ferguson, the Count Basie band and Randy Brecker, to name a few, at its annual festival.

This year, VU brings vocal great Patti Austin and acclaimed pianist Monty Alexander to Harre Union for this year's festival. Alexander is scheduled to release his newest collection, "Calypso Blues," soon, while Austin received her first-ever Grammy award in 2008 for Best Jazz Vocal Album for her '07 release, "Avant Gershwin."

"Everybody walks away from a concert of (Alexander's) just being thoroughly moved and entertained and knowing that they had a great experience," Brown said. "And (Austin) is an incredible talent with an extremely broad repertoire - we've had Grammy winners in the past, but we've



AUSTIN



ALEXANDER

#### JAZZ IN VALPARAISO

**WHAT:** 24th annual Valparaiso University Jazz Fest April 13 through April 18

**WHERE:** Harre Union, Valparaiso University, 1700 Chapel Dr., Valparaiso

**COST:** April 13 and 14 are free; other days require tickets

**FVI:** (219) 464-5415 or VALPO.EDU

• **6 P.M. APRIL 13** - performances by jazz ensembles from Valparaiso, Chesterton and Portage high schools and the Indiana University South Bend Jazz Band (free)

• **6 P.M. APRIL 14** - performances by jazz ensembles from Lake Central, Michigan City, Hebron and Munster high schools and the Valparaiso University Jazz Ensemble (free)

• **7:30 P.M. APRIL 15** - Monty Alexander Trio (\$20 adults; \$7 faculty, staff and students; \$15 seniors and alumni)



• **7:30 P.M. APRIL 16** - Valparaiso University Jazz Ensemble with special guest Curtis Fuller (\$6 adults, seniors and alumni; free to faculty, staff and students)

• **7:30 P.M. APRIL 17** - Valparaiso University Jazz Trio with special guest Curtis Fuller (\$18 adults; \$5 faculty, staff and students; \$12 seniors and alumni)

• **8 P.M. APRIL 18** - Patti Austin Quartet (\$25 adults; \$10 faculty, staff and students; \$18 seniors and alumni)

#### JAZZ IN GARY

**WHAT:** The Greater Gary American Jazz Association's "An Evening of Jazz" 5 p.m. April 18

**WHERE:** Genesis Convention Center, Lake Room, 1 Genesis Center Plaza, Gary

**COST:** \$35

**FVI:** (219) 944-8875 or (219) 985-1510

### Hot Latin jazz group Crosswinds breezes into Gary

BY TIM SHELLBERG  
Times Correspondent

**G**reg Penn, founder and percussionist of the Crosswinds Latin Jazz Band, takes pride in the response he receives from his audiences when performing.

"I've never seen anybody sit still when they hear us," he said. "It's a hot, energetic form of music that makes you want to dance, want to move, when you hear it."

Performing April 18 at the Greater Gary American Jazz Association's "An Evening of Jazz" in the Lake Room at Gary's Genesis Convention Center, Penn formed the ensemble in the mid-'90s.

The Crosswinds, Penn said, originally was put together to perform a one-off gig at the Jazz on the Alley festival on Chicago's South Side. But that plan changed shortly after the ensemble took to the stage.

"I saw this whole sea of people get into the rhythms, and I thought, 'we may be on to something here,'" Penn said. "So I decided to keep the band together." See **GARY JAZZ** on Page C4



See VU JAZZ on Page C4