

ERIN ZINDLE & THE RAGBIRDS' PRESENT

THE 18TH ANNUAL

Ebird & Friends HOLIDAY SHOW!

Dec 11-13



at
The Ark

Ebird & Friends **HOLIDAY SHOW** **PROGRAM OF SONGS - SET 1**

Ring Dem Bells

Featuring Erin Zindle & The Holiday Show Band
by Bob Dylan & Stephen Barber

Funky Jesus

The House Band
by The Jive Turkeys & Leroi Conroy

Oh So Quiet

Elisabeth Pixley-Fink
Inspired by Bjork; music by Hans Lang and English lyrics by Bert Reisfeld

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (Part 1)

Elisabeth Pixley-Fink
by Hugh Martin & Ralph Blaine

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (Part 2)

Jordan Hamilton
by Hugh Martin & Ralph Blaine; Arr. by J. Hamilton & B. Phillips

A Child is Born

Hand Bells & Horns
by Thaddeus Jones & Roland Hanna; Arr. by R. Huff

I Believe

Ki5 (w/ Jordan Hamilton)
by Kyler Wilkins and Kyler England

Carol of the Bells

Ki5
Trad. Ukrainian folk poem Adapted Mykola Leontovych; Arr. by Ki5

Pretty Paper

Jen Sygit
by Willie Nelson

Ring Dem Bells

Jon Brown on bells, Horn Section, House Band
by Duke Ellington & Irving Mills

Ring Out The Bells

Jess Merritt
by Connor, Rebscher, & Wolfgang

Ebird & Friends **HOLIDAY SHOW** **PROGRAM OF SONGS - SET 2**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel / God Rest Ye Jig / Christmas Carousing
Trad., adapted by Thomas Helmore/Trad English folk melody, Unknown
Arr. J. Hamilton & E. Zindle

Wild Winter Wind

Dylan Charles
By Dylan Charles

Temple

Billy King
By Billy King; Arr. B. King & B. Phillips

Fat Man's Comin'

Billy King
by David Byrne and Jherek Bischoff

O Christmas Tree

Ensemble
Trad. Melchior Franck; Arr. Huff

Winter Wonderland

Ember and Ash (Alex Holycross and Erin Zindle)
Bernard & Smith; Arr. Valerie June, adapted by A. Holycross & E. Zindle

Rise Up Shepherd

Ember and Ash
Trad. Spiritual; Arr. A. Holycross & E. Zindle

A Change At Christmas

Erin Zindle & The Holiday Show Band
by Daniel Kohn and Flaming Lips

Mary Had A Baby

Ensemble
Trad. Spiritual

The Holiday Show Orchestra

Brennan Andes – Bass and Guitar
Jon Brown – Drums and Percussion
Dylan Charles – Guitar and Vocals
Tim Haldeman – Saxophone
Jordan Hamilton – Cellist
Ross Huff – Trumpet
Shawn McDonald – Piano

Jess Merritt – Vocals
John “Tbone” Paxton – Trombone
Brad Phillips – Violin and Mandolin
Dan Piccolo – Drum Set
Jen Sygit – Vocals
Emily Slomovits – Violin
Erin Zindle – Violin, Accordion, and Vocals



ERIN ZINDLE is the songwriter, lead singer, and fiddler of the nationally-touring folk-rock band Erin Zindle & The Ragbirds. A multi-talented front woman, she is proficient in a variety of stringed instruments, skillfully switching between violin, accordion, kalimba and piano, all while dancing. Erin has been performing and teaching violin and piano for many years, but spends most of her time touring and playing her original music, solo, with her band, and also with her duo project, Ember & Ash. Zindle was classically trained in her hometown of Buffalo, NY and has been performing with bands of many styles and sizes all across the US for 2 decades and is an accomplished songwriter (with a song reaching the Top Pop 100 in Japan)



EMBER & ASH, the duo forged by Erin Zindle and Alex Holycross, is as captivating and dangerous as a spark on the wind in the dry season. Armed with fiddle and guitar, these two Michigan songwriters have had long careers, both defying genre boundaries in their own respective bands (The Native Howl's "Thrash Grass" and The Ragbirds' edgy global folk-rock)

Alex & Erin's voices curl together like smoky ribbons floating above a wild, elemental energy. In their live performances the duo seem to come more alive with each note, stoking a heat that threatens to burn the whole place down.

Launched in 2025, this duo is poised and ready for a big 2026, with the release of their debut EP and their first Mid-West tour.

Be sure to sign up for their email newsletter at www.emberandashmusic.com and come see them at The Ark on Jan 11, 2026



ALEX HOLYCROSS is an American musician, songwriter, and producer — best known as the lead vocalist and guitarist of The Native Howl, a band that blends bluegrass and thrash metal into a style they call "thrash-grass." A Twice Top-5 billboard charting producer, featured in GuitarWorld Magazine, Holycross also co-leads Ember and Ash, his newest duo project with fiddler, Erin Zindle. A dynamic performer and the primary creative force behind much of the band's writing and production, Holycross is known for his powerful vocals, intricate guitar work, and a stage presence that bridges raw intensity with deep emotional resonance. This will be Alex's 4th appearance in the Ebird & Friends Holiday Show.



ELISABETH PIXLEY-FINK is a Michigan-based singer-songwriter, producer, and bandleader. Emotion-focused folk and bratty garage rock that hits you in the chest with guts, trust and hunger. Her 2025 album, *Heartskin*, was recorded directly onto tape in Detroit, mixed by Tim Carr and mastered by Timothy Stollenwerk (Haley Heyndericks, Damien Jurado). It features guest performances by Theo Katzman, Dan Rickabus (The Crane Wives), and Jordan Hamilton. Elisabeth also has deep musical ties to Portland, Oregon and Mexico City, and loves queer fashion and queer futurism.



Cellist and vocalist **JORDAN HAMILTON** is a mix of mastery and maverick musicality; hip-hop influenced, rhythmically layered, melodically robust. Avant garde, folk-soul music, a key to navigate space, time, and change, gracefully, for those who use it. Driven by diversity, drawn to the cello's tone, cosmic strings calling souls home. Emotional energy crafted from integrity, immaterial and immortal, experienced at the speed of sound, with a bit of bounce, groove by the ounce, and all the jump you'll need to move.



Vocalist, songwriter, and producer **KYLER WILKINS** from Ann Arbor, Michigan has been performing as Ki5 using nothing but a loop station and a simple effects unit since 2017. Having opened for Erykah Badu, Reggie Watts, and CeCe Peniston and performed as a Sofar Sounds artist, Ki5 represents himself as a seasoned Michigan artist who continuously to spreads his unique style of vocal-driven music to the masses. NPR's All Songs Considered says this about Ki5's 2019 live-looping performance of "Honey" off his first EP "Looking for the Sun": "Like honey, [his] falsetto is sweet; the layers of loops are sticky and soothing, building to a celebratory bridge, then melting back down to calming waves."



BILLY KING As a seasoned performer, songwriter, and recording artist, Billy King's presence in the independent music scene brings an original blend of rootsy folk/pop with an occasional touch of country swing. Still living and working on the family farm, Billy has continued writing and recording, and, with his brother, started Holler Fest, a three-day music festival featuring Michigan artists. Billy's versatility as a multi-genre singer-songwriter is matched by his ability on a wide range of instruments from guitar and banjo to keyboards and accordion.



DYLAN CHARLES is an indie folk/rock singer, songwriter, and producer based in New York. His songs blend soulful lyrics and powerful vocals with dynamic and intricate guitar playing. Dylan draws from a wide array of influences across many genres, and fans have compared his sound to the likes of Tom Petty, Bruce Springsteen, Paul Simon and John Mayer. He has toured the US many times both as a solo artist and as a founding member of the soul band On the Sun. In addition to his own projects, he frequently collaborates with other artists as a producer, co-writer and multi-instrumentalist. We are very happy to have Dylan back for his second year; this time as part of the house band!



JESS MERRITT finds inspiration in the natural world, and her rich, soulful voice and evocative, emotional resonance take listeners on a journey of "healing through feeling." A big fan of "all the things" Jess draws on her background in music, design and engineering to move seamlessly through various mediums and genres. Jess released her first EP entitled 'Wild In Me' this last May which is now available on streaming platforms as well as her website. Recently leaving her corporate career in the Medical Device industry, she is now pursuing music and has started her own business in home renovation and repair as a General Contractor and Project Manager. Next up is pursuing her builder's license. This Jacqueline Jane of all trades is a staple in our holiday production and we are so happy to have her. Welcome back, Jess!



Sometimes traditional, sometimes contemporary, always imbued with a raw honesty- Lansing based Independent Music Award winning songwriter **JEN SYGIT** has released four albums, her latest “It’s About Time” produced by long time friend and collaborator Dominic John Davis (bassist to Jack White, Buddy Miller, Steppin’ In It) and features guest performances from Luther Dickinson, Colin Linden, The McCrary Sisters and Rachael Davis. The album’s title track won “Best Americana Song” at the 2019 Independent Music Awards in NYC and Jen’s music video for the tune “Love is Wild”, won “Vox Pop Fan Favorite” the same year. In addition to her career as performing songwriter, Jen is a founding member of the all-female string band “Stella!” who just dropped their sophomore release “Stella Tells the Truth” on Halloween of this year. You may have heard Jen sing on one of your other favorite artists albums- she is a veteran session vocalist appearing on over 50 albums nationwide.



For more than 17 years, Arranger **BRAD PHILLIPS** has served as a sideman for some of Michigan’s most prevalent singer/songwriter acts. He is most known for his appearances with Jeff Daniels, The Verve Pipe, and the Celtic-fusion super-group Millish. He has also appeared with May Erlewine, Joshua Davis and played violin for Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Pat Metheny, and Iggy Pop and the Stooges. Most recently, Brad is a featured artist/string instrumentalist for Patti LuPone’s ‘A LIFE IN NOTES’. Welcome back, Brad! We are honored to have you with us again!



EMILY SLOMOVITS is an Ann Arbor-based freelance musician, theatre artist, teacher, and writer. She has studied violin and voice in classical, jazz and folk styles for over fifteen years, and folk guitar for almost ten years. Emily plays music with her dad and uncle, the duo Gemini, with her dad as San and Emily, with singer-songwriter Billy King as well as with many other musicians, including Judy Banker, Billy Brandt, Annie and Rod Capps, and Jill Jack.



Co-Producer and Arranger, Trumpeter and flugelhornist **ROSS HUFF** performs with a half-dozen different ensembles based in Ann Arbor and maintains a docket of horn section engagements in every style of contemporary music, as well as several antiquated ones. Ross is a recording artist, arranger, and music instructor as well as an experienced composer, producer, and bandleader. He has previously worked as an essayist and editor and in his free time, is an avid baseball fan who brings his own pencil and scorecard to keep score at games.



Saxophonist **TIM HALDEMAN** resides in Ann Arbor where he leads several groups of his own, and performs and records with a wide variety of musicians. He is also a member of Mike Reed's People Places and Things and other Chicago projects.



JOHN 'TBONE' PAXTON is a veteran trombonist and vocalist professionally active in Southeastern Michigan for many years. He is the featured singer and trombone soloist with the 11 time DMA award-winning jazz ensemble, the Planet D Nonet. He also co-leads the Paxton/Spangler Septet, a jazz ensemble performing primarily South African jazz, as well as an in demand quintet with Tbone as the featured artist. John is a 2nd generation musician and a son of the "Jazz Age." His soulful sense of swing, phrasing, and his ability to interpret and bring personal meaning to a lyric allows him to connect to his audience at an emotional level, both as a vocalist and as an instrumentalist. Look for his 2020 CD recording "Back in Your Own Backyard" on Detroit Music Factory records with the RJ Spangler Quartet. Tbone has a new 2023 CD release, "Joys", on Eastlawn records. Both are available on Spotify, Apple, and Bandcamp as well as eastlawnrecords.com.



BRENNAN ANDES has been a bon vivant of Ann Arbor's scene for the last two decades. He has had the pleasure of creating music for a plethora of artists as well as being the founding member of The Macpodz. Years of touring nationally and internationally has made him aware of the importance of the community around him. You can catch Brennan with his crew 'The Pherotones' at The Last Word each Thursday night...and what feels like everywhere else!



JONATHAN BROWN Jonathan is a drummer, percussionist, educator, composer, chess player, twitch streamer, trekkie, explorer, and traveler.



Percussionist **DAN PICCOLO** regularly performs and teaches in a wide range of musical settings. He has recorded and toured internationally as a concert percussionist, jazz drummer, and world percussion specialist. Dr. Piccolo frequently appears as a clinician at universities throughout the United States. He is currently Associate Professor of Percussion in the College of Musical Arts at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. Please visit www.danpiccolo.com for more information.



SHAWN MCDONALD Drenched in the tradition of smokey organ jazz is the soulful voice of Detroit native, Shawn McDonald. Rich in the traditions of his hometown, this Hammond organist and blues pianist is chalked full of blue-eyed soul, relentless swing, deep fried funk and greasy blues. A versatile performer, Shawn has performed alongside premiere artists such as Larry McCray, Dan Ackroyd, Warren Haynes, Laith Al-Saadi, Thornetta Davis, Martha Reeves, The Vandellas, and many many more. Shawn has opened for the great B.B. King and Bobby Blue Bland performing in over 28 countries globally; and is also a contributing artist and honorary member of Ann Arbor's own beloved Macpodz. After touring for more than 18 years Shawn is back in the Motor City, and can be found occasionally leading his own group of incomparable musicians at several of Detroit's hippest hangs.



VINCE RUSSO is a washboard percussionist based in Ann Arbor who presently performs locally with Pontiac Trail Blazers and Desmond Jones. While the prior information is true, Vince is such an amazing part of the music community as a whole. We know how very lucky we are that Vince is back not only to be on stage, but also to manage us backstage!



JENNY JONES has been with the Holiday Show almost since its start, and has been friends with Ebird for over 25 years. Classically trained pianist, self-taught guitarist, and school-taught cellist, Jenny Jones is also a singer-songwriter based in Ann Arbor. She has released a full-length album, and for the past 14 years, has worked to bring together musicians and businesses within her community through her company Sadie Madden Music. Jenny has shared the stage with Michigan musicians including Erin Zindle & The Ragbirds, Jess Merritt, Abigail Stauffer, Nickie P, Billy King, The Crane Wives, Antwaun Stanley, The War & Treaty, and a number of others. She contributes to the local music community holding the position of Board Member for The Ark and The Amplify Project, and is the Executive Director of statewide nonprofit organization, Title Track, founded by Seth Bernard. Jenny is also a committee member for the Ann Arbor Summer Festival, the Alluvion Artist Council, and the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation.



SHELLY SMITH has stated that this production is one of her favorite parts of her world! She has been entertaining southeast Michigan audiences for years. She is the host and producer of the Reads and Weeds podcast and co-producer and host of Ear Candy piano karaoke. She'll be back at the Ark Jan 2nd, 2026 for Ann Arbor's 10th Annual 50 First Jokes!

For 18 years I've been gathering my musical friends together to creatively collaborate around the theme of holiday music. This tradition of gathering with those I love to harmonize in the key of snow has been important to me since I was very small. In Buffalo, NY where I grew up my large family gathered together every snowy Christmas Eve and sang carols with a guitar and a stack of mismatched songbooks. In the midst of that living room, surrounded by the voices of my entire family singing in harmony, I felt a deep sense of rightness with the world. I felt my calling – like I was a giant bell with many little bells inside me, all ringing out joyfully, and all around me the whole world was resonating with the same frequency.

There's no greater sense of unity than when humans fill the otherwise empty space of a room with their voices, singing a melody they all know. These familiar songs ring our bells when we hear them in the grocery store. They offer words of comfort and joy, of holly-jolly, of peace, and good will towards all. They are songs to prepare us for the long winter ahead. Songs of a baby born to save all of humanity and a jolly old fat man who brings us the desires of our heart. Songs of feasting, fasting, candles, and dancing. Songs of belief and doubt, loss and war, sugarplums, magic animals and chilly noses. Songs from many cultures and traditions. These are the songs we still sing, even in times when the world is loud with cognitive dissonance. These songs remind us who we are and the values we share in common. They remind us that we need each other.

It is a gift and an honor that I have drawn into my life many widely diverse and especially talented friends. We have different styles, tastes, ideas, beliefs, and traditions. But we all have something to celebrate at this time of year, even if it's just the simple act of coming together.

Thank you for being present and sharing this experience with us. Showing up is a revolutionary act in the days of division and automation and dystopia. I hope you will continue to show up with bells on, all polished up and ready to ring. Music is important to our community, to the survival of hope, decency, and democracy. I urge you to stay connected to these musicians you see on stage because we will provide opportunities all year round for you to stay connected with many others. This is our calling. We are gatherers. We are bell-ringers.

*How can we wake the world
unless we set all our bells to ringing?*

I hope you enjoy this pause from the season's busy-ness and find beauty in the suspension of disbelief, the 'agree to disagree', the open ear, the armistice, the mingling of ideas old and new to the sound of a familiar tune.

May the music bring you joy.

- GRIN



Executive Producer: Erin Zindle
Co-Producer: Ross Huff
Song Arrangers: Ross Huff, Brad Phillips, Erin Zindle
Master of Ceremonies: Shelly Smith
Audio Engineer: Mark Allen
Lighting Designer: Don Koleber
Stage Manager: Vince Russo
Video: Cory Robinson
Hospitality Manager: Jenny Jones
Publicity: Sadie Madden Music
Audio Equipment: Allen Audio Systems
Merchandise Manager: Tammy Johnsen
Sponsor Liaison: Katherine Keeler

Special Thanks:

Barry Lonik, Kay & Duane Huff, Deron & Anne Brod, Ed & Julie Zindle, Steve & Diann Meyer, Tommy Vanicelli, Fred Ellert, Betty Bair, Paula Jones, & The Ark Volunteers

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Please support the musicians you see on this stage tonight by visiting the merchandise table and frequenting their live shows all year round!

You can watch and share the livestream of the Saturday evening performance on The Ragbirds' YouTube channel

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