

UMS President Emeritus Ken Fischer Authors Memoir on Community Impact of Performing Arts

**A Reflection on the Power of the Performing Arts to Engage and Enrich
Communities**

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and Amazon**

John U. Bacon to Host Virtual Book Launch Event

September 22 at 7 pm

ANN ARBOR, MI (August 24, 2020) — The University Musical Society, housed on the campus of the University of Michigan, is a model for how world-class performances in music, dance, and theater can be employed to engage communities, preserve cultural heritage, incubate talent, and celebrate diversity. In *Everybody In, Nobody Out: Inspiring Community at Michigan's University Musical Society* (July 24, 2020; University of Michigan Press; ISBN 978-0-472-13202-7; \$29.95 hardcover; 216 pages), author **Ken Fischer**, with Robin Lea Pyle, reflects on his three-decade tenure leading UMS, one of the country's oldest arts presenters, and some of the most memorable events, people, and performances that together contributed to the organization being awarded the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest public artistic honor, in 2014.

During his time at UMS, Fischer oversaw an ambitious campaign to expand and diversify programming, an initiative inspired by his philosophy toward promoting the arts, "Everybody In, Nobody Out." The approach not only deepened UMS's engagement with the University of Michigan and Southeast Michigan communities, it led to exemplary partnerships with distinguished artists across the world.

In a beautiful foreword to the book, internationally acclaimed trumpeter Wynton Marsalis writes about one of his own performances at UMS: "After Ken delivers some gracious, inspiring, and welcoming words, the audience is warmed up; you are up over wires onto a battleground to play away the blues of everyday life for a group of strangers, who are soon to become 'one' in pursuit of an elusive, but

palpable mutual happiness. It is the ritual recreation of an event as ancient as storytelling. That concert remembers and foretells for artist and audience alike, what has meaning to us and what it means to be us. How that audience looks and feels, how it listens and responds, and how it discerns and assesses, is the heart of the matter. And, that tells you all you really need to know about the substance of your presenter's aspirations."

Under Fischer's leadership, UMS hosted numerous breakthrough performances, including the Vienna Philharmonic's final tour with Leonard Bernstein, appearances by then relatively unknown opera singer Cecilia Bartoli, a multiyear partnership with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and artists as diverse as Yo-Yo Ma, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Elizabeth Streb, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

Though peppered with colorful backstage stories of how these successes came to be, ***Everybody In, Nobody Out*** is neither a history of UMS nor just a memoir of Fischer's significant accomplishments with the organization. Rather, it is a reflection on the power of the performing arts to engage and enrich communities—not by handing down cultural enrichment from on high, but by meeting communities where they live and helping them preserve cultural heritage, incubate talent, and find ways to make community voices heard. As more arts programs aspire to engage and build inclusive relationships with their diverse communities, ***Everybody In, Nobody Out*** presents the perfect opportunity for them to learn from the successes of UMS.

VIRTUAL BOOK LAUNCH: KEN FISCHER'S EVERYBODY IN, NOBODY OUT

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 from 7-8:30 pm at ums.org

During this virtual book launch, **John U. Bacon**, Ann Arbor author, speaker, television and radio commentator, and longtime friend of Ken's, will interview Ken about his book, highlighting some of the wonderful stories Ken shares from his three decades at UMS and a lifetime in the arts. *This book launch is co-presented by Literati Bookstore and University of Michigan Press Great Lakes.*

KEN FISCHER is President Emeritus of UMS served as president of the organization for thirty years until his retirement in 2017. In 2019, he was awarded an honorary doctorate of fine arts from the University of Michigan.

ROBIN LEA PYLE is author of *First in the Field: Breaking Ground in Computer Science* at Purdue University. She directs and writes plays for her company To the Rescue Theatre to benefit animal rescue.

ABOUT UMS

A recipient of the 2014 National Medal of Arts, UMS (also known as the University Musical Society) contributes to a vibrant cultural community by connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. One of the oldest performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is an independent non-profit organization affiliated with the University of Michigan, presenting over 70 music, theater, and dance performances by professional touring artists each season, along with over 100 free educational activities. UMS is committed to bold artistic leadership, engaged learning through the arts, and access and inclusiveness. Since 1990, the organization has co-commissioned and supported the production of nearly 80 new or reimagined works. Matthew VanBesien became the organization's seventh president in July 2017.

MEDIA CONTACT

Mallory Shea, Marketing & Media Relations Manager
734.647.4020 / mschirr@umich.edu