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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

33rd Annual Jazz Fest offers three days of great jazz

Summary: Guest artists saxophonist Eric Alexander and bassist Todd Coolman will listen and perform.

(April 8, 2011)-Forget April in Paris. If it's April in Morris, it must be time for the University of Minnesota, Morris Jazz Fest. The 33rd annual Jazz Fest takes place Thursday through Saturday, April 7-9, 2011, on the Morris campus. An opportunity for young musicians to work with some of the great names in jazz, it is also a special time for jazz fans to enjoy a concert performed by the Morris jazz ensembles and guest artists each evening at 7:30 p.m. in Edson Auditorium.

The West Central All Star Jazz Band opens the concert on Friday night, and on Saturday night the festivities begin with the Alumni Jazz Band. Festival organizer Joe Carucci, assistant professor of music, has chosen musical selections by Duke Ellington, Thad Jones, Sammy Nestico, Frankie Lane, Oscar Pettiford, Bob Mintzer, and more.

This year's event promises to be a remarkable confluence of the New York City and Twin Cities jazz scenes. New York-based guest artists Eric Alexander and Todd Coolman and Twin Cities clinicians Jay Epstein and Adam Rossmiller will work with more than 600 high school and college jazz students from around the region during three days of clinics, highlighted by a one-hour master class on their respective instrument at 4:30 p.m. each day.

Saxophonist Eric Alexander

Saxophonist Eric Alexander, acclaimed by critics as "one of the finest young tenor players in jazz," first achieved fame by finishing second (behind Joshua Redman and ahead of Chris Potter) at the 1991 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Saxophone Competition. He has recorded dozens of discs since then as lead, sideman, and composer, while working, in his words, to establish his own voice within the bop-based jazz tradition. Known for his virtuosity, lyricism, and creativity, he is an accomplished bandleader and sought-after sideman playing with such artists as Jimmy Cobb, Steve Davis, Joe Farnsworth, Pat Martino, Jimmy McGriff, Cecil Payne, and Jim Rotundi.

Bassist Todd Coolman, positions himself among a new breed of jazz musicians who are equally adept at both performance and jazz education. One of the most recorded jazz bass players today, he has performed with musicians such as Ahmad Jamal, Bucky Pizzarelli, Chris Potter, John Hicks, Gerry Mulligan, Jimmy Heath, Horace Silver, Dizzy Gillespie, James Moody, Slide Hampton, Clark Terry, Zoot Sims, Stan Getz, Bobby Watson, and many others. He claims the distinction of being the last bassist to have performed with the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band. Coolman's most recent release as a bandleader, *Perfect Strangers*, features Eric Alexander leading the sextet on saxophone.

Drummer Jay Epstein

Drummer Jay Epstein, one of "the smartest players on the Twin Cities jazz scene," counts "several decades performing, recording, and touring in this jazz game" across the country and around the world, including seven European tours with pianists Bill Carrothers and Giacomo Aulà. His CDs, *Long Ago* and *Easy Company* featuring Carrothers and bassist Anthony Cox, have garnered luminous reviews in the international press. He has also accompanied such vocal greats as Karrin Allyson and Sarah Vaughan.

Trumpeter Adam Rossmiller

Trumpeter Adam Rossmiller is an active performer and educator in both the classical and jazz idioms. This versatility landed him in diverse venues, including The Glenn Miller Orchestra, The Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, The Air Force Notables, JazzMN, The Hornheads, Pete Whitman's X-tet, The Summit Hill Brass Quintet, and The Bach Society of Minnesota, as well as the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. Snowblind, an original jazz quintet he co-founded, has recorded two CDs and performs regularly at the Dakota jazz club.

"The UMM jazz community is very excited about studying and performing with these world class musicians," enthused Carucci, jazz ensembles and combos director.

Tickets may be purchased at the Student Center Information Desk or in the [Office of Student Activities](#), or call 320-589-6080 for more information.

This activity is funded in part by a grant from the Lake Region Arts Council through a Minnesota State Legislative appropriation.

Photo above: Eric Alexander

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