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2-20-2004

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UMM jazz musician invited to Bass at the Beach gig

Summary:

(February 20, 2004)-How does a day at the beach toward the end of February sound? Better yet, how about five days at the beach – in Myrtle Beach, S.C.? That's just where University of Minnesota, Morris jazz student Dustin Retzlaff will be February 25-29. Retzlaff, son of Karl and Linda Retzlaff of Cyrus, is one of only 60 musicians selected from hundreds of auditions to attend Bass at the Beach (BATB) at the end of February.

"I'm very excited for this opportunity, yet a bit scared," said Retzlaff, who will be footing his own travel expenses.

A senior music major at UMM, Retzlaff is a member of the renowned UMM Jazz Ensembles, under the direction of Dr. James "Doc" Carlson. UMM has four Jazz Ensembles and numerous Jazz Combos. All of the UMM Jazz Ensembles tour annually, in addition to biennial trips to New Orleans. UMM jazz musicians have performed for a variety of music conventions, including the MMEA (Minnesota Music Educators Association) convention in Minneapolis and the NCMENC (North Central Music Educators National Conference) in Chicago. In 1991, the UMM Jazz Ensemble was one of the 25 big bands from around the world to perform at the 25th annual Montreux Jazz Festival in Montreux, Switz., as well as in 1994 at The North Sea Jazz Festival at The Hague, Netherlands, with return appearances to both Festivals in 1997. They have also performed at Carnegie Hall with The Count Basie Orchestra, and at both the Montreux and Vienne, France Jazz Festivals in 2000. In addition, UMM jazz musicians perform each year with renowned jazz artists during UMM's own Jazz Fest. This year's 26th Annual Jazz Fest, which will be held April 1-3, will welcome jazz guest artists Wayne Bergeron on trumpet, and Kim Park on saxophone, flute and piano.

The Bass at the Beach program is designed for the professional (or aspiring professional) bassist, as well as the advanced player. A grueling schedule of 10 hours of bass each day includes concerts, master classes, panel discussions and plenty of "hang time" with renowned jazz artists and their colleagues. Master Class topics will include techniques, improvisation, "groove playing," rhythm section concepts, reading proficiency, and more.

Guest artists at BATB will be: Bassist Steve Bailey, who joined Dizzy Gillespie's band in 1983, and formed Bass Extremes with Victor Wooten in 1993 Victor Wooten of Bela Fleck and the Flecktones, winner of three Grammy Awards, and considered by his peers as perhaps the best bass player in the world Mike Pope of the Chick Corea Band drummer Gregg Bissonette, who has played with everyone from David Lee Roth, James Taylor, Ringo Starr, and Carlos Santana to Joe Satriani, and special guest Felix Pastorius.

The Bass at the Beach campus will be the luxurious Ocean Dunes Resort and Conference Center in Myrtle Beach, with each suite overlooking the sand and surf. Tennis, golf and other beach activities are options for those who can find time between lessons, concerts and practice.

A "tough gig," but somebody's gotta' do it!

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