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Milligan College to host Rick Simerly

From Contributed Reports

MILLIGAN COLLEGE— Rick Simerly, a renowned jazz trombonist and associate professor of music at Milligan College, will perform at the 40th anniversary of the International Trombone Festival in Nashville, Tenn., on June 24.

The 2011 International Trombone Festival will be held June 22-25 in Nashville, the city where the event began in 1971. Several other countries including England, Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands have hosted the annual festival in recent years. The event attracts trombonists, teachers and instrument companies from all over the world.

Simerly will play in a jazz quartet at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center following a concerto debut by New York Philharmonic principal trombonist Joseph Alessi and the Nashville Symphony.

"I am very honored to have been asked to perform at the International Trombone Festival," Simerly said. "The lineup of trombonists is an international who's who of orchestral and jazz trombone virtuosos."

In addition to his performance on Friday evening, Simerly will judge the finals of the J.J. Johnson Jazz Trombone Competition on Friday morning. This competition is named in honor of the great jazz trombonist J.J. Johnson, and is open to aspiring trombonists 25 years of age or younger. Three finalists chosen from previous competition rounds will come to Nashville to compete for the coveted title before a panel of Simerly and two other judges.

"Many years ago I attended this festival as a college student and was absolutely awestruck by a young, up-and-coming jazz trombonist by the name of Bill Watrous," Simerly said. "Bill is now considered one of the greatest legends of the jazz trombone and is also a featured soloist at this year's festival. Performing at the same event with Bill is not only a great honor but in some respects represents coming full circle for me at this 40th anniversary of the festival."

Simerly has toured with the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra under the direction of David Baker and has played in the bands of Tommy Dorsey, Woody Herman, Nelson Riddle, Les Elgart, Bob Crosby, Jimmy Dorsey, Buddy Morrow and the last band of Charlie Spivak.

He has performed and toured with numerous well known jazz artists and entertainers, including Billy Taylor, James Moody, Jon Faddis, Bobby Shew, Frank Sinatra Jr., Bob Hope, Red Skelton, Lou Rawls, Gladys Knight, The Temptations, The Spinners, The Four Tops, The Commodores and The O'Jays.

A veteran faculty member of the famed Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Workshops, Simerly has been artist in residence at numerous jazz camps nationwide. He has also served as a faculty member at the renowned Brubeck Institute in Stockton, Calif. As a clinician for Conn-Selmer Inc., he regularly performs clinics and concerts throughout the United States and has been a featured soloist for the International Association of Jazz Educators, The International Trombone Festival and the Mid-West Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago.

For more information about the International Trombone Festival, visit www.itf2011.org. For more information about Milligan, visit www.milligan.edu.