



Dave Bennett

Contributed/Dave Bennett

Bennett, Clarinet Swing Kings set for JCSO concert

■ Martin pops concert set for Saturday at 7:30 at Milligan.

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MILLIGAN COLLEGE — Phenomenal young clarinetist Dave Bennett has become the premier interpreter of the style and sound of his hero, Benny Goodman. He and his septet, the Clarinet Swing Kings, will be presenting the annual Mary B. Martin pops concert with the Johnson City Symphony on Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Bennett will play selections of Goodman's music along with numbers by Artie Shaw, Woody Herman, Acker Bilk and Jimmy Dorsey plus a medley of New Orleans/Pete Fountain tunes. The group also has a vocalist.

This annual tribute to Martin will be held at the newly renovated Mary B. Martin Auditorium at Seeger Chapel, Milligan College. Following the concert there will be a reception for the audience in the lower part of the hall.

Bennett is a self-taught musician who began age 10 playing a clarinet given to him by his grandfather. He learned to play Goodman music by ear, listening to his records. He began touring all over the country at age 14 on the "traditional jazz" circuit with a Saginaw, Mich.-based Dixieland band.

At 17, he won a competition over 600 entrants to solo with the Count Basie Orchestra. Pete Fountain, upon hearing a tape of Bennett, made an unsolicited

call to the teenager encouraging him that "you are on the right track."

He gives fresh and creative treatments to such classics as "Nightmare," "Stranger on the Shore," "Where or When" and "Begin the Beguine." Bennett and his touring band have performed at jazz festivals in San Diego, Elkhart, Ind., Detroit and at a number of leading jazz nightclubs.

His musical abilities aren't limited to jazz and swing. Bennett is passionate about rockabilly, pop, country and American roots music, and even composes his own material.

He has led his septet for concerts in 30 states and has performed with more than 20 orchestras in the U.S. and Canada. Reviews include "Audiences completely blown away ... a remarkable talent of genius proportions," by Thomas Wilkins, music director, Omaha (Neb.) Symphony, and resident conductor of the Detroit Symphony; and from Andrew Lane, principal Pops Conductor, Orlando (Fla.) Philharmonic: "Dave Bennett is one of the finest performers I have had the pleasure of working with. There is no doubt he is one of the greatest clarinetists of our time."

The concert will be conducted by JCSO assistant concertmaster Kellie Brown, filling in for conductor and music director Rob Seebacher, who is recovering from surgery.

Tickets for the concert are \$10 and can be purchased by calling the symphony office at 926-8762, through www.jcsymphony.com or at the door. Free buses will run from Colonial Hills at 6:15, Maple Grove and Appalachian Christian Village at 6:30 and from City Hall at 6:45.