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A dedicated ensemble

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Students and faculty will share the stage tonight, but this performance isn't any old merging of undergraduates and professors. This brass ensemble concert is dedicated to an influential member of the university's music program, Milton Stevens.

Scheduled for 8 p.m. in the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center's DeKelboum Concert Hall, Brass Ensemble - In Memory of Milton Stevens will feature the UM Student Brass Ensemble, as well as faculty of the music school. In addition, the UM Trombone Choir will perform two pieces dedicated specifically to Stevens's memory, including a work by Josh Perry-Parrish written exclusively for the occasion.

The idea for the show was formed in June when Stevens spoke to Gregory Miller, an associate professor at the school of music who will be performing tonight, about presenting a concert that incorporated both students and their teachers.

"It is not often that you get to see world-class brass players perform right in your backyard, with their students alongside them," said lecturer Matthew Guilford.

Stevens, an artist-in-residence for the music school, died July 30 of a heart ailment at the age of 64. Along with his position at the university, Stevens was the principal trombonist for the National Symphony Orchestra, founder of the Washington area's Interservice Trombone Choir and an adjunct professor at Catholic University.

Stevens also conducted a variety of groups throughout his career, including the Washington Symphonic Brass, Oberlin Brass Choir, Boston University Wind Ensemble and the UM Brass Ensemble. In 1999 and 2002, Stevens was selected as the principal trombonist for the Super World Orchestra, which performed in Japan.

"He did a tremendous amount at Maryland, building the brass program here," said Guilford, who played alongside Stevens with the National Symphony Orchestra and will also be performing tonight. "A large part of this concert is dedicated to him and the effort he put into helping these students."

Serving as the first collaborated performance between faculty and students in the program's history, the

musical selection will include the works of Edward Elgar, Johannes Brahms, Eric Ewazen and Ingolf Dahl. Although the groups are performing separately, Nathan Clark, an undergraduate student and member of the U.S. Air Force Ceremonial Brass, will join the faculty for part of the program. Admission is free to the public and Miller hopes that students stop by to take in the show.

"I think it's a great opportunity for students to come and hear an ensemble that is not normally heard," Miller said. "It is different because most of the works are original compositions for these instruments."

The preparation for the performance was unique because the students rehearsed only four times prior to the dress rehearsal, which took place Nov. 12 and was the first time the two groups met to perform the program. This move was made, according to Miller, "to give the students a better sense of what they would face in the professional world, where rehearsal time is always at a premium." The students also ran their own rehearsals; Miller only helped "coach" while the students practiced.

With such a unique opportunity for students to perform alongside their mentors, as well as play in honor of a man who was so highly regarded within the music community, both the students and faculty members are looking forward to the performance, Guilford said.

"It is a fantastic opportunity for the students and it is great, for me as a teacher, knowing that they can perform at this high level," Guilford said. "It is very exciting both for the faculty and for the students, and it should be a fitting tribute to this great man."

The Brass Ensemble - In Memory of Milton Stevens concert will take place tonight at 8 p.m. in the DeKelbourn Concert Hall in the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. Admission is free.

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