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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tickets & Information: 212/854-7799; www.millertheatre.com

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"This is an inspiring venue." — JazzTimes

MILLER THEATRE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

heats up winter with two hot drummer-led jazz quintets:

Neal Smith Quintet

Saturday, February 5, 8:00PM

Lewis Nash Quintet

Saturday, February 26, 8:00PM

Tickets: \$25 • Students: \$15 with valid ID

From Miller Theatre Director Melissa Smey:

"This February Miller welcomes two drummers as band leaders for the second half of this season's Jazz series. The first—Neal Smith—is making waves early in his career, having performed with a roster of renowned musicians. Next I am pleased to present Lewis Nash, a Miller favorite and veteran performer who can be heard on over 300 recordings with a wide range of performers."

Saturday, February 5, 8:00PM

Neal Smith Quintet

"As a musician continuing the jazz tradition, I feel it is not only my responsibility to pick up where my fathers left off, but to continually modernize the jazz sound," says **Neal Smith**. A longtime drummer for Cyrus Chestnut, Smith brings together several of New York's best in his quintet, which plays traditional tunes and original compositions with equal freshness and panache.

ARTISTS: **Eric Alexander**, tenor saxophone
Mark Whitfield, guitar
Mulgrew Miller, piano
Neal Smith, drums
Nat Reeves, bass

BIOS: **Neal Smith** has been playing drums since the age of five. He studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music where he received a bachelor of music degree in Jazz Studies and performance, the first African-American to earn a degree in Jazz Studies from the Conservatory. In addition to his academic training, Smith has studied with Vernell Fournier, Greg Bandy, Paul Samuels, Tom Freer, Bruce Collie, and Michael Rosen. He performs regularly in clubs and concert halls, at colleges and universities, and at United States-based and international jazz festivals. Smith leads his own group, which performs original compositions as well as classic arrangements of jazz standards. He also performs regularly with internationally recognized artists and has shared the stage with the likes of Tom Harrell, Anita Baker, Geri Allen, Donald Byrd, Kenny Burrell, Cyrus Chestnut, Mark Whitfield, Marlana Shaw, and Vanessa Rubin. Beyond performing, he loves to teach developing drummers. He is currently an associate professor at Berklee College of Music.

Boasting a warm, finely burnished tone and a robust melodic and harmonic imagination, tenor saxophonist **Eric Alexander** has been exploring new musical worlds from the outset. Alexander played with organ trios on the south side of Chicago, made his recording debut in 1991 with Charles Earland on Muse Records, and cut his first album as leader in 1992 (*Straight Up* for Delmark). Alexander continues to tour the world over to capacity audiences. Using New York City as his home base, he can regularly be seen in clubs including ongoing appearances at Smoke in Morningside Heights.

Mark Whitfield graduated from Berklee College of Music having studied composition and arranging as well as all styles of guitar performance. Upon graduation, he returned to his native New York to embark on a career as a jazz guitarist that afforded him the opportunity to collaborate with many legendary artists including Dizzy Gillespie, Art Blakey, Clark Terry, Jimmy Smith, Herbie Hancock, Quincy Jones, Betty Carter, Ray Charles, Gladys Knight, Burt Bacharach, Wynton Marsalis, and his teacher and mentor George Benson. In September of 1990, Warner Brothers released his solo debut, *The Marksman*. In 2005, Whitfield accepted the invitation to join the faculty as artist in residence at the Berklee School. Whitfield maintains an active teaching and touring schedule, both in collaborations and as a solo artist. In January of 2009, he released his latest solo effort, a Stevie Wonder tribute entitled *Songs of Wonder*, featuring Chris Botti, John Mayer, and Sy Smith.

Mulgrew Miller has performed with many of the legendary jazz innovators and has appeared on over 500 recordings. He was with the Duke Ellington Orchestra and had important stints with Betty Carter (1980), Woody Shaw (1981–1983), Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers (1983–1986), the Tony Williams Quintet (1986–1994), and, since 2004, Ron Carter. Other notable affiliations include Johnny Griffin, Freddie Hubbard, Kenny Garrett, Steve Nelson, Terence Blanchard, Donald Harrison, Bobby Watson, Steve Turre, Bobby Hutcherson, Wallace Roney, and Benny Golson. In 1985 Miller made his debut recording as a leader on Orrin Keepnews’s Landmark label, and later recorded on the RCA Novus label. The University of Memphis name Miller a distinguished alumnus in 2003. In 2005 he was elected director of jazz studies at William Paterson University. In 2006, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Performing Arts at Lafayette College, where he served as Artist in Residence from 2008–2009. In 2010 he toured with renowned guitarist John Scofield and also was chosen to serve as artist in residence at the Detroit Jazz Festival.

Nat Reeves was born in 1955 in Lynchburg, Virginia. When the self-taught musician teamed with other Virginia artists after his grandfather introduced him to the electric bass, the journey began. By 1979, he was in New York City, performing in small jazz clubs and at jam sessions. Two events occurred in 1982 that would change Reeves’ career forever. First, he traveled to Japan as a part of Sonny Stitt’s last tour. Also, Reeves moved to Hartford, Connecticut and started working with Jackie McLean, to this day the most important musical influence in his life. He began teaching at the University of Hartford and the Artists Collective. In 1994, Nat started touring and recording with Kenny Garrett. In 2001 that Reeves decided to focus full-time on his teaching career at The Hartt School. By this time, the University of Hartford had renamed the African American Music Studies Program to the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz. Today, Reeves is committed to perpetuating Jackie McLean’s legacy at The Hartt School, as well as continuing his career performing.

Saturday, February 16, 8:00PM

Lewis Nash Quintet

A veteran of the international scene, **Lewis Nash** has played with many jazz greats, from Betty Carter and Dizzy Gillespie to Diana Krall and Branford Marsalis. He rose to particular prominence during his decade in Tommy Flanagan’s trio. Noted for his subtle, melodic playing, Nash is also an accomplished bandleader and educator.

ARTISTS: **Jeremy Pelt**, trumpet
Jimmy Greene, saxophone
Renee Rosnes, piano
Lewis Nash, drums
Peter Washington, bass

BIOS: Born in Arizona, **Lewis Nash** developed an early interest in music and began playing drums at age 10. In 1981, Nash moved to New York City and joined the trio of Betty Carter. He is featured on three of her recordings, including the Grammy-winning *Look What I Got*. Bassist Ron Carter hired Nash in 1984. In 1986, saxophonist Branford Marsalis asked Lewis to join his quartet. That association spanned two years and several continents, and is documented on Marsalis’s Grammy-nominated recording *Random Abstract*. In 1988, Nash joined the Don Pullen/George Adams quartet, and in 1989 he toured with saxophonist Sonny Rollins. He also performed with Stan Getz, Art Farmer, Clark Terry, and Milt Jackson. From 1990 to 2000, Lewis was a member of the Tommy Flanagan Trio. During this period, Nash also toured and recorded with the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. His impressive discography (over 300 recordings) includes projects with jazz legends Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, Benny Carter, Hank Jones, John Lewis, Diana Krall, Joe Lovano, and Roy Hargrove. Demonstrating his stylistic diversity, Nash is also featured on recordings by Natalie Cole, Bette Midler, Nancy Wilson, Kenny Rankin, Melissa Manchester, and George Michael. Currently, while he continues to collaborate with a wide variety of artists, Nash leads several of his

own exciting groups.

Jeremy Pelt arrived in New York in 1998 after graduating from Berklee College of Music. Since his arrival, he has been fortunate enough to play with many of today's and yesterday's Jazz luminaries, such as the Mingus Big Band, Jimmy Heath, Frank Wess, Charli Persip, Keter Betts, Frank Foster, John Hicks, Ravi Coltrane, Winard Harper, Vincent Herring, Ralph Peterson, Lonnie Plaxico, Cliff Barbaro, Nancy Wilson, Bobby Short, Bobby "Blue" Bland, The Skatalites, Cedar Walton, and more. Pelt has also been featured in a variety of different bands, including the Roy Hargrove Big Band, The Village Vanguard Orchestra, and the Duke Ellington Big Band. Currently, he is member of the Lewis Nash Septet and The Cannonball Adderley Legacy Band featuring Louis Hayes.

Saxophonist, composer, and bandleader **Jimmy Greene** was born in Hartford, Connecticut on February 24, 1975. Greene's parents started him on alto saxophone at age six, and encouraged him to practice. Greene formed his first quintet while in high school, and began composing music soon thereafter. He studied at the Hartt School/University of Hartford, graduating in 1997. In September 1997, he moved to New York City, not long after becoming a member of the Horace Silver Quintet. In addition to the legendary pianist's group, Greene has performed regularly with the groups of Tom Harrell, Freddie Hubbard, Steve Turre, Lewis Nash, Avishai Cohen, Claudia Acuña, Kenny Barron, and Ralph Peterson, as well as the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, New Jazz Composers's Octet, and the big bands of Harry Connick, Jr., Jason Lindner, and Kendrick Oliver. Greene's own bands have performed in New York at The Jazz Standard, The Village Vanguard, Smoke, Small's, and Birdland, in addition to tours of Russia, Brazil, and Uruguay.

Renee Rosnes has toured and recorded with Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter, J.J. Johnson, Bobby Hutcherson, the SFJAZZ Collective, and James Moody, among others. As a leader, Rosnes has released 12 critically acclaimed recordings, which have garnered four Juno Awards (the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy). Rosnes was also honored by SOCAN as Composer of the Year in 2003. Her 2008 release, *Black Narcissus* (M&I Records), is a trio recording celebrating the music of tenor master Joe Henderson and was the recent recipient of a Gold Disc Award by Japan's *Swing Journal Magazine*.

*Columbia University's Miller Theatre is located north of the Main Campus Gate
at 116th St. & Broadway on the ground floor of Dodge Hall.*

For tickets, the public should call the Miller Theatre Box Office at 212/854-7799, M-F, 12-6 pm.
Tickets can also be purchased online at www.millertheatre.com.

For further information, press tickets, and to arrange interviews,
please contact Aleba Gartner Associates at 212/206-1450 or a@alebgartner.com.

For photos, please contact Charlotte Landrum at 212/854-2380 or cl2867@columbia.edu.

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