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Jazz Violin Great Randy Sabien to Head New String Department at McNally Smith College of Music

The St. Paul music college welcomes new department head at its Open House on Saturday, February 21 at 10:00 a.m.

St. Paul, MN, February 4, 2009 – McNally Smith College of Music President Harry Chalmiers announced today that prominent violinist Randy Sabien will head up a new String Department that will begin offering courses during the school's September 2009 fall semester. Sabien has been garnering attention in the worlds of music and music education since the late 1970s. In 1978, at the age of 21, Sabien founded and chaired a new jazz string department at the prestigious Berklee College of Music. Since that time he has performed in jazz, folk, rock, country swing, classical and blues settings, excelling at each. Sabien is also a highly-regarded educator and author of instructional texts. McNally Smith will welcome Randy Sabien to his new position at its first Open House of 2009 on Saturday, February 21, at 10:00 a.m. The Open House is free and open to the public and is not only an opportunity to meet Randy Sabien, but also to learn more about the college. McNally Smith is located at 19 E. Exchange St. in downtown St. Paul, MN. For more information, call (651) 291-0177 or visit www.mcnallysmith.edu.

Under Randy Sabien's leadership, McNally Smith will add the String Department to a Music Division that includes seven other departments, including brass and woodwind, guitar, bass, keyboards, percussion, voice and songwriting/composition. The college also has three other Divisions: Liberal Arts, Technology (recording and production) and Music Business. Harry Chalmiers said, "Forming a String Department is another step in McNally Smith's path to becoming one of the premier music schools in the country. One of the keys to achieving that goal is hiring the very best talent possible for leadership positions. A contemporary music school couldn't ask for a more qualified and more exciting string department head than Randy Sabien. His credentials as a performer and an educator are at the very top of his field, and he is a person of outstanding integrity as well. I consider this to be an important development for McNally Smith."

Growing up in Rockford, IL, Randy Sabien was a young drummer who took on the violin to fill a need in his youth orchestra. He took to the instrument quickly, and began integrating his influences that included the Grateful Dead, the Allman Brothers, James Taylor and others. When he heard the great Gypsy jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli, he became passionate for jazz from the 1930s to 1950s. From his early Berklee days performing with, and producing albums for, folk musician Jim Post (of the 1960s group Friend & Lover) to recent critically-acclaimed jazz releases, Randy Sabien has been one of those rare string musicians to be hailed as both a "violinist" and a "fiddler." *USA Today* said, "Jazz violinists usually draw from one of two traditions. The best of both can be found in the superb Randy Sabien ... he combines classical technique and folk energy in a program that's still strictly jazz." Sabien has been a frequent guest on "A Prairie Home Companion" and "Austin City Limits" and has toured the world playing in different styles and with many of music's greats.

About McNally Smith. Founded in 1985, McNally Smith College of Music is devoted to excellence in music industry higher education and in developing music industry professionals. An accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Music, McNally Smith College of Music offers music degrees and programs in Music Performance, Recording Technology and Music Business. With more than 500 students and an 80-member faculty, McNally Smith College of Music students get a personalized music education that combines the art of physics with musical artistry and includes wide access to current music technology, research tools and performance facilities. McNally Smith alumni are working all over the world. McNally Smith is located in St. Paul, Minnesota. For more information, visit www.mcnallysmith.edu.

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