Notes

To submit a class note or emeriti note to appear in *Madison,* read the instructions and fill out the form on the inside back cover or email madisonmag@jmu.edu

Hitting high notes

Outstanding Collegiate Jazz Soloist Matt Stuver ('03) takes his sax to the U.S. Naval Academy Band

BY AMELIA WOOD ('13)

Outstanding Collegiate Jazz Soloist **Matt Stuver ('03)** is the tenor saxophonist with the premier U.S. Naval Academy Band.

In 2011 Stuver was named the Outstanding Collegiate Jazz Soloist by *Downbeat Magazine* for his phenomenal musical talents. "This is literally the Heisman Trophy of jazz," says David Pope, Stuver's JMU undergraduate mentor and 1994 honoree of this same prestigious award.

In fall 2000, Pope met Stuver, and he says he recalls giving Stuver "the talk" during one of his lessons. "I remember telling him that he could be an extraordinary musician, if only he could set priorities and focus on working as hard as possible."

The talk seemed to work, because Stuver suddenly started getting better and better. "Professor Pope is a phenomenal mentor and teacher. He really kicked my [behind]," says Stuver, a Virginia Beach, Va., native. He began playing in almost every ensemble JMU offers, including the JMU Jazz Ensemble with Professor Chuck Dotas.

Stuver also played for the Madisonians and performed as a JMU cheerleader for two years. He was a member of the Marching Royal Dukes and served as drum major during his senior year. Stuver was the first saxophone soloist in MRD history.

"Matt's dreams included attending the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., for graduate study in their jazz program," says Pope. The first step to his dream was realized when he was offered a scholarship to study classical saxophone. He was later accepted into the jazz program as well. Stuver graduated with two master's degrees — one in saxophone performance and a second master's in literature and jazz studies and contemporary media.

The 2011 Outstanding Collegiate Jazz Soloist Matt Stuver ('03) is currently a tenor saxophonist with the U.S. Naval Academy Band. (Above): Stuver jams on a baritone saxophone with fellow musicians.

Throughout the past few years, Stuver has started a family and completed a doctoral teaching assistantship. He also is completing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media at the Eastman School of Music and auditioned for and was selected to the U.S. Naval Academy Band.

Stuver has performed with such artists as Peter Erskine, John Clayton, Bob Sheppard, Maria Schneider, Bob Brookmeyer, Clark Terry, Wayne Bergeron, Chuck Mangione, Rick Baptist, Christian McBride, Clay Jenkins, Rich Thompson and Jeff Campbell. He has performed with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Eastman New Jazz Ensemble, Eastman Jazz Ensemble and the All-American College Band in Disneyland. He performed with the Eastman Wind Ensemble during its 2004 Asia Tour and Carnegie Hall performance, as well as on their CDs, Danzante and Manhattan Music with the Canadian Brass. Stuver has also performed at the Rochester International Jazz Festival and the JVC Jazz Festival in New York City.

Stuver has been awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Expert Pistol Shot Medal.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MATT STUVER ('03)