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## Winnipeg far from seashore, but trombonist bringing shells

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Byline: Chris Smith / Jazz

Trombonist Steve Turre will gladly take the stage for two shows Saturday and Sunday.

But, he'd like to be in the audience a week later when one of his idols, the trombonist Curtis Fuller, performs here with the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra.

"Curtis is a dear friend and an inspiration," Turre said when told Fuller will be here a week after him.

Turre, a respected trombonist and teacher at The Juilliard School in New York, will be bringing his favourite specialty instrument -- sea shells -- when he performs two shows in the Izzy Asper Jazz Performances series.

"Will I be bringing the shells? Oh yeah!," he said in a telephone interview from his New Jersey home. "When I play with my own band, I always bring the shells."

Shells as jazz instruments may seem unusual to the uninitiated, but if you've ever heard Turre blowing them, you've had a treat.

The shells fit into the broader spectrum of world music that jazz musicians are incorporating, but they have an ancestral link for Turre. He was introduced to shells by multi-reedist Rahsaan Roland Kirk, but later discovered from Mexican relatives that his ancestors played shells as well.

He clearly enjoys the shells, and has a band called Sanctified Shells, but his music and performance are based on the jazz basics of swing and the blues -- like Fuller and another trombone mentor J.J. Johnson.

Turre learned the importance of those elements on the bandstand as he worked his way up through the ranks, working with jazz greats like McCoy Tyner, Horace Silver and Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, a travelling school that graduated some of the best musicians over a couple of generations.

As well as his work at Juilliard, Turre likes to hold workshops in cities where he performs. "I do them as often as possible," he said. "When I was younger, I just wanted to play: I enjoy teaching now because I want to keep the music alive."

"Most young kids today don't know how to swing -- they don't want to swing, or play blues, which is a (musical) language that comes from the heart," the trombonist adds.

Citing saxophone legends Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, Turre says "It was their spirit that made them unique, not their technique." They had tons of

technique, of course, but Turre says that alone wasn't enough to explain their impact on jazz and that is what he tries to pass on to young players: "Keep the essence, the spirit, the heart of the music alive."

If Turre acts as a mentor to younger musicians, it's because of older musicians like Fuller who taught and guided him.

They met in 1973, Turre said, when he first arrived in New York City and was playing with Blakey and had the honour of meeting the "defining trombonist" from the Jazz Messengers.

"Nobody can swing like Curtis," he says. "He can play faster than anybody, but it's not speed -- his phrasing is sublime."

"He's the only trombonist to play with Coltrane. That says something," Turre adds. "I love him."

The Steve Turre Quintet performs Saturday, March 6, and Sunday, March 7, 8 p. m. at the Berney Theatre in the Rady Jewish Community Centre. Tickets available at the door or by calling 477-7510 or 477-7534. Turre will lead a TD Canada Trust Jazz Lab workshop Friday, March 6, 7 p.m., Eva Clare Hall, faculty of music, University of Manitoba.

Curtis Fuller performs Sunday, March 15, 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., with the WJO at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Tickets at McNally Robinson Booksellers and Ticketmaster. Fuller's Jazz Lab workshop is Friday, March 13, 7 p.m., Eva Clare Hall.

chris.smith@freepress.mb.ca

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