

Wynton Marsalis, Managing and Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Ready, Go! (from *Toot Suite*)

Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn

As performed by Duke Ellington and his Famous Orchestra

Transcribed and Edited by Christopher Crenshaw for Jazz at Lincoln Center

Full Score

This transcription was made especially for Jazz at Lincoln Center's 2017-18
Twenty-Third Annual *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program.

Jazz at Lincoln Center and Alfred Publishing gratefully acknowledge the cooperation
and support provided in the publication of this year's *Essentially Ellington* music series:

Founding leadership support for *Essentially Ellington* is provided by The Jack and Susan Rudin Educational and Scholarship Fund.

Major support is provided by Jessica and Natan Bibliowicz, Alfred and Gail Engelberg, Casey Lipscomb,
Dr. J. Douglas White and the King-White Family Foundation, Cheryl and Louis Raspino, Augustine Foundation,
Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Charles Evans Hughes Memorial Foundation and United Airlines.

essentially
ELLINGTON

jazz

NOTES ON PLAYING ELLINGTON

At least 95% of modern-day large ensemble jazz playing comes out of three traditions: Count Basie's band, Duke Ellington's band, and the orchestrations of small groups. Those young players interested in jazz will be drawn to small groups for the opportunity to improvise and for practical reasons (it is much easier to organize 4 or 5 people than it is 15). Schools have taken over the task (formerly performed by dance bands) of training musicians to be ensemble players. Due to the Basie Band's popularity and its simplicity of style and emphasis on blues and swing, the better educators have almost exclusively adopted this tradition for teaching jazz ensemble playing. As wonderful as Count Basie's style is, it doesn't address many of the important styles developed under the great musical umbrella we call jazz. Duke Ellington's comprehensive and eclectic approach to music offers an alternative.

The stylistic richness of Ellington's music presents a great challenge to educators and performers alike. In Basie's music, the conventions are very nearly consistent. In Ellington's music there are many more exceptions to the rules. This calls for greater knowledge of the language of jazz. Clark Terry, who left Count Basie's band to join Duke Ellington, said, "Count Basie was college, but Duke Ellington was graduate school." Knowledge of Ellington's music prepares you to play any big band music.

The following is a list of performance conventions for the great majority of Ellington's music. Any deviations or additions will be spelled out in the individual performance notes which follow.

1. Listen carefully many times to the Ellington recording of these pieces. There are many subtleties that will elude even the most sophisticated listener at first. Although it was never Ellington's wish to have his recordings imitated, knowledge of these definitive versions will lead musicians to make more educated choices when creating new performances. Ellington's music, though written for specific individuals, is designed to inspire all musicians to express themselves. In addition, you will hear slight note differences in the recording and the transcriptions. This is intentional, as there are mistakes and alterations from the original intent of the music in the recording. You should have your players play what's in the score.
2. General use of swing phrasing. The triplet feel prevails except for ballads or where notations such as even eighths or Latin appear. In these cases, eighth notes are given equal value.
3. There is a chain of command in ensemble playing. The lead players in each section determine the phrasing and volume for their own section, and their section-mates must conform to the lead. When the saxes and / or trombones play with the trumpets, the lead trumpet is the boss. The lead alto and trombone must listen to the first trumpet and follow him. In turn, the other saxes and trombones must follow their lead players. When the clarinet leads the brass section, the brass should not overblow him. That means that the first trumpet is actually playing "second." If this is done effectively, there will be very little balancing work left for the conductor.
4. In Ellington's music, each player should express the individuality of his own line. He must find a musical balance of supporting and following the section leader and bringing out the character of the underpart. Each player should be encouraged to express his or her personality through the music. In this music, the underparts are played at the same volume and with the same conviction as the lead.
5. Blues inflection should permeate all parts at all times, not just when these opportunities occur in the lead.
6. Vibrato is used quite a bit to warm up the sound. Saxes (who most frequently represent the sensual side of things) usually employ vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. The vibrato can be either heavy or light depending on the context. Occasionally saxes use a light vibrato on unisons. Trumpets (who very often are used for heat and power) use a little vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. Trombones (who are usually noble) do not use slide vibrato. A little lip vibrato is good on harmonized passages at times. Try to match the speed of vibrato. In general unisons are played with no vibrato.
7. Crescendo as you ascend and diminuendo as you descend. The upper notes of phrases receive a natural accent and the lower notes are ghosted. Alto and tenor saxophones need to use sub-tone in the lower part of their range in order to blend properly with the rest of the section. This music was originally written with no dynamics. It pretty much follows the natural tendencies of the instruments; play loud in the loud part of the instrument and soft in the soft part of the instrument. For instance, a high C for a trumpet will be loud and a low C will be soft.
8. Quarter notes are generally played short unless otherwise notated. Long marks above or below a pitch indicate full value: not just long, but full value. Eighth notes are played full value except when followed by a rest or otherwise notated. All notes longer than a quarter note are played full value, which means if it is followed by a rest, release the note where the rest appears. For example, a half note occurring on beat one of a measure would be released on beat three.
9. Unless they are part of a legato background figure, long notes should be played somewhat *fp* (forte-piano); accent then diminish the volume. This is important so that the moving parts can be heard over the sustained notes. Don't just hold out the long notes, but give them life and personality: that is, vibrato, inflection, crescendo, or diminuendo. There is a great deal of inflection in this music, and much of this is highly interpretive. Straight or curved lines imply non-pitched glisses, and wavy lines mean scalar (chromatic or diatonic) glisses. In general, all rhythmic figures need to be accented. Accents give the music life and swing. This is very important.
10. Ellington's music is about individuality: one person per part—do not double up because you have extra players or need more strength.

More than one on a part makes it sound more like a concert band and less like a jazz band.

11. This is acoustic music. Keep amplification to an absolute minimum; in the best halls, almost no amplification should be necessary. Everyone needs to develop a big sound. It is the conductor's job to balance the band. When a guitar is used, it should be a hollow-body, unamplified rhythm guitar. Simple three-note voicings should be used throughout. An acoustic string bass is a must. In mediocre or poorly designed halls, the bass and piano may need a bit of a boost. I recommend miking them and putting them through the house sound system. This should provide a much better tone than an amplifier. Keep in mind that the rhythm section's primary function is to accompany. The bass should not be as loud as a trumpet. That is unnatural and leads to over-amplification, bad tone, and limited dynamics. Stay away from monitors. They provide a false sense of balance.
12. We have included chord changes on all rhythm section parts so that students can better understand the overall form of each composition. It is incumbent upon the director to make clear what is a composed part versus a part to be improvised. The recordings should make this clear but in instances where it is not; use your best judgment and play something that sounds good, is swinging, and is stylistically appropriate to the piece. Sometimes, a student may not have the technical skill to perform a difficult transcription, especially in the case of one of Duke's solos, in that case, it is best to have the student work something out that is appropriate. Written passages should be studied and earned when possible, as they are an important part of our jazz heritage and help the player understand the function of his particular solo or accompaniment. All soloists should learn the chord changes. Solos should be looked at as an opportunity to further develop the interesting thematic material that Ellington has provided.
13. The notation of plungers for the brass means a rubber toilet plunger bought in a hardware store. Kirckhill is a very good brand (especially if you can find one of their old hard rubber ones, like the one I loaned Wynton and he lost). Trumpets use 5" diameter and trombones use 6" diameter. Where Plunger/Mute is notated, insert a pixie mute in the bell and use the plunger over the mute. Pixies are available from Humes & Berg in Chicago. Tricky Sam Nanton and his successors in the Ellington plunger trombone chair did not use pixies. Rather, each of them employed a Nonpareil (that's the brand name) trumpet straight mute. Nonpareil has gone out of business, but the Tom Crown Nonpareil trumpet straight mute is very close to the same thing. These mute/plunger combinations create a wonderful sound (very close to the human voice), but they also can create some intonation problems which must be corrected by the lip or by using alternate slide positions. It would be easier to move the tuning slide, but part of the sound is in the struggle to correct the pitch. If this proves too much, stick with the pixie—it's pretty close.

14. The drummer is the de facto leader of the band. He establishes the beat and controls the volume of the ensemble. For big band playing, the drummer needs to use a larger bass drum than he would for small group drumming. A 22" or 24" is preferred. The bass drum is played softly (nearly inaudible) on each beat. This is called feathering the bass drum. It provides a very important bottom to the band. The bass drum sound is not a boom and not a thud—it's in between. The larger size drum is necessary for the kicks; a smaller drum just won't be heard. The key to this style is to just keep time. A rim knock on two and four (chopping wood) is used to lock in the swing. When it comes to playing fills, the fewer, the better.
15. The horn players should stand for their solos and solis. Brass players should come down front for moderate to long solos, surrounding rests permitting. The same applies to the pep section (two trumpets and one trombone in plunger/mutes).
16. Horns should pay close attention to attacks and releases. Everyone should hit together and release together.
17. Above all, everyone's focus should remain at all times on the swing. As the great bassist Chuck Israels says, "The three most important things in jazz are rhythm, rhythm, and rhythm, in that order." Or as Bubber Miley (Ellington's first star trumpeter) said, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

GLOSSARY

The following are terms which describe conventions of jazz performance, from traditional New Orleans to the present avant garde.

Break • within the context of an ongoing time feel, the rhythm section stops for one, two, or four bars. Very often a soloist will improvise during a break.

Call and response • repetitive pattern of contrasting exchanges (derived from the church procedure of the minister making a statement and the congregation answering with "amen"). Call-and-response patterns usually pit one group of instruments against another. Sometimes we call this "trading fours," "trading twos," etc., especially when it involves improvisation. The numbers denote the amount of measures each soloist or group plays. Another term frequently used is "swapping fours."

Coda • also known as the "outro," "tags" or "tag endings" are outgrowths of vaudeville bows that are frequently used as codas. They most often use deceptive cadences that finally resolve to the tonic or they go from the sub-dominant and cycle back to the tonic.

Comp • improvise accompaniment (for piano or guitar).

Groove • the composite rhythm. This generally refers to the combined repetitive rhythmic patterns of the drums, bass, piano, and guitar, but may also include repetitive patterns in the horns. Some grooves are standard (i.e., swing, bossa nova, samba), while others are manufactured (original combinations of rhythms).

Head • melody chorus.

Interlude • a different form (of relatively short length) sandwiched between two chorus forms. Interludes that set up a key change are simply called modulations.

Intro • short for introduction.

Ride pattern • the most common repetitive figure played by the drummer's right hand on the ride cymbal or hi-hat.



Riff • a repeated melodic figure. Very often, riffs repeat verbatim or with slight alterations while the harmonies change underneath them.

Shout chorus • also known as the "out chorus," the "sock chorus," or sometimes shortened to just "the shout." It is the final ensemble passage of most big band charts and where the climax most often happens.

Soli • a harmonized passage for two or more instruments playing the same rhythm. It is customary for horn players to stand up or even move in front of the band when playing these passages. This is done so that the audience can hear them better and to provide the audience with some visual interest. A soli sound particular to Ellington's music combines two trumpets and trombone in plungers/mutes in triadic harmony. This is called the "pep section."

Stop time • a regular pattern of short breaks (usually filled in by a soloist).

Swing • the perfect confluence of rhythmic tension and relaxation in music creating a feeling euphoria and characterized by accented weak beats (a democratization of the beat) and eighth notes that are played as the first and third eighth notes of an eighth-note triplet. Duke Ellington's definition of swing: when the music feels like it is getting faster, but it isn't.

Vamp • a repeated two- or four-bar chord progression. Very often, there may be a riff or riffs played on the vamp.

Voicing • the specific spacing, inversion, and choice of notes that make up a chord. For instance, two voicings for G7 could be:



Note that the first voicing includes a 9th and the second voicing includes a 9th and a 13th. The addition of 9ths, 11ths, 13ths, and alterations are up to the discretion of the pianist and soloist.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

The following are placed in their order of importance in jazz. We should never lose perspective on this order of priority.

Rhythm • meter, tempo, groove, and form, including both melodic rhythm and harmonic rhythm (the speed and regularity of the chord changes).

Melody • a tune or series of pitches.

Harmony • chords and voicings.

Orchestration • instrumentation and tone colors.

—David Berger

READY, GO! • INSTRUMENTATION

Reed 1 – Alto Sax
Reed 2 – Alto Sax
Reed 3 – Tenor Sax
Reed 4 – Tenor Sax
Reed 5 - Bari Sax
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3
Piano
Bass
Drums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composers • Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn

Arrangers • Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn

Recorded • February 19, 1959 in New York

Master # • CO62194

Original Issue • *Ellington Jazz Party* (CL 1323, 1959)

Currently available on CD • *Ellington Jazz Party* (UDCD 719)

Currently available as digital download • *Ellington Jazz Party*

Personnel • Clark Terry, Cat Anderson, Harold "Shorty" Baker, Andrew "Fats" Ford; Ray Nance (trumpet)*; Britt Woodman, Quentin Jackson, John Sanders (trombone); Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope (alto sax); Paul Gonsalves, Jimmy Hamilton (tenor sax); Harry Carney (bari sax); Duke Ellington (piano); Jimmy Woode (bass); Sam Woodyard (drums)

Soloists • Paul Gonsalves (tenor sax)

*While there are only 4 trumpet parts in this score, the original recording lists 5 players with no specification as to who played each tune.

REHEARSAL NOTES

- In 1956, Ellington's earth-shattering set at the Newport Jazz Festival echoed around the world, first in reports about the near-riot it caused and then when the album of the entire concert was released on Columbia Records. Paul Gonsalves' 27 choruses of the Db blues that bridged *Diminuendo in Blue* to *Crescendo in Blue* became such a sensation that Ellington crafted them into a piece of its own, and called it **Ready, Go!**
- The biggest challenge is for the soloist to invent an interesting and long improvisation over the course of the entire performance. One suggestion would be listen to and learn some of the original Gonsalves solo from the 1957 Newport recording and use that as the basis for this solo; that way, you'll have more than just the chords to go off of.
- A key component to the success of the performance will be when the various backgrounds are cued. Study them closely so you can bring them in at just the right moment to add to the slow build of excitement.
- The rhythm section should pace themselves so they leave room for a greater intensity as the performance progresses. Work on ways of creating variety in accompaniment—different cymbals, changing registers of the bass, piano comping and more.
- The horn backgrounds at B should interlock with each other; rehearse the trombones/reeds/trumpets separately until everything is set, then put them together so players can hear how they lock in.
- The on the beat quarter notes at C can be very effective if played with a Louis Armstrong-like feeling—right on the beat with a swing feel. Make sure there is space between all of the notes and that they are in perfect rhythmic unison. As simple as this device is, it can be thrilling when done right.

—Loren Schoenberg

To listen to original recordings, view interactive videos of Wynton Marsalis leading the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in rehearsals, and obtain rehearsal guides for the *Essentially Ellington* 2017–18 repertoire please visit jazz.org/EE.

CONDUCTOR

Jazz at Lincoln Center Library - Essentially Ellington

READY, GO!

(from Toot Suite)

Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn

Transcribed by Christopher Crenshaw

Medium Fast Swing ♩ = 220

Reed 1 Alto Sax

2 Alto Sax

3 Tenor Sax

4 Tenor Sax

5 Baritone Sax

Trumpets 1

2

3

4

Trombones 1

2

3

Piano solo

Bass D97 G97 D96 D9/F E97

Drums

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Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

11x

E♭ Blues

8

E♭m7 E♭7 A♭7 D♭6 D♭♭7 D♭7

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

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44867S

3x

Alto *mf*

Alto *mf*

Tenor *mf*

Tenor

Bari *mf*

Tpts. 1 *mf* 3rd x only

2 *mf* 3rd x only

3 *mf* 3rd x only

4 *mf* 3rd x only

Tbns. 1 *mf* 2nd & 3rd x only

2 *mf* 2nd & 3rd x only

3 *mf* 2nd & 3rd x only

Pno.

Bs. *mf* D \flat 7 G \flat 7 D \flat 7 A \flat m7 D \flat 9 G \flat 7 D \flat 7 Fm7 B \flat 7

Drs.

The musical score is for a piece titled "Ready, Go!". It is arranged for a large ensemble. The instruments and parts include: Alto (two staves), Tenor (two staves), Bari (one staff), Tpts. 1-4 (four staves), Tbns. 1-3 (three staves), Pno. (piano, two staves), Bs. (bass, one staff), and Drs. (drums, one staff). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo is marked "3x" (triple). The dynamic marking *mf* (mezzo-forte) is used for many of the instrumental parts. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. A large red watermark "Preview Only" is overlaid diagonally across the page. The watermark also contains the text "Legal Use Requires Purchase".

The image displays a page from a musical score, likely for a choir and orchestra. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a large red watermark reading "Preview Only Requires Purchase" diagonally across the page. The score is divided into two systems, with a double bar line and a "C" time signature change at the end of the first system.

The instruments and voices included are:

- Alto
- Tenor
- Bari
- Tpts. 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- Tbns. 1
- 2
- 3
- Pno.
- Bs.
- Drs.

The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *f*). The bass line (Bs.) includes chord symbols: Ebm7, Ab7, Db7, Bb7, Eb7, Ab7, Ab7, Gb7, E7, D7, and Db7. The drums (Drs.) part shows a rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

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Gb7 E7 Eb7 D7 Db7 Ab7 Gb7 E7 D7 Db7

[D] 5x

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

Db7

Gb7

Db7

Fm7

Bb7

Preview Only
Legal Use Requires Purchase

Ready, Go!

1, 2, 3, 4. 5. E

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

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Chord progression for Bass:

Ebm7 Ab7 Db7 Bb7 Eb7 Ab7 Eb7 Ab7 Db7

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Gb7

Db7

Fm7

Bb7

Ebm7

Ab7

Db7

Ebm7

Ab7

Bs.

Drs.

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Score for "Ready, Go!" featuring various instruments and voices. The score is marked with a large red watermark: "Preview Only - Legal Use Requires Purchase".

The score includes parts for:

- Alto (Two staves)
- Tenor (Two staves)
- Bari
- Tpts. 1 (Four staves)
- Tbns. 1 (Three staves)
- Pno.
- Bs.
- Drs.

The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo is marked "Ready, Go!". The score is marked with a large red watermark: "Preview Only - Legal Use Requires Purchase".

Chord markings for the Bass (Bs.) part include: Db7, Gb7, Db7, and Eo7.

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

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G

Ebm7 Ab7 Db7 Bbm7 Ebm7 Ab7 Db7

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

Chords: Gb7, Db7, Eo7, Ebm7, Ab7, Db7, Bbm7, Ebm7, Ab7

Score for "Ready, Go!" featuring various instruments and voices. The score is marked with a large red watermark: "Preview Only - Legal Use Requires Purchase".

The score includes parts for:

- Alto (Two staves)
- Tenor (Two staves)
- Bari (One staff)
- Tpts. 1 (One staff)
- 2 (One staff)
- 3 (One staff)
- 4 (One staff)
- Tbns. 1 (One staff)
- 2 (One staff)
- 3 (One staff)
- Pno. (Piano, Two staves)
- Bs. (Bass, One staff)
- Drs. (Drums, One staff)

The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score is marked with a rehearsal symbol [H] at the beginning of the first staff.

Chord markings for the Bass line include: D^b7, G^b7, D^b7, and E^o7.

1. 2. Tenor Sax Cadenza

Alto

Alto

Tenor

Tenor

Bari

Tpts. 1

2

3

4

Tbns. 1

2

3

Pno.

Gb7 Db7 Ab7 Db7 E7 Eb7 Ab7 Db7

Bs.

Drs.

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ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

The *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program (*EE*) is one of the most unique curriculum resources for high school jazz bands in the United States, Canada, and American schools abroad. *EE* extends the legacy of Duke Ellington and other seminal big band composers and arrangers by widely disseminating music, in its original arrangements, to high school musicians for study and performance. Utilizing this music challenges students to increase their musical proficiency and knowledge of the jazz language. *EE* consists of the following initiatives and services:

Supplying the Music

Each year Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) transcribes, publishes, and distributes original transcriptions and arrangements, along with additional educational materials including recordings and teaching guides, to high school bands in the U.S., Canada, and American schools abroad.

Talking About the Music

Throughout the school year, band directors and students correspond with professional clinicians who answer questions regarding the *EE* music. *EE* strives to foster mentoring relationships through email correspondence, various conference presentations, and the festival weekend.

Professional Feedback

Bands are invited to submit a recording of their performance of the charts either for entry in the competition or for comments only. Every submission receives a thorough written assessment. Bands are also invited to attend *EE* Regional Festivals for an opportunity to perform and receive a workshop.

Finalists and In-School Workshops

Fifteen bands are selected from competition entries to attend the annual Competition & Festival in New York City. To prepare, each finalist band receives an in-school workshop led by a professional musician. Local *EE* members are also invited to attend these workshops.

Competition & Festival

The *EE* year culminates in a three-day festival at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall. Students, teachers, and musicians participate in workshops, rehearsals, and performances. The festival concludes with an evening concert that features the three top-placing bands, joining the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis in concert previewing next year's *EE* repertoire.

Jazz at Lincoln Center Band Director Academy

This professional development session for band directors is designed to enhance their ability to teach and conduct the music of Duke Ellington and other big band composers. Led by prominent jazz educators each summer, this companion program to *EE* integrates performance, history, pedagogy, and discussion into an intensive educational experience for band directors at all levels.

As of May 2017, *EE* has distributed scores to more than 4,500 schools internationally.

Since 1995, over 740,000 students have been exposed to Duke Ellington's music through the *Essentially Ellington* Program.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER is dedicated to inspiring and growing audiences for jazz. With the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and a comprehensive array of guest artists, Jazz at Lincoln Center advances a unique vision for the continued development of the art of jazz by producing a year-round schedule of performance, education and broadcast events for audiences of all ages. These productions include concerts, national and international tours, residencies, yearly hall of fame inductions, weekly national radio and television programs, recordings, publications, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, jazz appreciation curricula for students, music publishing, children's concerts, lectures, adult education courses, student and educator workshops and interactive websites. Under the leadership of Managing and Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis, Chairman Robert J. Appel and Executive Director Greg Scholl, Jazz at Lincoln Center produces thousands of events each season in its home in New York City, Frederick P. Rose Hall, and around the world. For more information, visit jazz.org.

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