

>> APRIL IS JAZZ APPRECIATION MONTH!

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STEINBACHER
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DEFINING MUSICIANSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Wynton Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and NAFME



National Association
for Music Education

DEFINING *Musicians*



WYNTON
MARSALIS
AND THE JAZZ
AT LINCOLN
CENTER
ORCHESTRA
INTRODUCE
STUDENTS AND
TEACHERS
TO THE
IMPORTANCE
OF JAZZ.

rsHIP

IN THE 21ST CENTURY:



PHOTO: FRANK STEWART

BY NELSON DUFFLE
EDITOR, *TEACHING MUSIC* MAGAZINE

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER & THE MARSALIS MESSAGE

“**BITING**” doesn’t even begin to describe how cold it is in New York City on this particular February morning, and it’s obviously having an effect on everyone. Inside the Columbus Circle offices where Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) is located, Todd Stoll is warm, but he’s thinking about snow, students, and seats as he keeps one eye on the door and another on his watch.

“We may have to delay the performance a few minutes if they don’t get here pretty soon,” he considers. As the vice president of education for Jazz at Lincoln Center, Stoll is responsible for (among many other things) getting busloads of elementary school kids from all five boroughs into Frederick P. Rose Hall for the Jazz for Young People concerts. The weather today isn’t helping, and some of the schools haven’t arrived yet.

Stoll is also making sure that his boss has everything he needs before the 10:00 a.m. performance kicks off. They review the new script together and make final edits. They talk about some of the pieces the orchestra will perform. They wonder aloud where the buses are and when they’ll get there.

Todd’s boss is Wynton Marsalis.

Marsalis, of course, is the legendary trumpeter and composer who has won countless GRAMMYS®, awards, and accolades throughout his 30+ year career, and who also happens to be the managing and artistic director at JALC. This morning, though, he’ll be focused on leading the 15-piece Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra during the concert and teaching a house-full of youngsters about the wonders of jazz.

Assuming they show up.

Finally, the word comes—the students and their teachers are here and are quickly filling the 1,200-seat hall. The lights go down and a big, illuminated “JAZZ” logo glows brightly above the stage, just like the cultural beacon it’s designed to be. You almost can’t even take your eyes off of it, until Todd Stoll strolls on the stage and, without hesitation, smiles at the audience and says...

“Please welcome the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra!”

Energies United: JALC and NAFME

First, a little background. Early in 2014, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and JALC formally committed to working together to enhance jazz education professional development opportunities and resources for NAfME members and their students. In many ways, the two organizations share a common goal.

The mission of NAfME is to encourage the study and making of music by all, while advocating for a “broader minded” and more balanced curriculum in public school systems that focuses more on students themselves and not just on test scores.

The mission of JALC is to entertain, enrich, and expand a global community for jazz through performance, education and advocacy. The organization and its leaders, including Marsalis and Stoll, believe jazz is a metaphor for democracy. Because jazz is improvisational, it celebrates personal freedom and encourages individual expression. Because jazz is swinging, it dedicates that freedom to finding and maintaining common ground with others. Because jazz is rooted in the blues, it inspires people to face adversity with persistent optimism.

It’s these synergies that brought JALC and NAfME together as partners. It’s also what led *Teaching Music* editor Nelson Duffle to New York on that frigid February morning to talk with Marsalis about his personal vision for music education, among other things.

MARSALIS/ NAFME INTERVIEW

USE A SMART PHONE
TO SCAN THIS CODE
AND WATCH.



WYNTON MARSALIS: The NAfME Interview

“Let’s live up to our heritage, but let’s also be different. Let’s teach as if the cultural life of our nation depends on what we choose to teach—and pick our content deliberately, comprehensively, and carefully. We need to be all about quality education.”

Those were the first words out of Wynton Marsalis’ mouth when I asked him if he had a message to share with NAfME members. The man might have been someone whose records I’ve listened to fervently over the past 25 years but, on this day, he was more of a music educator with a passion than an icon on an album sleeve.

“I’ve had the opportunity to listen to a lot of bands in a lot of schools all over the nation,” Marsalis explained. “Some of those teachers put very difficult music in front of their students, and maybe the kids didn’t sound great playing it, but they were playing great music. And that great music taught them so many more things than just their execution of it.”

“The substance of what you encounter in your education determines how it shapes you. So when you encounter materials that are beneath your level of understanding, rather than materials that will lead you to a higher level of understanding, you’re being cheated by your education system.”

I asked Marsalis to elaborate in terms of jazz programs in public schools.

“Mainly I’m thinking how youth orchestras often have programs where they’ll play orchestral music like a Sibelius second symphony or a Bartók

Concerto for Orchestra, maybe a Beethoven third or Tchaikovsky fourth symphony. In jazz bands, though, the music they generally play will often be far beneath that level of engagement. When we're teaching, the kids don't have to be the Duke Ellington Orchestra, but they do need to be exposed to great quality music and shown how to reach further than what they think they can do."

Without a doubt, Marsalis and JALC are huge proponents of making "quality" jazz music available for students and teachers to use in classrooms nationwide, and they invest a great deal of time in helping overturn excuses like "we can't learn jazz because we don't have the music" or "I've never taught jazz before and don't know where to start."

Offering its many resources, JALC is the largest publishing program for authentic repertoire for jazz bands in the world. When a NAFME member or any teacher



MARSALIS SHARES HIS PHILOSOPHY ON MUSIC EDUCATION WITH NAFME'S NELSON DUFFLE.

signs up for the organization's Essentially Ellington

program, for example, they automatically receive access to free charts, online rehearsal guides, videos, and most recently, a mobile app that allows teachers and students to download and play along with the type of music Marsalis is referring to.

Marsalis believes strongly in the compositions and legacies brought to us by the jazz greats from eras gone by. Just before our interview, I watched him demonstrate this firsthand when he personally spent over an hour teaching the elementary students in Rose Theater all about Dave Brubeck.



Brubeck Lives On

"I want to introduce you today to a great jazz man named Dave Brubeck," he tells the kids after the JALC Orchestra has performed its first number.

"Everyone say it with me: Brubeck!"

"BRUBECK!!!!!" they all shout back.

"Now we're going to play a little tune that Dave Brubeck wrote in 9/8 time called 'Blue Rondo à la Turk.' See what you think," he smiles before returning to the trumpet section in the back row to join in with the orchestra.

Throughout the show, Marsalis alternates between teaching and playing, explaining how Brubeck got his start in music, getting the kids to clap out various time signatures, and even asking members of the orchestra to stand up and demonstrate certain styles and riffs, such as those created by saxophonist Paul Desmond when he wrote and performed the famous "Take Five" with The Dave Brubeck Quartet in 1959.

The performance is both educational and fun—an amazing ride that lasts over an hour—and throughout it all, jazz manages to hold the rapt attention of almost every single child in the hall.

Not just the illuminated "JAZZ" sign above the stage, but the music itself.

JALC'S EXHIBITION, "DAVE BRUBECK: JAZZ AMBASSADOR" FEATURES HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS, SCORES, PROGRAMS, AND CONCERT FOOTAGE FROM HIS REMARKABLE LIFE AS A COMPOSER, BANDLEADER, AND CULTURAL AMBASSADOR.

JALC AND NAFME: STRATEGIC PARTNERS

NAFME builds strategic relationships with partners in our efforts to provide members with exceptional resources. Our recent agreement with Jazz at Lincoln Center connects NAFME members with education resources that will enhance the ability to teach jazz and to understand the importance of jazz as part of our collective history. JALC educational programs include the Band Director Academy, JALC Youth Orchestra, Visiting Band Workshops,

Family Concerts, Middle School Jazz Academy, and an early-childhood jazz program, WeBop.

A signature program of JALC education is Essentially Ellington, a free jazz education program for high school jazz bands. Through this program, 15 bands are selected to travel to Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York and participate in the Essentially Ellington festival and awards program.

JALC will be selecting education resources for elementary through high school

teachers that will be available through direct links and on the NAFME website. These will include lesson plans, suggested teaching strategies, and other jazz education materials. JALC will also support the All-National Honor Jazz Band with music/charts, two \$500 scholarships, and live or virtual coaching sessions.

We are proud to recognize Jazz at Lincoln Center as our newest strategic partner, and will work together to orchestrate success for students and teachers.



MARSALIS DOING ONE OF THE THINGS HE LOVES BEST—TEACHING.

The Potential and the Challenge

Backstage, during our interview, I asked Marsalis a rather obvious question, but I wanted to hear his answer anyway.

“Do you feel that most music educators fully understand the real potential of what they can bring to a child’s life, something that goes far deeper than just learning notes on a page?” I inquired.

He took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and spoke a little more quietly.

“Yes, I think they do. I think we all understand it,” Marsalis said. “I believe that teachers are touched by music, and I believe that they want to do a good job. I also believe that the system can beat you down. And we’re all in different states of ‘beat-down.’ So we have to always invigorate. I think teaching isn’t a profession that you go into because you think you are going to make money.

“The music teachers that I’ve encountered in the thousands of United States classes that I’ve been in—I give them an ‘A’ across the grade,” he declared. “I’m very much a fan of music teachers and I have a broad cross-section

to base my opinion on. I believe that we just need to bolster each other up.”

During our time together, I was able to introduce Marsalis to NAFME’s new “Broader Minded” advocacy program, which had just launched in February and carries the message that music is essential to a superior, 21st-century education, largely because of the special qualities and skills it helps instill. Music allows for deep engagement with learning, and gives students more opportunities to excel. The program advocates focusing more on the student, rather than his or her test scores. To learn more, visit broaderminded.com.

“This makes a lot of sense,” Marsalis said as he looked over the Broader Minded brochure. “I’m glad that you folks at NAFME are doing this.”

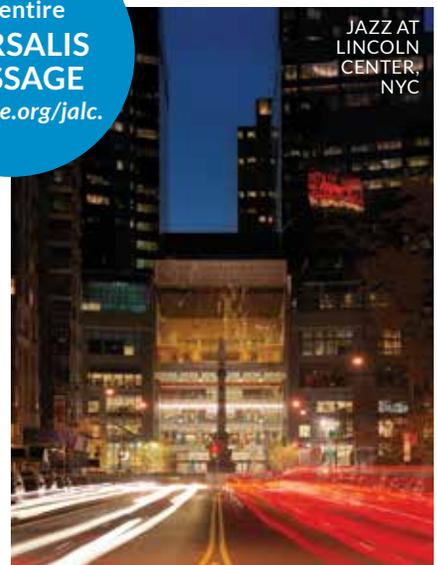
Defining Musicianship in the 21st Century: The Marsalis Message

Over the last couple of years, Wynton Marsalis has been spending more time examining and defining his beliefs, philosophies, and convictions about

music education than at any other point in his career. I asked him why now, and we discussed how an individual gets to a certain stage in life where you simply realize there’s only so much time that any of us are given, and that it is important to identify how you want to spend that time. (Marsalis is in good health, by the way, for anyone who may interpret this to mean otherwise.)

For Marsalis, his efforts and commitments are extensive, but he realizes that the time is right to get

You’ll find the entire MARSALIS MESSAGE at nafme.org/jalc.



JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER, NYC

PHOTOS FROM TOP: FRANK STEWART; BRAD FEINKNOPF

something in writing that can, hopefully, help to spread the importance of music education, and jazz in particular. His written words started out as a keynote address, but have since evolved into something that reaches much farther than that, as I see it.

After reviewing the paper, I asked him if I could share it with our NAFME members and *Teaching Music* readers, and he graciously consented.

In it, he proposes that we should all be striving to create citizens forever engaged with and excited about the arts, not people who “never want to touch or see their instrument again.” He declares that we are sitting on a treasure trove of homegrown musical pieces and songs and practices that profoundly and directly address cultural ideas that define us as a country. He suggests that we teach “national identity through music,” and makes a compelling case for why 20th-century music was so vital to the development of our American culture that we absolutely cannot let it be lost.

“Let’s live up to the quality of orchestra- and band-playing that’s been around for all those years,” Marsalis declares. “John Philip Sousa’s band—listen to those cornet solos by Bohumir Kryl or Herbert Clarke. Then listen to Louis Armstrong—they could all play. Let’s be what Benny Goodman wanted us to be, what Duke Ellington wanted us to be. We’re teachers. We have to show our students what quality is about, and why it makes up the fabric of what we are as a society.”

One of my favorite lines in the message that Marsalis has written is “substantive music justifies our sacrifice.”

He goes on to say, “A lifetime involvement with a profound and immediate truth of music shapes whom we are and compels us to share the best of what we’ve learned with our students.”

I asked him if those lines aren’t the core of everything that he’s written

about in this paper.

“That’s the core of LIFE,” he states with conviction.

For Marsalis, music is obviously not “just music.” It’s embedded in his DNA, just the way it is in so many music educators and NAFME members who rightfully believe that their work is worth far more than anyone can ever define on the surface, or assess through a written test.

Not surprisingly, when it comes to teaching youngsters, Marsalis is also a believer in discipline and letting kids learn by failing at times.

“Let them struggle with music. What’s wrong with being sad (with their playing)?

“I’m a big sports fan, and we see sad basketball and football all the time. Kids out there can’t kick, can’t catch, and parents are yelling ‘yeah, go, go!’—because we’re all into our kids. But all of a sudden, the band is sad and, oh, it’s like there’s a crime that’s been committed!

“Nobody’s saying ‘let’s stop playing football’ because these 10- and 11-year-old kids look sad playing it. They invest more in it.”

“I remember my own kid was in middle school and they played Dvořák, and I was thinking ‘umm, Lord have mercy’ because it wasn’t very good. But he said ‘well, that was rough’ and I said ‘yeah, it was rough, but so what? It was rough when we were playing too. But we were playing. We were playing hard music.’

“So, teach your kids that they can REACH. And tell them ‘if you fall short, I’m here for you. But you’ll be reaching. We’re going up higher. We’re going to learn this hard music. We’re going to play this hard piece. We’re going to practice on this. We’re going to get better on this. And we’re going to keep going.’”

At this point, I get



TODD STOLL, VP OF EDUCATION, JALC

WHAT DRIVES JALC EDUCATION

THERE ARE THREE MAIN BELIEFS THAT FORM THE FOUNDATION OF JALC, ACCORDING TO VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION TODD STOLL:

- 1. We believe that jazz education is good for everybody, regardless of their age, gender, race, or social economic situation. Our programs reflect that, from our WeBop program for pre-schoolers, to Swing University, and on to the work we do at senior centers and retirement homes.**
- 2. We believe that teachers need better resources and we’re supplying as many as possible—most of them for free—from charts in Essentially Ellington, to Jazz for Young People lessons, to our online Jazz Academy media library, and more.**
- 3. We believe that having an understanding of jazz history is the necessary foundation for teaching and learning about jazz. The music was created by great artists—some of the greatest minds in the 20th century in America—and the information they’ve passed on to us is part of a continuum. It’s all about our heritage.**

HOW JALC CAN HELP NAFME MEMBERS WITH JAZZ PROGRAMS AT THEIR SCHOOLS:

- 1. Sign up for our Essentially Ellington program at academy.jalc.org/ee/. You’ll get access to online resources, including eight free charts every year, rehearsal guides, videos on how to rehearse the charts, access to additional music from previous years, access to regional festivals, and a new interactive app that lets students and teachers download and play along with some of the music.**
- 2. Take part in our Regional Festivals. You can take your band there for “comments only.” It’s noncompetitive, like sticking your toe in the water with the music. We send out our own clinicians and our own judges. They’ll meet with you, give feedback, and answer your questions.**
- 3. Watch our concerts online—free. Immerse yourself and your students in jazz. We stream almost everything here at the House of Swing.**
- 4. Explore the curriculum materials in our new Jazz Academy media library—everything from the history of jazz, to music theory lessons, to improvisation lessons, to individual instrumental techniques.**
- 5. For more info, email Todd Stoll at TStoll@jalc.org or call (212) 258-9811. Also, visit academy.jalc.org**

Todd Stoll is the Vice President of Education at Jazz at Lincoln Center. He joined the organization in 2011 after more than 20 years as a music educator for Westerville (Ohio) City Schools and as the founder/leader of the Columbus Youth Jazz Orchestra.

so caught up in the unrestrained exuberance and conviction that Marsalis displays when talking about everything in the world of jazz—whether it’s playing, composing, rehearsing, or teaching—that I have to stop for a second to collect my thoughts and return to my notes.

Finally, I decide to bring it all back to JALC and I ask Marsalis where he sees the organization heading in the next five years. The man doesn’t hesitate for even a second before answering.

“I want all of our concerts to be streamed online, and our concert network to link jazz fans around the

world. I want our scores to be available online for people who want to study or play the music. I’d like to see at least 30 or 40 of our albums to be put out.

“I’d like to see us nationalize a lot of our education programs like WeBop for little kids. I would like to see people all over the country doing our Jazz for Young People concerts, consolidating our scripts and have other teachers doing it, getting in front of kids with other performers. I would like to see a lot of the things that Todd is doing in the education department being nationalized and internationalized. With Essentially Ellington, we have a

couple of international rumblings and I’d like to see that become even more.

“And I’d really like to see our Jazz Academy resources be built up with thousands of videos that people are putting in of musicians everywhere, so that students can come online to the Academy and really learn from it.”

To read Wynton Marsalis’ paper in full, go to nafme.org/jalc. You’ll also find excerpts there from the NAFME video interview with him, and from the interview with Todd Stoll. To learn even more about Jazz at Lincoln Center and the many resources available for teachers and students, go to jalc.org. ■

