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The conductors of Friday night's centennial concert in Central Park: Skitch Henderson of the New York Pops, Wynton Marsalis of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra and Kurt Masur of the New York Philharmonic.

## MUSIC REVIEW

# Melting-Pot Concert Marks Centennial

By JAMES R. OESTREICH

On the surface, the New York centennial celebration seems hardly plausible to a lapsed Midwesterner, who well remembers the centennial of his small hometown almost five decades ago. (Many of the men grew beards as a wildly exotic reminder of the life style of a century before.) New York, surely, was much older.

And as Kurt Masur pointed out from the stage at the Centennial Concert in Central Park on Friday evening, the New York Philharmonic is 154, seemingly far older than the city itself.

What was being celebrated, of course, as Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani explained from the same stage, was not the founding of the city, which dates to the 17th century, but the formation of greater New York, the consolidation of the five boroughs. In any case, it was reason enough for a big concert and fireworks — or so 25,000 revelers, the Parks Department estimates, seemed to think — on a cool and lovely evening on the beautifully restored Great Lawn of Central Park.

There were actually three hour-long concerts — by Skitch Henderson and the New York Pops, Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, and Mr. Masur and the Philharmonic — in a program made long and disjunct by the half-hour intermissions needed for elaborate stage resettlements. The Philharmonic received one of the loudest ovations of the night simply for tuning up — an indication that the last segment was finally at hand.

Still, the picnicking audience was largely attentive to the music, especially, it seemed, during the Philharmonic segment, which was devoted to music by Bernstein and Gershwin. And the Philharmonic responded in kind, performing Bernstein's "Candide" Overture conductorless (its favorite party trick) and other works under Mr. Masur's baton with vigor.

Although the music was, not surprisingly, all upbeat, few consistent themes were to be found. The Pops, presenting Ernesto Lecuona's "An-

## Few consistent themes emerge from 3 different orchestras.

dalucía" in a melting-pot potpourri, established a Hispanic thread of sorts. That was carried through by the Jazz Orchestra in Chico O'Farrill's "Afro-Cuban Suite" and the Philharmonic in Bernstein's "West Side Story" Dances, though what the O'Farrill composition brought to mind as much as anything was Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," not represented here. In general, the Jazz Orchestra's set was compelling, with Mr. Marsalis contributing strongly on trumpet.

The Pops paid its own tribute to Bernstein with music from "On the

Town," and Bernstein's collaborators in that project, Betty Comden and Adolph Green, were on hand to belt a few lines of its big hit, "New York, New York." Mr. Marsalis made a connection with the Philharmonic, to be carried into the next concert season, when he joined the orchestra and its excellent principal trumpeter, Philip Smith, in jazzed-up versions of two Gershwin songs, "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "Fascinatin' Rhythm."

Heard from a central location, all the music was reasonably well served by the sound system of the Carlos Moseley Pavilion except for some quiet passages from the Pops. In general, the Pops segment was the least satisfying, partly because of insipid arrangements, especially of tunes by George M. Cohan. But the orchestra's beery rendition of "Ach, du lieber Augustin" carried one listener right back to that old centennial in the Midwest.