

Official Program

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Battle of the Big Bands

NEW YORK'S BIG BAND RIVALS GO TOE-TO-TOE: BOTH SWING HARD, PACK A PUNCH, AND THINK FAST ON THEIR FEET.

The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra

Home: Lincoln Center, New York City.

How to Get There: The IRT #1 or #9.

Leaders Named After Presidents: Roosevelt Sykes, Taft Jordan, Mojo Nixon.

Founded: August 1988 as the once-a-year Classical Jazz Orchestra, under the baton of David Berger. Became Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in 1991.

Experience: Performs several concerts annually at home, has toured the U.S. twice, also Europe and Asia; three recordings released by Columbia Records.

Leader: Wynton Marsalis, b. New Orleans, La., Oct. 18, 1961. A boxer, he'll dance and weave and pull out an assortment of mutes in the ring. Faced with a challenge, he growls, purrs, smears notes and makes laughing, smooching noises like a bebop Jerry Lewis. Then he'll get intricate. Very intricate. Most victories by unanimous decision.

Ritual Fathers: Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Thelonious Monk.

Trainer: Stanley Crouch.

Cornerman: Rob Gibson.

Reach: At its best with pre-big-band era material, any Ellington (Notable moment: "Harlem"), and excursions into dusty corners of early New Orleans traditions.

Height: Wynton known to mutter, "If only Cat Anderson were still alive."

Ensemble Strength: Jazz repertory, includes commissioning transcripts of old records where no written scores exist. Soloists encouraged to capture, if not recreate, something of the flavor of the original soloist (Notable moment: Todd Williams' take on Paul Gonsalves' marathon "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue" solo). The LCJO can play particularly swinging Ellington pieces as well as any orchestra since Ellington's.

Listen: for Ellington-Strayhorn compositions, Monk, Armstrong and Marsalis originals.

Previous Meeting: June 1994 JVC-JF-NY, at home.

Verdict: A draw (*New York Times* card had LCJO ahead).

How It Performed: Outswung the competition by sticking fast to Ellington and unloosing saxophonist James Carter.

Most Move: veteran bass-baritone Milt Grayson belting "Jelly, Jelly" to the rafters.

Bandmembers Confirmed for Rematch: trumpeters Marcus Printup and Ryan Kisor, reedmen Wes Anderson, Joe Temperley and Dr. Michael White, drummer Herlin Riley, singer Milt Grayson.

Mentor on the Leader: "Wynton is a son to me," Ellis Marsalis.

How the Leader Spent Part of His Off-season: Contemplating a score for the Broadway production of *On the Waterfront* about an ex-boxer who coulda been a contender. (He decided against it.)



WYNTON MARSALIS CONDUCTS THE LINCOLN CENTER JAZZ ORCHESTRA



JON FADDIS, SHOWN HERE BLOWING TRUMPET, CONDUCTS THE CARNEGIE HALL JAZZ BAND

The Carnegie Hall Jazz Band

Home: Carnegie Hall, New York City.

How to Get There: Practice.

Others Named After Famous Buildings: the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Taj Mahal.

Founded: Fall 1992.

Experience: Performs several concerts annually at home, has made festival appearances away.

Leader: Jon Faddis, b. Oakland, Calif., July 24, 1953. A slugger. He'll stand flat-footed and outblow opponents, but is not above rope-a-dope. Faced with a challenge, whips out the hardest solo ever recorded by Dizzy or Pops and plays it really really really fast, then hits a couple of dozen very high, very loud notes. Most victories by KO.

Spiritual Fathers: Dizzy Gillespie, Thad Jones, Gil Evans.

Trainer: George Wein.

Cornerman: George Wein.

Reach: At its best with post-big-band era material (Notable moment: performance of Lalo Schifrin's "Gillespiana" and originals).

Height: Few sounds on the planet get as high as Faddis' trumpet. He's been known to hit notes even schnauzers can't hear.

Ensemble Strength: Since its inception, the CHJB has commissioned 17 new works and 26 new arrangements from Toshiko Akiyoshi, Slide Hampton, Ralph Burns, Renee Rosnes, Carla Bley, Jimmy Heath, and others (Notable moment: Jim McNeely's '90s take on Benny Goodman's '30s hits). Soloists get free rein. Harmonic depth approaches that of the original Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra. Tips: Listen for originals by Faddis.

Previous Meeting: June 1994 JVC-JF-NY, away.

Verdict: A draw (*New York Daily News* card had CHJB ahead).

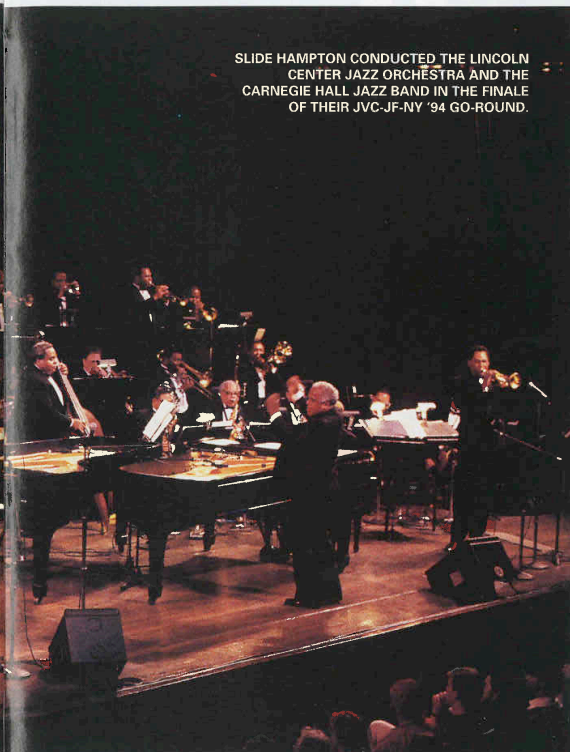
How It Performed: Outfinesse the competition with pastel voicings and bold solos (Faddis, trumpeter Nicholas Payton and pianist Geoff Keezer scored the fiercest blows). Faddis countered a knockdown punch by LC's Milt Grayson with a fast-on-feet falsetto blues vocal that had Wynton shaking his head and saying he was "not going to sing like a girl."

Bandmembers Confirmed for Rematch: trombonists Steve Turre and Dennis Wilson, reedmen Frank Wess and Lew Tabackin, bassist Peter Washington, pianist Kenny Drew Jr.

Mentor on the Leader: "Jon is like a son to me," Dizzy Gillespie

How the Leader Spent Part of His Off-season: Fronting the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra (!) on U.S. tour playing the music of Louis Armstrong—raising the possibility of a midconcert coup d'état.

SLIDE HAMPTON CONDUCTED THE LINCOLN CENTER JAZZ ORCHESTRA AND THE CARNEGIE HALL JAZZ BAND IN THE FINALE OF THEIR JVC-JF-NY '94 GO-ROUND.



BY LEE JESKE
PHOTOS BY JACK VARTOOGIAN