

LIVE FROM LINCOLN CENTER

May 29, 2003, 8:00 p.m. on PBS

Marsalis at the Penthouse

In the summer of 1987 a "Classical Jazz" concert series was established at New York City's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, under the inspired leadership of trumpet player, Wynton Marsalis. Seven years later this indispensable activity was redefined and became the autonomous jazz division at Lincoln Center--Jazz at Lincoln Center. Thus this essential American musical form took its place at Lincoln Center alongside such other constituents as the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera, with Marsalis continuing as the driving force behind it.

We have been privileged over the years on Live From Lincoln Center to be able to bring you several performances by this outstanding ensemble, most recently in concert with Kurt Masur and the New York Philharmonic. (Interestingly, during the years of the Masur family's residence in New York, the Maestro's son--himself an aspiring conductor--became a great jazz enthusiast.) Our next Live From Lincoln Center telecast, on Thursday evening, May 29, will be devoted to yet another live performance by Jazz at Lincoln Center.

But with a difference! Our previous sessions with Jazz at Lincoln Center have originated in one of the several concert halls in the Lincoln Center complex and have featured the artistry of the large ensemble. On May 29 the 90-minute performance will take place in the intimate confines of the Kaplan Penthouse high atop the building that houses Lincoln Center's administration offices. The Kaplan Penthouse has served as the locale for three previous Live From Lincoln Center telecasts: two featuring Itzhak Perlman, the other spotlighting Renée Fleming. And rather than the "Big Band" of Jazz at Lincoln Center, we'll have an evening of jazz chamber music played by a sextet of jazz virtuosi: Marsalis, of course, playing trumpet; Victor Goines, tenor saxophone and clarinet; Walter Blanding, Jr., tenor saxophone; Ellis Marsalis (Wynton's father), piano; Reginald Veal, bass; and Herlin Riley, drums. Master of Ceremonies will be Ed Bradley, famed CBS correspondent for "60 Minutes" and host for the syndicated radio broadcasts of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

The entire evening will be devoted to music by the drummer and composer, James (Norbert) Black, a crucial figure in contemporary New Orleans jazz, who died in 1988 at the improbable age of 48. Early on Black became associated with Ellis Marsalis, with whom he had a lifelong working relationship. As a member of Marsalis' quartet he recorded a number of his compositions in 1962. Black's expertise encompassed both jazz and rhythm-and-blues and he worked both sides of the fence, so to speak. For a year and a half he toured with Lionel Hampton, and then spent two years with Yusef Lateef before returning to New Orleans. There his music became strongly influenced by two streams: the marching bands

and the "second line" culture. This latter, a strange off-beat rhythm, grew out of the improvised drumming of hometown folk who followed behind the parade bands banging on sticks, garbage can lids, anything that added percussion sound to the brass-heavy bands themselves.

Among the works by Black to be performed that evening are "Magnolia Triangle" (considered by some to be his greatest work), "Monkey Puzzle" and "Dee Wee," and we can also expect to hear such other Black favorites as "Whistle Stop", "Blues Bag" and "Lil' Boy Man." So please join us in the Kaplan Penthouse on Thursday evening, May 29, for an evening of jazz chamber music with Wynton Marsalis and Friends.

I leave you with the usual suggestion that you check your local listings for the exact date and time of the telecast in your area.

See you then!