

## Tuesday Musical to host Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis

by Mike Telin



“It’s Duke Ellington’s 125th anniversary and the Akron concert is dedicated to Duke’s music,” saxophonist Ted Nash said during a telephone conversation.

On Saturday, April 20 at 7:30 pm at E.J. Thomas Hall, Tuesday Musical will present the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis. The evening of large-ensemble jazz led by a beloved jazz master will showcase

fifteen of the finest soloists, ensemble players, and arrangers in jazz today. Tickets are available [online](#).

Saturday’s program will include Ellington’s music from the late ‘20s through the ‘70s, including movements from his later suites. “We’ll also be playing music from his films, like *Paris Blues*,” Nash said.

The saxophonist pointed out that the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra is probably the only full-time jazz band in the United States. “It’s just amazing over the years what Wynton, with the help of so many amazing people, has built and managed to sustain in order to bring this music all around the world, and I’m really lucky to be a part of it.”

Nash, who has been with JLCO for nearly 26 years, said that the Orchestra has evolved over time. “The founding members were presenting a series of concerts at Lincoln Center before it became the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis. So when I joined the band it had been around for a few years. But I came on board just as the founding members decided to settle on a regular set of musicians who would be committed to presenting concerts at Lincoln Center as well as touring. And it was a big commitment.”

From the beginning, the music of Duke Ellington was an important part of JLCO's repertoire. "The second year I was in the band was Ellington's centennial and I was thinking, 'Oh my gosh,' playing *Take the A Train* and *Satin Doll* every night for a year? But that just shows how ignorant I was about his music. That year I learned so much about his history and how great his music is. He composed 1,500 plus pieces and of course we're playing a lot of them on this 125th."

Nash noted that the JLCO began as a repertory orchestra that focused on existing music as well as that of Wynton Marsalis. "As the band developed and the members got to know each other, Wynton began to ask the musicians to compose. So from the beginning, people like Wycliffe Gordon, Ron Westray, and of course Wynton were writing for it. At a certain point he started asking different members, including me, to compose larger pieces, and that's when I wrote *Portraits in Seven Shades*. That was sort of a turning point where the band's music really became more about the band. I don't think there's a band anywhere that has ten different composers and arrangers contributing to the repertoire. So I think it makes us very unique."

Nash added that he continues to be amazed by the depth of talent and musical styles of the JLCO members. "Everybody has such a completely different style and yet we love to work with each other and make music together." He added that people often comment that Marsalis is not always in front of the orchestra. "He's not soloing on every tune, but also sitting in the section. He loves the band and he loves to feature its members. And like I said, I'm really lucky to be a part of it."

*Photo by Luigi Beverelli*

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com April 17, 2024*

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