



WYNTON MARSALIS, Artistic Director  
ADRIAN ELLIS, Executive Director

## Inspirational Jazz Documentary *CHOPS* Drums Up Excitement for High School Arts and Music Programs

*Doc's distributor Virgil Films & Entertainment teams up with B-Side Entertainment and Jazz at Lincoln Center to provide film as a fundraising and educational tool*

DVD Debuts October 6

"Fantastic...much more than a lovely movie.  
Any age, anyone could watch that movie and love it."  
- CNN

"...It's a fantastic experience...you're overcome by this  
overwhelming feeling to hug each one (of the kids)...a job well done."  
- Cinematical.com

**For Immediate Release New York, NY (September 4, 2009)** – Virgil Films & Entertainment announces the innovative release of the acclaimed documentary, *CHOPS*, directed by Bruce Broder, which follows T.J., Owen and other high school jazz students from around the country as they prepare for and perform in Jazz at Lincoln Center's *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival. In partnership with B-Side Entertainment and Jazz at Lincoln Center, the film is being offered nationwide as a resource to bring awareness to the importance of arts education, as a fundraising tool for school arts and music programs and as an educational platform for teachers. *CHOPS* will be screened at schools and theaters this fall leading up to and through the DVD street date of October 6<sup>th</sup>. A special educational edition complete with lesson plans will be made available later in the year.

*CHOPS* made its debut at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival and garnered huge accolades for its entertaining storytelling and inspirational message. At film festivals around the country it won numerous awards, including the International Documentary Association's Alan Ett Music Documentary Award, several Audience Favorite Awards and two Grand Prizes.

Featuring the music of Duke Ellington, arguably America's greatest composer, the documentary profiles the relentless dedication and teamwork of young aspiring jazz musicians and their unwavering love of music. As they travel to New York City to compete in what has been called the "Superbowl of high school jazz band competitions," this group—made up of kids from all walks of life—makes the most of their differences and comes to embrace the commitment it takes to be the best. They work together, set goals together and push each other to realize a dream.

In an effort to bolster enthusiasm for arts and music programs in schools, Virgil and B-Side, in association with Jazz at Lincoln Center, have launched a nationwide screening

program. Educators are encouraged to book their own screenings of *CHOPS* in their school as a way to fundraise for arts education programs. As a part of this unique program, screening hosts may charge whatever admission they like and keep 100% of the proceeds.

"I am convinced that by watching this film [*CHOPS*]...my students will gain a new level of excitement and motivation to improve individually and as an ensemble," said Dr. Bill Pace, Band Director, Xavier High School, New York City.

*CHOPS* has already screened at Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. as a part of the celebrations of Jazz Appreciation Month and Duke Ellington's 110<sup>th</sup> birthday. Virgil and B-Side will continue sharing the film at jazz festivals, community theaters, and musical instrument and sheet music retailers across the country

Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, said of *CHOPS*, "This film is so well made, a labor of love..." while Andre Cole of BET wrote, "I really think younger audiences need to see this movie to appreciate jazz." Andrea Mineo of CNN raved about the film, saying it "...made me laugh, made me tear up, made me feel great. It was fantastic."

"*CHOPS* fits into that category of film that gets me excited," added Joe Amodei, President of Virgil Films & Entertainment. "When we can release a product that entertains and inspires at the same time, we have reached our goal. This film achieves both in a very big way."

*CHOPS* is a Bruce Broder film, in association with Winnercomm, Inc. with thanks to Jazz at Lincoln Center. The executive producer is Tim Cremin and the producers are Chip Rives, Joe Carmody, and Warren Skeels. The editor is Jake Pushinsky.

For more information about *CHOPS*, visit [www.chopsthemovie.com](http://www.chopsthemovie.com).

### **Contact**

Melody Serafino  
646.833.0206  
[mserafino@groupsjr.com](mailto:mserafino@groupsjr.com)

### About Virgil Films & Entertainment

Virgil Films & Entertainment, formerly Arts Alliance America, was founded in 2003 as Hart Sharp Video by Joe Amodei to develop, acquire, market and distribute DVD product in the theatrical feature film, documentaries, special interest and sports categories. The company has built partnerships with Sundance Channel Home Entertainment, ESPN, MLB Productions, Bombo Sports and Entertainment, TV Guide and NESN and other high-profile entertainment brands since their inception. Upcoming releases from Virgil Films and Entertainment include "The Caller" starring Academy Award nominee Frank Langella, the second season of the legendary "The Donna Reed Show," and the cult-classic children's series "The Mysterious Cities of Gold."

*For more information, visit [www.VirgilFilmsEnt.com](http://www.VirgilFilmsEnt.com).*

### About Jazz at Lincoln Center

Jazz at Lincoln Center is dedicated to inspiring and growing audiences for jazz. With the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and a comprehensive array of guest artists, Jazz at Lincoln Center advances a unique vision for the continued development of the art of jazz by producing a year-round schedule of performance, education and broadcast events for audiences of all ages. These productions include concerts, national and international tours, residencies, a jazz hall of fame and concert series, weekly national radio programs, television broadcasts, recordings, publications, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, jazz appreciation curriculum for students, music publishing, children's concerts and classes, lectures, adult education courses, student and educator workshops and interactive websites. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis, Chairman Lisa Schiff and Executive Director, Adrian Ellis, Jazz at Lincoln Center will produce thousands of events each season in its home in New York City, Frederick P. Rose Hall, and around the world. For more information visit [www.jalc.org](http://www.jalc.org).

#### About B-Side Entertainment

B-Side Entertainment ([www.bside.com](http://www.bside.com)) is a specialty film distributor that uses digital marketing and exhibition to connect films directly with audiences. The key to B-Side's unique distribution model is its technology platform which powers the web sites for more than 250 international film festivals, capturing feedback from 4 million audience members each year. B-Side distributes films globally using theatrical and non-theatrical venues, and through partnerships with DVD, digital, and television distributors. B-Side has offices in Austin and New York.

#### CHOPS

Virgil Films & Entertainment

Street Date: October 6, 2009

SRP \$ 24.95

Run Time: 89 min

UPC code: (8) 29567 0629-2 (0)

Catalog: 67029

Bonus features on the DVD include: the original trailer; an interview with Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center; extended scenes from Jazz at Lincoln Center clinician Ronald Carter's jazz workshop

# # #