

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:      DECEMBER 8, 2009**

**For High Res photos:**

Essentially Ellington Competition & Festival 2009:  
[http://www.jalc.org/jazzed/ee/gallery\\_2009/](http://www.jalc.org/jazzed/ee/gallery_2009/)



**JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF  
*ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON* WITH  
NATIONAL SEARCH TO RECONNECT  
WITH ITS COMMUNITY**

***Also Featuring New Program Initiatives for 2009-10***

**Who/What:**

Jazz at Lincoln Center celebrates the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program, (*EE*) with a national search to reconnect with its community and adding new program initiatives. Students, band directors, parents, and general fans are encouraged to share their experiences and favorite stories via an online survey to reflect and document the impact of the program. Responses will be compiled and presented during the Competition & Festival, May 8-10, 2010. To take the survey, visit [jalc.org/ee15](http://jalc.org/ee15).

Also new this year, Jazz at Lincoln Center will introduce **several program initiatives:**

- The winner of the *EE* Community Band category will play in exhibition at the annual Competition & Festival. Students will also be invited to attend all Festival activities including instrument workshops, the jam session, and the

Competition performances.

- A **short story component** has been added to the *EE* annual writing contest: This year, Jazz at Lincoln Center encourages students to enter the *EE* writing contest in one of two categories—a nonfiction essay or a fictional short story.
- A **fifth regional festival** at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Louisiana will take place April 24, 2010.
- Jazz at Lincoln Center is supporting the promotion of screening events featuring the acclaimed documentary **CHOPS** that follows a finalist band through their *EE* experience. Visit [chopsthemovie.com](http://chopsthemovie.com) for more information.

### **When/Where:**

December 2009-March 2010: National search and online survey available for alumni, band directors, parents, and general fans.

January 29, 2010: Competition recordings & application due

February 5, 2010: Writing contest entries due

February 24, 2010: 15 finalists, community band and writing contest winners announced

March 15, 2010: Survey closed, submissions compiled

May 8-10, 2010: 15<sup>th</sup> Annual *EE* Competition & Festival at Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center. Program impact project presented/alumni activities held.

### **How:**

More information on the *EE* survey and other initiatives can be found by visiting [jalc.org/ee15](http://jalc.org/ee15).

For more info on Jazz at Lincoln Center's *Essentially Ellington* program or to become a member: [jalc.org/essentiallyellington](http://jalc.org/essentiallyellington).

### **Quotes:**

"Over the years we've kept in touch with many of our *Essentially Ellington* alumni and found that they've followed a diverse path of interests and careers, from music and education to business, writing, marketing, etc. Many have indicated that their experience playing this music helped shape their decisions and pursuits. We also know directors, parents, and general fans who have expressed their connection to the program and we're hoping to gather stories to learn more about the broader impact *Essentially Ellington* has had over the past 15 years in all these communities."  
- Erika Floreska, Director of Education, Jazz at Lincoln Center

### **Background on *Essentially Ellington*:**

In the 15 year history of the *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program, Jazz at Lincoln Center has published 86 titles, distributed 90,000 scores to over 3,000 schools. An estimated 300,000 students have played these scores and the

music has reached countless members of their communities.

The *Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Program* is unique among educational resources for high school jazz bands in the U.S. and Canada and American schools abroad. Duke Ellington's music is at the very heart of America's 20th-century musical heritage and lies at the core of the rich canon of jazz music. Jazz at Lincoln Center, committed to instilling a broader understanding of this music, created *Essentially Ellington* during the 1995-96 school year to make Ellington's music accessible to as many high school musicians as possible and to support the development of their school's music programs.

Each year Jazz at Lincoln Center transcribes, publishes and distributes **Duke Ellington Orchestra** charts along with recordings and additional educational materials to high school bands in the U.S. and Canada and American schools abroad. These charts are original transcriptions of recordings by the Duke Ellington Orchestra, not simplified arrangements.

Jazz at Lincoln Center began including non-Ellington repertoire in the charts distributed to schools in 2008. While the music of Duke Ellington continues to be central to *Essentially Ellington*, the program now explores other seminal big band arrangers and composers as well – one each year. Last year “The King” **Benny Carter** was the additional jazz icon studied. In 2009-10, *Essentially Ellington* features the music of **Mary Lou Williams** in conjunction with the centennial celebration of her birth, including arrangements that she wrote for the Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman Orchestras.

Many bands receive the charts to add to their music libraries and rehearse or perform them during the school year. All bands have the option of submitting recordings of their performances for professional feedback. All entries will be judged in a blind screening process by professional jazz educators/musicians and every submission receives a thorough written assessment and a certificate signed by Wynton Marsalis.

All bands who receive the music are also welcome to submit a recording for the *Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival* held annually in New York City at Frederick P. Rose Hall, the home of Jazz at Lincoln Center. Fifteen bands are selected as finalists and, to prepare, each finalist band receives an in-school workshop in their community led by a professional musician. Each year, ten of the fifteen finalist bands are selected from schools that have not been finalists in the previously two years' festivals. *Essentially Ellington* culminates in a three-day festival in May for the finalist bands. Students, teachers, and musicians from across North America participate in workshops, rehearsals, and performances. The festival concludes with an evening Concert and Awards Ceremony open to the public at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall featuring the three top-placing bands and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis in a concert featuring the music to be distributed the following year through *Essentially Ellington*.

In the spring of 2006, Jazz at Lincoln Center piloted its first Regional *Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Festivals*. The noncompetitive regional festivals are education-focused and designed to offer bands of all levels the opportunity to perform the music of Duke Ellington and other seminal big band composers and arrangers. During the 2009-10 school year all *EE* member schools are eligible to take part in regional festivals. Participating bands are required to play at least one tune

from the [Essentially Ellington library](#) and will receive a post-performance workshop, soloist awards, and written or taped adjudicator feedback.

Beyond providing these charts, *Essentially Ellington* also supports participating bands throughout the school year. Numerous resources for band directors and students are available at [jalc.org](http://jalc.org). Band directors receive monthly newsletters and have access to online teaching guides and rehearsal videos that correspond directly to the current year's charts and offer practical ideas for the high school band room. Students are encouraged to enter an essay contest —the first place winner earns the honor of naming a seat in [Frederick P. Rose Hall](#)—the home of Jazz at Lincoln Center. *Essentially Ellington* strives to foster mentoring relationships between students and jazz professionals through email correspondence, various conference presentations, and the festival weekend.

**Sponsorship:**

Founding leadership support for the *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program is provided by The Jack and Susan Rudin Educational and Scholarship Fund. Major support is provided by the Surdna Foundation, The Irene Diamond Fund, the United States Congress, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Alfred and Gail Engelberg.

Additional support is provided by the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, The Mericos Foundation, The Heckscher Foundation for Children, The Charles Evans Hughes Memorial Foundation, The New York Times Company Foundation, and other generous funders.

**For more information:**

Bridget Wilson  
Associate • Public Relations  
Phone 212-258-9868  
Email [bwilson@jalc.org](mailto:bwilson@jalc.org)

# # #