



WYNTON MARSALIS, Artistic Director  
ADRIAN ELLIS, Executive Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:      FEBRUARY 23, 2011**  
*[REVISED 3/21/11]*

**For more information: [jalc.org/essentiallyellington](http://jalc.org/essentiallyellington)**

**For High Res Photos:**  
[Essentially Ellington Competition & Festival 2010](#)

# **15 HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL *ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON***

**HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND COMPETITION & FESTIVAL IN NEW YORK CITY  
MAY 12-14, 2011**

Agoura High School, Agoura Hills, CA  
William H. Hall High School, West Hartford, CT  
Dillard Center for the Arts, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
New World School of the Arts, Miami, FL  
Valley High School, West Des Moines, IA  
Downers Grove South High School, Downers Grove, IL  
East St. Louis High School, East St. Louis, IL  
St. Charles North High School, St Charles, IL  
Foxboro High School, Foxboro, MA  
Wellesley High School, Wellesley, MA  
River East Collegiate, Winnipeg, MB  
Temple High School, Temple, TX  
Mountlake Terrace High School, Mountlake Terrace, WA  
Roosevelt High School, Seattle, WA  
Sun Prairie High School, Sun Prairie, WI

**Winner of Community Band Category:**

American Music Program Pacific Crest Jazz Orchestra, Portland, OR

**Who/What:**

Jazz at Lincoln Center announces the **15 finalist bands** and **one winning community band** for its prestigious **16<sup>th</sup> Annual *Essentially Ellington*** High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival. The bands will compete and participate in workshops, jam sessions, and more, during a three-day **Competition & Festival** in New York City. The three top-placing bands perform with Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, Wynton Marsalis, as guest soloist, followed by a performance by the 15-piece Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra – whose members serve as mentors for the finalist bands throughout the weekend. The Festival's finale is an awards ceremony honoring outstanding soloists, sections and the top three bands. The Competition & Festival is the culmination of the annual *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program (*EE*), which also includes regional festivals, teaching resources, a summer Band Director Academy, monthly newsletters, and more.

*Judges: WYNTON MARSALIS, RICH DEROSA, DAVID BERGER, VINCENT GARDNER*

*In-School Clinicians: RONALD CARTER, WYCLIFFE GORDON,  
SHERMAN IRBY, TED NASH, LOREN SCHOENBERG, REGINALD THOMAS,  
RODNEY WHITAKER, TODD WILLIAMS*

*Mentors: members of the JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA*

**When/Where:**

**Competition & Festival:** May 12-14 at Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

**Final Concert:** May 14 at Avery Fisher Hall, 7:30pm

**How:**

**Free tickets** for each Competition Part will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis, one hour before the start of each concert on May 13 and May 14.

Tickets for the Concert and Awards Ceremony are \$20 or \$25 and **available now** at the Avery Fisher Hall Box Office, the Jazz at Lincoln Center Box Office, by calling CenterCharge at 212-721-6500 or at [jalc.org](http://jalc.org).

For more information or a schedule of events, visit: [jalc.org/essentiallyellington](http://jalc.org/essentiallyellington).

**Background/Statistics:**

Throughout March and April, Jazz at Lincoln Center will send, free of charge, a professional musician to each of the 15 finalist and winning community band schools to lead an intensive day-long workshop of rehearsals, lessons, and master classes. The free clinics are part of the rich 16-year history of this unique music education program, which has **reached more than 300,000 students in more than 3,000 high schools** across all 50 U.S. states, Canada, Australia and American schools abroad. *EE* has produced and distributed more than **96,000 copies of 92 previously unavailable scores** and **222 finalist bands** have traveled to New York City to participate in the annual **Competition & Festival**.

- This year Jazz at Lincoln Center distributed more than **9,200 newly transcribed scores**, reference recordings and additional educational materials.
- While the music of Duke Ellington continues to be central to *Essentially Ellington*, in 2008, Jazz at Lincoln Center expanded *Essentially Ellington* repertoire to include other seminal big band composers including Benny Carter and Mary Lou Williams. The 2010-11 *Essentially Ellington* season is the first time in the history of the program that repertoire composed for the **Count Basie Orchestra** will be included in the program. Repertoire includes, “Every Day (I Have the Blues),” “Swingin’ The Blues,” and “Tippin’ on the Q.T.” and by Duke Ellington, “Harlem Speaks,” “Portrait of Mahalia Jackson” from New Orleans Suite plus “Prelude to a Kiss” composed by Ellington and arranged by Billy Strayhorn.
- This year **1,536 high schools** in the United States, Canada, and American schools in Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, and Switzerland received *Essentially Ellington* materials.
- **110 bands** entered the competition by submitting a recorded performance of three compositions.
- The entries were evaluated in a blind screening by jazz education experts RONALD CARTER, ANDREW HOMZY, LOREN SCHOENBERG, and TODD WILLIAMS.
- **15 finalists** and **one community band** were selected.

#### **Quotes:**

“It is extremely gratifying to see the results of the seeds we sowed 16 years ago when we started *Essentially Ellington*. The improvement in the quality of the bands down through the years attests to the artistic substance of Duke Ellington’s music. The enthusiasm and dedication of students, families, band directors, judges, and alumni testify to the timeless American values that define this competition and festival. I’m looking forward to hearing this year’s finalists; it is my favorite time of year.”

**Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center**

“Through initiatives such as expanded community outreach, *Essentially Ellington* continues to cultivate interest and passion for our music throughout North America. Participation in all elements of the program has increased this year, with new directors and students, illustrating how building a strong jazz culture can carry a community through transition and maintain excellence in their programs. We look forward to coming together in May with new and familiar schools to celebrate the positive impact jazz can have.”

**Erika Floreska, Director of Education, Jazz at Lincoln Center**

#### **Sponsorship:**

Founding leadership support for *Essentially Ellington* is provided by The Jack and Susan Rudin Educational and Scholarship Fund. Major support is provided by The Con Edison Community Partnership Fund, The Irene Diamond Fund, Alfred and Gail Engleberg, The Ella Fitzgerald Foundation, The Heckscher Foundation for Children, The Charles Evans Hughes Memorial Foundation, The Mericos Foundation, National

Endowment for the Arts, The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust, Surdna Foundation, and the United States Department of Education.

**Contact:**

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

# # #