

Thurs. Dec '94 NYT

It's the End of the Riff For Marsalis's Septet

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the Fields," the orchestral suite he wrote for Lincoln Center, along with his more complicated long-form compositions, suggested that the big band was the direction he needed to go in. For the most part, a big band is economically unfeasible; Mr. Marsalis has access to one at Lincoln Center. As for the sabbatical, Mr. Marsalis once took a long vacation to Hawaii and left after one day, bored.

"Vacations, I'm not capable of them," he said.

How about the sabbatical?

"That's just not possible," he said.

"I'm going to concentrate all my energy on Lincoln Center now. I want to work with a big band, write more on that scale."

Mr. Marsalis is also intent on using some of his free time to study. He plans to work through a reading list with the cultural historian Albert Murray, and wants to do some serious, sustained listening to music. And he wants to collaborate with musicians he has met on his travels throughout the world.

"I want to work with a Japanese trumpet player, Tomona Hara," he

said. "I know musicians in Brazil I want to work with. I have a few short tours set up for next year, and I'll be doing them with a quartet of young musicians."

For the rest of the members of the septet, it is the disbanding of a sort of family; they spent more time with one another than they did with their own families. For Mr. Reed and Mr. Anderson, it is also an exciting time, as they have both recently started their own careers as band leaders. Mr. Anderson recently released one of the better albums of the year, "Warmdaddy in the Garden of Swing" (Atlantic), and Mr. Reed's third album is due out in a few months. Both of them are setting up tours.

"It's really great to be out on your own," said Mr. Anderson, "because you can test all the things you've been playing and experiencing on the road for years. It's your chance, and leading a band means that you're naked. It takes courage and conviction. What I've learned with Wynton, playing that hard music, with all its history, night after night, gave me an education that can't be duplicated. Now it's my job to translate it, and keep preaching the gospel."