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Jazz Flexes New Muscles In Lincoln Center Schedule

By BEN RATLIFF

Six months after being granted full constituency on the Lincoln Center campus, Jazz at Lincoln Center yesterday announced its schedule for the 1997-98 season and beyond. It entails more performances, longer runs, expanded education programs and a new corporate sponsor, the Discover Card, all making jazz an even more visible part of New York's cultural life.

Formerly, concerts put on by Jazz at Lincoln Center were one-shot affairs. Next season, which runs from September to April, every concert will be presented twice, to accommodate an increased demand for tickets. The exception will be a concert featuring Cassandra Wilson singing love songs associated with Miles Davis, running six nights (Dec. 1 to 6).

The educational wing of the program will expand its Essentially Ellington High School Band Competition. Bands from three states were included last year; by 1999, the year of Ellington's centennial, all 50 states are to be included.

A typically ambitious year of Ellington-related concerts has also been prepared for the centennial, including one in which the New York Philharmonic and Jazz at Lincoln Center will join forces for the first time. They will perform Grieg's

"Peer Gynt" Suite, both in Grieg's orchestration and in Ellington and Billy Strayhorn's arrangement.

The 1997-1998 season will include talks, films, children's programs and nine large concerts (this season has six). The full orchestra will present an evening of Dizzy Gillespie's big-band pieces from the 1940's (Sept. 11-13), a centennial celebration of Sidney Bechet (Nov. 20 and 22), a performance by Cuban musicians, including Chucho Valdéz and Frank Emilio (Jan. 22 and 24), a showcase of Wynton Marsalis's big-band music (March 19 and 21) and a concert of work by the saxophonist and composer Wayne Shorter (April 23 and 24).

A small-band series called Jazz Jam includes concerts with a spotlight on works of Thelonious Monk (Sept. 18 and 20) and of Gillespie (Dec. 11 and 13). Finally, on May 12, 1998, Jazz at Lincoln Center joins with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center to produce Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat," with Mr. Marsalis as soloist, in tandem with a new work by Mr. Marsalis with the same instrumentation.

The piano series, in its second season, will include Marcus Roberts's "Evolution of Blues and Swing in Three Parts," (Oct. 30 and 31, March 26 and 27 and April 30 and May 1), and recitals by Chucho Valdéz, Cyrus Chestnut and John Lewis.