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# A Father Passes the Torch Song

By SAMUEL G. FREEDMAN

In 25 years as a jazz fan, I long ago learned to savor the virtues of an 11 o'clock set, that crossroads of languid ballads and fiery bop. But until I walked into Alice Tully Hall last December, I had never been to one that sold Raisinets alongside Cognac and had the occasional tangerine tumbling out of a backpack and down the aisle. This concert was starting at 11 *in the morning*.

Beside me sat my son, Aaron, notebook and pen at the ready. At 6 he was naïve enough to want to be like his father, and I dreaded the day he would awake to my failings. Because I wrote books, he wrote books, and he had already filled half a shelf with tales of sorcerers and gods. Lately, he'd been asking me, dead-serious, why his works weren't available on Amazon.com.

Now, I hoped, I could pass along another passion of mine, jazz. When Aaron was an infant, I had dandled him to the poly-rhythms of Milton Nascimento, but as he grew older I felt somehow timid about pressing on him a music as intricate and demanding as jazz. It took enough paternal vigilance just to steer him clear of Raffi.

Though more of a Bonnie Raitt fan herself, my wife, Cynthia, encouraged me to subscribe to the Jazz for Young People series, produced by Lincoln Center and presided over by the trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis. From my mouth, the notion of spending a few Saturdays at jazz shows would have dripped of self-interest; from hers, it soared on wings of arts education. Given the opening, I snatched it.



Stephanie Berger

Jazz lesson: Wynton Marsalis, using a basketball to illustrate rhythm for youngsters.

crowd, half of it ranging from toddler to teen and the other half graying like me. The audience was as casually integrated by race as any I remembered from the club scene, even if it produced some sounds I never heard at the Village Vanguard — snuffles, whimpers, juice boxes being sucked dry.

We parents had lived long enough to see jazz finally win

there as the Metropolitan Opera. And the seven-year-old series of children's concerts, which continues tomorrow with a program about Duke Ellington, consciously models itself on Leonard Bernstein's classical Young People's Concerts presented from 1958 to 1972.

My jazz education had