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# Jazz Marches On

New York City has always been a Mecca for jazz, with more creative music per square foot than anywhere else on the globe. To name a seminal few, Ornette Coleman, Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and Betty Carter have all flourished here, making vital contributions to a uniquely American art form — one that is every bit as important as film, dance or opera.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts recognized this four years ago, when it created its jazz department and announced that the new division would eventually become a full partner at the center, joining the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, the New York City Ballet and the Film Society. Beginning this July, Lincoln Center will make good on its promise, promoting the jazz division to a full partnership, with an expanded schedule of offerings and its own board of directors.

This is an important development in the cultural life of New York — and the first time in almost three decades that Lincoln Center has created a new constituent, the last being the Film Society, established in 1969.

The jazz initiative has grown from a skeletal program into a rich and thriving series that has produced critically acclaimed recordings and that now includes more than 100 events a year. The young people's concerts have become especially popular and have followed in the tradition of Leonard Bernstein's classical concerts for the young. This year, under its artistic director, Wynton Marsalis, Jazz at Lincoln Center will stage events in 60 cities and 15 countries — revitalizing interest in the art form and enhancing one of New York's most important cultural exports. The effort deserves vigorous support from both audiences and sponsors.