

# Lincoln Center Elevates the Status of Jazz

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has gifts of \$3.4 million."

"I'm flabbergasted they're so far ahead because in today's climate it's not easy to raise endowments, because they're essentially private," he continued. "There are no signs that say 'Jazz at Lincoln Center Sponsored by ABC.'"

But the road has not been without bumps. The jazz department has been steadily bombarded by some critics and musicians who consider its programming, which focuses primarily on mainstream jazz and has largely ignored the avant-garde jazz of the 1960's and 70's, too narrow.

Mr. Marsalis has been called a nepotist for his assignment of commissions to himself and to young musicians widely seen as his disciples. There has also been criticism of what is seen as a paucity of white players in the program.

Paradoxically, the controversies and free-floating acrimony have kept Jazz at Lincoln Center firmly on center stage, a position that many in the program believe hastened the awarding of a constituency.

The squabbles certainly did not hurt attendance, which has risen strikingly over the last four years. This year's three shows have all been sold out, including "We'll Take Manhattan" on Saturday, which fea-

tured two quartets, a septet and two big bands, one of them the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, led by Mr. Marsalis. •

"I'm surprised that it's grown as quickly as it has," Mr. Marsalis said of the program. "When I first started, we were just putting on concerts."

"This sort of success just opens up the field to more work, to do things that haven't been done before," he said. "We're going to commission more work, publish literature, publish scores, have concerts by musicians from all over the world. The possibilities are endless."

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