Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis kicked off the 2007/2008 season at the Palace Theatre in Stamford, Connecticut.

When the 15-piece Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis took to the Palace Theatre stage on September 28, 2007, the audience knew that they were in for a treat. Wynton Marsalis, a jazz phenomenon whose partial list of credentials include recording more than 30 jazz and classical recordings, and winning nine Grammy Awards, together with an extremely talented and well-credentialed orchestra, made for an exciting evening of jazz.

The line-up: Wynton Marsalis, Music Director, Trumpet; Ryan Kisor, Brandon Lee, and Marcus Printup on Trumpets; Vincent R. Gardner, Christopher Crenshaw, and Elliot Mason on Trombones; Sherman Irby, Saxophone; Ted Nash, Alto and Soprano Saxophones, Clarinets; Walter Blanding, Tenor and Soprano Saxophones, Clarinet; Victor Goines, Tenor and Soprano Saxophones, Bb and Bass Clarinets; Joe Temperley, Baritone and Soprano Saxophones, Bass Clarinet; Dan Nimmer, Piano; Carlos Henriquez, Bass, and Ali Jackson, drums.

The orchestra opened the first set with Jackie McLean's "Appointment in Ghana", followed by Sonny Clark's "Cool Struttin'," and a piece created by Wynton Marsalis for the Twyla Tarp Dance company, that Wynton said was originally titled "Mastery of Melancholy," but Twyla thought that the name was too long, so they changed the name to Jump Start, playing the Fifth Movement, Jump. This lively piece interspersed solos by Wynton Marsalis, Joe Temperley, and Elliot Mason.

Slowing the tempo down a bit, the orchestra segued into Lee Morgan's "Ceora," with solo interplays by Christopher Crenshaw, Dan Nimmer, and Victor Goines. Rounding our the first set, the orchestra played (Gonna Lay Down My Burden) "Down By the Riverside" featuring solos by Brandon Lee and Elliot Mason, with the band clapping their hands to the rhythmic beat.

After a short intermission, the orchestra returned for the second set to play the band's own Ted Nash's "Portrait in Seven Shades," which he collaborated with the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, based on how one art form influences another with musical "portraits" of the artists Marc Chagall, Salvador Dali, Henri Matisse, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollack, and Vincent Van Gogh. The orchestra performed four of the pieces, Portrait: Part I, Monet; Portrait: Part II, Dali; Portrait: Part III: Matisse; and Portrait: Part IV, Picasso, where through Mr. Nash's talent, you could actually visualize each of four the artists through the varying tempos and rhythms.

The orchestra finished the evening to a standing ovation from the appreciative audience, starting the 2007/2008 season at the Stamford Center for the Arts off on an exceptionally high note.
After the performance, Edward F. Nesta and I stopped back stage for a conversation with the personable Wynton Marsalis, who was happily greeting his guests and posing for photographs. It was another special evening at the Palace Theatre.

The Stamford Center for the Arts features world-class artists and performances at the Rich Forum and the Palace Theatre, is conveniently located to New York, and is only a 46-minute train ride from Grand Central Terminal in New York to Stamford, Connecticut.

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