

*Happy Birthday*

# LINCOLN CENTER

A NEW YORK TREASURE FOR 50 YEARS

50



Photo: Bob Serating



Photo: Sara Krulwich/  
The New York Times



Photo: Paul Kolnik



Photo: Chris Lee

## *Remembering the Past — Living the Future*

IN 1959, THE BIRTH OF LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS transformed the tenement-filled neighborhood where *West Side Story* was filmed into what is now one of the most successfully developed areas of the city. Hailed as a “great cultural adventure” by then-President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lincoln Center secured New York’s identity as a world-class center of art and culture, cementing New Yorkers’ conceit as the greatest city on earth.

*From top to bottom:* Groundbreaking ceremony at site of Lincoln Center, May 14, 1959.  
Luciano Pavarotti performing “Tosca” at the Metropolitan Opera.  
New York City Ballet’s “Lifecasting”.  
Alan Gilbert conducts the New York Philharmonic.

FROM ITS INCEPTION, LINCOLN CENTER, the first and largest arts complex in the world and a groundbreaking cooperative venture between the public and the private sectors, reflected the character of New York City — its scale, its urbanism, its concentration of talent. Drawing from a broad spectrum of the performing arts — classical music, opera, ballet, theater and jazz — Lincoln Center nurtured up-and-coming performers, commissioned cutting-edge works, created definitive programming and showcased the biggest talents the arts had to offer. Just a few who commanded its stages in the early years include Leonard Bernstein, who conducted the opening of the New York Philharmonic in 1962 and Duke Ellington, who made his New York Philharmonic conducting debut in 1964. Placido Domingo and Beverly Sills launched their careers at New York City Opera in 1966; and the legendary George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein brought the New York City Ballet, which is now the largest dance organization in America, to Lincoln Center in 1964.

Lincoln Center continues to expand and evolve, and now includes 12 different resident organizations among its glittering array of theatres and performance halls. The New York Philharmonic in particular, of which Credit Suisse is the exclusive global sponsor, has sent touring

productions worldwide, sometimes to places no other Americans can go — like its historic 2008 concert in North Korea.

And Lincoln Center remains at the pinnacle of the artistic world, the place where young performers dream of “someday...”

“When I was a kid at Juilliard, we used to gaze across the Josie Robertson Plaza wondering when we would ever put our training to use,” remembers Tony Award-winning singer/actress Patti LuPone, who graduated from Juilliard’s first drama division class in 1972. LuPone, who has since performed on many of Lincoln Center’s stages, got married on the Vivian Beaumont stage on a day off from starring in *Anything Goes*. “I’m still inspired by Lincoln Center,” she says. “When you walk across the plaza, you feel the potential. You’re walking the same ground as the greatest artists have walked — New York City Ballet dancers, Maria Callas, Placido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, Yo-Yo Ma. It’s an incredibly humbling experience to turn around and look at those buildings and think about the people who have sung or danced or played there. There’s no place else like it.”

Opera soprano extraordinaire Renée Fleming also graduated from Juilliard, and made her recital debut at Lincoln Center while still a student. “Lincoln Center was, and is, the highest

level to aspire to,” says Fleming, who still vividly remembers winning the Metropolitan Opera auditions in 1988, just after she graduated. “It was such a thrill — and terrifying,” she says. And although she’s now filled the best opera houses in the world, “For me, there’s no better house to be — there are a lot of wonderful houses, but the Met is unique.”



Photo: Richard Termine for The New York Times

Renée Fleming in “Manon” at the Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center.

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### *A Performing Arts Center for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

As distinctive and rich in history as Lincoln Center is, after nearly 50 years of little or no capital improvements, many of its remarkable buildings were in significant need of both internal and external renovations and upgrades — for artists and audiences, as well as for the surrounding neighborhood.

Enter the new, 21st century Lincoln Center — a shimmering, high-tech, urban oasis. Where many of the center’s original stone-girded, Acropolis-like structures seemed to insulate themselves from the city, the redevelopment, which designers have called an “architectural striptease,” peels buildings back to reveal their essence — Alice Tully Hall and Juilliard in particular — replacing stone with sweeping, glass-covered facades that seem to beckon to passersby. Which is exactly the point.

“Our goal is to both change the mood and upgrade the facilities, to ultimately make Lincoln Center more welcoming,” says Lincoln Center Chairman Frank A. Bennack, Jr. “The magnitude of this undertaking is as important



Above: The new grand stair along Columbus Avenue.  
Right: View across Hearst Plaza from the forthcoming Restaurant Pavilion.



Renderings: Diller Scofidio + Renfro in association with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners

as the original founding. If there is one thing I can do to make a difference in this city, it's to see this project through."

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges of the \$1.2 billion redevelopment was uniting the 12 fiercely independent (and opinionated) resident organizations to work together. "When the board of directors asked me what was needed most, I said a chiropractor," says Lincoln Center President Reynold Levy. "Our constituents are enormously strong, and when fully aligned, they are powerful. This redevelopment is an illustration, and not a small one, of what can happen when great institutions get together and coalesce around common ground and a common good. We are transformed, physically and otherwise."

Architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro, while respecting the majesty of the original architecture, have accomplished exactly what Levy and others hoped — integrating the campus into the city, making the "theater of the theater" accessible to everyone and anyone. Soaring structures move seamlessly from indoors to outdoors, opening onto park-like green spaces complete with benches and chairs. Free Wi-Fi and a variety of dining options (including

a grass-roofed restaurant) encourage visitors to come in and stay awhile.

The newly opened Alice Tully Hall — the first unveiled major public component of the redevelopment — is a testimony to openness and transparency, its opaque, travertine (sedimentary rock) walls replaced with three-story-high wraparound glass. The Grand Foyer, paneled in rolling Brazilian bloodwood, features a huge limestone bar and café, at65, and is open all day, giving visitors a panoramic view of Broadway. The Credit Suisse Information Grandstand along Broadway, an example of the enormous private support that helped make this renovation possible, is a great place to people-watch and wait for concerts.

"Credit Suisse is especially pleased to help facilitate the modernization and revitalization of the Lincoln Center campus, which is vital to bringing the world's best music, theater, dance, opera, jazz and film to New York City residents and to the millions of visitors it attracts each year," says Eric Eckholdt, executive director of the Credit Suisse Americas Foundation.

With its continuing goal of attracting a younger, hipper audience, Lincoln Center has already added innovative programming and

unorthodox performance times. During the 10:30 PM Mostly Mozart concerts in the intimate Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse, for example, world-class musicians perform in the glow of candlelight among tables of wine-sipping music lovers.

But as much as is changing at Lincoln Center, its relationship with New York remains constant. For the last half-century, each has informed the evolution of the other, and it is impossible to imagine Lincoln Center without the surrounding context of New York City, or to imagine New York City, now an undisputed cultural leader worldwide, without Lincoln Center.



The "Charles B. Benenson Grove" will add green space at 62<sup>nd</sup> Street and Columbus Avenue.

Rendering: Diller Scofidio + Renfro in association with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners

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## Wynton Marsalis Talks Jazz

Wynton Marsalis is perhaps the quintessential Lincoln Center performer. The co-founder and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center — the largest organization in the world dedicated to jazz and jazz education — has played on practically every Lincoln Center stage and collaborated with nearly every resident organization.



Photo: Clay Patrick McBride

Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

**Q: Did you ever think there would be a whole institution at Lincoln Center devoted to jazz?**

Before I started working with the people who made it possible, I would not have imagined it. But once I saw the kind of support we received from the people at Lincoln Center, I was not surprised. They made it happen.

**Q: What's your goal for Jazz at Lincoln Center?**

To bring the beauty, the richness and the joy of jazz to the people. And to give them a good time.

**Q: You've said that jazz is made up of the same properties we need to successfully navigate life. Could you explain?**

There's the importance of developing and finding your own perspective and having pride in yourself. That's what we call a solo. Swing is about learning how to negotiate, and how to be flexible. Then there's improvisation, which teaches us to use our intelligence and all the things at our disposal to respond appropriately to the moment at hand. The blues recognizes tragedy, but always with optimism. Things might be tragic, but they're going to get better. Optimism that is not naïve in the face of adversity — something is wrong, but we're going to make it better.

**Q: Do you have any favorite Lincoln Center performance you've seen?**

The Philharmonic just plays the hell out of everything. They have such a great brass section, every time I hear them play, I'm enlightened.

**Q: Do you have a fantasy performance?**

No, every performance is like that for me. I'm always happy to be playing. I've played with so

many different musicians and styles, and had such a great time. I enjoy playing. It's always fun for me.

**Q: If you could go back in time and play with anyone, who would it be?**

Count Basie's Orchestra in the 1930s. It was the greatest community band ever. They're just down home, soulful, good time, great feeling music, virtuosic, with a lot of human feeling, great band members and a swingin' rhythm section. I would love to have been a part of that.

**Q: What would you recommend for people who are jazz novices?**

As with anything you're interested in learning about, you have to spend time with it. If you're interested in learning about abstract expressionism, you don't just look at one painting and say, "I don't like it"; or if you're interested in opera, you don't sit through one four-hour Wagner opera, and say, "Oh, that's too long for me." In jazz, when you learn about the history of the music and where it came from, you get into it, into the depth of it. And you can investigate for the rest of your life — you don't have to be in a hurry. You can study Beethoven till you die, you can study Duke Ellington till you die. The more you study, as anything of value, the more you hear, the more you appreciate.

**Q: So, where should a jazz novice start?**

It's all based on listening. You need to listen to the music until you begin to like it. The first time, the key is just to listen with no preconceived notions, not to decide if you like it or not, but to listen repeatedly, and to try to figure things out until you really start to hear it.

## One Icon Salutes Another

Macy's pays tribute to Lincoln Center's 50th anniversary at its flagship Herald Square store, with a series of special events bringing the excitement of dance, music and art to its more than 35,000 daily visitors. Throughout the yearlong celebration, Macy's will spotlight Lincoln Center's world-famous constituents with tribute windows saluting the center's storied history and exciting future, costume retrospectives, and fun family activities — like a day of swing lessons (incorporating swing fashions) in honor of the Midsummer Night Swing Festival. Other special activities will highlight the New York City Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and

New York City Ballet, among others. Events in the works include a panel discussion with Macy's fashion director and curators of the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Ballet, as well as an enter-to-win sweepstakes.

"Macy's and Lincoln Center are quintessential New York iconic landmarks along the city's landscape on Broadway," says Martine Rear-don, Macy's executive vice president of marketing. "Coming off of our own 150th anniversary celebration, it made perfect sense for us to salute the cultural contributions of Lincoln Center and its resident organizations on their 50th anniversary." ✨

## Celebrating Lincoln Center

Join Lincoln Center as it celebrates its 50th anniversary with a year of special events. For a complete listing and descriptions, visit: [LincolnCenter.org/50](http://LincolnCenter.org/50).

Through May 23

Share your memories of Lincoln Center with the national oral history project StoryCorps, as its signature Airstream trailer, outfitted with a recording studio, visits the Lincoln Center campus. To make a reservation, visit [StoryCorps.org](http://StoryCorps.org) or call (800) 850-4406.

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**Macy's East**