

ENTERTAINMENT

Jazz gets home in New York high-rise

NEW YORK (AP) - Perched above a shopping mall in a skyscraper at the heart of corporate America, the new home of New York's leading jazz orchestra is a long way from the smoky basements and soulful southern cities of the past.

"Welcome to the house of swing" — with those words Wynton Marsalis, of the legendary jazz family, opened the new headquarters of Jazz at Lincoln Center on Monday night with a gala performance in an auditorium designed specially for the acoustics of jazz.

Earlier he led a New Orleans-style musical parade down Broadway, kicking off the inaugural festival at the three venues housed in the Time Warner Center that towers over the southwest corner of Central Park.

Public performances start on Thursday with the Dizzy Gillespie Festival in the smallest and most intimate of the venues — Dizzy's Club Coca Cola, whose curved walls, low lighting and tables give the atmosphere of a nightclub.

The Frederick P. Rose Hall complex, sitting above the clothes stores and cafes in the



Jazz great Wynton Marsalis, left, leads a group of musicians as they strut down Broadway to kick off the opening of the new home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, Monday, in New York.

sleek new glass towers, was built at a cost of \$128 million and includes recording studios and classrooms for lectures and educational events.

"We've built a house that really swings with the way jazz works, the way jazz feels, and most of all, the way jazz sounds," Marsalis said before the gala opening featuring names such as Tony Bennett and Abbey Lincoln, as well as another four members of the Marsalis clan.

Jazz has always been a

family affair, and the new center aims to start them young. Children as young as two can join the singing and dancing in the WeBop! educational program.

The main 1,200-seat Rose Theater is designed for jazz but will also be used for opera, ballet, theater and orchestra performances. The most spectacular of the venues is the Allen Room, a 500-seat auditorium with dramatic views through a 50-foot-by-90-foot (15-meter by 27-

meter) glass wall overlooking Central Park and the shimmering lights of the city.

Initial reactions were good. "Sophisticated, cosmopolitan... flexible and alive," was the verdict of The New York Times.

Artistic director Marsalis said it's all about the music. "Either you can play or you can't play. That's the test."

Winfrey, Cruise set to cohost Nobel concert

OSLO, Norway (AP) - Tom Cruise and Oprah Winfrey will host the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Oslo, honoring the 2004 laureate, Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Maathai.

"They really wanted to do it, right from the start," concert organizer Odd Arvid Stroomstad told the Associated Press by telephone Wednesday. "They clearly know what the Nobel concert is, and what the Nobel Peace Prize is about."

As masters of ceremony for the Dec. 11 concert, Winfrey and Cruise will share the stage with plenty of high-profile entertainment.

Joss Stone, Andrea Bocelli, Diana Krall, Cyndi Lauper and Patti LaBelle, along with several Norwegian artists, are among those scheduled to perform.

Stroomstad said other celebrities are likely to be added to the roster.

The Nobel concert will be carried live in more than 100 countries, and traditionally draws some of the biggest names in show business. Last year, the event was hosted by Hollywood husband-and-wife Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

The 64-year-old Maathai, Kenya's deputy environment minister, became the first African woman to win the coveted peace prize, which was announced Oct. 8.

She was honored as founder of the Green Belt Movement, which has sought to empower women, improve the environment and fight corruption in Africa for almost 30 years. Maathai will receive the \$1.3 million prize at a Dec. 10 ceremony in Oslo, followed by a torchlight parade and banquet in her honor, and, the next day, the Nobel concert.

Rock to host Academy Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The Oscars have a piece of the Rock. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences last Thursday announced Chris Rock will host the next Academy Awards telecast.

Rock, who's been in the films "Head of State" and "Dogma," is best known for his standup comedy specials "Bigger & Blacker," "Bring the Pain" and "Never Scared."

Rock, 39, has previously hosted the MTV's Movie Awards.

"I am a huge fan of Chris Rock," said Gil Cates, the producer of the Oscars telecast. "He always makes me laugh and he always has something interesting to say. Chris repre-

sents the best of the new generation of comics. Having him host the Oscars is terrific."

The one-time "Saturday Night Live" regular has won three Emmys for his TV programs and two Grammys for his comedy albums. Rock currently is shooting a remake of "The Longest Yard" with Adam Sandler and recently provided the voice of the zebra in the animated feature "Madagascar," both to be released in May 2005.

His other film credits include "Pootie Tang," "Bad Company," "Down to Earth" and "Nurse Betty."

The 77th Academy Awards telecast is set for Feb. 27.

Jackson attorney leaves legal team

LOS ANGELES (AP) - An attorney who has represented Michael Jackson for more than a decade has left the pop star's defense team, Jackson announced Friday.

Steve Cochran took a "temporary leave of absence" from the team defending Jackson from child molestation charges but will continue to "collaborate" with lead attorney Thomas Mesereau Jr., Jackson said.

"I would like to thank attorney Steve Cochran for all of the hard work he has done on my behalf," Jackson said in a statement released by his spokeswoman. "He continues to be my friend and close adviser."

A reason for the departure was not released. A message left after business hours at Cochran's Los Angeles office was not

immediately returned.

In a separate statement, Mesereau denied rumors that there was animosity between him and Cochran. He called Cochran a friend, "brilliant lawyer, and a great credit to our profession."

Mesereau declined further comment when contacted by the Associated Press.

In April, Jackson fired Mark Geragos and Benjamin Brafman, replacing the two famous attorneys with Mesereau. The team of Cochran and Robert Sanger had worked for Jackson in lesser roles throughout the case.

Jackson has pleaded not guilty to child molestation, conspiracy and administering an intoxicating agent, alcohol.

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