

The Collection No Jazz Fan Should Be Without

dvd
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Legends of Jazz

produced by **Larry Rosen**
LRSmedia

Review by **Bart Marantz**



Legends of Jazz, now available in a three-volume DVD series produced by award-winning producer and NFAA Trustee Larry Rosen for LRSmedia, is simply a must for all levels of jazz education. It serves as a great video experience for the professional jazz musician as well. The average price for each of the three currently available volumes is about \$25, but prices may vary on the Web. Each package includes both a DVD and a CD, which makes for a great visual or audio experience. The critics agree:

- ▶ “*Legends of Jazz* represents a major breakthrough for TV and for jazz.”—*Chicago Tribune*
- ▶ “The series provides a lot to enjoy.”—*Washington Post*
- ▶ “A chance to see once-in-a-lifetime collaborations.”—*USA Today*

■ A Wealth of Material ■

Each volume consists of four, 30-minute episodes. Every show begins with a brief historical section outlining the major developments of either a style of jazz music or a particular featured instrument. This compact history

lesson, in a black and white photo format with narration, not only sets up each show for the uninitiated, but is also a great jumping-off place for a jazz classroom situation. The historical background segues into introductions of the guest musicians by host Ramsey Lewis, the National Endowment for the Arts piano jazz master, who follows up with short interviews which give some personal insights into each artist being showcased.

■ An Inside Look ■

These guides are available for free at www.legendsofjazz.net. They provide an in-depth study of the styles and instrumentalists/vocalists who appear on the shows. The study guides include discographies, videography, bibliographies and suggestions for creative classroom projects, with links to the National Standards for Music Education.

■ Committed to Quality ■

Great care was taken in the technical aspect of producing the best sound and video possible for television, using

digital technology that comes alive on the DVDs, as well as the CDs. This same commitment to excellence in sound was carried over to the choice of rhythm sections that support all the guest musicians. Although each rhythm section was different, all met the same top-notch quality standard. Of course Lewis, as the host, affords himself the delight of being able to interact with all of the guest musicians, as well as the supporting rhythm sections. He ends each segment with the soon-to-be anticipated question, “Would you help me end the show with the *Legends of Jazz* theme song?”

Although this may seem pedantic when viewing all the episodes consecutively, it nonetheless provides the audience with a chance to hear all the guest musicians put their own creative stamp on the same standard blues form.

■ A Promising Future ■

Legends Of Jazz is a major breakthrough for jazz education, providing an enjoyable way to experience some truly unique jazz artist collaborations.



Look for these articles and more in the next issue of *youngARTS*, coming in September.

- Visual Arts Alumni—They’re Really Something to See!
- A guide to Breakthrough 2007 in New York City featuring celebrities from all disciplines in the arts, plus *youngARTS*’ own up and coming celebrities—a selection of our 2007 *youngARTS* Winners.
- Exclusive coverage of the Presidential Scholars in the Arts Performance at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and exhibit at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC.

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UPCOMING 2007 EVENTS

New York City
Breakthrough *April 24, 7 p.m.*

Denver
Reception and performances by *youngARTS* Winners – Awards Ceremony to follow
May 15, 6:30 p.m.

Chicago
Reception and performances by *youngARTS* Winners – Awards Ceremony to follow
May 22, 5:45 p.m.

Annapolis
Reception and performances by *youngARTS* Winners – Awards Ceremony to follow
June 4, 6 p.m.

Washington, DC
Presidential Scholars Visual Arts Exhibit
June 10–29 SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM

Presidential Scholars Awards and Showcase Performance
June 25, 8:30 p.m. THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS CONCERT HALL

For information on any upcoming events, please contact Pilar Pava at (305)377-1140 or pilar@nfaa.org.

About the Author

Bart Marantz, a 1986 Fulbright Scholar, has been teaching jazz studies at the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) in Dallas, Texas for over 20 years. The music program has won 176 *DownBeat* Student Music Awards since 1983. The jazz and commercial program at Booker T. Washington HSPVA has produced seven alumni with 22 Grammy awards over its 30-year history.

