



Pulitzer-Prize winning jazz musician and composer. Author, *Jazz in the Bittersweet Blues of Life*. Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Wynton Marsalis has been described as the most outstanding jazz musician and trumpeter of his generation next in the lineage of great horn players, as one of the world's top classical trumpeters, as a big band leader in the tradition of Duke Ellington, a brilliant composer, a devoted advocate for the Arts and a tireless and inspiring educator. He carries these distinctions well. His life is a portrait of discipline, dedication, sacrifice, and creative accomplishment.



The sound of Wynton Marsalis' band is inspired by the philosophy that mirrors basic principals of democracy. Marsalis requires his sidemen to balance their (individual) right to play what they choose with their responsibility to the group. They are coached to communicate and must therefore *learn to listen*, and make thoughtful choices about when to play and what to say through their instruments. According to Marsalis, what you hear in a great jazz band is the sound of democracy. "The jazz band works best when participation is shaped by intelligent communication." This intelligent, hard swinging interplay has made Marsalis' bands the favorite among jazz musicians and audiences worldwide. It is this philosophy that has given Wynton that very special connection to his American audience. In the smallest of American towns Wynton is received warmly and enthusiastically. The connection is the music, which mimics our valued way of life. Through jazz music Wynton Marsalis represents America all over the world. In such disparate locations from Prague to Warsaw, Seoul to Wellington, Paris to Istanbul, Santiago to Mexico City, Toronto to Calgary, Amarillo to Portland - you will find Wynton Marsalis sharing his vision of the union of jazz and democracy.

Wynton was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on October 18, 1961 to Ellis and Dolores Marsalis. He was the second of six sons, one of whom is autistic. At an early age Wynton exhibited seriousness about study, an aptitude for music and a desire to contribute to American culture. At age 8 he performed traditional New Orleans music in the Fairview Baptist Church band led by legendary banjoist, Danny Barker. At 14 he was invited to perform with the New Orleans Philharmonic. During high school Wynton was a member of the New Orleans Symphony Brass Quintet, New Orleans Community Concert Band, New Orleans Youth Orchestra, New Orleans Symphony and on weekends he performed in a jazz band as well as in the popular local funk band, the Creators. At age 17 Wynton became the youngest musician ever to be admitted to Tanglewood's Berkshire Music Center. Despite his youth, he was awarded the school's prestigious *Harvey Shapiro Award* for outstanding brass student. When Wynton moved to New York City to attend Juilliard in 1978 and began to pick up gigs around town, the grapevine began to buzz. Two years later (in He practiced four hours every day and sought lessons from every willing instructor and musician he could find. He studied the work of every trumpet player since Buddy Bolden and then studied each player's rhythm section. He studied the work of every significant band and bandleader, every soloist, composer and every vocalist that made a significant contribution to the vocabulary of jazz. 1980) he was rewarded with the opportunity to join the Jazz Messengers to study under master drummer and bandleader, Art Blakey. It was in Art Blakey's band that Wynton learned the relationship between jazz and democracy. Art Blakey would always say, "No America, no jazz!" It was from Blakey that Wynton acquired his concept for bandleading and for bringing intensity to each and every performance. In the years to follow Wynton was invited to perform with Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie, Sweets Edison, Clarke Terry, Sonny Rollins, and countless other jazz legendstrailblazers. With this foundation Wynton assembled his own band and hit the road, performing over 120 concerts every year for ten consecutive years. His objective was to learn how to play and to comprehend how best to give to his audience. During these dues paying years Wynton's not only learned how to play, but

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his strong belief in jazz and his vision for the music revitalized the art form. Through performance and an exhaustive series of performances, lectures and music workshops Marsalis Wynton rekindled widespread interest in an art form that had been largely abandoned and redefined out of its artistic substance. Marsalis invested his creative energy in the *art* of jazz and would not be compromised by financial opportunity or critical pressure. Additionally, he garnered recognition for the older generation of jazz musicians and prompted the re-issuance of jazz catalog by record companies worldwide. A quick glance at the better known jazz musicians today reveals many students of Marsalis' workshops: James Carter, Christian McBride, Roy Hargrove, Harry Connick Jr., Nicholas Payton, Eric Reed and Eric Lewis to name a few. the entire music business had cast aside for the more profitable sound of fusion. Wynton garnered recognition for the older generation of jazz musicians overlooked by America's once prejudiced eye, stimulated the development of jazz curriculum in schools nation wide, prompted the re-issuance of jazz catalog by record companies worldwide and inspired an entire generation of young jazz musicians.

Not content to focus solely on his musicianship, While striving to become an accomplished musician Wynton devoted equal time to developing his compositional skills. becoming a skilled composer. The dance community quickly embraced his penmanship and he as Wynton received commissions to create major compositions for Garth Fagan Dance, Peter Martins at the New York City Ballet, Twyla Tharp for the American Ballet Theatre, and for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Marsalis collaborated with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society in 1995 to compose the string quartet, *At the Octoroon Balls*, and again in 1998 to create a response to Stravinsky's *A Soldier's Tale* with his composition, create *At the Octoroon Balls* and *A Fiddler's Tale.*, compositions for string quartet. At the dawn of the new millennium Wynton presented his most ambitious work to date, *All Rise*, an epic composition for big band, gospel choir, and symphony orchestra which was performed by the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Kurt Masur along with the Morgan State University Choir and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra (December 1999).

Wynton's love of the music of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and others drove him to pursue a career in classical music as well. He recorded the Haydn, Hummel and Leopold Mozart trumpet concertos at the age of twenty. His debut recording received glorious reviews and won the *Grammy Award* for "Best Classical Soloist with an Orchestra." Marsalis went on to record ten additional classical records, all to critical acclaim. Wynton performed with leading orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Pops, Cleveland Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra and London's Royal Philharmonic, working with an eminent group of conductors including: Leppard, Dutoit, Maazel, Slatkin, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Tilson-Thomas. Through his recordings, workshops and performances Wynton inspired many youngsters to pursue has been instrumental in attracting younger audiences to classical music as well. Famed classical trumpeter Maurice André praised Wynton as "potentially the greatest trumpeter of all time."

In 1987 Wynton Marsalis co-founded a jazz program at Lincoln Center. The first season consisted of three concerts. Under Wynton's leadership the program has developed an international agenda with up to 400150 events annually in 15 countries. The programming is rich and diverse and includes performances, debates, film forums, dances, television and radio broadcasts, and educational activities. Educational activities include an annual High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival that reaches over 2000 bands in 50 states and Canada, a Band Director's Academy, and a hugely popular concert series for kids called "Jazz For Young People." In December of 1995 the Lincoln Center Board awarded the Jazz Department's significant success by voting it a full constituent, equal in stature with the New

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York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, and the New York City Ballet - a historic moment for Jazz as an art form and for Lincoln Center as a cultural institution. In February 1998 New York City Mayor Rudolph Guiliani announced that Jazz at Lincoln Center was selected to be part of the redevelopment of the New York Coliseum site at Columbus Circle. Frederick P. Rose Hall, the new 100,000 square foot complex, will become Jazz at Lincoln Center's new home, and will contain state-of-the-art performance, recording, broadcast, rehearsal and educational facilities as well as the world's first large venue built specifically for jazz. The new Jazz at Lincoln Center campus will open in the fall of 2004 and will cost approximately \$130 million dollars.

In the fall of 1995 Wynton launched two major broadcast events. In On October 9th PBS premiered a series of educational television shows on jazz and classical music. The series was written and hosted by Marsalis and was enjoyed by millions of parents and children. Writers distinguished Marsalis' television series by comparing his work to that of the late Leonard Bernstein in his celebrated *Young People's Concerts* of the 50s & 60s. That same month National Public Radio began broadcasting the first of Marsalis' 26-week series entitled *Making the Music*. These entertaining and insightful radio shows were the first full exposition of jazz music in American broadcast history. Wynton's radio and television series were awarded the most prestigious distinction in broadcast journalism, the *George Foster Peabody Award*. While this body of work is enough to fill two lifetimes, Wynton Marsalis continues to work as hard as ever to *earn* the privilege to contribute even more to our world's cultural landscape.

Wynton Marsalis' accolades are extensive. He has won nine of the coveted *Grammy Awards*, and received widespread recognition as the most outstanding jazz trumpeter in the world. He earned the distinction of being the only artist ever to win *Grammy Awards* for both jazz and classical records (an accomplishment he astonishingly repeated in consecutive years), and he is the only artist ever to have won *Grammy Awards* in five consecutive years. Wynton was awarded Japan's *Swing Journal Silver Trophy*, the *Grand Prix Du Disque* of France, the *Louis Armstrong Memorial Medal*, the Netherlands' *Edison Award* and the *Algur H. Meadows Award for Excellence in the Arts*. He received countless plaques and was given the *Key* to over 50 cities. He was inducted into the American Academy of Achievement and was dubbed an *Honorary Dreamer* by the "I Have a Dream Foundation." Wynton received a citation from the United States House of Representatives for his outstanding contributions to the Arts. *Time* magazine selected Wynton as one of America's most promising *leaders* under age 40 in 1995, and in 1996 *Time* celebrated Marsalis as one of America's 25 Most Influential People. In the spring of 2001 United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan proclaimed Wynton Marsalis an international ambassador of goodwill by appointing him a *UN Messenger of Peace*. If you speak with Wynton, however, he will tell you that his greatest reward is the love and support that he receives from people all over the world from his twenty plus years of uninterrupted touring.

Honorary degrees have been conferred upon Wynton by twenty-nine of our nation's leading academic institutions including Columbia, Brown, Princeton and Yale University. Elsewhere, the New York Urban League awarded Wynton with the *Frederick Douglass Medallion* for distinguished leadership, the American Arts Council presented him with the *Arts Education Award* and Britain's senior conservatoire, the Royal Academy of Music, granted Mr. Marsalis *Honorary Membership*, the Academy's highest decoration for a non-British citizen. In France the Ministry of Culture appointed Wynton the most prestigious decoration awarded by the French Republic - the rank of *Knight* in the *Order of Arts and Literature*. And in 1997 Wynton Marsalis became the first jazz musician ever to win the *Pulitzer Prize for Music* for his epic oratorio *Blood on the Fields*. In the five decades prior, the Pulitzer Prize jury refused to recognize jazz musicians and their improvisational music, reserving this distinction for

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classical composers. In a personal note to Wynton, Zarin Mehta wrote, “I was not surprised at your winning the *Pulitzer Prize* for *Blood on the Fields*. It is a broad beautifully painted canvas that impresses and inspires. It speaks to us all ... I’m sure that somewhere in the firmament Buddy Bolden, Louis Armstrong and legions of others are smiling down on you.”

The most extraordinary dimension of Wynton Marsalis, however, is not his accomplishments but his character. It is the lesser-known but much appreciated part of this man who finds endless ways to give of himself. It is the person who waited in a dark and empty parking lot for one full hour after a concert in Baltimore, waiting for a single student to return from home with his horn for a trumpet lesson; it is the citizen who personally funds scholarships for students attending the Tanglewood Music Center and the Eastern Music Festival. Wynton Marsalis has selflessly donated his time and talent to non-profit organizations throughout the country to help raise money to meet the many needs within our society. From My Sister’s Place (a shelter for battered women) to Graham Windham (a shelter for homeless children), the Children’s Defense Fund, Amnesty International, the Sloan Kettering Cancer Institute, Food For All Seasons (a food bank for the elderly and disadvantaged), Very Special Arts (an organization that provides experiences in dance, drama, literature, and music for individuals with physical and mental disabilities) to the Newark Boys Chorus School (a full-time academic music school for disadvantaged youths) and many, many more — Wynton responded enthusiastically to the call for service. It is Wynton’s commitment to the improvement of life for all people as well as his outstanding contributions to the Arts that portray the best of his character and humanity.

Wynton Marsalis has been appropriately described as a *level raiser* whose breadth of talent is equated with genius. It has been said that he is an American musician for whom greatness is not merely possible but inevitable. Though a sufficient number of celebrated artists have performed music inimitably, time has been far less benevolent to those wishing to contribute to the *body* of music. Yet this artistic high ground is where Wynton Marsalis has excelled. To date Wynton has produced 33 twenty-three jazz and 11 nine classical records and has sold over 7 million records worldwide including 3 Gold Records. With his collection of *standards* he reinvigorated the jazz musician’s relationship to the American popular song. With *The Majesty Of The Blues*, Wynton re-introduced America to the *joy* in New Orleans Jazz. In *Levee Low Moan*, *Thick In The South* and other blues recordings, Wynton extended the jazz musician’s interplay with the blues. With *Citi Movement*, *In This House on This Morning*, *Blood on the Fields* and *All Rise* he invented a fresh conception for extended form compositions. His inventive interplay with melody, harmony, and rhythm – his lyrical voicing and tonal coloring assert new possibilities for the jazz ensemble and extend the puissant vocabulary of jazz. In his epic oratorio *Blood on the Fields*, Wynton draws upon the blues, work songs, chants, call & response, spirituals, New Orleans jazz, Ellingtonesque orchestral arrangements, Afro-Caribbean rhythms and he created Greek chorus-style recitations to move the work along. The New York Times Magazine said the work “marked the symbolic moment when the full heritage of the line, Ellington through Mingus, was extended into the present.” The San Francisco Examiner stated “Marsalis’ orchestral arrangements are magnificent. Duke Ellington’s shadings and themes come and go but Marsalis’ free use of dissonance, counter rhythms and polyphonics is way ahead of Ellington’s mid-century era.”

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Wynton Marsalis is taking new steps and in doing so achieves a sometimes-mystical radiance in his writing and performance. From his skilled and adventurous composition to his swinging virtuosity, music will forever be changed, and our time's melodious landscape fundamentally enriched.

What you hear in a great jazz band is the sound of democracy. – WYNTON MARSALIS



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