ENTERTAINMENT/ LIFESTYLE

Wynton Marsalis

Wynton Marsalis discovers his roots

By Ken Franckling

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. — GRowing up in New Orleans, jazz trumpet phenom Wynton Marsalis took the bubbling local music scene for granted.

Now, 10 years into Marsalis's high-profile career, the music he is playing serves as a reminder of the importance — and continued vibrancy — of the Crescent City's storied jazz and blues tradition.

Traditional blues has been an integral part of Marsalis's live and recorded performances for several years now. But he has drawn more attention to it with his latest recording, "The Majesty of the Blues."

It is a project that for several reason stands as his most important to date.

"The New Orleans music, that groove, is the basic groove of all jazz music," Marsalis said backstage at the recent Newport Jazz Festival at Saratoga, just before his acoustic sextet performed a stunning 65-minute blues-drenched set.

"I've been doing the blues all along. It takes time to develop what you've been working on. It's just now that I'm using a plunger mute, so it sounds different. It is more developed. It has more range. You grow, you try to develop your concept, but it is the same concept."

On "Majesty," Marsalis's working band is joined by some of New Orleans' top traditionalists — the venerable 80-year-old guitar and banjo player Danny Barker, trumpeter Teddy Riley (who played "Taps" at Louis Armstrong's funeral), and trombonist Freddie Lonzo — on a three-part work called "The New Orleans Function."

"I look up to Danny Barker. I played in his band, the Fairview Baptist Church Marching band, when I was eight," Marsalis says.

And Marsalis, 27, is still learning from him.

"Yes, Lord, I learned a lot. He didn't use headphones in the studio, that was the first thing. Plus, he plays with a lot of intensity at a soft volume. It is real intense. He and Teddy Riley both.

"When I was playing with Teddy, I didn't think he was playing that loud. Then when I checked out the tape, he was playing with so much intensity, personality and power, that was very interesting. Teddy Riley plays with a real personal sound."

Pulling from the past is nothing new. In fact, it is the essence of jazz. In order to make a statement of musical worth and purpose, a musician has to absorb what came before. He or she must explore it all, sort through it, and forge his or her own identity from what is found to be most important.

Marsalis says Duke Ellington may be the best example of that musical osmosis.

"All of his music — even his late music — has that in it. It has the New Orleans music," Marsalis says.

Show biz scenes

COMMODORE DECOMMISSIONED: One of the founding members of the Commodores says he was drummed out of the singing group because he opposed an upcoming performance in South Africa. "I could not, with a clear conscience, climb on the back of my brothers to make a buck," Milan Williams said in a prepared statement.

Williams had announced in June that he wasn't going to play the Sun City show and said he was notified of his dismissal in a letter signed by the other three Commodores on July 14.

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ROSS ON NUDITY: Diana Ross wants to make a movie about singer-dancer Josephine Baker and says she might be willing to do nude scenes if they're filmed with some class. "If there's an artistic way to be nude and beautiful, I would certainly consider it because that's being part of who Josephine Baker was," she said in a satellite interview from Lake Tahoe, Nev., where she's performing. "But being nude for the sake of being nude, that's certainly not me. I think my children would disown me totally."

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA — Odessa Hallman (L) and Susan Gresko show their thongs, controversial bathing suits which are causing a stir in Virginia Beach. Gresko recently received a ticket for violating the resort city nudity law. The thong bathing suit has become increasingly popular in Virginia Beach in the last two years, but local authorities say they will enforce city nudity guidelines.

Black men and the marriage problem

The marriages of black men who are deeply concerned about the ability to provide for their families are at greatest risk for separation or divorce, according to a University of Michigan study of the first four years of marriage.

"No matter what their income, young black men are subject to acute anxiety about their role as providers," the U-M researchers note.

"This anxiety may lead them to be lerry of marriage in the first place, and once married, it may continue to cloud their marital commitment.

"White husbands in our study also worried about family finances, but that concern didn't seem to predict marriage problems."

The U-M research team also found that marriages in which black men do not have more decision-making power in the family than their wives are likely to be unstable.

"These issues of economic security, gender relations and personal power appear to be closely tied to past and present economic and social conditions for blacks in America," the researchers say.

The four-year study is in its last year. Data has been collected during annual interviews in 1986, '87 and '88 with 199 black and 174 white couples randomly selected in the Detroit metropolitan area.

All the brides were under age 36 and all the couples were in their first marriages.

According to the U-M study, black marriages also are more likely to be at risk if:

—The husband says he is not emotionally satisfied or fulfilled by the marriage.

—The husband's father is well-educated. .

—The wife has very strong kinship ties with her own family and feels her in-laws are intrusive.

—The wife says there is not enough role flexibility in assigning of household tasks.

—The husband and wife each have separate groups of friends.

—The wife is very young.

The researchers report that they were surprised at first to find that the sons of educated black fathers were likely to have unstable marriages.

"However, like the economic and power issues, this findng is less surprising when we consider the educated black male in an historical and social context," they say.

Educated black men always have faced unusual pressures which put stress on their marriages and their children, the U-M team explains.

Many of the fathers of the men in the study entered adulthood before the civil rights movement when well-educated blacks were "lucky" to get jobs as railroad porters or postal workers.

That lack of opportunity and mobility led to resentment and frustration.

The fathers who became adults during and after the civil rights movement faced a different but equally stressful situation, for now they were getting jobs never held by blacks before, the U-M researchers say.

"In both periods, the fathers may have taken out their stress on their spouses, and these frustrated, anxious, distressed fathers were the role models for the sons who are now getting married."

It is not surprising, the U-M researchers conclude, that — other than the husband's sense of economic well-being — the most critical factor in Black marital stability is the husband's attachment to his wife and the fulfillment he derives from the marital relationship.

NPCBW to meet in New Orleans

The National Political Congress of Black Women (NPCBW), an independent bipartisan political organization founded in 1984 by The Honorable Shirley Chisholm, and other black women active in national politics, will hold its Third Biennial National Convention in New Orleans, LA., August 10-13.

Approximately 2,000 black women from across the country will come together to chart strategies for advancing the political empowerment shared by black women nationally, and to address the diminishing basic human rights, being abandoned by recent United States Supreme Court rulings.

The major thrust is to serve as a reminder that through the political process changes can be provoked.

LIFESTYLE

Social Notes

ART IN MOTION

By Paula Brooks
AFRO Lifestyle Editor

Take a trip to Mother Africa via authentic fashions and fabrics, carvings, paintings sculptures, costumes, music and dance. Positive Visions, an organization dedicated to sponsoring educational and cultural awareness programs for the community, is presenting its first fundraiser, African Art in Motion.

The women of Positive Visions have synergized their travels, experiences, and artifacts into a unique mixed media presentation, unparalleled by any singular fashion show, art exhibit or dance performance.

The featured artist is Olufunmilayo, Baltimore's finest and most enduring art treasure. She brings to this event more than 20 years of study, teaching and performance experience throughout Africa, Europe, Canada and the U.S.

This enriching cultural smorgasbord will be held at the Forum, on Friday, August 11 from 9:00 P.M. to 1:00 P.M. In keeping with African tradition, a buffet dinner will be served with open bar. For further information call Nathalia Gordon at 233-6171.

BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT

Black civil servants from Federal, State and local agencies around the country will gather in Washington, D.C. in August to assess the impact of recent Supreme Court decisions on equal employment opportunities. The occasion is the Eleventh Annual National Training Conference of Blacks in Government to be held August 16-20 at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Rubye Fields, president of BIG, said that even though government has been one of the major employers of Blacks because of discrimination in the private sector, Black government workers are still underrepresented in the upper grades and are concentrated in deadend jobs.

The conference provides leadership training designed to improve the quality of public and community service. It stresses professionalism, high performance, and achievement. This year's theme seeks to encourage participants to plan for the long term and to position themselves on the cutting edge of change.

Workshops and plenary sessions cover a wide variety of public concerns and career enhancement issues related to the Black experience. Featured speakers include Earl Graves, publisher of **Black Enterprise** magazine and Congressman Walter Fauntroy, Washington, D.C.

For further information contact F. Hunt 202-638-7767.

BIRTHDAY/REUNION

Frederick and Theresa Turner Garner, originally of west Baltimore, were blessed with 13 children. One of their sons, Master Sargent Bernard Garner, Jr., serving in the U.S. Air Force in Okinawa, had a fantasy that he talked about often over the course of 13 years.

His dream was to have a huge reunion of family and friends where food, music and dance could be thoroughly enjoyed. The affair became a reality when a birthday party for four people-Bernard Garner, Jr., his father, Bernard, Sr., brother Clarence (Bitts), and Bernard's daughter Erika of Japan was held.

The birthday party/reunion was held at Tiffneys Catering Hall. It was an informal affair with a buffet style dinner. Russell Allen was the disc jockey, and he played music from 1945 to the present.

The outstanding party was planned by the sons and their wives. At the end of the affair, M.C. Donald Garner welcomed speeches from the four honorees, and gifts, cards, and a money tree were presented to them.

Bernard Garner, Jr. spoke of his mother and father, now deceased, and told the gathering that his mother had lived to be 100, and her mother Mrs. Mamie Turner lived to be 99. His mother's sister, Mrs. Sarah Turner Wilson, a resident of Stell Maras, is currently 100.

Later that morning, the party was continued at the home of Mr. Earnest and Catherine Garner.

THREE GENERATIONS OF MILITARY SERVICE

Navy, Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps-all four are represented in three generations of the Willie family. The youngest member of the Willie clan to serve his country in the armed forces is Clarence E. Willie, Jr., 21, a 1989 U.S. Naval Academy graduate.

Willie, who majored in physical science, received a bachelor of science degree and was commissioned a Navy ensign this May. Later this month he will begin Surface Warfare School in Coronado, Calif., preparing to become a ship's officer.

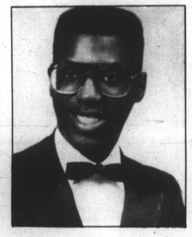
Clarence's father, Marine Corps, Lt. Col. Clarence E. Willie, Sr., is assigned to the Joint Tactical Command Control and Communications Agency, Defense Communications Agency in Reston, Va. His uncle, Army Lt. Col. James F. Willie, is assigned to the 1st Armored Division in Nuremburg, Germany.

In July he will assume command of the 28th Transportation Battalion in Mannheim, Germany. The patriarch of the family-Clarence's grandfather, Charles E. Willie, retired from the Air Force as a chief master sargeant after 30 years of service.

A former resident of Jacksonville, N.C., the youngest Willie graduated from Jacksonville High School in 1985. Clarence's parents reside in Greensboro, N.C., where his mother, Wilma, will be completing requirements for her bachelor's degree at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University at Greensboro this year.

Left to right James F. Willie, Clarence E. Willie, Sr., Clarence E. Willie, Jr., Charles E. Willie represent three generations of military service.

OUTSTANDING STUDENT HONORED



Donnell George Hughes future Yale student.

Donnell George Hughes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Hughes of Essex, was recently honored at a reception held at St. Stephen A.M.E. Church for his scholastic achievements while a student in the Baltimore County Public Schools.

A June graduate of Chesapeake High School, Donnell maintained a practically unheard of 4.0 grade point average, and graduated as valedictorian of the class. He plans to attend Yale University from which he received a substantial academic scholarship.

Other scholarships received by Donnell include a National Achievement Scholarship for Outstanding Negro Students, Chesapeake National Honor Society Scholarship, Middleborough Elementary PTA Scholarship, and Giant Food-It's Academic Scholarship.

While at Chesapeake, Donnell participated in the class of '89 Steering Committee, Journalism Club, Science Aid Club, and the National Honor Society.

He received outstanding academic achievement awards in social studies, physics, English, and mathematics, as well as the outstanding achievement award from the school.

COLUMBIA CAPERS

By Pinnie L. Ross

HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR BLACK STUDENTS

The Howard County NAACP under the able leadership of retired Howard County principal, Elhart E. Flurry, recently alleged that an area of "negativism" exists for Black students in the county school system. Consequently, the NAACP has recommended an increase in the number of minority teachers and administrators and clear policies about Black academic achievement for the system.

Mrs. Natalie Woodson, chair of the branch's education committee, feels that the system's 3,861 black students are being taught in a negative environment fostered by inadequate financing of the Black Student Achievement Program.

An environmental tone of disrespect for Black students and school personnel and low teacher expectations. Black students comprise 14% of the 27,661 students in the system, according to school district figures and 12% of the teachers are Black.

Mrs. Woodson, on behalf of the NAACP, presented a 20 page report to the school board which recommended several policy changes to address the problem. During the last year, Mrs. Woodson reports, the NAACP received an average of 30 complaints a month from Black Parents ranging from a scaracity of black teachers, to allegations of unfair suspensions of black students.

Mrs. Woodson, a retired Baltimore principal said, "We want to get the word out that the Black Community has high expectations for it's youth". She attended all-Black schools as a child where she said, "We were expected to achieve". She feels that this message is not conveyed to the county's 3,800 black students.

The NAACP met with Superintendent Hickey last month to discuss the issues raised in the report.

Branch President Flurry sent a note to me and all fraternities, sororities, service organizations, business leaders and religious leaders announcing a giant meeting on the school program. The meeting wil be held at the Dora Mack Carter Center, First Baptist Church, 7504 Oakland Mills Road on August 15, 1989. The 7:30 p.m. meeting will devise stategies for addressing the needs for our youth. "These are crucial times for Black Youth," he said.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

INITIATIVE IS DOING THE RIGHT THING WITHOUT BEING TOLD

Victor Hugo

Phi Beta Sigma Crab Feast was a whirlwind of activity including Wheels of Fortune, door prizes, music, and a 50/50 raffle. All proceeds went to the Education Fund.

Enjoying themselves at crab feast were Alpha Zeta Chapter Basileus, Merlene Adair; Frances E. Faithful; Zeta founder, Myrtle F. Faithful; Beta Zeta Chapter Basileus, Gwendolyn Brunson; and Mary E. Fields.