

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

ASPEN IDEAS FESTIVAL 2015

THE GENIUS OF JAZZ

Greenwald Pavilion  
Aspen, Colorado

Saturday, July 4, 2015

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

WYNTON MARSALIS

Musician, Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

WALTER ISAACSON

President and CEO, The Aspen Institute

JON BATISTE

Bandleader, "The Late Show"

Artistic Director at Large, National Jazz Museum  
in Harlem; Pianist

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THE GENIUS OF JAZZ

SPEAKER: Can you all see me? Okay. Before we get started with our final program of the day, we owe some thanks. And the first people that I would like to thank are all the patrons. We did this on opening night but without your support we would not have been able to bring 300 scholars to participate in the Ideas Festival for the last 10 days. And to all of you that have yellow ribbons around your necks, thank you so much.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: We also had about 14 sponsors who you are seeing on the background of our slides, and we really thank you. I think a lot of them have left but their support is invaluable to the Aspen Ideas Festival. And I also want to thank our speakers. People ask me how many did you have, and I get to a point in about the middle of May where I don't count any more, makes me nervous. But we had about 410 people. And for those who came across --

(Applause)

SPEAKER: We don't pay our speakers to speak, a lot of them would get major honorarium other places, they give us a huge gift of their time, many moderate, it is a lot of preparation. And to all of you that are here, thank you so much. David, Katie and everyone, thank you so much.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: And the last really important people that I would like to thank, if you can show a slide, which is just the portion of the group. It takes 150 volunteers to put this on.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: They're all of our incredible staff starting at the Aspen Meadows who has fed you every minute of the day who are just the most wonderful people, great customer service. If you ever need a meeting do it here, it is the best place in Aspen. And I'm serious about that, they are just fantastic to work with and they are our partners in all of our events. But the team at the Aspen Institute, the team on the Aspen Ideas Festival from

Washington to Aspen to New York, you are the most wonderful people I could work with, thank you so much.

(Applause)

SPEAKER: And with no further ado, we're going to start our last program of the day, and it is my pleasure to introduce to you Wynton Marsalis, Jon Batiste and Walter Isaacson.

(Applause)

(Music being played)

(Applause)

MR. ISAACSON: Happy July 4th, America's birthday.

MR. MARSALIS: Yes, sir.

MR. ISAACSON: And the day that Louis Armstrong always claimed was his birthday.

MR. MARSALIS: Right.

MR. ISAACSON: And in some ways that shows how jazz is part of the fabric of America. We have been talking also all week about race and how race is the fabric of bringing together jazz and then bringing America into jazz. And so I hope we can do a little of that today.

I first met Jon Batiste who when I was with Wynton.

MR. MARSALIS: Sit in the middle.

(Laughter)

MR. ISAACSON: Make him sit in the middle.

MR. BATISTE: Wow --

MR. MARSALIS: He has the suit on.

MR. ISAACSON: He has the suit on?

(Laughter)

MR. BATISTE: I don't have the toys.

MR. ISAACSON: Five or six years ago we were somewhere and Wynton and I were doing something and Jon was a backup player. I had known your uncle, Lionel Batiste from the Treme jazz band. And so thank you for both for being with us. We talk about how race is the beginning strand of jazz. In some ways it starts with the Emancipation and the 1870s, 1880s as the plantation-freed slaves come to the cities and bring with them some of the music. And maybe if you could start there, help me out a little bit, I mean a great song from the plantation blues, like *Motherless Child*, and when you think about *Motherless Child* it's because somebody had been sold down the river and left it and then split up as a family.

And so it's that type of blues that people bring at the very beginning. You want to explain that?

MR. MARSALIS: And I want to make the, also the observation that the word plantation was the English system of how they dealt with the Irish. So it is interesting that English had a plantation system to exploit the labor of the Irish, it came in America it was called plantations. And when people in the 19th century heard the spirituals they said they sound just like Irish folk songs. So it's important to understand that the root of Afro-American music and the root of all American music, Anglo-Celtic music, the harmonic roots and the folk songs, the use of the sixth and all the things that we are going to hear in *Motherless Child* that Jay Bad (phonetic) is going to play, that has this as matter of fact *St. James Infirmary* which is a New Orleans song was originally an Irish song.

MR. BATISTE: Right.

MR. ISAACSON: Can you do both? I love St. James

--

MR. MARSALIS: Sure.

MR. ISAACSON: Go for it.

(Music being played)

MR. MARSALIS: You could do *Motherless Child*.  
We're just getting it together now.

MR. BATISTE: No rehearsal.

MR. MARSALIS: All right.

(Laughter)

MR. ISAACSON: We could do *Motherless Child* and  
then *St. James* --

MR. MARSALIS: Okay, you do that, yeah. We'll do  
*Motherless Child* first.

MR. ISAACSON: *Motherless Child*.

MR. MARSALIS: You got it.

MR. ISAACSON: *Motherless Child*.

(Laughter)

(Music being played)

MR. ISAACSON: *Motherless Child*. And *St. James*  
*Infirmery*.

(Applause)

MR. BATISTE: (Inaudible) you hear a lot of the  
pentatonic scale in it.

MR. ISAACSON: Why?

MR. BATISTE: The melodic root of it is very  
pentatonic base which is also from Africa. You know, the  
pentatonic scale like if you play, you hear it a lot of  
folk music.

MR. MARSALIS: There is a lot of eastern music.

MR. BATISTE: Right. So it's --

MR. ISAACSON: Celtic, eastern, folk --

MR. MARSALIS: Have that as a --

MR. ISAACSON: And then the blues of the plantation. And then they get to New Orleans and there is Congo Square because the blues is in four-four (phonetic) right? And then how do you get to syncopation and Congo Square.

MR. MARSALIS: Well, we have a kind of ironic situation, many times if we just take -- when the founding fathers, when they were framing the constitution and the constitution of Congress you have a lot of things that are not congruent like the north is the reason that the slaves were considered three-fifth a person not the south. And because they didn't want the South to have those votes. So we have a lot of things that Congo Square came about because New Orleans was controlled by the French and the French let slaves play drums but the Spanish also controlled New Orleans for a brief period of time and they were the most lenient. If you could survive them, they didn't kill you, you have many more rights under the Spanish than any other colonial.

So the New Orleans style was -- New Orleans people were much more, had much more freedom and were much more integrated. After Louisiana Purchase, 1804, from that point till really the 1870s there was a constant American attempt to stop slaves from playing, to get rid of Congo Square, to make them be like the rest of the slaves who were more English and more Protestants. So they had to deal with another type of environment.

In a strange way in New Orleans we had all of this freedom due to the French and the Spanish, we were in America which is the land of freedom with the Mississippi basin the bottom of the mouth of the Mississippi River and finely Congo Square stopped because the militias started to drill in the Square and the slaves stopped. But before that point on a Sunday people had a chance to sell goods, something slaves didn't have a chance to do in the rest of America. And they could dance and play African music. And from that comes all of the music that we hear that has drums. That's why New Orleans has been kind of the fount of all of the things from rock 'n' roll to whatever style of music you like.

MR. BATISTE: Funk --

MR. MARSALIS: Funk, rap, anything that has drums and bass together comes from Congo Square and that experience.

MR. ISAACSON: In Congo Square what was the beat of the drums, the 6/8 and how did that --

MR. MARSALIS: It was a 6/8 and a 4, so -- you going to hold the 4 down. So if he's holding the four, we count 1, 1, 2, 3 to 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3. Okay, so I'm going to tap on how that became as swing rhythm. Okay, I'm going to show you how the evolution of that rhythm in America, it lean to what (inaudible) because I was making up stuff on. Okay, it comes from -- now if it ways like a Irish jig. That's the (inaudible) swing pattern, shuffle.

MR. BATISTE: Marches.

(Laughter)

MR. MARSALIS: We can't help it.

MR. ISAACSON: Well, I heard Jon talk about marches and that's when, you know, all these Spanish American war veterans are coming back and talking to their horns in New Orleans. The marches into 2/4 times so how does that play into the syncopation and the mix.

MR. BATISTE: Well, when you get into New Orleans music they do the big four and that's the accent of the fourth beat where marches are very straight, the tube and the bass drummer together.

So then what happens in New Orleans music from the African influence of Congo Square is they stop adding more syncopation based on their 6/8 rhythm that we were just doing. And that makes the beat dance a little bit more. Hear the difference? Make you want to shake your butt.

(Laughter)

MR. BATISTE: And that's what we became famous for.

MR. ISAACSON: So it's already a pretty amazing racial mix which is the New Orleans, the French Creole Orchestra, the people were turning back with the marching bands. Who brings it together, is it Buddy Bolden or -- I mean, you are the person who understands Buddy Bolden better than anybody.

MR. MARSALIS: He knows about it. Buddy Bolden brought it. Interestingly enough Buddy Bolden and the jazz musicians came in the period after Reconstruction. This is the same period in New Orleans where we began structuring confederate statues and doing all of these things to say okay we are fully American now and this is the place we want you all to have. Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Martin, early jazz musicians very consciously confiscated that. At that time of course they couldn't say anything if they wanted to live. They made the intelligent choice, they were very quiet from a political standpoint but socially they made their music a certain way, their music celebrated freedom and their music celebrated the exact freedom that we enjoy and that we celebrating here today.

So what they did was they took the traditional marching band form, the Judy Philip Sousa's band (phonetic), the most famous band in the land and the greatest band, that organization had clarinet and the high register, the trumpet, Norwood (phonetic) trumpet playing the melody where it should be.

(Laughter)

MR. MARSALIS: The trombone now in there sliding around somewhere, we don't -- we never know what they're doing. And the bass and the drums playing their part, they changed the base and the drum part the way Jon demonstrated, instead of being on the down beat they placed the accent on the offbeat. So instead of going -- they did it --

MR. ISAACSON: Can you go to the piano and show us how the trumpet does the melody and then the bass how that works? And you can do the trumpet melody.

MR. BATISTE: *Stars and Stripes.*

(Music being played)

MR. ISAACSON: And then Buddy Bolden was --

MR. MARSALIS: That is not a good melody for that. That melody is not trumpets, we don't want to -- we don't play those kind of melodies. Our melodies are much more, we play longer melodies.

MR. ISAACSON: How about *I thought I heard Buddy Bolden Say*.

MR. MARSALIS: Okay.

(Music being played)

MR. MARSALIS: Okay what Buddy Bolden did was he started to syncopate rhythms, and a syncopation is when your bounce around on off beats. Here is an example of it. If I say --

(Music being played)

MR. MARSALIS: That's like kind of traditional march, I'll start to get into it little bit as I've play. Now, Buddy Bolden took that same kind of sound and listen to the difference with the way he starts to play it.

(Music being played)

(Applause)

MR. ISAACSON: Somebody from Missouri, maybe Jeff Rosen or somebody asked me so how does Scott Joplin, the African-American sort of ragtime player, how does he bring his stuff into what becomes jazz?

MR. BATISTE: Well, ragtime is based a lot on marching music because the left hand of what the piano is doing is what the bass drum and the tube are doing in the March and the melody is -- that's when you put the trumpet melody with the clarinets, so --

MR. MARSALIS: Show him the left-hand --

(Music being played)

(Applause)

MR. ISAACSON: So we got a lot of influences coming down, then W.C. Handy comes down. Let me ask you a question. Did Louis Armstrong ever really hear Buddy Bolden play?

MR. MARSALIS: Louis Armstrong did not hear Buddy Bolden play. By the time Buddy Bolden had lost his mind it was in 1904, 1905.

MR. BATISTE: He wasn't born.

MR. MARSALIS: He was born -- Louis Armstrong was born in 1901 so he heard the spirit of Bolden. There are three trumpet players that did hear Bolden, the chief one that was hired to replace Buddy Bolden is Joe Oliver who became Louis Armstrong's mentor and who sent for Louis Armstrong in Chicago in early 1920s. There were three really great trumpet players, Joe Oliver, Bunk Johnson who we have whistling the tune that we played first.

MR. BATISTE: That we just played.

MR. MARSALIS: The song, something that Bunk Johnson whistled unbelievably well. He even went up to fourth and whistled the same thing in tune. And Freddie Keppard who was a creole trumpet player who they said could blow the mute out of the bell of the trumpet and could make sounds like a chicken and a cat. And there were other great trumpeters like he could -- he was unbelievably. Like Buddy Petit was another great one, a player with a great deal of sophistication diminished and what Louis Armstrong did was he integrated all of the great trumpet players, and not only the great trumpet players in Afro-American tradition but also the great cornet trumpet players. There was a whole tradition of great American cornettists that start with a great Afro-American cornettist named Frances Johnson who lived in Philadelphia in early 1800s, unbelievable story, went to Europe had everybody in the town dancing to him, created the first pop song because there's all kinds of things in his tradition.

Then the great Patrick Gilmore, unbelievable cornettist in that tradition. The string of white American fantastic players Bohumir Kryl, Herbert Clarke, the list goes on and on of just fantastic players. Louis Armstrong grew up in the glow of that fantastic cornet playing. And

he put all of our cornet, all of our styles together and that's why he is and remains the greatest trumpet of all times. He brought so many traditions together with such ease and such naturalness, it really remains even -- as long as I have known Bohumir, I have listened to his albums it is still not believable. Can you tell that story you once told me of your father the great teacher Ellis Marsalis and you weren't exactly a fan, if I remember, when you were a kid of Louis Armstrong, and I will let you take it from here.

MR. MARSALIS: Well I didn't like Louis Armstrong. Many people of my age coming up after the Civil Rights Movement we had our afros, our platform shoes, our -- we had -- we were listening to Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye and somebody with a handkerchief singing Hello Dolly. We didn't want to hear about that. So if you are not extremely sophisticated in your understanding of American history you did not want hear -- but my father would always say man you had to check Pops out.

And I was like, man, I don't want Pops, you know, and in New Orleans too it's so much what we call Uncle Tom and goes on. So much of that goes on playing Dixie shuffling (phonetic) and in my time I hated that with a unbelievable passion, when I was growing up. There is no way for me to even express the type of anger and hatred I had toward that type of behavior. So I could not appreciate Armstrong. But when I left New Orleans and I was in New York at that time my father sent me a tape, a tape. Then it was a cassette tape there was Louis Armstrong playing *Jubilee*. He said, man, why don't you learn one of these Pop solos. So I put it on, it sounded easy, was Louis Armstrong playing *Jubilee*.

I thought man, this is easy, I'm used to playing all these fast solos, Freddie Hubbard, Dizzy Gillespie, so I put it on, I started to work on it. Man, I could not play this solo at all. Just the endurance of Louis Armstrong, he never stopped playing, he's always up around high B's and when we go to the final course I called my father, I said, man, I didn't understand about Pops. He just started laughing. He said that's right.

And Louis Armstrong was he was -- I was once in Argentina with some people and a song came on the record of Louis Armstrong playing, he did know who it was, and he

said, man, who is this trumpet player, the play tango better than anybody who plays tango. He was a tango musician. He plays better than a tango musician, who is that? This is Louis Armstrong.

MR. ISAACSON: I'm going to throw you a curve ball, we hadn't even discussed this. But you mentioned King Oliver, Joe Oliver who is the band leader and mentor of Louis Armstrong. And at one point they record *West End Blues* with Louis Armstrong playing second cornet, right, I think he's still playing not trumpet. And it's kind of straightforward. And then I guess King Oliver gets sick and they recorded a month or so later and he does a 17 bar cadenza intro that almost to me is the beginning of jazz. Do you want to try that or show it or get really mad at me for mentioning it? Do you want to play?

(Music being played)

MR. MARSALIS: That's roughly it.

MR. ISAACSON: Want to do *West End Blues*?

(Music being played)

(Applause)

MR. MARSALIS: (Inaudible). I would have warmed up if I would have known you wanted me to play that one. That is all right. That *West End Blues* is not a joke.

MR. BATISTE: Dealing with that altitude --

MR. ISAACSON: You know it ties into our theme of race and what happens to the American because that brings all the strands together when Hot Five I guess it is is doing that. But if I remember correctly growing up West End was a beach and Park at the west end of like Pontchartrain. And when that song was written it was one of the places that was integrated because New Orleans had integrated beaches and integrated parks then and there were cutting contests and then the Jim Crow came, laws came along and you could no longer have those integrated beaches and that's right when that song was written. I don't know if you remember growing up with the West End part.

MR. MARSALIS: Right, that's a little before me.

(Laughter)

MR. MARSALIS: Before you too, right? That was -  
- they would have parks and beaches in the 1800s before.  
Then after the Robert Charles riots of 1900 there was a  
riot where a guy got tired of being messed with also  
involved an Afro-American and police and he shot some cops  
and then the town went crazy killing people. Every early  
jazz musician references that moment of just -- then it  
became strictly segregated. And it was a big riot. It was  
a copycat kind of a guy named Mark Essex got on the top of  
the Howard Johnson building in 1970 and began shooting  
people. And that crime 70 years later is linked with  
Robert Charles.

Robert Charles is a person actually from  
Mississippi, a person of very deep consciousness. He just  
was not -- he was tired of being messed with, he was with  
his nephew of somebody that looked up to him and he -- they  
got on the wrong day. You know, my great uncle was born in  
1883 and he used to always say it always depends on if  
something hits you. You know and a good friend of mine  
that is a policeman told me a lot of times he hates to go  
on, the worst calls are domestic calls. He said he will go  
into people's homes after some horrific crime has been  
created, and they has done -- and they know what has  
happened and he said he always let's just council, let's  
just stay here in silence. He said people are always  
crying and they are always sorry and they're always -- but  
it's that moment. And it is in that moment you have two  
master that moment.

MR. ISAACSON: And after that, you have always  
talked about how the two strains of American jazz, that  
kind of split because of that, why don't you give some  
examples.

MR. MARSALIS: Well, I was speaking more of two  
forms of music, one form is the form that the country had  
the greatest appetite for and still does, which is the  
minstrel show. The more of a fool a black person could be,  
the more ignorance could be ascribed to us, the more we  
could be shown as debased, the more we could be dehumanised  
the greater the audience and the most amount of money.  
That still continues with rap music.

There is an excellent rap film made by a guy named Hunt (phonetic), I'm sorry Brother Hunt I forget your first name, I love you though. And he -- in that one of the rappers observes, when I'm just rapping I'm not getting the sub words and I'm not making those, but as soon as I start the N word and I start all this killing and murdering, man, I'm getting, this is where the bread is coming in. So we still remain a country enamored with the minstrel show. We had a good hundred and something years of it.

If we take when it first started with Daddy Rice in the 1830s, something early 1840s in the Christian minstrels and all the different minstrels to the end of the Amos 'N' Andy radio show. We had a good hundred years of it and then it came back. And then there is always that other strain which is Fisk Jubilee Singers, Buddy Bolden, Duke Ellington, the strain of jazz which is always trying to confiscate. Another thing I want to say about race religions in America is never black versus white, it is always black and white versus white.

If you go all the way back to the underground road, there was never a black enterprise versus a white because the thought -- the actual concept of blackness itself is not real. It is something that exists in this country only for that group of people who are deemed to be black to be the other and always be the counterbalance to freedom. Well, how do we know we have freedom because you all don't have it. So it is built into kind of our consciousness.

But if you go to people in countries that are all black or have no people with any brown in their skin they don't look at you and say my brother you go to places in Africa, they are not looking at you like, yeah, what's happening brother, that's not. They have their own kind of construct and their way of looking at the world of who is with them and who is not with them.

In our country the greatest challenge is that -- is for all of us to be together in spite of our history and not only in spite of it but because of our history because our history has both strains, a strain of terrible and ignorant things and the strain of wonderful things. So the question of our symbols is always important because your symbols will determine what aspect of your personality do

you choose to embody. And it also a personal struggle that we all have. We all are capable of doing little things, but the thing we ask ourselves every day is how can I do -- not do these little things and do these other big things we are all capable of it. And so too are we capable as a nation of doing the smallest thing.

So how do we do the biggest thing? When all of our symbols are a celebration of smallness it will lead us to doing things that are small, when our symbols are big they will lead us to big things. And jazz has always been a --

(Applause)

MR. ISAACSON: Mitch Landrieu was here earlier this week. And he talked about you because you and I and many others were on 300th birthday of New Orleans celebration and Mitch said that you told him, fine, but take down the statue of Robert E. Lee because it was a symbol of what it was. He said, yeah, he had always gone around that circle not paying any attention, not even know who is the guy on top of Lee Circle and you said you but we know.

MR. MARSALIS: Well, my great uncle told me about it first. We used to ride the Belt in New Orleans. Now, remember when my uncle was born 1882-'83 so his consciousness was very different.

MR. ISAACSON: It was put up right when he was born and that's part of that symbol. Is that -- Robert E. Lee never came to New Orleans, he never was there. He never fought for New Orleans, it was put up then just as when you were talking about it, when the resistance to racial equality was coming in.

MR. MARSALIS: Right, when reconstruction ended was little early than that but then it, you know, takes time for law to take place and the thought of well, okay, there was some little brief period of equality, there was a brief period where were going to, but you know what we're going to go back to what we were doing because it felt too good. Now we want the labor structure to be the same, we're going to put up these symbols. And Mitch and I actually talk about that long before what happened in Charleston, it was not a response to kind of, I'm not a big

get with the topical issue, I believe we have issues that are human issues that transcend the topical, that are there before we're born, that last a lifetime and they're going to be there when we did. And these issues touch all of us.

In America it happens to be black and white, in other countries it is whoever their group is against another group. So, yeah, I told Mitch -- and Mitch is a trumpet player so we have known each other for years and his father was a great mayor, we have talked many, many -- I always wanted that statue to come down. And I have been talking to friends about taking it down, with Marc Morial I talked, we need to take this statue down. Because it is like -- it puts a curse over the city.

How are you going to put up a statue of somebody who didn't even defend you, we fell first in the Civil War. We didn't -- the Confederate Army did not defend New Orleans. And it's not a matter of the topical issue. And I am also a believer in American freedoms. I believe that a person who has a contrary view who believes in symbols that you may deplore I don't believe they have personal right to have those symbols in their home and it should be taken away from them, that's their right. But I do believe that public statue in the centre of your city that celebrates what you are about it stands over your city should not be of a Confederate general. First, they lost the war, they didn't win.

(Applause)

MR. ISAACSON: I agree with you. And you know inspired by you I wrote something for *Picayune* last week. But people say where do you draw the line and in the middle of Place d'Armes now called Jackson Square where he mustered the troops you have Andrew Jackson also a slave owner.

MR. MARSALIS: I don't have a problem with it. There were many slave owners at that time and that was American life. The question is not whether someone was a slave owner or not. If they were American they had means they owned slave, that was commerce, \$4 billion of value. More slaves accounted for more than all the businesses in New York City and they wore stocks, so that was a non -- that was a start they could not lose. So the entire nation was a part of that, what are we going to do not put up any

statues of anybody? So why -- he Andrew Jackson led the Battle of New Orleans, that's a legitimate statue in my mind, Robert E. Lee is not.

MR. ISAACSON: Got it. Before we --

(Laughter)

MR. ISAACSON: I totally agree. And by the way you have to say why was the symbol put up. Andrew Jackson was put up in 1840, you know, this was not about slavery, Civil War whatever because he had defended the city and then even the union general puts a quote from Andrew Jackson which is something he believed, "That the union must and shall be preserved." So it's complicated but I think we have to, you know, wrestle with our symbols.

Before we move onto the race, I was just wondering, you talked about the two different ways we do jazz, it leads to what bebop and swing. Do you want to give us some examples of that?

MR. MARSALIS: You know, you need to talk man, bring something down. He brings a lot of stuff down whenever we are at home and I'm talking to him, I can't -- I don't want to all go the time because he is very philosophical.

MR. BATISTE: He's saying a lot of stuff though.

MR. MARSALIS: Yeah, but I mean --

MR. BATISTE: He is saying a lot, I mean we could play something *Lady, Be Good* from the American songbook Gershwin.

MR. ISAACSON: And it is interesting because Gershwin, a Jewish immigrant to America, right, all of a sudden you see more strands coming in to what we call our American music that invented. *Lady, Be Good*.

MR. MARSALIS: Right.

MR. BATISTE: We could go in --

MR. MARSALIS: B-flat?

MR. BATISTE: F?

MR. MARSALIS: Okay, I started in E-flat -- F, okay? F is --

MR. BATISTE: E-flat, yeah.

MR. MARSALIS: Any way you want. What do you want --

MR. BATISTE: E-flat.

(Music being played)

(Applause)

MR. ISAACSON: And I am glad to know there is a great Jewish contribution to jazz as well. And finally before we go back to the end, how does that become people bebop, what's the difference in, I don't know, *Now is the Time*, whatever, explain to me swing to bebop.

MR. BATISTE: Well, swing music was based in big band tradition so with singer you had large ensembles and the difference with bebop is it focused more on the improvisation of the soloist in a small group context. So Great Depression, lot of people lose money, can't afford to pay big bands any more so now geniuses like Charlie Parker Thelonious Monk, they come up with this concept of taking American popular songs and they're listening to classical music, European classical music and taking harmonic concept from there. Taking music from Stravinsky all types of stuff and putting it into an American popular song and figuring out different ways to push the harmony and the rhythm even further. It is art music.

And it also was a political statement because they were black and they were oppressed and they wanted to be looked at as artists of the highest regard. But society didn't see them that way. So they had a lot of torment Charlie parker was a genius of the highest order who didn't get respect for what he could do and died young. But what he contributed to music is up at the level of the greatest Picasso the greatest of all time in any art form.

So swing really was something that was more social and bebop became a lot more insular, people started

to deal with the art form and trying to figure out ways to push it forward irregardless if the audience wanted to dance or not. And a lot of people said that hurt the music, Marcus Roberts says it hurt the music a lot.

MR. ISAACSON: Louis Armstrong said it did, right?

MR. MARSALIS: I want to clarify one thing about it is that Dizzy Gillespie took a big band on the road and was a jitterbug dancer, so he always wanted people to dance to the music. Bebop was a complicated music. And the ballroom tax killed the big bands. So the big bands lifted us out of the Depression, Benny Goodman in the mid-30s --

MR. BATISTE: -- swing.

MR. MARSALIS: -- he lifted us, he was part of the lift out of the Depression after the war and the ballroom tax. And the musicians union in the war struck as one of the dumbest strikes ever over non-essential business in war time. And I think the public never forgave us because there was a time that you could not get elected president if you didn't have the vote of the musicians union.

MR. BATISTE: Right.

MR. MARSALIS: Believe it or not, it seems like a joke now but we had a lot of power at that time, musicians did, when we struck reuse fees something in a war I think to public and that was the rise of Frank Sinatra because at that time singers were not considered to be musicians so they continue to record musicians, instrumentalists did not record, so the public say great we like him better anyway, cue. We can -- and, you know, bebop --

MR. BATISTE: And from then on singers to it --

MR. MARSALIS: From then on the singers became the most popular.

MR. BATISTE: Yeah --

MR. MARSALIS: And the bebop musicians played faster. But Dizzy always wanted people to dance to the music and he started off in a kind of argument battle with

Louis Armstrong, but Dizzy told me himself, he said listen bebop was about integration, we were not trying to be segregated, we always had integrated bands, we were thinking about it and we want to integrate not only with white Americans but also with all our Latin brothers and sisters.

I played with Chano Pozo, I put together these big bands, we were talking about absolute complete integration, that was our goal. And another thing he said is that I moved around the corner for Louis Armstrong so I could just sit in his house and hear him talk. And he said there has never been any person on earth like this man. He said I took advantage of living around the corner from his house. And I was always up in his house listening to him tell these stories. And, you know, he liked that too.

MR. ISAACSON: Do you want to -- is there an example of bebop, I don't know, *Now is the Time* or whatever you want to --

MR. MARSALIS: Well, maybe we could take the tune we just played and just play kind of --

MR. BATISTE: Bebop style.

MR. MARSALIS: You want to do that?

MR. BATISTE: Yeah.

MR. MARSALIS: So we'll take *Lady, Be Good* and we'll play the same tune we just played, we're playing kind of in a swing style, now we'll play more like a bebop style. We just keep the same tempo and just doubletime.

MR. BATISTE: Same tempo?

MR. MARSALIS: Yes.

(Music being played)

MR. MARSALIS: Wait, it is too fast. I've never doubletimed.

MR. BATISTE: -- doubletime.

MR. MARSALIS: Okay, you know what, I won't doubletime I'll just say good time --

(Music being played)

(Applause)

MR. BATISTE: I was trying to get in there with you. I like that new rhythmic theme, yeah. (Inaudible) side of the beep.

MR. ISAACSON: Well, we have come all the way from Buddy Bolden and Congo Square to Thelonious Monk, and one of the things I have heard you talk about some, Wynton, is generation and how sometimes we aim things too much to the youth and say that the wisdom of the generations. You come from three, four generations of musicians, so does John, tell me about your thoughts there.

MR. MARSALIS: I just feel that, I think it works above and below because we all are part of one generation. When you go into the Natural History Museum in Manhattan the planetarium, there is a timeline of earth and then there is -- it's a long timeline. And then about the width of a hair is this is where man appeared. And the thought I think in our country in the 1950s when we realized that there was some money to exploit puberty, parents' money, they became the kind of misconception of a generation and the generation gap.

Now, that generation '60s did create great change in this country driven by the youth. And America has had several reform movements, Farmers' movement, there have been movements that are reform movements. That particular moment the '60s was led by the youth. And the centerpiece of that movement was integration, centerpiece of rock and roll ironically was integration. The *Moondog* show was about Alan Freed, his shows (inaudible) was about integration. People had separated themselves and moved to the suburbs they wanted bebop. Alan Freed, the disc jockey was like, no, we're not going to play just wide covers of these songs, we're going to play the black songs and I'm going to put on shows that are integrated, he lost the TV show *American Bands* then -- the equivalent of *American Bands* then because he wouldn't have a nonintegrated band. So we see this strain running through our history. Now, to add to the confusion we have segregation by generation,

older people need the young people and the younger people need the older people, so we have a joke sometimes at Jazz at Lincoln Center we say we got to follow our younger generation and then we say we got to follow our older generation because we are intertwined we are linked.

You are a kid now, you're not going to be a kid, you're going to be old, that's what happens. And then you're not going to be here, that's a fact of life. So when a lot of stake is put on you because you are young, you say, well, my generation, my generation, what's your generation? You are representing something, you are not necessarily your generation.

Six people come out with some technological innovation and says our generation did that, most of us don't even know what that is. You know, so -- and that's true or anything. Beethoven is the German people, but Beethoven is Beethoven, not the German people. He represents a human, a thing in human beings that is timeless, it crosses all lines of tribalism. So I find it with younger people and with older people in this country, I see strict segregation. I just see younger people are just a exploitable market for us.

And we started providing them with all of these things, now we've gotten to the point where we're selling them pornography. And at a certain point you're selling pornography to your kids, 11, 12, 13 years old, how are they going to survive that? Then it becomes a belief in the generation gap.

If you look at pictures of your kids in 1912, 13, they don't look like something from another planet, they're just young versions of old people. And it -- it's like, you know you start to believe that.

So I always tell, Jon, like I've known him since he was a kid and I always loved him. I first met him when he was 13 or 14. He's from Kenner, Louisiana. You know, he's actually from Lincoln Manor and I'm from Kenner.

MR. BATISTE: Kenner.

MR. MARSALIS: I'm from Kenner, it's unbelievable. Somebody from Lincoln Manor, I think because Lincoln Manor is rough too now. And they had yellow and

black uniforms. So I always remember yellow and black. But it -- to see somebody who is 28 or 27, the age of my oldest son out there playing -- can play all of this music, can play multi-music, knows how to play ragtime, understands about music, that's what my father the musician wanted, that's what Dizzy wanted. And we are all a part of a continuum. That's what George Gershwin wanted.

And our continuum is integrated, our continuum is not segregated. And it's important for us to have our young people be in that line and not get caught in a kind of meaningless my generation of young people want this and that, people want to do the things that they've always wanted to do.

MR. ISAACSON: Thank you. Let me end with a question to bring it back to race and our discussions this week, which was the legacy of Charleston. And you told me that Stephen Colbert -- as most of you know, Jon starts in September as the band leader on the *Late Night* with Colbert.

(Applause)

MR. ISAACSON: In fact he met Colbert, the producer here when he played -- when he was with us last year at IDEAS FEST.

MR. BATISTE: -- yeah.

MR. ISAACSON: And got you first on the *Colbert Report* and now on. But you -- Colbert is from Charleston and I know you talked to him, what were your thoughts about the forgiveness the families did and how did that play into his thoughts?

MR. BATISTE: It's very hard to love, it's very difficult to love your neighbor. Something that happens when people get hurt is they build resentment and they build a sense of barriers with the other people who may have done something for whatever reason, the guy who shot these people, I'm sure he had a mental illness which brings up issues about how do we treat mental illness, how do we deal with that, how do we address that early, but we were talking and we were talking about the idea of people coming together and really being ready to do that right now in this generation.

This generation is something that I think is very much like a lot of the other generations in the past, but there's a very special thing that each person brings to the table that only they can bring to the table, there's never going to be another Wynton, there is never going to be another me, another Walter. We all have something special to offer and unique to offer. So we were talking about the concept of people having so much pain and the way to get the most out of everybody is to figure out how do we love better. You talk about the victims of the shooting who forgave the shooter, how did they have the ability to bring themselves to do that?

Their deep level of consciousness and love that comes from -- it just comes from being on earth and deciding to do that, being willing to do that like we were talking about on the phone. You have to be willing to love, and he was just basically saying that this is the time that I feel people are really ready to hear that, and there is still going to be minstrelsy, there's still going to be a lot of people doing shenanigans in popular culture. But, like you say, it's never really going to be over, it's never going to end.

But I do think right now is a seminal time and we can say something, you get these windows to say something, it's like golden eras, they only last about three to five years average, and I think one is happening right now.

MR. ISAACSON: Wow. And if there's a song that symbolizes that it was, Valerie Jarrett was saying how when he got to the podium, the President, he paused for a moment and then decided, yes, I'm going to sing it and I'm going to sing it and see, you know, what key can I do it and --

MR. BATISTE: He tried.

MR. ISAACSON: And it really did -- but that song I think was written at about the exact same time our nation was born. It was the 1770s Anglican hymn of John Newton that then became a negro and plantation spiritual that then became part of jazz, and in some ways it encompasses this, as you called it, golden moment we may have, *Amazing Grace*.

(Music being played)

(Applause)

(Music being played)

(Applause)

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