

Weyer Voice July 22, 97

that is a psychological ache for the perpetrators, and it runs deep. If the perpetrators ever looked at themselves, they would discover the powerlessness they feel. So who better to “play with” than a child, with whom they can feel powerful?

The self-analysis required to stop this behavior is something this society wants no part of. The ones not in denial are those who have been abused. Many survivors have read Goldstein’s series, and heard the message!

I believe that writing can alter people’s thinking. Mr. Goldstein could not have presented this issue more articulately.

The question of what to do with these perpetrators remains.

NAME WITHHELD
Manhattan

STALL THAT JAZZ?

Re Gary Giddins’s review of Wynton Marsalis’s *Blood on the Fields* [“Classic Ambition,” July 1]: I’ve known Wynton Marsalis, as friend and colleague, for more than 14 years. In that time I have produced most of his recordings—both jazz and classical—numbering no less than 26 CDs, with others

awaiting release. I am, therefore, very well acquainted with Wynton’s approach to performing, composing, and recording.

To that end, I must express my incredulity and disappointment at the rather nasty comments made by Mr. Giddins. In an obvious attempt to tarnish Mr. Marsalis’s integrity, Mr. Giddins suggested that Marsalis, in effect, manipulated the composition, recording, and release of *Blood on the Fields* to coincide with the Pulitzer Prize eligibility dates. This absurd conjecture is at best ignorant, irresponsible journalism and at worst borders on libel.

Blood on the Fields premiered at Lincoln Center in April 1994 as a “work in progress.” The original recording sessions took place in January 1995. As we began post-production last summer—in an effort to meet the release deadline for the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra’s international tour—Wynton felt that additional musical elements were required to satisfy his sense of the work’s totality.

I’m sure Mr. Giddins knows it is not unusual for compositions to evolve weeks, months, even years after their

initial presentation to the public. The LCJO tour notwithstanding, Wynton held that it was more important to take whatever time necessary to get it right, a method *not* unique to this particular album. This included recording new passages, honing the “mix,” and committing to task the re-choosing of “takes”—standard procedure for most of our albums. In fact, Wynton’s penchant for perfection has, in the past, been known to play havoc with album release dates.

Columbia Records, while originally intending—naturally—to capitalize on CD sales that would result from the tour, exhibited commendable sensitivity in letting Marsalis forego the constraints of the deadline. In doing so, he had the opportunity to fully realize his artistic goals in *Blood on the Fields*, which ultimately was issued several months after the tour’s completion. CD booklets had already been printed in hopes of an earlier release and therefore did not include a listing of the subsequent recording dates.

Most importantly, however, the revised and reworked composition was actually premiered in the U.S. on January 28, 1997, at Yale University.

It was *this* performance—not the recording—which qualified the work for consideration of this year’s Pulitzer.

In his zeal to present a blatantly biased review of *Blood on the Fields*, Mr. Giddins neglected to adhere to an important fundamental of journalistic ethics—checking the facts.

STEVE EPSTEIN
Manhattan

Gary Giddins replies: I merely reported the facts as provided by Columbia Records and Epstein—who addresses only two sentences in my review. Let me try to make sense of this: (1) Epstein’s idea of a work in progress consists of choosing takes and mixing, which involve no revisions in a concert work; as for those “new passages,” the 1995 CD libretto is identical to that in the 1997 concert program. (2) Nevertheless, we are supposed to believe that Sony spent vast sums so that Marsalis could revise his work over two and a half years, but wouldn’t pay to reset a line of type in order to include “subsequent” recording dates—even though it did revise the page to add three 1997 copyright notices. (3) Epstein supplies misinformation in the CD booklet (“Recorded . . . January 22-25, 1995”), but I am remiss in not questioning it.