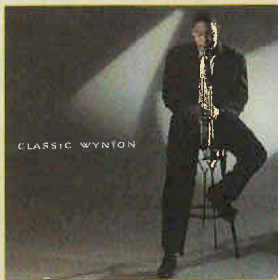


Wynton Marsalis

Classic Trumpet



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“Classic Wynton” is pure musical fireworks, the first-ever “greatest hits” collection of trumpeter Wynton Marsalis’ classical recordings. One stunning performance after another of everything from Bach to Bernstein, the disc would do any artist proud at the end of a distinguished career. But, of course, Marsalis is only 37. While he was making these recordings, Marsalis was also redefining American jazz with his virtuosity and uncompromising vision, emerging as the most effective advocate for music as a positive cultural force since Leonard Bernstein. He was also developing as an important composer in his own right, winning in 1997 the first Pulitzer Prize in music ever awarded to a jazz musician. All of these achievements—three extraordinary careers in themselves—enlighten and transform his playing in the classical repertoire. Everything on “Classic Wynton” sounds fresh, inspired, uniquely *alive*.

Marsalis’ technique is of the highest quality, and he possesses an uncanny grasp of the kaleidoscope of styles in 300 years’ worth of classical music. The 20 tracks on “Classic Wynton” include excerpts from concertos by Bach, two Haydns (Franz Joseph and his brother Michael), Hummel, Leopold Mozart and Vivaldi. There are also Baroque favorites, among them the Mouret Rondeau, best known as “the Masterpiece Theatre theme,” Jeremiah Clarke’s The Prince of Denmark’s March (today’s most popular wedding march) and the dazzling Prelude to Charpentier’s Te Deum. Marsalis also performs a brilliant Handel aria with soprano Kathleen Battle (*Let The Bright Seraphim* from *Samson*) as well as Romantic and contemporary works including Paganini’s Moto Perpetuo, Rimsky-Korsakov’s The Flight Of The Bumblebee and Bernstein’s Rondo For Lifye. Classic Wynton also offers the first-ever release of Marsalis’ recording of The Prayer Of St. Gregory by contemporary American composer Alan Hovhaness.

Most impressive, throughout, is Marsalis’ profound understanding of the music itself. He completely avoids the “been there, done that” attitude that afflicts too many classical virtuosos today, bringing the spontaneity of jazz to his classical work. The delightfully droll way he tosses off the giddy brilliance of Arban’s riotous Variations On “The Carnival Of Venice” is very much linked to the electrifying intensity he brings to the stratospheric trumpet part in Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto No. 2. One is merely great fun, the other is surely great music. But Marsalis never gives you the feeling that he discriminates or that such distinctions even matter in the moment. It is all music to him, a wonderful adventure.



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