

CREATIVE MONUMENTAL
IMPROVISATION SCAT
TRUMPET CLARINET
BANJO PIANO BASS
JOYFUL EXUBERANCE
TROMBONE DRUMS
MASTERFUL HOT
SWING UNINHIBITED
FIRE EXCITEMENT
INNOVATIVE ARTISTIC

On this recording, Wynton Marsalis addresses some of the most influential, yet often overlooked, repertoire in jazz history: Louis Armstrong's mid to late 1920s recordings. Among the great ironies in music is that Armstrong remains among the best-known entertainers in the world for lighter, less jazz-based, mainly vocal songs, like "Hello Dolly" and "What a Wonderful World" recorded in the 1960s. Less known among the general public is when Armstrong was at the height of his youthful creative powers and recorded over four dozen songs with his recording groups under "Louis Armstrong's Hot 5 or Hot 7" between 1925 and 1928.

Armstrong and his musicians demonstrated excellent New Orleans-style ensemble playing on these monumental songs and forged new directions and possibilities for jazz improvisation that opened the door for future players, composers, arrangers, and styles. Despite the great solo

and ensemble work of the other players like clarinetist Johnny Dodds and trombonist Edward "Kid" Ory, Armstrong rises above to display a previously unheard level of phrasing, swinging rhythms, tonal variety, and deep feeling that firmly place the emphasis of jazz on extended creative solo improvisation. In addition to pointing the direction of jazz towards improvised solos, Armstrong also influenced later jazz and popular music singers with his off-beat vocal phrasing and his uses of wordless vocals known as "scat singing."

The fourteen selections here are from live concerts called "Wynton and Louis Armstrong's Hot 5s," performed at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Hall between September 28 and 30, 2006. The repertoire included several better-known Hot 5 and 7 classics, like "Cornet Chop Suey" and "Potato Head Blues," and a couple of songs that Armstrong made traditional jazz band standards, "Basin Street Blues"

and “St. James Infirmary.” Rather than faithfully copying Armstrong’s classic recordings note for note or using the same arrangements, Marsalis wisely chose to do *like* Armstrong did and not exactly *what* he did. While Armstrong’s Hot 7 had the typical New Orleans jazz band instrumentation, with trumpet, clarinet trombone, banjo, piano, bass, and drums. The Hot 5 recorded without bass or drums, Marsalis uses nine musicians to great effect.

The ensemble breathes new life and meaning into the Armstrong songs through expanded roles for each of the technically competent musicians. Breaks, additional solos, added introductions and endings, and innovative vocals add to the artistic range and enjoyment of Armstrong’s classics. Appropriately, the concert audiences respond enthusiastically to the new and creative explorations of horn players, like trombonist Vincent Gardner, clarinetist Victor Goines, and saxophonist Walter Blanding. In addition to performing ably on the trombone and tuba, Wycliff Gordon

expands the scat style vocal that Armstrong originally popularized on “Heebie Jeebies.” With Don Vappie on banjo, bassist Carlos Enriquez, and drummer Ali Jackson, the rhythm section lays down a steady traditional swinging foundation on several songs. On others, the rhythm moves toward a more modern jazz conception. A pleasant contributor to the rhythm section’s exciting drive is a young Jonathan Batiste, who delivers creative piano solos and a driving stride style with complete mastery and joyful exuberance.

In the same way that Louis Armstrong dominated on the original Hot 5 and 7 recordings, Wynton Marsalis rises above the ensemble with solid lead lines, masterful melodic creativity, hotter than hot breaks, and expansive solos to make this a trumpeter’s recording. Like Armstrong, Marsalis is a preacher presiding over the proceedings with a powerful, authoritative voice and deep blues feeling. By “doing *like* Armstrong,” Marsalis leads the ensemble with his

own compelling “singing” trumpet tone and technically expansive phrasing that extends and respectfully updates Armstrong’s 1920s style while avoiding bland imitation. Marsalis leads this ensemble with a joy and spirit that is not above adding a few playful vocals and tonal variances.

The musicians on this recording have more than ably met the challenge of creating a valid, swinging, and artistically sound approach to early jazz in a way that is both respectful and uninhibitedly creative. On these recordings, Wynton Marsalis proves that no one is better to continue along and expand the great musical path forged by his trumpet king and fellow New Orleanian predecessor, Louis Armstrong. Marsalis and his musicians performed this tribute to the early jazz master with fire, taste, creative expansion, excitement, and swing that would make Armstrong proud.

—Dr. Michael White





**MARSALIS LEADS
THIS ENSEMBLE
WITH A JOY AND SPIRIT
THAT IS NOT ABOVE
ADDING A FEW
PLAYFUL VOCALS
AND TONAL VARIANCES.**

1. POTATO HEAD BLUES

COMPOSED BY Louis Armstrong
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Don Vappie, edited
by Chuck Israels

2. TWELFTH STREET RAG

COMPOSED BY Euday L. Bowman

TRANSCRIPTION BY Dan Block

3. SKID-DAT-DE-DAT

COMPOSED BY Lil Hardin
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Daniel Nielsen

4. JAZZ LIPS

COMPOSED BY Lil Hardin and Louis
Armstrong
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Wycliffe Gordon

5. ST. JAMES INFIRMARY

TRADITIONAL

TRANSCRIPTION BY Randy Sandke

6. WEARY BLUES

COMPOSED BY Artie Matthews

TRANSCRIPTION BY Tom Roberts

7. MELANCHOLY BLUES

COMPOSED BY Walter Melrose and
Marty Bloom

TRANSCRIPTION BY Brad Shigeta

8. HEEBIE JEBBIES

COMPOSED BY Boyd Atkins
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Rob Bargad

9. ONCE IN A WHILE

COMPOSED BY William H Butler
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Dan Block

10. ORY'S CREOLE TROMBONE

COMPOSED BY Edward "Kid" Ory

TRANSCRIPTION BY Don Vappie

11. BASIN STREET BLUES

COMPOSED BY Spencer Williams
Edwin H Morris and Co. Inc. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Edward Anderson

12. SAVOY BLUES

COMPOSED BY Edward "Kid" Ory
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Vincent Gardner

13. CORNET CHOP SUEY

COMPOSED BY Louis Armstrong
Universal Music Corp. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Randy Sandke

14. FIREWORKS

COMPOSED BY Spencer Williams
Edwin H Morris and Co. Inc. (ASCAP)

TRANSCRIPTION BY Don Vappie

WYNTON MARSALIS

Trumpet & Vocals

WYCLIFFE GORDON

Tuba, Trombone,
Bass & Vocals

VINCENT GARDNER

Trombone

VICTOR GOINES

Clarinet

WALTER BLANDING

Tenor & Soprano Saxophones

"PAPA" DON VAPPIE

Banjo & Guitar

JONATHAN BATISTE

Piano

CARLOS HENRIQUEZ

Bass

ALI JACKSON

Drums

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WYNTON MARSALIS

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Mark Wilder at Battery
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FRONT OF HOUSE ENGINEER

David Robinson

RECORDING ENGINEER

Saundra Palmer-Grassi

RECORDING ASSISTANT

Jeff Rothman

MIXING ENGINEER

Todd Whitelock at Amplified
Art and Sound

EDITOR

Gloria Kaba

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Wes Whitelock

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Daphnée Saget
Woodley and
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LINER NOTES

Dr. Michael White

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AT JAZZ AT LINCOLN
CENTER'S FREDERICK
P. ROSE HALL.**



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