





## THE MINISTRY OF JAZZ

By LEON WIESELTIER

There is a sense in which jazz is a supremely secular art, the very sound of secularism. In jazz one hears only human powers – the pulsings of the vainglorious city, the self-reliance of the improvising mind, the articulation of inner logics, the orchestration of seductions, emotions refined by structures, trains and buses, brothels and nightclubs, arguments and confessions – the whole magnificent enterprise of the search for human meanings in an immanent world solely by means of musical forms. The jazz musician is a man or woman left to his or her own devices, and to the devices of the jazz tradition. The improvising musician demonstrates by example the improvisatory character of existence. There is inspiration, but there is no revelation. No prophet comes to teach anybody how or what to play. There is soulfulness, but without the metaphysics. Jazz is exhilaratingly profane, which may account for its canonical status as the musical idiom of modernity.

And yet there has been sacred music, beautiful sacred music, in jazz. This goes back to its very provenance. Its origins in the blues gave jazz an origin in the church. “In point of fact,” Albert Murray observed, “the highest praise given a blues musician has been the declaration that he can make a dance hall rock and roll like a downhome church during revival time.” If the subject of the blues is melancholy and its overcoming, then the blues has a natural ally in the church, where people enter dejected and leave undejected, and men and women who have been laid low are raised high without any deception about the reality of pain. The same sort of people go to jazz clubs and jazz concerts for the same sort of reasons: to hear difficulties worked out and impediments transformed into opportunities for creation. Religious feelings often find a home in unreligious forms – and when they do, who is to say that the forms are not religious? There are secular compositions, and jazz compositions, that confer upon the listener

a sense of tranquility so overwhelming that it can only be called divine. (Horace Silver’s “Peace,” or certain passages in Coltrane, or Wynton Marsalis’ “Let Us Pray.”) The secular and the religious run into each other like paints mixing on a palette. The boundaries between them are inevitably porous, because they must both minister to the same human needs.

In the Western musical tradition, secular music has always permeated sacred music. Music, like wine, can be consecrated. Josquin made sublime masses out of the most vernacular materials. Haydn’s masses have a worldly sound but an otherworldly purpose – and in this respect they are like us, who inhabit all the realms, the streets and the clouds, within a single identity. The spiritual versatility of aesthetic form is also evident in the sacred compositions of the jazz tradition. In 1954, for example, Mary Lou Williams

underwent a religious transformation and began a period of reflection that culminated

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three years later with her acceptance into the Roman Catholic Church. Not long afterwards she produced a remarkable composition called “St. Martin de Porres,” for a small mixed chorus and piano. The piece is a hymn to a mulatto saint of seventeenth-century Peru, whom it addresses as the “Black Christ of the Andes.” It is almost entirely a cappella, as Williams deploys her legendarily sophisticated harmonic understanding in the service of her veneration – and then, almost at the very end of the lush modernist polyphony, her piano suddenly enters with an intoxicating groove that could not be more removed in time and place and mood from the antique monkish piety that it celebrates. What unifies these disparate elements into an aesthetic whole is the force of the composer’s spiritual intention. To explain the liturgical pieces that she was writing in





**DAMIEN SNEED**

the jazz style, Williams wrote a short guide to her ideas, which included this: "The Spiritual Feeling: The Characteristic of Good Jazz. The spiritual feeling, the deep conversation, and the mental telepathy going on between bass, drums, and a number of soloists are the permanent characteristics of good jazz. The conversation can be of any type, exciting, soulful, or even humorous debating." Of any type, but all for the greater glory of God.

In this aspect of the art as in many others, it was Duke Ellington who set the standard, and established the friendship between jazz and God most gorgeously and definitively. Between 1965 and 1973 he composed and performed three Sacred Concerts. He distinguished them from "the traditional mass jazzed up." (He was commissioned to write a mass but it seems never to have been completed.) They were instead suites of pieces for his orchestra and large choirs, in which various churchly moods – solitude (an old Ellingtonian theme), humility, desolation, affirmation, joy – were expressed in various rhythms and colors, all of them intensely lyrical: the blues with an unmistakable echo of the numinous. The jazz audience has always had trouble with the late works of jazz masters – Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Lester Young: all were said to have fallen off in their final years – and Ellington was no exception; but in Ellington's case, as with the others, this is an egregious mistake. Some of Ellington's religious music is profoundly affecting, and it has the ripeness of insight and expression that only late works can possess. In other contexts we call this lateness wisdom.

"I think of myself as a messenger boy," Ellington declared about his sacred compositions, "one who tries to bring messages to people." He undertook these works "not as a matter of career, but in response to a growing understanding of my own vocation." In this regard he brings to mind Rossini, another genius of mirth and elegance and pride, another revolutionary of musical arrangement, who turned to liturgical composition in his later years and produced a "petite messe solonelle" that summed up his methods and







his love of life and sealed them together with a heavenward look. The people to whom the jazz evangelist Ellington brought his message were “not people who have never heard of God, but those who were more or less raised with the guidance of the Church.” In his notes to the Second Sacred Concert, which like his other works of this kind was performed in churches, he was rather scolding about unbelievers: “I hate to say that they are out-and-out liars, but I believe they think it fashionable to speak like that... They snicker in the dark as they tremble with fright.” The tone is jarring: nastiness is such an unEllingtonian mode. It is important to note, therefore, that his sacred works themselves are mercifully devoid of such brimstone, and there is nothing stylistically orthodox about them, though Ellington’s point about the unfashionability of faith in the precincts of high culture is still correct.

The magnanimity of spirit that was a hallmark of all of Ellington’s music appears in a statement of principle that he produced to accompany his First Sacred Concert in 1965. “There are people who speak one language and some who speak many languages,” he wrote. “Every man prays in his own language, and there is no language that God does not understand.” Here is the universalism, the definitional inclusiveness, of the monotheistic God, though it is frequently honored in the breach by many of His believers. The legitimacy of jazz as an address to God, Ellington suggests, is beyond question, because there are no illegitimate addresses to God. Every human language is suitable for the delineation of hu-



man finitude and its appetite for transcendence. Of any type, as Mary Lou Williams taught. Or as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed, in a verse that figures significantly in Wynton Marsalis' Abyssinian Mass, "For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations."

Indeed, the sense of cosmic scale that is conveyed by religion may promote in us a preference for modesty of expression, for a humble and even inarticulate voice. Ellington continues, inventing a Hasidic parable of his own: "It has been said once that a man who could not play the organ or any of the instruments of the symphony accompanied his worship by juggling. He was not the world's greatest juggler, but it was the one thing that he did best. And so it was accepted by God." Jazz is a juggle, prayer is a juggle, existence is a juggle. The juggler is an artist of rises and falls whose medium is the air. He works with more than he can handle, but he handles it. What he drops he picks right up, and swiftly enough to prevent a disruption of the flow of the elements. The quality of his soul is established by his perseverance, his grace, his training, his wit, his precision, his cool, his familiarity with the experience of failure and recovery. He, the common juggler, is a spiritual figure.

Yet there was nothing aesthetically modest about Ellington's sacred pieces. His principle of inclusion was both philosophical and structural, and the same may be said of Marsalis' Abyssinian Mass, which is a formidable heir to Ellington's ecclesiastical breakthroughs. Unlike its precursors, this work is a "traditional mass jazzed up." It was composed in partnership with a minister and for a church, the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, a congregation that was founded in 1808 in protest against racially segregated seating in the First Baptist Church of New York. (The breakaway parishioners included Ethiopian sailors, who gave their country's name to the new institution.) Marsalis has produced music for a full

liturgy: the first thing one notices about this work is its magnitude. The mass is massive. In Marsalis' sweet amplification of the prophet's verse, this house of prayer is "for all, all, all, all nations." And for all, all, all, all states of the soul. "Everyone has a place in the House of God."

The Abyssinian Mass falls into the time-honored current of sacred music that seeks to represent the tremendous abundance of the religious universe, inner and outer. This is not an austere devotion. It is a plenitude of musical forms for a plenitude of spiritual circumstances. It describes lowliness and it describes grandeur, and it describes

### **IT IS A PLENITUDE OF MUSICAL FORMS FOR A PLENITUDE OF SPIRITUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**

the grandeur in lowliness. It traverses theology ("Now he sits at the right hand of God / Waiting to judge the quick and the dead") and sociology ("Stop by the hospitals. Set the wrongly imprisoned free"). Like the Psalmist, it finds God everywhere. And the ubiquity of God demands a great deal of music. Musically, too, Marsalis' offering is vast and multifarious: so many styles of African-American music, from the rollicking to the suave, contribute to these supplications and exclamations. The intellectual and compositional range for which Marsalis is renowned is amply in evidence here, the breathtaking diversity of rhythms and harmonies, infectious even when esoteric. Marsalis has a rare gift for making joy out of complexity. In The Abyssinian Mass he has joined intellectuality to enthusiasm, the thought to the shout.

Though it has been performed in concert halls (I attended one of those performances in 2013), The Abyssinian Mass is most emphatically a prayer service – an African-American prayer service. The African American church is a temple of participation and a theater of immersion. It offers not





a theory of religious experience, or a prescription for religious experience, but religious experience itself. Its program is arousal and catharsis and excitement and transfiguration – the movement of souls by the movement of voices and bodies, by turns tender and ferocious. It fully expects commotion from an awakening individual. The music of the church is the articulation of that commotion, which leads through agitation to bliss. Jazz, blues, or gospel, the objective of this music is the acquisition of an inner confidence, a fortifying light that is fully the match of the darkness that waits outside. The Abyssinian Mass is a perfect score for this practice of renewal.

The bestirring of the individual in the church, his ascent from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from the prosaic to the poetic, does not occur in solitariness. The unit of the revival is the congregation, the community; and the musical symbol of this shared spirituality, of the togetherness that lifts the individual above the miseries of individuation, is the choir, the chorus. The African



American chorus is the antithesis of the Greek chorus. The Greek chorus is detached, explanatory, chilling, a standpoint away from the dramatic and psychological action. The African American chorus is attached, participatory, thrilling, in the heart of the dramatic and psychological action. It stands for, and with, the congregation, melting in the same passions, answering to the same summons. Perhaps the greatest achievement of The Abyssinian Mass is Marsalis' choral writing. The demotic integrity of his words – this is a mass for everyday

people; Marsalis wrote it for his grandmother and his great-aunt, both of them domestic workers and devout – is brilliantly intensified by the chromaticism of their settings. The humanism of the work is most generously established by its belief in the holiness of the human voice.

In the history of religion, there have been two avenues of approach to the divine: away from the senses and through the senses. There have been believers who held that the material world is a great

**TRUE OR FALSE, FAITH  
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obstacle to the advancement of the spirit, and that material expressions of the divine should be denied and even destroyed, because they contradict the sublimity of God. And there have been believers who held that the spirit cannot arrive at the invisible except by means of the visible, at the inaudible except by means of the audible, and so God's incorporeality must make a concession to our corporeality and permit us to reach what we cannot see and hear by means of what we can see and hear. The former were known in the Byzantine world as iconoclasts, or smashers of the icons, and in the Counter-Reformation in Europe they cracked down on the pleasures of polyphony, and in the Islamic world in our own time they blow up ancient sites and statues that they regard as idolatrous. The latter, the ones who defended the icons, the artistic representations of God, were in the Byzantine controversies known as iconodules. From our rich heritage of sacred painting and sacred music, we may justly conclude that the iconodules won. The association of beauty with divinity has survived the enemies of beauty and the enemies of divinity. And even the doubters, when they see the great pictures and hear the great pieces, are lifted up, wherever their heights are. True or false, faith gave us all this art. Hallelujah!







## LIBRETTO

### THE ABYSSINIAN MASS WYNTON MARSALIS

## DEVOTIONAL

Hmm, hmm, hmm  
I didn't hear nobody prayin'  
I didn't hear nobody sayin'  
I didn't hear nobody  
Calling on the Lord

Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes  
I didn't hear nobody prayin'  
I didn't hear nobody sayin'  
I didn't hear nobody  
Calling on the Lord

I didn't hear nobody prayin'  
I didn't hear nobody sayin'  
I didn't hear nobody  
Calling on the Lord

Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord  
Yes, Lord  
Yes  
Yes, Lord  
Yes  
Yes, my Lord  
Yes, Lord

## CALL TO WORSHIP

God is great! And greatly to be praised!  
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.  
Fear before Him all, all, all, all the earth!

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven  
Hallowed be Thy name  
Thy kingdom come  
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

Lord, give us this day our daily bread  
Father and forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us, deliver, deliver, deliver us from evil  
Thank you, Lord

For Thine is the Kingdom  
For Thine is the Kingdom  
For Thine is the Kingdom  
The power, the glory  
Forever and ever and ever

In thy Holy name

## PROCESSIONAL: "WE ARE ON OUR WAY"

If you need Him  
Raise your voice and tell Him so  
If you seek Him  
Raise your hand and let Him know

When you praise Him  
Lift your head up to the sky  
When you find Him  
Bare your soul and testify

O! Hallelujah  
We are on our way

If you need Him  
Raise your voice and tell Him so  
If you seek Him  
Raise your hand and let Him know

When you praise Him  
Lift your head up to the sky  
When you find Him  
Bare your soul and testify

O! Hallelujah  
We are on our way

To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord

To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord

To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord  
To the house of the Lord

We march onward  
Down the streets of the glory land  
Steady walkin'  
Right to the house of the Son of Man  
He will greet us on the shores of Galilee  
There's no stopping this almighty Jubilee

Hallelujah  
Glory Hallelujah  
Glory Hallelujah  
Yes! We're on our way

Hallelujah  
Glory Hallelujah  
Glory Hallelujah  
Yes! We're on our way

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Raise your voice and tell Him so

If you seek Him  
Raise your hand and let Him know

When you praise Him  
Lift your head up to the sky  
When you find Him  
Bare your soul and testify  
O! Hallelujah  
We are on our way

We are marching to the House of the Lord  
We are marching to the House of the Lord  
We are marching to the House of the Lord  
Hallelujah

## INVOCATION AND CHANT

Father, please come sit with us now  
Father, please come teach us just how  
Father, how to live by Your plan  
Father, hold our souls in Your hand  
Father, please be with us always  
With us please, through dark painful days  
With us Lord now, we sing in praise

## RESPONSIVE READING, MATTHEW 5:3-12 THE BEATITUDES

Blessed are the humble of spirit  
Blessed are the humble and poor  
Blessed are the humble of spirit  
Hear me children, knock, knock on the door

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven  
Yes Lord theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Blessed are they who mourn in Zion  
Blessed are they who mourn and weep  
Blessed are they who mourn in Zion  
Listen children, 'fore you speak

For they shall be comforted  
For they shall be comforted



Blessed are the meek and quiet  
Blessed are the quiet and meek  
Blessed are the meek and quiet  
Hear me children, what I speak

For they shall inherit the earth  
For they shall inherit the earth

Are they blessed who hunger after righteousness?  
Yes, my Lord

Are they blessed who hunger after righteousness?  
Yes, my Lord

For they shall  
They Shall  
Be filled  
Be filled

For they shall  
They Shall  
Be filled  
Be filled

Are the merciful blessed?  
Yes, Lord  
Are the merciful blessed?  
Yes, Lord  
Are the merciful blessed?  
Yes, Lord  
Are the merciful blessed?  
Yes, Lord

For they  
For they

Shall obtain  
Shall obtain

God's mercy  
God's mercy

Are they blessed, the pure in heart?  
Yes, my Lord

Are they blessed, the pure in heart?  
Yes, my Lord

For they  
For they

Shall see God  
Shall see God

They shall  
They shall

See God  
See God

Blessed are the peacemakers  
Bless them all who make the peace  
Blessed are the peacemakers  
Listen children, what I speak

For they shall be called the children of God  
For they shall be called the children of God

O! Blessed are the persecuted  
O! Blessed are for righteousness sake  
O! Blessed are the persecuted  
Hear me children, what I say

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Of heaven  
Of heaven

Is the kingdom of heaven, I say  
Is the kingdom of heaven, I say  
Is the kingdom of heaven, I say

Is the kingdom of heaven

## GLORIA PATRI

Oh glory be  
Oh glory be  
Oh glory be

Oh glory be  
Oh glory be  
Oh glory be  
Oh glory be  
Oh glory be  
Oh glory be

Glory be to the Father  
And to the Son  
And to the Holy, Holy, Holy Ghost

Glory be to the Father  
And to the Son  
And to the Holy, Holy, Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning  
Is now and ever, ever shall be  
World without end  
Amen, Amen  
World without end  
Amen, Amen

Glory be to the Father  
And to the Son  
And to the Holy, Holy, Holy Ghost

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Is now and ever, ever shall be  
World without end  
Amen, Amen  
A world without end  
Amen, Amen  
A world without end

Amen  
Amen  
I said Amen  
Amen  
I said Amen  
Amen  
I said Amen  
Amen  
I said Amen

## PRAYER: "PASTORAL PRAYER"

Before the hills in order stood  
And Earth received its frame  
From everlasting thou art God  
To endless years the same  
Oh Lord, we thank You

Lord we thank You for life itself  
and for the privilege of being in the house of prayer  
Oh, Lord, we thank You

You've been good to us, oh, Lord  
Better than we've been to ourselves  
Lord, we want to thank You

You woke us up this morning  
started us on our way  
Thank you, Lord

You put food on our tables  
clothes on our backs  
Lord, thank You

You delivered us from danger  
Seen and unseen  
Lord we want to thank You

If we had ten thousand tongues  
We just could not thank you enough  
Thank you, oh Lord

Recitation:

Now, dear Jesus  
Please have Mercy  
Come by here  
Somebody needs You, Lord  
We know you are a heart-fixer and a mind-regulator  
Come by, Lord, and mend a broken heart  
Wipe tears from eyes: and turn some sinner around

Heal our bodies, Lord  
Ease our drifting minds  
Save our children  
Stop by the hospitals  
Set the wrongly imprisoned free

Oh Lord, my Lord,  
How excellent is Thy name in all the earth  
How great Thou art  
The God of my salvation

Choir:

Our God He  
Set his course through forty-two generations  
Plant Himself in Blessed Mary's womb  
Entered this world all bloody and sweaty  
Wrapped up, wrapped up, wrapped up, wrapped up  
Wrapped up in swaddling clothes

Our Lord He  
Grew in wisdom and stature  
Was baptized by John in the Jordan stream  
Tempted of the devil and delivered of angels  
Yes our Lord would reign supreme

Our Lord He  
Went out preaching the Kingdom  
Feeding the hungry  
Giving sight to the blind  
Casting out devils  
Healing the sick

Making the lame walk and raising the dead  
Just on what He said

Our Lord was loved by His friends  
Hated by His enemies

Our Lord was misunderstood  
Falsely accused

Our Lord was tried before Pilate  
Hung on a Roman cross  
Buried in a borrowed grave  
Battled in Hell  
(Battled in Hell)  
Two days

Early Sunday morning  
God raised Him up from the dead  
From the dead  
Now He sits at the right hand of God  
Waiting to judge the quick and the dead  
Now He sits at the right hand of God  
Waiting to judge the quick and the dead.  
Now He sits at the right hand of God  
Waiting to judge the quick and the dead

**CHORAL RESPONSE: "THROUGH HIM I'VE COME TO SEE"**

Oh, oh, oh, oh  
Our Lord is my savior but  
Through him I've come to see

Just before I close my eyes  
I whisper that in praise  
Oh our Lord is my guiding light  
With Him I long to be

Our Lord gave with loving kindness  
On Mount Calvary  
Oh, Jesus is my savior but  
In Him all people free

**ANTHEM:**  
"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST"

Glory to God  
Glory to God

Glory to God  
Glory to God

Glory to God  
Glory to God

Glory to God  
Glory to God

Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest

[illegible]

Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God

Glory to God  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest

He spoke the light from darkness  
He framed the open sky  
He laid the earth's foundation  
Caused forest and field to thrive

[illegible]

He set the bright stars in motion  
Made all that swims and flies  
Brought forth the animals that walk the ground  
He never blinked His eyes

[illegible]

He forged a man and woman  
To be fruitful and multiply  
Sat down on that seventh day  
And heard them testify, oh

Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God



Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God  
Glory to God

Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
Glory to God in the highest  
The Highest  
The Highest  
Glory to God in the highest

Glory to God

### **SCRIPTURE: ISAIAH 56:7**

These I will bring to my holy mountain  
And give them joy  
And give them joy  
And give them joy  
And give them joy  
And give them joy

In my house of prayer

In my house of prayer  
In my house of prayer  
In my house of prayer

For my house shall be called  
A house of prayer for all, all, all, all nations

### **MEDITATION: "LORD HAVE MERCY"**

Mmm mmm mmm mmm mercy  
Mmm mmm, Mercy  
On my, mmm

Ooo ooo ooo ooo  
Ooo ooo, oh my  
Oh my Lord

Ahh ahh ahh ahh  
Ahh I was lost  
Ahh I was, I oh Lord

### **SERMON: "THE UNIFYING POWER OF PRAYER"**

#### **PART I: "THIS HOUSE IS GOD'S HOUSE"**

Yes, this house is God's house  
God's house, God's house  
Yes, this house is God's house  
Long as it shall be

Yes, this land is God's land  
God's land, God's land  
Yes, this land is God's land  
Far as we can see

Yes this house is God's house  
Don't belong to me  
Yes, this land is God's land  
Far as we can see

O! Yes, my soul is God's soul  
God's soul, God's soul  
Yes, my soul is God's soul  
Don't belong to me

#### **PART II: "THE POWER OF PRAYER"**

Come together  
Through the power of prayer  
Be together  
In the power of prayer

Stay together  
With the power of prayer  
We shall find peace of mind  
Over the Lord  
(Over the Lord)

Come together  
Through the power of prayer  
Be together  
In the power of prayer

Stay together  
With the power of prayer  
We shall find peace of mind  
Over the Lord

Come together  
Through the power of prayer  
Be together  
In the power of prayer  
Stay together  
With the power of prayer  
We shall find peace of mind  
Over the Lord

Hallelujah  
Hallelujah  
Hallelujah

#### **PART III: "EVERYONE HAS A PLACE"**

Everyone has a place  
Oh, everyone has a place  
Everyone has a place  
In the House of God

Everyone has a place  
Oh, everyone has a place  
Everyone has a place  
In the House of God

Our Lord spoke of what will be  
When He set the temple free  
Free for all who seek Him

Everyone has a place  
Oh, everyone has a place  
Everyone has a place  
In the House of God

### **INVITATION: "COME AND JOIN THE ARMY"**

Join the army  
Come join the army  
Join the army  
Come join the army

Won't you come and join the army of the Jubilee  
We'll be carrying the banner cross the Red Red Sea  
Come join the army of the holy revelry  
All the people dancin', singin', sayin'  
O E-O E-O-E-O-E-O-E-O-E-O!  
Jubilee, Jubilee, Jubilee, Jubilee

Won't you come and join the army of the Jubilee  
We'll be carryin' the banner to victory  
Oh come and join the army of the holy revelry  
All the people dancin', singin', sayin'  
O E-O E-O-E-O-E-O-E-O-E-O!  
Jubilee, Juba, Jubilee

We gon' lift up this heavy burden  
Heavy for you and me  
Oh I say we're gonna lift up this heavy burden  
Pick it up and let it be

We gon' march 'round the tree of life  
Circle with our golden shield  
Oh I say we're gonna march 'round the tree of life  
Marching 'round that old field

Say, He's gonna lay down His heavy hammer  
Listen to that hammer ring  
He's gonna lay down His heavy hammer  
Listen to that hammer sing

O! Everybody sing  
O! Hallelujah  
O! Everybody sing  
O! Hallelujah

Won't you come and join the army of the Jubilee  
Carrying the banner of the Prince of Peace

Come and join the army of the holy revelry  
All the people dancin', singin', sayin'  
O E-O E-O-E-O-E-O-E-O-E-O!

Lift up this heavy burden  
Not gonna let it ride  
Pick up this heavy burden  
Not gonna let it slide

We gonna march 'round the tree of life  
Carryin' our golden shield  
March 'round the tree of life  
Standin' in that old field

O! Everybody sing  
O! Hallelujah  
Sing O! Hallelujah  
O! Hallelujah, Hallelu  
O! Hallelujah, Hallelu  
O! Hallelujah, Hallelu

Hallelujah, Hallelujah

## **OFFERTORY: (YOU GOTTA WATCH) THE HOLY GHOST**

Gimme that old time religion

## **DOXOLOGY**

Praise God  
From whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him  
All creatures here below

Praise Him above  
Ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son  
And Holy Ghost

Praise God  
From whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him  
All creatures here below

Praise Him above  
Ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son  
And Holy Ghost.

## **RECESSIONAL: "THE GLORY TRAIN"**

I'm goin' straight up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven to see my Lord  
I'm goin' straight up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven to see my Lord

And it be beautiful  
And it be glorious  
And it be marvelous  
And it be wonderful

I'm goin' right up to heaven  
Ride up to heaven on the glory train  
I'm goin' right up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven on the glory train

When I ride, I'm a ridin' with my white robe on  
My white robe on  
Oooh, oooh, oooh

I'm goin' straight up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven to see my Lord  
I'm going straight up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven to see my Lord

And yes the Lord will see  
And He will smile at me  
And He will hold my hand  
Up in the glory land

I'm on my way to heaven  
Right past the pearly gates to see my Lord  
I'm on my way up to heaven  
Right past the pearly gates to see my Lord

When I ride, I'm a ridin' with my white robe on  
With my white robe on  
Whoo, whoo, whoo

I'm goin' straight up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven to see my Lord  
I'm going right up to heaven  
Ride up to heaven on the Glory train  
I'm on my way to heaven (on my)  
Right past the pearly gates to see my Lord

I see Ezekiel's wheel  
And Moses' staff  
And the thundering trumpets of Jericho  
Done climbed Jacob's ladder  
With the patience of Job  
And the faith of Father Abraham

Sweet Mother Mary and Mary and Martha  
John, John the Baptizer  
John the Revelator  
Even old Methuselah standing there  
With Lazarus

All the fountains of gold  
Crystal rivers and streams  
And the ringing of bells  
Holy angels who tell  
The glory of Christ

O! the Lamb of God  
The Savior of man  
O! the light of the world  
I say, the Prince of Peace  
The Redeemer, the Lord  
And the bringer of mercy and kindness and love

O! That powerful love  
That still brings a true healing  
To this whole world  
As we sing, as we sing, as we sing, Ah-ah-ah!

I'm goin' straight up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven to see my Lord  
I'm on my way, way, way up to heaven  
Right past the pearly gates to see my Lord

I'm going' right up to heaven  
Straight up to heaven on the Glory train

And it be beautiful  
And it be wonderful  
And it be glorious  
And it be marvelous

And yes the Lord will see  
And He will smile at me  
And He will hold my hand  
Up in the Glory land  
Them holy bells will ring  
And all those angels sing

When I ride  
I'm-a ridin' with my white robe on  
My white robe on  
White robe on  
My white robe on

Whoo, whoo, whoo

## **BENEDICTION**

Dear Lord, from You, all things  
Though we are many  
In life and death  
We are truly one

Just the calling of Your Holy Name  
Releases us to perceive  
The oneness in all, of all

You have given us  
through Your word  
the Divine thought

And the Divine thought is  
the Divine manifestation  
Is holy action

Mighty mighty is the healing of Thy name  
O! Most High  
May we go forth and shout it  
In kingdoms earthly and divine

## AMEN

Amen, amen, amen, amen  
Oh Father we go forth in Thy Holy Name  
Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen

Oh, peace be unto you  
Oh, peace be unto me  
Oh, blessed be the name of the Lord  
Almighty God  
Amen

Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen, amen  
Oh Father we go forth in Thy Holy Name

Blessed our sisters  
And blessed our brothers  
And blessed our mothers, in Thy Holy Name

Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, amen

Amen, amen, amen

Go in peace  
Love and serve the Lord  
Let us  
Go in peace  
Love and serve the Lord

Blessed our mothers  
And blessed our fathers  
Blessed our sisters in Thy Holy Name

Blessed our mothers and  
Blessed our sisters  
Blessed our brothers in Thy Holy name

Amen, amen, amen, amen  
amen, amen, amen, amen

Oh, Father we go forth in Thy Holy Name

Amen amen amen  
Amen amen amen

Oh, blessed be thy name  
Forever Holy be  
Forever blessed be Thy Holy Name  
Forever be

Oh Lord forever be  
Oh Lord, oh blessed be  
Forever blessed be Thy Holy Name  
Forever be

Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen  
Amen, amen, amen

*This libretto is based on multiple religious texts as interpreted by Wynton Marsalis*





A photograph of the Saenger Theatre marquee in New Orleans. The marquee is illuminated with numerous warm white lights. The word "SAENGER" is displayed in large, white, serif capital letters. Below it, the text "THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS PERFORMING THE ABYSSINIAN MASS TONIGHT 7 PM" is shown in smaller, white, sans-serif capital letters. The marquee is set against a dark background, and the lights create a warm, glowing effect.

**S A E N G E R**

**THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER  
ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS  
PERFORMING THE ABYSSINIAN MASS  
TONIGHT 7 PM**

*Saenger Theatre,* **NEW ORLEANS LA**



*Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, CHARLOTTE NC*





*Kauffman Center,* **KANSAS CITY MO**





*Chrysler Hall,* **NORFOLK VA**



*Symphony Hall,* **BOSTON MA**





*Kennedy Center,* **WASHINGTON D.C.**



Chris Crenshaw - spoons; Carlos Henriquez - cowbell; Quinn Brown - lead tenor (vocal solo); Rafael Clarke - bass (vocal solo); Josh Adam Dawson - tenor (vocal solo); Derrick Baskin - tenor (vocal solo); Vincent Gardner - tuba, featured; Ted Nash - piccolo; Ali Jackson

Walter Blanding - tenor saxophone; Victor Goines - tenor saxophone; Jorell Williams - bass (vocal solo); Nicole Phifer - alto (vocal solo); Vincent Gardner - "African Bull Horn" trombone holler

# THE ABYSSINIAN MASS *by Wynton Marsalis*



## JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS

### REEDS

Sherman Irby - alto & soprano saxophones, flute, clarinet  
Ted Nash - alto & soprano saxophones, flute, piccolo, clarinet  
Victor Goines - tenor & soprano saxophones, flute, Bb & Eb clarinets, bass clarinet  
Walter Blanding - tenor & soprano saxophones, clarinet  
Paul Nedzela - baritone saxophone, clarinet, bass clarinet

### TRUMPETS

Ryan Kisor  
Kenny Rampton  
Marcus Printup  
Wynton Marsalis

### TROMBONES

Vincent Gardner  
Chris Crenshaw  
Elliot Mason

### RHYTHM SECTION

Dan Nimmer - piano  
Carlos Henriquez - bass  
Ali Jackson - drums

## CHORALE LE CHATEAU

Rasul A-Salaam, Justin Michael Austin, Martin Bakari, Derrick Baskin, Jeanette Blakeney, Clayton Brown, Quinn Brown, Chenee Campbell, Joe Caruncho Jr., Rafael Clark, Emily Dankworth, Tynan Davis, Josh Adam Dawson, Lauren Dawson, George Dowdy, Sequina Dubose, Patrice Eaton, Patricia Pates Eaton, Stephanie Estep, Christine Fanuel, Eustacia Foster, Shani Foster, Ayana George, Maryvel Gonzalez, Jamal Green, Amber Harris, Kaleb Alexander Hopkins, Candice Hoyes, Clinton Ingram, Arielle Jacobs, Michael Jahlil, Edward Jordan, Jonathan Kirkland, Tesia Kwarteng, Latoya Lewis, Marvin Lowe, Maria Marsalis, Ann McCormack, Richard McMichael, Lynette Rhett McNeil, Lauren Michelle, Jamal Moore, Belinda Munro, Djore Nance, Darnell Norman, Jonathan Owens, Nicole Phifer, Marquita Raley, John Rawlins III, Brittany Robinson, Cameron James Ross, Timothy Springs, Quiana Smith, Travis Smith, Karyn Stevenson, Sharol Stone, Gabrielle Stravelli, Elaine Sturkey, Brandie Sutton, Jennalyn Thomas, Nathaniel Thompson, Tonya Thompson, Bobby W. Walker, Joanna Wallfisch, Matia Washington, Montavious Wells, Kortland Whalum, Kali Wilder, Jorell Williams, Allyson Wilson

## ORATOR

Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III



# THE ABYSSINIAN MASS *by Wynton Marsalis*



## THE ABYSSINIAN MASS JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA WITH WYNTON MARSALIS FEATURING DAMIEN SNEED AND CHORALE LE CHATEAU

### An Original Composition by Wynton Marsalis

(Skayne's Music/ASCAP)

Executive Producer: Wynton Marsalis

Producer: Gabrielle Armand

Post Producer and Mixing Engineer: Todd Whitelock

Mixed in Studio B at MSR Studios, NYC

Assistant Mix Engineer: Alex Hendrickson

Live Mix Engineer: David Robinson

Live Recording Engineers: Rob Macomber, James P. Nichols

Mastered by Mark Wilder at Battery Studios, NYC 2016

Art Direction and Design: Frank Harkins

Photography: Frank Stewart

Essay: Leon Wieseltier

Copyists: Jonathan Kelly, Geoff Burke, Matt Hilgenberg, Rigdzin Collins

Music Administration: Kay Wolff, Christi English, Omar Little, Tim Carter, Alex Ball

Marketing: Aaron Bisman, Jake Cohen, Jonathan Fricke

Publicity: Zoëy Tidal Jones, Christina Riley

Project Management: Valerie Florville

DVD Producers: Eugenia Han, Sophia Betz

DVD Directors: James Sapione, Simeon Marsalis

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Steve Maritz/Maritz





## **ABYSSINIAN: A GOSPEL CELEBRATION TOUR (2013)**

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Eric D. Wright, Assistant Director  
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Billy Banks, Stage Manager  
Sarah Peterson, Production Manager

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Damien Sneed, Conductor  
Cynthia Ellis, Personal Assistant to Damien Sneed  
Karyn Stevenson, Executive Administrator  
Quinn Brown, Executive Administrator  
Jorell Williams, General Assistant  
Elaine Sturkey, General Assistant  
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Gwendolyn Quinn – Public Relations

#### **THANK YOU:**

Jazz at Lincoln Center, Damien Sneed, and Chorale Le Chateau would like to thank all of the tour presenters, promoters, churches, music and community centers, schools, radio stations and volunteers for their generosity, down-home hospitality and support throughout our tour.

Special thanks to The Abyssinian Baptist Church and Ricky 'Dirty Red' Gordon

Special thanks to the David Steward Family Foundation for their faith in a work that they had not yet heard.









