





# > > > C A N Y O U S E E ? > > >

ART EVOLVES WITH SOCIETY AND IS INFORMED BY SOCIETY, but an artist should never be so intimidated by the need for social acceptance that he or she will change the personal discovery of a vital truth just to fit in with vaporous trends. But sometimes the vapor of a trend is as rooted in poisoned gas as bigotry is rooted in brutal superstition. Sometimes, as the New Orleans legend Buddy Bolden is supposed to have said, all we have to do is open up the windows and let the bad air out. Nothing quite so simple can be done with superstition because it will not, like gas, rise up and float away when wind is allowed in through the window and bad air is ushered out. Some artists compose and perform as though they will continue to open up the window, no matter how that opening is responded to, whether with acceptance or rejection.

Wynton Marsalis is one of the most important artists of our moment because the quality and range of his talent has few peers and his integrity is exceeded by no one. (Uh-oh: did I hear somebody say integrity in this house?) Like Bolden, this contemporary son of New Orleans made a name for himself by "calling the children home." Marsalis reestablished the power and elegance of jazz in his time and for his generation and for all generations that came before or after his. This has now been going on for over twenty years and it was no small achievement when it began, and the opposition to what Marsalis went after was met both with great acceptance and great rejection. None of that stopped him from going his own way and from carrying much of the jazz world with him.

There were still problems because it sometimes seems to many that the balance achieved by integrity is impossible; the consequence is that the very idea of equilibrium starts to take on the form of a bitter myth due to the stubborn certitude of the protean opposition, which is almost as wily and flexible as art itself. One strain of opposition has evolved from the condition that began in 1619 when twenty African slaves arrived in Jamestown, Virginia. Neither those slaves nor anyone else knew that plantation bondage would last for over two hundred years and that 600,000 people would have to die in a bloody civil war before the slaves were freed into an ambiguous fate. That's how hard-headed the opposition to abolition was.







That is also why the certainty of inevitable freedom was made clear in the only way it could be by Abraham Lincoln, the commander-in-chief during that civil war. In his Second Inaugural Address, the president of the United States expressed the heroic and collective sense of democracy that he knew was the only solution. No, Lincoln did not bite his tongue on March 4, 1865 when he said, "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

The level of collective commitment made clear by Lincoln is what we need today, across all lines of political and ethnic distinction, because far too many of the descendants of those chattel now live in a variation on plantation life that has become a national presence so pernicious that it inspired the title track of this recording. We must remember, however, that the blues awaits us all. It never fails to tell us that the ultimate truth is simple while complex: good and evil dance so closely together that they could easily become one – but never do! They simply coexist in perpetuity. The proportions of that coexistence are always left up to us. Those proportions are questioned throughout this recording and something lyrical and soulful is always responding to the sorrows and the difficulties, good dancing with evil while doing its best to step on the feet of the blues.

As usual Marsalis continues to prove his preeminence as a trumpet player and a leader of men, this time bringing along a new singer that he is as proud of as he is of the remarkable instrumentalists who move on up to higher ground with him. From their moving position on the hill, the air is quite clear and you can see everything you need to see. Some of it is horrible but it is taken on by the beautiful, and the battle is something to behold.

— STANLEY CROUCH







## FROM THE PLANTATION TO THE PENITENTIARY

(6/4 GROOVE, 6/8 NANINGO, 6/4 SWING) 11:48

From the Plantation to the Penitentiary  
From the yassuh boss to the  
ghetto minstrelsy

In the heart of freedom ... in chains  
In the heart of freedom ... insane  
In the heart of freedom ... insane  
In the heart of freedom ... in chains

From the field hand cry  
To the ten to twenty-five  
From the 'sold-off' men  
To the raised by next-of-kin  
In the cause of freedom and shame  
In the cause of freedom and game

From the 'no book' rules  
To the raggy public schools  
From the coon and shine  
To the unemployment line  
In the land of freedom ... in chains  
In the land of freedom ... insane

From the work long days  
To the dope and drinking craze  
From the stock in slaves  
To the booming prison trade  
In the name of freedom ... insane  
In the name of freedom ... and shame  
In the heart of freedom ... in chains  
In the heart of freedom ... insane

## FIND ME

(MODERN HABANERA) 9:34

I see I see shattered people  
Roaming the streets night and day ...  
say can you see?

See what I see.  
See their minds.  
I see tattered ragmen reaching for  
eyes of a friend.

None can be found.  
Oh I see you pleading  
See your crazy stare.  
See you as you're falling  
Dropping everywhere.  
And it goes round and round and  
round and round.

It goes round and round and round  
and round  
It goes round and round and round  
and can you see  
Where we stand  
You and me?

I see starving people screaming  
Crushed as we rush on our way ...  
say can you see?  
Can you see me?

Hear my cries.

I see women dragging  
Souls of their womb vanquished dreams  
Never to be.

Yes I see you tremble.  
See your angry eyes  
See you as you're falling  
Thrown back to the skies.

And it goes round and round and round and round.  
It goes round and round and round and round  
It goes round and round and round and can you see  
Where we stand  
You and me?

I see scattered people praying  
Stick figures chant ghostly names  
Say have you seen ...  
Have you seen me?  
Seen my life?

I see people dying  
Running with bags full of gold  
Lost on the wind.  
I see cities crumble  
Ripped apart inside  
I see mountains tumble  
Nothing will survive.

And it goes round and round and round and round  
It goes round and round and round and round  
It goes round and round and round and can you see  
Here we stand  
You and me.

## DOIN' (Y)OUR THING

(ALTERNATING 2-BEAT COUNTRY GROOVE,  
SOCA, CUMBIA, SWING) 8:37







## LOVE AND BROKEN HEARTS

(BALLAD) 7:40

I don't need good looks to sell no cars or beer,

TVs, or new machines

All you con men can hang up your schemes.

Pimps and hustlers – put up the Vaseline.

I ain't your bitch I ain't your ho.

And public niggerin' has got to go.

Oh safari seekers and thug life coons.

You modern day minstrels and your  
songless tunes.

Don't take me down your memory lane

I got my own memories – just the same . . .

It's time for the return of romance.

It's time for you and me to slow dance.

For entrancing "I love you"s,

Sweet tender kisses.

It's time for moonlit glances and crazy  
playful love games.

It's time for candy roses and silly names

It's time for you to hold me and touch my soul

It's time for me to hold you and let you know.

We bring the starlit skies

When we're together.

Oh . . . how did we lose our song?

When . . . did we forget our dance?

Dances the ancients knew.

Songs country bluesmen blew . . .

'Bout our lives, are love and broken hearts.

It's time for me to tease and scold you

It's time for you to love and hold me.

For dining by candle light

Fun Sunday picnics

It's time for slow, slow dances and

showing love with no shame

It's time to treat me gently now.

Oh . . . how did we lose our song?

When . . . did we forget our dance?

Dances the ancients knew.

Songs country bluesmen blew . . .

'Bout our lives, are love and broken hearts.

It's time for me to love and hold you.

It's time for me to tease and scold you.

For dining by candle light

Fun Sunday picnics.

It's time for slow, slow dancing

And showing love with no shame

It's time to treat me gently now.

## SUPERCAPITALISM

(FAST SWING, CHARLESTON, CHA-CHA,  
SLOW SHUFFLE) 6:56

Gimme that. Gimme this. Gimme that.

Gimme this. Gimme that. Gimme that.

Gimme that. Gimme this. Gimme that. And

That and that and that and that.

Gimme this. Gimme that. Gimme that.

Gimme that. Gimme this. Gimme that.

Gimme this. Gimme that. Gimme that. And

That and that and that and that.

Let me see that, I think there's something  
there I see.

Give it to me. I got to have it all for me.

Let me see that, I think there's something  
there I see.

Give it to me. I got to have it all for me.

I got to have, I got to have now.

A lot of stuff, expensive fluff, Wow.

I got to work I got to get now

A brand new thing I'm worshipping, Wow.

I got to make, I got to get green.

Give me my fee. I got to be mean.

There's never enough.

There's never enough.

There's never enough.

It's never enough.

There's always some more.

Oh where are you hidin' it?

It's never e-

Gimme this. Gimme that. Gimme that.

Gimme this. Gimme that. Gimme that.

Gimme that. Gimme this. Gimme that. And

That and that and that and that.

## THESE ARE THOSE SOULFUL DAYS

(WALKING BALLAD) 8:04

"These are those soulful days . . ."







## WHERE Y'ALL AT?

(2ND-LINE SWING WITH MOTOWN VAMP) 5:48

You got to speak the language the people  
are speakin'  
'Specially when you see the havoc it's wreakin'  
Even the rap game started out critiquin'  
Now it's all about killing and freakin'

All you '60s radicals and world beaters  
Righteous revolutionaries and Camus readers  
Liberal students and equal rights pleaders  
What's goin' on now that y'all are the leaders

Where y'all at? (That's what I'm talkin' about)  
Where y'all at? (Where y'all at?)  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at? (Lord have mercy)

Don't turn up your nose  
It's us that's stinkin'  
And it all can't be blamed on the party  
of Lincoln  
The left and the right got the country sinkin'  
Knocked the scales from Justice hand and  
set her eyes a-blinkin'

All you patriots, compatriots, and true  
blue believers  
Brilliant thinkers and overachievers  
All you "when I was young  
we were so naïve'ers  
Y'all started like Eldridge and now  
you're like Beaver

Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?

We supposed to symbolize freedom and pride  
But we got scared after King and the  
Kennedys died  
We take corruption and graft in stride  
Sittin' around like owls talkin' 'bout "WHO?  
Who lied?"

All you po' folks victims of rich folks game  
All you rich folks gettin' ripped off in the  
same name  
All you gossips cacklin' "It's a dirty shame"  
And whistle blowers cryin' 'bout who's to blame

Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?

Well, it ain't about black and it ain't about  
the white  
They'll get together to make your pocket light.  
When you just keep on payin' do your jaws  
get tight?  
Taxes, that's your real inalienable right

All you afro-wearers and barbershop experts  
Cultists, sectarians, political disconcerts  
Big baggy pants wearers with the long  
white T-shirts

The good man that counter what the  
bad man asserts

Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?

After 9/11 the whole world was ready to love us  
Now everybody can't wait to rub us

We runnin' all over the world with a blunderbuss  
And the Constitution all but forgot in the fuss

All you feminists and mothers, fathers  
and brothers  
I guess you'd pimp your daughters if you  
had your druthers  
All you "It's not me" it's always others  
You watch the crimes, you close your shutters

Folks watchin' Fox and CNN News  
Seekin' a cure for the Red, White, and Blues  
Well, it won't matter which side you choose  
If we end up payin' international dues

All you "In my day it used to be" frauds  
All you "So what's and "Leave it to the Lawd"s  
All you "I'll just deal with whatever cards"  
All you extend adolescent American Bards

Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?  
Where y'all at?

**ALL COMPOSITIONS BY  
WYNTON MARSALIS**  
(Skayne's Music/ASCAP)

**PRODUCED BY  
DELFEAYO MARSALIS**

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**WYNTON MARSALIS TRUMPET**  
**WALTER BLANDING TENOR & SOPRANO SAXOPHONES**  
**DAN NIMMER PIANO**  
**CARLOS HENRIQUEZ BASS**  
**ALI JACKSON, JR. DRUMS**  
**JENNIFER SANON VOCALS**

Recorded on June 28 & 29, 2006 by DAVID ROBINSON at Right Track Studio A509, New York, NY

Assistant engineers: JAY GOIN, HYOMIN KANG & ALEX VANGUER

Additional recording by YURON ALDEMA at AM Studios, New York, NY

Mixed in October 2006 by PATRICK SMITH at Glenwood Studios, Burbank, CA

Mastered on November 17, 2006 by LEON ZERVOS at Sterling Sound, New York, NY

Production coordination: ISOBEL ALLEN-FLOYD, GENEVIEVE STEWART & RACHEL STICKNEY

Carlos Henriquez plays a Cleveland New Standard bass with Damian Dugolecki G & D and Gamut A & E gut strings

Ali Jackson uses Yamaha drums, sticks & brushes by Regal Tip, cymbals by Zildjian, and XL Spec Protecitor Cases

Recorded without the *dreaded* bass direct

A&R: ELI WOLF / A&R administration: KEITH KARWELIES

Product management: SHANIEKA D. BROOKS / Creative Direction: GORDON H JEE

Art direction & design: BURTON YOUNT / Paintings by JESSICA BENJAMIN from "The American Series"

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