

Skain's Domain

Episode 10 - June 1, 2020

0:00:00 Adam Meeks: Alright, let's get started. Welcome, everybody, thanks for being here for this week's episode of Skain's Domain. My name is Adam Meeks, and I'm the video producer here at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Tonight, with Wynton, we're going to focus on the current state of things in this country, and we'll definitely open it up for questions in a dialogue. Before I hand it over to Mr. Marsalis, I'd just like to take a second in this pivotal moment in our country to express my personal solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and the protests across this country and around the world, and to challenge us all to find ways to use our actions, resources, platforms, etcetera, to stand up for black lives and to keep our institutions accountable. With that said, I'm very much looking forward to an important and necessary conversation this evening, and I'll hand it over to Mr. Marsalis to kick things off.

0:00:54 Wynton Marsalis: Thank you, Adam. Welcome, once again, to Skain's Domain, where we discuss matters, trivial and significant, with increasing intensity. Well, we have a very tight week in our country. Yesterday, Jazz at Lincoln Center's staff, we had a very heartfelt at home meeting with various members got to express themselves over something that we posted that many people did not feel reflected how they were feeling about the moment. Now, I wrote the statement, and I wrote another post that I was also working on three days... Took me three days, a longer one. And I heard from so many of our friends and some of the young people that even spoke on Skain's Domain a couple of weeks ago and they were speaking with much more passion than they spoke when they were on this show about what they felt, what they would like to see, and how they feel we should be presented. It's been interesting, but it's necessary. Sometimes, in a joking fashion, but it's not really a joke, you have to follow your young leadership.

0:02:02 WM: There has to be... It's difficult when we start to speak different generations, older, younger, we have different vantage points, different points of view. The problems in our country are so great that no one person's vantage point, or no one person's opinion is going to be informed enough to solve our problems. It does not make a difference how wise somebody is. They need the help of a whole community of people of all ages, young, much older, middle age, from all different walks of life, to come up with something that still will not be sufficient, but at least it'll be a ways down the road from just fighting and being at each other's throats. Now we're under tremendous pressure in our country. We have wave upon wave of things that are dysfunctional and they're all hitting at the same time. So I'm gonna get into what I'm saying. I'm gonna read some of something I posted, and I'm gonna stop after about four paragraphs of it. And then I'm going to open it up for commentary.

0:03:14 WM: And it goes without saying, of course, what my feelings are about the public murder of Mr Floyd. Being from the south, growing up in segregation, traveling up and down this country,

having questionable relations with our law officers on different occasions, and also having a best friend that's a Chicago police officer. I'mma just tell you one story about a friend of mine, he's a retired police officer, I was the best man in his wedding. And we've argued these issues down through the years. We met when I was 21 or 22, now I'm 58. And he trained police officers, so he would always be in defense of officers, what they had to deal with, and what was going on. He's a police officer in West Chicago, now retired. So he's in an extremely rough area.

0:04:10 WM: And he would call us civilians and say, "You don't know what it's like out on the streets. You don't know what this is." Maybe three or four years ago, after one of the many killings that have happened down through the years, we started arguing about it. And it got a little heated. And he started saying what police officers encounter, this and that. So I said, "How long have you been in your position?" "Oh man, I've been in West Chicago for 20 years," or whatever he said. I said, "You're in a rough area." "Yes, I'm on the street." I said, "How many you kill?" He said, "I never killed nobody." I said, "Why?" He said, "I never wanted to kill none." And then he busted himself, we both started to laugh, not that it was a funny subject, but because after years I got him around to just the truth of why you would use deadly force on a human being that you don't have to use it on.

0:05:00 WM: You have to go through a lot of training. You go to officers academy, and there's an oath that you take when you get that firearm, and that oath is very serious. And of the activities that we've seen, not just in the last years, I mean it's really... You can go back as far as you want to go, this stuff has been going on. I'mma just start with this statement, and then I'm gonna open it up to talk with people.

0:05:32 WM: With the crescendo of public outcry and proliferation of opinions and justifiable expressions of outrage by so many experts, officials, and popular celebrities, I feel there's no room or need for yet another person voicing the commonly held opinion. I also believe that the everyday tragedies that are commonplace and routine in our everyday way of living should be addressed when they happen, not when so much pressure is built up in the system that it just must be let out. It's also much more difficult to draw a crowd everyday for the sanctioned and accepted forms of corruption and disrespect of black Americans that are shouted from countless recordings and videos, and even more powerfully whispered in the form of discriminatory laws, practices, and procedures that result in unfair housing, in unfair employment practices, and more tragically, lengthy unjust prison sentences.

0:06:32 WM: Much of this cacophony of crazy is executed officials to me with a warm and innocuous smile. Therefore, Americans of all hues, pass quickly from anger to acceptance. And as months turn into years, our daily silence and inaction is willfully misread as endorsement. And we go back to the illusion that we're past this because the daily grinding is more important than what we find if we'd just open our eyes and keep them open.

0:07:03 WM: This particular tragedy however, is very common and it's become common across these last decades. It's perfectly symbolic of this specific time and place. And this global pandemic is giving it a clear and much more pungent stage. This murder is so distinctive because of the large

size and gentle nature of the man who was murdered, and because of the small, patient, and determined demeanor of his killer, and of all the peace officers protecting the crime in full public view. And because our nation is always attempting to escape its original sin with the loud shouting of other serious though less egregious transgressions. This fully recorded public execution yet again, demands our full attention and interest if we have the slightest remnant of a belief in the morality, reason, and intelligence required to realize, maintain and protect our libertarian democracy.

0:08:06 WM: In each of the four decades of my adult life, I have addressed our myriad of American social and character problems with a very involved peace that always defends a belief in the progression towards freedom that my parents taught us was perhaps possible for all. Even though there was nothing in our environment that would indicate that. Experientially, artistically, and spiritually, I've had a lifetime of relationship akin to obsession with conforming this national calamity and conundrum. And here it comes around again, as it has come for me every day since I was a little small baby, and I recognized that something was wrong and somebody was it and who was it was you.

0:08:56 WM: It could be our neighborhoods with the asphalt streets and the ditches on the side. When you get on the wide side, it was all pavement. It could be our football uniforms that came from the 1950s. It could be any of a million things that were signs there in the south to reinforce your inferiority. And if you told your parents about it, the basic vibe would be, "Hey man, be glad. When I was growing up, we didn't have football on. They used to kill people for that." It was always something worse that had happened in the past. This is a difficult moment for our nation and it's a moment that requires us to be as for real as we can, but we also have lost faith in anything that anybody says.

0:09:55 WM: It's always interesting, somebody tells you something and you go into what you think they're trying to say, or what you know that they're saying underneath it, and then you go into your interpretation of it. And the thought that they might just be telling you something has been undermined. Let's put ourselves in time. The killing of black citizens over and over and over again in a very public way is tragic. The court system, and what it does, is even more tragic. The education system and what it does, very silently but at their very highest levels, always with a lot of philosophy behind it, is even worse.

0:10:40 WM: We can go through the gauntlet of things that are set up and executed to keep Afro-Americans from having the opportunity for equality in the United States of America. It's been so much investment in it for so long, it's really just a way of life. And if you think about what the Constitution is designed to do, it is a leveling document designed to create a balance of power and to attempt to give agency to those who don't have agency. And if you look at what we do with do it and how we abuse it to make sure that those who do have power get more of it and those who don't have it get less of it. If you look at how the mind, intelligence, and training is used to abuse those who don't have it, we're in a hell of a wave right now.

0:11:33 WM: What we have to do in this time, we have to return to our fundamentals. We have to

understand that we are in a situation that is calling out for chaos. There's nothing this current political economic climate wants more than chaos in the streets. I'll give you an analogy. It's like you go in the store with two or three of your partners and y'all just create havoc as a old school fight game. And y'all just start fighting and calling each other names while somebody's over there handling the cash register. Man, y'all just tear somebody's store up, and the person who was in there stealing goes unmolested. We have to keep our mind on our national objectives as we recognize yet again what has been going on for centuries to black people. It's a mistake to remove this one from all the other ones. They are all connected. They're acts of terror, they're connected in this country, and ultimately they're connected around the world. It's always best to connect yourself to the largest group because you wanna be on the big stage in addressing human issues.

0:12:57 WM: In this case, it's specific to our times, but they are no less human for those who suffer the same fate at the hands of those who have agency and choose to use it in a violent and ignorant fashion. We're in the middle of COVID-19. There's lockdowns. You hear the police sirens now, there's an 11 o'clock curfew in New York. A lot of people are unemployed. We can see another virus going through our financial system, and we're wondering, "Man where is this gonna land?" We're scrambling all over the place to keep people in jobs, trying to figure out what we can do. Any way possible to keep ourselves from being broke, our colleagues and friends. We in debt as a nation, and we in debt individually. We have a complete economic imbalance. Politicians who steal everything and brag about not even giving a damn about you in public. The church has become a political institution. And we get the spectacle of a police officer kneeling on a man's neck, breaking a man's neck in public, while he calls for his mama. When I saw the man on television, I wanna say I was shocked, but it's just Eric Garner six years later.

0:14:29 WM: Then we protested and talked. We had slogans about it, but we didn't change the grand jury system. It needs to change. We need to be pointed in our protests, in creating a change. Now we see what a lot of the civil rights legislation in the 1960s are being reversed, are we participating in it? We have to participate, with fire and fury, in our political system because violence is not gonna... Those numbers are not gonna work out. And sometimes we look at so many movies, it keeps us from understanding the actual dynamics of violence.

0:15:18 WM: I listed many of our problems. And I wanna say that listing problems is not a solution. It's like on a much less serious level but also serious, it's like you're playing. You can tell me everything wrong with your playing, but it does not mean you will become better. Oftentimes, there's one thing that keeps your playing from improving, it's that you don't have the will to sacrifice. And I think at the end of the day, there's limited talking that entertainers and musicians can do. We're not trained in that. We talk about what we know about. But the one thing that we do know is that if we're gonna come out of this, it's gonna take a collective will, and a collective intelligence, and it will not be tribal in nature, that's not gonna lead us where we need to go. It feels good, but we need to go to another place, and that place requires much more discipline, and that discipline does not feel as good as not having it.

0:16:25 WM: So, I'm gonna conclude my initial statements by saying that, yeah, I'm a believer. I believe that all of what we go through and all of what we're put here to do, is something great. I

believe we can be lead into ignorance, and I believe there are many who believe in ignorance. But I believe there are more who don't. I think if that were not the case, we would have annihilated each other by now, and we haven't done that. But I think it is necessary for us to fight for our rights, and it is necessary for us to protest and get out in the streets and write and agitate and agitate and agitate. And I believe that it's an everyday thing, and no gesture is too small. It's very important at this time for us to reaffirm our belief and our fundamental principles, and this is a time that leads us against those principles, and that's why when I wrote this article I went back to Abe Lincoln. And he talked about slavery, because a lot of this is a continuation of slavery that's been shifted to peonage. "How can I get you underneath me, get you to work for nothing? Sell you, abuse you?" These are the age-old questions, and in America it's played itself out in a very clear way.

0:18:00 WM: I also wanna say that what it takes to write something in a blog or a post or... It takes a second to do that, it takes a second to respond to something. The years and the investment required to be a part of a civil rights movement or something that creates change in our country, you've got to be a believer for a long time, and it's gonna wear you down. So as much as I think it's great for all of us to express our opinions and be forceful and write them with feelings, let's do things too. Let's be productive.

0:18:39 WM: Abe Lincoln said, "I hate slavery because of the monstrous injustice of it. I hate it because it deprives our republic of an example of its just influence in the world." Think about where we are right now in the world, how the world is looking at us. It enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites. It causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many really good people amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty, criticizing the Declaration of Independence. Then he's talking about how...

0:19:23 WM: People were always talking about, who was it referring to? What does it mean by, "Men are free," or "What does it mean?" And insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest. And that's where we've gotten to. This works for me. So I got mine, you get yours. I'mma conclude what I'm saying and I will answer and listen to what people have to say. Thank you for joining me. I will answer your questions as straight up... What comes to me, I'm gonna tell you. I know we got some youngsters on here, so I'mma check my language. This is a rough time. It's gonna take all of us to come out of it, but we have to believe in something to rise up out of it. So thank y'all. And now Adam, I'mma just... Whoever wants to leap...

0:20:13 AM: Great. Thank you Wynton.

0:20:15 WM: Yes sir.

0:20:17 AM: So for those of you who are joining us for the first time, if you have a question you'd like to ask, please just raise your hand in the participants tab. And it'll line you up in a queue and we'll get to as many people as we can tonight. Also, if you could please just make sure that both your first and last name appear, then I can call on you when it's your turn. So, with that, our first question is coming from Jean Flaherty. Jean, if you could unmute yourself now and go ahead

whenever you're ready.

0:20:51 Jean Flaherty: Yes. Thank you so much for doing this and thank you for your words tonight and on social media. I really appreciated it. I've heard you speak as keynote speaker at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago in 2012 and I wanna thank you for everything that you and your father have done for education and for music. I teach elementary music and I also direct an adult community concert band for local educators in Albemarle County which surrounds Charlottesville, Virginia. I'm a member of the marching band staff at the high school Veronica Swift attendance, so I've met her a couple of times when she stopped by to visit. And my husband and I heard her perform at the concert you did with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in Lynchburg in December 2018. As I mentioned, I teach in Albemarle County, Virginia, and since the events of August 2017, our school district has done a lot of work in reframing the narrative, which means we are trying to tell the truth about our history. My question is, do you have any resources or advice for someone teaching young students about jazz music, specifically related to the history of jazz and how it played a role in the current events of the time?

0:22:00 WM: Hoo, that's a good question. Thank you for calling. Thank you for everything that you do. A good book to get is a book by a guy named Donald Marquis, 'In Search of Buddy Bolden'. And I think that that book will give you a lot of insight into the nature of early jazz. It's something you have to read through to see what you want for kids. And then, Jelly Roll Morton's Library of Congress Recordings are the best resource. Once again, you have to make your resources out of what he says. You gotta pick through it 'cause it's not all for kids. And then I think that another good resource for the early jazz and what it's about is Sidney Bechet's book, 'Treat it Gentle'. Has great poetic writing in that book. I think the songs that are good, 'New Orleans Music' is good, 'March Music'. Things like 'Little Liza Jane', hymns, waltzes. If you read the 'Search of Buddy Bolden' book, you're going to see a lot about the music. Now, there's another book that I can't... I read it a long time ago, about some riots that took place in New Orleans in 1900. Robert Charles riots.

0:23:19 WM: Every early jazz musician, if you listen to old history, talks about these riots. And after these riots, the Creole musicians who come, light-skin Blacks, were forced to play with the dark-skin Blacks. There was a lot of murdering and mayhem and killing of Afro-American citizens and Creole citizens. New Orleans had a three-caste system. And it was a gentleman who was tired of taking disrespect from some police officers and he went on a shooting spree, a black man. And it was a line of demarcation in the life of New Orleans. So I think if you look up the Robert Charles shootings, it was a book that I read a long time ago. I wish I remember the name of it. If you look him up, you'll see. And I wanna say, when I was growing up in 1970s, a guy named Mark Essex got on the landing of a Howard Johnson's Motel and started shooting New Orleans' police, and he was a marksman. So I remember the news all day said it was seven or eight, and it was a big deal down where we were from. And it was also the cause of unbelievable racial tension. At that time, there wasn't as much of riots and stuff like there were in the 1900s.

0:24:34 WM: But there was another instance when I was growing up, of a guy named Gary Tyler, in the '70s, who was wrongfully imprisoned. We were around kinda the same age and it sticks in

mind. But you will notice, when you study jazz, you're gonna see many things that the jazz musicians are saying that don't go with the way history is taught. And I can remember being in classes... I was integrated after Martin Luther King got killed. It was a struggle, it was a... I don't need to get into it that much, but it was a struggle because I had grown up in segregation. I remember looking at books with slaves on the plantation smiling, and I would always... I always had problems. Always had problems with students just in terms of having to come up in here all the time. And it's important for us to correct as much about history as we can and tell the truth of it, because we owe our younger people with the ability to respond to the situations we're in now with actual information. And I'mma conclude what I'm telling you. I know I'm giving you a long answer. It's just out of love. I love my band instructors. I love it and so much feeling for it. I'mma conclude it by talking about a young trumpet player Khalil Jackson, got in the military, and he was in Afghanistan working in a...

0:26:03 WM: He was in the military and he came back from his first tour and I asked him, "Man, what did you learn?" He said " Man, I learned not to lie to myself because it could get me killed." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You know those little lies you tell yourself all the way, along the way of who you are. You don't even pay attention to them 'cause you've been doing it so much. But if you lie to yourself enough, you'll get in a situation you're not supposed to be in." And I thought that was also symbolic of the position we are in. And it's important for us to teach our younger people all the music around something. And we will find examples of protests, but we will also find examples of co-signature, we will find examples of democracy, we'll find examples... I'mma leave you one other thing... Because to criticize is always a powerful position.

0:26:54 WM: When I was like 23, I was teaching a class. Too young to be teaching, really. But I was teaching a younger trumpet player who was maybe 16, maybe the best trumpet player in the class. And every time that trumpet player played, it was somewhere in the south I would have a criticism, "You didn't do this, you didn't breathe, you didn't play." So after like 30 or 40 minutes, it was a lot of everything he wasn't doing. And he was not a disrespectful... He was being very respectful. Had my early record of Haydn Concerto, he was excited to play for me. Then he asked me... After a while he said, "Mr. Marsalis, may I respectfully ask that you critique me from the positive frame of reference." Well, that was a lesson for me because the school of teaching I had come up in... You know, you come in to teach, people tell you, "You don't sound good." And they just... It wasn't mean, it wasn't to destroy your confidence. And I thought... I told him, I said, "Okay, you're giving me a lesson now." I can't really teach like that, because I've never thought about it. But it's important for us to fix our vision and our sight on a 360 degree circle because then we know what we don't want, and we can see what we do want, and go in the direction of what we do want. When we only see what we don't want, that's all we see. So thank you and good luck with your students and your young people. Bless you.

0:28:15 JF: Thank you so much. That was wonderful.

0:28:17 WM: Alright. Sorry for the length of it but.

0:28:20 AM: Thank you, Jean. Alright, let's take another one. Next question's coming from Marcus

Miller. Marcus you can unmute yourself, go ahead.

0:28:31 Marcus Miller: Sure. Hello. So I'm actually not the bass player. I play the saxophone.

0:28:35 WM: Really? That's my boy, man, from a long time. Boy, I still love you.

0:28:40 MM: Nah, nah. We have the same name. I've met him several times and he calls me.

0:28:43 WM: That's right. I still love you. You know I still love you. With that... We was young in New York at the same time, so I love him.

0:28:49 MM: Right. Right, right, right. Yeah, I call him Big Marcus even though I'm 6 foot 6.

0:28:52 WM: [chuckle] Watch out. Watch out Marcus.

0:28:56 MM: Yeah. My question is this. So one of the things you said in the post on Instagram, a few swipes in, was that you felt that the compositions that you've written and the notes that you've played in trying to come to terms spiritually with this fundamental American problem have been wasted. Or perhaps... You said, "Perhaps they've been wasted." And as a musician, I'm a saxophone player and also I'm into mathematics and physics and it's kinda my thing. And these are words that can be very self-contained. It's a language that when you get to the higher levels of it, only a few people can speak. And it's not always obvious how to bring it to bear on the human condition at large. But especially in these times it feels more urgent than ever to be able to take the kind of insights in the process of creative thinking and bring that to humanity in a way that can be understood and felt and not just kind of appreciated as the art or something nice to hear, or pleasant or abstractly, while that person is really smart but I have no actual engagement with it. And so I've been very much wrestling with the question of how to include music and mathematics and just in general, in the moral imagination of humanity. I was wondering if you had any thoughts on this.

0:30:20 WM: Man, I love that question first, okay. Nothing but love and respect to you. This is gonna seem ironic, but today I was thinking about SpaceX and people are in space. And we now, the relation between 1968 and now. And I was thinking about the technology required and how fantastic the achievements of the technology are, the math, all the sophistication of it. And believe it or not, I thought, what if all of that sophistication was put toward developing a lower class economic infrastructure, so people who could actually function economically in an organic way in their neighborhoods. What if all of the collective creativity in the science, our objective was less about some gadgets we could build and more about how can we empower all of our fellow citizens? What if we focus our unbelievable imagination and wealth and all of these things on people being able to have healthcare?

0:31:21 WM: All the people who've turned that into a political issue when they need to... COVID-19, they need some type of care for their kids. It's not a political issue for you at that point. And I'm not coming from either side of the political spectrum because... Not because I don't have a perspective on it but because I feel that once you do that, you no longer can have a discussion. So

Marcus, I believe that things work together. I don't believe there is a separation of art and science. I believe, we're always together. There is a art of science, and there's a science of art. And when I said that I wasted my words and all that stuff... Man, when I... Man, I don't even know how to describe, everybody's been describing it. To see the man just choke a man out. It wasn't about that particular man, because that was symbolic of what I always say about what our country is doing to black people, when I go around the country. I get on the subway everyday and I see homeless people. Man, people who sit next to me, I'll talk with them.

0:32:32 WM: You know? It's like another good friend of mine in New York, is brother Haskell Mohammed. Man, Haskell was on the street for 25 years, and we had a partner named Robert. Robert was in a wheelchair, we played chess together, he'd come to my crib sometimes. He froze to death. Haskell was like, "Man I gotta get off the street." Hey, that was 15 years ago. In New York, man, we step over homeless people on the train. And sometimes you get on the train and... I'll get on the train in the morning, one morning... 'cause you gotta be looking to see who people are not sitting next to. And I made a mistake, I sat right down next to my man was, whoo, he was up in there. But I sat down, I just, "Okay, man, I'm up in here with you." We start rapping and he starts singing songs, and we start to talk and I think, "Damn this is like a choke-out." So for me to see the man choke, I see that every day and I've been around the country, I've been in places. Been in the hood, been in schools, been playing, been teaching. This ain't no, "I'mma get on my computer" or something. I can't even hardly see a cell phones and all that stuff, to do all these calculations. I've been arguing and fighting about this stuff for a long time, man in the 60s I was taking ass with this fudge, excuse my language.

0:33:54 WM: And on and on. And it's just... Man, just to see my man symbolically. And it's like I said in 'Blood on the Fields', you see an eagle sitting on a crows nest, his mind in the east but his soul is in the west. I just can't... I can't... Man, and it's not, it's hard to even explain, man. Because I've been alone with a lot of things I wanna say about what goes on with this racial stuff. I'm not a tribalist in my thinking so it puts me out there a lot of times. But I love black people. It does not mean I dislike like any other group of people or I'm against anybody, it doesn't mean that. It just means I relate and I understand our struggle. I'm from that struggle. I remember one of my partners, one time looked at me and said, "Man, what is it like to have a daddy, bro? Can I come to your house and see what your daddy does?" And I think about all of the experiences of me, if I could sit with my partners that we played... Just the humanity of us. We put out there so bad in all these videos and movies and TV shows and it's just thing after thing after thing where we're just criminals and bad people, and this and that. Such as we're never on our terms, we're never cool, and I'm saying to myself, "Damn, I never had that kind of experience."

0:35:27 WM: And if I didn't grow up in the hood, nobody grew up in it. There's a lot of people just... So I don't wanna soapbox y'all but it's just... And it's been years of fighting for it, for me. It's not, now all of a sudden we gotta all get behind this slogan, or something. I've been trying to fight this shit since 1965-66, when I first understood about it. And it's, I need you. When I see my younger people, black, white, I don't care what they are, when I see y'all and y'all wanna create a better thing of our country and you're willing to put skin in the game and be about it, great. Come out here, 'cause this is a battle. I know I kinda went off your question, but... I said I felt it was

wasted but I don't feel that, man. It was a blessing that the Lord gave me, to sit in gymnasiums with nothing but black kids time after time, speaking against music they love. They didn't wanna hear that. Beating their behinds in basketball, going to schools in the suburbs that were segregated, asking them if they thought they couldn't dance 'cause they was white. And then showing them films of some white that could dance in 1938. Being with black kids seeing... Man I had so much opportunity to be around so many beautiful kids in different instances, and the Lord blessed me to do... To do that, and I always try to hug them, give them some love.

0:37:01 WM: If I could tell you how many schools I would go in where dudes would literally start to cry because they had never had a man touch them with a feeling that had much love in it, and not treat them like they was predators. And the teachers would be saying "Damn, man, the effect you have on these..." I said "Yeah, man, people wanna know it's okay to be themselves." And they... So I don't wanna get too much into my own thing, but you have to know the years of it. It's not something that can be explained. And we have to understand decades of it. I went to a school when I stopped, and the kids were so disrespectful, I cussed them out. And I felt bad, I looked at my man Dennis Jeter, he's like "Man, you got into your thing." I said, "Yeah man, I need to take a little break." But that was after 28-29 years of it. And it's... I never give up. When I see you, what you're saying. And a lot of my younger students, even the ones that called me they didn't like my post and... I love them for that. And we need young leadership too, but be ready to be out here, because you're fighting against an opponent you don't understand what it is. It ain't in front of you, it's all around you. [chuckle] Believe me, it's all around you, it's all up in our mythology and our narrative. We need y'all to change that. So I'm just looking around, 'cause I don't wanna get full and get into my thing.

0:38:45 WM: You know, and it's... There's a lot of people in the world. And a lot of them don't know anything about this struggle. But this struggle is real.

0:38:56 AM: Thank you, Wynton and thank you, Marcus, for your question.

0:39:00 WM: Thank you, man. What do you play, man? You play, what do you play?

0:39:03 MM: I play alto.

0:39:05 WM: Practice your horn, baby.

0:39:07 MM: Yes sir.

0:39:08 WM: Put it together. It ain't wasted. Bring people with you. I'mma tell Marcus Miller about you.

[laughter]

0:39:18 WM: I love him, man. He is one of the great people, soulful artist. My brother from another mother. That's a good dude right there.

0:39:26 MM: That's a good dude.

0:39:27 WM: He got a good heart.

0:39:29 AM: Alright, let's take another one. Our next question's coming from Katheryn Higgins. Katheryn, you there? You can go ahead and unmute yourself.

0:39:40 Katheryn Higgins: Okay. Hi. How are you?

0:39:42 WM: How're you doing?

0:39:43 KH: You know, what has bothered me so much about all the events, and I can relate to everything you're saying Mr. Marsalis. You're my brother's age and he's a couple years younger than I am, and I have been going through this all of my life and I am so freaking tired. I am tired. I mean, this is the last thing at night that I wake up and I remember saying yesterday in church, I said, "Maybe we can have a better week this week." And I woke up this morning and someone was shot by police and National Guardsmen at 12:30 AM this morning while he was making barbecue. And the ironic thing about this guy that was making barbecue is, is that he gives free food to the cops. You know, so what's that all about? The world has gone crazy. But in experiencing all of this, I've been watching the live streams and I've been talking to my friends that were actually there. I have bad knees, so I can't stand for long periods of time. And then I listen to what is on TV and what I see on the livestreams, and what I hear from my friends that were actually there. Those two stories jive. But what is being told on TV is a completely different narrative and I find that pretty disquieting.

0:41:26 KH: And then the other thing that's bothering me is where they want to confuse those that are protesting with those who are looting, and I'm saying the looters are opportunists. The protesters are a different group. Okay. And let me give you an example. For those people who remember the Olympics in Atlanta, 20 years ago, do you remember that guy that came and set off a bomb in the park? The only reason he came and set off the bomb in that park was 'cause the Olympics were there and he had a worldwide stage. You cannot blame his actions on all of those athletes that were there. It's the same thing where someone has a stage and they take it to subvert a message. So I'm pretty upset that the message that's being televised, in my opinion, from what I'm hearing from my friends that were there and from what I'm seeing on livestreams, is almost a 180 from what the reality is, and I don't know how to say it. I'm pretty upset. I'm mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, tired. You know, you've heard me talk about my father that grew up in New Orleans and what he went through. Where are we? Where are we? And if... I put on my Facebook status, I said, "Fix it America", and that's exactly the way I feel. Fix it America, because if... Till we do, we're just shooting ourselves in the foot, we're not...

0:43:08 WM: Right.

0:43:09 KH: We're not helping ourselves, we are shooting ourselves in the foot.

0:43:12 WM: Right.

0:43:12 KH: That's my humble unbiased opinion.

0:43:15 WM: Well, we need... Thank you for your words. We need to address our mythology. We need another cultural mythology. First thing, I've said it for 40 years, just the level of pornography in our system for younger people. It's not gonna work for us. And the level of fear mongering and hatred and tribalism, it's not gonna work. People are justified to be angry, but I always make the point that we... It's gonna be a collective... The problem is too great for a person to know it or a group of people, like we got to... And there are examples of heroism in American history. You don't need 50 examples of it. What... One is Louis Armstrong. He's told you, you could play like this, and you're gonna fall short of it. But that one person showed you.

0:44:13 WM: But if you obscure that story... I never forget years ago, I was taking a train from New York to Washington. And I was to do an interview there. I was 25-26 and I was trying to explain to a reporter, who was white and older than me, about how I saw, all the time, kinda black and white people and that's not the narrative he wanted me to sing. He wanted me... And then I was younger, so I was firing all the time, I was still in my kinda 1970s, I still had my afro. I still had my thing. And I said, "But man, you know when I'm out here, I actually see people all the time, I see white people with black people. I see... I was telling him stories of when me and a white friend of mine beat up some dudes I just... The whole thing, I told him this and that. He listened to it, but that's not the story he wanted to write. He wanted to write me being mad at white folks. Okay, so... But that was in the 15 years that I was mad at white people every time I talked.

0:45:10 WM: We got off the train in DC and there was a white kid, who might have been 19, and he had two black kids with him, 13 and 14, and this was maybe 10:30. We got off the train and the young, the white kid was like a... Maybe a counselor in a camp. I don't know what his relationship was to 'em. And he said, he pushed him and said, "Yeah, talk to him, talk to him." And I talked to 'em, I dapped him, I hugged him. We stood on the train laughing, I was teasing him. I like to tease and clown and play with people all the time. I was playing with him, talking about them with their hat on or their chains or whatever. And such and such and such and such, and blah, blah, blah. I talked to him, dapped him. Gave him something, "Man, practice this such and such." And then he walked away. And when he walked away with them, they was hitting him. He said, and he was telling them, "Man, I told y'all he was gonna be cool." Such and such. They was talking, and I looked at the writer. I said, "But is that gonna be in your story?" And no, it was not in his story.

0:46:08 WM: So there's a lot of investment in people. When people decide a narrative, that's what it's gonna be. If you know how much I hear the narrative of, "Jazz at Lincoln Center donors want you to do this." Man, I'm a donor to Jazz at Lincoln Center. My donors never call me with, "You better do this or you can't say this. You can't..." These are people who dedicate their lives to this. 20, 30 years been people working on it. They're black and they're white people. They're women and they're men. And some of it makes me laugh, because they can't understand the struggles and travails we've had down through these years to bring this thing together and to be for real about it.

The thought that they will call me and say, "You better not say that," it's ridiculous.

0:46:52 WM: But once you believe a narrative, like my man who was writing that article. He wanted to see me being against white folks, and that's what he wrote in his article. And it's not just for me to complain about what's written about me. I'm one person. But when the history of your country becomes that type of lie, then it's hard. And you have a lot of common narratives that are written. But I think we have to look beneath it and accept the heroism of Afro-Americans down through these centuries to mature the United States Constitution, to shape our legal framework. Instead of doing that, we're trying to figure out how to tear it all down. [chuckle] That's ridiculous, actually. Yeah, you want to shake your head.

0:47:38 KH: Well, you can't confuse anti-racism with anti-white... Whiteness. They're two different things. Anti-white-ism does not equal anti-racist. People keep on confusing the issue. And turning it and subverting it, and that's getting on my nerves.

0:47:57 WM: Yeah. You can't imitate that. And I wanna make it clear to y'all, I was never gonna turn the other cheek. If you mess with me, I was gonna try to yoke you. I'm a trumpet player, but I don't know. You don't have the numbers for that type of behavior. You got to deal with it with a political solution. Unless there's just gonna be martyrdom, which is... That's always a... Frederick Douglass has a passage where he talks about that, a slave named Demby. But okay, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, y'all.

0:48:33 AM: Thank you, Katheryn.

0:48:34 KH: Well...

0:48:34 WM: We got to...

0:48:34 KH: Well, I was gonna make another point, but that's okay.

0:48:40 WM: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

0:48:42 KH: Well, I was gonna say, you have children. I don't have children. I don't have to worry about my children. I don't have any sons or daughters to worry about. But you have children, and you have sons to worry about. Can you address that?

0:49:00 WM: Hey, if you grew up in the hood, you gotta worry about your sons in the hood. Now, it's different when it's just somebody in your neighborhood that can bump you off because they can, or you made them mad, or you didn't do what they wanted you to do, because they're not sanctioned to carry a firearm. So in terms of you worrying about your kids, if you're in a situation where you have to worry about them, you're worrying about them. But that could come from any... From a lot of sources, if you're dealing with a black kid. The difference in the crime of police officers is... Because see, the thing is, if you're in the hood, you need the police officers. There are people who are in a situation where they got problems in their neighborhood. They're not saying, "Oh, we don't

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wanna see the police. Just leave us to what's on our corners." They're not saying that. If you think they saying that, you misrepresenting them. They just want officers to not be criminal. And when you sanction a person to use a firearm, and the oath they have to take, live up to that oath. A guy in the street is not taking no oath. So that's my feeling about it.

0:50:05 AM: Alright. Let's take another. This next question's from Renee Rampton.

0:50:10 WM: Oh, Kenny's mom.

0:50:12 AM: Renee, you can go ahead and unmute yourself.

0:50:15 Renee Rampton: Hi, Wynton.

0:50:18 WM: Hey, now. It's good to see you and hear you.

0:50:23 RR: Yeah, I watch you every week.

0:50:26 WM: Oh, thank you.

0:50:26 RR: And I really enjoy it. But my reason for sending a message is that I would like to hear some music on this every week. So I'm just making that suggestion, since that's what we're about.

0:50:44 WM: Okay, Adam hears you. You hear her, Adam? We're gonna put some music on.

0:50:47 AM: I'm not the one...

0:50:48 WM: You know I love you, and I love seeing you. So we gonna play...

0:50:53 RR: Okay.

0:50:54 WM: We could have put some Coltrane "Alabama" on for you tonight. But next time.

0:50:57 RR: Whatever you want.

0:51:00 WM: Next week, we gonna have it. Now I'ma just play something.

[music]

0:52:09 WM: There you go. That was some music. Thank you for calling in.

0:52:14 RR: Thank you.

0:52:15 WM: Yes, ma'am. Much love.

0:52:18 RR: You bet.

0:52:20 AM: Alright, thank you Wynton. This next question is coming from John Connors.

0:52:27 WM: Oh, Oh.

0:52:29 AM: Go ahead, John.

0:52:30 John Connors: How we doing, Wynton?

0:52:32 WM: What's happening, John?

0:52:34 JC: Good to see you. I just wanted to raise a second issue around this topic. Just if we take, say, the last 3 or 4 days, we hear the word hate a lot; certainly it's accurate. How about insecurity? So, when we talk about people being suppressed, whether it's black people, or women, or any minority, I think we can all clearly understand that the second part of it, besides hate, is absolutely insecurity. In other words, why do people wanna suppress? They're not confident they can compete with everyone in the world. And it's just true everywhere. Take sports. In the 1950's, in Canada, if you were the best hockey player in America, and better than half the Canadians, it didn't matter, you couldn't play there. Basketball, we saw the same thing 'til Albeck came along and said, "My job is to pick the best players. It doesn't matter if they're green, blue, or purple." So everywhere in life, along with the hate that comes with this horrible topic that we have to talk about, and is so important to talk about, it's plagued black people since day one in this country, it's absolute insecurity. And I wanna see if you could just take off on that for a minute.

0:53:47 WM: Well, I think insecurity is a part of being a bully. If you think, "Let's reduce what has happened with black Americans." The difference between a black American, is that American's cradle is freedom; that's the stuff that Abraham Lincoln was laying out. If you were a part of what Genghis Khan was doing, your freedom was not his issue. But the fact that we are a nation based on freedom sets off a lot of interesting equations. And there's a level of insecurity, but let's think on a personal level. If you go home because you have anxiety, and you just beat your children till they can't move, and you put one outside in chains, and you sell two of 'em, is that something that you're proud of? We always focus on the black pathology. It's real. There's a lot is going on, and continues to go on. But when you do that to somebody, think of all of what you are, and what you have to do down through time, just to act like it didn't happen. In today's world, it manifests itself as the air of entitlement. I see it in New York every day.

0:54:58 WM: We in the wealthiest city in the world, man. We have people just laying out in the street. People walk past 'em, step over 'em, treat 'em like they... Okay, what are they gonna do? It's a whole system that has created this, that's okay with it. You're telling me with all the intelligence we have, we can't figure out how to solve that as a problem? "Well, I don't want them staying here. We can't give 'em a home, or we can't..." Okay, that might not be the solution. But when I see, I think I said it in the thing, in the blog that I wrote. That when you look at people, you see like... The homeless people, it's like every person stepping out in the street in tatters has a sign on 'em; and that

sign is saying, "1859. 1833." I said, "It's clearly seen every day. In our richest cities, staggering out on the streets in a tattered suit with a sign saying, 'Do you see me?'" We try not to look at 'em. And, it's not one or two people. There's whole cities of it when you get on the West Coast. I did an album about it, "At the Plantation to the Penitentiary," saying, "Do you see me?" And they have something bearing all the slavery years; 1855, 1835. And the ghost reminds you that we rollback reconstruction.

0:56:17 WM: We denied the Afro-American heroism of World War One with the segregation of World War Two. We denied our citizens access to equal funding, and equal housing, and equal education, equal healthcare, equal opportunities, and we rolled back the gains of the Civil Rights Movement. John, you and I were alive when that happened. We saw it. And there was all kind of cold words around it, but we knew what it was. And in each broken promise, it's a smile and, "Fare thee well, brother. We're gonna move on." And we move on. But what do we expect? At a certain point, you can chop down enough trees, there's no trees left. And is that an achievement? Is that what the achievement of America is gonna be? "Boy, we really choked these people out? We don't even have to act like this never happened." And you know, no slight is too small. No slight is too small. We talk about big things, but boy, there's a lot of little small things. It's just, whoo! So yeah, I think insecurity is a part of it, but at a certain point it becomes your character. And that's true of white Americans, if they're the ones who participate in that; and that's also true of an individual in their house, taking advantage of whoever they can take advantage of. Do we consider that heroic? Whereas, we have a tendency to a great conqueror, or somebody who ruled people; Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, [0:57:44] _____, they're heroic.

0:57:46 WM: So, we have to get these things together. Is it heroic to just stomp people into the ground? Have concubinage, and make them work for you for nothing, and just dog them? Okay, that's an achievement. But in America, that's not how I set our goals. Even though it's in the roots of who we are, it's in the roots of who human beings are. But, we try to use reason and will and our acuity to become better, like we do in our personal lives.

0:58:13 JC: Well, let me throw out one more thing, and then you made a lot of good points there. So let's take our best universities, the ones that at least we call the best. Let's take MIT, just as an example. In the 1930s, 1940s, the overwhelming majority of the students came from just our country, right? Now, people come from all over the world. Maybe not so much in the last two years, but generally speaking, we've made huge progress there. It's the hardest school to get into, because we opened up the competition to everyone. Doesn't mean the system's perfect or fair, but it means it's open to a lot more people. And when we open up the world to everyone, it's a better world. It's that simple.

0:59:00 WM: Yes, it is a better world, but the Afro-Americans, it needs constructive assistance, corrective. I could remember being on a football field with my team, and maybe I was 12, 11, and man, we were struggling just to get plays in. And we're getting beat by a white team. I'mma just describe the scenario, so you can understand what I'm saying. We had a guy who had been a janitor, made sure we could all play in Kenner, Louisiana. His name was Buddy Larson. Our coach was struggling, so he struggled with alcoholism. We went out on the field. We played behind a chemical

company. Our team was 11 people. We played on offense and defense. We had uniforms from the '50s. We had helmets from the '50s. If you see us roll out onto a field, how you could not laugh, I don't know how. We would go on the White fields, Lions Club, Brentwood, Driftwood, that was the names. Man, they had hash marks on their field, parents in the stands, water bottles, 22 players.

1:00:00 WM: Now we just talking about football, so something trivial. Little League Football, kids. But we would get out on the field, man, we were getting our behinds whipped, because football, you gotta be organized. Oh, man, we losing this game 40-something to nothing. And the ref cheated us out of the one score we had. So I was standing next to him, and I laughed. And I said, "Man, you don't have to cheat us, we're gonna lose." And he threw me out of the game. He goes, "I'm mad." And I looked at him and I thought... Now, once he threw me out the game, we had 10 people, and we forfeited the game. We were gonna lose it anyway. And I remember, we were in the van going back. Now, we weren't crying because we got messed with. We're actually laughing and joking about the ref and what did it feel? "What you told him, Marsalis?" We was all talking like that. I said, "Man, I told him he didn't have to cheat us. He was going to... You know we're such and such and such and such." And I thought to myself in that van, "Man, are we gonna compete out here? It's just a lot. Man, we got... "

1:00:55 WM: Me and my brother Branford talked today, and we talking about how when we were growing up, it wasn't nothing like what we thought this was going on. To be put in a position to compete, you need somebody to want you to compete, and to say, "We want it to be fair, and you're not my enemy, because you're a competition. And when I see you, I see myself." I once asked the great Sweets Edison, trumpet player in Count Basie Orchestra in the '30s, if he was jealous because Buck Clayton, all the ladies loved Buck Clayton. I said, "Man, were you jealous of Buck? Because Buck was..." He said, "Hell, no. Buck plays so much horn. I had the greatest concert every night just listening to this man. My spirit was lifted just by a man a seat from me." And the kinda consciousness that we have in our music of sharing space. And I can say with our own orchestra, it's just the joy out there and some nights, Marcus Printup started playing, Ryan Kisor... Carlos Henriquez, whoever. I could go down the band.

1:01:52 WM: We, as the nation, have not... That is not our mythology, and that is not our ethos. And that too is written in our Constitution. This applies to everybody but the American Negro and the Native American. These two people are not a part of that. Now our amendments, 13, 14, 15, said, "Okay. These people are citizens. But we don't wanna live up to it. We wanna keep figuring out how to subvert it." Yeah, I think we can open it up, but in this country, there's been too much abuse for too long. It's gonna require help. Don't come to me when I'm in traction and ask me why don't I get up. Or tell me a story about... When I was growing up, there was always some story about somebody came through Ellis Island and when we was... I respect that they came through Ellis Island, but what does that have to do with this?

1:02:43 JC: Well, it's a very sad topic. It's very depressing.

1:02:46 WM: That's alright. We gotta go from depression to all of the victories that have been achieved, even though they have not been maintained. That Martin Luther King could live to be 38-

years-old and be working in the South at that time, is one of the great miracles of countries.

1:03:03 JC: Yes, it is.

1:03:04 WM: You can't think of a figure like him in another country. I mean, it's hard to survive doing what he did. So we got it in us, we just don't respect it when we have it. This thing keeping our foot on a brother's neck, I don't know if we like the fruit that it's bearing, but we say, "Open your eyes. Look at it. Don't look away from it." It's funny that the Star Spangled Banner says, "Oh, say can you see.", and Dixie says, "Look away, look away." So think about it.

1:03:42 AM: Alright. Thanks John, for your question. Next one's coming from Cat Rivers. So Cat, if you'll unmute your microphone, you can go ahead. Cat, are you there? Hey, Cat? Let's try it one more time here. Cat, if you'll just unmute your microphone. Alright. I think we're having some audio issues with her, so I'm gonna move down... Let's take one from Randy Vogel. Randy... You there? Hey Randy, can you hear us? If you just unmute your microphone...

1:04:32 Randy Vogel: There we go.

1:04:33 AM: Alright, great, go ahead.

1:04:34 RV: Hey Wynton, it's great to see you. Sorry, on the kind of environment that we're in right now, but man, it's been love listening to you for the past several weeks on here... On the internet, so... Or in Zoom. So over the past several weeks, and in watching everything that's going on. Friends have handed me or basically said, for work, I need to read White Fragility. And I've felt now is just as good a time as ever because in doing what I do in programming, I really need to understand what is going on. And with all the programs that you've had, Let Freedom Swing, let me tell you that's a great program you have, and we've loved bringing it into our community, especially on the Civil Rights discussions because it really has helped open people's minds about programming. I mean about jazz. But part of what I was looking at, and really what I'm seeing as I've read through White Fragility is things like the women's suffrage movement was really asking white men for permission to vote or Major League Baseball saying, "Okay, Jackie Robinson. You're good enough to bring up to be the first African-American baseball player." And it's really tough trying to figure out how to make change. What can I do as a presenter to be more constructive to a community? What can I do to change subconscious bias from people in how they grew up? And those are the things that are really keeping me awake at night right now in how to do my job better and how to be a better person.

1:06:47 WM: Well, I've been knowing you a long-time man. You know, got that big sound on the bass, swinging. I don't have the answer for what any person needs to do. I'm trying to figure out what I need to do. And I think that we... The age we are, man, you come to think to yourself and you know what you wanna see, you have a vision of the country you wanna see. And because of my generation, I think, and where I'm from, I'm not a big one for all of this kind of self-flagellation and all of that. I'm not from that environment man. I feel like people like to have a slogan and go out and take selfies. And I feel like every day we make decisions and you made a lot of decisions that

brought people closer together, but it's not for me to know...

1:07:44 RV: Yeah.

1:07:46 WM: What you're doing, how you feeling about stuff goes all the way back in your childhood. I don't know what it is... We all have stuff. And I think that... [1:07:52] _____ the bottom line on how you live in the world is, what world do you wanna create? And we all have ignorance and prejudice. But one thing I wanna say about this whole thing about white people, is that when people have military superiority, they beat people and they make those people do what they tell them to do. Somehow we're so removed from that fact that we talk like we're in a dreamworld. That plays out all over the world. In America, we have the chance to say, "Hey this is not right, let's discuss it, let's do this." And for some reason we lose kind of the sense of just how people with agency and power and... They don't have to be just if they don't want to be just. So in our country, what distinguishes us is that we have a constant dialog and we constantly... But our military is integrated. Our police forces are integrated. How will we always find three or four white cops that can stand around while a brother is being choked to death?

1:08:58 WM: With the military, it's gonna be interesting in our country, if it comes down to that. Are all the black soldiers gonna decide, "We're gonna turn our weapons on them." I don't know. You'll notice the vibe the military had when it was some kind of outbreak of something that President Trump did, that was racist, some statement he made. The military was, they were like, "Oh no, we're not having that here." So I think that these are very hard basic facts of life that we can get in the dreamworld. Like we in the school and we discussing... It's like you walk in a room or you walk in your neighborhood and some dude's telling you, "You're going to sell drugs." And if you can't stop them, what you gonna do? Talk your way out of it? So, you know I think... I can... I mean you... You my... I don't...

1:09:52 RV: Yeah no, I really, inward I've been learning about myself and I think about, what are the things that I grew up in? And I grew up in first generation non-segregated schools in South Florida where Dixie Highway was. If you were on the wrong side of Dixie Highway at 6 o'clock at night, you were in jail. So it's, I see the things that I grew up around, I see the things that I don't accept, and I fight the things that I know are wrong but I just have to change my own mind. And over time, they will. But it's a really dynamic time right now and the arts somehow, I'm hoping they're gonna be some part of the healing process.

1:10:40 WM: Well, we are man. We always in there. We always are in there. And the question for you and I, we've been knowing each other a long time. The question for us is how are we? What are we dealing with? What is our leadership? What are we showing people about how we can be together? And what do we do every day? This is a everyday struggle. Now it's a war going on in the streets, but hey, man, this gonna be about much more than... We are...

1:11:10 WM: Man, brother Floyd is a jumping off point. It's coming. We're looking at it, and we're trying to figure out, "Well, is this coming?" It's like when you hear about a hurricane if you in Louisiana. So one thing I was thinking about, when you hear about a hurricane, old folks will brag

about it. "Oh, Hurricane Betsy. That was the worst hurricane we ever had.", "Ooh, that was nothing like Camille. Camille came through here and washed up instead." But you know what, they don't do that about Katrina, because it's so serious you can't get into that. And we looking at it. And now we're raising signs and we got slogans and we're saying, "We want our rights." Everybody is standing, everybody. Okay, it's a lot of emotion, and it's justified, it should be emotional. But once we realize we're connected to something that is itself evil. Understand where we are in time. Our lack of involvement, our politicians are lost. Our systems are failing us. Our court system is bankrupt. We have all kind of innocent people that we put in jail. We violated our own Geneva code. I can go on and on of things that we have let happen and I'm including myself amongst them.

1:12:21 WM: At a certain point, somebody of us, we have to grow up, and say, "Hey, we've got to participate in this." It's not gonna be a person, it will not be. It's gonna be everybody that's saying, "We're not taking no more of this shit." And it's not just gonna be one thing. This is a catalyst. After we finish tearing up stuff and... And so it's two or three groups out there that's not even the same group in the protest. Two or three people got different agendas. When it's time to vote, when are we gonna get our voting up around 80%? Man, we're so far away from that. It's almost like we don't understand where we are in space and time. Then once it's too late, it's too late. Once Katrina is up on you, and there was still people at home saying, "Oh man, it ain't gonna be that bad." They always say that. One time they say it and it's what they say it is. We need to wake up and it's not gonna be a thing or personal, me or you, it's all of us. And we got to get involved, and every little way it helps. It doesn't make a difference what that way is. Let it be some action. I'm all for oggin' and talkin'. Let it be some action. Let it be some action, whatever it is. One thing. Let it be. No person is gonna come and tell us, I'll guarantee you that.

1:13:31 AM: Thank you for your question, Randy. We've got time... We're running out of time, but Wynton, I promised Cat Rivers, who we just had a hard time with her audio, that I'd try her one more time.

1:13:43 WM: Cat?

1:13:46 AM: Cat, can you hear us now?

1:13:48 Cat Rivers: Hear me?

1:13:49 AM: Yes.

1:13:50 CR: Yeah. Okay, I was like, "The Devil is alive." Okay, it worked. First of all, I wanna thank you all so much for all of the energy you have given us during this pandemic. Okay, I think that when people are upset, it's so easy, especially on social media, to get in on and kinda tear down something especially if you didn't help build it yourself. So just thank you all so much for everything that you all have done. I think, Mr. Marsalis, I really appreciate when you talk about... Okay, go ahead.

1:14:16 WM: Hey, just say that again, "It's easy to tear down something when you didn't build it

yourself."

1:14:19 CR: It is. They say they're trying and build. It's true and I just, I'm grateful for the platform, even if it doesn't always look or sound the way that I would like it to, right? I'm grateful for what you all do. My question is about this fabric, this cultural fabric that you talk about sometimes when you discuss mythology and the things that we tell ourselves. I don't think people understand sometimes that they are fighting to protect something that was fabricated and given to them, right? And so... Also, I think it's difficult when that fabric benefits you to see how it might actually be binding to the other people, to the point that they are losing their ability to breathe or their life, okay? And so my question, especially in regards to Jazz, in regards to the music and culture of the American people, and particularly Black people in this country, and particularly to the young Black people who are so on fire right now in the streets and on social media.

1:15:14 CR: How can we begin to see the threads of this fabric that are binding some of us, that are lifting others up, that are profiting, that are allowing some to profit and strangling others, when we are taught to hate things that we ourselves created? My first experience with the music that is called Jazz, as a young person, was before I learned how to speak, I was hearing the music. But when I first started hearing the words, Jazz and Swing, they came from outside of my community and in ways that were very demeaning. They were like the word urban is used today to refer, not to a place where this is the city, but to a people. You looked at a group of people and you say, "Oh yeah, those are urban people."

1:15:57 WM: Yeah. [chuckle]

1:15:58 CR: So what can we do to, one, see the fabric, to move beyond it, to tear it apart if we need to? What are your thoughts on that kind of thing? I hope that made sense.

1:16:08 WM: That made a lot of sense, but I'mma go to what you said in the beginning about the Devil. Well, you gotta always remember that the Devil comes as a friend. The Devil does not come as an enemy. And the Devil of humanity is Sectarianism, Tribalism. The easiest thing to sell a person on is the idea that you are superior to some other people, just because you're you. The story is there, it's documented, it's in books, it's in records. You have to look under sheets. You have to uncover stuff. You have to allow a thread. Follow one thing to another thing. And one thing to know, it was never easy. It's not on the surface. And the hardest thing we do is to develop the acuity to realize... Acuity to distinguish fact from fiction.

1:17:06 WM: I'mma go to one thing that I'mma leave about the music because I was... I talked to Spike Lee the other night. And when we were growing up, we were always like that one or two Black family that was always in the Black consciousness and stuff that went on. And we always hated going. Me and my brother Branford. And we'd be like, "Man, you know, we gotta sit through this." And it was something my mom and daddy would go and it'd be us it'd be Ken and Jordan's family. And somehow I always know people there. 20 people, 30. People singing the spirituals or something. Man.

1:17:39 WM: One night we went to a thing in Southern University in New Orleans, and it was Spike Lee's family. They were called The Descendants of Mike and Phoebe. Maybe I was 11, 10, and I always hated Jazz concerts. But I remember they started playing this bass line. Spike's Daddy was playing bass.

[vocalization]

1:18:01 WM: They sang a song, "John Coltrane, black spirit..." I never forgot that song. Then maybe a year later, I actually put on one of Trane's records. Now, I didn't like Trane's music or Jazz. It was not a thing, I listened to what was on the radio. But because I had heard them sing, John Coltrane, Black spirit, and I'd never forgot it. So when I talked to Spike, I said, "Man, John Coltrane." And I think that for the Black American, it's very difficult because you're always led away from the truth of your thing. And the further you get away from it, the more you're going to be... Go get a reward.

1:18:36 WM: You go to an institution and you want to get a reward, misrepresent yourself, "Man, I really liked this guy." You want to get attacked in the media, in the press, and all of that for 15 or 20 years, say something that's real about something. I remember Dizzy showed me an interview I had given, and I was... I said, "Oh man..." I was young, 21 or something. I said, "Oh, man, you know this?" He said, "No, no, no, no man, no. You're telling the truth in this. Ah, no, no, no, no." And then he looked at me and said, "But be ready for the return. It might not ever stop."

1:19:07 WM: I didn't understand what he said. But I understand now that you gotta look under sheets. You have to look under. Look at... It's not on the surface but it's there. And I want to say there's been scholars that's white, black and otherwise who love the culture and the music. And our music leads you away from sectarianism. It's just what it does. It led me away from it. I was raised in it. I believed in it, I grew up with a poster of Malcolm over my bed, I had my afro, I sat in barber shops. I would tell my daddy, "Man, stop talking about all this stuff, complimenting white folks, in here embarrassing me." And he said, "Man, you don't imitate a person whose philosophy you don't believe.", and I accused him of Tomming, "Man, you're Tomming." The music leads you away from it. I read John Coltrane's... Black music and Black nationalism has Trane on the cover. And when I was in high school Trane's first sentence was something about, he didn't believe in separating the people. I said, "Damn."

1:20:05 WM: They got this dude on the cover, and he's saying he's not espousing what's in the book. But people will overlook all of that because it feels so good to hate somebody else. Damn it feel good. And you know, especially if they've done wrong to you, and you're right that you have been wronged. Man, no, shit, it's... But we gotta get to an understanding of what is possible through what the greatest of what has been done, not through the worst of what has been done. Because boy, that bloody path is everywhere in the world. You take your pick and walk down that path, you're gonna find that. You pick your country. And the only thing that makes ours worse is we live in it and we have the cradle of freedom that makes us believe we're not being handled a certain way. And that's for black and white Americans. It's of course, much harder on black Americans because we started off here as slaves and a counterbalance to whiteness. Blackness is a construct.

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1:21:03 WM: You tell the African people who looked at different people, "Y'all are all black?" That's ridiculous. Nobody... Anyway, you know what I'm saying. I mean I could go on and on. So please forgive me. Thank you for your question. I hope I answered about the mythology we got constructed.

1:21:18 CR: Thank you for trying again. That was great. Thank you.

1:21:19 WM: Because it's here, it's there. And I always tell the students to go to the interviews of the musicians themselves. Don't read the book. Rutgers Library, the Hogan library at Tulane, go to these libraries and get these... Get to... Listen to the interviews, the oral... Go to the oral histories and listen to what the people are saying. It's very, very revealing.

1:21:46 CR: Thank you.

1:21:47 WM: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

1:21:50 AM: Thank you for that. All right. That's all the time we have. I just want to say thanks to everybody for joining us for this super meaningful conversation, and I hope we'll see you again next Monday night at 9:00 PM. Any parting words from you, Wynton?

1:22:06 WM: I just think that, you know, we... Our troubles are gonna continue. And we owe it to ourselves to get out and participate and create change. And it's gonna be later. When it really starts to fall apart, that's when they gonna need us. Let's be dedicated to that change a decade from now, 20 years from now, so that our old age can be a little softer, all of us who are of a certain age. And we need our young people involved and engaged. Thank you all so much. Thank you, Adam. Thank you.

1:22:36 AM: Thank you guys. Take care.

1:22:36 WM: Alright.