

## **Skain's Domain**

**Episode 13 - June 22, 2020**

**0:00:00 Adam Meeks:** Alright. Hey guys, thanks for joining us again this week. You're tuning into Skain's Domain with Wynton Marsalis, and I'm Adam Meeks your technical host for the evening. Tonight, we're joined by members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra including Chris Crenshaw, Kenny Rampton, Elliot Mason, Camille Thurman, Ted Nash, Paul Nedzela, Walter Blanding, Dan Nimmer, and Carlos Henriquez. If you have a question you'd like to ask, we will have you use the raise hand feature. To do this, click participants on the bottom of your Zoom window, and then in the participants tab, press the raise hand button. Please also just make sure that your full name appears as your user name so we can call you when it's your turn. And before we do that, I'd like to hand the mic over to Mr. Wynton Marsalis to kick things off. Go ahead, Wynton.

**0:00:47 Wynton Marsalis:** Alright. Thank you very much, Adam. Welcome everybody back again this week for Skain's Domain where we discuss issues significant and trivial, and the more trivial they are, the more we... More impassioned we are about it. Today, I have the blessing of having the members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. I missed them so much. And we spent so many times, so many years playing each other's music on bandstands. For our younger members, some started as students, for our older members, we've been here and I just wanna... I also wanna hear from them, we were talking and laughing and joking before we opened the lines up. So we're gonna just open to a few questions and then we're gonna to just a free conversation. Feel free to have questions for any of us and we'd love to answer it. I'mma start with our senior member, Mr. Ted Nash, because when you get to a certain age, everybody thinks you know something... They're always asking you for advice. So I want him to tell us how COVID-19 has affected him and what advice does he have for all of us for preparing for life post-COVID-19, if there's ever a post-COVID.

**0:01:51 Ted Nash:** You're just calling on me 'cause I'm old because you're afraid I'm gonna die before this call is over.

[laughter]

**0:01:58 TN:** I'll get through this fast.

[laughter]

**0:02:03 TN:** Oh my god.

**0:02:04 CH:** That's a good one.

**0:02:05 TN:** This is... It's really more about like moving forward. I feel like... This is a tough time, I mean whenever we have a time of extreme challenge or crisis, there's always an opportunity for growth, there's always an opportunity, we need to prepare for this, and we need to be practical, but we also need to deal with it psychologically and emotionally. And I know people are struggling right now, they're struggling with how to find inspiration, they're looking for ways to continue to be creative and active. And I think that moving forward, is gonna be about adapting, we have to be intelligent and creative, we have to really be intelligent and creative about how we move forward past all of this. It's gonna be tough.

**0:02:54 TN:** I know politics is gonna need to be less partisan, that is absolutely for sure. We need to find a way to be less partisan with our politics. Our country and our world needs to take better care of its citizens with more comprehensive health programs, more job protection. I think education, when I think about everything, education is absolutely the priority.

**0:03:17 TN:** We have to start educating and exposing kids when they're young to what is it out? What's the world like? I mean you can sometimes understand how kids grow up in a vacuum, and they don't know what's happening out here, and I think we need to vet our teachers, we need to make education and teaching... Like being a doctor, a lawyer, you have to study for a long time, and be really good at it, and you get paid well for it, I think education is the key. I think absolutely an overhaul of our police system is necessary. The United States needs to figure out a way to embrace cultures from all over the world. This is absolutely important. We are... It's hard to even see it sometimes, but I really do think it's an opportunity. It's always an opportunity when we're in this kind of crisis, and it's a shame to overlook it at this point. I know if you look at post-9/11, I know there's some probably some people out there that don't remember that as well, but the political polarization that began in the 1990s continued to get worse after that, and the economic inequality that began in the 1980s also continued to get worse through that.

**0:04:28 TN:** Nobody asked us to rally, to become more aware, more engaged. Our civic equity was completely squandered at that time, we had an opportunity. Flag sales went through the roof 'cause our leaders basically said, "Go out. Be consumers. Spend money. Go out and spend money." I mean anyone could buy a flag, but clearly, 9/11 did not really change the world, it accelerated our pre-existing trends, and I think that we're in that position now that we have to recognize that that's also a possibility and we have to fight against that, I mean that's... I think what we needed after 9/11 was better leadership and clearly now, we're struggling in that area. So I just think that we do have an opportunity, but we need to work hard, and that... I mean...

**0:05:13 WM:** Wait a minute. Let me ask you a question because it's easy to call for all of what we need. I'm gonna liken it to the bandstand. You're a person who's very good at adapting music from different cultures. You're able to understand what... The feeling or the essence of what something is, and you're also... When we're rehearsing your music, you're very good at not trying to force people to do something that they don't necessarily want to do, but still get the sound that you want. So without going too long, just on you, I want you to touch on something tangible about what makes you able to be successful, listening to other cultures' music and get in the orbit of their sound, and then how are you able to let people who may have a different concept from you, play their concept

and still find space under your umbrella for what they're doing?

**0:06:01 TN:** Well, it's interesting you say that because I feel sometimes I'm a little too easy on people when I rehearse. I know sometimes when I rehearse, you jump in say, "Hey, man, we gotta get that together more. Whatever." I know I'm like that. I'm very like...

**0:06:13 WM:** That's Carlos.

[laughter]

**0:06:16 WM:** That's Carlos or Walter.

**0:06:19 TN:** I mean I...

**0:06:19 WM:** Walter's always one turning around and say, "Do y'all hear how this sounds?"

[laughter]

**0:06:27 TN:** Sometimes I wish I were a little more clear about what I want, and sometimes I just think that I take for granted that everybody's gonna basically understand what I want, I don't have to force it down their throats. And I think that's, a lot of that's my upbringing. It's like when Andre Guess told me to embrace your mythology, embrace who you are, I think about my parents and how laid-back they were, and I think that's had a huge impact on me. So, even though I do like to explore all these different cultures, I'm not trying to... I remember when we did that whole program with the flamenco music, I think it was, and we were talking about the big 12.

**0:06:58 WM:** That's right.

**0:07:00 TN:** Man, you dealt... You took that music and you studied it so hard intellectually and you would say, "We gotta rehearse this stuff, we gotta get this feel together." And I had to write a piece for that, and I just intuitively wrote this piece of music, it sounded sort of flamenco-ish, and brought it in and we played it. But I didn't have that research that you had. And I feel like there's a place for really understanding deeply the cultures that you're trying to bring into your music and not disrespect it. Carlos definitely can talk about that because we do so much Latin and jazz mix stuff like that. And it's challenging sometimes to feel like you know enough about this to make people play it, but I'm more laid-back. So I don't know, maybe that's something I need to work on when I'm tampering with it. [chuckle]

**0:07:43 WM:** Well, I don't know. Your piece sounded a lot better than mine. Me and Carlos... [laughter] Well, that's just the truth. Carlos and I were looking at a book, we're on a plane. You remember this, Carlos?

**0:07:52 Carlos Henriquez:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

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**0:07:53 WM:** We're looking at a flamenco book, and we just studied it, studied it. And Carlos said, "Who wrote this book?" He said, "You see?" [laughter] All the information was wrong. So, I don't know about that.

**0:08:05 TN:** Oh, God. Yeah.

**0:08:07 WM:** So, I wanna go in another... I'm gonna just go over to Chris, and I wanna talk to... 'Cause we're all here, we have so many experiences we can share with people. I wanna see if Chris can remember an unforgettable moment that we've had on the bandstand that can be shared on air. [laughter]

**0:08:28 CH:** That was it.

**0:08:30 CH:** Man, that's not fun.

**0:08:33 Chris Crenshaw:** Man...

**0:08:35 CH:** Open it up.

**0:08:35 CC:** But I could think of two instances, actually. One of 'em was when Bobby Hutcherson played In Your Own Sweet Way.

**0:08:42 CH:** That's right, he made us proud. Ooh, ooh, ooh. We all had tears in our eyes.

**0:08:46 CC:** Bro, I'm talking about... Not to make a pun, but when he was playing, he had such a vibe. When he played, man, he played so much vibe.

**0:08:53 CH:** Amen.

**0:08:55 CC:** It was like, it was like it was you knew... It was almost like you knew it was his last time.

**0:09:00 CH:** His last time.

**0:09:02 CC:** He... That guy... Ooh.

**0:09:02 CH:** Do y'all remember that? It was NEA, right? Wasn't that the NEA?

**0:09:04 CC:** It was the NEA Jazz Masters.

**0:09:05 TN:** NEA, yep.

**0:09:05 CC:** Man, he came out there...

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**0:09:05 CH:** That's right, I think everyone was crying, that's right.

**0:09:08 CC:** Everyone was crying. I'm sorry, I wanted to take a standing ovation after he did his solo, man. It was that unbelievable, bro.

**0:09:14 WM:** That's right.

**0:09:16 CC:** I started to do it, but... That's one of those moments that you're on the bandstands like, "Man," you just never forget that.

**0:09:20 WM:** That's right.

**0:09:21 CC:** And then, another moment that I could think about... I can do it in two words: Eartha Kitt.

**0:09:28 CH:** Oh, yeah.

**0:09:29 DN:** Oh, man.

[laughter]

**0:09:32 CH:** You remember that?

**0:09:32 CC:** Man, it was...

**0:09:36 CH:** That's Sugar Rob. Sugar Rob in there.

**0:09:36 CC:** Oh, man.

**0:09:37 CC:** Yeah, exactly. It was 2007, it was the concert where we had Paul Anka, Fantasia and Eartha Kitt.

**0:09:45 CH:** Oh, man.

**0:09:46 CC:** And it was a sound check. It wasn't necessarily the gig, it was a sound check. And when she got up on stage...

**0:09:48 CH:** Chris, you remember the stretching she was doing?

**0:09:50 CC:** That's what I'm about to get into. She was stretching, she was purring, she was doing her thing, getting ready. And man, Sugar Rob was smiling like a Cheshire cat, bro.

[laughter]

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**0:10:00 CC:** He couldn't wipe the smile off his face, man. I'm talking...

[laughter]

**0:10:07 CH:** Oh, God.

**0:10:07 CH:** Yeah, that was a good one.

**0:10:08 CC:** And then, she started singing Santa Baby, and it got bigger and bigger and bigger.

[laughter]

**0:10:12 CH:** Chris, you remember when Bobby was at the softball game in San Francisco?

**0:10:17 CC:** Yeah, that's the one when Skain...

**0:10:19 CH:** Bobby Hutcherson came with his oxygen tank 'cause his son was playing with the SF Jazz Crew and he stood in the bleachers and just hung with us.

**0:10:26 TN:** That's right.

**0:10:27 CC:** That's right. Yeah, that was fun. Man, Skain came up, hit a home run and left.

**0:10:29 WM:** Yeah, he hit a home run and left.

[laughter]

**0:10:34 WM:** Hey, man, what about... Let me ask, do you y'all remember that Misty that Dianne Reeves put on us?

**0:10:37 CC:** Whoo, yes.

**0:10:38 TN:** Oh, yeah.

**0:10:39 CC:** Yeah, yeah, that was one Friday night, ooh.

**0:10:43 TN:** Yep.

**0:10:44 CC:** I'll never forget that.

[chuckle]

**0:10:45 WM:** That's right, it was Friday night, too.

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**0:10:46 CC:** It was a Friday night, too. Her and Peter Martin were on stage, and they did Misty and it was like it was never gonna end, but you didn't wanna end because it got into that moment where it was just spontaneity on top of spontaneity.

**0:10:58 CH:** Yeah, it was spiritual, man. Right there, yep.

**0:11:00 CC:** Yeah, yeah.

**0:11:01 WM:** Right?

**0:11:03 CC:** Sure, you right.

**0:11:04 WM:** Well, I wanna ask Elliot something. Your wife, Sofija, is a great singer. And your son, Maksim, he's gonna be in the trumpet section one day, like his uncle and his grandfather.

[chuckle]

**0:11:14 CH:** Oh, yeah, before he's a bass player.

**0:11:17 Elliot Mason:** Bass trumpet, bass trumpet.

[laughter]

**0:11:18 WM:** Oh, no. No bass. I wanna know how you...

**0:11:19 CH:** Playing bass and make some money, come on.

[laughter]

**0:11:24 WM:** I wanna know how you...

**0:11:25 EM:** Actually, he's on drums right now, he's sticking with drums now.

**0:11:26 CH:** That's close enough.

**0:11:28 EM?:** Yeah.

**0:11:28 Dan Nimmer:** I saw that video...

**0:11:28 WM:** Drums is right next to trumpet. So, Elliot, how are you staying motivated and inspired when there's no gigs around? And also when we look into the future, we don't see a gig anywhere.

**0:11:42 EM:** Yeah, yeah, that's the tough thing right there. But I think in general, we're all trying to

do what we love in any capacity possible. And as a musician, that human reaction that we have on stage and the intimacy and the feeling, you just can't match that. So, I've been trying to make little adjustments with the things that I can control to try and make up with that huge loss of that, the actual live performance. And I'm definitely missing you guys right now on stage, and being on stage, absolutely. But I'm listening to a lot of music. I mean, I always listen to music, but now I'm getting deeper maybe more into emotional listening. And you were talking about... Wynton was talking about Monk last week and how you were revisiting some of that stuff. And that's like... There's always music like that on in my house right now. And speaking of Maksim, he's calling stuff out. He's on a Brazilian kick right now, he wants me to put that on and he's dancing all around the house the whole time.

**0:12:43 S?:** [0:12:43] \_\_\_\_.

**0:12:46 EM:** So, he actually controls... He has the remote. He's controlling the music all the time.

**0:12:49 CH:** I told you.

**0:12:50 WM:** How old is he now? How old his, Maksim?

**0:12:51 EM:** He's two-and-a-half, he's two-and-a-half right now.

**0:12:54 WM:** That's it. He got perfect pitch?

**0:12:55 EM:** Actually, he's got some crazy ears. I don't even know what's going on there. He has some...

**0:13:00 CH:** Thanks to Daddy.

[laughter]

**0:13:03 CC:** Hey.

**0:13:03 CH:** He's like his daddy, that he got it.

**0:13:03 EM:** He's got some crazy, he's got some crazy ears. If we have time, I'll tell you a little bit of a story about him as well at the end there. But also, I feel like as musicians, sometimes that live performance is our creative outlet. And so, I'm making sure that I'm trying to be creative in my practice as well. And that's keeping me...

**0:13:25 EM:** I'm enjoying all these live stream concerts, I know everyone and their uncle is doing one. But at the same time it's fun to... I'm seeing people that maybe I wouldn't get to see. And on the other end of it, as being like a performer, it's giving me something to work towards and these little goals that help everything else fall in line, more of a purpose within my practice. Virtual collaborations have been crazy as well, which I think is wonderful. I'm getting reached out, and also



reaching out to people who maybe I've never played with before. And just having some reaction, I mean, some connection and play with some people that I didn't even think I'd even get to play with. So that's been a lot of the stuff that's keeping me inspired. I also think as a jazz musician, staying motivated and inspired when you only have three gigs in your book is something that is actually all too familiar to us.

[laughter]

**0:14:22 EM:** Yeah, I definitely, at some point we've been there, we can relate.

**0:14:25 DN:** True, true.

**0:14:26 WM:** Right, right.

**0:14:27 EM:** So there's a sense of that.

[laughter]

**0:14:28 CH:** That's so for real man.

**0:14:28 EM:** I mean, obviously there's... I'm not trying to make it a light of, I mean, obviously there's an unsettling uncertainty or whatever hanging over everything. But I think you can either go two ways, you can curl up into a ball and you can wait for things to end or you can double down on what you do and become stronger on the other end of it. And that's something that I feel like has really motivated me, it was just really trying to just almost double down on practicing and listening and everything. So when we do get to have our concerts then I'm feeling like I'm more positive and I'm in a better place than I was beforehand.

**0:15:10 WM:** We're gonna be back to being the two who play on the fast tunes all the time.

[laughter]

**0:15:14 EM:** Well, yeah, there's that. I'm just gonna quickly gonna tell you about that Maksim story. So we were recording Chris's tune, and I was in this room right now. And I don't know, we have the camera set up, I've got my shirt on, I'm half-way through the tune, everything is... I feel like it's a good take and that door opens and suddenly he comes running in and for the first few seconds, I'm thinking I can still salvage this thing. This is pretty cute, I'll pick him up on my lap and everything, and we'll still be able to use this take, because he's just come out of the bath, he's got zero clothes on whatsoever, so it's like... Now, I'm looking there going like, "Nah, this is un-salvageable. I gotta do another take right now."

[laughter]

**0:15:55 EM:** So when you're looking at those things that we're doing, the big bands, there's a lot

that goes on behind the scenes. I get Dan co-signing me right now. When you got kids and you're trying to record in a room and it's like... It's a challenge but all you can do is just enjoy it.

**0:16:13 WM:** Right.

**0:16:13 CC:** Yup.

**0:16:14 WM:** I'mma go ahead with the Nimski. Dan, what are some of the things that you've missed the most about being able to perform live? Because you're a die-hard swing.

**0:16:26 Dan Nimmer:** Thanks Wynton. Man, I miss everyone's sound, man, the vibration of their sound, being able to hear them in a room, being able to hear the sound bounce off the walls of a concert hall, of a stage, that's for real. No matter how good your Wi-Fi is or how good your headphones are, you're not gonna be able replace that live music.

[laughter]

**0:16:46 CH:** He said Wi-Fi.

[laughter]

**0:16:46 S?:** [0:16:46] \_\_\_\_.

[laughter]

**0:16:47 DN:** I'm serious man, we have all this tech...

**0:16:49 CH:** Let's get that straight.

**0:16:50 DN:** We have all this technology, but we got it... A live experiences is the...

**0:16:58 WM:** So you're gonna be less hard on us at rehearsals?

**0:17:00 DN:** That's right.

[laughter]

**0:17:00 WM:** When we get back to rehearsals you're gonna be more like, "Okay man, that was good."

[laughter]

**0:17:04 DN:** Oh, man.

[laughter]

**0:17:04 TN:** When are you gonna do your first big band arrangement?

**0:17:09 DN:** Yeah, I did it already, I did it, Quarantine Blues.

[laughter]

**0:17:13 WM:** That was good.

**0:17:16 DN:** I miss everyone's sound, I miss being able to interact with the musicians. Our music requires all kinds of interaction decision-making, we can't really do that now. So I miss all that stuff.

**0:17:28 WM:** Well, what do you think the first gigs are gonna be like after this quarantine is over? Like if you'd imagine, you could play in a trio or you can play alone, you could play a duo. So you're gonna be out there as soon as there is an opportunity, but what do you envision?

**0:17:40 DN:** I mean, I think for the audience it's gonna be... For everyone it's gonna be great. But for the audience it's just gonna be fresh and something new. But for us, as musicians, I think that feeling of being fresh and new, of course, the first few times it's gonna wear off. And it's just gonna be reassuring that this is what we've trained our whole lives to be doing, this is what we're meant to be, this is our lifestyle. Yeah, I think that's gonna be great gigs but...

**0:18:08 WM:** What do you...

**0:18:10 CH:** Yeah. Whatever.

**0:18:12 WM:** So are you putting on concerts for your kids in there?

**0:18:15 DN:** Yeah, everyday.

[laughter]

**0:18:16 WM:** Oh, what are they talking about? Y'all playing together? What are y'all doing?

**0:18:21 DN:** Yeah, we're doing, we got a few tunes that we're doing and...

**0:18:24 CH:** There's that Hamilton tunes you were doing.

**0:18:25 DN:** Yeah, we played, yeah, we did with Hamilton de Holanda, we just didn't... Carlos and I did a tune.

**0:18:33 WM:** I've heard it, man it sounds great. We got to put that up, that's fantastic.

**0:18:37 DN:** Yeah for sure.

**0:18:38 WM:** What's the name of that tune?

**0:18:40 DN:** O Farol Que Nos Guia.

**0:18:42 CH:** El O Farol Que Nos Guia. Guiding light.

**0:18:47 DN:** Our guiding light.

**0:18:48 CH:** Our guiding light.

**0:18:49 WM:** So Carlos, you're recording a lot from home, y'all just did the trio song, and I butchered one of your songs last week. But yesterday, I saw a beautiful picture, you with your three sons, age 15, 13 and six, you all had on y'all cute father's day shirts. How has being home so much impacted your life with your kids? Because I know that they've never seen you this much.

**0:19:13 CH:** Yeah, I was just gonna say that, during the summers we're usually on the road, working. And it's tough on me because being a musician that I am, I still wanna play, I miss the stage, I miss hanging out, I miss that part that's in me. But the one thing that I could tell you about this whole pandemic and the blessing on it is I actually get to see my kids grow, and I get to see them do things that I don't remember, like these guys, my big boy, Kiko, he's 15, he's a man already, man.

**0:19:47 WM:** He's big too. He's a handful.

**0:19:49 CH:** Man you know what I'm thinking man how am I gonna handle him? And then Alex, he's 13, he's 6"1", and little Joshi, he's growing up. It's been interesting, but it's been a blessing, Skain. It's always a pleasure to see my kids, just see them grow. They've been asking questions and we've been hanging, we've been throwing football outside. I've been so motivated during this time that my third floor I just demolished the hell out of my bathroom, so they've been helping me putting it together and stuff like that.

[laughter]

**0:20:23 WM:** Oh, you're going down home.

[laughter]

**0:20:25 CH:** We're just...

**0:20:26 WM:** You gotta call Murphy.

**0:20:27 CH:** Yeah, we'll figuring things out. And it's been cool. It's been cool. It's been a good thing. I've been very happy to see these kids grow and they all love, it's a blessing.

**0:20:39 WM:** Oh yeah. They're made out of gold, man, the Lord put a blessing on you.

**0:20:42 CH:** Amen.

**0:20:43 WM:** They're golden.

**0:20:44 CH:** I'm a blessed daddy to have 'em.

**0:20:47 WM:** Yeah, we all love when they come on the gigs too.

**0:20:50 CH:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**0:20:51 WM:** I ruined my back for a whole summer trying to pick Kiko up when he was 13.  
[laughter]

**0:20:51 CH:** And the bouncing house we got into, a bouncing house we were jumping up and down...

**0:21:00 WM:** Oh man, you remember that?

**0:21:02 CH:** We were aching the next day.

**0:21:05 WM:** Look I'm gonna go over to Camille. Camille, you have a degree in geological and environmental science, and you also have a community consciousness. And this is the time that cries out for community and protests and that type of consciousness. But there's not really a lot of that in Jazz today. We were actually looking for this season to be that, so we were looking around for who was really talking about it. And even if they're negative against us, go get them and just put them up here. And we didn't find a lot of people, so in this time, how can we as musicians continue the legacy of Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln and Nina Simone and Dave Brubeck, and all the musicians who were really about American social justice and use our platform to connect the community in battling social injustice? And do you even think we should do that?

**0:21:57 Camille Thurman:** Well, Jazz in itself is based off of speaking out, fighting for and advocating for what's right. Nina Simone had a great quote that she said, that, "It's the artist's duty to create music that reflects the times, that reflects the community." And as musicians, we are part of the community, our canvas is what we see around us and we're able to feel and be able to use the music as a medium to connect those thoughts and those feelings of what's happening in our world that we see with the people that we commune with every day. So even if it's just simply writing a song, or even if it's simply starting a conversation, or even if it's simply getting together with another artist in a different medium, whether it's through visual art or a dance, it's always great for us to use our music to be that way and speak out.

**0:22:56 CT:** I know with the things that was happening the last couple of weeks, for me, I didn't even have the words. And I found myself back at my instrument and it started flowing for me because it was like, "Okay, now I can hear what I'm feeling and try to communicate that," and I was able to put something together and start a conversation with people that I normally don't even really get to talk to. And I think we can, as musicians use our music to start those conversations.

**0:23:27 WM:** That's beautiful. That's like what Elliot was saying, just with people. But I know from talking with you, the depth of your intelligence and also the depth of your engagement, and it's in your singing too. It's in your composition. It's in your singing. I'm saying it's just the absolute truth. Okay, I see you smiling but I mean... 'Cause if people don't really know you, they don't understand. They're not around, they don't get a feeling for the depth of your level of engagement with things, so are you... Do you feel hopeful in this time or do you feel depressed? What is your feeling?

**0:24:01 CT:** I feel hopeful because as long as there's a will to fight and to keep pushing forward, it's gonna get done. And I think as musicians, we live each day with the gift of being able to create. And that's a sign of life, that's a sign of hope. So we have to keep pushing and striving to do everything in our power to keep that light going.

**0:24:20 CH:** Amen.

**0:24:20 WM:** So I'm gonna go over to Paul because he's also somebody who has a deep social consciousness and a political awareness, and is always... Has a point of view. But I'm gonna take him out of that. Look, you do, I always tell people, we talk about these issues all the time, Ted and I've been talking about this stuff for years in a very raw and basic way, because that's how we... We have to come to each other with that type of respect. But I'm gonna take you in another thing, and Camille has expressed it for us. We don't need to reiterate what she said, but I wanna know that... What do you think about the role of technology and the music, and it's changed recently, whether you know how to turn the phone on or not. I know how to get on my phone, I never knew how to do it. And how has it helped or hurt education and other ways you have to communicate a feeling to someone specifically, has the technology helped or hurt in this isolated period?

**0:25:18 Paul Nedzela:** It's a tool, and I think it's like, we're able to do this now, which is great. It's just great to be able to hear everybody's point of view, hear everybody play from time to time. But I think I'm a little bit in the minority sometimes in just the way I feel about some of the advancements, social media, and sometimes even what we're doing where that tool can be used for good, but sometimes not, without the consciousness of what we're using it for. Being able to have these conversations, be able to do the projects we're doing, I think is great, and we're chasing that live feeling that we miss. I love playing with you all so much, it's like just to get that taste of it is a little bit, but we're always just chasing that feeling. So I'm hoping at the end of it, what we really do is just like running out the gate to get to the real thing again.

**0:26:04 PN:** Only thing I feel like is, sometimes we take advantage of what we can do with

technology without actually thinking of why we are doing. And that same thing goes with playing of like, why make choices when you're playing, of why are you doing it. Sure, you can play a lot of notes or sure, you can do this, but what is the purpose of doing it? We can fill all the stuff on the air, we can put something out, but I think it's all just this... We're all just approximating the real thing. And there's nothing wrong with that. As long as when we can actually play together, we don't... That the simulation never try to overshadow the real thing. I'm never gonna get that same feeling as I get just sitting in the same room with y'all.

**0:26:46 WM:** Right.

**0:26:47 PN:** That sound, like Dan was saying, it can't even come close. It doesn't matter how good the equipment is, records, whatever.

**0:26:55 WM:** So I wanna pick up on what you're saying, and I wanna go to... For me, one of the great joys is to look at you, over these years, look at Walter. 'Cause you're much younger than us so when you would... And Walter's a lot younger than me so just... You sit next to Walter, so early on, I would always love just how when Walter play... Because you're much closer to his sound than we are in the trumpet section. And just to... You can't fake like something is hitting you. It's just something in music. And I'm gonna go with what Camille was talking about how... She said the emotion is so deep, she couldn't say, she could reach for her horn. And now, when you reach for your horn, the music is so invisible and so deep inside of all of us. That is something that once you learn how to speak this language so I'm gonna go to Walter because like Elliot, his mother and father, are both jazz musicians, and he also is, of all of us, he's like, a people person.

**0:27:52 WM:** So in this period I was thinking about Walter, always talking to people, always speak a bunch of languages, he's always out there. And I'm always thinking, "Man, this has got to be hitting Walter hard." He's like our ambassador. And I want to speak to him first, specifically about his sound because he has a sound that's so touching and present. Has your sound changed in this time? And then I wanna ask him, what things are you doing to help address the pandemic's effect on your sound and your creativity, Walter?

**0:28:24 Walter Blanding:** Yeah. Many times, it's interesting how when we go through our searches in life for whatever it is that we're looking for, and in this case, looking for my sound, when you find whatever it is that you're looking for, you discover that it was always there and so...

[chuckle]

**0:28:42 WB:** You know what I mean? That's who I am and thank God that we all have that beauty. I think that's one of the most interesting things about jazz is that in addition to the importance of teamwork and collectivity, is the ability to express yourself as we're all different, saying in different ways. Individuality is also a part of that group effort. And I think my sound, like all those different things, over the years, those long tones and exercises and things that we've been playing together, Wynton, when I come over to your house. Eat up all your food and working on different things to develop. Being present, and stopping, and taking a moment to just be in the moment and accepting

oneself for what it is, with the idea of improving. Even if we're not all perfect, but we are human. And that's that human connection, I think that is so special for us, particularly for me, considering this pandemic.

**0:29:44 WB:** It's a real challenge, sometimes, it's all of us. Sometimes you feel like, "Man, I don't know what's going on." One day, I'm hearing one thing, "When are we gonna open up again? When am I gonna be able to perform?" So some of the things, there's about four or five different things... Well, there's a lot of things, but I wanna share with you just a few things that I find really helps me. The first and most important thing I've discovered recently, is to wake up and just say, "Today is gonna be a great day." That makes a big difference, 'cause sometimes I worry about the future, and how to keep creative, and how to keep looking forward. And sometimes, you got all these thoughts, that might make me not sleep well or go through different periods where I'm so worried about the future. But just with that simple vibration, today is gonna be a great day, it's like setting off on the right foot and it makes a big difference for me. As well as looking forward to enjoying the moments during the day that bring me happiness.

**0:30:43 WB:** And it could either be a simple or profound thing, it doesn't even matter. Something like, especially in New York, that we all are inside, with the virus and quarantine. By the way, I've gone through quarantine since the end of January when we were in Shanghai and then coming back to New York for quarantine. It's just... You can go stir-crazy, but even just going in the park or sometimes just enjoying the sunlight in any way that I can, that's really healthy and safe and good for Vitamin E, that's a really important part of my thing. I definitely think exercise is an important aspect of combining our forces with this profound discipline in music, which is good for the body, and soul, and mind.

**0:31:28 WB:** And so I try to exercise and that really helps too. No matter how short or long, just something that's consistent, that helps keep my good feeling and energy flowing, and it helps my creativity too. And so I've been doing a lot of writing, things like that, it really helps me. Writing about stuff and just my thoughts, and reaching out to people is so important. And during this time, talking about being present, just reaching out to those people who support me, and that I also support or may need my support, is really important because, as we all know, we're so connected and in the music, that's exactly what we do. That's why I miss playing with you guys, so much, because every night that we go on the bandstand and play, it's a profound sense of a connectivity that is a good example for everything that goes way beyond the scope of music. Individuality, coming together, sharing, spontaneity.

**0:32:30 WB:** This music that's based on improvisation, all those things really help me to keep my creativity. And then, one of the big challenges that really is interesting and I like a lot is that so when I'm practicing by myself now, since we can't really play together in the room and hear the wonderful vibrations, it has really helped me in a way, because it gives me a more sense of being creative from my own and independent without necessarily relying on Carlos, or Dan or the backgrounds of orchestra, or different things that we're doing when we're playing in different groups and stuff. So that really helps, and I hope that when we get back together too, that will help me to contribute more to our efforts, when we have our picnic, I can bring something to the table.



**0:33:29 WM:** I wanna ask Kenny, 'cause Kenny also is always looking for some positives and it's such a struggle for musicians. We all know you're talking to your friends, man, there's no gigs. It's like from a financial standpoint, people really are struggling. You also come from a musical family, and this kind of music is a struggle. So are you seeing any positives from what has happened or something that you see that can happen as a result of the times we're in now?

**0:34:04 Kenny Rampton:** Yeah, actually I am. First of all, man, thank you for having us here like this Wynton. And man, I gotta say it's so great to see everybody in the band. I miss you all so much. I miss hearing you, I miss playing with you, and it's great to hear y'all speak so eloquently. Everyone of you always inspires me so much. Walter, man, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your words. Seriously, I've... All of you. But... I'm sorry?

**0:34:34 WM:** I said we like it as long as you're not turning around telling us we're not playing our part.

[laughter]

**0:34:40 WM:** "You don't hear how that sounds?"

**0:34:44 KR:** I have found that actually quite a few positive things have happened to me during this time of COVID. I have a nonprofit organization that I created back home in Las Vegas for jazz education, called Jazz Outreach Initiative, and we had... At first, I was really bummed out 'cause we had to cancel a bunch of concerts. We just got our Las Vegas Youth Jazz Orchestra off the ground. Had six rehearsals and had to cancel it. Had to cancel the kids concert. It was like, "Man, we've been working for three years to get this off the ground." And my executive director said, "You know what, this is gonna give us a chance to really strengthen our infrastructure," and so we focus on that.

**0:35:22 KR:** We got bylaws passed, we're expanding our board. We're doing all kinds of things to make it so when we get out of this, we're gonna be that much stronger. And in terms of the Las Vegas Youth Jazz Orchestra, we figured out a way to actually record them, and so they've been doing recording sessions like we do with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. And we're working on our third one now, and it's given them an opportunity to be in the studio, even though it's with their cellphones, there's not being a recording studio that's given them an experience they otherwise would not have had. So the first tune we did was Marcus Printup's arrangement of Wayne Shorter tune Armageddon.

**0:35:57 KR:** And we didn't choose that tune because of it's meaning or title during these times, we chose that tune because it was the kid's favorite tune to play. They love playing that song, so we recorded the drums first, then added the bass and the piano, then the lead voices, and that gives everybody... You send that to all the kids with the lead voices, then they start to understand what it means to follow a lead player on another level than they would have if they're all seating in a room with all kinds of distractions.

**0:36:21 KR:** So the kids have actually gotten better. We've done three record... We're working on our third. We did that one. Then we did a Zoom table discussion, like a round table discussion with all the kids, and I brought in Marcus Printup. So the kids got a chance to interact with Marcus, which was incredibly inspirational for these kids. And that's something that wouldn't have happened. Then we did "Li'l Darlin" from the Count Basie library, Neil Hefti. Huge. And we did the same thing. And this time we brought in Scotty Barnhart, and he came and did a discussion with the kids. So they got to ask him questions, and that was super inspirational. And Scotty in fact... We have this little 11-year-old trumpet player named Kai, he's been playing for five or six years already. Wynton know's him. Wynton gave him a lesson. This kid is the real deal.

**0:37:08 WM:** He can play.

**0:37:08 KR:** He can play at 11, and so he played the solo on "Li'l Darlin. So Scotty heard it and offered said, "Next time the Count Basie Orchestra comes through Las Vegas, we want you to come up and play that solo with us." So it was creating an opportunity for a youngster like that to be able to actually get to play with a Count Basie Orchestra. Right now, the kids working on another recording, Victor Goines' The Business of America is Business, which is not an easy chart. I think we can all attest to that, that's some difficult music. These kids, they've been putting in their time, they're working on it, they're shedding it, they've been playing along with recordings of Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, to work on it. And then Victor Goines is gonna come in and do a round table discussion with the kids on that.

**0:37:47 KR:** So these are opportunities these kids are getting that they would not have gotten if not for the COVID. And at the same time, the organization, we're getting more structure, we're breaking into committees, doing different things, and it wasn't long ago I was on the road with Wynton and you said you got your org chart together and I was, "What's an org chart?" And it's really, it's given me opportunities to help the organization grow and to do other positive things too. A lot of you have mentioned missing each other's sounds. Men, I miss everybody's sound, and I wanna let you all know I got a new horn, so I'm gonna have different sound when I come into the band.

**0:38:26 CH:** Oh no.

[chuckle]

**0:38:26 KR:** I've been working on that too, and I'm excited about it. I'm really excited about it. So I remember one time...

**0:38:32 CH:** I can't wait to hear it.

[laughter]

**0:38:34 KR:** I'll just say one more quick thing is, I remember one time being in the room at a Q&A that Wynton was doing, it was filled with probably a couple thousand kids, and Wynton was addressing a situation, and saying there's a positive and a negative side to everything in life, and

Wynton said, "It's important to be aware of the negative, but focus on the positive," and that's a lesson that I share with kids all the time. I think it's crucial, especially in these times, 'cause there's so much that we can focus on that's not necessarily positive, and it's sometimes difficult to find the positive situation in anything that we do, especially when it's something really drastic, when there's something really difficult to deal with, but that's the time when it's important to really search for that positivity and embrace it because it's there.

**0:39:20 KR:** It's there, and if we all do that, we're gonna come out on the other side stronger than we were before. Now look at what Carlos is doing, he's really embracing technology and recording, he's got a whole studio set up at home with birds in the background and everything.

[laughter]

**0:39:37 KR:** And I'm trying to do the same thing. I've got my home rig set up and I'm recording from home and we come out the other side of it, things are gonna be a little bit different and those who approach it from a positive point of view, I think are gonna flourish, I hope so. And I think it's important for everybody just for our spirits to really focus on the positive, so that's, you know.

**0:40:00 WM:** Right. Well, one thing I wanna tell you... Tell Kai that we got a little trumpet player named Maksim, and he's two.

**0:40:05 KR:** Alright.

[laughter]

**0:40:05 WM:** He's gonna be showing up on the Basie, on the Basie gig with Scotty and them two now.

**0:40:11 CH:** On the bass, you've just said the bass... He's gonna show up on the bass.

**0:40:13 WM:** No, no, no bass.

[laughter]

**0:40:17 CH:** He's show up on the bass, Skain, that's for sure.

**0:40:20 EM:** Hey well, he might get a gig while he does that.

[laughter]

[overlapping conversation]

**0:40:22 TN:** Walter something, I heard you on the radio today.

**0:40:29 WB:** Oh really?

**0:40:30 TN:** That made me feel so good, man.

**0:40:32 WB:** Wow, that's nice man.

**0:40:35 TN:** I'm not lying.

**0:40:35 WB:** Thank you man.

**0:40:36 TN:** And talking about sound, there was no mistaking who that was. It was so great... That little connection with you just in the afternoon was cool, I have to tell you.

**0:40:48 KR:** I gotta give a quick shout out. My mom is here. I wanna say hi to my mom.

**0:40:51 WM:** Hey mom!

**0:40:53 WB:** Hey mom!

[laughter]

**0:40:58 WM:** I wanna go back with something on the line of what Ted is saying, because we all hear each other play all the time, we all have moments that we can remember hearing each other play... Like that... Baby it's Cold Outside solo that you played in front of your daddy in the Hollywood Bowl that Ted played. And I wanna say that in general, the last solo was at the end of the night, is almost always Elliot. And then when Elliot starts to play, somebody had to be...

[laughter]

**0:41:28 EM:** Have we figured out why that is? Why is that? Right?

**0:41:34 EM:** Look, I don't wanna take that personally. Like is it a trombone three thing or is it personal? Let's talk about this right now.

**0:41:41 WM:** I don't know what... Why do we always remember that stuff...

**0:41:42 DN:** It's the nature of the instrument, man. Nature of the instrument.

**0:41:44 WM:** I don't know why we...

**0:41:44 DN:** Its the nature of the instrument.

[laughter]

**0:41:46 EM:** Yeah yeah, okay yeah...

**0:41:47 WM:** But when you start playing, people look around and say "Oh yeah him," and you start playing all kind of horn. And it's like, "Damn, this guy can play." So we've been thinking, we've been sitting up there all night, and he's just sitting there and has not play. But whenever we get to that last solo, that last person, we always was like, "Okay". And one thing before we open up for questions, I wanna just tell people about the thing that I love the most about the band, is that, because... You're only gonna play one time a solo, maybe you'll play twice. Sometimes you don't play at all, sometimes, if the set list is not right but I love how we start to... Over time, we start to figure out how who has played and who has not played.

**0:42:27 WM:** So when you get two or three songs from the end, Chris is turning around, Carlos, we looking at each other, we're trying to figure out how to make it possible for someone else to play. And I think that along with everybody, writing their own arrangements created the greatest change in the band, the collectivity and sharing that makes our... That makes our rehearsal so interesting too, because we keep that same disrespect for each other, but now we get to disrespect each other's music because we did the arranging. So I wanna thank all my beautiful members for being on, and I'm gonna open it up for questions and based on the question, we'll throw it to different members.

**0:43:00 CC:** Vic's on the call too, I see him.

**0:43:03 CH:** Vic's there?

**0:43:05 CC:** Yeah, he's in there. He's driving.

**0:43:08 WM:** Before I open up let me see what Vic is talking about. Vic...

**0:43:10 TN:** I think he drivin'

**0:43:11 Victor Goines:** Yeah, what's up man? How are you all doing? It's good to...

**0:43:16 KR:** Alright.

**0:43:16 WM:** Be careful man.

**0:43:16 TN:** Be careful.

**0:43:19 VG:** I'm not gonna look at the screen but I'll be checking you all out.

[laughter]

**0:43:22 CH:** He drivin'. Where you going?

**0:43:26 VG:** I'm going to New Orleans, man. It's like, the pandemic makes you remember what's

important to you. So I've been up since 6 o'clock this morning driving to New Orleans, I'm an hour away, and relating that to the band, it makes you remember what's important to you after 26 years of being with the JLCO. We took being on the road, not for granted, but as the thing that we do all the time. But not being on the road will give us a greater appreciation, it's gonna be like an awakening, for when we come back out, just an awakening for the world about that the things we've sleeping on, we've been living off the fat of the land, so to speak. But now that fat has gone away, so now we have to come back and rebuild but we can appreciate what we had so we can move forward and get to what we wanna have.

**0:44:19 WM:** Alright. Keep your eye on the road, man. We don't wanna get accused of nothing.

[laughter]

**0:44:30 WM:** What questions we have?

**0:44:32 AM:** Alright, let's get to it. We've got a long list. We'll try to get to as many as we can. I'll remind everybody just to raise your hand in the participants tab, if you have a question you'd like to ask. This first one is coming from Skyler Mendell. Skyler, go ahead.

**0:44:49 Skyler Mendell:** Hi, thank you so much for taking my question. It's really an honor to be speaking with all of you. My question is sort of two parts, it's about listening and part number one is what's your favorite way to listen to music, whether it's like a certain format of recording or with a friend or in the dark, or any of that, just out of curiosity. And then number two, as you're listening to music, how are you forming opinions about what you're listening to, and how are you getting rid of those... Like for example, I'll be listening to something and my friend will say like, "Oh man, Lee Morgan, he sounds really unbelievable on this solo-break on Blue Train." And then I can't hear anything else except that. So how are you forming your own opinions about what you're listening to?

**0:45:31 WM:** Well, a matter of listening... Who has the most kind of... Chris? Yeah.

**0:45:42 CT:** Yeah.

**0:45:42 CH:** He is a God.

**0:45:43 CC:** I don't know about all that.

**0:45:44 WM:** Chris.

[laughter]

**0:45:45 CC:** If he is a God.

**0:45:47 WM:** What about your format, did you listen to 'cause you got super-supreme ears?

**0:45:53 CC:** Well, actually, something that Elliot actually hit me to, was listening to high-resolution files, and we all got caught up in this MP3 type of thing when it came out in the early 2000s. And we're like "Yeah, we get the music! Yeah, we get it quick! And it's..." But it sounds like garbage 'cause there's a lot of information is lost on this, so like WAV files and vinyl, and all of that. If you could find the most high res that you can get and you can hear everything and get a sense of how deep or how deep the cymbal is, or just how much breath is in the tone of somebody's voice or somebody's instrument.

**0:46:33 CC:** So that's a format that I'd like to try and listen to at most of all the times. I pretty much have gotten rid of most of my MP3s and in terms of what to listen for, I was in that same boat where it's like something would always catch me and I'd always listen to that. But then playing on a bandstand or playing with my dad when he was... I know... But right now, he's missing playing and singing with our group back at home, The Echoes of Joy. I know he's missing that like crazy, but just being up on a bandstand and playing with him, you get to hear not just yourself, but you have to listen to everything, so it's like you have to listen to the bass, you gotta listen to the drums, you gotta listen to the guitar, you gotta listen to the background singers, you gotta listen to the lead singer in which my dad is of the most part, he's leading.

**0:47:20 CC:** And so I had to catch his cues and everything, so it was like you had to turn your ears and it's always... This is like playing a sport, like playing basketball, it's like the play is never over, it's like the moment is never over until it is over. And so, it's like you're constantly listening for one thing and constantly going to another. It's like if we're on the bandstand, for instance, with JLCO it's like I'm constantly listening for the bass drums and then the piano, and then it's like there's certain things that Ryan Kisor might do, our lead, that we have to pay attention to. Sometimes, we have to do some cross-section things. We might be playing with another person that's not normally the lead, but they're always capable, everybody up there is capable of doing that part, so it's like you always have to just listen not just for what they're playing, but how they're playing it.

**0:48:09 CC:** There's always a certain thing and they might change it, and that's the good thing about jazz, everything is human, so things may change, not drastically, but like a little thing like here and there that might change that you might have to catch on to, and latch on to. And it's that feeling that we miss right now, that you could get to in terms of that listening. You should try to focus on one thing and don't try to focus on two things. Like just listen to just the bass or listen to just the bass and the drums, or just listen. Listen to Cool Struttin', listen to that whole record, and listen to the rhythm section of that whole record. Cool Struttin' by Sonny Clark. Just listen to the hook of... That Philly Joe, Sonny Clark, and Paul Chambers had. Just listen to that the whole entire time, forget about Jackie McLean or Art Farmer, and just listen to the rhythm section and just feel the vibe that they get on there.

**0:49:00 WM:** So I wanna go to the second part of the question is how do you... How do you form opinions about what you're listening to and how do you evaluate what you're listening to while you're listening to it? So I guess I'll ask Camille.

[laughter]

**0:49:16 CT:** Well, [chuckle] it's always great to listen to as many versions... If you're studying a particular tune, listen to as many versions as possible, that's how you're gonna come up with your opinions, what you like, what you don't like, you'll hear differences as far as approach. Like I'll never forget the first time I heard Tune Up, and I heard Sonny Rollins' version of it. And then I heard Miles Davis' version of it, and it was just like, "Whoa, this is night and day." And the proximity of when they were recorded, super close, but these people had two completely different concepts in approaching the song, "Alright, let me check out another version," and then from there you're able to gain information and insight to what the possibilities are, maybe what some people took as a chance, maybe what they didn't take as a chance, which you would've taken as a chance, all those great things. But I would just say start with something that you like and listen to as many renditions of it as you can and start going back and forth between the recordings.

**0:50:15 WM:** So I wanna ask Elliot another addendum to that question, because he was saying somebody would tell him Lee Morgan is playing this way, or so and so is this and that way, and you were saying you're listening emotionally to music a certain way. How do you... If somebody tells you something about music or you've been led to think music is a certain way, how do you, after years of listening, listen to something fresh or anew, with a new type of ear?

**0:50:40 EM:** Well, for me, I'm not trying to analyze it, while I'm listening to it; that for me, takes the fun out of it. I just like to listen to it and enjoy it, and then almost get in another gear if I want to try and understand it, but I'm not putting music on to try and understand it. I'm putting music on to enjoy it and to... Especially if it's something, the people that we're all talking about right now, that can change the way you feel, you could be down that day and you put something like that on, and that changes the way you feel. But if I'm trying to think all the time about someone's sound or about they split this note or what was that harmony-wise or... Then, I'm actually... It's something that we try and not do when we're playing on the other end of it because if... There's so much going on, you just wanna be... Almost have that free mind and not analyzing and trying to figure out, "No, this isn't a good soul." If you start thinking that while you're playing, then...

**0:51:37 WM:** Right.

**0:51:38 EM:** You're already going down that track. So, it's trying to maybe just enjoy the moment, and then there's maybe times that you can bring that into your practice if you really wanna analyze it and understand it. But that's only to help you hear it, so when you're actually on the gig, you're not thinking, once again, you're just more in the moment and be able to hear it.

**0:52:00 WM:** Yeah.

**0:52:04 AM:** Great. Well, thank you for your questions, Skyler.

**0:52:06 SM:** Thank you.



**0:52:09 AM:** Alright. Next question's coming from Joshua Poleon. Josh, are you there? Hey, Josh. Hey, we can't hear you. I don't know if your microphone's working. No, nothing yet. I can come back to you. I'll give you a minute.

**0:52:36 EM:** Type it?

**0:52:36 AM:** Alright, let's go to Cayden Green. Hey, Cayden.

**0:52:46 Cayden Green:** Hi, Mr. Marsalis and the whole orchestra. I think I had heard in this early stages of the pandemic that you had said that one of the things that you wanted to focus on, really, was training your ear. And so, I've been able to put a lot of time into transcribing and working with singing with the tune, singing without it, and then putting it on the piano. I'm working on a lot of Byrd right now. And I was wondering, what other types of ear training, or working on your ear exercises or techniques, or even just listening, maybe, how to improve my ear?

**0:53:23 WM:** Well, I think I'm gonna throw that over to Ted Nash. He has great ears. He not only can hear stuff... He's an unbelievable reader and great musician, but he also can hear into the intention of other type of styles. So, Ted, what can you...

**0:53:37 TN:** Well, I just was remembering a time that we had some time backstage, and was it Carlos and Dan? And you guys were going to the piano and saying, "Alright, this is a C. Now, what's the next note? What's the next note? What's the next note?"

[laughter]

**0:53:53 CH:** Yeah, that was a good one.

**0:53:54 TN:** Remember that?

**0:53:55 CH:** Yeah, we did that on the tour bus.

**0:53:55 DN:** We did that on the bus, the cute little Casio, yeah.

**0:53:58 TN:** We did that for hours. And it was interesting because I think we get used to hearing, it's not about being... Having perfect pitch and saying it's a C, it's about the relationship with the note. So, we hear it in a context of a chord, or it's a dominant chord and it's a flat nine, and that's the 13, and that's a... You start to identify the extensions. And it's... I think it's... What we did, was such great... We were just goofing around, but it was such great practice for really getting your ears in tune. And when we're playing on the bandstand, we wanna be able to react, "Oh, is that a 13? Is that a flat 13? Is that a sharp 13?"

**0:54:28 CH:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**0:54:31 WM:** There's only five altos. Go ahead.

**0:54:38 DN:** Six, seven, eight.

[laughter]

**0:54:39 WM:** Six, seven, eight.

**0:54:40 TN:** I get the point, but besides the singing, and then trying to play... What horn do you play, Cayden?

**0:54:45 CG:** I play the piano.

**0:54:47 TN:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**0:54:51 CG:** Yeah.

**0:54:51 TN:** It's a great thing to... Someone said, just take a pencil with an eraser, then you go...

[music]

**0:55:00 TN:** And then, you say, that's a six, right? Or...

[music]

**0:55:01 TN:** That's a major seven. So, you have to identify the intervals immediately. So, you don't... You try to develop... 'Cause intervals are really important, it helps put context into things. And so, you just hit the C, and then you just hit randomly a note and see how fast you can identify the intervals. It's a fun little game. But you can get other people to do stuff for you, play something. Like, have a piano player... I mean, it's hard now. But online, you could do that. Have them play a voice and boom! Now, you just try to hit it.

**0:55:27 CH:** Boom!

**0:55:29 TN:** Boom!

**0:55:29 CH:** Bam!

[laughter]

**0:55:30 TN:** We had so much fun with that exercise, backstage.

**0:55:36 CH:** Yeah, who started that? Was that Nimmer?

**0:55:38 DN:** I think so.

**0:55:39 CC:** I think it was Nimmer.

**0:55:39 CH:** Nimmer that was you, right?

**0:55:40 WM:** He's taking credit for it, if he didn't.

[laughter]

**0:55:45 CC:** Yeah, he started it.

**0:55:45 TN:** But make things fun too, a lot of times we say, "That's work, man. I gotta practice. That's work." But you can make games out of it and have a lot of fun, and you would be learning in the meantime.

**0:55:54 WM:** Right.

**0:55:57 AM:** Thanks, Cayden.

**0:55:57 EM:** I wanna add to that, too. I think the more variety of music that you listen to, too. The more different kinda soloists you listen to, you're gonna have a broader spectrum of things that you can draw from harmonically. You can see how McCoy plays on a tune, versus how Chick plays on a tune, versus how Barry Harris, Bud Powell. You're just gonna hear different harmonic approaches, just by listening to different people. So, that's another approach, too.

**0:56:25 AM:** Alright. So, Josh just wrote to me his questions. So, I'm gonna go ahead and read it. He said, "My question is about Mr. Marsalis' book, 'Letters To a Young Jazz Musician'. He talks about breaking the rules by creating more form. I wanted to know how... I wanted to know more about this and how to be rebellious by creating more form, instead of losing form. Thank you."

**0:56:48 WM:** Well, that's a good question. I think I'm gonna answer, just so... And not take a long time. We have a vision of what the future is. And that future is some computer, some robots, people going to Mars, some shiny, silver object, that go somewhere, robots doing everything, everything being mechanized and more technological, things being more, what we call... Things being more abstracted, that's our concept. Now, what if the actual new thing is not that at all? Everybody thinks that's what it is. So, when they see it... What if the new thing is more collective creativity, more humanity, a deeper level of engagement with your neighbor, skills that have nothing to do with giving power over to robots? So, when I said that about form, the whole question of being a rebel means that you break a convention.

**0:57:35 WM:** So, if you have a convention that is, what is called avant-garde, and now it's just a term, to break that convention means you're not avant-garde. So, your relationship with all these terms is always, "What are you in relation to what everybody else is?" If everyone is the word liberal and, you're not... They're all conservatives. If you're the word conservative, in terms of the word liberal, it means... In terms of the word conservative, a conservative thing is the easiest path or the thing that everybody is... I mean it in that sense, 'cause there are many uses of the word conservative.

**0:58:12 WM:** In other words, when you have the comfort of the status quo is when you're doing something everybody else is doing. So you wanna be in that status quo? Just what are the avant-garde people are doing? I'm gonna do this. Now, when you don't want that umbrella, that's when you're actually out on that ledge, so that's what I meant. And what I meant by form is, form is unlimited and of... Everybody that's on here writes a lot of different forms. I think I wanna get to some people who haven't talked, so I'm gonna get to Carlos because he writes... I can pick on... Pick anybody here has done interesting things with form, but Carlos writes interesting forms that puts a lot of different groups together.

**0:58:50 WM:** He writes music that can be traditional, it cannot be traditional; he puts a lot of different elements in his music, so he exemplifies what I'm talking about. So I'll just ask him in this piece... In the new piece that you wrote, with Moses On the Cross and those pieces, what was your concept of form in that suite of pieces.

**0:59:15 CH:** Well... You guys hear me?

**0:59:20 WM:** You're freezing.

**0:59:20 CH:** Form for me is... I know it's the internet probably. Can you see me now?

**0:59:26 DN:** Yeah.

**0:59:26 WM:** Yes.

**0:59:26 CH:** How about now?

**0:59:28 WM:** No. [chuckle]

[chuckle]

**0:59:28 CH:** Okay. No?

[chuckle]

**0:59:30 WM:** Yeah, I can see clearly.

**0:59:32 CH:** Form, to me... The way I visualize form, it's more of an event in my life when I write music and I try to perceive a certain section of my life. I use form as a plot or scenery or something that has happened in my life, and I don't judge it by a certain even number of bars or whatever, I just let sound dictate what I feel to that specific situation in my life. Moses On the Cross was the song that just talks about Robert Moses' expansion project through the South Bronx, breaking up families and stuff like that.

**1:00:16 CH:** And what I utilized, and I'm always... I'm a lover for the Blues, the whole Duke Ellington concept of... The Blues is powerful, those 12 bars, those 24 bars are very powerful. I tend to try to continue that legacy, even through Latin music, because I feel that there's some type of spiritual connection with the I-IV-V. I know we have it... There's an even amount of bars, but that I-IV-V is very spiritual. And when I write forms, I try to follow these spiritual guidance and sounds, and that's how I usually build up form.

**1:00:57 WM:** Right, I think it's important too to go with what Ted was saying, 'cause form is also a matter of play, putting things in the context. We live in chaos. Okay.

**1:01:11 AM:** Yeah. Great. Alright, our next question is coming from Ivan Smith. Ivan, go ahead whenever you're ready.

**1:01:22 Ivan Smith:** Okay, I'm curious about what do you guys... When you're playing, what do you see? I'm a visual artist, and I'm working on a piece now where I'm... This is Thelonious Monk and I know people can't hear anything when they're looking at it, but I'd like to convey what he sounds like. So I've been thinking a lot about that, and I'm wondering, what do you see when you're playing as opposed to what you hear?

**1:01:55 WM:** I wanna see if Elliot, Paul and Kenny, we all wrote pieces for Crystal Bridges, that was based on some type of artwork, so I think you all have not talked, so... I don't wanna run out of time without y'all getting the chance so maybe if Paul and Kenny can go first and then Elliot can pull the caboose up.

**1:02:17 PN:** Yeah...

**1:02:17 WM:** I mean, Paul... I'm sorry, Paul, Kenny, and Walter. My fault.

**1:02:22 PN:** So in terms of seeing stuff, we based it on the art work, right, but honestly, when I'm playing, I always think of intent, and just the more of a feeling behind it, rather than just some... I don't really see a picture or anything when I'm playing. Some people have synesthesia and they can... They really see the colors swirl. Sometimes I'm jealous of that, I wish... I feel like it would make it easier. But just the feeling that comes into me, that was a really big awakening when, Wynton you talk about that all the time. Really getting into that intent of whatever the composer or the artist is really thinking about. That seems like the easiest way for me to actually try to get in some meaning into whatever I'm playing. If it's writing or playing or anything like that. So I guess it's less technical in terms of the picture, so much as what that feeling evokes in me, and then how

can I represent that with what I'm doing.

[pause]

**1:03:20 PN:** Go ahead.

**1:03:20 WM:** Kenny?

**1:03:20 KR:** For me, I don't really visualize pictures or colors when I play. I know some people do. For me, I visualize it as a scope or a shape of telling a story when I play. Now, the opposite, when we wrote pieces based on art, I was very... I actually hear music when I look at art. The piece that I wrote about... It provoked a feeling in me, and it brought me to a certain place where I actually studied music that came from that place and wrote music based on the piece of art that I was looking at. And I go to museums and I'll go... I love surreal sections; Salvador Dali is one of my favorites.

**1:04:10 KR:** It inspires music in me. But when I play, I'm not necessarily visualizing art that way or... Colors. I know there's a young trumpet player, I think... I just read about him. He's gonna be coming to Juilliard next year, who sees colors in music, he's very visual in the way that he plays. I look forward to meeting him. But in terms of myself, I don't really see it that way. It's a different thing, it's more about the feeling, and, I think, of improvising as spontaneous composition and in creating sound, different soundscapes that I can build on and create an overall arc and tell the story with.

**1:04:55 WM:** Walter.

**1:04:56 WB:** Yeah, yeah, I understand what you mean, Kenny. I kinda feel very similar. The only time I've actually seen something while playing that has affected what I'm playing is playing with dancers. We've also done another portraits concert where we actually played while they had slides of different artists, so we could watch the artwork while we were playing. When we did Crystal Bridges, I did it the other way around. It's not like I actually saw colors or paintings or shapes or anything like that necessarily when I was playing, but instead I took the shapes and the painting of Romare Bearden's Sacrifice and used that to interpret it, my own way of expression what I thought the emotions were. So I think I would say I feel more of the emotions that I'm sure we could probably interpret in different ways through art. But one thing I definitely appreciate because of your question is so nice in the sense that whenever we combine different arts together, it always creates something very magical.

**1:06:08 AM:** Yeah.

**1:06:12 WM:** Good question.

**1:06:13 AM:** Thanks for your question, Ivan. Alright, we're running out of time, but I think we've got time for one more. And this last question is gonna come from Estevan Otero. Estevan whenever

you're ready, go ahead.

**1:06:28 Estevan Otero:** Alright. Hello, Mr. Marsalis and the rest of the orchestra [1:06:35] \_\_\_\_\_  
Skain. So, I was wondering, so how many of you guys have perfect pitch and secondly, what's a good way to get better at theory? 'Cause my theory is not great but I have a really good sense of time and perfect pitch and I improvise pretty well. But I really need to get better at theory 'cause I'm not great with chords, where they are. I just need a better understanding. So what's a good place to start?

**1:07:14 WM:** Okay. First, who is the perfect pitch club? Chris, Marcus, Elliot...

**1:07:23 CC:** Vincent.

**1:07:25 CH:** I think Ted has it.

**1:07:26 CC:** Camille.

**1:07:30 TN:** I don't.

**1:07:30 CH:** Skain, you don't got it? Skain, you don't have it?

**1:07:32 WM:** No, no, man.

**1:07:33 CH:** You're not lying to us?

**1:07:36 WM:** No, my brothers be laughing at me man, no.

**1:07:36 KR:** I got perfectly bad pitch.

[laughter]

**1:07:40 CH:** A horrible pitch.

**1:07:41 WM:** Who else? We got more. Do we have five or six?

**1:07:45 CH:** Well, I think Ryan has it. I think that Dave Robinson has it too.

[laughter]

**1:07:57 KR:** Christy has it.

**1:07:58 CH:** Christy has it.

**1:07:58 CC:** Christy yeah.

**1:08:00 AM:** Yeah.

**1:08:00 WM:** Our librarian. Okay, in terms of theory... I think... First I'mma say, get you a book of Johann Sebastian Bach chorales.

**1:08:16 CH:** One and two.

**1:08:17 WM:** And learn how to analyze those chorales. That's Western harmony. Now, when you wanna learn about jazz harmony, get the music of Thelonious Monk. And his songs are a distillation of Duke Ellington's music. And Jelly Roll Morton. Now, all of us have different things that we could tell you. Lydian chromatic concept. There's so many theories of music that are great.

**1:08:41 WM:** I'mma give you another name of a book. There's an unbelievable book of actual harmony that you can just carry around and read. It's called "Structural Functions of Harmony", Arnold Schoenberg. That is a book that is very simple and the interesting thing about that book is, when he describes where the altered tones come from, is coming directly from a Bach harmony, but you're gonna notice the notes that he identifies through the minor mode and the major mode are gonna be the flat nine, the raised nine, the flat five, the flat 13 and the major seven on a dominant seven, or the dominant seven on the major seven. It's gonna be the same notes that we use in jazz. So that's what I... But I'm sure other people have other concepts. And Duke Ellington, that's advanced harmony. You call Chris Crenshaw, he knows all the Duke's chords. Anybody else wanna just say about harmony from a theoretical standpoint? No?

**1:09:44 CT:** I'll throw in something. To jump on what you were saying, strengthen your ears, transcribe as much as you can, and then once you transcribe, sit down and really try to work measure by measure understanding the relationship of what's happening and at that moment in time with what that chord is. Start with the blues. I love Trane's Slow Blues because he has this idea that he builds like five, 10 choruses off of that. It's just beautiful to witness, to see how he grows and creates this beautiful story with just a simple idea, but at the same time, he's doing certain harmonic things that you can see like reading a book just from looking at the chords that there's some blues.

**1:10:28 CT:** Also, I love George Coleman because when he plays, it's like reading an open book. And when you transcribe it and you parallel it to the chords of harmony like, take for instance, when he plays on Sierra, it's very understandable. There's several ways of looking and listening to harmony. I know because when you have perfect pitch, there's target practice where, okay, that's a C, okay, that's the D. But then there's the shape where you gotta get used to understanding. Okay, that color is a C minor/major 7. Okay, that sound has a flat nine in there somehow. So try to sit in front of a piano, and this is important, see if you can voice out, one by one, the voicing. And close your eyes and see if by each note that you play within the voicing, you can hear and see the distance between each interval and the difference between how does this color become darker when I flatten it? How does this color becomes a little brighter when I sharpen it?

**1:11:32 CT:** And then of course, learn tunes. 'Cause you'll realize all tunes, they ultimately have



pretty much... Most of the popular tunes have the same formula. And it's just a matter of understanding that road map, sonically, of what creates a structure of a good tune, and then from there being able to hear and see those shapes so that when you recognize those shapes, you can go to playing them 'cause you already are familiar with that sound and color.

**1:12:00 WM:** Great. Okay, I'm gonna leave you with one other thought to go with what Camille is telling you about harmony. Okay, the first is to understand harmony from a modal standpoint. Modes and how they work... One mode, Dorian, goes to another Dorian. Phrygian goes to another Phrygian. One major chord can go to another major chord. It's the way Art Tatum plays a lot of progressions. Minor, minor, minor, minor, minor, dominant. Try to understand the internal way that voices move. 'Cause harmony is vertical, and it's horizontal. It's like human beings in a relationship. You have your relationship with yourself in space, then it's me and Dan, me and Ted, me and Victor, Victor and Chris, Carlos and... We start to get all these relationships that at one moment, they're the most significant thing, and the next moment, they're not significant at all. This was the root of the chord, then the next time it's the major seven on the dominant seven chord. Then the very next chord is the minor third on a major chord.

**1:12:58 WM:** So harmony is such an intricate and detail and natural way, like the way a group of people just form a circle naturally. How many times we've been standing backstage, and we just fall into a circle? That's harmony. So get the modal understanding. Understand the philosophy of harmony, which is things that change relationships all the time, that there is no hierarchy of relationship, but they do progress in a certain way that implies a hierarchy, and that it's endless fun, and it's like math. It's a huge cycle. It's like the universe. It's like the heavens and the stars. It is a huge, unbelievable cycle that can be figured out mathematically and in millions and millions and millions of ways. There's no one way to understand.

**1:13:46 WM:** So I'm sorry if I went on too long in the end, but I love my members, my brothers and my sister, I love them so much. It feels so good to be able to say it and look at people and not have any hint of anything that is not real. And the depth of that love is very difficult to explain. It's been played out on bandstands and recording studios and parks, prisons everywhere in the world for years. And they are so for real about playing, rehearsing, doing stuff and handling their business. I'm so proud and have such a depth of love for each of them that I thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity to be on this earth and play with them for the amount of time I've played with them. So thank y'all very, very much for joining us tonight. All, y'all here on the Domain, Chloe and Adam, thank y'all. I know Adam is gonna close us out. I'm not gonna say anything else after this. I will see y'all next week, and I will be on the phone with y'all on Thursday.

**1:14:42 EM:** Thank you.

**1:14:43 TN:** Thank y'all.

**1:14:44 PN:** Thank you, man.

**1:14:45 EM:** Thank you so much.

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**1:14:45 DN:** Yeah, bye.

**1:14:46 WM:** Thank you.

**1:14:46 CC:** And say hi to your mom for me.

**1:14:50 WM:** Yeah, you right. [chuckle]

**1:14:51 AM:** I'd just like to offer a big thank you to everyone for being a part of this community. Jazz at Lincoln Center is a non-profit organization in New York City committed to entertaining, enriching, and expanding a global community for jazz. If it's within your means, please consider making a donation. With that, I'd just like to say thanks to Wynton and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra for your time this evening and your insights. And we'll see you guys next Monday at 9:00 PM Take care. Thanks so much.

**1:15:18 WB:** Take care.

**1:15:22 CC:** Peace.

**1:15:22 KR:** All right, y'all.

**1:15:24 DN:** Good night, everyone.

**1:15:26 WB:** See you later.

**1:15:27 WM:** Much love, y'all.

**1:15:28 CC:** Love, love.

**1:15:28 EM:** Yeah, man.

**1:15:29 CH:** Hasta luego, Papi.