

Skain's Domain

Episode 3 - April 6, 2020

0:00:01 Moderator: Hey, guys. My name's Adam Meeks. I'm the video producer here at Jazz at Lincoln Center, and I'll be your host and moderator for tonight's event. I will shortly introduce Wynton Marsalis to take things over for a little while. And then, once we run through some conversations with him and a host of other friends of Wynton's who will be joining us tonight, then we'll see if we can get to some questions from you all towards the end of the hour. In an addition to Wynton tonight, we will be hearing from Jon Batiste, Joey Alexander, Peter Martin, Terence Blanchard, Clarence Penn and Antoine Drye. I will do some sort of housekeeping things in a little while to instruct you guys on how to ask a question, if you have something you'd like to ask of anybody, any of the names that I just listed. And until then, Wynton, I'll turn it over to you.

0:01:00 Wynton Marsalis: Okay, thank you, Adam. I wanna thank y'all very much for tuning in. Tonight I'm gonna talk about my father in a time when we're surrounded by a lot of death, people dying in our families, people close to us. I just had a conversation with my father on Thursday night, he passed away on Wednesday. So the Thursday before that, I was talking to him and joking with him, I'm always playing with him. And I was joking with him about, "Stay away from COVID, there's so many people in New Orleans with it." I said, "I hope you weren't out parading during Mardi Gras season." And I said, "Man, I don't think it's your time for COVID." And he said, "Man, nobody ever knows when it's their time. I don't determine the time." And he said, "If it does happen, it's not any more tragic 'cause it's you, than it is for anybody else."

0:01:45 WM: And that was one of the main themes that he always tried to teach all of us that you're gonna hear from tonight. Which is that everybody is interwoven, and there's a... Something that hurts one person hurts everybody. For me the loss and the grief is so deep it doesn't express itself in kinda crying, it's just deep. I just stay up at night and I think about him, how sweet he was as a person and how high his aspirations were for... Always for humanity. And he always had the largest thought. I wanna thank everybody that wrote me. I got so many phone calls and so many emails and nice things from people really all over the world, that loved my father. So I'm just so humbled and grateful, I'm gonna try to get back to everybody. And, I'm gonna go to his theme, just many people are dealing with this. Many people are dealing with this. And he was a person who... He embraced the higher part about humanity all the time.

0:02:41 WM: I'll tell y'all just one funny story about him just... In our neighborhood, we lived in Kenner, Louisiana, when I was growing up. And we lived between the railroad tracks and Mississippi river. And even in that neighborhood we always had the raggediest cars. And my father would go out and get the raggediest car he could find, and when that car broke down he would take

it to the junkyard, and take the plates off it and get another one from a junkyard. And I think when people pass away, in our tradition the old folks used to say that people sit with them. And that sometimes when people sit, they sit on your porch or something, they don't really even have to say nothing. They just sit there and just their feeling transforms you. Well in this case, in the condition when I couldn't even get down to my father's funeral or anything, but we have a chance to sit with some friends tonight and we're gonna talk and tell stories. On the Thursday night that I talked with my father, for some reason I decided to go through his whole kind of history that I knew, clubs that we had been in, funny stuff that happened, sweet things, bad things.

0:03:41 WM: And he was very lucid, even he corrected one of the bass players. I told him, "Julius Farmer played bass with y'all in the 70's." He said, "Man, that wasn't Julius Farmer, that was a cat named Trees." So he was on top of everything, and I did not know that he would be going to the hospital on Saturday, and that he wouldn't come out of the hospital when he got there. But at the end of that conversation he said, "Man, why are you talking about all this old shit?" I said, "Man, you know, it's good to remember stuff." He said, "Yeah, man. Yeah, man. Memories, memories, memories." So that's kind of the last lucid conversation I had with him. I'm gonna turn it over now to one of his students and a piano player who lived in Lincoln Manor, right next to Kenner, somebody who became out there, Mr. Jonathan Batiste. He's gonna tell us a few things about my father, Ellis Marsalis. Hey Bat...

0:04:28 Jonathan Batiste: What's happening, what's happening?

0:04:30 WM: What's happening? Thank you, bro.

0:04:32 JB: Man, man, my condolences. And this is how we sit around in this quarantine time, so I'm glad that we could do this and pay homage.

0:04:42 WM: Yes, sir.

0:04:45 JB: It's very, very evident to me, and it becomes more and more evident as the days go on, that it's hard to put a meaning to someone's life in a succinct way. I think about how much his values had become something that I adopted before I even understood that it had come from him. The origin was him and a few of the other elders in New Orleans, and they created something for us before we were even thought of. And to come into that, and to take the mantle to that, and take that into the next generation. And be a part of something that's so important and something that took so much sacrifice and study, diligence, the idea of learning the craft, making it your own, passing it on to so many young musicians over the years, being the patriarch to a musical family that took this music around the world, to deliver it with such class and humility. And to be humble about something that you don't really often get a pay off for.

0:06:00 JB: To be humble about something that's a true achievement, whether the majority of people know it or not. And I just remember encountering that level of seriousness and not really understanding, and still trying to understand what a life like that... What happens in the wake of a life like that. And conceptualizing that in my own way, so that I can deepen my seriousness and

commitment to everything that those elders have given us. I just remember the first time we met, and I was 13 years old, and at this point he was a...

0:06:45 JB: In our community, in the jazz community, and in the community of musical education, and New Orleans cultural community, and in the world, he had become somewhat of a mythological figure.

[laughter]

0:07:00 JB: I'd heard about him before I actually heard him play, and I knew, as I was getting serious about piano, that I had to address what he had put on the table. He was playing at Snug Harbor every Friday night for 30 years. It must have been 31 years? And I heard about that gig, so I went down there. My parents brought me down there, and when I got there... Now this is something that I think, also, shows you the level of commitment he had to tutelage, and understanding the craft, but also learning, and being aware of what's coming behind him.

0:07:46 JB: When I went to introduce myself to him he had already heard about me, and maybe he had heard me play already, and was telling me things about my playing, and invited me to the house. [laughter] So when I went to the house I thought that that kind of encouraging spirit, the tenor of his encouragements, would continue, but it didn't go that way.

[laughter]

0:08:09 JB: So I sat at the piano, and I started to play, and before I could finish the melody he cut me off. He said, "Jonathan, do you know the words to this song?" It was Autumn Leaves, and he was like, "Do you know the words to this song?" And I was like... You know, when you're young you try to hide your ignorance, versus just admitting that you don't know. So I said something that was kind of noncommittal, like, "Well, you know, I heard them before.", and then he was like, "Well, you need to hear them again."

[laughter]

0:08:55 JB: I could go on. You know, I don't want to take up too much of your time, but there's so many stories like that over the years, from that point of just... And not just seriousness, laughter, and comradery, and also talk about things in both a colloquial manner, and also in a manner of someone who was an elder who was trying to prepare you for the range of things that you're gonna deal with as a musician out here. He was talking to me one day, I remember, I went back to the house. This is many years after that, and he was talking about how to do your taxes, and how important it is to learn how to do your taxes.

[laughter]

0:09:36 JB: In the tradition of musicians who didn't figure that out, and why that's just as important as tightening up your instrument. Just to have somebody who created that amount of... Just to have

created such a wealth of tradition, and knowledge, built on something so meaningful that we can grab onto, you can't quantify it. We just gotta keep thinking about it as years pass, and just telling stories, and meditating on conversations and lessons that we garnered from being around those type of people, and hopefully one day we can be that in our communities, in the space that we inhabit.

0:10:25 WM: Mm-Hmm. Yeah. Well, I want to say how much he loved you. My daddy, whenever he'd hear somebody else who could play, he'd call me, "Man, I heard a little cat from... Somebody, man, from Lincoln Manor, Jonathan Batiste, man. You know his parents was playing... " I knew about your parents, of course. "Man, that boy can play. He's just natural, got that natural ability." So, first of all, I'm gonna thank you, J. Bat. Just stick around if you can, because you know we're gonna throw it back and forth. We're not really in an order. I know it's past Joey's bedtime, but we're gonna let him wait a little bit, because I'm gonna throw it over to one of our...

0:11:00 WM: We're the elder statesmen on this particular call. [laughter] My brother, who could always play. I mean, he was just always so soulful and serious, and I want to say, in introducing him, Wallace Roney passed away, too. And the three of us are like the same age. We came up here at the same time, we've known each other for a long time, and I never think about Wallace. I think about that time when we were 18 and 19, and the gentleman I'm introducing, we went to school together. We were in high school. We had 8th grade honor band together, and we've known each other for many years, I want to thank him for being on, Terence Blanchard. Thank you, T.

0:11:40 Terence Blanchard: Oh man, thank you. First of all, my condolences this week.

0:11:45 WM: Yes, sir.

0:11:46 TB: There's so many things, man, I can say about Ellis. There's a lot of funny stories. But for me, I think, one of the most important things is to really emphasize that, to me, Ellis was the embodiment of what it meant to be selfless, you know? This was a man who could have had a career, could have went on to a lot of other things to further his career, but decided to go back to New Orleans and really educated us. You know? One little thing that I think about a lot is that physically he had six children, but spiritually, man, he had children all over the world.

0:12:25 TB: One of the things that used to amaze me about El... It took me a while to get accustomed to it, because he was so approachable that I didn't think he was real. I just thought, some of it's... But then I said, "No, no, no, man. That's just the way he is. He's just a cool dude, and you could talk to him about anything." One of the biggest lessons that Ellis has ever given me throughout my life is the fact that whenever I encountered him he was studying something. He was trying to learn something. He didn't quit. He didn't sit down and say, "No, I'm just gonna do this, and just be this for the rest of my days."

0:12:43 TB: No. He always worked at his craft, always worked at bettering himself as a person. And I'll never forget, just recently, I had a production, here in New Orleans, of an opera that I'd done, and when I got to the theater, I walked in and I saw Ellis, man, and you would have thought my last name was Marsalis. His face was just as big as anybody else's, man, and he was there just as

proud. And I had to invite him over to the house afterwards. So him and Roger, man, they sat up in my house all night long, man. I had to throw them out at the end.

[overlapping conversation]

0:13:47 WM: Wait, you're talking about T, let me see. You're talking about Roger Dickerson, who was a great composer and my father's oldest living friend. They were friends in high school. So Roger Dickerson also taught Terence, gave Terence a few composition lessons, right? When you were in high school, T?

0:14:02 TB: Oh, yeah, man, he's a... Look, if it wasn't for those two guys, I wouldn't be here. It's so interesting, but people used to ask me all the time. Journalists asked me, "Name the two greatest influences on you." Well, I said, "My two earliest, well, those are Brown and Miles Davis." And you know where I got there from? From the two records that... When I was at NOCCA... I came into NOCCA talking about these other trumpet players and Ellis said, "Son, you need to go home and listen to this." And he pulled out these records. He pulled out Four & More Live and he pulled out Brown and Roach Incorporated. And he said, "Listen, take these home." And, look man, he must have played them about 100,000 times because they had tape around the edges.

[laughter]

0:14:42 WM: That's great.

0:14:42 TB: He said, "Man, just take these home." And, look, I still got them around here some place. I never brought them back. Once I took them home, that was the beginning of a whole another life for me, man, and I often reflect on the fact that there's not much that I could have ever done to repay them back. So the best thing that I could do and the best thing that we can do is to pay it forward. It's one of the reasons why I love to teach, because all of my lessons, man, when I'm working with students now, come from the experiences that I had with Ellis. When Ellis would be up there, he would sit at the piano and played for us until we got it together. He said, "Listen, just, yeah, go ahead. Go ahead." He would play, and Wynton knows this is true.

0:15:26 WM: Yeah.

0:15:27 TB: Sometimes he would play and fall asleep at the piano and keep playing the changes while he was asleep at the piano. It was the damndest thing I've ever seen.

[laughter]

0:15:41 TB: Sometimes we would walk over to him and kind of look at him and I'd say, "Damn, man, he's asleep. Holy cow." You know what I mean? But, hey man, those guys, they were committed to music. One of them... And I feel like J Bat, man. I don't wanna take up too much time. But one of the reasons why my career has gone the way that it's gone is because celebrity was never the issue. Never, ever. The issue was always a passion for creativity and that's the thing that I feel

extremely blessed because my life went down the path of experiencing Ellis. It's one of the reasons why the other day when I felt like I was shot in the chest with this news. I payed a little tribute to him by playing Twelve's It on the piano because Wynton blown bell off the trumpet when we were in high school.

0:16:40 TB: And when I came along with just a little bit of proficiency on the piano, Ellis, his eyes got big. He said, "Finally I'm gonna have a piano student." And he tried to make me a piano player. No, bro, I just played my horns, man. So I had to go back and play Twelve's It on the piano for him because he just meant a lot to so many people. He's gonna be missed but he will never be forgotten, dude, because those lessons, those life lessons, are the things that are still carrying us forward.

0:17:21 WM: Wait. But I also want to say, look, Terence can play the trumpet but he can play the piano too now. I used to play the Haydn Trumpet Concerto and Terence would play the piano part.

0:17:28 TB: Oh, I never...

0:17:29 WM: Hey, come on. You know you can play it.

[overlapping conversation]

0:17:31 TB: To go to I think Tanglewood or something like that.

0:17:35 WM: You can play, man.

0:17:35 TB: Right, but...

0:17:37 WM: You always could play.

0:17:37 TB: But all of a sudden you said, "Hey, man, T, I need to work on these changes. You think you could play these changes for me?"

0:17:44 WM: T could play. Whatever he touched he could play. So we're gonna... Thank you, thank you, T.

0:17:51 TB: Sure, sure, sure.

0:17:53 WM: We're gonna come back around. I know it's time for Joey to go to bed but you know what?

0:17:55 Joey Alexander: Getting close. I sleep at one or two o'clock.

0:18:00 WM: Okay? Well, we're gonna keep you up a little while because we're gonna go over to the gentleman that I first met in St. Louis. I don't know. He was 14 or 15 with his friend Jeremy Davenport as a trumpet player. I was playing with the St. Louis symphony and he said, "Man, I

want you to hear my boy play." He was playing. I said, "Wow, you can play. How old are you?" He was 14 or 15. He said, "Man, you gotta hear my boy play. Pete." And he sat down and played all kinds of piano, then later I heard him play a McCoy Tyner solo online. He's like, man, I don't know. He had to be 15 years old or something. And he's done so much on his instrument at this point. He's such a fantastic musician and a great teacher and unbelievable scholar about the music and everything. Mr. Peter Martin is here. Pete, jump on in here and tell us a little something.

0:18:44 Peter Martin: Oh, thank you so much Wynton, and my condolences to you and the whole family and everybody who's here. I mean, Ellis, Mr. Marsalis, E. He was...

0:18:57 WM: Right.

0:18:58 PM: Yeah, he had several names and I almost feel selfish to say he was all of our fathers, but he was. He was your father and your brothers but, I mean, he, from the first time I met him, it was a musical father, a piano father, a teacher, a old cool dude. I mean, he was like an old cool dude but he wasn't even that old. Now I'm thinking back to it. He was my age now. But he was already an old cool dude.

[laughter]

0:19:32 PM: And Wynton, I remember when I met you, yeah, in St. Louis and you played with the symphony and my dad was playing and Jeremy's dad. And my dad's like, "Yeah, this young trumpet player. Man, this dude is a great classical player and he claims he can play jazz too. I hadn't heard that but he can definitely play Haydn Trumpet Concerto." And you told my dad and Roger...

0:19:51 PM: I guess they were telling you about me and Jeremy, he's like, "Bring him down", and we came and met you and we were like, it was such a cool thing to meet you, and looking back I was telling this story recently and I realized after time passed, I was like, Wynton was sort of like the original internet before the internet. Wynton is traveling around in the '80s meeting... Clarence, remember when we met Clarence, Clarence Pazier? And he's like, "Yeah, I know Wyn."

0:20:16 PM: I'm like, "I know Wyn." And when was it? But then, as I got to know Wynton, and one of the first things you told me Wynton, it's like, "You need to meet my father." And you gave me his number in New Orleans. I remember, like this, when you came back with Charnete and Jeff, and the Jazz group, and I was like, "Oh, I got a phone number. I'm gonna call this... Like Wyn seems pretty cool. Let me call his dad, he plays piano." Then I found out that your dad was actually the original connector of all this and now I see J Bat, and Joey Alexander, and Terence and all these folks that I've been just so honored and proud to be associated with the different generations, the connections, New Orleans, New York, and all this, and your dad was always kind of like the connector of that. But he was also...

0:21:06 PM: I always come back to those moments over the years that I saw... I think the first time I saw him was 1986 at Snug Harbor. First time I saw Mr. Marsalis, Ellis, E, father, all these, perform there, and it was such a mesmerizing, and soothing, and soulful, and grooving. It was like

the style that I always thought that I might want to be associated with, but never knew what it was. It was like jazz, but it was New Orleans, but it was groove, and it was like Bill Evans and McCoy Tyner, and I mean, it was all the things, it took me years later to realize like he...

0:21:49 PM: And I'm gonna geek out, I'm a nerd out a little on the piano stuff, forgive me, but I mean, I just wanna speak a little 'cause we have so many great angles in the prism of Mr. Marsalis, it's so beautiful and that's why his legacy is gonna live on. But just from a pianistic standpoint, the understated Ellis, like the precision with his touch and his time, the things that people take for granted and all the people that heard him play at Snug Harbor, and around the world, and at Dizzy's and at Lincoln Center, that he made look so easy, I'm like, "That shit is not easy." Piano players we can say amen to that because that is like the top level and I still haven't totally figured it out, I'm just starting to scratch the surface, but at that time, I remember hearing him play and saying like, "Wow, that is something that he's tapped into." And I think what he's given us pianists.

0:22:43 PM: And then, it's funny Terence you saying about you come up in him, "So, I got my pianist." That was... He was the consummate pianist, he was the consummate educator, obviously the consummate father to his sons, and the consummate husband. I mean, again, I could go on with stories, but we all got them. I remember one time, I'll just say there's one time, I think it was '91 and I was playing with you Wynton, with Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, and we were in, I think it was in somewhere in Spain and your dad was there playing at the festival also, and we were somehow... I mean, it was one of these crazy Ellis Marsalis stories, like we're hanging at one in the morning on the streets, it's Spain, so they're just having dinner and drinks, and I'm hanging with Mr. Marsalis like... I've known him for a long time, but I'm still not like... I'm still... And he's still my father, a father figure, and we're hanging, going from bar to bar, it's like the first time I really drank with him. I'm like, "Man, he can... Not only can he play piano, and teach, and all this, build programs, he can drink too a little bit."

[laughter]

0:23:43 PM: And we're going from bar to bar and at a certain point, I'm like, I'm only 28, 29, 30 years old, and I'm like, "Man, this dude is hanging." He kept kinda looking at me like, "When are you gonna drop off?" But I just remember the love that I had for him and that continues to this day. And Wynton I thank you because you opened that up, you were always so like, "You gotta meet my father." It was never like, "No, this is mine." It was like, it was one love. It was the New Orleans family. And J Bat, I remember when you first came by the house and it was like...

0:24:18 PM: I didn't realize it at the time but that was the beginning of the continuation of all this. And Antoine and Terence, but really Ellis was the prism with which before we realized that we all kind of existed and came together and the legacy is deep, wide, and grand, and I'm honored to be just a teeny part of it, so, thank you.

0:24:40 WM: Man, thank you. And you know I just wanna say how much he loved everybody. And he loved Terence, what T said was right, "Man, you heard this opera T, right? You heard this film score he did, man T, man T." Like he could go on and on about each cat. He had a thing where it

wasn't so much... I didn't feel about my father was not a kinda touchy, feely, emotional person, who put a lot of, "You have to be this way or that way." He wasn't like a big family Marsalis and all that kind of clan that he's proud of, that wasn't his thing. So how he would talk about Peter if he heard you, something you did or you wrote, or about Terence, or about J Bat, he would have a lot to say about it. Now, he would call me, you know how he would... When he start talking you couldn't stop him.

[laughter]

0:25:24 PM: Yeah, yeah.

0:25:26 WM: Man, he... He came back from your opera, he came back from a film you wrote, oh man, he loved the music, he must have talked to me for 40 minutes straight about the whole film. He'd say, "Man, let me tell you another thing I noticed. Man, the one cat had the tuba going. And the tuba was playing on so and so and so and so". Oh, he'd say, "Yeah man, I love what this cat Peter. Man, he wrote this amazing so and so and so." So he had very specific things about each person that he liked and he wanted to talk about. "Man, J Bat, he gonna get that stride playing together man, 'cause he know how to stay in time when he's playing." He... So I love hearing you say that. And I'm gonna bring the next young gentleman in 'cause we know he has his milk and his cookies next to him.

[laughter]

0:26:13 WM: And he's such a fantastic ability on the piano. He blows everybody's mind. His harmonic sophistication and his knowledge of music goes so far beyond his years. I can't even tell you what my father thought about him. The depth of respect my father had for his playing and his understanding. He's joining us. Mr. Joey Alexander.

0:26:30 JA: Hi.

0:26:31 WM: What you talking about, Joey? Thank you.

0:26:32 JA: Thank you, Wynton. Well, first of all, my condolences to you and family.

0:26:38 WM: Thank you, man.

0:26:40 JA: I'm gonna share a little story of first time, Ellis, my first encounter. Yeah. Not meeting him but, so, I was very little. Probably four or five years old.

0:27:00 WM: Well, how old are you now?

0:27:02 JA: I'm 16.

0:27:03 WM: Right.

0:27:03 JA: Yeah. Listening to a recording of Harry Connick Jr. Singing Stardust. Well, and at that time, my dad was playing this track and my dad, when he told me who played the piano, I knew Harry played piano, but I asked my dad, "Who's playing the piano?" At the time, even my dad didn't know and very long I learned that it was Harry's teacher, who was Mr. Ellis Marsalis. And when I found out about that, I was really wanting to meet him after hearing his playing. He plays so beautifully, playing behind Harry and his voice sings, his harmonic approach. It was something mesmerizing and that stuck with me, that version of Ellis and Harry playing together. It was such an unforgettable moment. It's actually one of the first piano accompany a singer and it was truly special for me to hear that.

0:28:32 WM: Mm-hmm.

0:28:36 JA: And when I got to meet the man himself, we were at a festival in Minneapolis, and actually Delfeayo was playing with his orchestra. We were sharing the same stage and I was so glad to meet Mr. Ellis and he was quiet. He was just sitting down and enjoying his meal. But, yeah, it was a festival. There was a lot of people standing. It was outdoor, so the energy was a lot. Well, later on I got to see Ellis again. Mr. Ellis, we did a headlining together at this museum in Arkansas. Crystal Bridges. Crystal Bridges Museum of American art.

0:29:35 WM: Mm-hmm.

0:29:38 JA: And we spent a whole day. I was truly... It was a humbling experience. We really talked in the dressing room and, well, so actually there's a little story to this. So we were doing a Q&A and after we finished the Q&A... I had some, a lot of time with the questions and I think he knew that I had a hard time dealing with the questions. And then when we were in the dressing room, there was I think the most inspiring things was that he really wanted to help me, help me out.

0:30:32 WM: Mm-hmm.

0:30:32 JA: He really cared about how I did with in the questions and he told me, "Sometimes you can get stupid questions."

[laughter]

0:30:49 JA: Yeah, I don't think it was such this stupid questions but I remember he told me, "You have to know how to deal with it, and you just have to, you gotta joke around sometimes. You gotta be funny." Because he was such a funny guy. I can see those qualities also in Wynton. I can see them.

[laughter]

0:31:16 WM: Yeah.

0:31:20 JA: I just know he would tell us about what his beginnings. I think he started playing clarinet and pulled out the saxophone and then he moved to piano. So then age 15, if I'm right, so he had some great stories to tell.

0:31:38 WM: Mm-hmm.

0:31:38 JA: And even for me, I'm not that great at story telling and I think he knew that.

0:31:47 WM: [laughter] You're getting better, man. Don't worry about that.

0:31:49 JA: Yeah, it's true, man.

0:31:50 WM: You getting better. By the time you're 20, you're gonna be great at it.

0:31:52 JA: You really, about how the way I said it is how I get comfortable with questions that maybe I might feel offended by. Or some questions that I won't answer but I have to kinda stay cool about it. Don't feel like you're being confronted, that's what he told me. Just feel like it's a conversation. It's something that you have to enjoy, and that's what I learned. And when we... After the Q&A, we did the performance. I played before him and we... I mean, it was a great moment. And after I played, it was Ellis, Mr. Ellis Marsalis turn to play and he was with this wooden cane. It was a pretty hip cane I think.

[laughter]

0:33:04 JA: Well, because the stage is... It was pretty high, and it was a long walk because he had to go up to a few steps and I think he had somebody helping him walking to the stage. Really. It was truly... The strong impression that I get from Mr. Ellis is that the way he... The whole day we spent together, spent time together, he just wanted to play. He didn't get any tiredness. He was there to play and everything about him is something that I'm always... It stuck with me. And one of his performances, I was hearing a song that he did. Well, I heard Bill Evans played it. It was called Emily.

0:34:10 WM: Right, Right. Yeah, he loved that song.

0:34:13 JA: Oh, yeah, I love it to, so I was... When I heard that, wow, it's... He played so beautifully. I mean, it was something that I won't forget.

0:34:25 WM: He loved that record. Bill Evans and Tony Bennett.

0:34:27 JA: Oh, I love that record too.

0:34:29 WM: Yeah, he loved that record.

0:34:37 JA: Yeah, anyway, he was always very sharp and he always asked me how was school. We

did home schooling but he's always... He want to know what I'm doing. What books you reading?

0:34:50 WM: See, you were lucky when you got him. Because when you were young, he was nice to you. But me and Terance... Hey, T, you remember when we were growing up, when you would play something and he didn't like what you played, he would just ask you a question. He'd say, "Son... "

0:35:04 TB: Yeah.

0:35:04 WM: "What are you playing?"

0:35:07 TB: What are you doing? [laughter]

0:35:08 WM: Now, Terence, tell them.

0:35:09 TB: You know what's funny about you saying that? I'd never forget. I was in the practice room and I finally learned what a minor, what a major seven chord was and I was playing C minor, major seven back to B seven minor. I kept going back and forth and I thought it was such a hip sound, man. And Ellis heard me and he goes, "Why you playing Chelsea Bridge?" I thought I created something on my own. You know what I mean? He just came in there and broke it down, but he was always that way. I mean, I was telling somebody the other day. I said, "One of the things... " Somebody asked me, "What's the main lesson you took away from Ellis?" I said, "Know what you're doing please." [laughter] Please know...

0:35:51 WM: Exactly.

0:35:51 TB: If you didn't know what you were doing, he'd call you out on it. Hey, man, what is that? What was that? You know what I mean?

0:36:00 WM: Yeah. Yeah, he always want you to take... And Joey another thing he would do... So in the '70s, we learned how to circular breath. Terence, remember every time we couldn't control it...

0:36:09 TB: Oh!

0:36:12 WM: Man, every solo week we'd be...

[vocalization]

0:36:12 WM: We just played some scales and all the people just start clapping it. So I remember I was on my daddy's best then. Man, I was just playing and circular breathing. I was just playing scale and everybody just erupted in the audience, oh! Circular breathing and holding a note and know everybody was erupted. And then daddy called me over to the piano. He said, "Come here man." I walked over there. I said, "Yeah." I was just smiling like, "Dad, I'm showing you up." He

said, "Hey, bro, the circus is down the street." [laughter] So he could bite you. He wasn't just playing with you.

0:36:49 TB: Oh, man.

0:36:49 WM: So we got our brother Clarence Penn up in here too. We gotta get some drums up in here. He had drums and, Penn, my father always loved drummers. James Black. Ed Blackwell, first was his man who played with Ornette Coleman. Well, they played together in the '50s and then later James Black Jr in New Orleans music and composition. Not well known by people but he was like... Him and my father, all though the '60s and early '70s, they played together. So this is a gentleman, unbelievable drummer, that my daddy loved with a great deal of intensity. Mr. Clarence Penn.

0:37:23 Clarence Penn: Yeah. What's up guys? My condolences to the family. Yeah, Ellis talked incessantly about Ed Black. Well, actually, he brought him down to BCU to do a clinic and he talked about James Black. Because I was telling them, one time, I was like, "Man, drummers don't really write." He was like, "Man, you don't know James Black, so." Yeah, he wrote Boy Man. I mean, he just talked about this cat all the time. But, I mean, I wanna say that, when I met Ellis, it was in '87 and I had just saw Wynton and you said... I was at another school and I didn't like that school. And he was just like, "Man, you need to go study with my father." And I was like, "Where's your father?" He was like, "He just went to Richmond. You need to go down there." I was like, "Where?" Richmond. Richmond wasn't even on my periphery at all. [laughter]

0:38:10 CP: So it's funny, a couple of months later Ellis came to Detroit to play and he was playing with Branford. Lewis Nash and Delbert Felix. Because when I went to the concert and I was like, "Man, Wynton told me to come study with you." He was like, "Great. Give me your address. Give me your number." He wrote it down. He had the school send me the information.

0:38:22 CP: I went down there, auditioned, got in. Didn't have a place to stay. Ellis said, "Man, well, you know Victor Goines. He's out here." So he just told Victor, he said, "Let Clarence stay with you."

[laughter]

0:38:53 CP: I stayed with Victor for about three months. I didn't have a practice room. Ellis was like, "Well, you can use mine. You can use my practice room." Yeah, so I shared his practice room. I said this to my wife the other day, after practicing every day, Ellis said, "I got a gig. You wanna do this gig?" I was like, "Of course I want to do the gig." And we're flying to, I don't know, North Carolina, somewhere like that. And really, man, I'm thinking that I made it. I checked out Wynton. This cat was like... It was just like just the status of jazz and I was like, "Okay, this is where I'm headed."

0:39:27 CP: I'm on the plane. Ellis pulled out this big, thick book of 360 Bach Chorales and was like, "Get busy." "What you talking about? I thought I was just gonna be chilling." He was just like,

"Man, do you think this is a game out here? This is serious."

[laughter]

0:39:30 CP: So I started analyzing. I mean, so being on the road. I thought it was gonna be fun, man. Every gig we had, I had homework. But want to touch... And also, Wynton talked about Ellis and them cars. So Ellis sold me my first car.

0:40:03 WM: Oh, man, sorry. [laughter]

0:40:03 TB: Oh!

0:40:03 WM: [laughter] He didn't do that to you.

0:40:04 TB: Oh!

0:40:07 WM: He charged you \$200.

0:40:07 CP: \$500. Check it out. And your mama, Dolores, said: Ellis don't sell that boy that car. [laughter] I started the car. It started smoking. [laughter] And Ellis said, that's gonna go away when the car warm up. [laughter] Two years later, the car was still smoking.

[laughter]

0:40:42 CP: So, I mean, I think I had a special relationship with him because I was down in Richmond and he had just went down to Richmond, so he didn't really know a lot of people. I didn't know nobody. So, I was over at his house every day, me and Victor. I was there eating. Your mother was cooking dinner and he was telling stories. Teaching me how to play. Tell me a bedtime story on piano or "Blue and Green. Stuff on piano. And so, at that point, I kinda felt like this was my dad. I was like, "He's all mine," right? It wasn't until I moved to New York in '91 that I found out this cat knew all the kids, everybody. And I was kinda jealous. I was like, "Peter Martin, you don't know Ellis. I know Ellis." [laughter] I had to just realize that this guy was just... He was like that with everybody not just me. The wealth of information.

0:41:37 CP: I called Ellis two months ago because I went back. I'm in school getting my Master's and so I wanted to tell him, like a dad, I wanted to tell him and make him proud. Man, I thought I was gonna talk to him for about 20 minutes. I kid you not, two hours later my wife is like, "Are you still on the phone?" He's just going. He's telling me... Man, it just kept going. He was like Yoda. He just like always has something to say. Always the right thing too. And if you were messing up on stage, he'll say something. You have to look at him, you be like, "Okay, so, maybe that wasn't as good as I thought." So I miss that cat, man. He was like a father for me, and I know for a lot of people. So, I'm just really honored to be amongst the whole family and amongst the people that he touched.

0:42:24 TB: Hey, Wynton, remember those keys he used to have? Remember those keys he used to have?

0:42:30 WM: No.

0:42:31 TB: You would always hear him when he was teaching. You would always hear him coming down the hall because he had 40 keys in his pocket. So, I remember we were sitting out front of Oakland and... Me, and some other people I went to school with. And we knew every night... No, but every day he kept us there after school and that'd be like a two or three hour conversation. Just talking about all kinds of stuff. He would run the gamut, bro. It wasn't about me, it was about life and all kind of stuff. So I remember, one day, man, we heard those keys and everybody said, "Oh, shit. Ellis is coming." I was running down block, bro. We got to the other corner, man. We looked back. It was the janitor.

[laughter]

0:43:17 TB: I remember that [0:43:19] _____.

0:43:21 WM: Oh, man.

0:43:22 TB: Oh, bro.

0:43:25 WM: Bro, look, he could talk, but he's saying... I know when I was really little, when I was seven, eight, nine, I was always hanging with him and James. So my mom always thought... Man I'd be getting home at 1:00, 2:00. She'd be like, "Y'all running up and down the street with a child." I said, "If you really knew that they stood out on the corner and talked from 12:00 to 2:00 in the morning about something I don't have no idea what they talking about, and they just making me stand there, them doing this." They could go, man. They could go.

0:43:52 TB: Oh, man. All of those guys were like that. The whole crew of guys was like that, man. All of them.

0:43:57 WM: They could go. And you know the cats, they had hard times. Like cats in my father's band, two of them died of heroin overdoses.

0:44:07 TB: Yeah.

0:44:07 WM: And so they were like a family, but my mama had grabbed him and she put so much of her power on him, he was afraid to get that high.

0:44:15 TB: Yeah.

0:44:15 WM: And, I mean, she kept him together because without her, he'd of had a hard time even surviving.

0:44:21 TB: Man, I gotta tell you this, bro. I have to say this, man. One of things that was beautiful about growing up with Ellis and your mom, they dispelled the myth about making a choice between family and the music. They dispelled that myth. Look bro, when I came over... You know your mom. Your mom treated me like I was y'all, you know what I mean?

0:44:42 WM: Mm-hmm.

0:44:44 TB: If I wasn't good enough, she didn't hold her tongue. She let everything known what was on her mind.

0:44:51 WM: Yeah, she would do that.

0:44:52 TB: Yeah, and at the same time, man, we could never say that when Ellis was at a gig that he wasn't carrying himself with dignity and honor, man. 24/7. And I carry it with me because the way I live my life, I figure I'm trying to pay homage to those guys that came back and gave us everything that we use now to develop our careers, man. And that's one of the things that I've always wanted to tell him thank you for. That I never knew how to say thank you about. Just showing me how to be a man, showing me how to be a family man, as well as an artist at the same time.

0:45:34 WM: Yeah.

0:45:35 WM: Him and my mama had their thing, they didn't live in Camelot.

0:45:43 TB: Right.

0:45:44 WM: But they stayed together and dealt with their business even though they went through a lot of changes. But I was thinking, I don't remember if it was Peter, somebody was saying my dad would fall asleep when he was playing. So the funny thing he would do is... My mom would be in the audience a lot of times. And she would be saying, "Child, I'm gonna sit here and see your daddy go to sleep." So when he would fall asleep, he always knew where he was, as long as he was sleeping. So she'd start calling his name out in the audience. "Ellis. Ellis. Ellis!" And she would get louder, louder. People looking at her. Then he'd wake up, and when he woke up, then he would get lost. So when he woke up he didn't know where he was. As long as he was asleep, he could follow the form. And then he'd look at my mom and put his fingers to his lips, like she was disturbing his concentration. And she'd say, "Child... "

0:46:29 TB: Oh, man.

0:46:29 WM: I got our final guest. I think he's in here. He was always around my daddy and my momma. Fantastic trumpet player. Scholar. We actually live two blocks from each other. We can't leave our apartments. And we're gonna see each other more than we do now. Mr. Antoine Drye. What you talking about, Drye?

0:46:47 Antoine Drye: Hey. What's up brother? Yeah so, like everybody else, man, it's so many stories I could tell. I studied with Mr. Marsalis, and Victor Goines, Harold Battiste, Charles Blanc at the University of New Orleans. Go privateers. Class of '95. And, I mean, I was telling this story earlier before we started about when I met him when I was 15. He was the first Marsalis that I met when I was 15 and it was in North Carolina. I was studying classical music at North Carolina School of the Arts, and he came there and Clarence Penn was on drums.

0:47:28 AD: It was Jeff Clapp and me. The name of the club was Orchestra's Pit and I think James Genus was on bass. And Marsalis was a little quiet because he had had some kind of surgery on his mouth. But fast forward because I wanna just make this quick so I'm just... This might not make sense but I'm just telling some story. So fast forward, I ended up going to school. University of New Orleans, where Mr. Marsalis taught. And he taught in a very unique way. He would be like... I'd come to class. At the end of the class, he'd be like, "Go down to Preservation Hall and just sit there until they let you sit in. Go to Sheraton. Tell George French I sent you to the Sheraton." He would just tell us how to get involved with the music in a very un-institutional sort of way, which was awesome. But I remember one time being at school in the cafeteria, and I saw him there. He just looked at me and he said, "Oh, you got time to eat, huh?"

0:48:29 WM: [laughter] Right.

0:48:30 AD: And I'd never figure out if he was telling the truth or not. I mean, if he was serious or not. So anyway, so for the final, I just wanna say something really, really quickly. This is gonna be the last thing that I'm gonna say, if you will allow me. Let me just find this really quick. Because on Wednesday, when Mr. Marsalis passed... With my friends, I always called him E but to him, I always addressed him as Mr. Marsalis. I had highest level of respect for him and Mrs. Marsalis. Loved them both very dearly. But Wynton Jr. Called me and told me. He called me at 8:00, 12:00 or something like that. And I wrote to him and Sydney, and I said, "So sorry for your loss. E was very special to so many of us with the desire to play this music. Little did we know, E teaches through living. He helped many of us transition from being young dreamers to the strong, resilient adults he knew we'd need to be for a life in this music and beyond."

0:49:39 WM: Yeah, man.

0:49:40 AD: And then I read something later. I don't really... Didn't really feel like I said it eloquently enough for the way... It got my point across. But I read something by Arturo O'Farrill. He was talking about, in an article, about the passing of Pizzarelli and Mr. Marsalis. And he wrote, in one little section, he wrote, "They were such nice people too. They were examples to me of humanity, and gentleness, and generosity. I feel like we lost more than musicians and icons. We lost a high bar for how one should behave as a human being."

0:50:16 TB: There you go.

0:50:17 WM: He's right.

0:50:17 AD: So, thank you. And Wynton sent me, like everybody else, he sent me... I was studying classical music at North Carolina School of the Arts. He sent me down to New Orleans and I met Peter Martin was one of the first people I met. Jeff Clapp and I went to [0:50:30] _____ and I saw you there. It was an amazing time. Anyway, thank you for letting me say that. I could go on and on. Just say hi to Ben Wolfe and whoever else I can see. Terence, love you Terence.

0:50:47 WM: Oh, what's up bro?

0:50:47 Ben Wolfe: Love you bro.

0:50:47 AD: Alright.

0:50:48 WM: I didn't know Wolfe was up in here, so...

0:50:50 AD: Yeah.

0:50:52 WM: We finished but we got J. Batt. We got Peter Martin. We got Terence Blanchard, Clarence Penn. Joey Alexander, if he's still up. He might've went to bed. Antoine Drye. Whoever wants to... If you have questions you wanna get in. It doesn't have to be for me. It can be for any of us. It's like they were saying about with my father, we all are... And it's good that you all can see kinda just the natural way we all with each other, because a lot of the times it doesn't come across just in articles. Or we all doing different things, but when we come together, we have a certain type of just basic oneness. This comes from our training. We're talking about my father tonight, but we could be talking about Terence's parents. We could be talking about... It doesn't matter who we're talking about. It's all one kinda circle.

0:51:40 TB: But one of the things that I think people should really understand is the reason, the way that I came into contact with you, that my aunt, my mom's sister went to college with Ellis and Roger. They all get my aunt to play jazz. She was a classically trained pianist. So this is like family, man. This is going back generations. And when I started with Roger, I'll never forget, man. I was playing piano with him and he went out of town, so he said, "Listen, I'm gonna send you uptown. Take a lesson with Ellis." So I got up to the house and Ellis set me at the piano and he asked me for a tune. And when I really sit down to voice it the correct way, most teachers would sit down and tell you something, but Ellis said, "We'll figure it out." He sat there, bro, for 30 minutes while he watched me figure out how to voice all of the chords on the tune.

0:52:28 WM: Right.

0:52:28 TB: Making sure that you did the work. Wanted to see your process. Not just leave it up to you but to make sure you understood what it is you need to get better.

0:52:28 WM: Yes. Indeed, T. What you talking about Wolfe? Can y'all... Is Wolfe still in there? Adam, can you get Wolfe in here?

0:53:01 Moderator: Yeah, I'm bringing him in right now. Here he is.

0:53:03 BW: Am I unmuted now? [chuckle]

0:53:06 AM: Yeah, guess so.

0:53:07 Moderator: Yes, you are.

0:53:11 BW: Perfect. I wanna see... All right, man, I love that family. I love you guys, man, you know that. And that was very sad news, when I heard this. And E, for me, was someone who I always... I would say to myself, "Would E think I'm bullshitting right now?" [laughter] That's the bar I would think about, for some reason.

0:53:33 BW: I spent a few times with him in conversation. Several, I guess. And I'd play with him a few times, but I remember all the situations. But I just remember him in them. I don't remember the other people around him. I remember just him. We played jazz At Lincoln Center. I don't remember what we... It might have been with Tony Bennett. I think Hurley was playing drums. I don't remember, but I do remember the way he was in the bandstand was very inviting. That thing with the bass and the piano, like, "What change are we gonna play?" Because the best musicians I've played with, we didn't really discuss it too much. We discussed it musically. You listen, you hear, hopefully, and you play together. And it was almost like, without using words, the way he played, he was playing like, "How about we do this right here?"

0:54:30 WM: [chuckle] Right.

0:54:30 BW: How about we do this right here? It was so clear and so inviting and so easy. And I just remember the feeling of it was... Yeah, it made you not think about what you're playing. It made you think about the music and made you go deeper inside of the music. So it was like a lesson without it feeling like a lesson.

0:54:50 WM: Right.

0:54:51 BW: It was very special and I remember, you talked about him, he would talk a lot.

0:55:00 WM: He could go.

0:55:00 BW: I remember there was a gig with Jeremy Davenport somewhere in maybe Calgary. One of those jazz festivals where the venue's in a hotel. So we were sitting in the bar and he says, "The problem about music today is there are no bands." I was just talking to Trey about this recently. [laughter] And then he went into this long thing. It made so much sense but it was really deep, how clear and concise. And I didn't say one word. But I remember the feeling of it was very special, and it was very giving. Just like on the bandstand. A very giving, selfless... He never seemed like he wanted to demonstrate of, "I know this, you don't." Or, "I can do this. I can..." It

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was never like that. It was always just giving information for real, though not... He would give it hard sometimes but it was good. I mean, my father was like that so it was very comfortable. I used to get in a lot trouble when I was a kid for playing extra notes on the last chords or playing out of tune. And I would get in trouble for that so, E, the way he, it was very comfortable for me.

0:56:11 WM: Right.

0:56:13 BW: In fact, your whole family always made me feel very supported and very welcomed, and that was always very inspiring. So, I mean, you know that, man.

0:56:23 WM: Yeah, man, come on. You know you my man? The first tour we went on with Wolfe, we was playing in all Afro-American churches. And Reginald Veal was playing bass before and grew up in a church tradition. I had a piece he had to sing on it. He said, "Man, I can't sing this." I said, "Yeah, you can sing it, man." So he starts singing and all the people in the church start erupting, "Yeah, yeah, we love our white boy on the bass. In the sweet embrace of Life.."

[laughter]

0:56:46 BW: Yeah, that was some good ass food, that tour, too.

0:56:49 WM: We talking about the church, man, language.

0:56:57 AD: Hey, hey. I got a...

0:56:57 WM: Gospel music.

0:56:58 BW: That was your words.

0:56:58 AD: I wanna say something about that because I remember something really cool. I remember y'all came and y'all did that in New Orleans. And then I remember y'all were going to Texas after that. And I remember getting on the bus and I remember Wynton was eating some Ritz cracker with tuna fish and putting a drop of soy sauce on it. I will never forget that.

[overlapping conversation]

0:57:20 AD: And I will never forget, the bus took off, man, and I ended up going to Texas with him! [laughter] I'll never forget that.

0:57:29 WM: Oh, man.

0:57:29 AD: But I do wanna say one more quick thing about E because he taught me something. He used to say something and it kinda came to me later on. But I remember one time I got hired to do... I got called to do a gig with this pop group called The Brand New Heavies and my parents were really into me getting my education. So when they called, I said no. And the next day I called. I was

in school. I was at the PAC, Performing Art Center, and I told him, I said, "Mr. Marsalis," and he immediately said to me... Because it was very good pay. I told him everything, the money and everything. And he said... His first response to me was, "Can you call them back?"

[laughter]

0:58:05 AD: He was like... And I was like, "Man, my mom is gonna kill me." And he was like, "I'll talk to her." And I'll never forget that. He talked to my mom and I went on that tour, and I ended up hating it. I ended up hating it. Remember Terence? I ended up hating that tour. I saw Terence at the Iridium hotel or when the Iridium used to be in the Empire. I was like, "Man, I hate this." I really wanted to play jazz but I just remember that story, man. Sorry.

0:58:34 WM: Yeah, that's it. No, that's good. Okay, we gonna open it up. But that's how E was. He wasn't prejudiced against stuff.

0:58:41 AD: No.

0:58:41 WM: You gotta find out about stuff. Go do it.

0:58:44 AD: Yeah.

0:58:45 WM: So we got any new people?

0:58:47 AD: Yes, yes.

0:58:49 WM: Well, no...

0:58:49 AM: Yeah, let's turn it over to some questions here. Real quick, for those of you who joined us a little bit late, if you wanna ask a question, just select the raise hand function at the bottom of your participants tab. We got a lot of questions and not a ton of time, but we'll see how many we can get through. Our first question is coming from Sabine Catonis. Let me... All right, Sabine, you're unmuted. Go ahead.

0:58:54 Sabin Catanas: All right. Hi Wynton. Can you hear me all right?

0:58:54 WM: Yeah, man, how you doing?

0:58:54 SC: My condolences. I had never got the privilege to know your father but I am thankful for him because he gave us you. So you've absolutely had a major influence on my life and the way I think about the world. So it's just a privilege just to be sitting here talking to you. My question was, you recently said in a radio interview that, "Excellence is a form of protest." Can you explain that? Can you elaborate on that in light of Mr. Marsalis Senior, in light of his life? Because whenever he was protesting it, he was never doing it with anger. And, again, he was always well composed, very professional. So can you please talk about that statement, that elegance... I'm sorry,

"Excellence is a form of protest," in the lens of Mr. Marsalis' life? And thank you.

1:00:21 WM: Well, my father grew up in segregation. So he was 26 before he could ride on the front of a bus. And it doesn't mean that he started riding on the bus, on the front, when he first had the opportunity because he used to always say, "Man, if you get somebody used to riding in the back of the bus, if you get rid of the back, they'll build one to get in it." And my father was really Eastern kinda in his thinking but he grew up... He dealt with a lot of prejudice and ignorance growing up when he did. And even after the end of segregation, stuff is... It ain't no way about it. I mean, I was always much more hot-headed than him. So he would always tell me, "Man, why don't you be quiet, man? Look, you need to... "

1:01:06 WM: He was a certain type of person. Eastern, more Eastern-like. And he had a sense of peace and calm, but that doesn't mean that he wasn't acute about what was going on. And he was not philosophical. He knew it and he had a very clear understanding of stuff. By that, I mean, kinda what everybody was saying. What everybody, J Bat, Terence, Peter, Joey. Clarence talking about, "Hey, man, learn these 365. Analyze these chorales, because if you wanna say you believe something, be adroit, be adept, know... Have information. Know what something is about." And he believed in participating in the democratic process. And he was not one side or the other. He was the side that he felt was his way.

1:01:57 WM: And I saw my father deal with a lot of ignorance in a philosophical way. In barbershops, in the neighborhoods we grew up in. He was always struggling just to make ends meet, playing jazz. It was a struggle, especially when I was growing up in the '60s and '70s. But he always had his point of view in his mind and he always, know matter what, if he had the most unpopular view in the barbershop, he didn't care.

1:02:19 SC: Right.

1:02:20 WM: He was not gonna go with people he didn't... And he was also the least prejudiced person I knew philosophic.

1:02:26 SC: Right.

1:02:27 WM: This was Civil Rights Movement and right after that, the kind of retreat from civil rights, which was also just as hard on my father. The late '70s and into the mid '80s was rough on his generation. Because in the '60s they thought there would be kind of a change. He always used to say he was shocked because he didn't think Lyndon Johnson was gonna sign all of that legislature because Lyndon Johnson was from Texas. So for him, yeah, excellence. I think it's what we all were saying. Huh? What you saying Bat?

1:03:03 AM: Alright, he's coming in. Just one second. Alright, go ahead John.

1:03:08 JB: When you exist and you disprove stereotypes or disprove things that are put against your character and your essence just by merely existing, it's a form of protest without having to say

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anything. The actions speak louder than words. The idea of being somebody who's erudite and comes from a lineage that they represent and can demonstrate on their instrument and they can speak about it and they have a depth of humanity and they understand how to relate to different people, from all walks of life, without judgment. All of these things I think are a form of protest to the kind of small-minded boxes that sometimes society wants to put groups of people in. All of the isms.

1:04:06 WM: [laughter] Right. That's Batiste.

1:04:07 JB: Oh, yeah. Oh, that's Alvin.

1:04:09 WM: That's Alvin. That's Alvin Bat.

1:04:12 JB: That's Alvin Batiste.

1:04:12 WM: Isms.

1:04:13 TB: He was like that too. And he could talk too.

1:04:18 WM: [laughter] That could get you for a good hour and half.

1:04:21 TB: Yes.

1:04:22 WM: That's an hour and a half after he tell you, "Yeah, finally." [laughter] My daddy's was in a nutshell. He'd tell you, he looked at you like, "No, no, not in a nutshell."

1:04:32 TB: But, yeah your dad had two things. He would grab the nose or he would grab the ear like this.

[overlapping conversation]

1:04:47 SC: Wynton, so thank you so much for that answer. In closing, can I just take five seconds to read something beautiful I read about your dad this week?

1:04:56 WM: Sure.

1:04:58 SC: The law professor, David Wilkins, from Harvard school, said, "We can all marvel at the sheer audacity of a man who believed he could teach his Black boys to be excellent in a world that denied him that very possibility. And then watch them go on to redefine what excellence means for all time." So may he rest in peace and we're very thankful that he graced us with his presence and with this ethic throughout his life.

1:05:33 WM: Yeah, that's deep for David to say that. And one thing I want to say about my dad is too, about him, is he wasn't really... He was conscious from a racial standpoint. You couldn't come

from where he came from, but he was not a race guy. He loved everybody. When I left home to go to college, he gave me a book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, by Paramahansa Yogananda. So I looked at the book, and I thought to myself, "Now, I was raised by this man, I hung with him. I went everywhere with him. He never said one word about any yogis, nothing. And absolutely nothing about any of this, and this is the book he's giving me?"

1:06:07 WM: Some 400 page book with all these Indian names that I can't even remember a name? And he put it in my hand, because I was kind of contentious when I walked out the door. He said, "Read this book, man. And try to understand what this man is telling you about self realization, and you gonna understand your place in the world." So here's a guy from Kenner. We lived in Kenner, he's from New Orleans, and that's what he's telling me. So his thing about deliberation of yourself was not a racial liberation, it was a human liberation. And that's why even in the last conversation I had with him, he said, "Man, everybody's losing people." The last lucid conversation. "People are losing people all over the world. Your loss is not any more significant than anybody's." I didn't know he was talking about himself. Maybe he knew it, I didn't know it. But that's what I think all of us on the phone, it doesn't matter, whether it's me or Clarence, or Joey or Ben, or Bat, or T, or Peter, we all... And that's the part of his teaching and his philosophy. That was where he was coming from.

1:07:14 SC: Alright. Thank you, and when you're in Detroit next time, it'd be nice to connect.

1:07:19 WM: I would love that, if Clarence let me come back. [laughter]

1:07:24 AM: Alright, thanks so much for your question. Alright. We've only got time for probably one or two more, but let's see if we can squeeze a couple more in. Next question's coming from Robert Hrabluck. Robert, go ahead.

1:07:40 Robert Hrabluck: Hello, Mr. Marsalis.

1:07:42 WM: Hey, what's up?

1:07:42 RH: My condolences on your father's passing.

1:07:45 WM: Thanks.

1:07:45 RH: I know you said you didn't get a chance to cry, but I hope you find your time and your way to grieve. And that's my hope for you and your family, so...

1:07:56 WM: Thank you.

1:07:57 RH: My condolences. I was talking to the great Scotty Barnhart the other day, and good old Scotty. And he was mentioning the fact that there's no generational gap in jazz and how cool that is for the art form that there's no generational gap. And Mr. Blanchard, you brought this point up tonight, pay it forward, right? And whether you're young or old, you can all hang together. We've heard stories of that with your father tonight. And so my question is, generations of jazz musicians

have brought with them this sense of influencing teaching, hanging with younger musicians. A large part of this was fostered through tangible interaction at clubs, on bandstands, and through traveling. If we fast forward that now to the present, do you feel that this fostering of no generational gap in jazz can be represented in an online sense, whereby that tangible quality might be lacking?

1:09:00 WM: Well, you got it tonight. If you look at J. Bat is much younger than me. Peter is younger. Me and Terence are basically the same age. Ben Wolfe too. I know he's trying to creep and pretend like he's younger, but he's not.

1:09:15 BW: [laughter] Yeah.

1:09:16 WM: Clarence is definitely younger, and Twine is younger. Now, how many years? I couldn't tell you. 10, 15 for some. 30 for some. And Joey, he's still... We still smell Similac on him. [laughter] But when we look at each other's bands, I see Terence's band, or Ben, the students he teaches. When I see J Bat and his whole band, I can remember people in J Bat's band now on the Colbert show. I remember when my daddy called me when Joe Saylor was in high school and said, "Man, I just heard some cats who can play in Pennsylvania." So we still, we all play with each other, we see each other. What you think about that, ya'll?

1:09:54 BW: Yeah.

1:09:55 TB: Definitely.

1:09:58 TB: Well, Wynton...

1:10:01 TB: I think it's unlike anything you've ever seen, anything from sports, man. When you enter into sports, being young and this or whatever, and then their careers are kinda over within a short period of time. With us, being artists, we can enter into this business, man, and still have relationships with great musicians who still can foster support and compassion, and encouragement.

1:10:37 TB: We can get all of that from them. Whenever I saw Ellis, man... I saw him not too long ago. He was playing at Snug Harbor. And he was on his break, and I just sat, and he was having dinner. I just sat down with him. And just the fact that this man was still excited about playing music was a lesson to me, was encouragement to me. And you looked at who was on the bandstand with him. He didn't have a bunch of guys up there his age. The age range spanned this incredible range of generations who had been with him, who had just started to play with him. And that's the beautiful thing about what it is that we do. It's a communal thing, man. There's nothing like it. You can't find anything like it in life, especially in the arts. And with a guy like Ellis, we are all...

1:11:35 TB: You've heard the testimonies tonight. We're all blessed having encountered him. And one of the things, I think, the important thing for us to take away is when you look at all these different generations that have encountered Ellis, they all have been the same experience. This is a humble person. This is a person who loved his craft, who loved music, and loved people, and got excited about what we were all doing. And it's one of the things that we need to pay forward. You

know what I mean? This world of, the art world, is harder, man. So Ellis was an example of how we come together and support each other. How we need to constantly teach each other and move this thing forward out of love and respect for one another.

1:12:23 WM: That's right.

1:12:24 TB: Yeah.

1:12:25 WM: That's like, if I see Peter with Terence the same. If I see Peter, if I see J. Bat... And we're all connected. Me and Ben Wolfe, how many bandstands have we been on for years? Okay, we playing. It's a natural kind of familial thing, really. If I see Bat, he's the age of my oldest son. But immediately, if he come to my house, or I see him anywhere we are, it's just a certain, natural love.

1:12:47 WM: And that's true with the music. And J., we go around the world. We see people who play our music. Man, I was in Brussels not too long ago, a young kid came up, 16 years old, I don't remember his name. He was playing so much guitar, that it took me right back to when I first heard Peter play, when he was 15, because you don't hear the musicians like that. And I still see that. I see it in Bat's band, Endea playing the bass. I remember Rodney Whitaker telling me about her. And I remember Rodney, when he was 14, Marcus Belgrave brought him to come see me play in Detroit. It keeps going.

1:13:23 RH: I appreciate that very much Mr. Marsalis, and everybody for the answer. There's a lot of heavy weights in the room tonight and I appreciate the fact that you allowed us to be part of this conversation. I'm shaking a little bit, because of all the heavy weights. But I'm trying my best to get my thoughts out, so I appreciate your time very much. On that, my condolences and much love to you.

1:13:44 WM: Thank you very much for coming on. I'm glad my daddy didn't hear you call us heavy weights.

1:13:57 TB: [laughter] Oh, man.

1:13:57 Moderator: So Wynton, this is Chloe. We lost Adam but I'm on the video team as well at Jazz at Lincoln Center. We're waiting for Adam to come back but I have a little brief shebang that I would like to do before we take our last question. Just wanted to let everyone know that we've got a great line-up of live events that we'll be hosting for free every day throughout the coming weeks, including more master classes and conversations with members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center orchestra.

1:14:24 Chloe: Special guests like performances and more. So stay tuned, check out our website, our social media, jazz.org. We will always be here for you. Thanks again to everyone for being part of the community. If it's within your means, please consider making a donation. Jazz at Lincoln Center is a nonprofit organization in New York City. And we're committed to entertaining,

enriching, and expanding a global community for jazz. Contributions of any amount are extremely meaningful and to our supporters and donors, we cannot thank you enough. So, we're gonna go to the last question. Mr. Andre Carter. Andre are you there?

1:15:08 AD: Hey Carter.

[laughter]

1:15:08 Andre Carter: Hey, everybody.

1:15:08 BW: Hey, Andre. How you doing, man?

[overlapping conversation]

1:15:17 AD: Hey, Andre.

1:15:18 AD: Andre. [laughter]

1:15:24 AC: Hey, guys. I was checking it out for sure, man. E, I have stories for days about E. I loved him so much. And I can start out with the first stories. I came from DC. When I was in DC, I thought I could play. From DC, I really, I was like, "Man." I told my teacher, "I'm gonna play. I'm gonna learn the music." When he was in high school, he used to come to Duke Ellington and give his workshops or clinics and he was always dressed to the T, and clean. And he could play so greatly, man. He was a man. This is what I want. I want to be with this.

1:16:03 AC: Wynton was like, "Man, you need to go to New Orleans, and study with my father." And I came to New Orleans, and I auditioned for UNO and I played, and I had to play confirmation. And I think Satin Doll. E was like, "You need to look at the music for Satin Doll?" Yeah. When he said that, I knew. I was like, "Man, look... " "You got a lot of work to do." I thought I was just going home, and I wasn't coming back, you know what I'm saying? He said he need to go listen... Then he said, "You need to go listen to Nicholas Payton."

1:16:38 AC: I said, "Oh, okay." And we're talking about 1990, you know what I mean? . This is 1990. And I go hear Nick and I'm like, "Oh, shit. Okay, this guy... I see what he's saying right now." You know what I mean? But, anyway, I was accepted at UNO.

1:16:50 AC: And it was the most beautiful time in my life. Ellis was just, he was like a father to me, man. Like another. All the knowledge that he had, and all the teachers that he had. I'm just so glad that I had the opportunity to go to New Orleans and study with him. And it was just beautiful. I mean, I heard you. Antoine, I heard you were saying about... You was talking about how you had a gig with the Brand New Heavies. I had a similar story because I said I had a gig with Buckwheat Zydeco, and I was like, "Man, look, I got a gig. To go on the road to play with Buck, but, I mean, I'm in school." And E said, "Look, school will always be here, but a gig will not." [laughter]

1:17:34 AD: And we all know that now.

1:17:34 AC: Yeah. [laughter]

1:17:39 AC: [laughter] So, man, I went and played that gig with Buck and travelled all over the world, man. Amazing time at 21 years old or whatever, however old I was at the time. And travelled all over the world playing, and that's what I want to do. I wanted to go around the world playing my horn and I had to thank E for that. Man, I got so many stories. This is the last one. I don't wanna hold everybody up but this is the last one I have. Hold on, I got one more. One more. I have two more. This is the next one. We was in school.

1:18:12 AD: Let it out, man.

1:18:13 AC: And I told Wynton about this. We was in school, and we was in a hallway one time after class and somebody, I remember... I think it might have been Jeremy. He was like, "What do you think about..." He asked Mr. Marsalis. He said, "What do you think about everybody trying to be like Wynton? Everybody trying to play like Wynton and dress like Wynton and everybody trying to just be like Wynton?" And E was like, "Well, it's a lot of people out here trying to be like Snoop Doggy Dog."

1:18:38 AD: [laughter] I remember that.

1:18:42 AC: I'll never forget that, bro. I'm like, "Hey, really, man." And this is the last one and then I'm gonna get off of here. Not too long ago, during the Grammys, Ellis was out here in LA. And I got a call from Wynton. I was like... I didn't know. Me and Wynton talk all the time. And I think it might have been late or something. And I was like, "Man, calling me this late for?" I said, "Man, look, what you doing now?" He said, "Man, I want you driving my daddy down to New Orleans." I was like, "What?" But I was like, "Sure, man, that's my man. If you need me to be doing it." And we took a ride down to New Orleans, and I helped drive him down to New Orleans. And it was a two day trip, but it was too short. Because it seemed like two hours. I mean, because it was so much knowledge that he had, and so many stories that he had, and it just reminded me of being at UNO and being his student and just...

1:19:32 WM: But let me say something, bro.

1:19:34 AC: It was the greatest ride I have ever had.

1:19:37 WM: Hey, Dre. Dre, I just wanna interrupt you to say one thing. Okay, my father had driven out to the Grammys. I didn't want him to drive out there.

1:19:46 AC: Right.

1:19:46 WM: It was just recently. He had a lot of health problems. He had just driven out there. And Deidre is the lady. He was blessed to have this lady take care of him and my momma. My

momma had dementia for eight years so she passed away. But she drove out there and somebody was supposed to drive back with him and they couldn't do it.

1:20:02 WM: So I started thinking, "Who could take care of my daddy?" Because my father has a lot of issues. It's not just driving. And it was going to be a struggle. So I remembered how Dre had taken care of his grandma. And this is a man that's so selfless with so much depth and soul and feeling. I said, "Man, he was in the middle of what he was doing." I said, "Man, I need you to..." And I didn't want to call him, but I told Deidre I just didn't want her to drive all the way from Los Angeles back to New Orleans with my father because my father couldn't get around. He couldn't walk. He had to stop all the time. They'd stop at hotels. And Dre agreed to do it. He took them all the way back to New Orleans. And Deidre said Dre was going to take her job because of how well she took care of him. That's all I wanted to say. I just wanted to say who you were and what you actually did. And I want to thank you for doing that.

1:20:50 AC: Actually, it was no problem at all, man. I loved him, man. It's whatever I could do for him, I was happy to do it, because I really loved him. I love you and your family. Man, they took care of me when I was in New Orleans. Man, I appreciate everything you all ever did for me, man. And it wasn't a problem at all. But it hurt for me to find out that news, but it is what it is in these times right now, man. That he lived a good life, and he helped so many students and people along the way. Man, we just really appreciate and love him and love you and your family for what you all did for us, man. So it was no problem, man.

1:21:25 WM: Yeah, you're right. Thank you.

1:21:29 AC: For sure, man. Anytime.

1:21:29 WM: Thank everybody for getting on.

1:21:30 AC: Yeah.

1:21:31 WM: And the love we all have, that we expressing on the line, is not fake.

1:21:38 AC: I had that good ass gumbo when I was down there, man, for years. [laughter] That you're momma...

1:21:42 WM: Man, don't you talk about that.

1:21:44 AD: I did too.

1:21:48 WM: Don't talk about that.

[overlapping conversation]

1:21:48 TB: You ain't get none of these jokes. You ain't getting none of these jokes.

1:21:49 AC: I tell you.

1:21:54 AC: Such a profound part of our life.

1:21:58 TB: Come on down. Come on down.

1:22:01 WM: Yeah, right.

1:22:04 AD: Yes, indeed.

1:22:05 AC: What's up, Terence?

1:22:05 TB: Hey, what's happening, bro? Good to see you.

1:22:06 AD: Hey, I like that white hair Terence. It looks beautiful on you, man.

1:22:10 AC: Yeah, man.

1:22:10 TB: Hey, thank you. It's been white for a long time. I just got tired of dealing with it.

1:22:18 AD: It looks good, man. It looks good. I love it.

1:22:20 TB: Thank you. Thank you. Man, we can go on and on, man. Hey, look, and those two, I used to see those two all the time in New Orleans in class. I always used to see them on Freshman Street.

[laughter]

1:22:36 AC: Antoine and Andre.

1:22:42 AM: Antoine, yeah.

[overlapping conversation]

1:22:42 AC: Hey, hey, Terence, hey man, when you came to Delfeayo's crib and gave us a lesson, though, man. You was like, man, you gave us a lesson, man. Taught us the deal with the Clarke studies, man. You said that's what it's all about, the Clarke studies, man. Yeah.

1:22:58 TB: Look, that's how I was, man. With Billy Thompson, Johnny Fernandez, and all of them players. Whenever...

1:23:05 WM: Hey, George Jensen. Don't forget.

1:23:07 TB: George Jensen, right. And whenever we saw him in passing, bro, it was a trumpet lesson all the time.

1:23:11 WM: That's right. Don't forget Jensen.

1:23:12 AC: I appreciated that. Terence was living two blocks down from us in the Garden District. But coming to the great Atlantic. Gave us a lesson, man. Look, I appreciate that, man. For real, man, that's...

1:23:26 AD: Yeah.

1:23:26 AC: Man, such a legacy, man, just to be involved with all of y'all, man. Me coming from DC and going to New Orleans, I'm so glad I came down here and just studied, man, and just met y'all, man. It was just such a blessing. I love all of y'all, man.

1:23:38 TB: That's what I'm saying. It's important for this man's life to have more meaning moving forward because they gave up careers, man, for us.

1:23:48 AD: Yeah.

1:23:49 TB: You know what I mean? Ellis, John Batiste, Kid Jordan. The list is endless man, there were a lot of very talented musicians bruh, and all very loving people.

1:24:03 AD: Yeah, for sure.

1:24:05 TB: They weren't people who would give us... You could approach any of them at any one time bro, and it's one of the things I loved about Ellis man, that I have with me today. There's no way in hell that I could ever turn away a student who wanted to learn something about music. If Ellis saw somebody who wanted to learn, then all you had to do was ask and that was it. He'd give you the world. Keep moving that forward bro, by being selfless and giving back to the community.

1:24:31 AC: It's the last thing I've got to say about E, man. E wanted everyone to be great. He wanted everybody to be great, you know what I mean? Even... Man, on that ride he was like "Man, what you doing now, man?" We was listening to some Louis Armstrong in the car, and he was like "Man, can you play in this style?" He said, "You come to New Orleans man, you can, you know, you can do something man." He wanted everybody to be great, man. Man, that's what you need.

1:24:57 TB: Let me just, I'm going to say one thing. Wynton, when you talked about Paramahansa Yogananda's, "Autobiography of Yogi", bruh, that's very powerful, because I got that book after I left home and when I came back and I brought it to Roger Dickinson, who was Ellis ' best friend. Those guys were like two peas in a pod. And when I showed it to Roger, Roger goes, "Oh yeah." And took me back and showed me where his book was and an altar where he would pray. So, these were the type of guys that lived their lives through example, not trying to beat you over the head with information, they just lived their lives based on beliefs. And we sought to find out the

information as we we became adults and it started to really make sense of what actually fueling this energy that we felt, behind what it was that they were giving us, you know what I mean? So I read that book and learned a lot from that book, and it just made so much sense to me that those guys were the way they were, because of their own belief system.

1:26:03 WM: Yep, that's right. You summarized it.

1:26:07 Moderator: Alright guys, I think that's a really great note. We're running out of time here, but I want to give a big thanks to our special guests who joined us tonight.

1:26:15 WM: Thank you.

1:26:16 Moderator: Jon Batiste, Joey Alexander, Peter Martin, Terence Blanchard, Clarence Penn, Antoine Drye, Andre Carter, and anybody else who joined us asking questions.

1:26:26 WM: And Ben Wolfe.

1:26:27 Moderator: And Ben Wolfe, sorry. And I want to say thanks again to our supporters and donors. We're a non-profit organization in New York City, if it's within your means please consider making a donation. We're extraordinarily grateful for any support and you can keep up to date with us on social media, just search for Jazz at Lincoln Center on Facebook or follow us on Instagram, Twitter/jazzdotorg. Thanks again everybody for joining us, any closing words Wynton?

1:27:00 WM: Just, I think what Terence was saying would summarize it, there's nothing else to say, my daddy received a lot of love and he died, he was very unfussy about everything, he was himself till the end. They'd be asking him did he need more oxygen or something and steady bringing it up, and he was like, "No, everything is fine." And I think in the end he had a lot of underlying conditions, too. So, he had a very good life and you hear an example of why, he loved everybody who spoke, he talked about so much and loved their music and creativity, and we could have had many more of us to talk about him, and just thank y'all for tuning in. I thank the Lord for having known him and for knowing such great people as we heard speak tonight.

1:27:45 TB: Love you man.

1:27:45 BW: Thank you, Wynton.

1:27:46 AD: Yeah you're right.

1:27:47 WM: Much love.

1:27:49 JA: Thank you Wynton.

1:27:51 AD: Thank you all. Good to see everybody.

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1:27:53 WM: Yeah, you right.

1:27:55 BW: Great to see you all.

1:27:57 AD: Come on over Wynton.

[chuckle]

1:28:00 WM: I might creep over there.

[laughter]

1:28:05 WM: What ya'll eating man? What ya'll eating over there.

1:28:07 AD: That's all we've been doing is cooking man.

[laughter]

1:28:11 AD: Hey Momo is delivering. Momo got food.

1:28:15 WM: I might have to put my mask on and go over there and get some of those ribs.

[laughter]

1:28:22 AD: Any time, any time.

1:28:23 TB: Hey brother that's why we've got a whole stack of gloves and masks.

[laughter]

1:28:33 WM: Alright.

1:28:35 WM: Much love.