

Skain's Domain

Episode 7 - May 4, 2020

0:00:00 Moderator: Hey everyone, thanks for being here, nice to see y'all for another special episode of Skain's Domain. My name's Adam Meeks, I'm the video producer here at Jazz at Lincoln Center. I'll be hosting tonight's event. Tonight, Wynton Marsalis will be joined by a number of emerging young artists, including Immanuel Wilkins, Cosimo Fabrizio, Alexa Tarantino, Riley Mulherkar, Sean Mason, Joe Block and Jacob Melsha. As is usual, I'll hand things off to Wynton and our special guests for the evening, and then later on we'll conclude with a Q&A portion. I'll give instructions on how to ask a question once we get to that point, for those of you who are unfamiliar, and we'll get to that in a little bit. So, without further ado, take it away, Wynton.

0:00:47 Wynton Marsalis: I wanna welcome you all again to Skain's Domain. It's such a pleasure for us to be here, and I'm really excited about tonight's program because I have the chance to speak with some of the most talented, engaging, sincere, deeply soulful young people in the world. They're the reason that I'm always so optimistic about what is coming. Most of them I have had the pleasure of knowing since they were in high school, and I've seen them grow in so many ways. They are all great and dedicated musicians, and they are also political activists, they're music directors, they are teachers, they are recording artists, they're student body leaders, and they are much more.

0:01:22 WM: I've had many hours of good spirited conversation with them, and I always love hearing their opinions, and I always tell them, "You got to follow your young leadership, too." You're gonna hear Cosimo Fabrizio who's 19, Joe Block is 20, Jacob Melsha is 21, Sean Mason and Immanuel Wilkins are both 22, Alexa Tarantino is 27, and we're gonna start with our senior member, Mr. Riley Mulherkar who is 28 years old. He is a great trumpet player and he could always play. I first heard him when he was a freshman in high school, or something like that.

0:01:52 WM: With Riley, his humility and his adventurousness has resulted in continued improvement in his playing. Every time I hear this man, he is playing a different way and always with more depth and expressiveness. He also has a rare trait and quality to his solos because he plays with a great deal of thematic development. Plays with uncommon authority. I could go on and on, but he's member of a group called The Westerlies. And he's also actively involved in presenting artists at festivals in North Carolina, in New York City, in Seattle. He's the Artistic Director of Joye, a festival in Aiken, South Carolina. And I'm gonna turn it right over to him with this question: Riley, what has this pandemic and the quarantine made you realize with more urgency?

0:02:38 Riley Mulherkar: Thank you, Wynton. Hello everybody, it's great to be here. What has this pandemic made me think about with more urgency? It's hard sometimes 'cause there's so much going on right now, but I think one thing I've been thinking about, and I'll be curious to hear

everyone, all the panelists here thinking about this together, is that we see how revealing a pandemic is in so many ways, like we see it on the level of government, it's very revealing. We see it as in a society, it's very revealing, it reveals a lot about structural things that may be working or very well may not be working, as is the case.

0:03:26 RM: But I've been thinking about how it also has been revealing on a personal level. I know for myself, it's very humbling experience to have to pause and to stop everything, and so much of what I do and what I think about could be measured by maybe how many gigs I have any given week or month, or how much I'm traveling, or how many people are in the audience, all these sort of factors that are actually more external. And then when you're forced to stop, it's made me think about with more urgency what actually is it that I am working on and where am I going, and what are my values, you know? And I think that has been on my mind both on a personal level and on musical level.

0:04:16 RM: I'm looking right on the screen and I can see Sean Mason, and one of the last gigs I played was in South Carolina that festival with him, and I think we all have the taste of the last gig we played in our mouth, 'cause we're like hanging on to it as long as we can. But I don't know, I think for me personally it's no coincidence that I've been going back to a lot of the music that first got me into jazz. A lot of Louis Armstrong and a lot of Benny Goodman with Teddy Wilson. A lot of the records that got me really excited about music when I was really young. And has a lot of the books I've been reading, I'm interested in some of the books. I'm curious to maybe open up a little bit with some of our other guests here about what are the things that you've come back to? What are the fundamental, maybe things in the musical context or just in a, you know, maybe as a citizen? I know we're gonna get to some of those topics a little later on.

0:05:20 Cosimo Fabrizio: Sure, I could speak from a guitar perspective. A lot of the work that a rhythm guitar player does is in the context of a band. And your role is kind of measured around your contributions to other people, but there are no other people right now, so I'm forced to revisit a lot of Joe Pass, Joe Pass "Virtuoso", trying to gain a greater appreciation for the guitar as an instrument in and of itself. So yeah, Joe Pass "Virtuoso".

0:05:47 WM: So I wanna ask Riley a question, but thank you Cosimo. How do you deal with the fact that you can't make any bread?

[laughter]

0:06:00 RM: It's a grim reality. A lot of the time has been spent working on grants, working on applications for government assistant program that to this date have not come through yet, and as the time goes by, it seems bleaker and bleaker. But also looking out and trying to check in on people who have been a big part of it. I was talking with Todd Stoll earlier today, who is in charge of education at Jazz at Lincoln Center, and he was talking about a friend of his and a group of people who had bonded together to come up with some funds to support someone who is really living gig to gig at this moment. For me, I'm lucky that I'm not gig to gig at this second right now. But yeah, it's been... I don't know what we can do right now besides try to figure out plans for the future. Any

other...

0:07:12 WM: I just, I wanna... Yeah, just one thing before we go over to Cosimo and hear what he's talking about. One other thing I just wanna ask you is, when you return to those fundamentals, return... What are you hearing on those fundamentals that makes you want to hear that, because you also... You have a lot of different styles of music. You can play it right. What do you find in those fundamentals?

0:07:41 RM: I think, for me, it brings me back to how I fell in love with music, and I think the spirit and the feeling of jazz for me before all the other stuff came. Before moving to New York and studying music, and before going on my first tour, and then before getting to meet some of my heroes and play with them. Before all that happened. It brings me back to a focus and an urgency just on loving music and putting myself into it every day. And I think it's a recalibration so that whenever we can move forward out of this moment, being able to maybe have checked in with that sense of ourselves in a deep way, in a sort of meditative way. I don't know if that resonates with some of the other folks here on the panel. Like any moments that we might have had in the past two months.

0:08:50 Joe Block: Yeah, I can... I think returning to these kinds of musics that we first fell in love with, less of us tap into that sort of innocence and that naivety that we had when we first started playing, but at the same time, returning, to me, is that we maybe haven't checked out in a little bit. We have more maturity and we have more knowledge to apply to that music, so we can kinda reconcile a sort of youthful experience that we get from it. And also like an older, more mature listening, which I've definitely benefited from in this quarantine.

0:09:26 Immanuel Wilkins: Yeah, I feel similar to Riley in the way of returning to these older things that made me fall in love with the music. And one word that I find myself kept repeating was retreat. I was always telling people like, "Man, I'm treating this time is like a retreat." I'm just by myself, focusing on development, and I think it's interesting because I've thought about retreat in the way of retreating back to traditional values and fundamentals in a way, but then also actually retreating from society in a way, as a way of development. So this time, in a way, it's all for me about retreat in a way. I don't know.

0:10:21 RM: That's great. Well, maybe I can pass it off now to Cosimo 'cause I know he's gonna take it in a direction alongside what we can do while we're seeing all this going on, on the societal levels, on the levels of government.

0:10:40 CF: When I was talking to Mr. Marsalis and some other people and Jacob a couple of days ago, and the question that keeps on coming up is, "Well, what do you do?" And I think part of the answer lies in the importance of reinforcing young people's idealism. Not letting that wane. Making sure that young people are staying on top of what's going on in the news and finding a way to navigate for your own self spiritually, what part of the news you're gonna stay up to so that you don't get lost in it, but most importantly that idealism doesn't wane. Curious to hear if other people feeling a similar kind of way about it.

0:11:17 Jacob Melsha: Well, Cosimo, you mentioned that we had been working together a bit in the past several weeks. And something that I've been looking at recently that I found so interesting is that everyone wants to say that our generation of 18 to mid-20 year-olds, they don't get out and vote. And for the most part, that is true. But something that's given me hope and given me a little bit of direction in all of this, is that while our generation isn't always the best at making it to the polls, we care overwhelmingly about issues and movements as opposed to political parties. So I agree with you, you're right. I don't think that, overwhelmingly in America, that there is a huge sense of trust and faith in the government, but it's been eye-opening to me to realize the extent to which our generation truly does care about these issues and movements even if they aren't making it to the polls. And that's something that you and I are working together to improve as well.

0:12:14 CF: And I'll just say one thing then, to the point of music. One of the things that music has taught me is, particularly jazz, evolution is inherent to the art form, and I think this is an instance right now where we're seeing our political system can take a lesson from jazz in giving power to young people to move the ball forward at a fundamental level.

0:12:38 WM: Okay, let me ask you all a question. Okay, 'cause I love all this give it to young people and all of that, but I don't want a 20-year old pilot on a plane that's struggling. I'm already afraid of the airplane to begin with. So no, I look up and there's a teenager up there, [chuckle] I might jump off the window to just not experience the next two minutes. So what want I y'all... You, Jacob. Jacob is a fantastic trombone player. And he is from St. Louis and he's always been unbelievably civic conscious. It doesn't come up when we're just flowing back and forth if we don't introduce each other a certain way. But the two of y'all have been working on something to get younger people out to vote. Explain to us what it is that y'all are working on.

0:13:25 JM: Sure.

0:13:26 WM: Jacob and Cosimo.

0:13:29 JM: You got it Cosi.

0:13:30 CF: Okay, you film what I miss. The project we're working on is largely starting at a high level advertising around, "How do we craft messaging to make young people in this time see that voting is still a solution?" As corrupt and as complicated and as difficult as our political system is, voting is still a tool that we can use effectively to inspire some sort of long term substantive change. One of the things that we started looking into even more is that in this election, there's going to be a need for young people to find a way to get involved outside of just going to the polls. So trying to encourage people to stay focused on this like "vote by mail" and "voting at home," which in some states that are key for the election just generally, we're already seeing efforts to try to strip the vote and attack the integrity of American democracy by not allowing people to vote at home. So we're trying to raise awareness, educate people about what is going on, let people still feel confident in the fact that voting is a tool to impact change. And just broadly trying to help young people find their place in this chaotic election, which hasn't even really started getting crazy yet.

0:14:47 JM: And it's been great looking at ways that young people can get involved aside from just making it to the ballot box. We've been looking at ways and how we can encourage young people to sign up to work as election workers, poll workers, and looking at the different options that we would have in a vote by mail election or a vote in-person election, depending on the outcome of Coronavirus over the next few months. But finding ways for young people to really find that they have a place and have a voice in the political world outside of just checking a box once every four years, really getting them involved and getting their boots on the ground, whether it'd be activism, voting, volunteering, what have you.

0:15:26 WM: I only wish... We hearing them talk. I wish y'all could hear them play. Both of them are so for real, that I wanna go over to a lady that is like a one woman wrecking crew. She started a jazz festival in Rockport, Massachusetts, when she was only 22 years old. She's currently giving weekly concerts from home and she donates a portion of those proceeds to artist relief funds. She has raised \$3,000 so far. And because the summer program and many other programs have been cancelled, she and a fellow teacher launched an online summer jazz program called "A Step Ahead Summer". It's a jazz online for all ages and all abilities. And she is always a very insightful on many, many issues, and we all rely on her. We're gonna hear what she has to say. Ms Alexa Tarantino, tell us something about how can you use your talents and skills to be productive in a time to deal with the type of depression that Cosimo was talking about?

0:16:28 Alexa Tarantino: Thank you Wynton and thank you all so much, it's been great hearing you speak, and it's so great to see so many friends and people watching, so hi to everyone. Yeah, during this quarantine I have been just thinking about the impact of technology and social media and what we're dealing with, what we were dealing with before the quarantine, and how the impact that technology has on our lives has increased since we've all been on lockdown. And one thing that I've noticed with technology and productivity is that the sense of urgency and instant gratification that we're getting from these notifications and emails and these pings and texts and the feeling that we have to respond right away is one of our biggest distractions from our main priorities and our main goals.

0:17:19 AT: And I read this book "Unsubscribe" by Jocelyn Gleib, which I really recommend, which mentioned that any time we're on a focused path of work and we depart even just to answer a text or an email, it can take us up to 25 minutes to get back on that same level of momentum and focus that we were on before. And I'm kind of a nerd when it comes to efficiency and productivity, and I read about this stuff all the time, because, I think, as freelance musicians, now more than ever, we are just having to maximize every single second, whether it's learning a set of chord changes on the airplane or singing along to a record quickly before you get to the sound check. Whatever it is, I just try to make the most of every minute. And I think the quarantine has provided a great opportunity to rest and retreat, like Immanuel said. I've certainly done a little bit of that, and I sometimes have to stop myself and allow myself to do that more.

0:18:19 AT: But I think this question of, "How do we stay productive?", we really have to determine what our mission is and what our ideal work-life balance is, and then we have to commit

to not letting the media and technology and social media dictate what we're thinking and what we wanna do. So for me, and what I recommend for my students is writing down these priorities, breaking them down into actionable steps that you can take every day to move them forward. But I think it also, in this quarantine, with us, with these musicians being so reliant on technology, like Wynton said, I've been doing these weekly live stream concerts, there is an element of needing to depend on it at this time to make money or to give donations to people who need it. So I think the question that comes up is, "Do you let your music do the talking or do you have to do the talking for your music?"

0:19:16 AT: And I think this is really what it is for us as jazz musicians right now. And if I could just expand upon that question for a second, if you're letting your music do the talking, to me that means you're playing, without question, you get up on the bandstand and you let that do the talking. And for me, that's what I want people think of me as a player, that it all just comes out on the bandstand. And that's really where it's all at. But in this time of having to do the talking for your music, to me that might mean more self-promotion, more communication with your audiences to engage them and maintain them through this time, coming up with initiatives to keep that community there and together.

0:20:04 AT: So it's really interesting, and like Wynton said, quarantine concerts are a big thing right now among the community, and while we see jazz as this often an intimate and acoustic experience, right now because we are dependent on technology, I guess I would just encourage everybody to keep their heads up and make sure you are aware of what your priorities are, not letting social media and distractions take the reins, which hopefully can allow some room for people to find that creativity and inspiration to make something happen in the community with what we have.

0:20:43 WM: Okay, I wanna just ask you a question, thank you. I wanna ask you a question based on what you were saying, when you, to let your music do the talking for you. Now, since The Great Depression, and it covered most of the '30s that World War II two took us basically out of, we've not had substantial music education for our general population. So we're looking at... We're gonna be up on 100 years of that soon. Because we don't have audience appreciation for music in general, those art forms that require more education to enjoy, all the years and study, you're playing basically for an audience that, through no fault of their own, have not been educated to listen to you play. So even if you're a great player or if you can't play at all, a lot of the audience, they might like you, your charisma or something you do, but they're not no longer able to evaluate what you're playing.

0:21:42 AT: Yeah.

0:21:42 WM: So this could be for you, Alexa, or anybody who wants to say, "What do you do to stay encouraged when now you can't even be there in person?" So your charisma is not, and you have an audience that's willing to listen to you play if we just had taught people to listen to music and have music appreciation class, not for musicians, not like camps and things that we do. What do you... Does this time make you think about the audience in a different way? Because the fact that we're on this phone makes me think about each of you, you all very differently than if we were sitting in my house. Now, on my screen I can see Sean, so you know I'm looking at him. Whereas if

he was sitting here... Does that make sense what I'm asking?

0:22:23 RM: Yeah.

0:22:23 AT: Yeah. Well, for me, with these concerts, it's definitely been an adjustment not having the audience right there. And I think to a certain extent you recognize how dependent you are on the applause or the cheers or the reaction or the laughs, like in your banter. And so, it's definitely been an adjustment, but what I think the fundamental qualities of this music are, when you strip it down, come down to basic human qualities that hopefully everybody can understand, it's not about notes and pitches and rhythms, and that's something that I try to identify in my music education, is that jazz education in itself is a lesson in discipline, in time management, in respect, in responsibility, in listening, in empathy, communication. And so I think during this time, when people are... Hopefully the audiences that we had are yearning for some type of connection, some type of entertainment. I think, while we can't be there to have the same experience in person, I'm finding that the response from people is just overwhelmingly grateful because I think those qualities do come through. Those qualities of this music in particular.

0:23:42 WM: So I wanna hear what a... This next young man is a composer and arranger student at Columbia and at Juilliard. Now, he is a philosopher and a poet. He has a very clear personal approach, play anything of the music from very complex music with all kind of time changes on a sophisticated to a very, very basic fundamental music, and I always love talking with him and hearing his perspective. And he always, he's interesting because he has an overview and he has the ability to focus on the micro-issues, which many times all of us who are composers know you have to do that. So you have to write a score, you have to think of all the form and all that, then you have to go through and put a dot and a dash on notes and dynamics and make sure every chord is right in it. So, he's 20 years old, his name is Joe Block, he's spoken a little bit already. Joe, what are you thinking about what Alexa's saying or what you're thinking about in general?

0:24:37 JB: Yeah, thank you, thank you Wynton. So I'm just thinking about the idea of responsibility and how we can be responsible for others, how we can care about people that aren't ourselves and that are potentially more vulnerable than us, which is definitely an important subject during this pandemic as we see this virus is hitting different demographic groups that don't necessarily pertain to us. And I'm noticing that during this pandemic, problems, even though we're self-isolating, problems aren't going away, they're just, they're changing. At the same time, they're becoming more local and they're becoming more general.

0:25:17 JB: The other day I was transcribing some Herbie Hancock voicings from some comping he was doing. I was really trying to get inside of the voicing, and I was sending it to my friends, and we couldn't figure out what the notes were in it. I would get really frustrated, and eventually we broke through, and it was great. And then that same night, I found out that a family friend had passed away, and in that moment I had to reconcile two complete opposites. The musical minutia, kind of what you're talking about with the dynamics, like what are these notes that he's playing, how can I get inside this music? At the same time, people are dying every single day. So every single day I'm thinking about what can I do as an artist and a musician and a pianist and a composer

to help mitigate the gap between these micro and macro problems and create something that is more relatable for the audience.

0:26:12 JB: So, yeah, not just musicians are affected right now, but as Alexa said, the audience is also affected. The experience of going to a performance and being next to strangers and sort of sharing in a collective experience of being overcome by something is gone. And you can sit in your living room and watch a live stream but that sort of camaraderie and fellow feeling is completely gone. And with that is our empathy and our understanding become more fragile, and the oversaturation of technology leaves us numb and irritated and upset and even more self-interested. These are all these problems that we're dealing with. And as artists, we are here to help heal people, others and ourselves. And this is something that Wynton does really well and I really admire in his music, is you include a combination of personal and collective experiences in your music so that others can more easily relate to what you're saying, improve themselves and feel something. Art has always been this tool of consciousness raising and visually or sonically depicting suffering in a different group that isn't us.

0:27:37 JB: So the onus is on us now to really work on that sense of empathy and care for others that aren't ours. How can we be responsible for people that we don't even know, people that we see on the news that are suffering? And this relates to music when you're playing on the bandstand, when you're not playing, how can you be responsible for uplifting someone else's solo? As a pianist I have to comfort people. How can I really support and push someone in the same way that someone would push me? So these are the micro and macro things that I'm really, really thinking about, and I'm curious if anybody else has any topics they wanna touch on for this part.

0:28:21 WM: I wanna point out how much would you say it is in common with what Alexa is doing? It's touching to me that she's playing every day, she has to work for her bread and she's gonna take care of herself, and she's also donating a portion of the proceeds, so she's online working to the artist relief fund. And to identify with what you're saying, Joe, the question, you're a composer, you write music. And I think, if I turn over to your fellow brother, piano player, he's 22 years old, Sean Mason is his name, he's a dyed-in-the-wool swinger, also imaginative and very passionate... He's very passionate and imaginative, plays a lot of intensity but he doesn't forsake accuracy.

0:29:06 WM: So, Riley was talking about a gig that they were on before we had to shut down. Sean, what are you thinking about the... Everything is gone in your social space. Like Joe, I thought it was touching the way he said that you sit in a room with others and you all have a collective experience, and what Alexa was saying, you're distracted at stuff going on and it takes you 25 minutes to get back to whatever it is you're doing. But I also wanna let people know that we've been on our best behavior because we are public. Normally when I talk to them, oh my God, every time I see someone, it's argue, argue, argue, argue. So I'm glad you all have such good manners. I see something. I'mma have to keep a spotlight on y'all every time we have a conversation. So I wanna just know, Sean, what are you thinking about? 'Cause you're in another place. All the social interaction is dropped away.

0:29:58 Sean Mason: Yeah, I wanna start and express how grateful I am to be here and how grateful it was to have everybody speaking, also everybody in the comment section. We spend a lot of time complaining, but I just wanted to... Not tonight, but I just wanted to express how grateful I am. And even how bad technology is, I just wanna express how grateful we are to connect via technology and also to be able to live stream concerts. And as anything in life, we all have pros and cons, but I'm grateful for technology. A 100 years ago if this would have happened, who knows what position artists would be in.

0:30:46 SM: But I do wanna touch on two different sides of a coin, and one part is the gratitude that a person [0:30:56] _____, but on the other side is that we can't ignore the real issues that are going on. And to ignore the real issues is really to be ignorant. We walk around life with invisible layers of armor, and that as musicians, we've accumulated over the years. And the virus proves us that overnight, those pieces of armor can be taken away from us, and we have to resort to what is constant. And Riley touched on it in his first speech just going back, and Immanuel touched on it, too.

0:31:36 SM: But going back to the original motive, to the original sense of that that started us all on this journey of being an artist and being a musician, and not taking for granted any opportunity. I've learned that I'm not entitled to anything. I'm grateful to be able to play gig for money. Even after the Coronavirus, I'm not entitled to have those gigs back. I'm grateful for every gig that I have and I don't take that lightly. So I do want to touch on the second side of the coin, which is the incentives and the incentives that drive our social life, that drive our political life, and ultimately, that drive our lives as artists seeking whatever we're seeking, is the question of us always trying to define something. And once we get to the moment where we have to define something, we have to ask the question, "Who are we or what are we doing?"

0:32:44 SM: And the virus has proved to us that if the money can be easily taken away from us, if the audience in person can easily be taken away from us, something has to be constant. And then we have to be, we have to hold on to what is constant. And my views on it is that the music is was, the music lives beyond me. If I were to die, the music continues to live, I'm just a vessel. I'm just a part of this whole thing. And I'm here to portray my voice and to give my part into the whole continuum of the thing. So I'm just super grateful. And I wanted to put that message of positivity into the conversation, of gratitude, and also of spirit and uplifting spirit as artists, and for us to go back and hold on to what first started us as artists, and to not take anything for granted, even in this tough time.

0:33:46 WM: That was a lot. That was a lot. It was beautiful that what you said. It's also, it encapsulates a lot of what everybody is saying in terms of to have the type of humility, to have the type of understanding. And I think what Joe said, I think when you say people other than us or not our people, he was talking about anybody that's not your immediate family or anybody. So he was talking about anybody you perceive as being the other. And I think, Sean, you were talking about... It made me laugh when you say we're not entitled to nothing, even after this is over. And that the stripping away makes us get down to the fundamentals. And that fundamental is the music.

0:34:26 WM: I was thinking about the Viktor Frankl's book "Man's Search for Meaning". When he was in the concentration camps and he would see really strong people would be broken down in three weeks. They was, they were big, they was skinny. And he realized that the only thing that can't be taken from you is how you feel about something. That you know, you can take everything from me, but you can't make me like what you did. And it's kinda like when you were saying the music is a constant. It made me think about that stream that we all are in, and music is what has us all here.

0:34:55 WM: And my only wish, because of the limitation of this form is, were we in a room and everybody could hear you all play, and hear how high the level of playing is and how serious the playing is, a lot would be made clear. So it ties in with what Alexa was saying about speaking about your music. You can speak, but when you play, you don't have to do too much talk. And I want to go from Sean, I want to see what Jacob is saying and let him riff on something. Jacob is 21 years old. And he spoke already, but he's going to speak and clarify things. He's also another, family musicians can just can play his horn. You can just, if you want to riff on what we did, you can, Jacob, or just take it where you want to take it, and then I know Immanuel is gonna break something down, too. So...

0:35:47 JM: Well, yeah. I just wanted to touch on a couple of things that both Alexa and Joe mentioned. And it's that looking at our music beyond just the surface level of the notes, rhythms and pitches. What about that music draws us in? And how can we utilize this time that we're in to create meaningful art? If you look at musical works from history, we... They... Why have they had a lasting impact on society? And why or why not were they received well? They often play on themes that are central to our nature as humans, feelings and emotion that we all feel. Much of today's pop music revolves around heartbreak, lust and greed. And there's a reason that that music is popular because everyone has been through a breakup or wanted something really badly. People resonate with those themes as they have throughout all of human history.

0:36:37 JM: On a deeper level, much of the music of the past that still resonates with us today revolves around themes of loss, oppression, struggle and unity, and all forms of music deal with this to some degree. From the work songs of slaves on plantations in the deep south to the music of post World War America in the 1940s, music has always come from these deeply rooted feelings and served to bring us together in times of distress and peril. Singers like Nina Simone found herself in the heat of the Civil Rights Movement, acting as both a musician and as an activist, performing songs like "Backlash Blues", where she sings, "You give me second class houses and second class schools. Do you think that all colored folks are just second class fools?" Or songs like "I wish I knew how it would feel to be free", where she cries, "I wish I could break all of the chains holding me, remove all of the bars that keep us apart." Now, obviously Nina's music made some people feel wildly uncomfortable, but her high profile performances in this music allowed her to play a crucial role in the Civil Rights Movement, and her music remains impactful today because it harbored those themes of oppression and the struggle for equality.

0:37:40 JM: Impactful music also came out of the, out of wars of our history. World War II coincided with the big band swing era, where soldiers, where songs played into the themes of the soldiers coming home or fighting for common victory, and a few decades later, John Lennon wrote

songs like "Power to the people", where he says, "A million workers working for nothing, you better give them what they really own," calling for unity and class solidarity as the US came out of the radical politics of the '60s. The song was used as a rallying cry by pro democracy students in the early '70s to protest America's military campaign in Vietnam. And even today, with as divided as we all stand at times, popular music can put a spotlight on inequality and oppression and bring it to the world stage. Kendrick Lamar's music has highlighted issues of police brutality and mass incarceration that have ravaged our country for decades and still do so, through highlighting the struggles that so many African-Americans face, he consequentially unites people whose music bringing them together in the face of their challenges.

0:38:38 JM: So what role does Coronavirus play in the continuum of time in this music? Obviously, it isn't necessarily comparable to a world war, the Civil Rights Movement or mass incarceration, but tens of thousands of people have died here in the United States today alone. Tens of millions of people have filed for unemployment. The majority of the human race, which are very social creatures, are now stuck in solitude for a matter of months upon months. Most of us as musicians haven't made music with a real person in a couple of months, which goes against the very essence of what jazz is as a social and interactive music.

0:39:13 JM: What emotions does this global crisis make us feel as humans? And can we channel those into meaningful art in this time? Will the impact or will the music of Coronavirus have a lasting impact on society? If we as artists, not just as musicians, but as artists can tune into those common themes of loss, struggle and isolation that the entire human race is dealing with, we can create art that is relatable on a deeper level. And hopefully, as an artistic community, we can come together in the aftermath of this pandemic and reflect upon the art that came out of these modern day struggles.

0:39:47 WM: Okay, well, my question, and it's for you, but it's for all of y'all: Are you all doing that, are you all trying to do that? Or are you all just talking about it?

0:39:56 JM: Me personally, I've had a rough time coming up with inspiration specifically out of Coronavirus, but as a jazz musician who's going to school to study this, I have also been trying to figure out different ways that I can combine my art with my passion for, as you mentioned, politics and social justice. And so I personally, even if not yet Coronavirus specific, I've tried to kind of mesh my art with my passion for those things, and use my art to bring attention to social issues like inequality, social justice, what have you. And so even if it's not Coronavirus specific yet, I've been trying to do that in a general sense.

0:40:37 WM: What about some of our other... I mean, you always have been like that, so I understand. You're kinda social conscience as a very young person, which is uncommon. Somebody else, just if we could unmute people, I just wanna hear just a different, before we get to Immanuel. Or if he wants to say it, just what are y'all specifically going to do in this time. What have you said, "I'm gonna create this, I'm gonna be on this kind of vibe"?

0:41:04 IW: Well, I mean, yeah, I can talk about it a little bit. For me, that's been kind of a on-going

question for me, is kind of how how does the music look during this and how can we bring this to people during this time And right now, one of immediate things that I did, and probably a lot of my friends did was immediately bought a microphone. It was like, "Alright, well, at least we gotta be able to learn how to track and do something." But then in planning, I'm planning a festival for once this is over, and I'm working with this organization called the Metropolis Ensemble. And what they're talking about is, "What do concerts look like after this social distancing?" All of this, in terms of putting the society back together again.

0:42:02 IW: You know, we're forced to deal with... Well, there's a different set of parameters on what music looks like, what live music looks like in those times. And especially, thinking about now, I get up every morning and I workout, and I listen to music on my headphones, and me and some friends in a band that we have, we send a record every week, so it turns out to be four records every week, and we all listen to those four records, right? And what it got me reflecting on was the fact that just recorded music affects me in a completely different way than when I listen to music live. And how do we figure out how to replicate that energy, if there's a way to replicate that energy, while separated. How do we deal with that? So, these are some things that I've been thinking about and just reflecting on during this time, I guess.

0:43:04 WM: Well, I know... Immanuel's 22 years old, and he also plays with tremendous sophistication and he has fantastic ears. I know you got perfect pitch. You always try to play it off, but. And his music also is very intense because he plays with a great deal of meaning and belief. So I think if anybody could figure that out, 'cause you know, I'm trying to just figure how to get my cell phone on. I can't even look down there. Most of icons that when I look at I have to call someone, I say, "What does this one say right here?" So, if you can figure out how to make this experience of where we all will be more impactful and the depth of... With the depth you will have done something.

0:43:52 IW: I wonder... Now, I see, I wonder if the tradition of house concerts is gonna come back after this. You know what I mean? I wonder if people will start playing house concerts again.

0:44:03 RM: I mean, I would try, I like that. One thing I always think about. I think we were in this time, in general, where it's, especially as young musicians, a lot of times we have to make our own gigs. You know the gigs? No one's calling you, asking you to line up a tour across the country, that's just not a reality. And I think we'll see more of that where it's up to us to create the environments, to create the gigs. Jazz, I think, was the trend anyways, but I think it only accelerated to that point even more.

0:44:40 AT: Yeah, I agree. I think if you wanna have a, I guess, varied or well-rounded or long-lasting career, in my opinion, like playing in any different style, any different era, any different influential musician on your instrument, all those tools and things you put in your toolbox. But at the end of the day, I completely agree that making your own career with all of that, making your own work is where it's at. So, when Sean was saying we're not entitled to anything, that's, I'm totally with you, and you have to. I feel like now, more than ever, we have to find our niche. And so if right now it's online concerts for, with a very particular specific sound of maybe somebody just

wants to hear Blossom Dearie and there's a whole community of people that just wanna hear Blossom Dearie tunes, if that's the live stream concert that's hot right now, that's the bread that's coming in. So I think in this time, now more than ever, making your own work is what it's about.

0:45:54 WM: What you saying about that, Sean?

0:45:57 SM: Yeah, just to piggyback on what everybody else said, I think that as far as a music career happens, my personal philosophy of it is that, especially relating to the Coronavirus and even going back to what Jacob said about how he's responding to the Coronavirus, for me, it didn't affect my creativity in the way that I thought it was gonna affect my creativity. And so, I thought that it was gonna put a pause on my creativity, put a pause on my life and allow me to reflect and re-evaluate some things, but I think that the inherent truth and the inherent reason why I play is way deeper than anything that can be affected, whether it's Coronavirus or a critique you get from other musicians or whatever that may be. And I think that ties directly into our career decisions and the decisions that we make in this time of how we're going to "monetize" our career, and how we're gonna reach an audience.

0:47:13 WM: So I wanna just ask Immanuel, 'cause I know he comes from Philly, he has that same kind of consciousness, him and Joe are both Philly, so they're good at talking about cheese steaks.

0:47:24 IW: Yes, sir.

0:47:24 WM: But I wanna see what Immanuel, 'cause he also has another consciousness. He's always about consciousness and the spirituality in music. When you see all the non-spiritual stuff that's going on on a macro level, and all the decisions that are made that are so non-caring from a humane standpoint, and how all the aspects of our culture that have to do with investment, like education is an investment in the future of people. A health system is a... Your healthcare is an investment in the future of your way of life. When we come to this aspect of our lives, we're always impoverished when it comes to that, because everything is always about exploiting everything for every damn dollar you can squeeze out of. So when somebody like you sees that, and you're looking around, you don't have no gigs, you can't make money, you call in your boys, you listening to recordings, how is that... What does that do to your... Is it making you waver philosophically? 'Cause sometimes, hunger gives you a very different attitude.

0:48:35 IW: Yeah, definitely. I think, just when I think about how I grew up and just... I could speak for a lot of us, I'm sure, when I think about just what is fundamental to our lives in general, music is what we fall back on, and in a way that's what it's always been for me. It's never... It's always about, "How can I respond to this more or less than doing something different even." I'm doing the same thing as I was always doing. It's just, for me, it's a different medium. I'm presenting the same thing and I'm trying to heal people, I'm trying to provide some comfort and some love.

0:49:30 WM: So has the extreme circumstance made you double down, would you think? Or has it made you... You doubling down, or are you... What's your attitude?

0:49:38 IW: Yeah, I'm doubling down, I'd say, I'd say. I'd say I'm doubling down on it. Yeah, I'm just, I'm going harder. I got more time. I got more time for me.

0:49:48 WM: What you saying, Cosimo? You doubling down or you backing away?

0:49:53 CF: I'm doubling down, too. I can't back away. I think one of the things that I respect about Immanuel that is a little different is, for me, music, like Immanuel said, plays such an important role in my life, but it's not like my sole career. And I'm still, before Coronavirus, as a young musician, trying to figure out exactly how music plays a role in my life, because I didn't go to conservatory like my brother and a lot of people I grew up playing with, but knowing that my life without music is inherently less meaningful. So, Coronavirus has made me appreciate that facet of it. And like Immanuel and a lot of people are saying, I've been spending a lot more time playing, not because I have to, it's honestly been better that I don't have to play for something, because I've been finding that intrinsically when I don't have it for a certain amount of time, I just start feeling lost.

0:50:48 WM: So I wanna ask Alexa, just what about music without words? Every time we talk about social consciousness, it's always got to have a word attached to it. What about music? People, most of us are instrumental musicians. We love the song word, we love... It's not against singing, but for some reason, in the last, I noticed in the last years, whenever a music is described as social consciousness or social meaning, it's always music with words. Is there a modern music that younger people are playing that is a music without words that has that same kind of feeling of protest on one hand, but affirmation on other hand? Because many times what we call protest is actually people trying to affirm the equality that you are promised an opportunity to pursue by the Constitution. Now, it's not in there, but you're promised opportunity to pursue it. So, is it possible for you all to play horns or pianos or guitars, and alto sax, 'cause Alexa plays alto saxophone, I don't know if I said that. But when she plays all the reeds, flute, she probably could play a good baritone, tenor, doesn't matter. But what do you think about that?

0:52:05 AT: Yeah, I think it feels like a trick question because this is what you're always telling me off-stage, which is getting all the colors into your horn and being able to express all those different attitudes and emotions, but it's real. I think I remember I played one gig with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra at The Kimmel Center, and afterwards, Wynton came back to where I was in the backstage area and was talking about Ornette, and just the amount of emotion and raw feeling in his sound. So I personally, I love to listen to vocalists, but as a Saxophone in a woodwind doubler, I think that's... With the expansive options in terms of flutes and clarinets and double reeds, that's where I choose to pick my feelings, if that makes sense. The personality that comes from the alto flute is so different from the personality that comes from a bassoon or a tenor, soprano. And then I think within each instrument when you're playing it, the goal, like Wynton has taught me and I know many of us is, just sound like you are a human being crying or moaning or shouting for joy, expressing joy. I don't think words need to be attached for somebody to empathize with a cry or that raw human emotion.

0:53:38 WM: What do you think, Joe? Are you a composer? Like in terms of when you write music, do you feel like the human voice? Not to go away from what Alexa is saying, I understood

what you were saying. But I mean, the type of force that a person plays their instrumental music with, the person who comes, of course, most immediately to mind is Trane just because you know, Trane, his sound was so characteristic, it equated with the Civil Rights movement, and he didn't do, like Mingus would have Fables of Faubus would talk in or... I think most people probably come up there with Trane and Elvin.

0:54:16 JB: Totally.

0:54:17 WM: It seems like that's not really of the younger generation, 'cause one thing I wanna make clear is that I encourage my younger people that you should have the opinion you want, the attitude you want. This is your ride out here, you don't have to agree with me. You need to be free and be forceful with what you think, because you've got a certain amount of time, and your artistry is gonna demand from you absolute honesty with yourself. And don't be swayed by mentors and people, learn from them, listen to them, okay, that's your opinion, but when it comes down to make your statement. So I want you to talk to me the way you talk to me when you're texting me back and forth. Are you thinking about that kind of vibration?

0:55:01 JB: Yes, I definitely feel you on the Coltrane thing. I feel like Immanuel can back me up, the Trane sound is such a part of Philly jazz.

[laughter]

0:55:14 WM: Trane is from North Carolina, man.

0:55:16 JB: Yeah...

0:55:18 IW: He's from Philly.

0:55:20 JB: He moved here when he was 12 or...

0:55:20 WM: 13. [laughter]

0:55:25 JB: Yeah, I've been listened to a lot of McCoy in training, that sort of intensity and energy is unparalleled, I think in the history of Jazz, in my opinion, it's just insane amount of emotion, the raw emotion. So you can go down that route, short of happening into our core human elements, but to address your thing about words, there's also a history of a sonic representation of the issues that we're dealing with, whether it's a harmonic progression or when you've written a lot of music that offers the sonic representations of trains or objects or different things that people can hear like, "Okay, that sounds like this, that sounds like this." While it may not be a word or a phrase, that's sort of a common symbol that we can tap into. So I think when I play or when I write music, I try to do a balance of both, tapping into both the human element, which everyone relates to, and at the same time, the social and cultural symbols that we can represent sonically.

0:56:35 IW: If I can say something to that, I think that one of the interesting things about what we

do as musicians is we provide the soundtrack for decades of music. If you think about the '50s, you're thinking about a certain group of people, if you think about the '60s, you're thinking about a certain group of musicians, you think about the '70s... You know what I mean? So what gets created during this time, non vocally or vocally, whatever, I think it's interesting because our role, in a way, is to provide the soundtrack of this era. When I think about the Great Depression, I think of Lester Young, I think of his playing. I've been reflecting on ideas of just like audible associations. When I think about going to a cookout, I'm thinking about "Earth, Wind & Fire". You know what I mean? It's like a certain associations for me. And so I'm interested to see what's gonna be the product of what's going on right now, just in terms of the sound track of this generation, because that's... All of us on this call right now, we're gonna be the main cast plan, I guess, in creating this music, so this kind of shapes our generation's sound in a way.

0:58:06 JB: No pressure.

0:58:09 WM: There's so many people playing around the world, that you don't know that you're gonna meet.

0:58:13 IW: Yeah, totally.

0:58:14 WM: You're gonna meet people, man, they're gonna be from places you never even heard of. I remember when I first met Igor Butman, I was 26, that's somebody from Russia. Man could play like that, "Damn man, how you learn how to play like that?" Chano Domínguez. Man, we went to some jam session in Spain. He starts, "Man, where are you from?" You know, the list it goes on and on. And believe me, there's people out there, you don't know them.

0:58:40 IW: Yeah, that's true.

0:58:41 WM: So yeah, I understand what you're saying. Sometimes I wonder, you take a person like Duke Ellington who wrote music during the jazz age, during the Great Depression, the swing era or through World War II, the music of The 1950s. Wrote all those Suites in the 1960s, and then hit a little tail-off in the '70s. A figure that's so large across the whole expanse of American music, that his achievement is not even dealt with. It's kind of like Bill Russell with those 11 championship rings that he won, he's always left out of every conversation of who's great, the greatest player in the history of all team sports, not even mentioned. It's like, I say, how can a guy win 11 Championships, the last player coach, and his name is never brought up? It's something. I don't... I can't understand you, man! So, you know what I mean? So, okay, a decade, and I agree with you, stuff falls in the decades. A guy like Ornette Coleman acquainted me with the '60s. But he was playing, you know, he played the whole time. You know what I'm saying? So we're gonna go to... I see Immanuel didn't like this. So we're gonna go to questions.

[laughter]

0:59:55 WM: Where we at, Adam? Let's get some people's questions.

[laughter]

1:00:00 Moderator: Yeah, we got a line-up of questions, and for those of you who would like to ask a question, just click raise, raise hand in the participant's tab, and I'll start going through them and see how many we can get to.

1:00:12 WM: Yeah, and I'll just... I know it's a different of our young people based on what it is.

1:00:16 Moderator: Great, so I think we got about 15 minutes worth of questions, so let's just see what we can get through here.

1:00:22 WM: Let's see if we can get everybody in on one.

1:00:26 Moderator: Great. First up, we've got a question from Abigail Cole. Abigail, go ahead.

1:00:30 Abigail Cole: Hi, so before, you were talking about how right now education is a very big and important part during these times? So I was wondering, who are some of your great teachers and what aspects made them such prominent people in your life? And along with this, what important life lessons did they teach you?

1:00:55 WM: Do you wanna hear from the old guy or do you wanna hear from young people?

1:00:57 AC: Anyone. [chuckle]

1:01:00 WM: Okay, I'm gonna let... Riley can do it, but don't include me if I'm one of your teachers, don't put me in it.

1:01:06 RM: Oh, you're just gonna... You're just gonna presume that you would have been...

[laughter]

1:01:10 WM: Hey, I said if. I didn't presume, I said if. [laughter]

1:01:17 RM: Thank you, Abigail. You know, one of the... I'm thinking of a couple things and I'll try to organize it in a way that makes sense. But I've been thinking about education also, because I think this situation has been affecting us as a jazz community particularly in a hard way because jazz is so much about generations. And so, so many of the people who are my teachers and my mentors who showed me, who helped me fall in love with all of this are the ones who are so vulnerable right now. I was just on the phone with my middle school director, Bob Nat in Seattle. He went to Grambling State. And also the generations of jazz are so, this music is so young. His father used to hear Bunk Johnson practicing in Louisiana, and he would tell me about that and I was in middle school. So...

1:02:10 RM: Anyways, to your question, what he gave me, what my high school director Clarence

Acox in Seattle, Washington, what he gave me, and then some of the other mentors I had in Seattle, guys like Wayne Horvitz and Robin Holcomb, great composer and pianist, what they gave me was more than any lessons I can remember. They gave me a feeling of the spirit of what they loved about music and what they loved about jazz and what it can give, and they imparted that on me. And I have to say, it's one of the things that in this time I've been optimistic about. I have some students and some teaching things that had been lined up, and I was trying to think, "Okay, well, how can I make this work if I can't be there?" But actually imparting the spirit and the love of this music, and all the things that make me get up and scream, 'cause this music gives it to us, I can still do that, and I can still share my favorite recordings, the recordings that helped me fall in love with the music, and communicate with younger generations and all that. So... Yeah, I mean, for me, in terms of my teachers, it was more about the spirit of the thing than anything. And then, that's what made me fall in love with it and I'm still falling in love.

1:03:40 WM: Great. What else we got, Adam? Great, Riley, thank you.

1:03:42 Moderator: Alright, thanks for your question Abigail. Alright, next question is from Sean Panderri? Go ahead.

[laughter]

1:03:51 WM: Get him off of here.

[laughter]

1:03:54 AM: What's up Sean?

1:03:57 WM: What's up Sean?

1:03:58 Sean Panderri: Hey, how are you doing? First to Mr Marsalis, I wanted to express my condolences. My family all sends their love, we found your words really inspiring, so thank you for that.

1:04:08 WM: Man, just seeing you lifted me up. Thank you, man. I'm serious, I love you, thank you.

1:04:15 SP: I just wanted to throw this out for all the students in the call. I wanted to ask you guys how this situation is kind of affecting the way you guys are approaching your education, and a lot of you are still in college, and I don't know, just thinking about how to be a musician in Music School when you can't play with people is something very interesting. It's a really hard task, and I wanna know how you guys are kind of dealing with that. And lastly, I just wanted to say, Immanuel, you sounded so great on Giveton's album, and I just had to shout that out, so.

[laughter]

1:04:50 SP: Also, Happy Birthday, around the corner.

1:04:57 WM: Okay, you wanted Jacob, you wanna... It's gotta be somebody still in the school, so.

1:05:00 JM: Sure. Yeah, it... So for me, finishing up my junior year at Juilliard on Zoom has been quite interesting, and it's taken away some of the elements of what makes music school in particularly Juilliard so incredible, getting to play with some of the most talented young musicians and artists on the planet and being surrounded by such incredible faculty. It's kind of stripped some of that away in an in-person sense. And so what I've found has been really useful ways to spend my time now, is kind of diving into jazz from a different perspective other than just playing it with people, because there's not really a way that we can do that, we can make "a cappella", or layer tracks on garage band, but it's not going to be that in time in-person collaboration that we're so used to.

1:05:47 JM: And so reading about jazz or studying the history of jazz or learning how to write tunes better; you have to kind of focus on different non-collaborative aspects of it to a certain extent. So, I've really found that just diving into certain biographies or movies, documentaries about jazz, learning how to write better for my teachers, has been really useful in this time where we can't really play with other people real time.

1:06:13 WM: Okay, I just want to say thank you, Jacob. Sean is a great bass player and one of the greatest people you will ever meet. And he's talking about a trumpet player named Giveton Gelin, fantastic young trumpet player, Giveton can just play. And Immanuel is on Giveton's fantastic album. Yeah, you're right, Sean. Happy Birthday around the corner.

1:06:35 SP: Thank you so much, guys.

1:06:37 Moderator: Thank you, Sean.

[vocalization]

1:06:41 WM: Stay on that bass.

1:06:43 Moderator: Alright, let's take another question. We've got one from Esteban O'Taro. Esteban, go ahead. Esteban, you there? Alright, I'm going to go ahead and move on if not. Let's try one from Nick Beltramini... Nick, go ahead.

1:07:14 Nick Beltramini: Hey, y'all, I wanna throw it back to education for a sec. And you were talking about using this time for education. And I think as a whole, music education is vital, for just everyone to have a fundamental understanding. And I think so often I see so many listeners just not being able to appreciate or truly listen to the music, just 'cause, to be honest, a lot of people don't know that there's 12 notes on the piano. And I just think now's a great opportunity as a whole to focus on music education. But I'm curious from the musician, like an individual musician perspective, what can we do? Is it change the way we approach the music or the way we

communicate to listeners to make it more, I guess, accessible to the general public?

1:08:06 WM: You want to... Sean, you want to answer that? Because you kind of touched on that when you're thinking about your music, if not, you wanna answer?

1:08:15 SM: I can, I mean, I think Alexa might be best suited for the education 'cause of how involved she is, but I can answer it if you want me to.

1:08:22 WM: Well, we can let her do it and you can wait for one that's, you know.

1:08:25 AT: That's okay, go Sean. You got it.

1:08:28 SM: Okay.

[laughter]

1:08:32 AT: I mean, I can take it, come on.

1:08:33 SM: You have all these organizations you started.

1:08:37 AT: No, I mean, it's not about organizations, though. I think it's about...

1:08:41 SM: You can go ahead.

1:08:41 AT: Okay. Alright. Okay. Here we go.

[laughter]

1:08:47 WM: Now it's getting closer to what it is. That's good.

1:08:48 SM: That's what I was about to say.

[laughter]

1:08:52 AT: I know. I know 45 minutes in, right. I mean, that's a great question. I think, my parents are not musicians. And so when I said I wanted to be a jazz saxophonist, it was totally out of the blue and I knew in fourth grade that I wanted to be a saxophonist. And so my dad is in medicine, and I think he went out and bought all those books just about jazz and how to listen to jazz and all this stuff. And I think I'm taking your question less in the education, organizational education perspective, and more just how to inspire people to be curious about the music, because I think maybe the attitude that I'm sensing, what you're talking about is maybe somebody has an attitude like, "I don't understand this, therefore I don't like it." That's just shutting something down that's unfamiliar, right? So, in my opinion, I think it's just teaching people to be open to something which you don't, doesn't have to be music in this situation, but it's teaching people that unfamiliar is not

bad or wrong. And that's, again, a fundamental issue that we have in society.

1:10:06 WM: Another thing I want to just add to what Alexa was saying, one of the implications in your thing was should you play like how people want you to play? Well, that's like, should you act like how they want you to act in your neighborhood? Should you change your attitude? Should you go along with whatever is the popular viewpoint. I'mma go to just something that I will tell Immanuel. It doesn't make a difference how many times I tell Immanuel something, he's gonna do what he wants to do. I will say, "Immanuel." And it's like he's saying, "Yeah, yeah, man, I understand what you're saying." And he doesn't know, he thinks I really want to hug him for that. Because you have to have a personal vision that's so strong, and you have to have such deep belief in what you're doing. "Okay, you don't like this? This is what I play." And if you play that with enough force and feeling like he does, then people come around to it. So I have to tell him, "I was wrong, Immanuel, do your thing man."

[laughter]

1:11:00 Moderator: Thanks for your question, Nick. Alright. Let's go to another one. We've got Jennifer Silacker.

1:11:08 Jennifer Silacker: Yes!

1:11:09 Moderator: Great. Jennifer, go ahead.

1:11:10 JS: Hi, thank you so much for taking my question. This is for Mr. Marsalis. I've had the pleasure of meeting you several times. I've brought my students to everything; Essentially Ellington, rehearsals, we were at the Sesame Street rehearsal a couple of months ago. My question is, how would you motivate and inspire... And this could be for anybody, but actually Mr. Marsalis, I'd like you talking to it as well. As a music teacher in Harlem, how would you inspire, motivate students during this pandemic, through Google and Zoom? I'm feeling the disconnect. I've tried to reach out and talk to the kids. I have them on smart music. The kids who have instruments, half don't. I find myself getting really discouraged.

1:12:06 WM: Well, I'm sorry about that, and I understand. Being in a lot of classrooms a lot of times, people don't... It's hard to perceive with kids. How old are the kids that you're teaching?

1:12:23 JS: I teach middle school, fifth through eighth, that I felt like we were just on the cusp of... I don't know if you remember the one girl that came, she was taking notes. I was just on the cusp of getting them interested in jazz and... And then we're out of school for the rest of the year, and they're talking about next year. So, I think middle school... Sorry.

1:12:45 WM: No, no, I am sorry, go ahead.

1:12:46 JS: I just think middle school is an age where, and this is my 19th year teaching, middle school is an age where kids will pick up and find their love, and I see the opportunity for some of

these students. And I can tell if we're in school, things would be different, but I'm not sure how to inspire them through a webcam. I love Zoom meetings, but they don't.

1:13:15 WM: I think, first, make sure you get your technical setup right, like with all your light and all of that. Make sure you got all your technical stuff right. And then, I think, the stuff you know about teaching, like all those years you've been teaching is 'cause you love kids. And middle school, that's the hardest age group to teach, I find, 'cause they're just coming into their sexuality, they have all these things to exploit them at that time. And if you teach kids from first to seven, when you get to that seventh, eighth, ninth grade, wooh! But I feel... If I were you, I feel like you should just act like we never had anything before this, and this is all we have, and you were raised teaching to this medium, you would do all kind of stuff. I'm talking to the screen, I'm looking at a cell phone, that's something that...

1:13:58 WM: When I was going up, we couldn't even imagine you would have a phone. That's only, they only had that on Star Trek or the Jetsons or something. But I swear, I feel like I'm talking to you. And your emotion is coming through to me. You say you're frustrated. It goes back to what Immanuel was saying about he's listening to these records with his boys, they're passing it back and forth his friends. They might not all be boys, but he's listening to it, and it's like the music has an effect. So, I think first, you have to turn your voltage up. It's like if we do a recording on cell phones, which we're doing every week, we discovered that we have to play with a lot more intensity and softer, because the cell phone can't take that volume.

1:14:35 WM: The great Herlin Riley, drummer, was telling me just today, "You've been playing some on the bass drum." He said, "I gotta lighten up off that bass drum and play it with more intention." So, I think you start to pick your wattage up with them. And you just gotta move through your course. I also think it's important through this medium to be much more organized with your time. If it's 45 minutes, if it's an hour, plot your time out. And that doesn't mean write everything out, but I would ink on my times with pieces of music. And some music would be listening, some will be calling response, and one thing would be the difficult teaching. I would teach the most difficult thing in the first section. The second section, I would have call and response, 'cause that's when you start to lose them, when they get bored. And the third section would be, "Y'all got to listen to some music," because that's the thing that's very important. And I think just that level of organization and keep your thing moving, I think you're gonna see some success. And if you need, you can also get people online, if you want me to get on with your class or something, I'm gonna give you my information. I would love to call them and clown with 'em. That's another thing. I miss going to schools.

1:15:35 JS: They won't believe it.

1:15:38 WM: I love your kids, so I'm happy to do it.

1:15:40 JS: That would be awesome, thank you so much.

1:15:43 WM: Okay, maybe somebody else has a thought, who has not talked. Sean, you wanna talk

about this one?

1:15:51 SM: Yeah, when I was in eighth grade, that's when I started playing. So I guess I was 13. So the fact that they even are starting to learn about this music at such a young age like fifth grade is amazing to me 'cause the only thing I was concerned about when I was at fifth grade is hooping and girls and sports and all the other things that the community that I was raised in cared about. But I was fortunate enough to have a grandmother that played Duke Ellington records around the house. And I would just piggyback on what Wynton said about how important listening is. And also what Alexa said about how the music speaks to her soul. I can't imagine somebody listening to Duke Ellington for sustained period of time and not enjoying it. I would imagine that listening is very important, and if you continue to put the music into your student's ear, it will definitely resonate.

1:16:48 JS: Thank you.

1:16:50 WM: And you know, they're gonna know you love 'em. Even though we're on this phone call, I love all the kids that's on this call. I love Sean. And it's not like a kind of thing when I'm up on top of them with... Or Riley, I love him in the way you you gotta love your family members, they're gonna do what they wanna to. And they're gonna feel that love coming from you. Because I remember now, when your class was in there, and I know you get frustrated, but they feel you, turn your watts up.

1:17:20 JS: Alright.

1:17:21 Moderator: Thank you, Jennifer, thanks so much.

1:17:23 JS: Thank you.

1:17:24 Moderator: Alright, we've got just time for one more, but I think we can squeeze one more in here at the end. Alright, before we get to that, just wanna remind everybody about all the live events we're continuing to host, question/answer sessions, master classes, live performances, and that we also premiered our gala concert in April, it's called the Worldwide Concert for Our Culture. And it could be found on YouTube, Facebook, and at jazz.org/gala2020. So check all of those things out, if you haven't. And our last question is coming from Chris Deffindors.

1:17:58 Chris Deffindors: Oh, I'm so honored. Can you hear me?

1:18:00 Moderator: Yes, we can hear you.

1:18:00 CD: Well, first of all, Mr. Marsalis my condolences on your recent loss. I saw you in 1989. I'm a bass player, I'm a composer, primarily a composer. And I've been playing bass since 1984, but I did a transcription when I was at Berkeley in 1989, of Quincy Jones' "Wee B. Dooinit". And at the time, I was very influenced by, I was very influenced by your thoughts, a couple of years previous, about how electronic music would take away jobs such as sampling keyboards and stuff. So, I was a DJ before I was a bassist. I was a DJ since '82. My father was a DJ. So I was a guy with the sound

system. So around 2009, I just got interested in starting my own civics thing, and I'm really kind of glad that Skain's Domain has turned into this different thing than I expected. The brotherhood and the brotherly love, in that sense, sisterly love, in that sense. And so I poured everything into my art. I just did it, and I followed the song, and later recognized by Cornell. Just, I didn't go there, they just discovered my art, like put me in a... I'm in with Shakespeare and stuff.

1:19:38 CD: So I'm trying to find my own voice with the turntables. I scratch, but I can scratch any pitch. So I can play... I heard a couple... I've been listening to Skain's Domain... I'm sorry, I missed the last couple. I didn't realize that this was a weekly thing until the second week. But what I was gonna say is that I'm finding my sound, but I'm just really wanting to know, Mr. Marsalis' words, because the music is a gift that I have, and my whole inspiration is just to show people how they can be... I can download my creativity through my art.

1:20:26 CD: So my friend Rita says, "I like your bass playing better than your scratching." So I don't know if I'll ever be able to change that, but I have... Things that I can, and I love it. I can also scat while I scratch a melody. So it's an instrument that you can play a million different infinite tones, but of course, the thing is to find your sound. So I'm trying to hone in. I've been... Just had a lesson with someone doing some scat. And just finding that the song is everything, and the song just leads me to this. So I feel like it's my way of giving back, and not giving back, but honoring my father who was a DJ, and also I was inspired by hip-hop, and then it turns out when a friend of mine mailed me this transcription of Quincy Jones, that I had notated this turntable arrangement, and then so I was literally trying to be revolutionary in 1989 and I turned out to be that.

1:21:34 CD: I had met John Cage. I'm gonna sum it up, but I had met John Cage a couple six months before, and so I had the turntables as a thing, but I'm trying to make a difference musically. I'm trying to hone in on my sound, trying to learn everything I can. And more like the pentatonic as you had described in the previous thing is what I was gonna say. I know you can only play what you hear. So I'm gonna hope to listen to your voice now.

1:22:04 WM: Man, you covered so much ground with all that knowledge, and that stuff is beyond what I do. I got to turn that over to Immanuel. You sound like, you're in Immanuel's wheelhouse, man. I can't mess that. You summarized all of what you're trying to do, and I think, I don't know as much about turntables as... Also, I don't know... Joe Block... Who have we... Joe, we've not heard from him, Jacob and Immanuel. So maybe we'll go one, two, three, like that. Joe?

1:22:33 JB: Okay, yeah. Yeah, you mentioned how your friend or somebody was recognizing your DJing or your something more than your bass playing. It's always interesting to compare how you view yourself with how others view. Just thinking about how Wynton introduced me. When I first met Wynton, I was thinking about Steve Coleman's music, and I did this program in high school with Immanuel. We were studying. I was odd meter. So that was the first interaction I had with Wynton. But that's not something that I think necessarily defines my music. So it's always interesting to hear, to compare that. Similarly, I think of myself as a composer and a pianist, and some people might think of me more as either of those. So it's always interesting to take a step back and get a perspective that isn't always so self-interested, get a lot of different opinions to help craft

your identity.

1:23:36 WM: What you're saying, Jacob?

1:23:36 JM: Yeah, yeah. So I've always been someone who's tried to remain as versatile as I can. I know you mentioned you play bass, and you spin the discs. You scratch the discs. And so, for me personally, I've always tried to maintain all the sides of my playing. I know Alexa plays literally every woodwind instrument there is. And so if you can just do whatever it takes to be a complete artist and a complete human, whether that is...

1:24:06 CD: Yeah, I hear what you're saying.

1:24:09 JM: Also, like me personally, trying to take a deeper dive into politics, or to read up on different things. I appreciate what you're doing with that versatility between bass and spinning the discs, and just keep it up, man.

1:24:25 CD: Thank you.

1:24:25 WM: Right. What you're saying, Immanuel?

1:24:30 Moderator: Hold on. I've got him, he's muted.

1:24:32 IW: There we go.

1:24:33 Moderator: There you go. Go ahead, Immanuel.

1:24:35 IW: Yeah. One thing that I've been kind of dealing with... Well, so I'll tell you how I got there. Basically, if we're talking about electronics, that's been the first thing we've had to deal with during this virus. I'm playing keyboards. I'm no longer playing a piano. You know what I mean? When I'm making tracks for myself or whatever, I can't record piano parts. I'm recording keyboard parts. I'm dealing with MIDI cables and stuff like that, so I'm already by virtue of what's going on, having to deal with the electric side of things. But then I thought about like, what does it mean to take that a step further? What is like... Something that I've been doing recently is flipping through these flash cards by Brian Eno. He has some flash cards called Oblique Productivity. And what it does is it gives you little phrases that help you to think outside of the box and can help with creativity in a way.

1:25:43 IW: And one of 'em that I flipped to the other day was cross the line. And so I've been trying to figure out how I can... What does it mean to cross the line? When we're playing, we all know where the line is. You know what I mean? Whether it be... And the line's different for everybody, right? Whether it be playing outside of the changes, playing inside of the changes. Playing out the time, playing inside the time. And then of course we can get more abstract than that. But so I've been trying to figure out conceptually what does it mean to cross the line when I'm playing, and how can I live on the other side of the line. So yeah, I'm still trying to figure out what

that means. Maybe extra musical. I don't know.

1:26:31 WM: Right. Great.

1:26:31 IW: Cool.

1:26:33 WM: I wanna thank you. I wanna thank all my panelists, of course. I love them. My man, I wanna commend you on your leisure suit. I haven't seen one of those in a long time. And I like the sand dunes you have behind you. I don't know where you were, but it put us in the mood. So I just wanna say thank you to all of you for joining us tonight. It was certainly a pleasure for me to see my younger people and hear what they're saying. And we're gonna see y'all again next week, and just love to everybody till we meet again. I'm gonna turn you back over to Adam and his capable hands. Riley? Joe?

1:27:14 Moderator: Thank you, everybody.

1:27:15 WM: Alexa, Sean.

1:27:18 AT: Thank you.

1:27:20 WM: Cosimo, Jacob, Immanuel. All of us.

1:27:23 Moderator: Alright, thanks everybody. That's a wrap on tonight. I'll just remind everybody we're a non-profit organization in New York City. If it's within your means, please consider making a donation. We're so grateful for any support. And with that, we'll call it a wrap. I just wanna say thanks to everybody who joined and participated and we'll see you again soon. Take care, guys.