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**WYNTON MARSALIS**



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Talk about creativity of people, I never understood why it is considered to be the progress of a small group of people. The first thing I tell a class is it's very easy to improvise. I say here's a few things, no you play. Only difficult to play well. If we look around, even in this room, we see the result of human creativity. This magnificent room itself, what everyone has on, these monitors, these couches, table, everything is a result of someone's decision. Some architect, steel worker. It's unbelievable. So many combinations of things. You don't have to learn creativity. All you have to do is unleash it. Everyone is given the gift of creativity. There are no rules of creativity, that's why we have trouble grading kids in school. They have to memorize facts. Creativity is like dreams, you can't control them, they come to you. How many times have you had off the wall ideas. Someone else executes your ideas to success? How many times were you laughed at that made you lose your confidence. Respect your own creativity. Focus on your gift, what you are able to do and the tools you've been given to accomplish it.

Almost every critic came up and said I was too authentic, and it was too stupid. That I had nothing of value to say. Someone said to me: why are you trying to act what you are, be what you are. Be yourself, value your own ideas and minding your own dreams. Now this sounds simple enough, it's easy to be demoralized. Old ideas are safe and seldom celebrated. I ask students what are you trying to do? They say they want to be like someone famous. You won't be someone who changes the world of jazz, but what about being good. Jazz teaches you about developing your own personal style, about being happy.

Unsung power in achieving your own personality and projecting it. The whole world will not want to imitate you. Have to be content. Play good before you can play great. If it is your idea it is important to you, important to nurture it. Personal can be great in or outside of the tradition. May create a new world outside the tradition and inside it create a world of your own. The arts are essential to everyone in the world, it contains every type of imaginable person who has worked with whatever they had.

We have knowledge of the great innovators, it can unlock the roadblocks we think pertain to only us. They inspire us and delight us. First lesson in jazz at 8 years old, my daddy in 1970 said the church was starting a new band. But we were thinking about Marvin Gaye. My brother was playing clarinet and trumpet, and other kids too, we were dissatisfied with this position. When you're 9 everyone is old, but there was this old man, and he began to teach us about jazz, and standing in the sun, and with afros it was hotter. He said I'm going to teach you about jazz. He said what does this trombone have that no other instrument, yes it's a slide. So when you play it's got a slide. At the clarinet, he said all those key, play something fast. The tuba, see how big it is, play big notes. If the elephant starts running everyone is in trouble. He couldn't read music, he was showing us how to play. If it don't have feeling, it don't have meaning. Here's the melody ... every time he gave us an example he would tell us to play. When we played it was the worst thing you ever heard, and he said, now that's jazz. We'd be looking around and say that's jazz? First he taught us respect with our instrument, and taught us to communicate with each other. Left hand and right hand have a conversation with each when you play the drums. When people hit that beat together, it's jazz. So we started playing, it was the worst thing you ever heard, and he said that's jazz. Now if you see those musicians today, the greatest in New Orleans, you say that's jazz. He taught us to respect our creativity and the creative space of other people.

You are creative. Second step to unprecedented creativity is co-creation, to adjust your thing to fit with theirs. America is a very young country. We had a big idea. Now believe the arts are some type of dreamy non-essential material, it's the first thing we cut from school. In reality, art forms contain the collective wisdom of the people, the highest aspirations and relationship to spiritual matters. How we deal with the most important issues of life, birth death and the inbetween. They exist to expand our awareness of the possible. They are tools for survival and survival with style, like the Blues. People listen to the Blues to feel good. You get a little bit of the Blues to keep the blues away. Arts can stand as testament to the grandeur of people.

We have a way of life, modern democratic living, our living is stylized in the way of jazz, it's the most definitive. An explosion of creativity. The definitive art of America has an unprecedented role call of innovative art. Courage and persistence that would serve us very well.

The originator of Jazz was a man who played trumpet. He brought a startling idea to the world. He combined many different music groups. First was sanctified church music, and he put it next to songs played on whore houses. Of course everyone knew the church music but they knew the whore house songs too. They just didn't have the courage to put the two of them together. These two things appeared to be opposites, but in fact were pursuing the same thing. Made the other instruments sound like human voices. He added and improvised figures to music. His innovation helps us to realize 2 basic tenets of American democracy: have the right to create and project own way of doing things, and have responsibility to respect others that are doing that too.

Louis Armstrong didn't invent jazz, but he brought it to the people. A great synthesizer of material, he understood all essentials that make humans the same, hunger, jealousy, loneliness, and transcendent joy.

The opposite of what's accepted. Combine intensity of Blues with a cool playing conception. 1930's, era of deep segregation, with contention about white and black musical styles. He defended the right to be himself and looked up and everyone was imitating him.

Together they create an entirely new world. Jazz happened at the beginning of WWII. The founding fathers, the late poets are in the arts. After WWII we had Gillespie, Parker, Kenny Clark, Phelonius Monk. Together they created a new style called Be Bop. A psychological complexity that took jazz from the images of America's conception itself.

Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker gave us a chance to rethink the values. Then there's the person who does not have great talent, but works in it until he give in to it. John Coltrane, teaches us that the search is power. A constant seeker.

The most significant jazz innovation is jazz itself. Art is born to nourish the people that birth it. Got to go back to earliest moments, the original source. Time tends to erode things like integrity. The further away we go from the son, the colder it gets. Originators were victims of forms of segregation, and that was before we had marches and protestors, freedom was much more than a word. These originators exhibit their ideas of freedom through music. They were linked in freedom as they were linked in bondage. They were thinking about sharing and communicating with all kinds of people, they became masters of balance. Used improv and rhythm that we call Swing. It's an era in American history and a world view. Belief and power of collective ability to absorb mediocre to poor decisions to a feel for something, when they continue to be in synch that is Swing. Feeling that our way is more important than our way. This may seem idealistic, but think about whole congregations who recite things every day. On the bandstand, Swing is the core that makes us all work together. Music is the collective aspirations of a group of musicians, under extreme pressure of time. When we all work together, music is Swing, and when we don't it's not. That's why although the perception of jazz is that we all get along, we just make that stuff up. In actuality we are trying to get along, and the integrity of the process is Swing. If you are trying to play it with me I will get along with you.

Keys to swing: combination of opposites, man and a woman. Base is lowest, drums is loudest, and cymbal is the highest frequency. All coming together. Base players and drummers never get along. That's why we need rhythm guitar, a sacrificial instrument. Like a trampoline, get them all on 4 beats. Get along, develop good manners, empathy with other people you play with. Develop super-sensitive empathy with other people you play with. Cultures are coming closer together, thanks to new technology. Closer they become, the more conflict is generated. Let's not confuse the conflict with the end of the world, it's actually the beginning of the world. It's called harmony through conflict. We are fighting now, but we are trying to understand. Be better prepared to deal with the integration we find ourselves with upfront.

We find ourselves responsible to more people as adults. A mature level of relationship is directly related to the size of things you take on. Your art form, all the arts, and finally humanity itself. In this era of technology, jazz points to one thing, undisputed importance of your humanity and of the human being. Important to have a culture component to business. Arts let us know the best of who we are. Civilization requires extreme effort, the technology of the human soul does not change. To understand your art form is to be inside of yourself. We still listen to Beethoven, but we're not going to return to aristocratic government. We are still interested in his music because he spoke to the depth of the human soul. Much to celebrate and much to be cried. Jazz reconciles contradictions. Dancing and happy beat never made anyone cry. How do we reconcile technological advancements that threaten to replace the feeling of the human being. How do we get technology to work in a more human manner. Jazz believes in good taste of individuals, in the power of humans to create wonderful things and embraces the power of the human being. Respect and trust, these are things Jazz can teach people. Each other's ability. Most time is spent listening to other musicians making music. Always making adjustments, improvising based on what other people do.

Jazz is feeling. In the simplest context, creativity and innovation reiterate importance of soul. Also have artistic imperative to understand creativity as tools for democracy and accomplished citizenship, demonstrating ethic to self. To play with integrity. Technology is never the model, people are the model. Here again a great lesson can be learned with Jazz. Lesson integrity, jazz stood as fortress of integrity, skill and competency were hard learned. You did all that time practicing you want to show people you can play. Challenges that many businesses face. Lack of leadership, line items on a budget. Irony of all good and bad lessons of life, is that creativity and innovation will happen regardless. We choose who we reconcile our differences. Energy is powerful and indescribable when it happens amongst a group. You didn't have to earn your creativity, you were born with it. With the arts, it creates community, and that feeling is hard to let go. That's what made Beethoven, Louis Armstrong, Henry Matisse, Duke Ellington keep doing what they were doing.

That's what we all want to happen and that's jazz.