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**Wynton Marsalis & Willie Nelson
JALC Season XIV
Program 49, Airdate 8/30/07**

1) Music: Basin Street Blues

2) Marsalis:

HIS MUSIC HAS BEEN CALLED A LOT OF THINGS. "OUTLAW COUNTRY." "PROGRESSIVE COUNTRY." EVEN "COUNTRYPOLITAN." BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER HE'S PERFORMING A TUNE THAT'S ASSOCIATED WITH COUNTRY, JAZZ, BLUES, OR ANYTHING ELSE. HE FINDS A WAY TO INHABIT THE SONG THAT'S UNMISTAKABLY WILLIE NELSON.

JUST AHEAD ONE OF THE SUPREME INTERPRETERS OF THE AMERICAN SONG, WILLIE NELSON JOINS OUR JAZZ SEPTET FOR SOME DOWN HOME SWING. I'M WYNTON MARSALIS. THIS IS JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER, AND WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

3) Marsalis:

WE'RE IN THE ALLEN ROOM WITH A 50 FOOT HIGH GLASS WALL BEHIND US OVERLOOKING MANHATTAN'S COLUMBUS CIRCLE AND CENTRAL PARK. JUST TO GET EVERYONE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE PROCEEDINGS, LETS GIVE A BUNCH OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BAND A CHANCE TO SOLO ON A BLUES BY JIMMY REED.

4) Music: Bright Lights, Big City

5) Marsalis:

“BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY,” WILLIE NELSON ON GUITAR AND VOCALS, MICKEY RAPHAEL ON HARMONICA, ME ON THE TRUMPET, WALTER BLANDING JUNIOR ON TENOR SAXOPHONE, AND DAN NIMMER ON PIANO.

6) Music: “Family Bible,” Claude Gray

7) Marsalis:

IN 1959, WILLIE NELSON WAS LIVING IN A HOUSTON SUBURB KNOWN AS PASADENA AND STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET. AS THE STORY GOES, HE SOLD THE RIGHTS TO HIS SONG "FAMILY BIBLE" TO A FRIEND FOR FIFTY DOLLARS AND THE PRICE OF A MEAL. "FAMILY BIBLE" WOULD END UP BECOMING A TOP 10 HIT ON THE BILLBOARD COUNTRY CHART FOR THE SINGER CLAUDE GRAY, BUT ALL WILLIE WOULD HAVE TO SHOW FOR IT WAS HIS FIFTY BUCKS. BUT AS NELSON SAYS, WHEN YOU ASK HIM ABOUT IT: "I REALLY NEEDED FIFTY BUCKS."

AS NELSON CONTINUED TO DRIVE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN PASADENA AND A GIG IN HOUSTON AFTER THAT, A NEW SONG STARTED TAKING SHAPE IN HIS MIND. IT'S BOTH PROUD AND LAMENTING ABOUT HIS STRUGGLES AS A WORKING MUSICIAN.

OH YEAH, HE SOLD THE RIGHTS TO THIS ONE TOO -- BUT AT LEAST HE GOT TO KEEP HIS NAME ON THE SONG. THIS IS "NIGHT LIFE," CREDITED TO BREELAND, BUSKIRK, AND NELSON, BUT ACTUALLY WRITTEN BY WILLIE NELSON.

8) Music: “Night Life”

9) Marsalis:

WILLIE NELSON'S “NIGHT LIFE,” FEATURING WILLIE NELSON ON GUITAR, AND MICKEY RAPHAEL ON HARMONICA AND THE WYNTON MARSALIS SEPTET.ONSTAGE IN THE ALLEN ROOM AT ROSE HALL.

NOW, ON THE B-SIDE OF THE "NIGHT LIFE" RECORD WAS ANOTHER NELSON COMPOSITION CALLED "RAINY DAY BLUES." AT THE TIME, IT MIGHT HAVE SEEMED AN AFTERTHOUGHT FROM A FLEDGLING SINGER WHO MIGHT NEVER BE HEARD FROM AGAIN. BUT THAT UNDERESTIMATES THE TALENT, DETERMINATION, AND CANNINESS OF THIS MAN --

9) Marsalis: *(continues)*

AND HERE WE ARE ALMOST FIFTY YEARS LATER, WITH NELSON STILL SINGING "RAINY DAY BLUES" – IN FACT, HE RECORDED IT AGAIN ON HIS 2006 RECORD "SONGBIRD." FROM ROSE HALL, HERE'S OUR VERSION.

10) Music: "Rainy Day Blues"

11) Marsalis:

"THE RAINY DAY BLUES," WILLIE NELSON GUITAR AND VOCALS, WALTER BLANDING ON SAXOPHONE, MICKEY RAPHAEL ON HARMONICA AND DAN NIMMER ON PIANO.

12) Music: "Pretend I Never Happened", from *Phases and Stages*

13) Marsalis:

BY 1977, NELSON HAD GONE FROM A FAVORITE OF THE COUNTRY UNDERGROUND TO A BONA FIDE STAR, WHO REVELED IN THE "OUTLAW" IMAGE ASSOCIATED WITH HIS NAME. THE INVENTIVE MUSICAL STORYTELLING AND RAW SINCERITY OF ALBUMS LIKE "PLACES AND STAGES," AND "THE RED-HEADED STRANGER" HAD CRITICS AND FANS CLAMORING FOR MORE. BUT HIS NEW PROJECT MADE THE EXECUTIVES AT COLUMBIA RECORDS UNEASY.

14) Music: "Blues Skies"

15) Marsalis:

AFTER CASUAL CHATS AND JAMS WITH BOOKER T. JONES, THE

GREAT SOUL ORGANIST WHO HAPPENED TO BE NELSON'S UPSTAIRS NEIGHBOR IN MALIBU, NELSON HAD DECIDED HE WANTED TO DO AN ALBUM OF STANDARDS, WITH TUNES BY HOAGY CARMICHAEL, DUKE ELLINGTON, AND IRVING BERLIN.

15) Marsalis: *(continues)*

JONES WOULD PRODUCE, ARRANGE, AND PERFORM ON THE ALBUM WITH NELSON AND HIS BAND. THE RECORD COMPANY EXPECTED THE ALBUM TO BE AT BEST A MODEST SUCCESS. BUT NELSON HAD CONFIDENCE. HE TOLD MICKEY RAPHAEL IN 1999: "THESE ARE MY FAVORITE ALL-TIME SONGS. I KNEW THERE WERE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO LIKED THESE SONGS, AND WOULD LOVE TO HEAR THEM AGAIN."

AND HE WAS RIGHT. THE ALBUM, CALLED "STARDUST," STAYED ON THE BILLBOARD CHARTS FOR TEN YEARS. THIS NEXT TUNE IS ONE OF THOSE GREAT ONES BY HOAGY CARMICHAEL WITH LYRICS BY STUART GORRELL.

16) Music: "Georgia On My Mind"

17) Marsalis:

ONE OF THE DEFINITIVE READINGS OF "GEORGIA ON MY MIND". WILLIE NELSON.

HEARTBREAK IS ONE OF THE BASIC ELEMENTS IN THE BOOK OF AMERICAN STANDARDS AND YOUR HEART CAN'T GET MORE BROKE THAN WITH WILLIE NELSON . BUT HE'S ALSO PERFECTLY COMFORTABLE WITH THE 'SAD-SACK' COMEDY OF BOB RUSSELL'S LYRICS TO THIS DUKE ELLINGTON CLASSIC

18) Music: "Don't Get Around Much Anymore"

19) Marsalis:

WILLIE NELSON WITH BOB RUSSELL'S LYRICS ON DUKE ELLINGTON'S TUNE -- "DON'T GET AROUND MUCH ANYMORE,"

IF YOU'RE NOT GETTING AROUND MUCH ANY MORE, YOU KNOW YOU CAN BRING HOME THE SWING. -- THAT 'S RIGHT, (JUST ME AND MY INTERNET CONNECTION...) YOU CAN HEAR THIS SHOW AGAIN OR HEAR JAZZ LEGENDS ANYTIME AT J A L C DOT ORG --THAT'S ALSO AN EASY WAY TO FIND THE JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER ORCHESTRA ON TOUR, OR OUR JAZZ EDUCATION PROGRAMS LIKE WE BOP AND SWING U.

BRING THAT SWING ON HOME AT J A L C DOT ORG -- IT'S JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER. THERE'S MORE OF OUR COLLABORATION WITH WILLIE NELSON JUST AHEAD. I'M WYNTON MARSALIS.

21) Music: "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," from The Red-Headed Strangere."

22) Marsalis:

THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK HAS BEEN A GOOD SOURCE FOR WILLIE NELSON -- AND HE'S BEEN GOOD TO THAT SONGBOOK TOO HE'S COMPOSED CLASSICS LIKE "CRAZY" AND "FUNNY HOW TIME SLIPS AWAY" -- AND HE'S KEPT ON PLAYING OLDER SONGS, BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT GOOD MUSIC NEVER REALLY GOES OUT OF STYLE.

TRUE TO WILLIE'S EAR FOR OLDER TUNES, WE WENT BACK TO ANOTHER RICH MOMENT IN MUSICAL HISTORY: THE EARLY JAZZ OF NEW ORLEANS FOR THIS NEXT ONE -- A TUNE WHERE ARTISTS AS DIFFERENT AS LOUIS ARMSTRONG, HANK WILLIAMS AND RICKY NELSON HAVE FOUND COMMON GROUND.

24) Music: "My Bucket's Got a Hole In It"

25) Marsalis:

"MY BUCKET'S GOT A HOLE IN IT," CREDITED TO CLARENCE WILLIAMS – WE HEARD WALTER BLANDING PLAYING A WHOLE LOT OF SAXOPHONE AND WILLIE NELSON ON GUITAR. AND THAT WAS ME JOINING IN WITH WILLIE ON VOCALS.

KEEPING EVERYONE IN A CRESCENT CITY FRAME OF MIND, LET'S KEEP GOING, RIGHT ON DOWN BASIN STREET.

26) Music: "Basin St. Blues"

27) Marsalis:

SPENCER WILLIAMS' "BASIN STREET BLUES," WITH SOLOS BY WILLIE NELSON AND BY ME.

28) Music: "September Song," from *Stardust*

29) Marsalis:

"I LOVE THE WAY WILLIE SINGS..." MILES DAVIS ONCE TOLD THE JOURNALIST CHERYL MCCALL -- "THE WAY HE PHRASES IS GREAT; HE PHRASES SOMETIMES LIKE I DO." UNLIKE MILES, WILLIE IS A MAN OF FEW WORDS AND GREAT HUMILITY, BUT LIKE MILES, WILLIE NELSON IS COMFORTABLE LEAVING A LOT OF SPACE IN A SONG. THE FACT THAT NELSON DOESN'T SAY THAT MUCH ACTUALLY AMPLIFIES THE POWER OF EACH WORD.

CHECK HIM OUT ON THIS BLUES BY PORTER GRAINGER

30) Music: "Ain't Nobody's Business But My Own"

31) Marsalis:

"AIN'T NOBODY'S BUSINESS", WILLIE NELSON, AND ME IN THE ALLEN ROOM AT THE HOUSE OF SWING.

32) Music: "Beans and Cornbread," Louis Jordan

33) Marsalis:

LOUIS JORDAN WAS ONE OF THE BIGGEST STARS OF THE 40S, HE HAD 57 DIFFERENT R&B SONGS ON THE CHARTS BETWEEN 1942 AND 1951. BUT HE FELL OUT OF FAVOR IN THE 50S AND ISN'T A SINGER THAT EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT TODAY. BUT WILLIE NELSON DOES -- AND BLUES FANS WILL RECOGNIZE THIS NEXT TUNE AS ONE OF JORDAN'S STANDARDS. THIS IS "CALDONIA."

34) Music: "Caldonia"

35) Marsalis:

SOLOS BY WILLIE NELSON, OUR BASSIST CARLOS HENRIQUEZ, MICKEY RAPHAEL ON HARMONICA, AND WALTER BLANDING ON TENOR. THE LOUIS JORDAN CLASSIC : "CALDONIA"

36) Music: track from The Troublemaker

37) Marsalis:

WILLIE HAS HAD A LONG ASSOCIATION WITH RELIGIOUS MUSIC. HE AND HIS SISTER BOBBIE WOULD PLAY AT CHURCH MEETINGS WHEN THEY WERE GROWING UP, AND HIS 1976 GOSPEL RECORD "THE TROUBLEMAKER" RANKS AMONG HIS BEST.

YOU KNOW HE EVEN TAUGHT SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR A LIVING AS YOUNG MAN IN FORT WORTH. HE RETAINS HIS GREAT FEEL FOR SPIRITUAL SONGS TODAY.

38) Music: "Down By the Riverside"

39) Marsalis:

THIS NEXT TUNE IS ONE THOSE SONGS THAT EVERY ONE IN THE BAND HAS PLAYED HUNDREDS, MAYBE THOUSANDS OF TIMES. THE TRICK IN PERFORMING SUCH A FAMILIAR TUNE LIES IN FORGETTING ALL THE TIMES YOU'VE PLAYED IT BEFORE AND APPROACHING IT LIKE IT'S TOTALLY NEW. IF YOU CAN DO THAT, YOU JUST MIGHT MAKE EVERYONE REMEMBER WHY THE SONG BECAME A CLASSIC IN THE FIRST PLACE.

40) Music: Stardust

41) Marsalis:

THE LYRICS BY MITCHELL PARISH, WITH THE MUSIC BY HOAGY CARMICHAEL. STARDUST, -- WHICH IS ALL THAT'S LEFT ON THE STAGE OF THE ALLEN ROOM HERE AT JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER.

OUR ENSEMBLE FEATURED DAN NIMMER ON PIANO, CARLOS HENRIQUEZ ON BASS, AND ALI JACKSON ON DRUMS. WALTER BLANDING WAS THE SAXOPHONIST, MICKEY RAPHAEL PLAYED HARMONICA, THAT WAS ME ON THE TRUMPET AND ON OUR LEAD VOCALS AND GUITAR WAS ONE OF THE GREAT TROUBADORS OF AMERICAN MUSIC, WILLIE NELSON.

IF YOU MISSED ANY PART OF THIS SHOW, YOU CAN HEAR IT AGAIN - - BRING HOME THE SWING.AT J A L C DOT ORG. AND THIS CONCERT IS ALSO AVAILABLE ON CD.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER RADIO IS PRODUCED AT MURRAY STREET. THIS EDITION WAS WRITTEN BY ANDREW ROSENBLUM. OUR PRODUCERS ARE DAVID GOREN AND STEVE RATHE WITH SIMON RENTNER

41) Marsalis: *(continues)*

THE RECORDINGS WERE MADE BY SAUNDRA PALMER GRASSI WITH ROB MACUMBER AND JEFF ROTHMAN AT XM PRODUCTIONS. OUR THANKS TO CHRIS ROOSE.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER IS KATHERINE BROWN. I'M WYNTON MARSALIS. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US.