

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH WYNTON MARSALIS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, JAZZ AT THE LINCOLN CENTER LOCATION: NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BALLROOM, WASHINGTON, D.C. TIME: 1:01 P.M. EDT DATE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2003

Copyright ©2003 by Federal News Service, Inc., Suite 220, 1919 M St. NW, Washington, DC, 20036, USA. Federal News Service, Inc. is a private firm not affiliated with the federal government. No portion of this transcript may be copied, sold or retransmitted without the written authority of Federal News Service, Inc. Copyright is not claimed as to any part of the original work prepared by a United States government officer or employee as a part of that person's official duties. For information on subscribing to the FNS Internet Service, please email to info@fnsg.com or call (202)419-6167.

MS. LYTLE: Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Tammy Lytle, and I'm the Washington bureau chief for the Orlando Sentinel and president of the National Press Club. I'd like to welcome club members and their guests in the audience today, as well as those of you watching on C-SPAN or listening to this program on National Public Radio. Please hold your applause during the speech so that we have time for as many questions as possible. The video archive of today's luncheon is provided by Connect Live and is available through the National Press Club website at www.press.org. For more information about joining the Press Club, contact us at 202-662-7511. Press Club members can also access transcripts of our luncheons at our website, and non-members may purchase transcripts, audio and video tapes by calling 1-888-343-1940. Before introducing our head table, I'd like to remind our members of future speakers. On Wednesday, Rod Paige, secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, will give his annual "Back to School" address. On Tuesday, September 30th, David Gunn, president and CEO of Amtrak, will discuss "The End of Trains or a New Beginning: Amtrak's current situation and observations on how best to manage and operate the national passenger rail system." And on Friday, October 3rd, Senator Orrin Hatch will be our speaker. If you have any questions for the speaker, please write them on the cards provided at your table and pass them up to me. I will ask as many as time permits. I'd now like to introduce our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names are called. Please hold your applause until all head table guests are introduced. Steve Koff of the Cleveland Plain Dealer and a Press Club member; Josephine Reed of Interfaith Voices and a Press Club member; Askia Muhammad of National Scene News Bureau and a Press Club member; Lisa Schiff, chairwoman of the Jazz at the Lincoln Center and a guest of our speaker; Marc Sandalow of the San Francisco Chronicle and member of the Press Club; Dana Gioia, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts and a guest of our speaker; Gil Klein of Media General and former National Press Club president; skipping over our speaker for a moment, Mike Doyle, McClatchy Newspapers and member of the NPC Speakers Committee who organized today's lunch; Hugh Fierce, president and CEO of Jazz at the Lincoln Center and guest of the speaker; Christine Arrasmith of National Public Radio and Press Club member; John Berlau of Insight on the News and Press Club Member; and last but not least, Larry Bivins of -- the Washington correspondent for Gannett News and member of the National Press Club Board of Governors. (Applause.)

Our guest today is a remarkable musician, educator and ambassador for the arts. As artistic director for Jazz at Lincoln Center, Wynton Marsalis has put his stamp on the musical world. "I'm from New Orleans," Mr. Marsalis once told an interviewer. "We don't need a concert hall for jazz."

Just as music is in the heart of New Orleans, so it is in the blood of Wynton Marsalis. His father, Ellis, and three of his brothers are also recording musicians, and in fact his first trumpet came from Al Hirt, who was his dad's boss at the time.

Mr. Marsalis studied at the Juilliard School in New York City before joining the famed group Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. Since releasing his first album in 1980, Mr. Marsalis has produced nearly 40 albums of both jazz and classical music.

He is 41 and the father of three, and finds time for basketball but puts much of his energy into music, and it has paid off. And in fact, he's got much of the credit for the revival of jazz.

The honors to him have come from both within and outside the music community. His work "Blood on the Fields" was the first jazz composition to win the Pulitzer Prize in music, and he has won nine Grammy awards. In fact, in 1994 he pulled off the unprecedented feat of winning Grammys for jazz and classical instrumental music at the same time.

In 1990, the culture watchers at Time magazine put him on the cover and announced the dawn of "The New Jazz Age." He certainly is one of the hardest-working men in show business. He works with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, oversees the creative and educational activities at Jazz at Lincoln Center, and practices the trumpet several hours each day. With all this, he still makes considerable time for teaching and lecturing on the sometimes elusive concepts of jazz. As he once told an interviewer, "You have to look at the world around you and the things happen to you and take them inside yourself and make something out of it. That's what jazz is."

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Wynton Marsalis. (Applause.)

MR. MARSALIS: Thank you. Thank you, Tammy Lytle, the president of the National Press Club; Mike Doyle; Chairman Gioia; Hugh Fierce, the president and CEO of Jazz at Lincoln Center; Lisa Schiff, who likes to be called the CHAIRMAN of Jazz at Lincoln Center -- (soft laughter) -- and is heading our effort for our new performing arts facility, which opens next fall. I'd like to recognize Davey Yarborough, long-time friend and educator, band director of the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington. He's here today with some students. (Applause.)

(Applause.)

I want to thank all of you for the opportunity to be here today and to play from a different kind of stage than I'm used to. As you know, the Press Club normally holds Washington insiders, and while I'm truly not a political, you all probably know that the press still grills me like I'm one. (Laughter.) So, if there are any reporters here, please remember I'm a musician not a politician.

Now, there's nothing that makes me happier than being involved with music on all levels -- playing it, writing it, teaching it. In fact, I like it almost as much as the people in this town like to talk about the "red" states and the "blue" states. (Laughter.) Well, I like to play music in all of them. As a matter of fact, I play in a lot of places; I play all over the country and all over the world, from Brighton, Illinois, to San Angelo, Texas, to Anchorage, Alaska. I play for all types: kids, elderly people; people of all races, shapes, sizes and backgrounds. And I'm increasingly worried about what I've seen around our country.

In school after school, over the past 20-something years, I've seen a generation of Americans who are culturally ignorant; who lack a basic connection to, and an understanding of the arts; of music, of theater, of dance and of the visual arts. I also see a government that is just unwilling to invest in turning this situation around. And in a nation that's as rich in culture and dollars as ours, that's truly unacceptable. We can all do better, not just here in Washington, and not just in state and local governments, but all of us, from performers to parents to community organizations to performing art centers.

This may not be a front-page issue, but it really should be a cause for concern for everybody. So, the obvious question is, considering what's going on in the world today, why is this so crucial right now? How can there be space for this when our nation is at war and we continue to live in the shadow of terrorism? The answer is that as Americans, it's more important than ever that we have a sense of our identity. When you look at a Stuart Davis painting or listen to Charlie Parker play the saxophone or watch an Arthur Miller play, you're living an important part of the American experience.

Now, we need a generation of leaders who understand why we must defend our country, of course. But more importantly, they need to understand what exactly it is that we're defending; something more than just a slogan. We need a generation of diplomats who understand and take pride in our culture and can share it with others. Only then can we truly put our best foot forward and show the world that America is about a lot more than some "shoot 'em up" movies, quasi-pornography for kids, and a 99-cent hamburger that makes you reach for some Roloids. (Laughter.)

Now, it's no secret, music has always been at the heart of our national identity, of who we are as a country. George Washington watched the British return to England to the tune of "The World Turned Upside Down." In the Civil War, it was "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" versus "Dixie." The slaves created the first viable body of purely American music, the Negro spirituals, and those songs are still played, sang and recorded today and still have meaning.

The 20th century brought us the airplane, television and the computer. But it also saw the blues become the foundation for every music that's come after -- every American music, American popular song, country -- country and western, bluegrass, gospel, rock-and-roll, and the counterculture music of the 1960s, which was the soundtrack of the civil rights and anti-war movements. And, of course, the blues is the lifeblood of jazz. You turn on the radio today, and even in the music that your kids are listening to, the theme songs of Generation Y, you still hear echoes of the blues -- breaks, riffs, call and response.

In short, music has provided a voice for some of our nation's most historic -- significant historic movements. Why? Well, that's because art interprets the human soul, and the technology of the human soul does not change. The power of great music is timeless. That's why it remains such an indispensable tool for teaching our youngsters. I can't understand why we don't want to use it. What's more, music is one of the few things that transcends the boundaries of race, class, religion and geography that too often divide us. Now, back in the days of segregation, it was the desegregated airwaves on the radio that really exposed the sham of racial separation that polluted our national soil.

Music is the one truly universal language with the power and the spirit to bring people together. No matter where I go, people respond to music in the same way. I hear: "Do people like the music in France?" Or "Do they like it in Japan?" Or "Do they like it in Russia?" Or "Do they?" -- I say everywhere we go, they do the same thing: "Keep swinging." "Can we hear another tune?" "When are you all going to be back?"

That's why it was impossible for Nazi Germany to keep Louis Armstrong out, for the Soviet Union to keep the Beatles out, and for East Berlin to keep Michael Jackson out.

Now, as I said earlier, we can't expect our children to understand the meaning of our country and our role as a global leader without also teaching them music and the arts. Every student should be afforded the opportunity at least to pick up an instrument and learn to play. They should know about Beethoven, Bach, Ellington, Armstrong, Parker, Monk and so on -- so many great ones. They should all have the chance to pick up a paintbrush or get on the stage, not just when they're in elementary school. For some reason you have the little students, oh, they're painting and writing plays and doing all this creative stuff. But then, when they get in high school, they got -- have a very sad look on their faces. And once they get into college, well, they know everything by then, so it doesn't make a difference. (Laughter.)

Now, this isn't culture for culture's sake. We know for a fact that exposing kids to the arts makes a difference not just in their cultural literacy, but in their self-esteem, their academic achievement, their sense of our global heritage and their readiness for the workforce. Just look at the studies. Children who are involved in music programs score more than 100 points higher on the SATs than those who aren't. I was in St. Louis one year when the SAT scores came out for kids, and who were the National Merit finalists. And I started to notice 60 percent of the kids were in the band. What more could you say? (Laughter.)

Music helps kids to demonstrate significant improvements in their spatial abilities, which, as we know, is important for success in math and science. They have improved reading skills, higher self-esteem and are less likely to get in trouble. Finally, and most important in the long run, education in the arts can help students think creatively, communicate effectively and work collaboratively. These are skills which are crucial for their futures in an increasingly knowledge-based global economy.

Now, it's hard to argue with these facts, but believe me, we do it all the time. Too many of our students in our communities and classrooms simply don't have access to arts education. This is wrong. We see that it's wrong, but we continue to do it.

Right now at the federal level, we invest a grand total of \$1 per child per year in arts education. That's not even enough to buy a Milky Way, let alone an instrument. The Department of Education earmarks just \$34 million a year for music education. That's not enough for the basics: for curriculum development, instruments and teacher training.

And check this out: The National Endowment for the Arts budget is just \$130 million. I'm talking about \$130 million for our nation's entire cultural budget for 280 million people. And of that amount, less than 10 percent goes to arts education. That's less the pitiful. It's also less than \$10 million for 50 million kids. But our kids are in trouble.

And in this economy, state and local governments are struggling just to keep schools open. Most are spending a fortune to meet the new accountability standards and the president's No Child Left Behind Act. And the arts just aren't something that can be measured with a multiple choice test.

We hear all the time something is wrong with the kids, these kids -- the music they listen to; what these kids are doing. I always tell older people it's not the kids. They act on what we give them. They don't have the ability to control what's going on. They follow.

Given these facts, you know, it's not surprising that only 25 percent of our nation's eighth graders are able to participate in instrumental music programs. And those schools which do have programs are often staffed by teachers without the proper training in music and the arts. Many others that do, when they have the experience, they're retiring in droves and in disgust.

I see kids have to get up at 5:30, 6:00 in the morning to go to band practice because there's no space in the day, music is so unimportant, the arts are so unimportant. This doesn't make sense. We want our kids to be literate in the sciences, so we spend billions, billions of dollars every year to give them a solid science education, and that's great. We should be doing that. But we've got to ask ourselves: What's the point of having the best science and technology if we live in a nation that's culturally bankrupt, if we live in a nation with an impoverished soul? This is what we complain about all the time. We don't identify it.

And the problem goes beyond dollars. Even when there is music in our schools, it's often the wrong kind. You go into a band room and listen to what they're playing. It's not going to be a John Philip Sousa march or Scott Joplin

rag. It's not a symphonic dance by Bernstein or Duke Ellington swing, something swinging. Many times it's a watered-down version of the latest pop song, and as a result, our kids don't even know what a classic is. They've never heard music that so many of the world's great musicians learned from, or even the great music from our country. Instead, they only know about the latest commercial musical ventures -- ventures many times designed to drive a wedge between them and their parents, and exploit their young sexuality.

The foundation of any music education cannot be within the top 40 this week, and music sales don't indicate quality. And that's not how you train the ears of a musician or even a non-musician. That's not how you lead kids into a deeper understanding of who they are or who they will be, which is even more important.

The result of this is nothing short of cultural bankruptcy. Can you imagine a society where no one had an appreciation of music or theater or art; where no one could perform, everybody's lip-synching, nobody could teach? Well, believe me, that's the direction we're heading in.

It's like when somebody says, "Well, my parents didn't like my music either." I say, "Well, how many generations can you go off of that? What do you have to do to get to something that's so deplorable even you don't like it?" (Laughter.)

We're sending our kids into the world with their skills and talents untapped and underdeveloped. We are doing that; it's not them. We're depriving them of a fundamental part of their educational development, and our nation is really much poorer for it. Who knows how many great artists we're leaving behind? Just as important, who knows how many kids never get to feel the power of the arts, to paint or act, to rehearse with others and to perform with others? Playing in an ensemble teaches you more about good citizenship than I don't know what.

Now the good news for all of us is, I've got this all under control. (Laughs.)

(Chuckles.) And I know y'all are just dying to hear my ideas. (Chuckles.) (Laughter.)

But seriously, I'm confident that working together as a community, with government, educators, musicians and cultural centers, we can turn this around. The beautiful thing about America is that things change very quickly. I once asked my father, "Did you know in 1953 that you wouldn't have to ride on the back of a bus in 1967?" He said, "Nope." He said, "Not only did I not know, no one knew."

Now, first, there's no way around this, we're going to have to make an investment, starting at the federal level and going right on down to the town hall. Right now, between the NEA and the Department of Education, we're spending only \$50 million a year. Now, that was the dollar-per-child figure I told you all about earlier. To put that into perspective, the government spends that much on copy paper every year. Or put another way, we're only spending \$500 per school, per year for education in the arts. You can't even get baseball equipment with that, we're just talking about the baseballs and the bat. And you wonder why we have such tremendous cultural problems.

I don't think it's asking too much to call on the federal government to double its spending on arts education to \$100 million a year for program development, teacher training, instruments and supplies. That's \$2 a student. And that's really barely enough to get us started. Still, we have to start somewhere. Now, I know these are tough times, but this is our kids we're talking about. I don't think we should be cutting corners when it comes to their internal welfare.

Second, anyone who's worked with children knows that money alone cannot solve the problem. We can't just expect teachers to carry the load all by themselves, especially with the short money they're out there making. It's going to take an entire community to turn stuff around, starting with parents at home, including local performers, community centers, mayors. But that shouldn't deter us, because one thing, we're all in agreement that something is wrong. We all have to do something to change that.

I want you to think about how much effort we put into everyday tasks, how hard we work to raise our kids, from when they're little babies; changing their diapers, reading to them, making sure they don't put their fingers in electric sockets, just that's a full-time job. Later, staying on them about their homework, driving to various practices, just trying to get them to have basic manners. Now, I want you to think about the energy that we expend when something goes wrong with our kids -- Lord have mercy.

Parents are our greatest untapped resource when it comes to music education. They're the best watchdogs for our children because they're the ones at the PTA meetings, they're the ones in teacher conferences, and they're the ones who have to insist on arts education as part of their children's curriculum.

I see people all the time, they say, "Of all the schools that you've been to, of the thousands of schools, what makes a school good? Is it these military tactics that the principal uses? Is it the -- whether it's a suburban school or whether it's an inner-city school?" I always say no. The thing that makes a school good is parental support. You can

go into the poorest school in the United States, and if there's a good PTA involvement and parents are coming, those kids are getting a good education, believe me.

The Kennedy Center, for example -- the Kennedy Center has developed a wonderful program. It's a Community Audit for Arts Education. It helps parents ask the right questions to assess their schools' arts curriculum. I urge parents to call the Kennedy Center in Washington, get a hold of these materials and be a thorn in the side of the school board, but be nice to the Kennedy Center. (Scattered laughter.)

Parents themselves can be music educators. I can't tell you how many parents over the years have come up to me and asked, "What can we do to make our kids better musicians? When is it too early for them to start playing music?" And I always ask them one question. "Do you play an instrument?" And there's almost universal response in our country. "Oh, I used to play, you know, violin," or "I used to play flute. I played trumpet, but oh, my instrument is -- I gave up when I got into college," or -- I say, "Why did you give up?" They say, "Oh, but if you could just hear me." I say, "Hear you! I still play basketball. You want to see that?" (Laughter.)

But my advice to them is always the same. The best thing you can do for your kid is dust your instrument off and play some music with them. It'll make them a better musician. It gives you a chance to spend some good time with your kids, not preaching to them or staying on them. And it'll get them to practice. All it takes is 10 to 15 minutes a day after dinner or something. Have a nice little family concert.

And you can patronize them. The kids know they're being patronized. "Ooh, y'all." (Applauds.) (Laughter.) "My baby sounded so good!" (Laughter.)

Don't think they don't know, but they'll -- it still makes you feel good. That's why you look for your mama a lot of times after a concert. You know you didn't sound good. You know she's going to say, "Yeah, baby." (Laughter.) "Mm-hmm."

In fact, I go and the country all the time, and it's really a highlight for me to hear younger students play, to meet them, to clown with them, tease them about their mustache growing in, whatever. It's a lot of fun. And the parents -- always they're concerned, looking at me, like "Now don't say anything to hurt my child." They're telling me! I got kids, too. I'm not going to hurt them. (Laughter.) But I got to leave them with something true.

Professional musicians in all communities play a critical role in the development of our kids. We need to get more of them involved. Musicians don't mind. Whether teaching students, training teachers or giving concerts in community centers, we're almost always there to do what we can to help.

Recording studios, record companies, private organizations need to pitch in. We have examples of that. That's why I work with groups like VH1 Save the Music. It puts instruments in our schools. That's one program.

As I said earlier, there are so many outside forces weighing on our kids. We need to show them that it's cool to pick up an instrument and do something constructive with it, because their version of what's cool today -- you can't get too much cornier than that. We have to remember: Apathy is the enemy.

Finally, I think that performing arts centers in America should serve as the hub of our community-wide efforts to stem the tide of cultural bankruptcy. This is being done with great successes -- with great success -- so many S's and E's in that word! -- in cities around the world and right here at home.

The Emilia Center in Italy is doing cutting-edge work with music and childhood development. So is the Youth Symphony in Venezuela, the Annenberg Center for Performing Arts in Philadelphia -- (pause) -- that was good timing -- (laughter) -- San Francisco Jazz Organization, Cal Performances in Berkeley and many others. And believe me, they're making a big difference.

According to a report that will be released by the Dana Foundation next week, performing arts centers, with the right support, can play a critical role in student development and achievement.

At my home base, Jazz at Lincoln Center, we spent years building an education program that reaches out to children across the country. In line with our broader mission, the program teaches young people about the rich heritage of jazz, its great works and musicians, the relationship between jazz and other arts disciplines, and even more importantly, the relationship of jazz to American life. In fact, by the end of next year, we will have reached over 1 million students and educators.

There's so much that we're doing at Jazz at Lincoln Center:

Our Essentially Ellington competition that brings high school jazz bands from around the country and Canada to New York for a three- day festival of master classes, rehearsals, jam sessions and live competition. As a matter of fact, people in Australia liked it so much, they said, "We're starting one down here." So, we've got it up here and we've got it down under. I knew you'd like that. (Laughter.) We encourage the study and the performance of Ellington's music and foster mentoring relationships between students and professional musicians. And if you could read some of the letters we receive from students, from parents, from educators, it would bring tears to your eyes. Our Jazz for Young People performance brings popular, live demonstrations to Lincoln Center and to schools in the New York metropolitan area.

Finally, we've also launched our Jazz for Young People curriculum to bring the best of jazz into schools around the country. We offer schools a resource kit that includes teaching guides, study aids, CDs and videos to give teachers the tools they need to teach jazz and to have a good time doing it.

But it's not enough to do this kind of work only in big cities, through institutions like the Kennedy Center here in Washington or Lincoln Center in New York. Obviously, there are a lot of places here in America and around the world that simply don't have access to cultural centers. So that's why today, I'm proud to announce a new interactive website that we're launching at Jazz at Lincoln Center, www.JazzForYoungPeople.org. Harnessing the power of technology, this site is a cyber cultural center; one that gives students, parents and educators a window into the world of culture through the sensibility of jazz. With the click of a mouse, students can watch a concert, teachers can download a jazz session or a jam session, and parents can learn about how to get their kids involved with music. JazzForYoungPeople.org is the consummate democratizer of jazz. It's our way of bringing jazz at Lincoln Center into homes, classrooms and communities from Harlem to Helsinki.

Now, these steps are just a start. But it's like learning music: you start with a few well-intentioned notes -- don't have to sound that good -- and you get a little basic beat, and then you work with it until it starts to feel right. It's like a bow tie. (Laughter.) You've got to do a lot of work with those. (Laughter.)

Now, we've got a tough challenge ahead of us. But I know that working together, we can make a difference in our children's lives and we can replace cultural bankruptcy with a full pocket of good music. Lord knows we need it.

Thank you, and I will be happy to take your questions. Thank you. (Applause.)

MS. LYTLE: I'm going to start out with a couple of questions that relate to music as it's been in the news lately. The first question is: What do you think the record industry should do in light of the recent lawsuits against young people who have been downloading music from the Internet?

MR. MARSALIS: My personal feeling about that is that the cost of CDs should come down. I look at it like a newspaper -- I'm not saying it should be the price of a newspaper, but nobody is going to waste their time copying a newspaper. So that's my feeling. And more emphasis needs to be placed on live performances.

MS. LYTLE: What do you think of the consolidation that's gone on in the radio industry, and as well in record labels?

MR. MARSALIS: I'm never a fan of one or two people owning everything, but things kind of will go that way. It's like in your neighborhood, you know, as things go on a smaller scale, it's goes on a larger scale. However, I have to say that sometimes one company will take over another company, will take over another, but the leadership remains the same, or -- I don't like when I see one philosophy governing everything. So I'm not a big fan of that. But what to do about it, I don't know.

MS. LYTLE: Are you concerned that there's a generation of young African-Americans growing up who don't know enough about the achievements of jazz?

MR. MARSALIS: Yeah. I'm concerned about a generation of Afro- Americans who are growing up and are constant victims of virulently negative stereotype images that I first saw when I was in high school with the pimp movies and all of that. And I know the type of negative effect it had on my generation, and I see that image coming back around. Really, it's like the minstrel show, it just comes around over and over again.

So, I'm very concerned about it. I speak out on it. And there are many people who feel that way. And I think it's a thing that doesn't just concern Afro-Americans, it's a national problem. And I think that our whole nation shouldn't just sit by and be comfortable with things like the use of the word "nigger" all the time over public airwaves, or curse words like "bitch" and "ho" and all of this that's just common national currency now. I feel it's an outrage, and I'm embarrassed by the fact that it's considered to be a part of Afro- American culture, because it doesn't represent anything I know to be Afro-American culture, and Lord knows, I grew up in it. (Applause.)

MS. LYTLE: Aside from that admonishment to some of the young musicians out there on their language, what

can be done to turn some of these younger fans into jazz music fans?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, I always say with our younger people -- I'm not admonishing the younger musicians. As always, the problem is that younger musicians are not the ones putting these records out, they're not the ones who are putting them in stores, they're not the ones who are selling. The younger people respond to what we give them. They don't run anything most the time but their mouth. (Laughter.) And it's the case, you don't let your 15- or 16-year-old run your house -- that's not going to happen. So why should they run you when it come to the culture or how they're going to talk or dress? This is something that's very unusual. It's a trend that has developed over the last 40 years in our country, but it's really an anomaly, if you look at the history of the world. This kind of thing really is not common.

What we need to do is educate our kids. And when I say "our kids," I mean all of our kids, not just my three kids. All of our kids are connected. Kids need to be educated. We need to set the bar, we need to set a standard for them to live up to. It's our job to do that, it's not theirs. They're going to do -- you know, like when we were kids, I got by with what I could.

MS. LYTLE: Any particular music that you would recommend that young people listen to to gain an -- or older people, to gain an appreciation for jazz?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, I always tell students, and people in general, any music that has a development section -- two things. If the music goes from one point and the theme is kind of developing, going, if there's a part of it that you don't understand in the middle, that's the kind you want to listen to. And also, stay away from "boom-bap, a-boom-bap, a-boom- bap." I'm so sick of hearing that. That drives me crazy! (Laughter, applause.)

MS. LYTLE: You criticized the government for not investing in music, but what about wealthy foundations?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, there are a lot of wealthy foundations that are doing a lot. I don't have the exact figures, so I'm going to refrain from going into it. But I'm sure if you added up what the wealthy foundations contribute to arts education in this country, it would make the government's contribution pale in comparison. And that's really a shame. And it's also not the case with a lot of European countries. They invest in their culture.

MS. LYTLE: Have you had a chance, or do you plan to lobby President Bush on investing more in music?

MR. MARSALIS: Yes. (Laughter.) I'm lobbying -- I'm lobbying right now. (Laughter.) We need to invest more in arts education, please!

MS. LYTLE: Do you think labels and pop musicians are contributing enough to arts education?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, it's hard to want to contribute to something that you're a part of what the problem is. A lot of their money is made off of the fact that people don't know. So I don't know that I would look so much to them. But I think in a strange kind of way that things happen. There's a certain type of relationship we have to corruption in our culture where sometimes somebody will make a lot of money doing a thing that's maybe kind of shady, and then they contribute, build a boys' home or give some money to a church, or something. And that way they could do a lot more to help with the education of our kids.

MS. LYTLE: You played last night at the Lincoln -- or I'm sorry, the Kennedy Center, where the price of tickets was too much for a lot of people in some neighborhoods in Washington. What -- is that the down side for artists whose performances are becoming less affordable, and what can you do about that?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, I think that in general, it's very expensive to bring all the musicians we bring and to move around. However, I want to make the point that when we talk about the neighborhoods or -- when you speak to people from neighborhoods about how much they spend on concerts that they want to go see, it's much more than they would have paid for our tickets. And when I see a tennis shoe will cost \$200, a jersey is \$450 -- the concert has got to be better than the jersey. (Laughter.)

MS. LYTLE: Aren't professional musicians in danger of being overtaken by modern technologies, which can give a computer operator the capability to sound like an entire orchestra?

MR. MARSALIS: That will never happen. That's like old John Henry. You're not going to create any computer that has the consciousness of a person. It's like -- you know, in all the computer programs, it's very interesting, they can "boom-bap" all day, but you never found a computer that could swing, and that's not ever going to happen, believe me. (Laughter, applause.)

MS. LYTLE: Who are some of the young jazz talents on the rise today?

MR. MARSALIS: We have so many of them. We have the great Marcus Roberts. I don't know if he's considered young now, but he's a great genius of the modern piano. We have a lot of great piano players: Cyrus Chestnut, Brad Mehldau, "top professor" Eric Lewis, Eric Reed. And I'm just listing piano players for you who can play. We have a lot of musicians who need encouragement. We also have jazz organizations that are springing up, like San Francisco jazz has Joshua Redman. He has an ensemble out there. And the Chicago Jazz Ensemble and -- I mean, there's a lot going on. There's a lot of great young musicians.

MS. LYTLE: You made substantial contributions to Ken Burns' documentary on jazz. What are the strengths and weaknesses that you saw in that program?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, the first thing is that Ken Burns is a genius, and working with him made me have even more respect for just the type of force and intelligence he brings to his work. And I was so happy that he focused on jazz, that he brought that genius that's evident in all of his work to our subject. The greatest thing about that series was that it showed that Americans were trying to get together from a racial standpoint. Then there's always something that makes us not come together. It showed basic things, like Louis Armstrong loved his wife -- things that you never see when Afro-American artists are involved. Then you had the chance to hear Charlie Parker play. How many people ever heard Charlie Parker play? You had long swatches of time. And also, it connected jazz to central movements in American culture, which is really what jazz is.

Q (Off mike) -- (appreciate it ?).

MR. MARSALIS: That's okay. Don't -- I'll do it again for you sometime. (Laughter.) So that's what I really, really, really enjoyed about the series. In terms of critiquing it, I'm not really qualified to critique it, because it was so much greater than anything that's ever appeared on jazz. That's like if you're in a class, and you make 180 and the rest of the class is making a 20, and somebody says, "Yeah, but you didn't make 200," okay, you know. So I just have respect for him and owe what he did.

MS. LYTLE: Is light jazz the worst thing that's ever happened to jazz? (Laughter.)

MR. MARSALIS: No. (Laughter.) It's not -- I mean, light jazz is okay. It's not really jazz. It's more like instrumental pop music. But it's -- light jazz is not -- it's not that bad for us (Chuckles.) (Laughter.)

MS. LYTLE: How about jazz -- how about the fusion movement? What has that done to jazz?

MR. MARSALIS: I'm not that much -- I mean, there's not too much fusion -- there's still some bands playing. I grew up in the fusion kind of era of the 1970s. There's some people, but it's like how many people still have their peach leisure suits on or -- (light laughter) -- you know, it's not -- so fusion was okay. But it's like with the digital watch, you know. It came, and we still got our watches on.

YTLT: And there are no peach leisure shirts here just for the record -- (laughter) -- any -- (inaudible) -- suits. But is there anything distinctive about the jazz made in New York City?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, I think that every -- the things that go on in New York are distinctive because there's so much energy and so many people. It's really a city moving -- I always think when I walk through New York City this is something that has never happened on the face of the Earth. And I'm from New Orleans -- we call it the Big Easy. But New York is -- first, it's just the range of jazz, different people who play and the way they come together. New York is a distinctive place just in the world -- unbelievable energy and synergy.

MS. LYTLE: Some people said that the Young Lions reenergized the jazz scene, but lacked the originality and the genius of Armstrong, Ellington, Parker, Davis, Coltrane, et cetera.

MR. MARSALIS: Oh, I think that the Young Lions -- I don't really know what that term means -- I guess, four or five or six of us who came up in the early 1980s playing. We brought a lot of spirit and energy to the music. But we brought also a philosophical direction that has yet to be addressed, and it has affected jazz in major ways. The one thing that we brought most with us was no belief in the generation gap. If you are a jazz musician, you should be able to play the history of jazz -- that all jazz is modern. In terms of individual voices, there have been musicians with individual voices, like the prime example to me would be Marcus Roberts, who created a style of playing the piano and a style of music that we have never heard. Things he can do that -- how did somebody do that? Playing two times at once and come out right -- a computer would have a hard time with that. (Laughter.) We talk about Casborough's (ph) dealing with Deep Blue and them -- this is about the blues in the deepest context. They need to come up with something else.

And in terms of the breadth and scope of the music that we've done through jazz at Lincoln Center and many

musicians, we are in a field where kind of our musical achievements don't actually get addressed, except in the very broadest way, so that many ballets and symphonic pieces we deliver break a lot of ground in American music. None of that is ever addressed when we're talked about. And also in terms of taking eight or nine of the greatest geniuses ever produced in the history of an art, putting the pressure of those nine geniuses compressed into one sentence, on any group of people, you'd have a hard time. Like if you start naming the greatest scientists -- Fermi and Einstein, and you look at your class and say, Where's your Einstein or where's your -- and if you're not Einstein, you're not successful, there'd be a lot of people feeling bad about whatever they did. (Laughter.) So, you know, so far as producing an Ellington -- I don't know that any culture ever will produce something like that. But that would be like saying classical music is not successful, or John Adam's music is not great because it's not Bach. I don't know about that form of criticism, you know.

MS. LYTLE: The country has seen an influx of Latin immigrants. How has that changed jazz?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, the jazz musicians have always reached out into the Latin sounds. Jelly Roll Martin, one of our first true intellectuals and great composers, said that you had to have 10 years of Spanish in your tunes. Early great jazz musicians traveled back and forth -- came from Cuba. Manuel Perez was a great trumpet player who was from -- had been to Havana. And all through the years Duke Ellington did music with Juan Tizol, his trombonist, that inspired the musicians south of the border. And then Mario Bauza, who is a great trumpeter who became one of the foundations of the Latin jazz movement in New York, came to New York to hear Duke Ellington's band. The great Chico O'Farrell, who recently passed away, and participated in jazz at Lincoln Center many times, he wrote a lot of arrangements for Dizzy Gillespie, which were the foundations of the CuBop movement. These things have continued on with great musicians like Poquito de Rivera (ph). At Lincoln Center we have the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra, which is led by Chico O'Farrell's son, Arturo O'Farrell. And we are always playing -- we are always talking about coming together. We do concerts. We speak of ways to bring our musics together. Many of the great musicians like Chucho Valdez down in Havana -- we talk all the time about bringing jazz and Lincoln Center down there. He comes and plays with us all the time. So the Latin jazz is a powerful and important part of our music. And all of us, all the musicians who are part of this -- whenever we get together we are always trying to figure out how can we learn how to play on clave or why does our band play behind the beat, because we are playing the eighth note, we're not swinging. As a matter of fact, our bassist in the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, Carlos Henriquez -- he's from the Bronx and he grew up playing in the Latin tradition, Latin jazz, and he's always on us about dragging and not playing in time. So, you know, a lot is done for the communities to come together. It's a real thing to have this influx of energy.

MS. LYTLE: You mentioned Ellington again. How do you explain the allure of Ellington?

Q He was great. (Laughter.) You know, how do you explain the allure of Shakespeare? He was so comprehensive in his thought, he had such a love of people, he had a love of romance. He loved his country. He had such an understanding of all the foundational elements of American music. Duke Ellington understood the fiddle reel, he understood the minstrel song. He understood the spiritual, he understood the work song, he understood the American popular song. He was a tireless student of music. He understood groove based music. He understood music in the gospel traditions. And all of these things are in his music. He invented an original form of orchestration. He elevated the American orchestra, which is the big band, to such a high standard that musicians like Stravinsky and Milo (ph) and they don't come from here, they'd be like, "Man, what is Duke talking about?" And if it were not for the segregation in our culture at that time, he would be recognized now as what he actually is. It's just a matter of time before he becomes what he actually is. It's like my father getting out from the back of that bus. It's just a matter of time, because Duke Ellington's achievement is captured on more than 800-and-something albums.

And I remember when I first came to Washington to see the Duke Ellington Archive at Smithsonian -- because I -- you know, I had a jazz musician's knowledge of Duke's music -- it's not from one generation -- you don't really understand what went on. I thought guys in his band wrote his music and all kind of stuff you hear. So I went in the room where the collection was housed, and it was like a whole row of these huge cabinets that stretched across three walls. So I said, "Okay, where's Duke's music?" And they said, "There it is." I said, "What? He wrote that?" They said, "Yeah, that's what he wrote. So I started looking at the scores -- mound of music that he wrote -- and that takes a long time to write some music. And he was doing all that other stuff too?"

MS. LYTLE: -- catch up to him?

MR. MARSALIS: Oh, never. (Laughter.) I don't want to do that.

MS. LYTLE: He argued that competition is what made jazz music great, and that government subsidies would make it less cutting edge. How do you respond to that?

MR. MARSALIS: I think it is time the thought of government subsidies for something like jazz was so off the wall that he's speaking about another whole context. People like to compete. They are going to compete whether

they have money or not. Just think about it -- like competition in elementary school: Who has the right color of Frito Bandito eraser? (Laughter.) People compete. That's what we do. So I think Duke was speaking in another time.

MS. LYTLE: What advice do you have on practicing and how many hours a day do you practice?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, practice is something you have to do if you want to be good. It's like my father told me. He said, "Man, if you want to be recognized, you have to do something that other people aren't willing to do." So most people they practice 30 minutes. Some might practice an hour. You have a few that practice an hour and a half. You have got some who practice two hours. And once you get to that three-four hour range you're pretty much by yourself. Then you get to that six or seven hours, something might be wrong with you. (Laughter.) So I think it's very important to understand that practicing is -- and not just let me put in a few hours of practice -- it's concentrated, it's focusing your concentration, your intelligence, developing the things that are actually wrong with your playing. Practicing is a great lesson in humility, because you are constantly assessing your weaknesses and trying to use your strengths to teach your weakness. So practicing isn't -- I used to practice a lot when I was growing up, four or five hours, but I would practice every day. Now I need -- I always say to kids I need to practice now. Sometimes they give me this hard thing, I recall, and say, "Can you play that?" And I tell them, "Now, see, that's what happens when you don't practice." (Laughter.)

MS. LYTLE: We must have a few musicians in the crowd, because they want to know what kind of mouthpiece you use and what kind of -- or how you developed your embouchure if I am saying that right.

MR. MARSALIS: I use a Monette -- Dave Monette trumpet, there's a mouthpiece called B2. It's kind of an equivalent of a Bach one and a half C for trumpet players. And what your embouchure, the best exercise is a slur, a flexibility exercise. I use a book designed by a man named appropriate kind of the equivalent for trumpet flexibility exercise designed by a man named Max Scholossberg -- "Daily Drills and Studies" -- and you have to go very slowly, and play soft-ly. And that's all. (Laughter.)

MS. LYTLE: Aside from all that practice, what advice do you have for our young jazz musicians?

MR. MARSALIS: It's what I tell kids about when they come to New York, the energy right now is negative, because in our field there's not a lot of work, and there's a lot of people vying for very few jobs -- not just in jazz, in the arts. Sometimes we hear about it in jazz, but I always say, What you think about a filmmaker, comes to New York, who is 17 or 18 -- What chance do they have of getting a film made? Somebody's a poet coming to New York to be a poet -- "I'm going to be the poet laureate" -- what chance do they have? So the thing I always tell them is you have to bring a huge infusion of positive energy and hold onto that energy and never let it go, no matter what happens -- what's said about you, how depressing it is, how hard it is to learn how to play, how disappointed you are in your mentors, how disappointed you are in yourself. Keep this feeling you have right now that 14-year-old or 13-year-old feeling, where they're all like, Yeah, I'll stay up all night and play. Or, Wow, I can't believe I'm here in the band. And where did you get those shoes from? You lose that after a while. But when you lose that, keep it. And that's the best advice I can give them.

MS. LYTLE: Can you tell us about the influence your family had in your love and skill in music?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, just seeing my father play all the time in small places for the same people and not for much money, and to play with this type of integrity he played with -- that was the greatest education I could receive in life. I saw him in 1967, I saw him in 1977, and later after our family became known, then things came around for him. But my whole growing-up years, I would always be saying, Why are they playing this? Then my brother played in a funk band. We were going to a gig -- there'd be 2,000 people at the gig. My father's gig, there would be 16 people, 20. That same 20. I'm like, okay. But he believed in the music, and he made me understand the power of the integrity. So that's really what I got from my father.

From my mother really, who kept our family together, everything about -- my mother is extremely intelligent. Everything about artistic substance -- like she understood the value of art more than my father understood it, even though he as an artist. She would make sure we went to concerts. And I know she didn't like a lot of those concerts. She made sure we read books, made sure we had art -- like we had some Picasso paintings and stuff -- of course reproductions. (Laughter.) But, I mean, we had stuff -- even though we didn't have any money, we had things that were artistic. And she made sure that we kept our involvement in the arts, and she believed in that. So that rubbed off on all of us.

MS. LYTLE: Has your art changed as a result of the September 11th attacks?

MR. MARSALIS: No. My art has always been about the same that all the jazz is about -- about freedom of speech, freedom of expression. And because we come out of the blues, we are always prepared when tragedy strikes.

That's what our music is about. It was forged in tragedy, so it has that type of steel and strength to it. And it's also optimistic music. It says, Okay, this kind of stuff happens, but we are going to find a groove -- not by escaping, we are going to be engaged with it. And that's why the blues are such a powerful form of music, and that's why it's such a central ingredient for jazz music, because it lets us know here these things happen. And through engagement we can elevate it from here to up here, and that's what the people needed to survive in those early years, in the 1800s and in the early years.

MS. LYTLE: How much of an influence did jazz bassist Charlie Mingus have on both your music and your being a voice for music for young people?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, Mingus not so much when I was growing up I didn't really listen to his music that much. But now a lot, because he had such ambitions for our country. Like he has a piece that we play now that's called "Meditations for Integration." And doing it -- I did a young people's concert on Mingus and I read a lot about him and studied him and listened to his music. He really represented what most of the jazz musicians -- he, Charlie Parker, Monk, the great ones of that time -- wanted to see our country be on a much higher level of social engagement. And Mingus was really a person who talked out against segregation, and he was a powerful voice during the -- he wrote the Fables of Faubus that decried Governor Faubus's reaction to the Little Rock situation. And Mingus was always ready to put himself on the line to further the music and really about people coming together -- but not coming together blindly -- coming together with a form of engagement. So in that way I'd have to say now I guess I'm very influenced by him. And he also studied classical music, and he was a serious student of all types of music.

MS. LYTLE: Why aren't there as many horn and trumpet players -- horn or other -- trumpet or other horn players as there are piano players?

MR. MARSALIS: Well, trumpet players generally are a lot cuter. (Laughter.) So we're not -- there's not that much cuteness to go around, and the trumpet is harder to play. (Laughter.)

MS. LYTLE: Well, thank you. Before I ask the last question, I wanted to give you a certificate of appreciation and a famous National Press Club mug as a token of our gratitude for your being here today.

And the last question is: What kinds of music do your children listen to, and are they going to follow into the family business? (Laughter.)

MR. MARSALIS: Well, my one son, my oldest son, he listens to -- he likes R&B music from like the '70s and '80s. My 13-year-old son, he likes rap music and hiphop. He won't -- he tries to hide it from me, but I mean I know what he likes. And they listen to jazz. They listen to some classical music. I don't kind of make them sit down and listen to like Beethoven symphony and stuff -- they'd be like, Okay, man -- not too much. They have kind of broad tastes. But they have kind of typical tastes for kids in our country. And they play instruments. My seven-year-old son -- you know, he's just seven, so he listens to whatever -- he doesn't mind. He's like, Okay, all of this is good. My 15-year-old son plays piano, and my 13-year-old plays clarinet, and my seven-year-old wants to play the trumpet. He has a good head for it, you know, one of those good round heads. (Laughter.) So I'm trying to -- I'm trying to -- I want them to play. I don't think they're going to be musicians, but you know all through they're growing up I would play like a little -- this one Monk song we always played, "Blue Monk" -- so we have a jam session, man, we just play "Blue Monk." And you know if they play good -- if they don't play, I don't mind. I just want them to know about not just music but all of the arts, you know, all of the arts.

MS. LYTLE: Great, thank you. (Applause.) I'd like to thank you all for being here today. I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff members Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, Joann Booze, Melanie Abdow Dermott and Howard Rothman for organizing today's lunch. Also thanks to the NPC Library for their research. And good afternoon.

####

END