

ENTERTAINMENT



MY TUNE  
by  
Obataiye B. Akinwale

My noisy display of joy brought my wife rushing to see just what I was watching on TV. Ramsey Lewis' weekly jazz show was on BET. His featured guest was none other than Marcus Roberts. I told my wife, "That's the guy we're going to see on Saturday." Her response: "He can really play." What an understatement.

Marcus Roberts is one of a group of young African-American musicians who are dedicated to keeping America's classical music in vogue. These musicians are almost single-handedly breaking down old boundaries. Old categories are disappearing and African-American music is leading the way.

Roberts was paired with Ellis Marsalis. Marsalis will always be remembered as the father of Branford and Wynton. But often overlooked is his rhythmic intensity, his leadership, and the experience of having performed with such diverse musicians as Al Hirt and Art Blakey whose "Jazz Workshops" are legendary. He is a master of a genre that has included the giants of jazz: John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, John Q. Lewis and Bud Powell.

Both pianists bring a different perspective to the instrument. They share the same influences: the legendary "Fats" Waller and Art Tatum as performers and America's greatest composer, "Duke" Ellington. But the generations that separate Marsalis, the fatherly figure who has seen many come and go, and Roberts, the blind, classically trained musician who evokes memories of Art Tatum, actually enhance their playing.

There was something for all. Marsalis was first on the program with solo performances of several classics including the unforgettable John Lewis composition, "Django." I was pleased by the interpretation of "Hallucination," a piece originally done by Bud Powell who just happens to be my favorite pianist.

Roberts came on and his control of the piano timbre was the first thing that I noted. His clarity and expert use of the pedals is amazing for such a young musician. Ellington's influence is obvious. No other musician conceptualized the piano's role in jazz the way the "Duke" did. There were pianists who were better technically, but none defined the concept like Ellington. Roberts' interpretation of that concept is refreshing.

After intermission, the two gave a performance that evoked a variety of positive expressions from those in attendance. The shouts, breaks and idiomatic counterpoints prominent in New Orleans ensembles, as exhibited in the playing of Jelly roll Morton, were handled with ease. For those more interested in exuberant but polished music, the two offered ballads like "The Man I Love," "How High the Moon," and the lighter side of John Coltrane.

Roberts astounded the audience with his agility. This man runs 10ths with the precision of Oscar Peterson. His hands resembled giant spiders gracefully building geometrically concise webs. Marsalis was equally adept, with the grace that several generations of meeting the world brings. The melding of two generations and perspectives spelled excitement personified.

W. Marsalis Expresses View  
**Evolution Has Its Place In Jazz**

CHAPEL HILL—As Wynton Marsalis will tell you, evolution has its place in the jazz world as well as the scientific world. Marsalis, who will play at UNC's Memorial Hall at 8 p.m. on March 16, sees jazz as a constantly evolving combination of New Orleans style, bebop, swing, cool jazz, free jazz and fusion.

Marsalis, who has been called the "past, present and future of the blues," feels that all these forms combine to create a whole, rather than various segmented parts as many others believe. Furthermore, Marsalis believes that there has been a type of dark age in jazz history. He feels this occurred during the time he was growing up in the 1960s, when the true tradition of jazz was nearly lost, in part to fusion jazz, which Marsalis does not consider to be jazz at all.

His penchant for a more traditional approach to jazz, along with his polished suit-and-tie appearance, has led critics to compare him to the jazz greats of the '50s and '60s. And no wonder, for he has said he is trying to reclaim the jazz tradition through his music. Make no mistake, however, for Marsalis there is a large difference between reclaiming and recreating the past.

"Erroneously, those who have written about it [his music] said we are trying to recreate the past, which is not what we're trying to do because that's impossible," Marsalis said in a 1991 interview. "What we're trying to do is address the sophistication of the past."

Taking Marsalis' background into consideration, it is no small wonder that the jazz tradition is something he values highly. Born in New Orleans, the son of Ellis Marsalis, a well-known jazz pianist, composer and educator, Wynton grew up surrounded by music, especially jazz. At the age of six, Al Hirt gave him his first trumpet.

However, it wasn't until the age of

12 when he began to study classical music that he began to take the trumpet seriously. Marsalis said that "It's harder to be a good jazz musician at an early age than a good classical one. In jazz to be a good performer means to be an individual, which you don't have to be in classical music. Because I've played with orchestras, some people think I'm a classical musician who plays jazz. They have it backwards! I'm a jazz musician who can play classical music."

In his youth, Marsalis quickly gained notice as an up-and-coming jazz trumpet player. Instead of attending his high-school prom, Mar-

salis was playing with Lionel Hampton, who recruited him for a brief period in his teens.

At the age of 17, he was admitted to Tanglewood's prestigious Berkshire Music Center despite its age requirement of 18. The next year Marsalis went to the Juilliard music school and began playing with the Brooklyn Philharmonia and in various Broadway musicals' pit orchestras.

Having toured with jazz greats such as Herbie Hancock and veteran jazz drummer Art Blakey, it seemed only natural that Marsalis would form his own group one day. This eight-time Grammy winner

has put out 20 albums and in 1984, he made music history by becoming the first artist to win back-to-back awards in both the jazz and classical categories.

Marsalis has said that in creating his music he tries to give his band members room to express themselves and to play freely. However, critics have said that in some of his work the feeling of freedom is not really there, and that it is a very controlled, precise body of music.

However one feels about his musical style, there is no denying that he has helped to change and in many ways create the way the world thinks about jazz.



GRAMMY WINNERS—Four-time Grammy Award winning contemporary gospel singers, The Winans, will appear Saturday, January 25 at 8 p.m. in the Memorial Hall on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The 1990s are the time for a dazzling mix of gospel harmonies and streetwise rhythms.

**'Meet Me In St. Louis' To UNC-Ch. Stage**

CHAPEL HILL—"Meet Me in St. Louis," a musical comedy commemorating what was best known as the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, will be presented at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Feb. 2.

The 8 p.m. show, which will be

performed in Memorial Hall, is based on the 1944 MGM Vincente Minelli-Judy Garland film classic and the Sally Benson "Kensington Stories" that inspired the film. It captures the domestic adventures and misadventures of a St. Louis family in 1903.

"Meet Me in St. Louis" is the third performance in the Carolina Union 1991-92 Performing Arts Series. Tickets for the general public are available at the Carolina Union Box Office.

**'92 African-American Arts Festival Begins In Jan.**

GREENSBORO—The 1992 African-American Arts Festival will feature 12 major arts events which will run from January through May. Live music, theater and dance performances, art exhibitions and African-American art workshops are being offered by the United Arts Council of Greensboro in cooperation with area universities, colleges and arts organizations.

The African-American Arts Festival is held in celebration of the outstanding contributions that African-American artists have made to the American culture. The festival is produced by the United Arts Council of Greensboro and sponsored by Miller Brewing Co. with sponsorship support from the Greensboro News and Record, WQMG Power 97, BB&T, WFMY-TV 2, and the North Carolina Grassroots Program.

Opening the festival was the art exhibit, "Black, As I See It," at the Greensboro Artists' League. This outstanding exhibition is curated by festival feature artist Edward "Halesie" Hale and will display works by African-American artists from the Triad.

Highlighting the festival will be a performance by blues legends Bobby "Blue" Bland and Clarence Carter on Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. at the Carolina Theatre.

The visual arts will have a strong representation during the festival with three dynamic exhibitions. "Acha Debela: Computer Art" opens Feb. 16 at the Green Hill Center for North Carolina Art and runs through May 16. The Mattye Reed African Heritage Center will present the "Contemporary African Arts Festival" featuring the works of Ethiopian artist Acha Debela and Ghana artist Kwakena Amprofo-Anti opening Feb. 21 and showing through May 2.

The exhibit "Atelier's Best Kept Secret of 1992" will present the works of Gilbert Young, conservator of the University of Cincinnati. This exhibit opens March 1 and will run through March 31 at the African-American Atelier. All of the galleries exhibiting art for the festival are located in the Greensboro Cultural Center, 200 North Davie St.

Performing arts programs for the festival include "W.C. Handy Blues Revue" at the High Point Theatre on Feb. 7; Greensboro Symphony Orchestra with Metropolitan Opera soprano Marvis Martin at War Memorial Auditorium on Feb. 22;

Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Ensemble at the Greensboro Cultural Center on Feb. 23 at 5 p.m. and Feb. 26 at 8 p.m. at the Carolina Theatre; and five performances of Alice Childress' play "Wedding Band" from Feb. 26 through March 1 by the UNC Greensboro Theatre in Curry Auditorium with an open community forum on Feb. 29 in the Ferguson Building on the UNC Greensboro campus.

The 1992 festival also features a variety of arts workshops throughout Guilford County. The students and faculty of the New Garden Friends School will present "Children Teach Children," a dance, drama and visual arts workshop for the Headstart program and the North Carolina School for the Deaf from Jan. 17 through March 27. The Gibsonville Friends of the Library will offer children and young adults the opportunity to participate in visual arts workshops as part of the Gibsonville Black History Month Celebration.



AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'  
Sunday, February 9  
8:00 P.M.  
Memorial Hall  
UNC-Chapel Hill  
\$10.00 General Public  
Reserved Seat Tickets at  
Carolina Union Box Office  
962-1449

**TONY BROWN**  
(Continued from page 4)

In the midst of this country's economic depression, some are very concerned. Clyde Prestowitz wasn't just referring to the fact that the Big Three U.S. automobile manufacturers lost 13.2 percent of their sales volume in one year when he said: "The Big Three is a dying business."

Prestowitz, president of the Economic Strategy Institute, predicts: "By the end of the decade, if there is not a significant policy change, the industry will die."

The auto industry accounts for 4.5 percent of everything produced in the United States and employs two million people. For proof that Prestowitz must know something, you only have to point to the 21 plants that General Motors announced it was closing and the 74,000 workers it plans to fire.

Prestowitz wants the Japanese government to play fair, by American standards. Others say Detroit should make better cars and make them more economically: it now costs \$1,481 more to build an American car than a Japanese car because of labor and the cost of capital.

I say both are correct. But I would add a very obvious fact: Japanese buy Japanese cars and Americans buy more and more Japanese cars and fewer American cars. The Japanese have captured 30 percent of the U.S. market; Americans have a puny one percent of the Japanese

market, and Japan is only the size of California.

That's largely why Americans spend \$41 billion more with Japanese than Japanese spend with Americans. It's called a trade deficit.

Even when the Japanese set up factories in the United States, called "transplants," 83,201 jobs were lost by Americans to Japanese in Japan and \$6.3 billion was transferred from the U.S. economy to the Japanese economy.

As bad as all of that is, blacks were hit even harder because blacks lose four jobs for every one lost by whites and the U.S. Japanese "transplant" factories always locate away from black and Hispanic neighborhoods, and the Japanese prefer white workers, mainly German-Americans—one study documented.

I believe in the Japanese formula of self-help called MITI and our version called the Buy Freedom 900 Network. But for our version to work, we're going to have to work with one another as the Japanese do, beginning with this free offer to radio stations and businesses: (212) 575-0876.

"Tony Brown's Journal" TV series can be seen on public television in Raleigh on WUNC-TV 4. Please consult TV listings or phone station for air time.



MUSIC AWARDS—Hammer hosts the 19th annual "American Music Awards" special, airing on ABC-TV, Monday, January 27, 8-11 p.m. (ET & PT). Awards will be presented in seven categories—Pop/Rock, Country,

Soul/Rhythm & Blues, Rap, Heavy Metal/Hard Rock, Adult Contemporary and Dance Music—to the past year's elite in music. Top musical stars serve as presenters and performers on this traditional special.

A SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT  
**THE REAL McCOY**  
African-American Invention and Innovation, 1619-1930  
Greensboro Historical Museum  
Jan 18 - Mar 1  
Mon - Sat 10 - 5  
Tue 10 - 8  
Sun 2 - 5  
130 Summit Ave  
Free Admission  
For more information, call 919/373-2043