

Wynton Marsalis

Quotes

People, Art, Jazz, Play, Mean, Music, New Orleans, Musician, Swings, Country, Trying, Kids, Song, Democracy, Want, Thinking, Giving, Brother, Way, America

When I auditioned for my high school band the band director was excited because my father was known to be a great musician. When he heard me, he said 'Are you sure you're Ellis's son?'

~Wynton Marsalis

I always like to play very contemporary concepts of swing right next to New Orleans music because it highlights continuum.

~Wynton Marsalis

And that's the soulful thing about playing: you offer something to somebody. You don't know if they'll like it, but you offer it.

~Wynton Marsalis

The real power of Jazz is that a group of people can come together and create improvised art and negotiate their agendas... and that negotiation is the art

~Wynton Marsalis

Everything comes out in blues music: joy , pain , struggle . Blues is affirmation with absolute elegance.

~Wynton Marsalis

Love is the spiritual essence of what we do. Technique is the manifestation of the preparation and investment as a result of the love.

~Wynton Marsalis

Louis Armstrong is jazz. He represents what the music is all about.

~Wynton Marsalis

Jazz music is the power of now. There is no script. It's conversation. The emotion is given to you by musicians as they make split-second decisions to fulfill what they feel the moment requires.

~Wynton Marsalis

Don't settle for style. Succeed in substance.

~Wynton Marsalis

I have absolutely no idea what my generation did to enrich our democracy. We dropped the ball. We entered a period of complacency and closed our eyes to the public corruption of our democracy.

~Wynton Marsalis

What is deeper than respect and love? That's what we felt: veneration.

~Wynton Marsalis

Through improvisation, jazz teaches you about yourself. And through swing, it teaches you that other people are individuals too. It teaches you how to coordinate with them.

~Wynton Marsalis

Maybe the preoccupation with technological progress has overshadowed our concern with human progress.

~Wynton Marsalis

Whenever you face a man who's playing your instrument, there's a competition.

~Wynton Marsalis

Blues is like the roux in a gumbo. People ask me if jazz always has the blues in it. I say, if it sounds good it does.

~Wynton Marsalis

If you want to be different, do something different.

~Wynton Marsalis

Everything about the swing is about some guideline and some grid and the elegant way that you negotiate your way through that grid.

~Wynton Marsalis

If you're not making mistakes, you're not trying.

~Wynton Marsalis

Let the critics criticize and let the doers do.

~Wynton Marsalis

Jazz is democracy in music.

~Wynton Marsalis

I think that virtuosity is the first sign of morality in a musician. It means you're serious enough to practice.

~Wynton Marsalis

Trumpet players see each other, and it's like we're getting ready to square off or get into a fight or something.

~Wynton Marsalis

I believe in professionalism, but playing is not like a job. You have to be grateful to have the opportunity to play.

~Wynton Marsalis

There are forces all around you who wish to exploit division, rob you of your freedom, and tell you what to think. But young folks can rekindle the weary spirit of a slumbering nation.

~Wynton Marsalis

I believed in studying just because I knew education was a privilege. It was the discipline of study, to get into the habit of doing something that you don't want to do.

~Wynton Marsalis

Flexibility is an essential part of Jazz. It's what gives Jazz music the ability to combine with all other types of music and not lose its identity.

~Wynton Marsalis

Jazz is not the kind of music you are going to learn to play in three or four years or that you can just get because you have some talent for music.

~Wynton Marsalis

The reason why the music [jazz] is important is because it's an art form-an ancient art form-that takes in the mythology of our people.

~Wynton Marsalis

Many a revolution started with the actions of a few. Only 56 men signed the Declaration of Independence. A few hanging together can lead a nation to change.

~Wynton Marsalis

I dress up a certain way because I respect the music.

~Wynton Marsalis

The young very seldom lead anything in our country today. It's been quite some time since a younger generation pushed an older one to a higher standard.

~Wynton Marsalis

Don't worry about what others say about your music. Pursue whatever you are hearing... but if everybody really hates your music maybe you could try some different approaches.

~Wynton Marsalis

Ethics are more important than laws. Which means that the exact note is less important than the feeling of the note.

~Wynton Marsalis

I didn't want to get that ring around my lips from practicing the trumpet, because I thought the girls wouldn't like me. So I never practiced.

~Wynton Marsalis

Jazz music is the power of now.

~Wynton Marsalis

Sustained intensity equals ecstasy.

~Wynton Marsalis

The nerves are a problem on trumpet, because when you mess up everyone can hear it. Just remember most people are too polite to say anything about it. That should calm your nerves.

~Wynton Marsalis

You need a team. You need people to push you. You need opponents.

~Wynton Marsalis

Don't bullshit' just play.

~Wynton Marsalis

The rebuilding of New Orleans is an important point in the history of the United States.

~Wynton Marsalis

I feel like a lot of the fundamental material, I've assimilated. So now the question is: Am I going to really get into my spiritual inheritance of music and really develop my abilities?

~Wynton Marsalis

The first time I ever played the trumpet in public, I played the Marine Hymn. I sounded terrible.

~Wynton Marsalis

We need more math classes, we need more science. It's the art of math and the art of science that creates all the innovation, and we have a tradition of great arts, great music.

~Wynton Marsalis

I think that when the education system started to be dismantled during the first Great Depression in the 1930s, we didn't recover from that.

~Wynton Marsalis

Humility is the doorway 2 truth & clarity of objectives... it's the doorway 2 learning.

~Wynton Marsalis

My older brother and myself always played together in bands, but we never knew we would be professional musicians.

~Wynton Marsalis

We always hear about the rights of democracy, but the major responsibility of it is participation.

~Wynton Marsalis

There really have only ever been a few people in each generation who step out, are willing to put themselves on the line, and risk everything for their beliefs.

~Wynton Marsalis

Jazz comes from our way of life, and because it's our national art form, it helps us to understand who we are.

~Wynton Marsalis

Young kids are always singing and painting. When you get to that second and third grade level, you're supposed to put all that aside.

~Wynton Marsalis

The blues. It runs through all American music. Somebody bending the note. The other is the two-beat groove. It's in New Orleans music, it's in jazz, it's in country music, it's in gospel.

~Wynton Marsalis

The bandstand is a sacred place.

~Wynton Marsalis

It's important to address young people in the reopening of New Orleans. In rebuilding, let's revisit the potential of American democracy and American glory.

~Wynton Marsalis

Through first-class education, a generation marches down the long uncertain road of the future with confidence.

~Wynton Marsalis

This rebuilding of New Orleans gives us the perfect opportunity to see if we're ready to extend the legacy of Dr. King.

~Wynton Marsalis

There was one thing Beethoven didn't do. When one of his string quartets was played, you can believe the second violin wasn't improvising.

~Wynton Marsalis

A beat is a moment in the life a groove.

~Wynton Marsalis

My daddy expected that my brothers and I and our generation would make the world a better place. He had lived in an America of continual social progress.

~Wynton Marsalis

It was Dr. King's tireless activism that fostered our modern way of relating to one another.

~Wynton Marsalis

What, other than injustice, could be the reason that the displaced

citizens of New Orleans cannot be accommodated by the richest nation in the world?

~Wynton Marsalis

I always read all these books about the slaves. My mother is very educated. My father would talk to us like we were grown men. We never knew what he was talking about half the time.

~Wynton Marsalis

We're blues people. And blues never lets tragedy have the last word.

~Wynton Marsalis

The soul gives us resilience - an essential quality since we constantly have to rebound from hardship.

~Wynton Marsalis

I try to put a lot of our music in my music - by that I mean of American music.

~Wynton Marsalis

Thank the good Lord for a job.

~Wynton Marsalis

Art is a luxury. It's not necessary for you to - you can work your job and you can make some money and never know who Walt Whitman was, and never read a poem.

~Wynton Marsalis

When I was 12, I began listening to John Coltrane and I developed a love for jazz, which I still have more and more each year.

~Wynton Marsalis

For Black people, we're one of the only groups of people that for some reason to express love of yourself, in some ways, is misconstrued as a

dislike for someone else.

~Wynton Marsalis

Jazz is not just 'Well, man, this is what I feel like playing.' It's a very structured thing that comes down from a tradition and requires a lot of thought and study.

~Wynton Marsalis

New Orleans - the real New Orleans - is the soul of the country.

~Wynton Marsalis

I wanted to make somebody feel like Coltrane made me feel, listening to it.

~Wynton Marsalis

The only justification for looking down on anyone is that you're going to stop and pick them up.

~Wynton Marsalis

Nothing else will ever capture the democratic process in sound as perfectly as Jazz.

~Wynton Marsalis

Only a few act - the rest of us reap the benefits of their risk.

~Wynton Marsalis

Jazz music creates so many phenomenal figures.

~Wynton Marsalis

I play piano and drums very poorly and French horn and tuba all equally as bad.

~Wynton Marsalis

Don't wish for someone else to do later what you can do now.

~Wynton Marsalis

Trumpet players are just belligerent, and cocky, and you know, just hard-headed.

~Wynton Marsalis

Music is always for the listener, but the first listener is always the musician

~Wynton Marsalis

We looked up to our father. He still is much greater than us.

~Wynton Marsalis

When me and my brother would go to see our daddy playing, there'd be 30 people in the audience. I was only 14 or 15, but I realised something was wrong.

~Wynton Marsalis

My thing is, once you start to put a backbeat on your music or something that has a machine in it, you have popularity, but you lose the flexibility. And you lose a richness.

~Wynton Marsalis

There's the tradition in jazz of having the "Battle of the Bands" and you do not want to get your head cut when you're playing.

~Wynton Marsalis

If you are serious about American culture and you are serious about Afro-American culture, you are in a lot of pain. You are not - you are not smiling about it.

~Wynton Marsalis

We learn a language through its song, and even if you don't have music you have the song of people you love's voice, and you'll notice that

song in their voice.

~Wynton Marsalis

I have friends who will critique me much harder than any review.

~Wynton Marsalis

When did we begin to lose faith in our ability to effect change?

~Wynton Marsalis

The heart of a music is its rhythm. The heart of rhythm section music is the rhythm.

~Wynton Marsalis

Commercialism that has absolutely no relationship to quality whatsoever, only quantitative assessment of a thing.

~Wynton Marsalis

When I say "our," I definitely mean all of America. It's not less pertinent for you because it comes from a Black person, just like a great achievement by an Anglo American is less important.

~Wynton Marsalis

So when we spend all of our time trying to separate that which is already joined, it's a waste of time.

~Wynton Marsalis

If you looked around, you'd be glad you couldn't see.

~Wynton Marsalis

Instead of imposing your will on every situation...focus on including everyone else, and just that little adjustment of attitude gives you the space to understand where and who you are.

~Wynton Marsalis

The blues is always there. It's going to be hard out here, but it's all right. It's all right, and that's what the blues teaches you. You got to roll with the punches and find your equilibrium.

~Wynton Marsalis

My mother always took my brothers and me to music lessons. There were six children. Our parents attended our concerts and encouraged us to study and enjoy many different types of music.

~Wynton Marsalis

Even in these times, there are still neighbors that will turn their backs on neighbors.

~Wynton Marsalis

Grace Kelly plays with intelligence, wit and feeling. She has a great amount of natural ability and the ability to adapt. That is the hallmark of a first-class jazz musician.

~Wynton Marsalis

Milk in a mother's breast-that's cool. Milk in a mouth-that's cool too. But milk in my trumpet? Not so cool. I have to play that thing.

~Wynton Marsalis

In the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra we play such a diversity of music, with 10 arrangers in the band, we don't really worry about whether it's contemporary or not.

~Wynton Marsalis

The first jazz musician was a trumpeter, Buddy Bolden, and the last will be a trumpeter, the archangel Gabriel.

~Wynton Marsalis

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