

**REDACTED AND EDITED TRANSCRIPT
OPENING SESSION, LEAGUE 2021 CONFERENCE
SIMON WOODS, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN
ORCHESTRAS WITH WYNTON MARSALIS, MANAGING AND ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR, JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER; WYNTON MARSALIS ENTERPRISES,
INC.**

SIMON WOODS: Good afternoon and welcome! We're happy to have you here for the Opening Session of the League of American Orchestras 2021 National Conference – virtual again this year, and hopefully for the last time, as we are looking forward to gathering together in Los Angeles this time next year!

It was great to see Henry Fogel on screen just now - and I want to thank Professional Audio Designs, E-coustic Systems, and Talaske, whom you saw in that opening video, for their Sponsorship of our Opening Session.

Before I do anything, I want to thank all our sponsors and business partners for their incredibly generous support:

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Please pay all our business partners a virtual visit in the virtual exhibitor hall. You can find them by pressing the exhibitor button on the left-hand navigation. I want to say thank you to every single one of our sponsors for sticking with us in this second year of online conferencing. And a big thank you to all of you for joining us online over the next several days. We don't underestimate the many demands on your time, especially right now, at such a pivotal moment. And we hope you will be richly rewarded by the keynotes and discussions we have lined up. More on that in a minute.

So there's no question that we stand on the cusp of a huge burst of energy in our field, as orchestras explode back into life again, after a year and a half of the most appalling challenges.

Of course, in a few parts of the country, concerts with audiences have continued these past months. We're so impressed what's happened in Dallas, Houston, Omaha, and a number of other places. But for most of us, music has been in our computer screens. A kind of technological marvel that has been sometimes frustrating, but often surprisingly moving. And the emotion is perhaps all the more acute because of the tremendous personal hardship that so many have experienced this year. And because it definitely wasn't a given that every orchestra would make the journey. But most have. And in fact, I think all have. And this is an incredible affirmation of the resilience of this field. And when you think about it, where does that resilience come from? It comes from our people.

People who threw everything they knew in the last year at keeping the music going and staying in touch with audiences. I'm thinking about the musicians, playing in impossible conditions, distant from each other, separated by Plexiglas, struggling with masks, but still making great music. I'm thinking about the operations teams, working with scientists and hospitals and public health agencies, to create safe conditions for everybody. The digital technology experts, who produced new platforms almost overnight. The managers and administrators, redoing their plans every month, every week, sometimes every day, again and again and again, as the situation evolved. The audiences and donors and foundations showing unprecedented generosity, in order to keep orchestras alive, and support the musicians and staff they care so much about. The orchestra committees who worked with common cause together with boards and management to find ways to keep the music playing. And this last one is personal to me: the executive directors and CEOs facing a daily range of impossible decisions, often somewhere on a scale from bad to worse.

And many, many, many others, of course. And it's literally impossible to find words strong enough to reflect our admiration and gratitude for what you've all done. And when the dust settles and we look back on this period, I think we'll see it as a time -- yes, of suffering and hardship and loss, and there's been plenty of that. But I think we'll also see it as the moment when our field achieved the impossible, through the power of creativity, teamwork, and sheer persistence. So thank you to everyone who played even the smallest role in this collective achievement. And although the challenges are still not fully behind us, I really do think now we have an opportunity to turn to the future. And the future is what this conference is all about.

Let me just say something about this. First of all, we have constituency meetings. Over the past year and a bit, since the pandemic, we've hosted over 200 constituency meetings, and there's been a trend towards those meetings becoming more and more curated, with special speakers and facilitators. That's a trend you're going to see through this conference. And I really welcome this, because I think this is where some of the most meaningful discussion happens. As well as the most amazing network of support for colleagues who you can call on for support who are going through the same as you. So the constituency meetings are at the core of what we do.

But for the main plenary sessions, we've made an intentional decision to stay out of the weeds, as it were, and instead tackle the really big questions, the things that concern everyone, as we come back to a world that's very different from the one we left 16 months ago. Each day of the conference has a different theme, with a combination of keynotes, panel discussions, and interactive sessions, and each day is MC'd by a leader from our field who has also played a key role in the leadership of that day's content. I'm excited to see how it works out and I'm pleased to see voices from our field centered on each of the days. I encourage you to take part as an active participant. Many voices are what makes conferences rich and dynamic!

And of course, the racial reckoning of the last year has been a time of intense change in our field. It has correctly been a time of questioning, self-criticism, learning, and new commitment to action. And although it's early days, I am genuinely excited about the steps forward orchestras have made, after far too many years of far too little change. And by the way, I include myself in that calculus, in my years running orchestras. So this is long overdue.

And at the League, other than our baseline commitment to supporting orchestras in their missions, nothing matters more to us than our work advancing racial equity and building a more inclusive and fairer orchestra world. So you'll see that, like a persistent and insistent thread, running right through the conference.

So welcome. We're gathering remotely, but we come together with tremendous solidarity and purpose, and as I've been having conversations with managers around the country in these past months, I really feel the winds of change in the air. It's an exciting time, and we're really glad you're here with us.

So now it's my great pleasure to introduce the League's board chair, Doug Hagerman. As every executive director knows, having a great board chair is absolutely critical for success. And at the League, we're so fortunate to have Doug, not only with his long experience in business and as former chair of the Milwaukee Symphony, but also he's someone who has a great love of music and a great love of our field, and it shows in his leadership of the League. So Doug, over to you.

DOUG: Thanks, Simon. I want to share my admiration about the incredible work orchestras have done this past year, and the amazing resilience of our field. Before we get started, I want to thank all of our League staff and all of our speakers and presenters for the hours of preparation that make these two weeks possible. And I want to welcome all of you conference delegates, from all corners of the country, even from Hawaii, where it's only 9:30 in the morning. We have nearly 1,300 people, representing 340 orchestras in this conference.

And we will together embrace the changed world, through many timely conversations, over the next two weeks. Now I would like to thank the Ford Motor Company Fund, for their continued support of the Ford Musician Awards, and also making possible the Ford Musician Impact Fund, which assisted 165 orchestra musicians from 92 orchestras, in making their digital presence stronger during the pandemic. Musicians are of course at the center of our orchestral world, and we celebrate today five award winners, and honor their extraordinary contributions to their communities.

So let me introduce and welcome Yisel Cabrera, government and community relations manager at Ford, to present this year's Ford Awards for Excellence in Community Service. Ms. Cabrera, over to you.

YISEL: Thank you for being here today. You know, at Ford, we believe that arts have the ability to transform, educate, and inspire. That's why we're committed to supporting musicians who incorporate arts and learning, inspire creativity, and build multicultural understanding in communities. The Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service recognizes orchestra musicians who have made an outstanding contribution to their communities. This year's award recipients used music as a therapeutic tool for adults with severe and persistent mental health challenges, provided pop-up concerts during food bank distributions, brought string musicians to a regional hospital, organized private violin lessons and group classes during the pandemic to breach the digital divide, and brought the joy of music to toddlers and their families. Please join me in congratulating the recipients of the 2021 Ford Musician Awards. Jeremy Crosmer of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. John Turman of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. Miho Hashizume, of the Cleveland Orchestra. Lorien Hart of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and Sean Claire of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. These musicians have gone above and beyond for their communities over the past year, creating lasting positive impacts over such an uncertain time. Thank you for bringing the joy of music to so many. And now I would like to give it back over to Simon Woods.

SIMON: Thank you, Yisel, and thank you to the Ford Motor Company, for your longstanding support and for helping us celebrate these amazing musicians across our field. At the League, we do believe that everything comes back to artistry and community. So this is a wonderful moment to be able to celebrate these incredible musicians. So thank you so much. It's now my great pleasure to introduce you to an old friend of mine, and also a longstanding friend of the League. Marie-Helene Bernard, President and CEO of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Marie-Helene has a few words for us about League Giving Days. Welcome!

MARIE-HELENE: Thank you, Simon. I'm excited to be here and to see so many registered for this year's conference. This has been an extraordinary year for all of us,

one in which every orchestra in the company has benefited from The League's work, from constituency meetings to webinars, and of course, the critical work of advocacy that has been supported by the phenomenal Heather Noonan. So this summer marks for me 25 years since I entered the wonderful world of orchestra management, through the League's orchestra management fellowship program. And at every step of my career since 1996, while working with small and large orchestras in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boston, and now St. Louis, the League has been a resource to me. So I give to the League as an individual, because I'm grateful for the professional development opportunities it gave me.

And also because I am committed, as an orchestra leader, to sustaining the League's programs and research we all benefit from. And philanthropy being key to the League, as 70% of its income comes from donations, I'm inviting you, whether you're here as a board member, a musician, a member of management, an educator, a business partner, or a volunteer, please join me in supporting the League by making a League Giving Days gift. Remember that any gift counts. And what is meaningful to you is meaningful to the League.

You can make your gift today by clicking the "support The League" button on the conference website, or by visiting AmericanOrchestras.org/strongertogether. So thank you for supporting The League, and enjoy the conference.

SIMON: Thank you, Marie-Helene. Thanks for being here. It's so great to know your longstanding history with the League. And I want to say in advance thank you to everyone who chooses to participate in League Giving Days. As Marie-Helene said, it is absolutely a critical time for us, when we have to raise money to support our operations and support our ability to support orchestras. So we are grateful in advance to everybody who makes a commitment at whatever level, to League Giving Days. Every single one of you will be deeply appreciated.

So now it's time for our special guest. Wynton Marsalis is one of the treasures of American music. Composer, trumpeter, bandleader, educator, national advocate for culture. There are many ways to describe him. And his music has inspired millions of people across the world. It's really an honor to have him with us today. And he's going to join me in conversation about orchestras, music, education, and we'll see where the conversation goes. But certainly we'll talk about what's coming now. So please welcome Wynton Marsalis!

WYNTON: It's really my pleasure. Thank you so much. It's a pleasure to be here.

SIMON: Thanks for joining us. You're such an icon in the music world and it's such a pleasure to have you as part of our conference. So here's where I want to start. In the conversation you and I had to prepare for this discussion, I was struck by the way that so many of your ideas about culture and society are relevant to orchestras, as we emerge from the pandemic and double down on our missions. But before I get into that, I want to start off with asking you a bit of context about your role at Jazz at Lincoln Center. And I think this is important for everyone to understand. Because I personally hadn't understood it. Your title is Managing and Artistic Director. In that role, you oversee the artistic program and the management team. This is a little different from our field, where we usually separate artistic and executive leadership. Can you tell us a little bit about that, and tell us why you think it matters so much to have both of those functions reporting to you, within your jurisdiction?

WYNTON: For me, at Jazz at Lincoln Center, I worked for years under that model. With the Executive Director and artistic director being separated. But it was very difficult, because the control of the organization through the budget, whenever you want to do something, there's no money for it. And not having the business sense and the financial sense to know what to risk on and what not to risk on, when you don't know what an art form is, and you don't know really what you're selling, you may have wonderful business sense, but you're going to have a hard time with a business that requires a lot of nuanced understanding and a lot of uphill selling. So after 23 or 24 years, working in that model, and a lot of different problems, I became the managing and artistic director. And for me, it's a little different.

Just because... We're very basic. All the arts organizations, our financing is very, very basic, unless you're stealing. So it only becomes complicated when you're trying to do something that you're not supposed to be doing. Our business model is very straightforward. And simple. And for me, in the role I have headed now for ten years, I've had great Executive Director and a great CFO and we have a great team. So it's easy for us to work together on the business issues surrounding our organization. Also the balance between the power of the artistic vision and the practical nature of it, and also how we conduct and excuse our business and what our business objectives are. Of course, I grew up without money. So I'm not somebody given to just spending piles of money. Just for fun. So revenue is very serious to me, and the expenditure of that.

SIMON: Do you ever find yourself pulled in two different directions? That you want to make one decision artistically, but the need for the business asks you to make a different decision? I can only imagine there must have been a lot of tension about that during the pandemic.

WYNTON: This year, I decided we would stay on and keep almost all of our staff. We went from \$24 million in revenue to \$2. We knew it would be uphill. We knew everything was closing. We furloughed some staff. We did what we had to do. We went from 120 to 80. The building was not working. To its capacity. I mean, at all. So it was a struggle. We all had to work very, very hard. And find revenue in many places. Called on the phones a lot. We did a lot of good community work. And we're two weeks from the end of the year. Our budget... We're still hustling. But we're within a million or so of it. We see it. In September -- our fiscal year ends at the end of June. We didn't see -- especially because we had survived March through June, and were able also to pay our staff their entire salary. Keep everybody in their health plan and everything. At that time, I was telling our staff -- we always say stuff like "we're family" and all of that. Let's see if we are that.

SIMON: Have you seen the same thing that we've seen in orchestras? Which is a lot of your donors and supporters really stepping up to support the organization?

WYNTON: Unbelievably. I called and talked to a lot of people. Unbelievable foundations. What people did to look out for us has been... Just like in New Orleans, after Katrina. What the nation did for our city was unbelievable.

SIMON: So I want to go a little bit deeper on this business-art thing. Because I just think it's really fascinating. Can you tell us a little bit about this document you have, which is called the Jazz Way of Doing Business? And how you use your art form to actually inform your management and leadership values and processes?

WYNTON: Well, when I came in to be the Managing Director, we had a crisis. Because with jazz, the business side of that is always trying to undermine the art. It's not the same in classical music. Because many administrators in classical music are also classical musicians. And they love the art form a certain way. They've gone to camps, studied, they love the literature. Our field is not the same. Jazz is just basically a field which is... It's a struggle. When you get arts administrators, many times, like a lot of educators, they may know a little something about the music, but their objectives are not aligned with the music. So the first thing I did was deal with the budget cycling, how the budget was laid out, and how things looked on the page. So I use music for everything that I try to do.

So if you think... When you're looking at... I just think a board of directors, looking at spreadsheets, calibrated in millions, people who are not in the finance industry don't even know what numbers they're looking at, most of the time. Make stuff easy for people to understand. Come up with forms that are like the front piece of a score of music. If

you think of how efficient that document is, and we just think of the front page of a complicated work, you could take your pick of your favorite complicated work. And you look at that front page, all the different things you can tell. The keys of the different instruments, the tempo, who was the composer -- things that took 200, 300 years of refinement, and trying to figure out how to make that document as elegant and efficient as possible. My first thing was to be as efficient with our budget cycles, with our documents, and make sure that people understand every number of everything.

And I would always tell them: No conductor worth anything looks at the front page of something -- the French horns are in F? I can't transpose that. I wonder what the bassoon is playing. I don't know. I'm sure it'll work out. You have to figure out what everything represents. And certainly our budgets are nowhere near as complicated as any... Even Duke Ellington Harlem score -- if you have to read that, there's a lot of information in that score.

SIMON: I often like the analogy for management of soloists and chorus. And one of the things that's interesting about great organizations is great organizations have to have a lot of people in them who can play both roles. So they can be in the chorus and they can harmonize with people. And they can work as a team. But then they need to step out as leaders. And I expect that that's very much a feature of jazz that seems to apply to management.

WYNTON: Well, there's a document called Twelve Principles of Jazz Business that I wrote. And it went through in specific detail how our business practices align with our music practice. One is that if you take the fundamentals of jazz, one is improvisation. That's your leadership, your personal sense of style, things you do where you are in control of the form, the logic, and the continuation of the piece. The second is swing. And swing means you're responsible for everything.

Swinging means you're in sync. You're coordinated. And you're making intelligent decisions that account for the fact that you're not alone. The swing forces opposite instruments to play together, like the bass is the softest without an amp and the lowest, and it plays in 4. And the cymbal of the drums is the loudest, and it plays in 6. So for the duration of the song, they have to figure out how to play together. Swinging also means to play in extreme coordination with the time. So that's your sense of your business, of your department, and how your department relates to the whole.

One of my things with the budget is: Understand where you are in the overall budget template. Just like you're going to be a much greater third trumpet player if you know the function of your part, what the first is playing, and who -- if you're ever doubling, if oboes are playing, the more you know about a piece of music, the better you are. I give my

staff the example of -- I played basketball in high school and I was point guard. One day, the coach blew a whistle and said: Marsalis, how many points did Boyer make? He started to call different players of the team. I would guess the points. I was close, but not really. Assists, rebounds, after he got to the fourth player -- what do you do? I knew all of my stats. When I finished giving my stats, he said: That's why you'll never be a good point guard. And then we blew the whistle and we started rehearsing. I always laugh at it. It was the way of him teaching me: You need to know what everyone is doing if you're going to distribute the basketball. Now of course the game has evolved since then. If you look at these teams, they play -- the greater teams are more intelligent, the positions are, every player, the more they understand the function of their decisions on the overall goals and objectives of the team -- we strive for that. Finally, with the jazz analogy, blues is a fundamental of jazz, and that's the period we're in now. We have an optimism that's not naive. Which is why I believe we can stay together, keep our staff together, keep people on, do the things we have to do, make sure the orchestra got paid, deal with the challenges, and at the end of the day, at the end of this particular fiscal year, even though COVID is by no means over, we will figure out how to work things out and come with a much stronger organization and one that is much more connected, and I think that's what's happening.

SIMON: So you passed over some fantastic words there, which I just made a mental note of. "An optimism that is not naive." Amazing. I want to take that to connect to the next topic here. Which is: I want to talk a little bit about what comes next. I think we have good reason to be optimistic about the arts. And about their role in society. But, you know, as vaccinations liberate us from the constraints we've been in, in the last year, we also know that many of the social barriers and inequities in society are not only not solved, but they've gotten worse. Right?

So how can we optimistically look forward, as organizations, but also think about what our role is to help society to be better? And I know that's something that you care deeply about.

WYNTON: The first thing is you have to want to do it. I think if you wrote a story of what you did, but you actually wanted it to be true... And then you had to do what it took to make it true... That's a long distance from you being in your backyard, saying I'm going to be a quarterback in the Super Bowl and you being Tom Brady. But... As organizations, we have to determine: Do we want to do that? Or do we just want to talk about it? And if we want to talk about it, that's fun too. You know? I mean... Since the civil rights movement, our culture has gone the direction it's gone all over the country. The desire was to move away from civil rights. We've done that very successfully. Education is separated. It's a racial... Not only racial, but it's also class.

It's more difficult to get through gender separation. Because even though the genders are different... You know, we're going to propagate our species. So those are separate

issues. We have a tendency to conflate all issues. Everything is one thing. And we have to look at the things, the decisions that we've made, and we have to figure out... Now the arts have to be a voice of super wisdom, and we have to be now, conservators of the mythology of the country and make adjustments to the mythology to make it congruent with the highest aspirations of the culture. People have come. They've left us with music and art and plays and all of these things. If we choose to mine through what has been created, to give us a good baseline to educate our constituencies. However...

We can always very cynically pick the unqualified, dumb down our things, and have these dreaded Black Weeks and all this other stuff that we do that's so patronizing and it gives you a stomachache. And we end up with orchestras playing video game themes for their concert series.

SIMON: So I hear you saying it has to be authentic and it has to be meaningful, but it also has to protect the values of the art form. That we have been blessed to have an art form which has extraordinary richness to it. So when you look at the classical music world, and obviously we're in a moment i when the whole racial aspect of the classical music world is under intense scrutiny, as it should be. So where should we go? What are your hopes for the classical music world, as we come out of the pandemic, with a different opportunity, perhaps, than we've ever had before?

WYNTON: I would like to see Black people embracing the classical music world. And I would like to see Black programmers who have been gatekeeping this concept of whiteness... Which has nothing to do with the greatest composers. Shostakovich wasn't thinking... "I'm white". We have to think... Do we want people in our community? We take a system that is segregated by class as well, but race is of course in America much more explosive, as a part of our identity, just who we are, basically. Make so many decisions that are that way. But I'm less in the school of... The victimizing and just look at me... I don't think that's productive. I feel like what's productive is: To get the greatest achievement of Afro-Americans and other composers. Women composers, whoever. Whoever we deem as an Other. There have been great people of every race, ethnicity, gender. Find them. Like you do everything. However, the achievements of Beethoven, Bach, it goes on and on and on -- one of the great libraries of the world. Including literature.

There's no way in the world you should ever undermine those great masters. And if anything, our communities need to know, white and Black. I've taught in schools around America. White people don't know about their music either. And we have a challenge. To teach them who these great masters are. And they can't be seen through the prism of race. Only as much as they're not treated as if they're seen through the prism of race. I don't see them through that prism. However, I do work in a field that sees them that way. And we need to correct those things and make people understand how rare a master is.

Then people won't throw their names around with that level of disrespect that I hear out here, for any cause. Not just racial.

SIMON: Well, I think it's so interesting, you're talking about that. This is definitely a subject that I think our field is really -- right in the middle of, right now. This discussion is alive and well, in our world here. Which is: To what extent have we supported, over many, many decades, and probably centuries, a vision of the field which is... Entirely one dimensional about the tradition of white European music. But I struggle with it, and... I think many of us struggle with the fact that we love a lot of the repertoire that you've talked about, and we also don't want to see that talked down. We want that to be part of our future. Because it has enriched so many people's lives, and it continues to enrich so many people's lives, but it's just not the full story. So it seems to me that getting the balance right is maybe the thing that lies in front of us.

Perhaps just... Being able to recognize that it's a yes-and answer. Not an either-or answer.

WYNTON: Well, I think maybe. But it's important to understand that there's a big difference between Europe and America. European music is in Europe. (audio drop) America is a different place. We have a lot of music that's not just European. That we chose -- we've had composers who have written American music, white and Black. Someone like Leonard Bernstein, his paper at Harvard -- his thesis was on racial influences. His music -- it's been an ongoing discussion back to the 1800s. We ran Dvorak out of America because he said Black American music was the foundation of American music. And also Native American. If you look at Afro-American music that's watered down and made to be not what it really is... He had to run away from America and run back home. And my good friend Mark O'Connor have talked about that for many years. However, in the class that Dvorak taught in New York, his first class, included Rubin Goldmark, who wound up running Juilliard and was an influence on Gershwin, and Marion Cook, an influence on Duke Ellington. That's a whole swath of American music. And all of the great composers we've produced since that time. None... Very few have said: We're against this music.

But I think our systems in our country are a certain way. And you can take it any way you want, from the urban renewal that ran highways through Black folks' communities, to the travesty of the prison plantation system that exists now. Music cannot solve all those things. We need to be transparent in our communities, be very hands on in our communities. For whites and Blacks. Believe me, I've gone in those schools. All 40 years it hasn't just been... I'm going to teach just Black kids. I've taught more white kids than Black kids. They're not aware of these traditions either. We need to teach all of them. That's what the greatest musicians want to do. What does Beethoven say in the Ninth Symphony? We can go down and down the list of people that was there. Live that message. We have to do it at home. A group of people who are all the same, discussing

how to do better... I laugh at our organization. We're going to have another training about how to deal with Black people who are not here? All white people. Okay. That kind of training checks a box. To me, it's corny. That's something we want to do? Great. But more important is we have something productive in our communities that will make a difference for families. You're not going to do it with kids. I've been teaching kids since 1980. And I'm telling you, when I see parents and kids, the first thing I'm looking at is those parents that are up at 10:30, 11:00 at night with their kids, is this your mommy? This your daddy? White and black kids. Remember, your parents were here at 11:00. You're not going to come up with some way to avoid an adult and get to kids. We need a holistic community approach that deals with parents and kids who are not exposed to our music. And by "our," I mean classical music. Beethoven's music is my music. We need to figure out what we can do to expose them to the power of this music. All the things designed for kids, inviting them to this music. We need to be very aggressive in this music. Most of our time in the arts is trying to fight the management and the staff. If we knew how stupid that was... It's like you're spending all your time fighting inside of a system that your larger culture doesn't even care about.

SIMON: So... I go back to what you said at the beginning. Which was: We've got to decide if we want to do this work. If we want to show up for it. You know, when I look at orchestras, many orchestras across the country have pretty interesting community programs. And pretty interesting and pretty successful education programs. But what I'm hearing you saying is that actually this needs to be a much more important part of our work. And needs to be at the center of our work. Not just something off to the side. And that it really needs to be -- like a vibrant focal point of our missions.

WYNTON: Right. And I don't know what they're doing. But I would submit to you all that it's not interesting or successful. Or audiences would look different. And that's the truth. That's for all of us. I'm not speaking outside of our field, like I'm speaking down to you, some kind of fake Black person who is paid to tell you something that's not going to work. Like what happened in the 1970s. I'm part of this system too. The failures of my institution are my failures. We've had many failures on this end. Not just racial. So understand the dynamics and the difficulties of it. And understand also with democracy, it's a battle we have to fight every day. It's like a battle you have with your weight. It's just much easier to go and eat a pie. And say... I'm going to do better tomorrow.

SIMON: So jazz... We tend to... In the classical world, we tend to think of jazz, I think, as a kind of a "popular" art form, which automatically speaks across boundaries. I remember when we were talking before, you said that you have huge struggles with trying to diversify your audience. Can you talk a little bit about that. I think we'd love to hear -- what has worked and what hasn't worked for you? As you've been trying to broaden the appeal of jazz?

WYNTON: Well, the only thing that's worked is sustained development with the groups of people over time. Like, we send a group into high schools. Three times a year. So they get a relationship with their group. And we attach it to something in the curriculum. Community concerts that you can get subsidized, where there's still a ticket price, but people can bring their kids. But those concerts are successful -- but they're still segregated concerts. We need to do more than what we've done. Jazz is a challenge. And you have to realize that in America, the pastime for Black people has always been the minstrel show. If you use the N word, call people names, celebrate those attempts -- the nation gets behind it. There's resources for it. If something puts a Black person in a true heroic role, deals with them philosophically -- a person like Martin Luther King was not a racist. He's presented as a Black leader. He's not a Black leader. He's an American leader. He led a coalition of people. So the first person to come to mind of course is Duke Ellington, because he's the greatest. He's not suitable for the national mythology. They're going to go to the minstrel show. It's going to be somebody... You know, I don't even have to say it. So many of them out there now. The arts in general are under siege. And when a group of people are taught... That it is acceptable and rewarding for making a fool of themselves, it's hard for them to like things that are not foolish.

That applies to Blacks, but it applies to Whites as well. Because a lot of what you see in the larger White population, that population is exploited, it's undereducated, that does not know what happened to the America of their dreams, the stuff that they're interfacing with, much of it is foolish, their vision is foolish, and so they gravitate towards foolish things. If we want a richer democracy, those who have education, insight, and by no means do I mean a college education. I just mean who understands a little more of what's going on, instead of exploiting -- we have to determine: Hey, we're going to use our budget, we're going to use our resources, our staff, and all these things to further this particular vision of America, and this is what it's going to cost. And this is what we're going to get our donors behind. And this is what we have to do. It still remains to be seen if we want to do it. I still have to see if my institution wants to do it. Of course, we're always pushing in that direction. But we have a long way to go.

SIMON: Do you come up against resistance ever, because the work that you see as fundamentally humanitarian and around civil rights and civil liberties is perceived by others to be political work? And a boundary that you shouldn't cross? Have you encountered that?

WYNTON: No, I don't encounter that. I encounter the benign resistance that's very definitive. Like I said, I encounter people who don't want to do it. I mean, I had a younger white staff telling me what Black Lives Matter means. I'm living in the real world. I have to laugh sometimes. I would say... Okay. Give your job up for the people who matter. There's a lot of tribal sloganeering, stuff if you're my age... I lived through the '60s and '70s. I understand about it. I see the type of easy... The resistance that's pervasive, because it's easy. People don't want to sit out and argue with you about politics. It presents a certain level of power, to tell you you're politically motivated. I'm not

motivated by politics. I would like to see America be a more informed country, more artistically enlightened, and I also don't disrespect great European composers, dead white men and all of that. I'm not a part of that. It's imbecilic to me. I've been against prevalent art forms that use the N word that everybody in our country embraces. I stand against it. I don't embrace it. I don't care who's mad about it. That's why when we're talking in this conversation I'm too old now to be patronizing and playing around. Too much skin in the game, too much at stake, been out there too long, too many students and parents and kids. It's too serious a thing to play around with. We have to pay dues to this. It's as flawed as it has always been in our nation. If we want to lead the way and the world for how groups of people can get along and not be tribal, we're doing a terrible job right now. And it breaks down on a community level. And just yesterday... Give you a prime example... We played in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

We played with the Tulsa Symphony. Fantastic experience. We were playing a piece I wrote, called All Rise. The concert mistress's husband is a jazz trumpet player. We're the same age. We played the concert. The city is divided. We're talking about 1921. The massacre. After the show, I'm signing autographs. A friend of mine, from high school, a white guy, who I always loved. He's always just dipped in gold. I stood out by his car, we talked for a long time, laughing with his kids and some of their friends in the backseat. When I went away from talking to him, one of the guards said: How do you know that white fellow? I went to high school with him. Y'all look real familiar. I said yeah, we're familiar. He said... Too bad the country can't be like that. We say that to each other, now we're a certain age. Me and my friend Steve. We say... Did you think we would be like this when we were 60? We were 14, 15. We talked about those issues then. It wasn't like we were 14-year-old, 15-year-old kids in New Orleans not understanding all the racism that was going on and that he didn't understand it. We would talk about these things all the time. We just have to be for real about what we've got to do. This is not going to be a Kumbaya. You thought with Obama people thought it was going to be Kumbaya, everything was going to be good, because a guy from Hawaii was going to come in. No. Arts is the same way. Bring up the masters of classical music, and teaching people to see things in a non-tribal way. My father always said: Don't tell me what somebody is, son. Tell me who they are. We need to double down on that.

SIMON: So as you think about that, and what comes next for you, what are your ambitions? What is your uncompleted work, musically, and in terms of making a statement about some of these humanistic issues you've been talking about?

WYNTON: I'm out here. I'm always saying the same thing. I'm for real about it, my daddy was for real about it, and a lot of people are about it. I've seen so many parents, kids, musicians, artistic administrators, so many people are for real. We're going to stay for real. Bringing our nature closer, living up to our highest aspirations and ideals, something about who we are -- opening the best pictures in our album book. And programming great musicians. I told them: I'm going to program all the White jazz musicians. Now everybody is more tribal, I'm going to go in another direction. The tribalism is the thing that you're trying to get away from. There have been great people of

all kinds. And as far as the orchestral program and all of that -- you can put some Black people in here, the contemporary piece you don't like or something. 15 minutes. I'm always called upon to write a piece like that. Can you write eight minutes of something we can program second that's innocuous, so we can say somebody Black wrote something and it's not so long that our audience is going to be mad if you write something sad? You can put any type of people in these spots. Put more people in spots and let people see. But at the end of the day, putting them in the spots is not going to cure the racism. The racism is going to be cured by letting people know who Beethoven was and what he was saying.

What Shostakovich dealt with. That's going to help you cure this racism. Who was Bach. Let people know the strength of classical music and the beauty of depth of it. And get more people in these halls. That's going to help us cure it.

SIMON: So... Just before we finish, we're kind of approaching the end of our time, I want to just ask you -- because what you just said, then, I think is going to resonate for a lot of people, for a long time to come. But on this kind of... Theme of greatness, I just ask you, just back to what's coming up for you, I was looking on your website, and you have coming up this performance of Coltrane's A Love Supreme, in the band version. I mean... I adore that album. And if you want to talk about an album that is... You know, iconic, at the level of one of those great classical masters you talked about, it's this one. Just tell us something about that. What's the message of Coltrane's work? How does that speak to us right now, after a pandemic and with all of this ahead of us?

WYNTON: He wrote a prayer at the end. A Love Supreme is called -- and the line of the prayer is included, and he plays the prayer on his saxophone. I want to say I was very close to Elvin Jones, who played drums on it, came to New Orleans in '63. Very close to my father. Elvin, many nights we sat up, and he liked to listen to classical music too, and the Scottish Guard. He liked how clean the snare drums were. But Coltrane was trying to write as little music and find a kernel -- do-do-do -- pentatonic scale on the fourth, turn around on the second, and he wanted to find as much in common with great music around the world, in folk nuggets, and he would improvise in his language, in four movements. Acknowledgment, acknowledgment that things need some change,.

SIMON: Okay. I think we lost Wynton. . I was literally just about to wrap it up, as Wynton was talking about the Coltrane Love Supreme, he was talking about the prayer there at the end of it. I was going to just draw to a conclusion and say thank you to him. For some pretty inspirational and thoughtful comments. I think if you go back over some of the things he said, there was so much to unpack there. About repertoire, about authenticity, about the critical importance of community and education. About the humanitarian aspect of the art that we all do. Just a lot of really wonderful stuff. So we're incredibly grateful to Wynton.

Right now we've come to the end of our session. And we will look forward to seeing you later. We have the National Symphony Orchestra concert at 7:00 pm, with a pre-concert talk and a short introduction from National Symphony Executive Director Gary Ginstling and me. And the concert. It should be wonderful. And then tomorrow, for our full afternoon of activities around digital media and its importance and the trade-offs between digital and in-person live performance. Which we will explore tomorrow in depth. So please join us there. Thank you so much for joining today on this first session. Sorry we had a few technical glitches this afternoon. But hopefully you've found something interesting and important in it anyway. Thank you for your support. Thank you for being here. And we will see you later in the conference. Have a wonderful conference. Thank you so much.