



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Listening Selection

Grade

8

January 14–18, 2008

This listening selection is to be used in administering Book 2 of the English Language Arts Test. The entire selection is to be read aloud twice to the students. For complete directions, please follow the instructions in the *Teacher's Directions*.

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Listening Selection**Classic Jazz Artist***by Mark Merfeld*

Imagine winning music’s top award—the Grammy—for jazz at the age of 23.

Now imagine winning another Grammy the same year—for classical music.

It’s kind of like an athlete being named the Most Valuable Player in the National Football League *and* in Major League Baseball in the same year!

Now imagine accomplishing the same feat again the very next year! That is what Wynton Marsalis did.

Marsalis may be the only trumpeter in history to master both jazz and classical music. Yet he describes himself only as “a jazz musician who can play classical music.”

Marsalis is more than a great musician, however. He is also a historian and a teacher. His goal is to preserve traditional jazz as a part of America’s musical history. That is why he is so concerned with education. Whenever he goes on musical tours across the United States and Europe, he holds classes for students. He also gives children’s concerts and organizes film programs to educate people of all ages about jazz history.

He is a superstar of the jazz music world, yet he finds the time to teach and encourage many young musicians. He stays in touch with many of the students he meets. He calls to give them tips over the phone. He’ll often invite them to practice with him. Sometimes he gives students musical instruments.

“Whenever he came to New Orleans, he’d pick me up from school, we’d play basketball, then have a trumpet lesson,” remembers Marlon Jordan, a jazz recording artist. “He had a definite effect on me, and it will be there until the day I die.”

Marsalis once explained his feelings about jazz in a *Time* magazine article. “To play it is to have the belief in quality,” he said. “And the belief in practice, the belief in study, belief in your history, belief in the people that you came out of.”

Marsalis’s belief in quality is obvious. His skill on the trumpet in both jazz and classical music is famous around the world. He is also a respected teacher and composer.

Go On

His belief in practice? As a child, he practiced three hours a day on the trumpet. He played in marching bands, jazz bands, and youth orchestras. By the time he was 14, he was playing classical music in the New Orleans Philharmonic Orchestra.

Marsalis always believed in studying. His father, Ellis Marsalis, was a pianist and teacher. He sparked young Wynton's interest in music and his desire to study. In school, Wynton was a straight-A student. He later attended The Juilliard School in New York City where he soon became the best trumpet player at this famous music, dance, and drama school.

Marsalis's belief in his history and his people is also evident. His work at the Lincoln Center in New York is devoted to preserving the many jazz styles of the past century. Marsalis's contribution to jazz is perhaps most important in this area. Now, young musicians are following his lead. They are studying the styles of the historic jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker. As a result, record companies are recording more jazz artists. They are also remaking many classic jazz recordings.

This great American cultural tradition of jazz music is far healthier than it has been in decades, thanks to people like Wynton Marsalis.

STOP



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