

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER LIBRARY — BLUE ENGINE RECORDS

BALLOT BOX BOUNCE

FROM THE DEMOCRACY! SUITE (2021)

Wynton Marsalis
Full Score

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JAZZ  LINCOLN CENTER

BALLOT BOX BOUNCE • INSTRUMENTATION

Flute

Clarinet, Tenor Sax

Trumpet

Trombone

Piano

Bass

Drums

Solo sheets - C, Bb, Eb

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer • Wynton Marsalis

Recorded • September 27, 2020 at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Frederick P. Rose Hall

Original issue • Blue Engine Records BE0037

Currently available as digital download

Personnel • Ted Nash (alto & soprano sax, flute), Walter Blanding (tenor & soprano sax, clarinet), Wynton Marsalis (trumpet, composer), Elliot Mason (trombone), Dan Nimmer (piano), Carlos Henriquez (bass), Obed Calvaire (drums, tambourine)

The solo form of this piece is directly correlated to the form heard on The Democracy! Suite recording. If you would like perform the piece differently than what is written, solo sheets for C, Bb, and Eb instruments have also been included with the arrangement.

THE DEMOCRACY! SUITE NOTES

This is a time of great struggle for health, wealth, life, and liberty. A panorama of timeless national and international human rights dilemmas has been surfaced and accelerated by the pitiless glare of 2020. As Americans and global citizens, we are increasingly uncertain about who, where, and how we are. The healing insights of jazz are right in time. This music is tough. In the face of tremendous social, political and cultural resistance, jazz provides solutions to the central dilemma of our democracy and of our universal humanity: can we work together to create unlimited resources and agency for each other, or do we just accept that the strong will exploit and control the weak?

Since its inception as an art form, jazz has stood tall and unflinching in its defense of human rights. The fight for personhood and freedom is in the sounds, rhythms, and voices of those singing horns and dancing drums that stretch back to the years immediately after the abolition of

American slavery. Jazz is the spirit of Congo Square, always advancing to meet the intentions of Constitution Hall.

From deep in the souls of those who put the foundations of this music in place sprang an entire sweep of collective creativity that would come to represent the rights and responsibilities that characterize our way of life. Its sound was powerful and provocative. Its nature was organic and deeply considered. It was and IS still called...jazz. And though there are many more fans of the name than the music, only the actual music has that combination of insight, virtuosity, grit, soul, invention, honesty, and integrity that makes the sound of jazz like nature herself: sweet and pungent.

The Democracy! Suite is a non-polemical, instrumental composition inspired by the facts, feelings, and fictions of our current global situation. Written a few months into the Covid-19 lockdown, it addresses the drama and beauty, the ugliness and the violence of these times, yes, but ultimately, The Democracy! Suite is optimistic in tone and execution.

Be Present

A piece inspired by citizens who have put their lives on the line working through this pandemic (whether by choice or otherwise). “Be Present” recognizes the efforts of everyone who has chosen to enter the fray to fight for human freedoms, wherever and however they choose.

Sloganize, Patronize, Realize, Revolutionize (Black Lives Matters)

A melody that articulates the slogan-chant-battle cry that has dominated our airwaves and social spaces. Its intention is very clear, though the facts of it all remain shrouded in mystery. Is it an organization, a philosophy, a call to arms, a call for justice, or all of the above? Used and obscured by all sides to mean whatever they want it to mean, it has illuminated, excited, and exacerbated the multiple segregated fault lines that corrupt our way of life. Will this be a passing slogan used to patronize and move on? Or will it be a bloodless revolution, realized through the changing of the laws and mechanics that allow unarmed citizens to be slain by peace officers who lie beyond the arm of the same justice they are sworn to uphold?

Ballot Box Bounce

The postmaster general is very publicly and proudly making mailboxes bounce away. It’s like your fire chief identifying himself as an arsonist. Here, the to-and-fro of Swing is applied to our national vote. Some folks are begging you to vote; others warn you to stay away. Ha-ha—it’s ironic, funny, and difficult to play. Prohibition created more drinkers; these preventative actions will create more voters.

That Dance We Do (That You Love Too)

In-person and over the multitudes of media outlets, I listen closely to the diversity of music in various protests. There are so many unconventional, grooving beats accompanying the profuse slogans and chants and...always people with tambourines. Where do all of these tambourines come from? This movement is a recognition of folks, them and us, getting out and gettin’ down for our beliefs, rights, and responsibilities.

Deeper than Dreams

So many of us have lost loved ones to Covid-19 and didn’t have that last chance to say goodbye in person. Your dearly departed is forced to come to you from the spirit world and sit with you. Their presence allows you to grieve slowly, to mourn completely. So many people say they just can’t sleep. It is a profound, holistic pain that can only be assuaged in a realm that is deeper than dreams.

Out Amongst the People (for J Bat)

Musicians are trying to stay active in this period. Many of my younger students call me to come and play at this protest or the other. Invariably, they tease me about my age and so on— “climb up out of that jar of formaldehyde and join us out here, man.” I love pianist and entertainer Jonathan Batiste. He has always been about getting in front of the people and serving good-time music to uplift the entire community. I saw a picture of him playing with drummer Joe Saylor and other members of the Stay Human band, surrounded by people cloaked in masks. They were all grooving, doing their thing in the name of freedom. It was pure inspiration to see our younger musicians engaged with the fundamental principles of democracy. For every call I got saying “Let’s get out there!” and in the festive spirit of J Bat, I wrote this.

It Come ’Round ’Gin

Is this actual change or a wash cycle that will soon pass until the next time we have to “let a little pressure out of the system”? Time will tell. This is what old, wise people say whenever you ask a question about the current crisis: “I remember a time when so and so happened—and it come ’round ’gin.” Maybe—maybe not. In the words of the great American historian Geoffrey Ward, “History doesn’t repeat itself; people do.”

That’s When All Will See

It’s easy to look away from human tragedies that befall others. Bad things that happen to “them” do not affect “us.” It’s over there, and we’re over here. Sometimes, when “we” become “them”, and circumstances leave us with no other option...we are forced to see. Then, as a matter of survival, different tribes come together and act for the good of a larger community.

After 9/11 and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we saw a national awakening and a mutual productivity for the benefit of any and all citizens trying to recover. We saw it too after the murder of George Floyd. A diversity of Americans with a non-commercial common goal.

Propaganda is powerful, and illusions are comforting. They allow feelings to override facts. Every now and then, a reality is so inescapable that fabrications peel away, and facts become evident. For some, this is very painful. For others, it is cause for celebration. This is a parade song for some future time when we won’t need death and destruction to force meaningful, intelligent, and humanistic change.

Let’s see. Can’t wait.

GENERAL PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

1. Rhythm Section and Balance • The rhythm section determines the style, groove, and feel of each piece. It is the section that can comfortably play alone, and regularly does. In a typical 3-piece rhythm section, there is one string instrument (bass), and two percussion instruments (piano and drums); in a 4-piece section (with the addition of guitar), there are two string and two percussion instruments. In order for the rhythm section to achieve a swinging balance, it is crucial that the string instruments are clearly audible. The voices of these instruments must be respected by the two percussionists.

The drummer acts as the ‘President’ of the group, with the quick power to make dramatic and definitive changes to every aspect of the music.

The bass is the ‘Judiciary,’ holding the responsibility of constraining the volume and power of the drums. Their second responsibility is to play the mobile, lower melody that defines the integrity of the rhythm/harmony progression.

The piano is the ‘Congress,’ and has the ability to function as drummer, bassist, soloist, and accompanist; weaving in, out, and in between all of these roles to represent the widest range of voices and possibilities.

In a 4-piece section, the guitar acts as the ‘conscience’ or integrity of the rhythm and volume of the entire ensemble. They prevent the drummer and bassist from rushing or dragging and forces them to play softer and listen more closely.

The members of the rhythm section should know exactly what the names of grooves mean: *boogaloo*, *12/8 shuffle*, *bossa nova*, *2/3 clave*, etc. Every groove has a detailed function and definition. The top and bottom parts of the groove (drums and bass) must work together; at the same time, the interlocking rhythms of the piano and guitar must cooperate, honoring the context of the groove while also not interfering with each other.

When improvising with the rest of the band, the rhythm section should create a clear, basic, and danceable groove. They should also feel a sense of accomplishment from swinging with consistency and emotion.

When accompanying, the rhythm section should not feel compelled to have a constant stream of dialogue with the band; just like a friendly conversation, the dynamic should feel natural, with give and take. The goal is not to create constant “chatter.” Be proud of accompanying and swinging—they remain essential elements to any successful performance.

Members of the rhythm section must remain conscious of constraining power. For balance to be maintained, one must give up their desire to play louder than the other members of the section. As in any relationship, it is the constraint of power that creates the equilibrium within the section.

On the bandstand, each musician should be aware of balance at all times. This requires constant adjustment. The most important relationship is the drums and bass. If they are out of balance, the band does not sound or feel good. Do not let the PA system become your default ‘balance’ position.

Like a good democracy, the big band functions best when adhering to a system of checks and balances. Ultimately, the band should balance to the dynamic of the bass (as the softest acoustic instrument). Each section in the big band should both follow and play under their respective lead player.

2. Improvisation • A solo is an opportunity to express your personality and to exert tremendous influence on the success of a performance.

Responsibilities of the soloist:

1. Know the melody.
2. Understand the rhythm in relation to the groove.
3. Understand the harmonic progression.
4. Solo with emotional commitment and try to develop thematic material or musical ideas that relate to some aspect of the song.
5. Understand the function of background or accompanying parts.
6. Create your solo inside, outside, and alongside the arranged parts.
7. Create an ending for your solo that either leads into the next written part, hands off something good for the next soloist to play, or finishes with the right mood.
8. Do your absolute thing!

3. Follow the Lead • Within each section, know who has the lead (it isn’t always in the “first” part) and always play under that part. Do not assume that the lead player can tell if you are too loud; constantly re-assess within your section, in relation to other sections, and across sections if you are under the lead. Follow their phrasing, style, articulations, dynamics, and breathing. Lead players: you have a greater responsibility than others—be definitive in your concept, but not dogmatic. You must know the arrangement, including how your part fits into the overall dramatic and thematic objectives of the piece. You have to make musical decisions that help your colleagues follow you.

4. Personalize Your Parts • When referring to the performance of parts, clarinetist Jimmy Hamilton once said, “This is Duke Ellington’s music; it’s not written in stone. Duke always told us, ‘Personalize your parts.’” When done tastefully, all of the various vocal expressions that we can muster (i.e. vibrato, bends, swoops, shakes, moans, and vocal effects) will create a warmer and more human performance. Your parts should be played with the feeling and vocal expression of an improvised solo. These elements allow an audience to feel your humanity, and also welcomes them into nuances of your feeling. (You can do this while also following the lead).

5. Internalize the Form • Form is your defense against chaos. Every member of the ensemble has a responsibility to understand the architecture of each piece they play. Ask yourself, *Is it a blues? AABA form? An extended form? Where is the coda?* Be aware of entrances, repeats, and endings in relation to the form of the piece. *Is this an interlude or a shout chorus?* Sections often hand off phrases to other sections with an almost psychic level of awareness and nuance. At the very first rehearsal, begin figuring out how the piece is structured to achieve the composer’s goals. Focus on understanding the total architecture and the function of your individual part within the context of the piece. Remember, everyone in the ensemble has the responsibility of understanding and fulfilling both the most complex and most basic requirements of the arrangement.

6. Have Integrity When Rehearsing • *Your time is too valuable to waste.* Always be professional. Arrive on time and pay attention to everything—whether it’s a general concept or the most minute details. Take yourself and the music seriously at all times, and you’ll be shocked to see how much better you get just by changing your attitude in rehearsal. Be conscientious about playing better each day, and over time the improvement will be exponential.

7. Listen to Jazz • Go to every conceivable performance of jazz possible—whether you like it or not—so that you can develop both a feeling and understanding of the music. There is an almost infinite amount of diverse and high-quality recordings of jazz at your disposal, which create a sonic history of the music that can inform, enlighten, and inspire you. The more music you know, the more you will enjoy.

To listen to the recording from Blue Engine Records, please visit jazz.org/democracy.

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Score

Wynton Marsalis

Swing ♩ = 260

The score is for a 4-measure piece in 4/4 time, marked 'Swing' with a tempo of ♩ = 260. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The instruments and their parts are:

- Flute:** Melodic line starting with a triplet of eighth notes, marked *mp*.
- Clarinet/Tenor Sax:** Similar melodic line to the flute, also marked *mp*.
- Trumpet:** Melodic line with a 'cup mute' instruction, marked *mp*.
- Trombone:** Harmonic accompaniment with a 'cup mute' instruction, marked *mp*.
- Piano:** Chordal accompaniment with slash notation, chords: Eb7, F7, Bb7(b9), Eb, Gb7, F7, E7, Eb.
- Bass:** Chordal accompaniment with slash notation, chords: Eb7, F7, Bb7(b9), Eb, Gb7, F7, E7, Eb.
- Drums:** Rhythmic accompaniment using brushes, marked *mp*. Measure 4 contains a (4) indicating a four-measure rest.

2

3

4

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The musical score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The top four staves are for Flute (Fl.), Clarinet (Cl.), Trumpet (Tpt.), and Trombone (Tbn.), all in treble clef. The fifth staff is for Piano (Pno.) in treble clef, and the sixth staff is for Bass (Bs.) in bass clef. The seventh staff is for Drums (Drs.) with a double bar line and slash. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score is divided into measures 5, 6, 7, and 8. The piano accompaniment consists of chords: F#7, B7(b9), E7, Eb, Gmi7, Gbo, Fmi7(b5), Bb7, and Eb. The drum part includes a snare drum in measure 6 and a cymbal in measure 7.

Fl.

Cl.

Tpt.

Tbn.

Pno.

Bs.

Drs.

5 6 7 8