

Wynton Marsalis – Standards and Ballads (2008)

Written by bluesever

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1. *When It's Sleepytime Down South* 2. *Stardust* 3. *Embraceable You* 4. *Reflections* 5. *After You've Gone* 6. *The Seductress* 7. *My Ideal* 8. *Spring Yaounde* 9. *Melancholia* 10. *Where or When* 11. *I Guess I'll Hang My Tears Out To Dry* 12. *April in Paris* 13. *I Can't Get Started* 14. *Flamingo* Wes Anderson - Sax (Alto) Alvin Batiste - Clarinet Walter Blanding - Sax (Tenor) Phil Bowler - Bass Ron Carter - Bass Victor Goines - Sax (Tenor) Wycliffe Gordon - Trombone Herbert Harris - Sax (Tenor) Shirley Horn - Vocals Robert Hurst - Bass Kent Jordan - Flute (Alto) Kenny Kirkland - Piano Branford Marsalis - Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) Ellis Marsalis - Piano Wynton Marsalis - Trumpet, Vocals Lewis Nash - Drums Eric Reed - Piano Herlin Riley - Drums Joe Temperley - Sax (Baritone) Reginald Veal - Bass Jeff "Tain" Watts - Drums Todd Sebastian Williams - Clarinet, Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) Ben Wolfe - Bass

Drawing from previous Columbia albums that were originally released between 1983 and 1999, this compilation serves as a best of collection when it comes to jazz's traditional partnership with the romantic song. It's a love-fest. What's more, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis shares his passion for these fourteen chestnuts with his audience fluently, readily and sincerely.

Whether it's the open horn on "Embraceable You" with piano trio or the muted Louis Armstrong tribute on "When It's Sleepy Time Down South", Marsalis lays it down accurately. He gets his point across. With strings, as on "Stardust", he's in ecstasy, just sitting back comfortably and letting the emotion flow.

The trumpeter has been criticized for several decades. That kind of discussion seems to follow fame like a lost dog on a country road. Just when you think it's gone, you see it again over your left shoulder. Marsalis never deserved most of the criticism that was shoveled his way. Not for his trumpet playing, that is. He remains one of the best there is. Technically brilliant, rich in tone,

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fluid in seamless transition and conservative in his approach to improvisation, he marks the center of what jazz is.

From the soundtrack to the enjoyable but sadly overlooked film *Tune in Tomorrow* (1990), Marsalis fronts his big band for "I Can't Get Started, with Shirley Horn singing in her inimitable manner.

From *Hot House Flowers* (Columbia, 1984), the trumpeter moves "Melancholia in dense harmonic patterns with large orchestra, creating an unforgettable impression.

From *Citi Movement* (Columbia, 1993), he opens up on "Spring Yaoundé with similar results. These two and several others are not standards per se, but Marsalis has cast them in the image with suitable impressions. He squeezes out each emotional tone as if they were old friends. Reminiscing on these timeless themes makes for an interesting start to the New Year. ---Jim Santella, allaboutjazz.com

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