

Wynton Marsalis – Think Of One (2007)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Knozz-Moe-King* 2 *Fuschia* 3 *My Ideal* 4 *What Is Happening Here (Now) ?* 5 *Think of One* 6 *The Bell Ringer* 7 *Later* 8 *Melancholia* Personnel: Wynton Marsalis (trumpet); Branford Marsalis (tenor saxophone); Kenny Kirkland (piano); Ray Drummond, Phil Bowler (bass); Jeff "Tain" Watts (drums).

In his early years after leaving Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Wynton Marsalis strode forth with this excellent recording, his second as a leader, done in tandem with brother Branford, also out of Blakey's herd. The combination of the two siblings created quite a buzz in the music community, and this recording, which may stand the test of time as his finest, is one of the more solid mainstream jazz statements from the Young Lions movement of the early '80s. Top to bottom, this music sings, swings, simmers, and cooks with a cool verve that, in retrospect, would turn more overtly intellectual over time. A command of dynamics akin to those of Charles Mingus creates a signature sound, heard clearly in the opener, "Knozz-Moe-King," fueled by supercharged bop; the bold, extroverted, and precise trumpeting of the leader; and Kenny Kirkland's complementary piano comping. It could be the best single track of the entire recording career of Wynton. Ranking close behind is the tick-tock drumming of Jeff Watts, informing the pretty albeit dark musings of the brothers during "Fuchsia," and the sighing horns, samba bass of Phil Bowler, and stop-start modernities of an utterly original "The Bell Ringer." A bouncy treatment of the standard "My Ideal" shows Wynton's singing tone through his horn, a great interpretation of Thelonious Monk's "Think of One" is totally sly and slinky in low-register hues, and triplet phrases that have become a staple of the Marsalis musical identity accent "Later," adapted from a phrase similar to "Surrey with the Fringe on Top." At their unified best, Wynton and Branford shine on the tricky "What Is Happening Here (Now)?," a spillover residual of their time with Blakey. Think of One is a definitive statement for Wynton Marsalis, and though other efforts turned much more elaborate, none have been played better -- with more palpable spark and original ideas -- than this fine studio date. ---Michael G. Nastos, Rovi

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