

Wynton Marsalis

Maestro WYNTON MARSALIS enlightens and delights listeners with a dynamic new recording, **From the Plantation to the Penitentiary** (Blue Note), on which he delves into the real word behind the American Dream of "prosperity and happiness." At times the compositions are angry and urgent, while other songs are playful, even soothing. An engaging young vocalist, Jennifer Sanon, is featured on four cuts, including the title song, on which she evokes a burdened melancholy mood that's also evident on "Find Me." On "Doin' (Y)Our Thing," the pace is more urgent and impatient (as some would describe the younger generation), while on "Supercapitalism," Marsalis offers an upbeat, breezy rhythm that reflects greed, money and consumerism, which he says "distracts us from enjoying ourselves and other people." The soulful, languid "These are Those Soulful Days" was inspired by watching his sons and their friends enjoy themselves as children. The set ends with "Where Y'all At," a Wynton Marsalis spoken-word call for listeners to stop waiting for others to fix problems. "They not coming. Where are we at?" Again Marsalis excels as composer, lyricist and musician. Accompanying Marsalis' emphatic trumpet are Walter Blanding (reeds), Dan Nummer (piano), Carlos Henriquez (bass) and Ali Jackson (drums).

—Lynn Norment