Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Jader Bignamini

PARADISE
OPENS FRI SEPTEMBER 15
DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCH
ON STAGE
PERSON

Paradise Valley was the business district and entertainment center of a densely populated African American residential area in Detroit known as Black Bottom, from the 1920s through the 1950s. The Paradise Theatre opened in 1941 in the former Orchestra Hall, built for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in 1919, and was the place to hear jazz greats such as Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, and Dizzy Gillespie. Urban renewal programs and the construction of freeways in the 1960s abruptly halted life in Paradise Valley and the Black Bottom neighborhood, pushing residents out of their homes and businesses. By using an image of the Paradise Theatre as source for the cover design, this album commemorates the tragic disappearance of a neighborhood that once was among the biggest hubs of Black American music. The DSO returned to its historic home in 1989 and each season pays tribute to Orchestra Hall's legacy as a jazz destination through its Paradise Jazz Series.

Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961)

Blues Symphony (2009)

1	I. Born in Hope	7. 41
2	II. Swimming in Sorrow	13. 09
3	III. Reconstruction Rag	10. 04
4	IV. Southwestern Shakedown	8. 08
5	V. Big City Breaks	4. 29
6	VI. Danzon y Mambo, Choro y Samba	11. 23
7	VII. Dialogue in Democracy	6. 32
	Total playing time:	61. 26

Detroit Symphony Orchestra
conducted by **Jader Bignamini**

The Blues Symphony is a seven-movement work that gives a symphonic identity to the form and feeling of the blues. It utilizes regional and stylistic particulars of the idiom's language and form to convey the basic point of view of the blues as music:
'Life hands you hard times.'

When you cry, holler, and shout to release those hard times; when you tease, cajole, and play to diminish them; and when you dance and find a common community through groove, better times will be found. The more profound the pain, the deeper the groove.

This piece is intended to further the legacy of Scott Joplin, George Gershwin, James P. Johnson, Leonard Bernstein, John Lewis, Gunther Schuller, and others who were determined to add the innovations of jazz to the vocabulary of the symphonic orchestra. I believe there is an organic and real connection between all Western traditions regardless of instrumentation, and that the symphonic orchestra can and will swing, play the blues, feature melodic improvisation, and execute the more virtuosic aspects of jazz and American vernacular music with absolute authenticity.

Wynton Marsalis

Recording *Blues Symphony* was an unforgettable dream come true. The project united my love of jazz's improvisational colors with my passion for conducting, and particularly for conducting an orchestra as talented, expressive, and versatile as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

This dynamic and challenging work captures the breadth of American music and can be appreciated from both the orchestral and jazz worlds. I believe it brings together the two souls of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and speaks to the musical legacy of the city of Detroit and our home, Orchestra Hall.

Recordings are the ultimate collaboration between a conductor, the musicians, and a composer, illuminating and sharpening the work we do in rehearsal and in concert. Working with Wynton Marsalis and the DSO musicians on *Blues Symphony* was a true partnership. Every day during the process, Wynton prioritized listening to each of the sessions, providing detailed notes, and working closely with me.

All the musicians of the DSO love to work on details and play exactly what the composer wants, but they do this very sensitively and with their own personalities. It's beautiful that even when working as a team, musicians have the room to express themselves. And in this piece, with so many different solo parts for each instrument and section, people will hear a very special sound—the DSO sound.

Jader Bignamini, Music Director, Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Blues Symphony

Now regarded as one of Wynton Marsalis's most innovative and colossal works, the Blues Symphony, his second symphonic work, was many years in the making.

First conceptualizing the piece in 2008, Marsalis worked with music supervisor Jonathan Kelly for more than a decade on its development. Blues Symphony is a triumphant ode to the power of the blues and the scope of America's musical heritage. With a blend of influences from ragtime to habanera, the piece takes listeners on a sonic journey through America's revolutionary era, the early beginnings of jazz in New Orleans, and a big city soundscape that serves as a nod to the Great Migration.

The DSO most recently performed Wynton Marsalis's Blues Symphony in December 2023, conducted by Jader Bignamini. The DSO first performed the piece in June 2022, also conducted by Jader Bignamini.

Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1
Robyn Bollinger, *concertmaster*
Kimberly Kaloyanides Kennedy, *associate*
Hai-Xin Wu, *assistant*
Jennifer Wey Fang, *assistant*
Marguerite Deslippe
Laurie Goldman
Rachel Harding Klaus
Eun Park Lee
Adrienne Rönmark
Alexandros Sakarellos
Laura Soto
Greg Staples
Jiamin Wang
Mingzhao Zhou

Violin 2
Adam Stepniewski, *acting principal*
Will Haapaniemi
Hae Jeong Heidi Han
Elizabeth Furuta
Sheryl Hwangbo Yu
Daniel Kim
Sujin Lim
Hong-Yi Mo
Marian Tanau
Alexander Volkov
Jing Zhang

Viola
Eric Nowlin, *principal*
James VanValkenburg, *assistant*
Caroline Coade
Glenn Mellow
Hang Su
Hart Hollman
Han Zheng
Mike Chen
Harper Randolph

Cello
Wei Yu, *principal*
Abraham Feder, *assistant*
Robert Bergman
Jeremy Crosmer
David LeDoux
Peter McCaffrey
Una O'Riordan
Cole Randolph

Bass
Kevin Brown, *principal*
Stephen Molina, *assistant*
Christopher Hamlen
Peter Hatch
Vincent Luciano
Brandon Mason

Flute
Hannah Hammel Maser, *principal*
Amanda Blaikie

Sharon Sparrow, *assistant*
Jeffery Zook

Piccolo
Jeffery Zook

Oboe
Alexander Kinmonth, *principal*
Sarah Lewis, *assistant*
Monica Fosnaugh

English Horn
Monica Fosnaugh

Clarinet
Ralph Skiano, *principal*
Jack Walters
Shannon Orme

Bass Clarinet
Shannon Orme

Bassoon
Conrad Cornelison, *principal*
Cornelia Sommer
Marcus Schoon

Contrabassoon
Marcus Schoon

Horn
Johanna Yarbrough
Scott Strong
David Everson, *assistant*
Mark Abbott

Trumpet
Hunter Eberly, *principal*
Austin Williams
William Lucas

Trombone
Kenneth Thompkins, *principal*
David Binder
Adam Rainey

Bass Trombone
Adam Rainey

Tuba
Dennis Nulty, *principal*

Timpani
Jeremy Epp, *principal*
James Ritchie, *assistant*

Percussion
Joseph Becker, *principal*
Andrés Pichardo-Rosenthal, *assistant*
James Ritchie
Luciano Valdes

Librarians
Robert Stiles, *principal*
Ethan Allen

Additional Musicians

Violin
Kyoko Kashiwagi
Cristina Muresan
Joachim Stepniewski
Judy Wu

Viola
Mark Braithwaite
John Madison

Cello
Sarah Cleveland
Andrew Laven

Bass
Jessica Grabbe

Flute
Amy Taylor

Oboe
Geoffrey Johnson

Clarinet
Taylor Marino

Bassoon
Jeffrey Lyman

Horn
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Adam Unsworth

Percussion
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Rob Kistler

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Detroit Symphony Orchestra
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Acknowledgements

PRODUCTION TEAM
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