



Courtesy Rodney Marsalis

THE RODNEY MARSALIS PHILADELPHIA BIG BRASS

PROGRAM

There will be an intermission.

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Friday, December 9 @ 8 PM

Prince Theatre

AFRICAN ROOTS, AMERICAN VOICES

Part of the African Roots, American Voices series.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass celebrates peace and the unity of the human spirit through a variety of holiday music including “Joy to the World”, excerpts from Handel’s *Messiah*, “A Jazzy Nutcracker Suite”, “Stan Kenton Christmas”, and even a holiday sing-along.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass (RMPBB) is comprised of some of America’s top brass musicians dedicated to bringing the joyous experience of great music to a wide range of audiences. A group that always reflects the diverse makeup of men and women in the American culture, RMPBB is dedicated to the notion that music is a gift to be enjoyed by everyone. The group is especially focused on reaching the world’s youth and inspiring them to strive for their dreams. A veritable “dream team” of virtuoso brass players, the group’s artists have appeared on the world’s most prominent stages and performed with such groups as the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Baltimore Symphony, the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra, the Imani Winds, Canadian Brass, Empire Brass, Dallas Brass and Boston Brass. RMPBB burst onto the music scene with a debut performance at the Kimmel Center’s Verizon Hall, a residency for the Mann Center for the Performing Arts, and a special feature on the National Public Radio show, *All Things Considered*.

In recent years, RMPBB has been invited to perform in major music halls around the world including China’s National Center for the Performing Arts, Tanglewood’s Seiji Ozawa Hall and several prominent halls in Brazil and Italy.

Performances by the RMPBB range from solo trumpet to brass quintet to the full ensemble with percussion. Their programs include holiday concerts, family concerts and traditional brass concerts with added organ or choir. The groups also specializes in themed concerts: American Music, Baroque-Renaissance, contemporary popular music, the Francis Johnson Project, the John Philip Sousa Project, and a Civil War/Civil Rights Movement multi-media concert entitled “Brothers on the Battlefield - The Power of Love.”

Rodney Marsalis (Trumpet)

The sound of Rodney Marsalis’ trumpet has reverberated throughout the world. Whether playing baroque piccolo trumpet or interpreting works commissioned especially for him, his artistry has been enthusiastically enjoyed throughout the U.S. and in France, Spain, Germany, England, Greece, Rumania, Japan, Taiwan and Korea. He has been praised by music critics from *Fanfare Magazine*, American Record Guide, Records International Catalog and other international publications for his evocative interpretation, impeccable virtuosity and beauty of sound.

A graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, Marsalis has worked under the guidance of world renowned conductors such as Leonard Bernstein, Michael Tilson Thomas, Gerard Schwarz, James DePreist, John Williams, Jesus Lopez-Cobos and Christopher Hogwood. He was awarded a fellowship at the Tanglewood Music Center where he was invited to return for a second summer and was awarded the Seiji Ozawa Award for Outstanding Musicianship.

Marsalis was born in New Orleans, Louisiana where he began his musical studies at the age of six. When he was eleven, he began taking classical trumpet lessons with his cousin, Wynton Marsalis. Referred to as a “trumpet prodigy,” his solo debut was at the age of fifteen with the New Orleans Symphony. After having won various solo competitions, he received

national attention at the age of nineteen while performing as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. He has also performed as soloist with the San Diego Symphony, the Tenerife Symphony, the Orquestra Sinfonica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia and many orchestras throughout the United States and Europe.

Marsalis has made several world premiere recordings including "Sonata for Trumpet and Piano" (Albany Records) by Adolphus Hailstork and "In Our Own House" (Albany Records) by composer Alvin Singleton with saxophonist Branford Marsalis.

In 1998, Rodney Marsalis made the premiere and critically-acclaimed recording of Franz Waxman's "Carmen Fantasy for Trumpet and Orchestra" with conductor Lawrence Foster on the Koch International record label.

Marsalis' debut solo trumpet CD *Spirit of the Trumpeter* (Albany Records) is a compilation of some of the most popular recital works for trumpet and piano. Regarding *Spirit of the Trumpeter*, former cornet virtuoso and renowned conductor Gerard Schwarz says, "Rodney is a superb trumpet player and musician. I have no doubt that this CD will make an important addition to the catalogue of sublime trumpet performances."

In the course of his more than twenty years as an orchestral musician, Marsalis is the winner of several national and international competitions for titled orchestral chairs including positions with the New Orleans Symphony, the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, the Orquestra Sinfonica de Tenerife, the Barcelona Symphony and the Richmond Symphony. After completing a one-year trial period, he was awarded the Principal Trumpet position with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia. During his tenure as Principal Trumpet with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, Marsalis was appointed head of the trumpet department at the Escuela Superior de Musica de Catalunya (ESMUC), Spain's leading music conservatory.

Marsalis can be heard as Soloist and Principal Trumpet on over 30 recordings. His year is split between his duties as Principal Trumpet with Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Artist in Residence at Temple University and various master class and solo engagements in the U.S. and abroad.