

OTHER VIEWS

BY JOE LANG

New Orleans is inextricably linked to jazz. On *Crescent City Jewels* ((Troubadour Jass Records) trombonist **Delfeayo Marsalis** leads his Uptown Jazz Orchestra through a collection of 16 tracks that includes a blend of originals, standards, jazz tunes, and miscellaneous selections interpreted with New Orleans R&B grooves that are flavored with a jazz sensitivity. The overriding impressions garnered from a first listening are excitement, outstanding musicianship, and well-conceived programming. The liner material does not give specific personnel for each selection on the program that was recorded in two sessions from November 2023 and an additional set of sessions in May 2024. However, there are several guest players noted such as Branford Marsalis on tenor/soprano sax, Kermit Ruffin on trumpet, Davell Crawford on piano, Herlin



Riley on drums, and Maurice “Miracle Meaux” Trosclair on trombone.

Vocalist Tonya Boyd-Cannon is featured on six selections—“A Sleepin’ Bee,” “Valley of Prayers,” “Summertime,” “Exactly Like You,” “Round Midnight” and “I Wish I Knew How It Felt to Be Free.” Ruffin lends a gruff vocal on “Ooh Poo Pah Doo.” Crawford handles the vocal chores on “Basin Street Blues” with Trosclair adding

some nice trombone interludes. Riley is the driving force on “Basie Moods,” a nod toward the great Count composed by Delfeayo Marsalis. When the band closes with a rambunctious take on “Little Liza Jane,” it is time to sit back with a smile and indulge the impulse to immediately revisit what you have just experienced. dmarsalis.com

During the existence of **The Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra**, leader **Wynton Marsalis** has written several extended works for the orchestra. His latest is *The Shanghai Suite* (Blue Engine Records). This live performance of the nine-part suite was recorded at Frederick P Rose Hall on September 30 and October 1, 2022. This tribute to the city where jazz flourished in the 1930s was written for the opening of JALC’s club in Shanghai. Marsalis opted to base his composition on pentatonic scales, five notes to the

octave, the basis for much of Chinese music. This work, he said, “is inspired by that civilization’s rich mythology, cuisine, and architecture and set to the language of jazz rhythm.”

The titles of the individual sections, “Swinging on the Bund,” “The Monkey King’s March,” “White Yulan – First Flower of Spring; Yulan Magnolia – Soul of the South,” “Hot Pot,” “The Nine Dragons,” “Li Bai’s Blues,” “The Five Elements,” “From the Casanova to the Peace Hotel to Right Here Tonight”, and “The Shanghai Skyline” identify the range of subjects that Marsalis considered. The music is eclectic, often complex, and offers significant solo space for the players on the band. As it proceeds, the listener is carried along on a musical adventure that is satisfying and consistently engaging. This album is available in download format at jazz.org/shanghai