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## BRANFORD MARSALIS · 'A LOVE SUPREME' LIVE IN AMSTERDAM BIOGRAPHY

For Marsalis Music's second DVD release, label founder Branford Marsalis and his quartet have been captured in a complete performance of John Coltrane's 1964 masterpiece "A Love Supreme". This legendary suite, which tenor saxophonist Marsalis included on his label's premier release, *Footsteps of Our Fathers*, was performed at Amsterdam's Bimhuis during a European tour in March 2003.

"We felt that we were pretty much done with "A Love Supreme" when we went to Europe, but my manager wasn't done with it," Marsalis recalls wryly. "After hearing us perform the suite at the Bottom Line, she insisted that we had to film it so she approached Pierre about the project and he agreed." Pierre Lamoureux, a filmmaker known for his expertise in musical subjects, directed the recent Emmy-winning PBS special *Only You in Concert* by Harry Connick, Jr. "Pierre cares about how his films sound as well as how they look," Branford emphasizes, "and the combination of Pierre and the Bimhuis was too good to pass up."

Branford is unsparing in his enthusiasm for the Amsterdam club, which has been a center for jazz in Europe since it opened in 1973. "I only played there once before, with Art Blakey in 1981, and I've wanted to bring my own band into the Bimhuis ever since," he admits. "It's simply one of the two or three best jazz clubs in the world, because the room is intimate and the focus is on presenting the music instead of selling food and drinks. There is a bar outside of the performance space, and people do go there to hang, but once they walk into the club itself, it's all about the music."

Marsalis' acclaimed quartet - with pianist Joey Calderazzo, bassist Eric Revis and drummer Jeff "Tain" Watts - was all about the music as well, as they delivered a performance both musically and visually riveting. As a bonus to the live performance, all four members of the quartet, together with Branford's fellow saxophonists Michael Brecker, Ned Gould, David Sánchez and Miguel Zenón, discuss the inspiration and the challenges presented by Coltrane's composition. In addition, Alice Coltrane, John Coltrane's widow and the pianist in his last band, is seen in a 30-minute conversation with Branford. An audio-only disc of the Bimhuis performance is also included, and is available only in the DVD package.

"A Love Supreme" is considered by many to be the ultimate expression of the classic John Coltrane quartet, and remains Coltrane's most popular album. Where Coltrane only performed the suite live on one occasion, Marsalis and band had several opportunities to play individual sections of the piece as well as "A Love Supreme" in its entirety before hooking up with Lamoureux for video documentation. "We definitely grew into the piece as we played it, which is why I'm so pleased that Pierre caught us when we really understood it," Marsalis reports. "One thing about "A Love Supreme", it takes tremendous concentration and focus from every member of the band. The first time we played the whole thing live, all we could do afterward was sit in the dressing room for 20 minutes, totally exhausted. You don't see this band in that shape too often. By the time we got to the Bimhuis, though, we were up to the challenge."

What has resulted - a scintillating live performance, plus informed musical commentary and a rare visit with Alice Coltrane - makes *'A Love Supreme' Live in Amsterdam* a must for all fans of Coltrane's and Marsalis' music.

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