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*The Marsalis Family Perform and Record Live For the First Time On
The Marsalis Family: A Jazz Celebration.*

*Historic Farewell Occasion Marks Ellis Marsalis'
Esteemed Educational Tenure.*

Ellis, Branford, Delfeayo, Jason and Wynton Meet in New Orleans Concert

The Crescent City's most celebrated jazz family led by the patriarch, Ellis Marsalis, has recorded together for the first time. What may be the most eagerly anticipated family affair in jazz history, **The Marsalis Family: A Jazz Celebration**, will be released on Marsalis Music on February 4, 2003. The album features all of the music-making Marsalises - father Ellis on piano and sons Branford (tenor and soprano saxophones), Wynton (trumpet), Delfeayo (trombone) and Jason (drums) - along with bassist Roland Guerin and a special guest appearance by Harry Connick Jr.

Over the years, many attempts have been made to bring this illustrious family together. It was not until August 4, 2001 that schedules and the alignment of the stars allowed the Marsalises to join forces on one bandstand. The occasion was a concert marking Ellis' retirement from teaching duties at the University of New Orleans, and the school's establishment of a chair in his name. Before a packed house in the Kiefer UNO Lakefront Arena, the Marsalis family members were so inspired by each other's presence that, as Delfeayo puts it; the performance "reflected our family collectively and individually."

The center of attention is Ellis, the brilliant pianist, composer and educator who spawned both a family of jazz giants and (through his example and his teaching) several generations of young and influential jazz artists. In settings that include, trio, quartet and sextet, Ellis' luminous touch, probing sense of harmony and keen melodic imagination are brought front and center. The inclusion of four of his best-known compositions, "Swinging at the Haven," "After," "Nostalgic Impressions" and "Twelve's It," underline Wynton's observation that "through his playing and his teaching, my father has been so instrumental in the cultural life of New Orleans."

But Ellis is not the only family member who shines on **The Marsalis Family: A Jazz Celebration**. Youngest son Jason provides sympathetic percussive support throughout, stepping forward with a subtle, lyrical drum solo on the trio feature "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top." Delfeayo's trombone is featured in a limber nod to Duke Ellington and Ellington trombonist Tyree Glenn on "Sultry Serenade." Branford and Wynton turn Branford's blues "Cain and Abel" into a hearty, heated two-part invention. And all four brothers, plus stalwart bassist Roland Guerin, join their father on four tracks, including a salute to Louis Armstrong on "Struttin' with Some Barbecue."

Also performing at the concert and included on the CD is one of Ellis' most illustrious students, Harry Connick, Jr. Connick performs "St. James Infirmary" with trombonist Lucien Barbarin and joins Ellis and sons for the spirited "Twelve's It."

Branford Marsalis sums up the results by noting that "Everybody came to play the music as well as they possibly could play it." The spirited results, by turns fiercely swinging and deeply lyrical, confirm that the company and the occasion elevated each family member to new levels of eloquence.

Details on the Marsalis Family National tour, DVD and PBS special to be announced soon.

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