



Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life

Wynton Marsalis, Geoffrey Ward

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“In this book I hope to reach a new audience with the positive message of America’s greatest music, to show how great musicians demonstrate on the bandstand a mutual respect and trust that can alter your outlook on the world and enrich every aspect of your life—from individual creativity and personal relationships to conducting business and understanding what it means to be American in the most modern sense.”

—Wynton Marsalis

In this beautiful book, the Pulitzer Prize-winning musician and composer Wynton Marsalis explores jazz and how an understanding of it can lead to deeper, more original ways of being, living, and relating—for individuals, communities, and nations. Marsalis shows us how to listen to jazz, and through stories about his life and the lessons he has learned from other music greats, he reveals how the central ideas in jazz can influence the way people think and even how they behave with others, changing self, family, and community for the better. At the heart of jazz is the expression of personality and individuality, coupled with an ability to listen to and improvise with others. Jazz as an art—and as a way to move people and nations to higher ground—is at the core of this unique, illuminating, and inspiring book, a master class on jazz and life by a brilliant American artist.

Advance praise for *Moving to Higher Ground*

“An absolute joy to read. Intimate, knowledgeable, supremely worthy of its subject. In addition to demolishing mediocre, uniformed critics, *Moving to Higher Ground* is a meaningful contribution to music scholarship.”

—Toni Morrison

“I think it should be in every bookstore, music store, and school in the country.”

—Tony Bennett

“Jazz, for Wynton Marsalis, is nothing less than a search for wisdom. He thinks as forcefully, and as elegantly, as he swings. When he reflects on improvisation, his subject is freedom. When he reflects on harmony, his subject is diversity and conflict and peace. When he reflects on the blues, his subject is sorrow and the mastery of it—how to be happy without being blind. There is philosophy in Marsalis’s trumpet, and in this book. Here is the lucid and probing voice of an uncommonly soulful man.”

—Leon Wieseltier, literary editor, *The New Republic*

“Wynton Marsalis is absolutely the person who should write this book. Here he is, as young as morning, as fresh as dew, and already called one of the jazz greats. He is not only a seer and an exemplary musician, but a poet as well. He informs us that jazz was created, among other things, to expose the hypocrisy and absurdity of racism and other ignorances in our country. Poetry was given to human beings for the same reason. This book could be called “How Love Can Change Your Life,” for there could be no jazz without love. By love, of course, I do not mean mush, or sentimentality. Love can only exist with courage, and this book could not be written without Wynton Marsalis’s courage. He has the courage to make powerful music and to love the music so, that he willingly shares its riches with the entire human family. We are indebted to him.”

—Maya Angelou

From the Hardcover edition.

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