

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE
COLLEGE OF ARTS + ARCHITECTURE

The College of Arts + Architecture presents

Branford Marsalis: **Charlie Parker 101**

Special thanks to the Department of Music

Anne R. Belk Theater
Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts
Monday August 30, 2021 | 7:30pm
coaa.charlotte.edu

About Branford Marsalis

Branford Marsalis continues to thrill audiences around the world while racking up achievements across diverse musical platforms, even after four decades in the international spotlight. From his initial recognition as a young jazz lion, he has expanded his vision as an instrumentalist, composer, bandleader and educator, crossing stylistic boundaries while maintaining an unwavering creative integrity. In the process, he has become an avatar of contemporary artistic excellence winning three Grammy Awards, a Tony nomination for his work as a composer on Broadway, a citation by the National Endowment for the Arts as Jazz Master, and a 2021 Primetime EMMY nomination for the score he composed for the *Tulsa Burning* documentary.



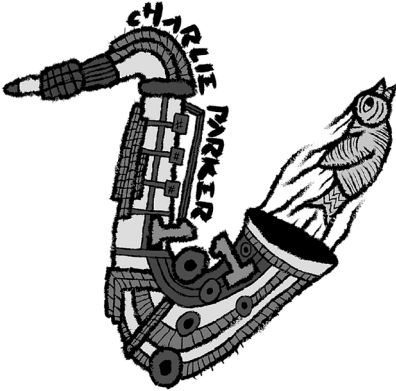
Growing up in the rich environment of New Orleans as the oldest son of pianist and educator, the late Ellis Marsalis, Branford was drawn to music along with siblings Wynton, Delfeayo and Jason. The Branford Marsalis Quartet, formed in 1986, remains his primary performance vehicle. In its virtually uninterrupted three-plus decades of existence, the Quartet has established a rare breadth of stylistic range as demonstrated on the band's latest release: *The Secret Between the Shadow and the Soul*. But Branford has not confined his music to the jazz quartet context. A frequent soloist with classical ensembles, Branford has become increasingly sought after as a featured soloist with acclaimed orchestras around the world, performing works by composers such as Copeland, Debussy, Glazunov, Ibert, Mahler, Milhaud, Rorem, Vaughan Williams and Villa-Lobos. And his legendary guest performances with the Grateful Dead and collaborations with Sting have made him a fan favorite in the pop arena.

Branford's screen credits as a composer include original music for: Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* starring Oprah Winfrey, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* starring Viola Davis and the late Chadwick Boseman and the History Channel's documentary *Tulsa Burning: The 1921 Race Massacre*. The critically acclaimed *Ma Rainey* is the Netflix film adaptation of two-time Pulitzer Prize winner August Wilson's play, produced by Denzel Washington. And in reviewing the score *Vanity Fair* proclaimed "*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* is a story in which the music has to be authentic and the details need to be correct. It requires the musical oversight of someone who has this history in his blood. It requires Branford Marsalis." While *The Guardian* noted "Marsalis's work, both recreation and original composition, is as close to perfection as I could imagine." He recently received a 2021 EMMY nomination for the original music he composed and produced for *Tulsa Burning* in the Outstanding Music Composition for a Documentary Series or Special (Original Dramatic Score) category. His work on Broadway has garnered a Drama Desk Award and a Tony nomination for the acclaimed revival of *Fences*. His previous Broadway efforts include music for the revivals of *Children of a Lesser God* and *A Raisin in the Sun*, as well as *The Mountaintop* which starred Angela Bassett and Samuel L. Jackson.

Branford has also shared his knowledge as an educator, forming extended teaching relationships at Michigan State, San Francisco State and North Carolina Central Universities and conducting workshops at sites throughout the United States and the world. In the wake of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, Branford, along with friend Harry Connick, Jr., conceived of "Musicians' Village," a residential community in the Upper Ninth Ward of New Orleans. The centerpiece of the Village is the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, honoring Branford's father. The Center uses music as the focal point of a holistic strategy to build a healthy community and to deliver a broad range of services to underserved children, youth and musicians from neighborhoods battling poverty and social injustice.

Branford Marsalis is exclusively represented by Opus 3 Artists.

Bird Lives!



artwork by UNC Charlotte Alumnus
G'Kar Joseph '21 (BFA, Graphic Design)

Charlie “Bird” Parker (1920-1955) was an innovator, a virtuoso, and an artist. In his 101st year, we’re taking the opportunity to explore Charlie Parker—to share the breadth and depth of a musician who made an indelible impact not only on jazz, but on the communities and spaces he came into contact with. Parker’s genius reverberated well beyond the circles of musicians with whom he played and those who came after him, inspiring visual artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Romare Bearden and writers like Ralph Ellison and Ted Joans.

Along with Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, and Max Roach, Parker is best known for his musical innovations in the jazz genre known as bebop. Today, bebop is known as both a genre of protest (against racism in both American society and in a music industry that continually privileged white musicians over Black musicians) and as an outgrowth of swing. Bebop—especially as Parker played it—features extended harmonies, fast tempos, more triplets and syncopation, wide-ranging and sometimes angular melodies, and a high standard of virtuosic improvisation. Perhaps more than any other jazz musician, Parker’s approach to bebop remains a crucial part of the jazz lexicon today. Take a listen to his solos on “Klactoveedsedstene,” “Ornithology,” “A Night in Tunisia,” and “Ko-Ko” to hear a range of his approaches to improvisation— from solos filled to the brim with scalar passages and arpeggios to tuneful melodies. Through it all, Parker never lost the blues, masterfully merging tradition with a forward-thinking sound in tunes like “Now’s the Time,” “Billie’s Bounce,” and “Bloomdido.”

In his life, and well after his death, discussions of Parker’s musical ability have almost always been accompanied by sensationalized stories about

his drug use. These stories dehumanized him and fitted him to racist stereotypes and tropes, rather than dealing with his complex life. Through tremendous societal and personal trauma- the racist, segregated system that routinely denied his humanity, the loss of his young daughter to pneumonia- Parker's brilliance persisted.

"Bird Lives!" The message spread quickly after Parker's death in 1955, graffitied in chalk on the streets, sidewalks, and walls around New York City- a reminder of the ongoing, never-ending importance of a man whose tragic death at age 34 didn't keep him from changing jazz forever. When we say "Bird Lives!" we recognize the full life of a man whose music touched many. We acknowledge his continuous influence on a broad range of artistic communities. And we celebrate Parker's place in an ongoing tradition of Black American music.

We welcome Branford Marsalis to the University this evening to help us consider the life and work of Charlie Parker through the lens of his unique and singular career.

- Dr. Kelsey Klotz, jazz historian and lecturer in the Department of Music

Upcoming Charlie Parker 101 Events

October 18, 2021

UNC Charlotte Jazz Ensemble and Combos

7:30 pm, Anne R. Belk Theater

November 22, 2021

UNC Charlotte Jazz Ensemble and Combos

7:30 pm, Anne R. Belk Theater

January 12, 2022

Charlie Parker: Reverberations

Presented in partnership with the Harvey B. Gantt Center of African-American Arts + Culture, this multifaceted event will explore the intersections of jazz with art, architecture and urban design, and literature, marking the influence of Parker's genius within and beyond his circle of musical collaborators. The evening will include live music, spoken word performance, and a panel conversation. Guests are also invited to tour *Container/Contained: Phil Freelon – Design Strategies for Telling African American Stories*, an exhibition developed and created by the UNC Charlotte School of Architecture that examines the way the buildings and spaces that North Carolina architect Phil Freelon designed to convey the culture and identity of Black Americans.

January 14 & 15, 2022

"Bird Lives!" at The Jazz Room

Presented in a partnership with Jazz Arts Charlotte, Charlie Parker 101 comes to The Jazz Room. UNC Charlotte music faculty join local professional musicians for four shows devoted to "Bird," featuring selections from the rarely played *Charlie Parker with Strings* albums and spoken word performances by Hannah Hasan.

March 3, 2022

CP at CP: A Student/Faculty Collaboration

Students and faculty from UNC Charlotte and Central Piedmont Community College collaborate to celebrate Charlie Parker with a performance in the Halton Theater. On the program is a student-focused performance of selections from the Charlie Parker with Strings albums.

Dean, College of Arts + Architecture

Brook Muller

Chair, The Department of Music

Joseph Skillen

CoA+A Performing Arts Services

Dean Adams, Associate Dean for Performing Arts Services

Elizabeth A. Yoder, Production Manager

Kellie D. Knight, Performing Arts Operations Manager

Liz Paradis, Audience Services Manager

Beth Rucker, Business Services Coordinator

Rachel Engstrom, Lecturer, Costume Lab Supervisor / Designer

Matthew B. Fraiser, Lecturer, Technical Director

Hali Hutchison-Houk, Costume Lab Manager

Rick Moll, Senior Lecturer, Master Electrician

Gordon W. Olson, Senior Lecturer, Lighting Designer

Benjamin G. Stickels, Senior Lecturer, Audio Engineer and Asst. Production Manager

Rachel Watkins, Senior Lecturer, Stage Management

College of Arts + Architecture

Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER

Faculty Dance Concert

Fri Sep 10 & Sat Sep 11 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

OCTOBER

Migrant X

Fri Oct 2- Wed Oct 6 | 7 pm
CoA+A Arts Quad

Jazz Ensemble & Combos

Mon Oct 18 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Wind Ensemble

Wed Oct 20 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

Orchestra

Thu Oct 21 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

University Chorale

Fri Oct 22 | 7:30 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater

NOVEMBER

Gather

Thu Nov 4- Sat Nov 6 | 7:30 pm
Sat Nov 6 & Sun Nov 7 | 2 pm
Black Box Theater

Fall Dance Concert

Thu Nov 18- Sat Nov 20 | 7:30 pm
Sun Nov 21 | 2 pm
Anne R. Belk Theater