

United We Play Transcript

Marcus Roberts: I've been thinking a lot lately about the current state of the world and the current state of our country. This is a very difficult time in our history. We seem to be surrounded by pain and conflict and mistrust, but we are here today to show you in our own way how music can help us overcome. As musicians, we have had to learn to depend on and trust one another in order to create something greater together than any of us could have created alone. Through music, we can learn to work together, because every time we truly listen to someone else's voice, we become stronger—better musicians and better people.

MUSIC BY:
Marcus Roberts

United We Play

Marcus: *United We Play* is about bringing jazz and classical music together as a symbol of the need to bring our entire country together.

A PRODUCTION OF:
The American Symphony Orchestra
and
Marcus Roberts, J-Master Music

MARCUS ROBERTS & THE MODERN JAZZ GENERATION

Marcus Roberts	Piano
Rodney Jordan	Bass
Jason Marsalis	Drums
Joe Goldberg	Alto Saxophone & Clarinet
Ricardo Pascal	Tenor & Soprano Saxophones
Stephen Riley	Tenor Saxophone
Tissa Khosla	Baritone Saxophone
Alphonso Horne	Trumpet
Tim Blackmon	Trumpet
Ron Westray	Trombone

AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Leon Botstein	Conductor
Cyrus Beroukhim	Concertmaster
Pauline Kim Harris	Violin I
Philip Payton	Violin I
Robert Zubrycki	Violin I
Richard Rood	Principal Violin II
Wende Namkung	Violin II
Ragga Petursdottir	Violin II
Dana Kelley	Principal Viola
Shelley Holland-Moritz	Viola
Debra Shufelt-Dine	Viola
Eugene Moyer	Principal Cello
Maureen Hynes	Cello
Alberto Parrini	Cello
Jordan Frazier	Principal Bass

NARRATION BY:

Marcus Roberts & Leon Botstein

Leon Botstein: Music is a meaningful means of human expression and action without being easily pinned down. I don't think we can live without music any more than we can live without language. For music really to survive it can't be through any box—not the computer, the audio device, not the smartphone—it has to be human-to-human and in real time, real space. Nothing has brought that home more vividly than this enforced isolation from doing that.

Marcus: The American Symphony is a great orchestra. We were rehearsing to do a concert together at Carnegie Hall right at the beginning of the pandemic. Unfortunately, just a few hours before the show, Carnegie Hall was closed and the show was canceled. So we hated to lose the chance to perform together, so we came up with the idea to do this remote performance for all of you.

Leon: Music, it demands our being together in a common space. This project, which is a stopgap between the times when we were actually able to perform in front of the public and with the public, and the time when we will be able to do so again.

Marcus: This pandemic is certainly an enormous problem. To overcome it, we're going to have to get to it by working together and looking out for one another. Each of the 10 jazz musicians, we rehearsed over Zoom, connected remotely.

Marlan Barry: *Are you guys there?*

Marcus: The classical players and the maestro recorded the string parts separately, and I was logged in from 1,500 miles away. *Contrabass was late at measure 21*. This pandemic has forced us, as people, into isolation. It's not natural. But, perhaps it's an opportunity for us to find innovative ways to collaborate remotely and to get together and work better together.

When I was writing *America Has the Blues* I was thinking about the many complex issues that our country is struggling with at this time in our history. In jazz music, we play the blues to defeat the blues in life. Our music sends a clear message that we never succumb or give up. This piece is a statement that together, we will overcome the blues in this very difficult time.

America Has the Blues [Musical Feature]

Marcus: *Seeking Peace* is a song that I wrote for piano and strings. Sometimes in the midst of chaos and turmoil, we just need to find a quiet place to reflect. I've been doing more of that than usual this year myself. The sound of the strings, it's a beautiful sound—my hope is that it will bring you a feeling of tranquility and a feeling of being settled.

Seeking Peace [Musical Feature]

Leon: The real demands of our life—whether it is about the water in our community or the schools in our community, whatever community you may be in, you're going to have neighbors who are not like yourself. They're of different religion, they're different belief, they come from different places, they're different color skin. You can't choose them the way you can on the Internet, and that's the demand of democracy: to listen, to compromise—and musical communication is connected to democracy. The role of the listener, the player, the performer, the spaces we have for music. What happens in a musical ensemble, what happens when we dance to music, we sing together at church. We use music as a kind of medium, a form of life by which we connect with other people, and we can express kindness to strangers.

Marcus: When we have 20 or 30 great musicians on the stage, especially at the same time, we have to find a balance between freedom and individual achievement and collaboration. If everybody is just concerned with being the star of the show, we likely would end up with chaos. So we have to listen to each other and make room for each musician's part to be heard. This is a very politically charged time in our history. It's so important that we do everything we can to listen to one another and work together. If we do, if we do the same in our families, our workplaces, and in our communities, I think we would have a much more peaceful society and a lot more satisfaction in our lives.

United We Play [Musical Feature]

Credits

UNITED WE PLAY

America Has the Blues
Seeking Peace
United We Play

Composed and arranged by Marcus Roberts
Commissioned by the American Symphony Orchestra
Published by Marcus Roberts, J-Master Music

Marcus Roberts, Executive Producer
Leon Botstein, Music Director

Featuring

Marcus Roberts & The Modern Jazz Generation

Marcus Roberts	Piano
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Jason Marsalis	Drums
Joe Goldberg	Clarinet & Alto Saxophone
Ricardo Pascal	Tenor & Soprano Saxophones
Stephen Riley	Tenor Saxophone
Tissa Khosla	Baritone Saxophone
Alphonso Horne	Trumpet
Tim Blackmon	Trumpet
Ron Westray	Trombone
Lynn Moore	Artist Manager

American Symphony Orchestra

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Maureen Hynes	Cello
Alberto Parrini	Cello
Jordan Frazier	Principal Bass

Oliver Inteeworn	Executive Director
Ally Chapel	Marketing Manager
Katherine Peck	Director of Development
Catherine Williams	Operations & Audience Development Coordinator
Zachary Schwartzman	Assistant Conductor
Matt Dine	Personnel Manager
Sebastian Danila	Library Manager
Marc Cerri	Orchestra Librarian
Marielle Metivier	Production Consultant

Film Production

Lynn Moore	Co-Director
Oliver Inteeworn	Co-Director
AJ Wilhelm	Director of Photography & Editor
Alexander Ariff	Senior Producer
Chelsea Solitrin	Senior Producer
Ally Chapel	Creative Director
Marcus Roberts	Audio Producer
Les Stephenson	Audio Engineer
Joe Goldberg	Assistant Engineer
Tissa Khosla	Assistant Engineer
Marlan Barry	Audio Producer & Engineer (ASO string section)
Damon Whittemore	Co-Engineer (ASO string section)
Kostadin Kamcev	Assistant Engineer, Studio Mozart (drums)
Danny Carr	Robo Cam
John Gasper	Robo Cam Operator
Denise Sinelov	Additional Camera
Alexander Ariff	Additional Camera

SPECIAL THANKS

Sam Gellerstein - Jeff Bradshaw - Tre Lambert - Khalyl CE - Ben Gullett
 Julian Weller, Musicians United NYC - Marc Basch - Matt Dine - Gillian Maranga

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fishercenter.bard.edu