

Branford Marsalis

Doctor of Music

Branford Marsalis is a world-renowned saxophonist whose musical curiosity leads him to actively explore jazz, classical, blues, and funk. A native of New Orleans, Marsalis is a member of one of that city's most distinguished musical families, which includes his father Ellis and his siblings Wynton, Delfeayo and Jason. In 2011, the Marsalis family was honored with the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters award. Known for his innovative spirit and broad musical scope, Marsalis is equally at home on the stages of the world's greatest clubs and concert halls. He has been a featured soloist performing works by Copland, Debussy, Glazunov, Ibert, Mahler, Mihaud, Rorem and Vaughan Williams with major symphony orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Chicago, Detroit, Düsseldorf, Australian and North Carolina symphonies. He also toured for several months with the Philharmonia Brasileira. Marsalis, a three-time Grammy recipient, is a keeper of the history of American jazz, having played with such greats as Art Blakey, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock and Sonny Rollins. He is also a keen scout for new musical talent and has his own label, Marsalis Music, where he continues to discover, develop and promote new artists. Marsalis has held faculty positions at Michigan State University, San Francisco State University and currently at North Carolina Central University, where the members of his quartet serve as artists-in-residence. In addition to this traditional role, Marsalis engages in innovative and wide-reaching educational efforts with Marsalis Jams. This program fosters interactive education between professional musicians and students by coordinating campus visits and "jam sessions" by leading jazz ensembles at universities and high schools across America. Marsalis is also a humanitarian. After Hurricane Katrina's destruction of New Orleans, he and Harry Connick Jr. conceived of the New Orleans Habitat Musicians' Village in the hard-hit Ninth Ward, built as a project of the New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity. The centerpiece of this effort is the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music.

For outstanding accomplishment as musician and humanitarian, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to confer on Branford Marsalis the degree of Doctor of Music *honoris causa*.