

## Marsalis hits high notes for Sacramento

Tags: [arts](#), [berkeley](#), [mayor kevin johnson](#), [sacramento](#), [world-class](#), [wynton marsalis](#) — kevin @ 10:49 am

World-class people flock to world-class cities. And there's no better definition of world-class than musician and educator Wynton Marsalis.

Wynton dropped by the Sacramento Ballet this week to inspire arts leaders on behalf of our "For Art's Sake" initiative. The message was tough -- our culture doesn't value arts, Wynton said -- but the words came straight from the heart.

I met Wynton years ago after he stood up for me on a national TV show. I won't mention the commentator or the show -- both are long gone -- but Wynton had my back. I'll never forget it.

Basically, the commentator said I shouldn't be talking about the importance of education until I completed my degree at UC Berkeley. Wynton stopped the commentator cold, saying the interviewer had no clue what he was talking about.

I tracked Wynton down afterward, and personally thanked him. He said I could always call on him. I took him up on that promise this week. Once again, the man delivered -- driving up from Berkeley Wednesday and speaking to our arts group.

"It's all about education," Wynton said when asked why our young people don't have an appreciation for traditional or classical music.

Wynton brings his trumpet and his Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra to the UC Davis Mondavi Center Jackson Hall at 8 p.m. Friday. I encourage everyone to see and hear this American icon.

As for that UC Berkeley degree of mine, it's hanging in the Mayor's office at City Hall.

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