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Van Morrison, Wynton Marsalis attended 'Bolden' screening after closing Jazz Fest on Sunday

BY SUE STRACHAN | sstrachan@theadvocate.com APR 29, 2019 - 2:00 PM

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Wynton Marsalis, Van Morrison and film director Dan Pritzker chat at the screening of 'Bolden' Sunday, April 28, 2019 at the Cinebarre Canal Place theater in New Orleans.

Staff photo by Sue Strachan

Jazz Fest headliners Van Morrison and Wynton Marsalis somehow evaded post-fest traffic Sunday night to attend a Canal Place screening

of "Bolden," the new film about the early 20th-century New Orleans cornet player who is generally considered to be the first true jazz musician.

Morrison was the closing act Sunday on the main Acura Stage, his eighth appearance at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival presented by Shell. The singer, multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and Hall of Famer concluded his Jazz Fest set with an extended version of his 1964 classic "Gloria," as a vast audience lingered past 7 p.m.

By 8:15 p.m., Morrison was in the by-invitation-only audience at Canal Place. After the screening, he approached Marsalis, the film's co-executive producer and composer, to say how much he enjoyed the music and film.

Marsalis, too, pulled off a quick escape from the Fair Grounds. He ended his day at the festival performing alongside brothers Branford, Delfeayo and Jason Marsalis and their father, New Orleans jazz patriarch Ellis Marsalis, in a packed WWOZ Jazz Tent.

He is artistic director of New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center, a National Medal of Arts recipient and a multiple Grammy winner. He is also the recipient of the first Pulitzer Prize in music for jazz.

"Musically, I'm a descendant of Bolden's, just by being from New Orleans and being a trumpet player," said Marsalis, who performed the score of "Bolden." "Everything that came after him was always music I was interested in, in terms of American cornet solos, the style of them and variation."

A number of New Orleans notables attended Sunday night's screening, including clarinetist and jazz historian Dr. Michael White, who wrote the liner notes for the movie's CD and performed on the soundtrack, along with restaurateur Dickie Brennan, Bethany Bultman of the New Orleans Musicians' Clinic with son Tristan Bultman, and WWOZ-FM general manager Beth Arroyo Utterback.

New Orleans drummer Herlin Riley got a shout-out when Marsalis, with whom Riley shares a long history, saluted him from the stage as the "best drummer around."

Also in the audience was Bolden's great-granddaughter Rita Bell, Don Marquis, author of "In Search of Buddy Bolden: First Man of Jazz" and "Finding Buddy Bolden," and "Bolden" actors Karimah Westbrook (who plays Bolden's mother, Alice Bolden), Breon Pugh (Willie Warner) and Kearia Schroeder (Grace)

After the screening, a question-and-answer session moderated by music writer and producer Ben Sandmel featured Marsalis and the movie's director, co-producer and co-writer, Dan Pritzker.

The "Bolden" that screened Sunday night was the second version of the film. Pritzker scrapped the first version, which starred Anthony Mackie as Buddy Bolden, after lengthy delays made final filming with Mackie impossible.

The film to be released on Friday (May 3) stars British actor Gary Carr as Bolden. Locally, it will be shown at the Broad Theater.

[Click here to see the "Bolden" trailer.](#)

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