

## **Marcus Roberts Trio - WPAC in Whitefish on June 7th and at beautiful Brumar Estate in Bigfork on June 8th**

Marcus Roberts was recently featured on **CBS-60 Minutes** in a piece entitled, ***"The Virtuoso: Marcus Roberts"*** which aired March 30th of this year. Watching it inspired Ed Gilliland of Somers to excitedly call John Simpson of Singer & Simpson Productions to exclaim, *"I just saw the best piano player I ever heard!!"*

On the 60 Minutes program, host Wynton Marsalis opens by saying, *"Who s the greatest American musician most people have never heard of? To me, it s Marcus Roberts."*

Marcus Roberts became blind at the age of five. His mother is also blind and taught him to face it with courage, and inspired him with her gospel singing. He attended the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, the same school as Ray Charles. When Marcus was eight, his parents bought him a piano and he figured out how to play the songs he learned from the radio by artists popular at the time, like Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and The Jackson Five.

In 1985, Roberts graduated from Florida State University with a degree in piano performance studying classical music and jazz. That same year he began his career as the pianist with *The Wynton Marsalis Band* where he stayed till 1991. Since then, he's been leading his own trio, composing, performing as the piano soloist with numerous symphony orchestras, recording and creating musical notation technology for the blind. For the last decade, he's also been teaching at his alma mater FSU. Roberts lives in Tallahassee. He'll receive an honorary doctorate from The Juilliard School on May 23rd at Lincoln Center.

Jason Marsalis, Wynton's youngest brother has been the drummer for the Marcus Roberts Trio since 1994 when at the age of 17, he showed up for his first gig having memorized all the music from Roberts' CD *"Gershwin for Lovers."* Another one of Roberts' best recordings is *"Cole After Midnight"* a tribute to both Cole Porter and Nat King Cole. Rodney Jordan (bass) is also on the staff at FSU School of Music. Like Roberts, he can be hauntingly

soulful or relentlessly swinging. The Marcus Roberts Trio's style is powerfully melodic, blues-based, improvisational and a whole lot of fun.

**For assistance with tickets please call 406-730-2817.**

***Sponsored by Don "K" Subaru, and produced by Singer & Simpson Productions.***