00:00:00	Music	Transition	Gentle, trilling music with a steady drumbeat plays under the dialogue.
00:00:01	Promo	Promo	Speaker: Bullseye with Jesse Thorn is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	[Music fades out.]
00:00:12	Music	Transition	"Huddle Formation" from the album <i>Thunder, Lightning, Strike</i> by The Go! Team.
00:00:19	Jesse Thorn	Host	It's Bullseye. I'm Jesse Thorn. Next up this week, another Grammy nominee and a Grammy winner: Robert Glasper. Robert is a pianist, producer, and songwriter. He's worked with Kanye West, Common, J Dilla, and others. He's also responsible for some outstanding keyboard work.  [Music fades in.]
			Like on Kendrick Lamar's <i>To Pimp a Butterfly</i> .
00:00:39	Music	Music	"These Walls" from the album <i>To Pimp a Butterfly</i> by Kendrick Lamar.
			If these walls could talk, they'd tell me to swim good
			No boat, I float better than he would
			No life jacket, I'm not the God of Nazareth
			But your flood can be misunderstood
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue, then fades out.]
00:00:50	Jesse	Host	So far in his career, he's earned three Grammy awards and is up for another two, this year. Best R&B Song for "Better Than I Imagined" and Best R&B Album for—and we will have to bleep this— <i>F-k Your Feelings</i> . When I talked with him in 2012, he'd just released one of his most acclaimed albums to date: <i>Black Radio</i> . <i>Black Radio</i> blends jazz, R&B, and hip-hop in an elegant and effortless way. It's more like a soul record played by a jazz combo. It features vocals from Erykah Badu, Yasiin Bey—the former Mos Def, and Glasper's longtime friend, Bilal. Here's one of my favorite tracks from it, a cover of David Bowie's "Letter to Hermione".
00:01:28	Music	Music	"Letter to Hermione" from the album <i>Black Radio</i> by Robert Glasper.
			He makes you laugh He brings you out in style He treats you well And makes you up real fine And when he's strong He's strong for you And when you kiss It's something new But did you ever call my name Just by mistake? I'm not quite sure what I'm supposed to do So, I'll just write  [Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue, then fades
			out.]

00:01:57	Jesse	Host	Robert Glasper, welcome to <i>Bullseye</i> . It's great to have you on the show.
00:02:00	Robert Glasper	Guest	Indeed! Thank you so much for having me.
00:02:02	Jesse	Host	So, you were—literally spent a lot of time as a kid backstage at clubs with your mom onstage?
00:02:10	Robert	Guest	Yes! My mom onstage, random waitresses coming in, checking on me. [Laughs.] As long as she was like—you know—within a seven—walk—seven stride—walk stride to me, she was—she was rather—she'd rather that be the case than just be at some strange babysitter's house. You know?
			[Jesse chuckles.]
			Back then I don't even think they had nanny cams back then. So. [Laughs.] You know, she was not about to have people watching me. If my grandmother couldn't do it, then I was with her. So—
00:02:37	Jesse	Host	I like that there's a specific distance—like, it's like an electric fence type situation.
00:02:40	Robert	Guest	Yeah, seven. Seven strides. Yeah. Seven strides. It has to be seven. Definitely. Seven or less.
00:02:46	Jesse	Host	What was it like for you to be backstage when you were [chuckling] you know, not even of age?
00:02:52	Robert	Guest	Uh, it was fun for me! For me it was—it was—it was interesting. And I loved—I've always loved music, so I was just listening to the music I got—you know, I would get a chance to watch the musicians and—you know, they—she was always having rehearsals at the house, too. And so, I would always be around the rehearsals and you know, so it was just a—it was a really cool world for me.
00:03:12	Jesse	Host	It wasn't ever, like, burdensome to you? It didn't ever feel like, "Oh god, more music. I guess I have to—I have to practice my piano."
00:03:22	Robert	Guest	No! Because I wasn't even—funny thing is, I wasn't even playing piano then. I didn't start playing piano until I was like 11. I was really—I was actually playing drums when I was like 7. I had a drum set and I would practice the drums a little bit, but I don't know. I loved being around the music, but I didn't really tap into it like, "Hey, I wanna do it," 'til a little bit later.
00:03:45	Jesse	Host	What do you think changed?
00:03:46	Robert	Guest	I don't—um, me not making the basketball team.  [They laugh.]
			'Cause I literally, like—I auditioned for a performing arts high school my freshman year and I got in for piano. But I declined to go, because I wanted to play basketball at the regular high school. So, I stayed at the regular high school. I went to the regular high school and rode the bench the whole year. And I realized, "Oh, you know what? I'm probably—let me try out this piano thing."
			[Jesse chuckles.]
			So, then I went to the regular—then I went to the performing arts high school and that's kind of where I got more serious.
00:04:19	Jesse	Host	But if you grew up with your mom playing all different—I mean, playing, you know—playing as a working musician and the kind of working musician who—you know, is a local working musician,

			which is to say plays whatever kind of music there is a gig for—then you—then you're in a situation where you have to have, you know—you sort of by necessity have a basic fluency in everything.
00:04:46	Robert	Guest	Exactly. And that becomes the norm for you. You know? To not have fluency in everything becomes abnormal, so that's kind of how I got it. I think that's how I got it. That—'cause all I know is random. [Chuckles.] Randomness. You know? And to me, the random—I embraced the randomness and became—you know—normancy. If you will.
00:05:11	Jesse	Host	What kind of music did you love when you were 14 years old?
00:05:17	Robert	Guest	Um, 14 what is 14? Ninth grade? Um. I loved—actually, I loved pop rock music. I loved Billy Joel. I loved Bruce Hornsby. I loved Bonnie Ray. And I loved hip-hop, as well. I was a Tribe Called Quest fan. And I loved a lot of Keith Jarrett, at that time period.
00:05:46	Jesse	Host	I think, you know, few are the—few are the guests on our show who don't say that when they were 14 they loved Keith Jarrett, [chuckling] A Tribe Called Quest, and Bonnie Ray.
00:05:56	Robert	Guest	[Laughs.] That would literally be like a mixtape. I used to make tapes to listen to in my car. And I'm sure that all those were on there at some—together. My mixtapes were very random. My friends would get in my car and be like, "Huh!?" [Laughs.] 'Cause they would be like nodding to the Tribe Called Quest, but you keep riding and in about ten minutes, you know, imma hit you with—you know, [singing in falsetto] "Turn down the lights." You know.
00:06:23	Jesse	Host	When you were on the basketball team, at the regular high school and you're in the—you know, and you're in the locker room and you have a tape deck and you press play on a Bonnie Ray tape, what did everyone think?
00:06:38	Robert	Guest	[Laughs.] That's where headphones come in.  [Jesse laughs.]  I never really let that out at the regular high school. That was just a little secret of mine. I never let them know I listened to Michael Bolton's "Soul Survivor".
00:06:51	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	[Jesse guffaws and Robert chuckles.]  Jesse: You probably shouldn't!
00.06.51	Crossiaik	Crossiaik	Robert: 'Cause I probably would have got my ass whooped.
00:06:53	Jesse	Host	You probably shouldn't be letting me know that now!
00:06:56	Robert	Guest	[Cackles.] Oops, did I say that?  [They laugh.]  Yeah, I'm telling you, man. I got some—I got some skeletons.
00:07:05	Jesse	Host	I wanna ask you about working with Bilal Oliver, with whom you've worked for many, many years. The two of you met in college, right?
00:07:19	Robert	Guest	Yes. We both got—Bilal's from Philly. I'm from Houston. We both got full scholarships to The New School, in Manhattan. And when you first go there, they put all the new students in a room and basically call you—call your names and they just make random bands and you just play together. And we actually didn't play together, but I just saw him sing with another band. He was like—oh, I was like, "Man, he's ridiculous." And he heard me play and

			was like, "Aw man, he's ridiculous." And there was only six Black people at the school, so we just knew each other.
			[They laugh. Music fades in slowly.]
			So, we just became really, really, really cool from day one and here we are, 15 years in. Same thing. That's my brother right there. And he's my favorite vocalist.
00:08:06	Jesse	Host	Is there—I was thinking of playing—there's a couple of songs that you recorded with him on your very first album, <i>Mood</i> . Is there one that maybe you'd like to talk about a little bit?
00:08:21	Robert	Guest	Uuuh, yeah, well, I like the "Maiden Voyage" and—the "Maiden Voyage", that's on there. And there's a subtle hint of Radiohead mixed in there.
00:08:29	Music	Music	"Maiden Voyage" from the album <i>Mood</i> by Robert Glasper.
00:09:00	Robert	Guest	[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]  It was just a mashup that I came up with a long time ago, actually. I
00.09.00	Robert	Guesi	actually redid it again on my <i>In My Element</i> record, more blatant because I could actually get it cleared. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> So, on <i>Mood</i> —this album, <i>Mood</i> , we're talking about—I didn't have the means to get it cleared. I was with a small label. We couldn't get the Radiohead cleared, so I just hinted at it. I invited Bilal to the studio to come put something on it and I didn't know what he was gonna do. He didn't tell me what he was gonna do. He didn't know what he was gonna do. He just went into the booth and started making sounds and my producer was like, "What is he doing? I don't like the—w-wh-what's happening?"
			And I was like, "I don't know, but he's a genius. Just let him do what he does." 'Cause he went in there and started going [makes a buzzing sound]. You know. And then all of the sudden, it turned into this beautiful sea of sound.
00:09:43	Jesse	Host	Let's take a listen to the Robert Glasper trio from Robert Glasper's very first album, 2004's <i>Mood</i> , featuring Bilal with a version of Herbie Hancock's "Maiden Voyage" with a little bit of interpolation of Radiohead on top of it.
00:10:00	Music	Music	[Volume increases.]
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue, then fades out.]
00:11:17	Jesse	Host	So, Radiohead isn't something that you hear a lot of—in [chuckles]—you know, usually in traditional jazz, Herbie Hancock is like—is controversial enough.
			[Robert agrees with a laugh.]
			Just because you can kind of dance to it. So, right from the start you were interested in expanding the boundaries of what jazz could be. It seems like there are a lot of folks in the jazz community who are interested in maintaining jazz, essentially, as a museum. As something that can be—that we can be reverent of, certainly, but that shouldn't expand.
00:12:05	Robert	Guest	Right. [Giggles.] And who said that? Who said, "Hey, wait a minute. Jazz shouldn't expand!" All it's ever done was expand! That's all it

			Manoush Zomorodi: To become a world champion in freediving, Tanya Streeter learned to breathe like this:  [The sound of a long, drawn out breath taken through the mouth followed by several smaller, shorter gulps of air.]  Manoush: Ideas about air, breath, and breathing. That's on the TED Radio Hour from NPR.
00:15:55	Promo	Clip	[Music ends.]  Music: Mellow synth piano plays in background.
			Brea Grant: Readers have a lot of problems.
			Mallory O'Meara: How do you juggle your holds at the library?
			Brea: How do you decide what to read next?
			Mallory: What do you do when you find out an author you love is a huge trash baby?
			Brea: I'm Brea Grant.
			Mallory: And I'm Mallory O'Meara.
			Brae: And we're the hosts of Reading Glasses.
			Mallory: We're here to solve all your reader problems, and along the way, help you figure out—
			Brea: —your reader wheelhouse—
			<b>Mallory:</b> —which are the things that will absolutely make you pick up a book. Our listener favorites tend to be magic and woman on a journey.
			Brea: And also, birds for some reason?
			Mallory: Your reader doghouse.
			Brea: Yeah, that's the things that will make you avoid a book.
			Mallory: Ugh. Love triangles stress me out so much.
			Brea: Reading Glasses. Every Thursday on MaximumFun.org.
			[Music ends.]
00:16:36	Jesse	Host	It's <i>Bullseye</i> . I'm Jesse Thorn. My guest is pianist, composer, and producer Robert Glasper. As a solo artist, he's released almost a dozen albums, including the Grammy award winning <i>Black Radio</i> . He's also collaborated with some of the biggest names in music today: Kendrick Lamar, Herbie Hancock, Common, and Erykah Badu, among many others. Anyway. We talked in 2012, right after <i>Black Radio</i> had been released. Let's get back into it.
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00:17:26	Robert	Guest	You've made some really beautiful music, both with hip-hop artists and with hip-hop as an inspiration and I wanna talk to you a little bit about the late hip-hop producer J D, J Dilla. Um. Did you first meet him when he was working with Bilal?  Yes. That was one of the first producers that—when Bilal got signed to Interscope Records—in '99 he got signed, I think—that was one of the first producers they had sleighted to him to work with. So, they flew Bilal out to Detroit to work with him and he told them, "Yeah, I'm gonna bring my boy out with me—you know—to work—to work with us."  They were like, "Okay." So, they flew me and Bilal out to Detroit and we worked with Dilla for like a week and half, two weeks. Every day, in his basement. Hung out with him and, you know, talked about music, shared records. You know, he hipped me to a lot of jazz records I wasn't hip to.  [Music fades in.]
00:18:12	Jesse	Host	Showed me where a lot of his samples came from, all kinds of stuff.  I'm gonna play an instrumental from Slum Village's Fantastic, Vol.  2—which was probably
00:18:20	Robert	Guest	Most critically acclaimed.
00:18:22	Jesse	Host	Yeah. The album that J D produced.
00:18:26	Music	Music	A song from Fantastic, Vol. 2 by Slum Village.
			[Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]
00:18:42	Robert	Guest	Nobody else's drums sound like his drums, because he sounded like an actual drummer. And when you're a person that pays attention to beats, you know, his high hat, kick, snare all came together and sounded like there was a person at the drums. Which is hard to do, 'cause all the—everything made sense as far as sound-wise. "Oh, it sounds like somebody's at the drums." And that's because he also played drums and so he understood the drums. But he also played the drums in the way that many people weren't hip to, didn't play like, because he had this thing people call it "behind the beat", you know, all kind of stuff. But—where he laid everything was always like not right on, didn't sound quantized. It wasn't exactly on, but at the same time you can bob your head to it. Sometime the snare'll be early. Bass drum would be a little late, or a base drum would be a little early, snare be a little late. High hat's kind of in the middle doing something. It was kind of drunk funk-ish. You're just in the middle like, "What's happening?"  Then there's the melodic content of it, where he's one of the most melodic producers I know. You know. That's what really gravitated
00:19:53	Jesse	Host	me towards his music.  You know, the aesthetics of jazz and hip-hop owe something to each other, but they're also very different. I mean, I think that—for one thing, jazz is very deeply invested in the idea of the instrumental solo, which is not at all part of hip-hop.  [Music fades out.]
			Well, I guess you could make—
00:20:10	Robert	Guest	Well, the vocal!

00:20:11	Jesse	Host	I was about to say, I guess you could make some argument for the vocal being something like an instrumental solo.
00:20:16	Robert	Guest	Uh-huh! 'Cause it's improved a lot of times. Sometimes it's—you
00:20:18	Jesse	Host	know what I'm saying? [Interrupting.] Sometimes.
00:20:10	Robert	Guest	It's off the cuff, freestyled if you will.
00:20:19	Jesse	Host	Sure. But I think—I think that it's—I think you're stretching, there.
00:20:30	Robert	Guest	Honestly, it depends. And it depends on who you're going to see.
00.20.00	Robert	Oucsi	You know, you go see Q-Tip live? He's probably gonna freestyle.
			You go see—I'm just naming people that I've been onstage with
			and pretty much nine times out of ten, I know they're gonna
			freestyle at some point. You know what I mean? But for the most
			part now, when you—when you add I have records into it—you
			know, I have albums. I got songs that people know, you gotta do the songs. You know what I mean. But I know what you're saying. If
00:20:59	Jesse	Host	you go to a jazz show, you're gonna see more improvisation.  And I also think that, you know, there's also an element of dance
00.20.39	Jesse	11051	music versus not dance music in the sense that most hip-hop—
			certainly not all hip-hop, but most hip-hop is either dance music or
			has its roots in dance music. And one of the essential elements of
			dance music is repetition. Um, and—you know, jazz music—
00:21:24	Robert	Guest	Now we're going back to the birthplace of jazz! What was jazz when
			it was first made?
00:21:28	Jesse	Host	Yeah, sure, but it has—it has substantially—
00:21:33	Robert	Guest	Changed.
00:21:34	Jesse	Host	—not been that for—since the '50s.
00:21:36	Robert	Guest	Right. But, again, that's what I'm saying. The birth of all this stuff
			comes from the father to the son. Now, the father—jazz in the '30s
			was all dance music! That's what it was for! That was the purpose!
			And it was very repetitious. It was a big band. The beat was
			[syncopated] ching-chika-ding-chika-ding-chika-ding, the
			base was dum-dun-dun-dun. And the horns were bap!
			Bap! Spa-dap! Bop! Spa-ba-dop, ba-ba-dop, ba-ba-bop! Repetition.
			And then it—then it morphed into something else and the same
			thing with jazz, same thing with hip-hop. You know? Repetition.  Dance music. I mean, hip-hop and jazz is the same [censored]
			thing.
			umg.
			And everybody's like, "Oh, you know, hip-hop cats, you know,
			they're always—they're—it's all about drugs and women and
			alcohol." What was jazz?!
			,
			[They laugh.]
00:22:25	Jesse	Host	Robert, I'm not sure I can support hip-hop, because I've heard a lot
			of hip-hop artists smoke jazz cigarettes.
00:22:31	Robert	Guest	[Laughs.] You know, it's all the same! You know. They learned
			from—hip-hop cats learned from jazz. Jazz was the first of all that.
			'Cause jazz was the hip-hop of its time. It was the newest, coolest,
			dopest, most cutting-edge music of the time, all the time. And that's
			what's missing about it now. Now, they're reminiscing about that
00:22:52	loos	Hoot	time period instead of keeping it cutting edge and new all the time.
00:22:58	Jesse	Host	Robert, I need to ask you one last thing.
			[Robert affirms.]
			[NODER AIIIIIIIS.]
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00:23:23	Robert	Guest	Um, I saw on [chuckles]—I saw on the internet that you went to a strip club with Ludacris and that is like—I don't know, I can't even—that's like going to see The Last Supper with Jesus.  [Robert cackles.]  I don't even know. Is that real?!  Yeah! I was in Atlanta and I did a gig with Ludacris. [Laughs.] That was—what? Earlier this year? Or last year? I can't remember. It might have been January. But, yeah, a friend of mine is his music director and Red Bull put on this whole big concert thing and it was like Ludacris versus this rock band and the whole point of it was Ludacris was taking three of their songs and changing it into Luda style hip-hop and the rock band took three Ludacris songs and changed it into their style of rock.
00:23:53	Jesse	Host	Get to the going to the strip club with Ludacris part, Robert Glasper!
00:23:57	Robert	Guest	And then I—after that, we went to the strip club and partied! And I partied with Ludacris at the strip club! [Laughs.]
00:24:04	Jesse	Host	That's something you can tell your grandchildren about, Robert Glasper.
00:24:07	Robert	Guest	I could, but the same—you know what's funny, though? He was standing up against the wall quiet. He was not the Ludacris that you think you would see on the videos and stuff like that. He was just chilling. You know. Really, really, really, really chilling. Good guy.
00:24:22	Jesse	Host	Well, Robert Glasper, I sure appreciate you taking the time to be on <i>Bullseye</i> . It was really a pleasure.
00:24:27	Robert	Guest	Thank you so much. I appreciate it.  [Music fades in.]
00:24:29	Jesse	Host	Robert Glasper. His recent album—which, again, we will have to bleep the name of— <i>F-k Your Feelings</i> is up for R&B Album of the Year at this year's Grammys. Will he win? We'll find out in March! Let's listen to his Grammy nominated single, "Better Than I Imagined", featuring another past guest of our show. A favorite past guest: Meshell Ndegeocello.
00:24:52	Music	Music	"Better Than I Imagined" from the album F-k Your Feelings by Robert Glasper.  In the scramble to get a flight I lost my phone and I'm calling you from the hotel phone I couldn't get a flight back to the States I realize you're the only number I know by heart  Last time I was here, we were together, remember?  [Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue.]
00:25:22	Jesse	Host	That's the end of another episode of <i>Bullseye</i> . <i>Bullseye</i> is created from the homes of me and the staff of Maximum Fun, in and around greater Los Angeles, California—where just this very week, my daughter learned to ride a bike. And only two days later, when the road in front of my house was blocked by an enormous crew cab pickup truck, she screamed, "Hey, get out of my way! I'm biking here!"

			Our show is produced by speaking into microphones. Our producer is Kevin Ferguson. Jesus Ambrosio and Jordan Kauwling are our associate producers. We get help from Casey O'Brien and Kristen Bennett. Our interstitial music is by Dan Wally, also known as DJW. Our theme song is by the band The Go! Team. Our thanks to The Go! Team and to their label, Memphis Industries, for letting us use it all these years.  If you wanna hear the latest about what we're up to, you can keep up with our show on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. We post all of our interviews up there. And I think that's about it. Just remember: all great radio hosts have a signature signoff.
00:26:28	Promo	Promo	Speaker: Bullseye with Jesse Thorn is a production of MaximumFun.org and is distributed by NPR.  [Music fades out.]