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For immediate release:

New Orleans Jazz Orchestra Brings Crescent City Spirit to Mondavi Center

October 11, 2007; Davis, California—Inspired to bring the sounds of the Crescent City to the world in the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the **New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO)** will celebrate the rich heritage of New Orleans jazz at the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** on November 2. The 16-piece ensemble, led by *Billboard*-award winning trumpeter and composer **Irvin Mayfield**, will play jazz steeped in blues, swing, spirituals, and more in a high-spirited tribute to New Orleans' musical legacy.

The event will begin at 8 pm on November 2 in the Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the **UC Davis** campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at MondaviArts.org. The event is presented as part of the Mondavi Center's **90.9 KXJZ Improvisations Series**. There will be a **Pre-performance Lecture** featuring **Derek Washington**, host of *Trackin' the Blues* on 90.9 KJXZ, beginning at 7 pm in the AGR Room of the **Buehler Alumni and Visitor Center** adjacent to the Mondavi Center.

New Orleans is often considered "the birthplace of jazz," a place where a wide range of musical influences from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the U.S. came together to form a new kind of music based on swinging rhythms, blues harmony, and collective improvisation around the beginning of the 20th century. From early innovators such as **Joe "King" Oliver**, **Jelly Roll Morton**, and **Louis Armstrong** to current figures such as **Wynton Marsalis**, **Terrence Blanchard**, and **Harry Connick, Jr.**, the city of New Orleans has been synonymous with jazz for almost a century, yet until recently, no cultural institution existed to sustain and promote that legacy and to bring it to a nationwide audience.

Irvin Mayfield has worked to remedy that situation, founding the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra in 2002 as an educational institution and performing ensemble dedicated to preserving and promoting New Orleans jazz. His efforts have been redoubled in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the city in August 2005 and claimed the life of Mayfield's father.

"He really became the representative of those who died," Mayfield told Canada's *The Globe and Mail*. "It became so much more important for me to communicate with people. The real story here is the community as

well as the individual—which is the story of jazz. Musicians have been getting that right for the last 85 years down in New Orleans.”

Born in New Orleans in 1977, Mayfield is increasingly recognized as one of the most prominent musicians of his generation, with a style that draws from all eras of New Orleans music. He was appointed an official Cultural Ambassador of the City of New Orleans in 2003, and serves as artistic director for the NOJO non-profit institution, through which he delivers year-round jazz presentations for the New Orleans region.

In October 2003, Mayfield premiered his composition *Strange Fruit*, commissioned by **Dillard University** and featuring the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra and the **Dillard University Concert Choir**. The work was the first commission of its kind made possible by a historically black university. Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra made history again on November 17, 2005, when they symbolically reopened New Orleans with the performance of Mayfield’s *All the Saints*, the first major cultural event inside post-Katrina New Orleans. A Basin Street Records artist, Mayfield has released 10 albums, the most recent of which is *Strange Fruit*, with NOJO, from 2005. His recording *Volume One* with **Los Hombres Calientes** won the *Billboard* magazine award for Contemporary Latin Jazz Album of the Year in 2000, and the group was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2001 for *Volume Three*.

Under Mayfield’s leadership, NOJO is regularly presented at the country’s most prestigious venues, with performances at **Jazz at Lincoln Center**, Chicago’s **Ravinia Festival**, Philadelphia’s **Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts**, and others. For its current tour, NOJO offers audiences a program titled *Do You Know What It Means?*, a vibrant collection of Mayfield’s big band arrangements of traditional New Orleans jazz, blues, swing, and spirituals. This special program will evoke the blues-based sound and celebratory *joie de vivre* of New Orleans, giving audiences across the country a sense of what it means to miss New Orleans.

The line-up for the Mondavi Center event includes Mayfield, **Evan Christopher**, alto sax and clarinet; **Aaron Fletcher**, alto sax; **Ed Petersen**, tenor sax; **Derek Douget**, tenor sax; **Dan Oestrieher**, baritone sax; **Vince Gardner**, trombone; **Jeff Galindo**, trombone; **Terrance Taplin**, trombone; **Barney Floyd**, trumpet; **Leon Brown**, trumpet; **Eric Lucero**, trumpet; **Maurice Brown**, trumpet; **Victor Atkins**, piano; **David Pulphus**, bass; and **Adonis Rose**, drums.

“The city of New Orleans has made an immense contribution to jazz and to American music in general, and we look forward to celebrating this legacy with the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra,” said Mondavi Center Executive Director **Don Roth**.

What: New Orleans Jazz Orchestra
When: Friday, November 2 • 8 pm
Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis
Admission: \$42/\$37/\$32 Adults • \$21/\$18.50/\$16 Students & Children
Tickets/Info: 530.754.ARTS (2787)
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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