

world village

a world music label from Harmonia Mundi

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ ORCHESTRA BOOK ONE

Available on World Village June 9, 2009



As their beloved city gradually rebounds from Hurricane Katrina, the **New Orleans Jazz Orchestra's** World Village debut, **Book One**, (WV468079 -- street date **June 9**) reflects and champions the Big Easy's indomitable spirit. Bandleader **Irvin Mayfield** draws upon centuries of intermingled French/African/Caribbean influences, Southern blues, Count Basie's big-band swing, plus modern grooves as fresh as today's breakfast of chicory-laced *café au lait*, *calas* (a deep-fried fritter) and golden-brown, sweet *beignets*. The set commences with the sultry, strutting, tenor-sax-and-trombone-infused "7th Ward Blues". This historically heavily *Creole* neighborhood (Jelly Roll Morton lived here) was almost totally inundated after Katrina but the residents are gradually reclaiming their homes. The *bolero*-flavored "Creole Thang" is inspired by water in its many guises, both life giving and destructive, while "The Mistress (Madam)" depicts lovers wandering through a moonlit, flower-scented summer night.

"Beat" recalls colonial-era dances from Martinique and Cuba before careening off into breathlessly frenetic and intricate yet tautly disciplined flute, trumpet, alto, sax and drum solos. "Move On Ahead", with smoky, falsetto-voiced local R&B figurehead John Boutté on vocals, expresses both the composer's impatience with the endless bureaucratic delays that have marred the Crescent City's full recovery, and his unshakable confidence that right will prevail and the good times will continue to roll, just as they always have.

The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO), a non-profit organization, was incorporated in December 2002. The ensemble was founded and is still led by the Grammy®-nominated and Billboard-Award-winning trumpet virtuoso, composer and educator Irvin Mayfield, a former child prodigy and protégé of Wynton Marsalis. He lost his father during Hurricane Katrina, but instead of allowing himself to be stunned into inactivity, Mayfield has maintained a constant-level positive endeavor, and is now the officially appointed Cultural Ambassador for the City of New Orleans. NOJO operates primarily as an all-star 16-piece big band, but also incorporates trios, quartets, quintets and sextets suitable for smaller venues. They are based at Tulane University and dedicated to presenting educational programs and promoting the famously rich music and culture of their city. Their first recording, entitled *Strange Fruit* (2003), which featured an original composition of Mr. Mayfield's, received widespread critical acclaim. NOJO has performed at Ravinia, Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Congressional Black Caucus, among other important concerts. A 2005 performance at Christ Church Cathedral, where NOJO premiered a newly commissioned work called "All the Saints", marked the first major jazz performance in post-Katrina New Orleans. Their international tour, *New Orleans: Do You Know What it Means*, has expanded awareness of the members' hometown experience while demonstrating that jazz is a truly democratic form of artistic expression.

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Book One (World Village 498079)

1. 7th Ward Blues
2. Sweet Bread On The Levee
3. In Love All Over Again
4. Creole Thang
5. Somebody Forgot To Turn The Faucet Off
6. The Mistress
7. Richie Can Count
8. Beat
9. Move On Ahead

"This album has emotional power and depth of writing/arrangement content that invites comparison to similar efforts by such past giants as Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Charles Mingus"

– **OffBeat**

"[Mayfield's] compositions...are effective vehicles for the ensemble, which makes a beautiful sound on such highlights as the sultry, indigo-hued '7th Ward Blues.'"

– **The Star-Ledger**



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