

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Wynton Marsalis Galvanizes Entertainment Community
For Hurricane Katrina Anniversary Events**

*Marsalis brings host of superstars, establishes charitable trust, three days
of tribute events to help rebuild New Orleans' cultural infrastructure*

NEW ORLEANS— Nine-time Grammy Award-winning musician and New Orleans native Wynton Marsalis returns to New Orleans to commemorate Hurricane Katrina and help support the cultural infrastructure of a city devastated one year ago.

“New Orleans: Rebuilding the Soul of America...One Year Later” is a three-day commemorative event sponsored by Harrah’s Casino that includes a concert; a talent search contest featuring performances by Marsalis and the hottest local talent in the Mississippi Delta; and a free jazz and culinary event featuring Emeril Lagasse with Marsalis welcoming back the school children of New Orleans. Thousands of New Orleanians and out-of-town visitors are expected to attend the commemorative events.

“We wanted to bring this event to New Orleans not only to help raise money to support the people recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina but to remind them that they’re not alone,” Marsalis said. “I love this city as much as you do.”

“Harrah’s New Orleans is proud to join Wynton and so many others working together to focus national attention on the city’s cultural assets and its continuing need for assistance,” said Anthony Sanfilippo, Harrah’s Entertainment’s Central Division president.

Appearing at the Aug. 29 benefit concert is Grammy Award-winning artist Stevie Wonder, whose latest album, *A Time 2 Love*, features his hit single “Shelter in the Rain,” which he produced last fall and dedicated to New Orleans. Marsalis narrates “Shelter in the Rain” for the blind in the song’s music video.

The Rebuilding the Soul of America concert also has tapped Earth, Wind and Fire, touring this summer to promote the band’s 23rd career album, *Illumination*, and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member Carlos Santana. The concert also showcases the talent of three of Gospel music’s hottest artists: Grammy Award-winning Gospel legend Yolanda Adams, Grammy Award-winning Gospel crossover artist Kirk Franklin and Houston native and Grammy Award-nominee Kim Burrell. The Wynton Marsalis Septet and local talent also are on the roster to perform.

Marsalis and tribute event co-producers have committed to tapping additional resources, humanitarians and corporations to help in the region’s recovery. Other events that will support the proceeds will be the Kazanjian Foundation **Jewels for Charity** through eBay® Giving Works, the dedicated program for charity listings. The auction is being organized by Auction Cause, a premier online auction management agency. The auction can be found at www.ebay.com/jewelsforcharity and will begin Aug. 22.

The charitable arm of prominent jewelry company Kazanjian Bros., Inc., the Kazanjian Foundation has donated 57 exquisite pieces from its collection to benefit the Rebuild the Soul of America Charitable Trust (RSOA.) Several pieces from the collection will be available for viewing at www.ebay.com.

Rebuild the Soul of America Charitable Trust (RSOA) is being formed as an independent not-for-profit entity focusing its efforts on rebuilding the cultural economy in America by supporting civic life, musicians and the integrated arts, and creating awareness of the critical role of the American Cultural community. Most of the targeted areas for grant funding are in line with Marsalis' role as co-chairman of the Cultural Committee of the Mayor of New Orleans' Bring New Orleans Back Commission.

Deveney Communication of New Orleans is handling publicity of the "Celebrate Jazz Trio: Rebuild the Soul of America" three-day event. Additional information also is available online at www.celebratejazz.org and www.rsoatrust.org.

Ambassador of Swing Talent Search

The opening night of events Sunday, Aug. 27, marks the first installment of the *Ambassador of Swing* musical talent reality series in the tradition of *American Idol*. The series brings the "making of a Star" concept such as MTV's *Making the Band* to the Delta Region. The jazz version is produced by former MTV Senior producer J. Kevin Swain and takes a cultural step further by giving homage to America's original art form-Jazz and its blues roots.

The first show will be taped at the Harrah's New Orleans Theater from 9 to 11 p.m. with edgy, playful performances by Marsalis and the series' host. Subsequent shows will discover what talent is "swingin'" the hardest in juke joints, living rooms, back rooms and street corners throughout the Mississippi Delta. This unique concept features performances by undiscovered musical talent indigenous to the New Orleans region. What sets the *Ambassador of Swing* apart from the others is that viewers will get an education on the roots of American music. Contributions to the RSOA Charitable Trust will be made annually from the series.

Cookin' With Music! With Chef Emeril Lagasse and Wynton Marsalis

Marsalis and celebrity chef and restaurateur Emeril Lagasse will host a free educational cooking concert for 4,000 school children from New Orleans and surrounding parishes. The event will feature a cooking demonstration of Jivin' Jambalaya by the Master Chef coupled with jazz education by Marsalis. The event takes place Aug. 28 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. The two New Orleans cultural ambassadors will explore two important aspects of New Orleans culture: Jazz and food.

"Wynton and I have created a fun-focused educational performance to share our love of cooking and music with New Orleans-area children as they kick-off the new school year," said Lagasse. "What better way to instill pride and hope for the future than to showcase our culture."

For attendance information, school administrators, nonprofit organizations and social interest groups can contact Emeril Lagasse Foundation at (504) 212-2222 for details.

New Orleans: Rebuilding the Soul of America...One Year Later

The marquee event is a star-studded benefit concert and taping on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina—Tuesday, Aug 29.

Tickets for the concert may be purchased by phone through TicketMaster at (504) 522-5555 or online at www.ticketmaster.com; or the New Orleans Arena ticket office at 1501 Girod Street, New Orleans. New Orleans Arena Box Office Information line: (504) 587-3822. Packages are available online at www.hotels.com.

Marsalis and friends are donating their time and talent to the musical event, “New Orleans: Rebuilding the Soul America...One Year Later.” The concert celebrates the enduring spirit of New Orleans, its music and those brave Americans who have begun the process of rebuilding.

John Cossette, executive producer of the Grammy Awards and BET Awards, Don Mischer, producer of The Olympics opening and closing ceremonies, and BET Awards Producer Ron Weisner are joining Marsalis and his production partner Lisa Marie Hoggs to produce the “Rebuilding the Soul of America” concert.

“We are mournful of all that was lost following Hurricane Katrina; however, we’re also committed to keeping the focus on the great need to rebuild this amazing city,” said Hoggs, Marsalis’ co-executive producer of the three-day tribute. “The response from the entertainment industry has been overwhelmingly supportive.” Additional talent will be announced in the coming weeks.

The events are co-chaired by Bill McFarlin, executive director of the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE), and Daniel Carlin, chair emeritus of The Recording Academy (GRAMMY® Awards), both trustees of the RSOA Charitable Trust. Seletha Smith Nagin, first lady of New Orleans, also is chairing the events.

Individual tickets begin at \$35.00, and all proceeds from the concert will go to RSOA, which will help rebuild the cultural economy of New Orleans. The concert takes place at 6 p.m., Aug. 29 at the New Orleans Arena. Tickets of \$35.00 to \$250 may be purchased through Ticketmaster. Ticket packages are available through Royal Insider at (504) 524-7094 or emailing royalinsider@celebratejazz.org. Sponsorships are available by calling 866-415-RSOA (7762) or 866-403-JAZZ (5299).

“Having spent so much time in this community, I’ve heard a common theme from the people in New Orleans, that some days they’re up and some days they’re down,” Hoggs said. “We truly wanted to create an event that brings people together to encourage the community and help bring the spirit back to this great city.

“We’ve kept the ticket prices low so as many people in the community as possible can come out and be together,” Hoggs said.

“We thank our native son, Wynton Marsalis, and culinary ambassador Emeril Lagasse and their teams for their vision and commitment to the rebirth of New Orleans,” New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin said. “As we come together as One New Orleans and one nation to spiritually reflect on the devastating losses we have experienced, let us stand together in hope for the historical rebirth that will be our future.”

Marsalis is at the forefront of the efforts to rebuild Louisiana and its cultural economy. As artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), he organized an all-star benefit raising more than \$2 million for Hurricane Katrina relief last fall and weeklong New Orleans residency and world premiere of “Congo Square” in April that included free concerts, master classes, clinics and workshops and ended with a three-day New Orleans Festival in New York, benefiting the Big

Easy. He also serves on the city of New Orleans' Bring New Orleans Back Commission as well as co-chairs the state Office of the Lt. Governor's National Advisory Board for Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

Marsalis and Harrah's will co-host an event in the Masquerade Room to thank sponsors and contributors who purchased tickets of \$2,500 or more. Harrah's New Orleans, the Platinum Sponsor of the event, has committed to a \$1.5-million sponsorship for the concert and television taping. Other supporting sponsors and contributors include Apple Computer, eBay® and Hotels.com.

Ticket packages include:

Diamond Fleur de lis - \$5,000

Includes tickets to Ambassador of Swing Talent Search, Emeril Lagasse Foundation "Cooking with Music" event, Diamond Fleur de lis seating at "New Orleans: Rebuilding the Soul of America ...One Year Later" concert, and exclusive receptions and post event.

Platinum Fleur de lis - \$2,500

Includes tickets to Ambassador of Swing Talent Search, Emeril Lagasse Foundation "Cooking with Music" event and Platinum Fleur de lis seating at Rebuilding the Soul of America concert and post event.

Harrah's Purple Circle - \$250

Includes Harrah's Purple Circle seating at the Rebuilding the Soul of America concert.

Individual tickets and Corporate Packages, available through Ticketmaster:

Gold Circle - \$100

Gold Circle seating at the Rebuilding the Soul of America concert.

Corporations may underwrite blocks of 10 seats or more for the Rebuilding the Soul of America concert **Hero** (\$75) and **Helper** (\$50) tickets.

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