



Irvin Mayfield

In his first book (accompanied by a 14 track CD), *A Love Letter to New Orleans*, Grammy Award - winning trumpeter Irvin Mayfield reflects and reports on the people and places his music has brought into his life thus far. From rowdy New Orleans recording sessions to late night introspection with mentors like Wynton Marsalis and the late Herman Leonard, *A Love Letter to New Orleans* is a poignant chronicling of Mayfield's resilient love affair with his city's legacy - Jazz.

At only 32 years old, Irvin Mayfield represents the continuity of the unfolding Jazz legacy of New Orleans. Winning both a Grammy Award and a Billboard-award, this versatile trumpeter, bandleader, composer, arranger, professor, cultural ambassador and recording artist is on a path to position Jazz at the center of American culture. His musical virtuosity and devotion to the music has made Mayfield one of the most recorded and decorated Jazz musicians of his generation. In 2002, Mayfield created the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO), a performing arts institution dedicated to presenting engaging and transformative Jazz experiences. Under his artistic direction, NOJO won the 2010 Grammy Award for Best Large Jazz Ensemble for its critically acclaimed CD *Book One* on the World Village/Harmonia Mundi label. The 20-piece orchestra, which is one of the most sought after touring Jazz orchestras in the country includes such respected musicians as Victor

Atkins on piano, Ed "Sweetbread" Petersen on saxophone and Evan Christopher on clarinet, to name a few.

Mayfield's latest commission, the Elysian Fields Jazz Suite, is a big band composition that will premiere as a musical commencement address at the University of New Orleans' graduation ceremonies in May 2010. The Elysian Fields Jazz Suite is an exploration of liberty, family, death, and rebirth. The composition is inspired by Elysian Fields, the historic avenue in New Orleans that connects the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain, as well as the mythological abode of blessed souls. Elysian Fields is also the location where the body of Mayfield's father, Irvin Mayfield Sr., was found in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Metaphorically, the Elysian Fields Jazz Suite recognizes New Orleans' historical ties to France and its namesake, the Champs Elysees, the storied boulevard where liberty is honored. The Elysian Fields Jazz Suite will serve as the musical platform for the Road To Carnegie Hall Tour in 2010.

Other notable commissions by Mayfield include the Art of Passion, which premiered in 2009 with the Minnesota Orchestra where Mayfield serves as artistic director of Jazz programs. In 2008, Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra presented All The Saints, a spiritual work commissioned by the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. All The Saints was the first concert in the city after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. In 2006, Mayfield premiered Rising Tide, a commission from the New Jersey Performing Arts Center that celebrated the indigenous musical culture of New Orleans. In 2003, Mayfield composed Strange Fruit, which featured the

New Orleans Jazz Orchestra and Dillard University's Concert Choir. The Half past Autumn Suite, Mayfield's first commission, is a musical tribute to renowned African-American artist Gordon Parks. This musical score was commissioned by the New Orleans Museum of Art in 2000 and it accompanied an exhibition of the photographer's work. The score was later recorded with Parks, Wynton Marsalis, and the Irvin Mayfield Quintet, and released on Basin Street Records in 2003.

A proponent of linking Jazz with academia, Mayfield established the New Orleans Jazz Institute (NOJI) at the University of New Orleans in 2008. Since its inception, NOJI launched the Saturday Music School for local elementary students, established a consortium of Jazz professionals throughout the New Orleans area, initiated a high school scholarship competition in partnership with the Satchmo Summer Fest, and created the UNOJO (the University of New Orleans Jazz Orchestra)—a student orchestra patterned after Mayfield's own NOJO (the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra). He is currently a professor of professional practice at UNO's College of Liberal Arts and teaches New Orleans As Discourse, a forum where students interact with nationally recognized cultural, business, and political leaders. The class is streamed on the UNO website and students are required to blog on each guest lecturer. For more information on the class, visit <http://cola.uno.edu/mayfield/>.

Mayfield is on a mission to fortify Jazz through performances, audience building, education and cultural rebirth. In 2009, he entered into a historic partnership with

the Royal Sonesta Hotels, opening Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter. The Playhouse provides over 50 Jazz musicians an opportunity to perform and build new audiences on a weekly basis. Mayfield has also expanded his media platforms with his radio show, The Life & Times of Irvin Mayfield which airs on WGSO 990am and streams on wgso.com.

President Barack Obama nominated Mayfield to the National Council on the Arts, the advisory board of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Mayfield was nominated by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve on the National Council on Arts for a full six-year term until 2016. He also serves as Cultural Ambassador for the City of New Orleans, an appointment recognized by the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Governor of the State of Louisiana and other governmental bodies.

In 1998, Mayfield co-founded the Latin jazz band Los Hombres Calientes with drummer Jason Marsalis and percussionist Bill Summers. Their debut CD-Los Hombres Calientes on Basin Street Records won Billboard's Latin Music Award for Contemporary Jazz Album of the Year. They also recorded Volume 2: Los Hombres Calientes in 1999, the Grammy-nominated Volume 3: New Congo Square in 2001, Volume 4: Vodou Dance in 2003 and Volume 5: Carnival in 2005, all released on Basin Street Records.

Prior to Book One, Mayfield recorded Love Songs, Ballads & Standards with Ellis Marsalis, an early mentor and patriarch of the Marsalis family. His discography also includes

Higher Ground on Blue Note Records, 2005; Strange Fruit, 2005; Half Past Autumn Suite, 2003; How Passion Falls, 2001; and Irvin Mayfield: Irvin Mayfield in 1999, on the Basin Street Record label. His early recordings include Jaz Sawyer/Irvin Mayfield 20/20: Live at the Blue Note in 2000 on Half Note Records and The Irvin Mayfield Sextet: Live at the Blue Note in 1999.

Mayfield received his first trumpet in the fourth grade and graduated from the famous New Orleans Center of Creative Arts in 1995. After turning down a scholarship to the Julliard School of Music, Mayfield studied at the University of New Orleans Jazz Studies program under the mentorship of Ellis Marsalis. Eager to perform, Mayfield left college in 1997 and formed the Irvin Mayfield Septet.

A passionate advocate for New Orleans, Mayfield is Chairman of the Board of the New Orleans Public Library. He also serves on the boards of the New Orleans Recovery Authority, the New Orleans Arts Council, the New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation, the Louisiana State University's Department of Psychiatry and Health Science, Unity of New Orleans, the New Orleans Public Library Foundation and Tulane University's School of Architecture.