

For Immediate Release

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**HARRY CONNICK, JR. CAPTURES THE MANY MOODS
OF NEW ORLEANS ON TWO NEW ALBUMS, *OH, MY NOLA* AND *CHANSON DU VIEUX
CARRÉ*, BOTH
AVAILABLE TUESDAY, JANUARY 30**

**Bountiful Programs of Original Compositions and Classics Associated with the City Celebrate
the Cornucopia of Musical Styles that Represent Connick's Home Town**

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(dateline - New York – January 19, 2007; source: Columbia Records)

Columbia Records will release *Oh, My NOLA*, the new album of New Orleans-inspired music from Harry Connick, Jr., on Tuesday, January 30. On the same day, Marsalis Music/Rounder Records will release a companion album of instrumentals by Connick's big band, *Chanson du Vieux Carré*.

"New Orleans is a city of paradox. Sin, salvation, sex, sanctification, so intertwined yet so separate. The blurred lines from the dark blue of Mardi Gras night to the periwinkle of Ash Wednesday morning" is the way Connick summarizes the gritty and grandiose, soulful and magical Crescent City, where the musical culture is second to none. "Jazz, gospel, brass band, rhythm and blues, country, funk aren't all the styles played in New Orleans," he emphasizes. "But they're the ones I wanted to play around with." And "play around with" them he does, to brilliant effect, on *Oh, My NOLA*.

Oh, My NOLA was recorded in June, days after Connick had completed his historic run in *The Pajama Game*, which is documented in the original cast recording comprising half of the two-disc set *Connick on Broadway, Volume 1*. With the assistance of his great Big Band, plus the added input of a few special guests, Connick has created an unprecedented musical cornucopia of songs inspired by and associated with the Crescent City for his new album.

Several of the songs will bring New Orleans instantly to mind, although Connick and his associates have inevitably found ways to provide a new perspective on these old favorites. "I put a New Orleans groove on 'Jambalaya,' instead of a traditional Cajun or Zydeco feeling," he says of the old Hank Williams hit, "then we move into an entirely new tempo for an entirely new groove – big-band swing." "Careless Love," an even older warhorse, was arranged and performed spontaneously, at the end of the album's final session, with a trio of Connick on vocals and piano, Jonathan Dubose on acoustic guitar and Arthur Latin playing only bass drum and tambourine; while "Working in the Coal Mine" gained new life through Latin's imaginative overdubbing. "Arthur worked his magic with all of his percussion toys," Connick reports, "and each part he played told a different story of each different worker in that mine." For "Something You Got," Connick allowed several of the horn players in his band to take a

breather and came up with what he calls "a and rhythm section."

traditional, old-school arrangement for four horns

Personal tributes also add to the heartfelt aura of *Oh, My NOLA*. These include "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey," the favorite song of Connick's Uncle Ray (whose photo graces the cover of Connick's album *She*), and "Lazy Bones," one of the songs that Connick's mother would sing to him when he was a child. Several of Connick's musical idols also receive their props: "Let Them Talk" is a nod to the great James Booker; "Hello Dolly," identified worldwide with Louis Armstrong; and "Elijah Rock," one of Connick's favorite recordings by the New Orleans gospel giant, the late Raymond Myles.

Oh, My NOLA also features four new originals reflecting the paradoxical nature of the city Connick celebrates. "We Make a Lot of Love" is all about romance, and a song that Connick began work on while recording his popular collection of love ballads, *Only You*. The title track, "a brand new song about a very old city," makes room for one of New Orleans' master musicians, banjo player Bill Huntington, as well as three of its young lions – trumpeter Leon "Kid Chocolate" Brown, trombonist Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews and pianist Jonathan Batiste. Connick's other two original compositions are among the most moving of his career. "Do Dat Thing" is both a celebration of New Orleans culture ("The title means whatever you want it to mean," Connick insists; "You've just got to know how to do it") and a tribute to the city's late musical greats, many of whom are mentioned specifically by name. More powerful still is "All These People," inspired by the suffering Connick witnessed when he visited New Orleans in the days immediately following Hurricane Katrina. "The song is all about the people who were left stranded at the Convention Center, with the verses describing what I saw as I was taken through by a kind fellow I had met on the street earlier that day named Darryl." The track features Connick in duet with the great Sony Urban Music/Epic Records gospel singer Kim Burrell.

The companion album, *Chanson du Vieux Carré*, was recorded for Marsalis Music/Rounder Records in 2003. The disc features Connick's longstanding big band in a similar mix of New Orleans classics, including compositions by New Orleans legends Armstrong ("Someday You'll Be Sorry"), Sidney Bechet ("Petite Fleur"), Paul Barbarin ("Bourbon Street Parade") and Professor Longhair ("Mardi Gras in New Orleans") as well as three Connick originals. While Connick does not sing on this album, there are vocal spots for trumpeter Leroy Jones and trombonist Lucien Barbarin.

"All These People" was the first single to be released from *Oh, My NOLA*, and 100% of Connick's royalties from its sale, as well as a portion of his royalties from the sales of both albums will benefit the New Orleans Habitat Musicians' Village. This project, conceived by Connick and his longtime friend and colleague Branford Marsalis, will consist of single-family homes and elder-friendly duplexes as well as the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music, named for the modern jazz pioneer and patriarch of the Marsalis clan who counts Connick among his legion of successful music students. New Orleans Habitat for Humanity began dedicating completed houses and delivered keys in the Musicians' Village to needy families shortly before *Oh, My NOLA* was recorded.

For all of the work that remains to be done, there is a basic spirit of optimism and celebration that permeates both discs and that is best captured in Connick's version of "Yes We Can Can" on *Oh, My NOLA*. "Allen Toussaint was prophetic on this one," he says of the song's legendary composer. "'Yes We Can Can' perfectly fits the bill of a post-Katrina New Orleans. This should be the theme song of our great city." It also summarizes the manner in which Connick views life – with positive spirit, a focus on solutions rather than casting blame, and a humanity that knows no boundaries. It is this same

spirit that makes *Oh, My NOLA* and *Chanson du Vieux Carré* such honest and affirmative experiences.

SonyBMG Music Entertainment, Marsalis Music and Rounder Records are proud supporters of the New Orleans Habitat Musicians' Village and will contribute a portion of the proceeds of these records to the Village. For more information, visit <http://www.habitat-nola.org> and click on Musicians' Village or <http://www.NOLAmusiciansvillage.org>.

Harry Connick, Jr. & His Big Band: My New Orleans Tour 2007
Confirmed dates:

February 23rd: Mizner Park, Boca Raton, FL
 February 24th: Ruth Eckerd Hall, Clearwater, FL
 February 25th: Carnival Center, Miami, FL
 February 26th: Bob Carr Performing Arts Center, Orlando, FL
 February 27th: Mercer Theater, Savannah, GA
 March 1st: Thomas Wolfe Auditorium, Asheville, NC
 March 2nd: North Charleston Performing Arts Center, Charleston, SC
 March 3rd: Township Auditorium, Columbia, SC
 March 4th: Ovens Auditorium, Charlotte, NC
 March 7th: Fox Theatre, Atlanta, GA
 March 9th: BJCC Concert Hall, Birmingham, AL
 March 10th: Knoxville Auditorium, Knoxville, TN
 March 11th: Palace Theater, Louisville, KY
 March 13th: Tennessee PAC, Andrew Jackson Hall, Nashville, TN
 March 14th: Murat Theatre, Indianapolis, IN
 March 15th: Chicago Theater, Chicago, IL
 March 17th: Fox Theatre, St. Louis, MO

Additional tour dates to be added.

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