

Irvin Mayfield Biography

Irvin Mayfield, 31, is a Grammy-award nominated and Billboard-award winning trumpeter, bandleader, composer, arranger and recording artist. His dual passion for Jazz and New Orleans, the city of his birth, has quickly established Mayfield as one of the young giants in the world of Jazz. His music, which draws from all aspects of New Orleans life and culture, re-imagines unique New Orleans styles and blends them into an authentic 21st century jazz sound.

As the founder and artistic director of the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (NOJO), a performing arts institution dedicated to presenting engaging and transformative Jazz experiences, Mayfield recently led the 15-piece NOJO on a 20-city tour of “New Orleans Then and Now”, a multi-media musical tour de force. Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra will release their new CD BOOK ONE on World Village, a subsidiary of Harmonia Mundi in the summer of 2009.

On the forefront of promoting the culture and business of Jazz, Mayfield entered into a historic partnership with the Royal Sonesta Hotels in March 2009 and opened the Irvin Mayfield’s Jazz Playhouse on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter. The Royal Sonesta, an international hotel corporation made an investment in New Orleans jazz by branding its premier entertainment venue after the city’s young jazz giant.

As a proponent of linking Jazz with academia, Mayfield is a professor and serves as artistic director of the New Orleans Jazz Institute at the University of New Orleans. He was also appointed artistic director of jazz for the internationally acclaimed Minnesota Orchestra in 2008 and is directing a four-concert jazz series, while also participating in various educational projects. He also is writing a new commissioned work, “The Art of Passion,” which he will perform with the Orchestra in the summer of 2009.

Expanding his media platforms, Mayfield recently launched “The Life and Times of Irvin Mayfield”, a talk format show on WGSO 990 AM in New Orleans that is streamed on www.wgso.com. As host, Mayfield has interviewed such notable guest as James Carville, New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin, New Orleans Saints Drew Brees, former

HUD Director Henry Cisneros, Wynton Marsalis, and bass sensation Esperanza Spaulding.

Mayfield co-founded the Latin jazz group Los Hombres Calientes, whose debut CD won Billboard's Latin Music Award for Contemporary Jazz Album of the Year. Their third CD, Vol3: New Orleans Congo Square was nominated for a Grammy. Los Hombres Calientes released a total of five albums on Basin Street Records, and Mayfield released another five albums as a leader on that label, including "Love Songs, Ballads and Standards" in 2008. It was the first major release on the label since Hurricane Katrina. On it, he and Ellis Marsalis, the patriarch of the Marsalis family, perform instrumental interpretations of time-tested classics. Mayfield also released two albums on Half Note Records and, in 2005, recorded "Just a Closer Walk with Thee" on Higher Ground/Blue Note Records, for the Musician's Relief Fund. He performed the tune for President George W. Bush during Black Music Month.

As a composer, Mayfield's fastidious interest in the intersection of Jazz and history led him to numerous collaborations that resulted in historic commissioned works. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Mayfield who lost his dad in the storm composed All The Saints, a critically acclaimed spiritual ode to the city of New Orleans. Commissioned by the Episcopal Dean of the Christ Church Cathedral, the first of its kind by an Episcopal diocese, All The Saints was performed in the cathedral served and served as the first major cultural event inside the city post-Katrina. In tribute to all of the victims of Hurricane Katrina, famed trumpet designer David Monette created the Elysian Trumpet, a 14-karat gold one-of-a-kind trumpet depicting the storms effects on the city of Jazz.

In October 2003, while serving as the founder and artistic director of the Institute of Jazz at Dillard University, Mayfield debuted, Strange Fruit, featuring the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra and the Dillard University Concert Choir. The first of its kind commission by a historically Black College, Strange Fruit is a 90-minute, nine-movement triad chronicling the lives of an interracial couple in the 1920s. Strange Fruit was later released on Basin Street Records in 2005.

His first composition, Half Past Autumn Suite, was commissioned by the New Orleans Museum of Art's as a musical tribute to renowned African American artist Gordon Parks. The piece was later recorded with Parks, Wynton Marsalis and the Irvin Mayfield Quintet and released by Basin Street Records in 2003.

A passionate spokesman for the rich history and cultural significance of jazz and New Orleans, Mayfield was unanimously appointed cultural ambassador for the City of New

Orleans by the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Governor of the State of Louisiana, Louisiana House of Representatives, Louisiana Senate, City of New Orleans, New Orleans City Council and New Orleans Aviation Board.

Mayfield is highly engaged in numerous public service projects including serving as Chairman of the Board of the New Orleans Public Library, and serving on the boards of New Orleans Recovery Authority, New Orleans Arts Council, New Orleans Police and Justice Foundation, Louisiana State University's Department of Psychiatry and Health Science, and Unity of New Orleans (communications chair and the official spokesperson for the City of New Orleans' homelessness commission) and vice chairman of the New Orleans Public Library Foundation and vice Chairman for First Responders Fund.

Mayfield received his first trumpet in fourth grade and went on to graduate from the famous New Orleans Center of Creative Artist, the artistic springboard of Wynton Marsalis, Harry Connick Jr., Nicholas Payton, and many other contemporary jazz greats. He was granted a scholarship to the Julliard School of Music but chose to study at the University of New Orleans Jazz Studies program under the mentorship of Ellis Marsalis and Clyde Kerr Jr. With eagerness to perform, Mayfield left college and formed the Irvin Mayfield Septet.