

“Down By The Riverside” Program Notes
The Blind Boys of Alabama and The Preservation Hall Jazz Band

The Blind Boys of Alabama and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band are two great American institutions that have joined together to bring attention to the rich musical heritage of New Orleans with their “Down By The Riverside” Tour.

Earlier this year, the Blind Boys released *Down In New Orleans*, the first album they ever made in the Big Easy. Released on January 29th, on Time Life Records, the CD represents the Blind Boys desire to give hope to the still storm-ravaged city. The *Washington Post* said of the album: “Inspired and relevant, it borders on the miraculous.” *USA Today* praised it as a “rousing musical tribute to New Orleans,” and *Rolling Stone* called it “A superweapon of roots-music uplift.”

The record, which features guest performances by the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, the legendary Allen Toussaint, and local kingpins the Hot 8 Brass Band, continues to receive overwhelming critical acclaim. In April the Blind Boys and Preservation Hall performed together live (along with special guests Dr. John, Susan Tedeschi and others) at a sold-out concert at Tipitinas club in New Orleans. The show was recorded for a DVD due for release in early 2009.

In addition, Preservation Hall Recordings has just released *The Hurricane Sessions*, a CD/DVD set of new and unreleased recordings and video footage from Preservation Hall’s forty-plus years as New Orleans’ musical and cultural nerve center.

Shortly after Hurricane Katrina, Preservation Hall creative director Ben Jaffe salvaged a set of early PHJB master tapes from the flooded Sea Saint Studios. Those tracks, recorded by his father, Preservation Hall founder Allan Jaffe (1936-1987) inspired him to create *The Hurricane Sessions*- a musical and visual document that bridges the Hall’s past, present and future. The set, which takes the music and visual documents from last summer’s collector’s box *Made In New Orleans*, “demonstrates the significance of New Orleans music as a timeless cultural art form,” Jaffe says.

About the Blind Boys:

The Blind Boys of Alabama have thrilled and inspired audiences the world over for years. Formed in 1939, the group still continues to create critically acclaimed recordings and reach new career heights. In recent years the group has won FOUR consecutive Grammy Awards, and has featured on “60 Minutes,” “Regis & Kelly,” “The Tonight Show” and the “Late Show with David Letterman.” They performed on the 2005 Grammy Awards telecast, and appeared in the 2003 movie “The Fighting Temptations” alongside Beyonce and Cuba Gooding Jr. They sang a Phil Collins tune in Disney’s “Brother Bear” animated film, and were also the inspiration for the Steven Bochco TV series “Blind Justice.” The Blind Boys have been inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame and awarded the NEA’s Heritage Fellowship for Lifetime Achievement, as well as

many other prestigious honors, earning them the true distinction of “living gospel legends.”

Jimmy Carter – vocals

Bishop Billy Bowers – vocals

Ben Moore – vocals

Eric (Ricky) McKinnie -drums

Joey Williams – lead guitar

Peter Levin - keyboards

Tracy Pierce - bass

About the Preservation Hall:

Dedicated to preserving and perpetuating New Orleans Jazz, the world renowned, Preservation Hall Jazz Band derives its name from the venerable music venue founded in 1961 by Allan and Sandra Jaffe. Located in the heart of the French Quarter, Preservation Hall presents New Orleans Jazz on a nightly basis. Post Katrina, the band’s mission became increasingly important as a result of the severe physical and cultural loss due to the flooding of New Orleans. The son of the founders and Creative Director, Ben Jaffe, co founded The New Orleans Musicians Hurricane Relief which continues to operate today as Sweet Home New Orleans: Renew Our Music. The band’s response to the destruction was the release of “Made In New Orleans: The Hurricane Sessions” a scrapbook of Preservation Hall memorabilia from the Preservation Hall archives, new recordings and tracks recovered from the flooded Seasaint Studios as well as a DVD of historic Preservation Hall performances. The band was awarded the *2006 National Medal of Arts* by the National Endowment for the Arts, the highest level of recognition by the Federal Government. Today, the band is comprised of musicians all born and raised in New Orleans. Many have performed together for over 40 years. The band tours worldwide carrying on the musical legacy and varied traditions of New Orleans.