


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

 The logo for Jazz Arts Group features the word "JAZZ" in a stylized, red, blocky font. The letters are interconnected, with the 'J' and 'A' being particularly prominent. To the right of "JAZZ", the words "arts group" are written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.	<p>Date: January 10, 2008 Contact: Dave Kelch Director of Marketing & Communication Phone: 614.294.5200, ext. 110 Email: dkelch@jazzartsgroup.org <i>Electronic images available upon request.</i></p>
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CJO PRESENTS *THE GOSPEL TRUTH*

Columbus, Ohio – The Columbus Jazz Orchestra (CJO), under the direction of Byron Stripling, will revisit the music that earned rave reviews and attracted record-breaking audiences as legendary vocalist Mavis Staples joins the CJO for *The Gospel Truth: From Spirituals to Swing*, this season's second offering in 'The Great American Songbook Series'.

From her early days with her groundbreaking family group, The Staple Singers, to her powerful solo recordings, Mavis Staples is an inspirational force in modern music. An inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and one of VH1's '100 Greatest Women of Rock and Roll', Staples will perform music from her latest CD *We'll Never Turn Back* and will close the concert with her signature hit *I'll Take You There*.

"Gospel, jazz and blues are all very similar in that they all rely on improvisation as a major component of their music," says CJO Artistic Director Byron Stripling. "The earthy, soulful, sprit-filled quality of Mavis' music combined with the shout of the CJO will lift everyone's spirits. Mavis will set your soul on fire!"

Also joining the CJO will be the Milt Ruffin Chorale.

Show times are 8 p.m. Friday, January 18 and Saturday, January 19 at the Southern Theatre.

Single tickets (\$35-48) are available for purchase online at jazzartsgroup.org or from the Jazz Arts Group ticket office, (614.294.5200, x 3). Discounted Student Rush tickets (valid college ID required) and Be-Bop Balcony tickets (ages 6-18) are available at the door.

The Gospel Truth is made possible with media support from *The Columbus Dispatch*.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

MAVIS STAPLES

Mavis began her career in 1950 with her family group, The Staple Singers. Initially singing locally at churches and appearing on a weekly radio show, the Staples scored a hit in 1956 with "Uncloudy Day" for the VeeJay label. When Mavis graduated high school in 1957, The Staple Singers took their music on the road. Led by family patriarch Roebuck "Pops" Staples on guitar and including the voices of Mavis and her siblings Cleo, Yvonne, and Pervis, the Staples were called "God's Greatest Hitmakers."

With Mavis' voice and Pops' songs, singing and guitar playing, the Staples evolved from enormously popular gospel singers (with recordings on the United and Riverside labels as well as VeeJay) to become the most spectacular and influential spiritually-based group in America.

By the mid-'60s The Staple Singers, inspired by Pops' close friendship with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., became the spiritual and musical voices of the civil rights movement. They covered contemporary pop hits with positive messages, including Bob Dylan's "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" and a version of Stephen Stills' "For What It's Worth." The Staples sang "message" songs like "Long Walk To D.C." and "When Will We Be Paid?", bringing their moving and articulate music to a huge number of young people. The group signed with Stax Records in 1968, joining their gospel harmonies and deep faith with musical accompaniment from members of Booker T. and the MGs. The Staple Singers hit the Top 40 eight times between 1971 and 1975, including two No. 1 singles: "I'll Take You There" and "Let's Do It Again," and a No. 2 single: "Who Took the Merry Out of Christmas?" Far from their early roots as a pure gospel group, The Staple Singers had become bona fide pop stars.

MILT RUFFIN

Milt Ruffin currently serves as chorus director at the New Salem (Columbus) Baptist Church in addition to his position as principal and director of the Ft. Hayes Metropolitan Education Center (Columbus City Schools). Ruffin has been involved with gospel productions with both the Columbus Symphony and the Columbus Jazz Orchestra and has performed as a bassist with artists such as Lou Rawls, George Clinton and Rick James.

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The Columbus Jazz Orchestra (CJO) is the flagship ensemble of the Jazz Arts Group (JAG), America's oldest not-for-profit arts organization dedicated to producing, performing and promoting jazz. The CJO performs nearly 50 concerts each season and is considered one of the finest jazz orchestras in the world. The CJO consists of musicians who are nationally and internationally recognized as elite performers and educators.

The Jazz Arts Group receives ongoing support from the Ohio Arts Council, the Greater Columbus Arts Council and The Columbus Foundation.