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Jazz Aspen Snowmass Announces 2009 Winter Performances and First Labor Day Act

Aspen, CO – December 26, 2008 – Jazz Aspen Snowmass is pleased to announce upcoming winter and summer shows. Five-time Grammy and two-time Emmy winner **Randy Newman** is slated to perform at the Wheeler Opera House on Saturday, March 7th at 8pm. The show, presented by Jazz Aspen Snowmass in association with the Wheeler Opera House, is a benefit for JAS Education Programming. Tickets will be available at the Wheeler Box Office starting January 12.

Additionally this winter JAS is collaborating with the Wheeler on John Oates Songwriter Series, "The Words Behind the Songs." The series will feature three performances: **Patty Griffin** on February 15; **Tift Merritt** on February 26 and **Jimmy Wayne** on March 19. Each artist will be paired with a noted professional songwriter, as well as John Oates, for a performance that offers a combination of music and conversation, exposing audiences to the magic of the songwriting process. The program, conceived by Oates, also features a local student songwriters' contest. The winning student songwriter will perform their selection at one of the concerts. All shows will take place at the Wheeler Opera House. Tickets will be available January 12.

Already looking forward to the summer JAS is busy booking acts for the June and Labor Day Festivals. Confirmed to open the 2009 JAS Labor Day Festival on Friday, September 4 is Colorado favorites **Michael Franti & Spearhead**. The show will be Franti's only summer appearance in Colorado. Additional acts for both June and Labor Day will be announced early next year.

Ticket information for the June and Labor Day Festivals will be released early next spring. For more information on JAS programming please contact Jazz Aspen Snowmass at 920-4996 or visit www.jazzaspen.org.

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Press Contact: Andrea Beard (970) 920-4996 or abeard@jazzaspen.org

Randy Newman is a singular figure who over the course of his career has explored various styles and sounds of the canon of 20th century American music. His latest release, *Harps and Angels*, is his first album of new material in nine years. The album showcases Newman's myriad talents as a political and social commentator, balladeer, and storyteller. The arrangements have a Dixieland feel, with Newman on piano fronting a club-size combo; several tracks feature his lush orchestrations, as grand as anything he has produced on his film scores.

Patty Griffin's new album *Children Running Through* continues the remarkable creative evolution that's quietly established Griffin as a vital and singular music force. It also belies her persistent sensitive-singer-songwriter image – a limiting perception that fails to fully convey the emotional depth and breadth of her songwriting or the emotive power of her fluid, soulful singing. The disc's 12 originals maintain a timelessly truthful resonance that echoes a variety of styles, most notably the classic R&B and gospel music that have long been a source of inspiration for Griffin.

A writer, singer and sometime photographer, **Tift Merritt** is a North Carolina native who lives in New York City and longs for Paris. Merritt's debut album, *Bramble Rose*, earned spots on both Time Magazine and the New Yorker's year-end Top Ten lists. *Tambourine*, her sophomore album, was Grammy nominated for Country Album of the Year and earned numerous accolades from press and fans. In 2008 she performed at the Jazz Aspen Snowmass Labor Day Festival.

Character, creativity and an unbridled passion for life infuse **Jimmy Wayne's** music and reverberate through every track of his debut album, *Do You Believe Me Now*. He succeeds in crafting an album of songs that resonate strongly with audiences because of the honesty in the lyrics and the catchy melodies that

make listeners immediately want to sing along. Each song on the project is brought vividly to life by Jimmy's strong, soulful voice. It's a potent instrument that conveys every nuance of a great lyric.

What's most impressive about **Michael Franti** as a recording artist and live performer is his ability to inspire. Ultimately, the heartfelt music that Franti makes and his dedication to greater understanding on a global level, are not two aspects of his life, but very much one and the same. Franti has been bringing our world exceptionally powerful, deeply felt music under a variety of names in a wide range of genres for twenty years, currently the joyful and meaningful modern soul music of Michael Franti & Spearhead. This will be Franti's second JAS appearance.