



For Immediate Release

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**National Endowment for the Arts Honors
San José International Mariachi Festival
San Jose Jazz Festival**

*Top Arts Agency Awards Prestigious
Access to Artistic Excellence Grants to San Jose Festivals*

San José, CA—December 4, 2007—The Mexican Heritage Corporation, producer of the annual San José International Mariachi Festival, and San Jose Jazz, producer of the annual Comcast San Jose Jazz Festival presented by Southwest Airlines, today announced the festivals' selection by the National Endowment for the Arts to receive NEA's prestigious grants in support of Access to Artistic Excellence.

The grant received by the Mexican Heritage Corporation is \$20,000 and the award to San Jose Jazz is \$12,500. In its press release, the NEA announced today that it will award \$20.2 million to fund 908 grants. The Arts Endowment will distribute \$19,189,000 in this round of FY 2008 funding to nonprofit national, regional, state, and local organizations across the country through the NEA's Access to Artistic Excellence category.

Access to Artistic Excellence grants support the creation and presentation of work in dance, design, folk and traditional arts, literature, media arts, museums, music, musical theater, opera, presenting, theater, and visual arts. Projects include commissions, residencies, workshops, performances, exhibitions, publications, festivals, and professional development programs.

“We’re honored to be recognized by the country’s leading arts agency as a presenter and producer of the San Jose International Mariachi Festival,” stated Marcela Davison Aviles, President and CEO of the Mexican Heritage Corporation. “The Festival has grown significantly over the past three years and achieved a level of artistic excellence that San Jose and the nation may be proud of. We look forward to announcing the artist roster and creative theme for the 2008 festival in the first quarter. So stay tuned!”

"For the past 21 years, San Jose Jazz has been committed to artistic and production excellence and this award by the NEA is great validation of that commitment," said Geoff Roach, Executive Director and CEO of San Jose Jazz. "The Comcast San Jose Jazz Festival embraces not only the best of mainstream jazz but also the many variations that make jazz innovative and creative, just like Silicon Valley. This grant recognizes that jazz can take many forms and continues to evolve and that San Jose has a rich and vibrant cultural scene. Everyone in Silicon Valley should be proud of the recognition that the jazz festival and the mariachi festival have received."

“I am delighted that the National Endowment for the Arts is recognizing two of San Jose’s great festivals with these prestigious grants,” said Mayor Chuck Reed. “Year after year, the San Jose International Mariachi Festival and the San Jose Jazz Festival provide opportunities for local residents and visitors to experience the world’s top performers while celebrating the rich cultural and musical heritage of our diverse city.”

San Jose District 5 Councilmember Nora Campos stated, “These grants are a testament to the success of these two phenomenal music festivals that continue to propel San Jose onto the national and international stage. These celebrations in San Jose’s rich artistic and ethnic diversity have immensely boosted our city’s prominence as the cultural capital of Silicon Valley. I am extremely proud of the work these two organizations have done in bringing in outside funding to support arts in the City of San Jose.”

“Both festivals have made enduring contributions to our City’s rich artistic culture and we couldn’t be more pleased by NEA’s recognition,” noted San Jose District Three Councilmember Sam Liccardo.

"A measure of a festival’s success is its commitment to and recognition for outstanding programming, said Bruce Labadie, Festival Director, Comcast San Jose Jazz Festival and Festival Producer, San Jose International Mariachi Festival." I'm pleased that the NEA has recognized both events for its growth in this area. This award is one of the highlights of working on festivals in Silicon Valley over the past two decades."

About the Mexican Heritage Corporation and Plaza

MHC is the non-profit operator and arts programmer of San Jose’s famed Mexican Heritage Plaza, one of the largest Latino cultural centers in the nation. With a mission to affirm, celebrate and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Mexican community and showcase multicultural arts within the region and nationally, MHC both presents and produces a vibrant array of multi-disciplinary arts programs in theatre, dance, and music

education and in the visual arts. To learn more about the Mexican Heritage Plaza, visit <http://www.mhcviva.org>.

About San Jose Jazz

San Jose Jazz , producer of the annual Comcast San Jose Jazz Festival presented by Southwest Airlines, is a 501©(3) public benefit organization with a mission of celebrating jazz through performance and education in order to enrich and improve the lives of people in Silicon Valley. San Jose Jazz education and outreach programs include an in-school program that reaches over 5000 school children a year with messages about music and innovation while also delivering a healthy lifestyle and neighborhood develop message. For more information on the San Jose Jazz, visit www.sanjosejazz.org.

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