

Holiday Travel

New Orleans: A Month Of Holiday Cheer

(NAPSA)—From hot jazz to cool rhythm and blues, the rich and varied musical traditions of New Orleans lend themselves to a special holiday celebration.

Downtown and the French Quarter are home to clubs that feature some of the world's best-known musicians, as well as talented street performers who can be heard at almost every intersection. During December, this historic district also plays host to almost-daily free holiday concerts at 200-year-old St. Louis Cathedral on Jackson Square.

Jazz, R&B and gospel musicians are featured throughout the month, beginning at 8 p.m. Highlights include Ellis and Jason Marsalis of the famed New Orleans musical family (12/2), the Dillard University Concert Choir (12/4), Bridget Bazile and Revelation (12/8), the Pfister Sisters (12/15), Rachel Van Voorhees and the Chamber Ensemble (12/18) and Philip Manuel (12/23).

Special musical events this holiday season include *The Nutcracker* in IMAX 3D (12/1-24, Canal Street at the river) and the lighting of the largest Hanukkah menorah in Louisiana (12/9) at the Riverwalk Spanish Plaza. Other holiday favorites are Handel's "Messiah" with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (12/15 and 16) at the Orpheum Theatre, live performances of *The Nutcracker* (12/22 and 23, Theatre for Performing Arts), the Soul Christmas Concert (12/29) and New Year's Eve cruises on the Paddle-



St. Louis Cathedral is the beautiful backdrop for caroling in Jackson Square.

wheeler *Creole Queen* (800-446-4109) and *Steamboat Natchez* (800-233-BOAT).

The magic of the season is also celebrated daily in December at Celebration in the Oaks, featuring driving and walking tours of a one million-plus light show in New Orleans' City Park. The Carousel Gardens at City Park offer amusement park rides, and some nights include live entertainment and visits with Santa Claus.

For a guide to Christmas "New Orleans Style," including a schedule of holiday concerts and other events, call 1-800-474-7620 or visit www.neworleansonline.com.