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Ryan Cohan Quartet Kicks Off American Music Abroad Tour

WHO/WHAT: Ryan Cohan Quartet, comprised of Ryan Cohan on piano, Geof Bradford on saxophone, Lorin Cohen on bass and Kobie Watkins on drums, will tour with the 2007-2008 Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad season produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. State Department. Over the past two years, the program has presented 17 tours visiting 120 cities, in 66 countries, on 5 continents.

WHEN: January 30 - February 28, 2008*

WHERE: RWANDA (January 30-February 5); DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: (February 6-10); UGANDA: (February 11-15); ZIMBABWE (February 16-21); JORDAN: (February 22-28)*

*Dates and locations subject to change

HOW: Please visit **The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad** at www.jalc.org/TheRoad for more information on this program. In addition, you can listen to music and stories about the program for free on **Jazz at Lincoln Center Radio** at <http://www.jalc.org/jazzcast/program.asp?programNumber=205>

BACKGROUND: The program, produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, is designed to foster cultural exchange with audiences worldwide. Between Fall 2007 and Spring 2008, six jazz quartets and four urban music ensembles will visit regions including Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Participating bands were selected from a national pool of applicants in a competitive audition process.

International tour activities include public concerts, master classes, lecture-demonstrations, workshops, jam sessions, media outreach and collaborations with local musicians. The program also incorporates free performances by each quartet hosted by Jazz at Lincoln Center at Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola* in New York and at The National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C.

"Cultural diplomacy allows artists and audiences to share in a common experience that reaches beyond differences in culture, religion, language and generations and to connect as people without borders," said Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Professional and Cultural Exchanges Alina L. Romanowski.

"In the historic tradition of such musical alumni as Armstrong, Ellington, and Gillespie, these tours focus on diverse geographic audiences and the dynamic interaction born of music. The emphasis on education as well as performance leads to powerful exchange for our audiences and musicians alike," said Susan John, Director of Touring for Jazz at Lincoln Center.

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The **RYAN COHAN QUARTET** constantly searches for new musical territory to explore while remaining deeply rooted in jazz and blues traditions. Conversant in a variety of world-music styles and rhythms, the Chicago-based quartet has distinguished itself on major stages throughout the U.S. and Canada by balancing dynamic and tight ensemble playing with explosive, expressive solos.

Ryan Cohan (piano/composer), a graduate of DePaul University, has performed with master jazz artists including Freddie Hubbard, Jon Faddis, Curtis Fuller and Kurt Elling, in addition to releasing two albums of original work. He penned the theme for Ramsey Lewis' PBS TV series, *The Legends of Jazz*, as well as, compositions for three of Lewis' albums. Cohan has served on the faculty of the New York Summer School of Arts program and works as a clinician at high schools and universities across the country. Chamber Music America awarded Cohan their New Works: Creation and Presentation Program grant in 2005 for a suite that will be the centerpiece of his upcoming recording, *One Sky*. Cohan's first feature-length film score, *Tapioca*, is also due out in 2007.

Geof Bradfield (saxophone) attended the renowned High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, Texas before earning a bachelor's degree from Chicago's DePaul University and a master's degree from California Institute of the Arts. Bradfield has had the opportunity to perform with numerous jazz luminaries and rising stars including Lonnie Smith, Lionel Hampton, Albert "Tootie" Heath, Arturo Sandoval, Reid Anderson of the Bad Plus, Avishai Cohen and dancer Savion Glover. He also leads his own critically acclaimed group, Rule of Three. Bradfield currently resides in Chicago, Illinois and teaches at Columbia College.

Lorin Cohen (bass) began playing electric bass at age 14 and later studied with pioneering bass guitarist Anthony Jackson at the Manhattan School of Music. Cohen learned the double bass under the tutelage of Joe Guastefeste, Chicago University's principal bassist, Larry Gray and with the late master Ray Brown. In 2004 Cohen toured Southeast Asia extensively under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State. He has performed with many jazz masters including Monty Alexander, Von Freeman, Andy Bey, Houston Person, Ernie Andrews and Bobby Broom.

Kobie Watkins (drums) has been called the "Swing Master of Chicago" and lauded as both a teacher and jazz musician. From a toddler playing pots and pans to a teacher in Chicago's public schools, Watkins has dedicated his life to music. He received a Bachelor of Music Education from Vandercook College of Music and holds a Master of Music degree in Jazz Pedagogy from Northwestern University. Watkins has played and recorded with legends Sonny Rollins, Curtis Fuller, Arturo Sandoval, Sonny Fortune, Willie Pickens, Kim Burrell and currently works with Kurt Elling.

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Jazz at Lincoln Center is dedicated to inspiring and growing audiences for jazz. With the world-renowned Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and a comprehensive array of guest artists, Jazz at Lincoln Center advances a unique vision for the continued development of the art of jazz by producing a year-round schedule of performance, education and broadcast events for audiences of all ages. These productions include concerts, national and international tours, residencies, weekly national radio and television programs, recordings, publications, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, a jazz appreciation curriculum for children, advanced training through the Juilliard Institute for Jazz Studies, music publishing, children's concerts, lectures, adult education courses and student and educator workshops. Under the leadership of Artistic

Director Wynton Marsalis Jazz at Lincoln Center will produce nearly 2,000 events during its 2007-08 season in its home in New York City, Frederick P. Rose Hall, and around the world. For more information, visit www.jalc.org.

U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs promotes mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through international educational and exchange programs. Through its Cultural Programs Division, the Bureau supports a variety of cultural exchanges programs that support U.S. foreign policy, foster America's artistic excellence, and demonstrate America's respect and appreciation for other cultures and traditions. The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad program presents selected professional American performers of jazz and urban music on concert tours in countries with limited exposure to live American culture. For more information, visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/culture/index.htm>.

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The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad program is made possible with underwriting support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State.

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