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AFAR



Alvin Atkinson &
The Sound Merchants



Chris Byars
Quartet



The Dana Leong
Band



Devin Phillips & New
Orleans Straight
Ahead



Exegesis



Kelley Johnson
Quartet



The Maya
Azucena Band



Ryan Cohan
Quartet



Universes

20 FREE JAZZ & URBAN MUSIC CONCERTS IN NEW YORK CITY & WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHO/WHAT: Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs announced today the dates of 20 free concerts in the U.S. featuring the six jazz quartets and four urban music ensembles selected to participate in the 2007-2008 The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad Program. Featured bands include:

AFAR

Alvin Atkinson & The Sound Merchants

Chris Byars Quartet

The Dana Leong Band

Devin Phillips & New Orleans Straight Ahead

Exegesis

Kelley Johnson Quartet

The Maya Azucena Band

Ryan Cohan Quartet

Universes

WHERE/WHEN: FREE concerts at **Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola**, January 19 - May 3, Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City: *Broadway at 60th Street, 5th floor.*

Place	Date	Time	Ensemble
NYC	January 19, 2008	1 p.m.	Kelley Johnson Quartet
NYC	January 19, 2008	3 p.m.	Universes
NYC	January 26, 2008	1 p.m.	Exegesis
NYC	January 26, 2008	3 p.m.	Ryan Cohan Quartet
NYC	March 29, 2008	1 p.m.	Maya Azucena
NYC	March 29, 2008	3 p.m.	Alvin Atkinson & The Sound Merchants
NYC	April 19, 2008	1 p.m.	Devin Phillips & New Orleans Straight Ahead
NYC	April 19, 2008	3 p.m.	The Dana Leong Band
NYC	May 3, 2008	1 p.m.	AFAR
NYC	May 3, 2008	3 p.m.	Chris Byars Quartet

Free concerts at the **National Geographic Society**, January 17 - May 1, in Washington, D.C.: *National Geographic's Grosvenor Auditorium, 1600 M St. NW.* Information: 202.857.7700.

Place	Date	Time	Ensemble
D.C.	January 17, 2008	6 p.m.	Kelley Johnson Quartet
D.C.	January 17, 2008	7:15 p.m.	Universes
D.C.	January 24, 2008	6 p.m.	Exegesis
D.C.	January 24, 2008	7:15 p.m.	Ryan Cohan Quartet
D.C.	March 27, 2008	6 p.m.	Maya Azucena
D.C.	March 27, 2008	7:15 p.m.	Alvin Atkinson & The Sound Merchants
D.C.	April 17, 2008	6 p.m.	Devin Phillips & New Orleans Straight Ahead
D.C.	April 17, 2008	7:15 p.m.	The Dana Leong Band
D.C.	May 1, 2008	6 p.m.	AFAR
D.C.	May 1, 2008	7:15 p.m.	Chris Byars Quartet

HOW: Please visit the **Jazz at Lincoln Center website** at www.jalc.org/TheRoad/ for more information on The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad 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 Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad, produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, is designed to foster cultural exchange with audiences worldwide through musical performance and educational outreach. 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.

Over the past two years, Jazz at Lincoln Center has produced 17 Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad tours visiting 120 cities, in 66 countries, on 5 continents.

"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.

CONTACT:

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AFAR is an instrumental hip-hop band with jazz, R&B and gospel influences. Committed to pushing the boundaries of the way hip-hop defines itself, the group focuses on three concepts: live music, unity and education. Through performances, recordings and educational workshops both nationally and abroad (including their participation in Jazz at Lincoln Center's The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad tour to Southern Africa in 2006), the band seeks to spread the message that in this age of electronic music, live instrumental performance remains the source of it all.

ALVIN ATKINSON AND THE SOUND MERCHANTS integrate jazz and blues influences with inflections of rhythms and melodies from around the world. The group's mission is to exchange their spirit and music with audiences worldwide as literal merchants of sound.

THE CHRIS BYARS QUARTET plays original music based on a lifelong study of great jazz masters. The members of the band have been performing together for two decades, most frequently at the New York City jazz club, Smalls. The quartet has also toured extensively, most recently to Russia and Central Asia as part of Jazz at Lincoln Center's The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad Program in 2006-2007. Their newly released CD is on Smalls Records entitled *Photos in Black, White and Gray*.

THE DANA LEONG BAND has an incredible musical chemistry that combines live grooves, electronically charged tracks, rhyme and reason. Bandleader Leong uses a laptop both onstage and in the studio to create soundscapes of electronic beats and to manipulate the sound of instruments through real time processing. The result is a unique fusion of computerized instrumental hip-hop funk rhythms and rock propulsions.

DEVIN PHILLIPS & NEW ORLEANS STRAIGHT AHEAD play modern jazz spiced with the rich musical traditions of New Orleans. Through their repertoire of standards, traditional songs and original works, the band members celebrate the unique musical heritage of the birthplace of jazz. Their debut CD, *Wade in the Water*, was released in December 2006.

EXEGESIS bases its music in the belief that symbols, scientific thought, astronomical ideas, numerical ratios and conceptual art and architecture can be expressed in sound. The group seeks to bridge the gap between modern music technology and improvisation, using live samplers and interactive music software to create the sonic illusion that there are more than four musicians performing. In 2002, Exegesis released their debut album, *The Order of Chaos*.

With musical influences ranging from Earth Wind & Fire to Ella Fitzgerald, **THE MAYA AZUCENA BAND** bridges the genres of soul, hip-hop, world and funk music. Through their "raw soul" sound and progressive lyrics, the band seeks to uplift communities worldwide. Best known for riveting tracks and spirited live performances, Azucena and her band recently released their sophomore album, *Junkyard Jewel*, to wide acclaim.

THE KELLEY JOHNSON QUARTET draws from the Great American Songbook and modern jazz repertoire, reworking standards in a creative and energetic way, to feature the solo work of each member of the band. The quartet has recorded three albums in New York City, including *Live at Birdland* and the critically acclaimed *Music is the Magic*. They have performed throughout the world, including a U.S. State Department sponsored tour to Russia and Central Asia in 2004.

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.

UNIVERSES is an ensemble company of multi-disciplined writers and performers who fuse poetry, theater, jazz, hip-hop, down-home blues and Spanish boleros to create challenging and entertaining theatrical works. The core members each bring a different element of style to the group. Committed to their roots in the New York City poetry scene, the group has performed in venues all over the five boroughs, including Nuyorican Poets Café, Joe's Pub, Aaron Davis Hall and The Bronx Academy of Art & Dance, among others. They also present their work in schools and colleges across the U.S. and recently completed a tour to Chile.

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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. Further information about Cultural Programs of the U.S. Department of State is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/culture/index.htm>.

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For more information please visit <http://www.jalc.org/TheRoad/>

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