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10 AMERICAN BANDS CHOSEN TO TOUR THE WORLD

WHO/WHAT:

Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs announced today the 10 ensembles who will tour with **The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad** program in 2009. American music groups from across the United States specializing in jazz, urban/hip hop and other American roots music - blues, bluegrass, cajun, country, gospel and zydeco - applied for the opportunity to share their music with the world to promote cross-cultural understanding, with special emphasis on countries not regularly visited by American musicians. Selected for their artistic integrity, musical ability and educational skills, finalist bands are:

- Brian Horton Quartet
- Chris Byars Quartet
- Duende Quartet
- Eli Yamin Blues Band
- Hoppin' John String Band
- NuGenerations

- Roseanna Vitro Quartet
- Ryan Cohan Quartet
- The Student Loan
- Vice Verse All Stars

International tour activities will include public concerts, master classes, lecture-demonstrations, workshops, jam sessions, media outreach and collaborations with local musicians. Over the past three years, 108 musicians from 28 ensembles have toured with the program, visiting 89 different countries on 5 continents.

WHERE/WHEN: Ensembles travel around the globe for approximately one month from February through June 2009. The program also incorporates free performances by each ensemble hosted by Jazz at Lincoln Center at Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola* at Frederick P. Rose Hall, Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center and at the Grosvenor Auditorium at the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C., either before departure or upon return from overseas.

HOW: For more information visit **The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad** at www.jalc.org/TheRoad. In addition, you can listen to music and stories about the program free of charge on Jazz at Lincoln Center Radio at <http://www.jalc.org/jazzcast/program.asp?programNumber=262> and <http://www.jalc.org/jazzcast/program.asp?programNumber=205>

QUOTES: Alina L. Romanowski, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Professional and Cultural Exchanges:

"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."

Susan John, Director of Touring for Jazz at Lincoln Center:

"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."

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SPONSORSHIP: 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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BRIAN HORTON QUARTET, based in Durham, North Carolina, is deeply rooted in the blues, groove and tradition of jazz music. The ensemble explores multi-cultural rhythms and encourages improvisation. Through these channels, musicians revisit jazz standards with fresh ideas and craft original, spontaneous composition. The band developed through the study of masters—such as jazz greats Dexter Gordon, Duke Ellington and Charles Mingus—as well as through exploring new, global urban grooves and improvisation.

THE CHRIS BYARS QUARTET plays original music based on a lifelong study of great jazz masters. The members of the New York City-based 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 the U.S. State Department and 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*.

DUENDE QUARTET is devoted to playing Latin jazz in the style of Mongo Santamaria, Cal Tjader and Willie Bobo with a taste of the legendary Blue Note Records sound of the 1960s. In a unique small group setting, Duende Quartet captures the vibe of the jazz combo, with piano as the lead instrument, while using the rhythms of a Cuban conjunto. The band is based out of Silver Spring, Maryland.

ELI YAMIN BLUES BAND's program welcomes audiences of all ages into the varied and rich world of America's primary musical art form, the blues. The band explores the range and healing power of the blues - from spiritual to classical, from bebop to folk. In 2004-2005 the quartet performed over 50 concerts in the New York metropolitan area. Venues ranged from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and jazz clubs to universities and elementary and high schools. In 2006-2007, performances included the WBGO children's concert series at The New School of Social Research, the Viscardi School for Children with Severe Disabilities and concerts at Flushing Town Hall in Queens, New York.

THE HOPPIN' JOHN STRING BAND brings to life the history and dialogue of American folk music with animated artistry and community commitment. Ensemble members have hosted workshops on the tradition of this art form internationally and actively educate and perform for local audiences. The ensemble is based in Brooklyn, New York.

NUGENERATIONS fuses jazz tradition with artistic, musical adventure. In addition to honoring jazz roots, this ensemble is dedicated to pursuing risky musical angles and sparking fresh composition. Collectively, members explore how the voice functions as an instrument. This New York City band encourages audiences to interact with their music and soak in American jazz culture—here, rhythm, harmony and melody serve as a universal language. NuGenerations members each represent a distinctive age, or generation, of existence.

THE ROSEANNA VITRO QUARTET draws from a variety of jazz styles. From Texas blues to Brazilian tones, this ensemble is comfortable playing just about any type of jazz. In addition to performing, all band members are dedicated educators—while touring, they aim to illustrate jazz as a universal language and a unifier. Several members have toured internationally. Quartet members have performed previously together in many capacities and they are based in New York City.

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.

THE STUDENT LOAN is an eclectic four piece bluegrass/newgrass band, originally from Bowling Green, Ohio and now based in Portland, Oregon. Mixing elements of traditional bluegrass and folk music with elements of rock, jazz and blues, The Student Loan has a sound that defies genre and is both familiar and new. With original songs and a vast library of covers from groups as diverse as Bill Monroe, The Beatles, Phish and Sublime, the Student Loan presents rooted in the grass roots tradition.

VICE VERSE ALL STARS is a crew of musicians and educators that encourages audiences to explore the intersection of jazz, poetry and hip-hop. Members have roots in The Bronx and Brooklyn, and perform throughout New York City venues. Two musicians return from previous Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad tours.

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About Jazz at Lincoln Center: 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, yearly hall of fame inductions, weekly national radio and television programs, recordings, publications, an annual high school jazz band competition and festival, a band director academy, jazz appreciation curriculum for students, music publishing, children's concerts, lectures, adult education courses, student and educator workshops and interactive websites. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis, Chairman Lisa Schiff and Executive Director, Adrian Ellis, Jazz at Lincoln Center will produce nearly 3,000 events during its 2008-09 season in its home in New York City, Frederick P. Rose Hall, and around the world.

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 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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