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## 10 FREE JAZZ AND AMERICAN ROOTS MUSIC CONCERTS IN NEW YORK CITY & WASHINGTON, D.C.

### WHO/WHAT:

Jazz at Lincoln Center and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State announced today the dates of 10 free concerts, each with two sets of music, in the United States featuring the American music ensembles selected to participate in the 2008-2009 The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad program. Featured bands include:

- Brian Horton Quartet
- Chris Byars Quartet
- Duende Quartet
- Eli Yamin Blues Band
- Hoppin' John String Band
- Helen Sung & NuGenerations
- Roseanna Vitro and The JazzIAm Band
- Ryan Cohan Quartet
- The Student Loan
- Vice Verse All Stars

Selected for their artistic integrity, musical ability and educational skills, these finalist ensembles will tour internationally with The Rhythm Road program to share their music with the world to promote cross-cultural understanding with special emphasis on countries not regularly visited by American musicians. 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 countries on 5 continents.

**WHERE/WHEN:** Free concerts at **Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola**, Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, January 31 – June 6, in New York City: *Broadway at 60<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> floor*

Place	Date	Time	Ensemble
NYC	January 31, 2009	1 p.m.	The Student Loan
NYC	January 31, 2009	3 p.m.	Vice Verse All Stars
NYC	March 21, 2009	1 p.m.	Helen Sung & NuGenerations
NYC	March 21, 2009	3 p.m.	Chris Byars Quartet
NYC	April 11, 2009	1 p.m.	Ryan Cohan Quartet
NYC	April 11, 2009	3 p.m.	Hoppin' John String Band
NYC	April 18, 2009	1 p.m.	Brian Horton Quartet
NYC	April 18, 2009	3 p.m.	Roseanna Vitro and The JazzIAm Band
NYC	June 6, 2009	1 p.m.	Duende Quartet
NYC	June 6, 2009	3 p.m.	Eli Yamin Blues Band

Free concerts at the **National Geographic Society**, January 29 - June 4, in Washington, D.C.: *National Geographic's Grosvenor Auditorium, 1600 M St. NW*

Place	Date	Time	Ensemble
D.C.	January 29, 2009	6 p.m.	Vice Verse All Stars
D.C.	January 29, 2009	7:15 p.m.	The Student Loan
D.C.	March 19, 2009	6 p.m.	Helen Sung & NuGenerations
D.C.	March 19, 2009	7:15 p.m.	Chris Byars Quartet
D.C.	April 9, 2009	6 p.m.	Ryan Cohan Quartet
D.C.	April 9, 2009	7:15 p.m.	Hoppin' John String Band
D.C.	April 16, 2009	6 p.m.	Brian Horton Quartet
D.C.	April 16, 2009	7:15 p.m.	Roseanna Vitro and The JazzIAm Band
D.C.	June 4, 2009	6 p.m.	Duende Quartet
D.C.	June 4, 2009	7:15 p.m.	Eli Yamin Blues Band

**HOW:** For more information visit **The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad** at [www.jalc.org/TheRoad](http://www.jalc.org/TheRoad). In addition, 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>

**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** is deeply rooted in the traditions of blues, groove and jazz music. The Durham, North Carolina based ensemble explores multi-cultural rhythms and encourages improvisation, revisiting jazz standards with fresh ideas to 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 new, global urban grooves.

**CHRIS BYARS QUARTET**'s rhythms evoke Manhattan's bustling Times Square in its heyday. This New York-based quartet generates new, inventive music inspired by the 1950s Bop tradition—it has spent years developing relationships with and learning from musicians who thrived during the period.

The Chris Byars Quartet returns to The Rhythm Road after touring to the Balkans, Mediterranean and Central European regions with the program in February 2008. Three months later, the quartet was invited back to Cyprus to conduct an 11-day intensive workshop entitled "Jazz Futures," which took place in the United Nations Buffer Zone in the divided capital of Nicosia and featured musicians of both Cypriot communities. The Chris Byars Quartet has made it a practice to study the music and traditions of their touring regions while also continuing exploration of such musicians as Gigi Gryce. Gryce, an inspiration to the ensemble, was an American jazz musician who converted to Islam in the 1950s.

**DUENDE QUARTET**, an ensemble devoted to playing Latin jazz, draws inspiration from the concept behind its name. *Duende*, literally meaning goblin or imp, has been used to describe jazz's subtle, emotional power. Kenneth Tynan, one of several writers using the term to describe the understated music of jazz pioneer Miles Davis, defined *duende* as "...the ability to transmit a profoundly felt emotion with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of restraint." Inspired by such qualities, the Duende Quartet crafts a unique Latin jazz sound in the styles of Mongo Santamaria, Cal Tjader and Willie Bobo as well as Blue Note Records' legendary 1960s sound. In a unique small group setting—with piano, bass and two hand percussionists—the ensemble captures the vibe of the jazz combo while using the rhythms of a Cuban *conjunto*. Its repertoire ranges from traditional Cuban songs to arrangements of jazz standards—all pieces strike a balance between danceable groove and effortless improvisation.

Duende Quartet, based in the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland areas, was formed in 2004. The group toured Turkey, Albania, Cyprus and Bosnia in February 2007 as part of The Rhythm Road. Band members have played together in many settings, including with Palmetto recording artists Rumba Club.

**ELI YAMIN BLUES BAND** plays the blues to dispel the blues. This ensemble welcomes audiences of all ages into the varied and rich world of America's primary musical art form—the blues. The band explores the healing power of the music and its range from spiritual to classical, from bebop to folk. In some instances, the music is folksy, fiery and brassy. At other times, it is quiet and restorative. The group explores the blues' unique capacity to bring people together of all different backgrounds. The quartet sings to its audiences, "*It's not just a song for me/ Take a breath and you will see/ Why the blues has the power to be/ A healing song/ A healing song.*"

In addition to being spirited performers, members of the Eli Yamin Blues Band are also skilled educators. They have taught with Jazz at Lincoln Center, The Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music and LaGuardia High School of Music and Art and Performing Arts. During their performances on The Rhythm Road tour, audiences "will be getting up and stomping, really feeling the juice of the blues," says band leader Yamin. "They will relate their own personal experience to these practices and melodies." Some members have travelled with previous Rhythm Road tours.

**HELEN SUNG & NUGENERATIONS** fuses jazz tradition with musical exploration. Its jazz roots firmly established, this ensemble takes creative risks, sparking new works and innovative performances. A project of bandleader Helen Sung, each member of this New York City-based band represents a different generation of life and musical experience. With diverse backgrounds including classical music, R&B, funk and world-music, and from varied origins across the United States—from the Bay Area to Michigan to Texas to Chicago—Helen Sung & NuGenerations collectively create distinctive music and inspire audiences to participate in and learn more about this great American art form, jazz.

**HOPPIN' JOHN STRING BAND** performs and teaches music deeply rooted in the ballads, fiddle tunes, and traditions of the Appalachian Mountains of the United States. Through story and song, Hoppin' John String Band brings alive the experience of the American laborer, farmer and people from all walks of life. This music is made for bringing people together to sing, dance and to celebrate life. Comprised of two fiddles, guitar, banjo and bass, this band is sure to bring you to your feet and inspire you to sing along.

Ensemble members have hosted workshops on these traditional art forms internationally. With strong roots in Brooklyn, New York, this quartet actively performs for and educates local audiences of all ages. Constantly creating and innovating, the ensemble also writes original tunes inspired by classic melodies. "This music communicates the joy of being alive," says vocalist and fiddle player Alicia Jo Rabins. "It is music for stomping along with, for dancing and clapping. In its stories, American history comes through."

**ROSEANNA VITRO AND THE JAZZIAM BAND** draw from a conviction and dedication to jazz music in its many incarnations. The JazzIam band is a high energy group comprised of four musicians who are powerful improvisers, composers, teachers and performers. This ensemble is a modern gumbo whose flavors include swing from Duke Ellington to Bill Evans, blues from the Ray Charles Songbook and the exotic melodies and rhythms that form world music, spanning the globe from Brazil to India. JazzIam's mantra is, "*Music is a universal language and it is spiritually healing. Good music played with passion unifies our world and makes it a better place.*" Each member is based in New York City, has toured extensively, playing in major festivals and workshops, spreading the gospel of improvisational music.

**RYAN COHAN QUARTET** constantly seeks new musical territory for exploration 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 North America by balancing dynamic and tight ensemble playing with explosive, expressive solos. Through jazz, the Ryan Cohan Quartet stimulates genuine, personal connections—the ensemble has audiences and musicians alike clapping, dancing and improvising to its fiery tunes.

The 2008-2009 Rhythm Road season will mark the ensemble's second tour with the program—previously, the Ryan Cohan Quartet toured Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Jordan.

**THE STUDENT LOAN** is a four-piece band that tests audiences' perceptions of bluegrass and newgrass music. Their eclectic style mirrors their name—The Student Loan draws from many genres to produce distinctive, diverse musicality. Mixing traditional bluegrass and folk with elements of rock, jazz and blues, The Student Loan's sound 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 music set in the grass roots tradition.

While touring with The Rhythm Road, The Student Loan will share with audiences the nostalgia and the human emotion present in Appalachian music. This is The Student Loan's first tour with The Rhythm Road. Originally from Bowling Green, Ohio, ensemble members now live in Portland, Oregon.

**VICE VERSE ALL STARS** crafts a timeless urban sound that conveys the passion of hip-hop music. Featuring rapping, singing, break dancing and beat boxing, this ensemble creates strong, conscious rhymes that bring hip-hop back to its essence. Vice Verse All Stars draws from greats such as The Roots, De La Soul, Jill Scott, Erykah Badu and others, and it offers audiences an authentic non-commercialized, diverse experience with the genre.

During The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad, Vice Verse All Stars looks forward to spreading hip-hop's message. Two musicians return from previous Rhythm Road tours. Members of Vice Verse All Stars have roots in The Bronx and Brooklyn and frequently perform throughout New York City venues.

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### **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. For more information, visit [www.jalc.org](http://www.jalc.org).

#### **U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs**

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 manages 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/cultural>.

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