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**THE 2010 RHYTHM ROAD: AMERICAN MUSIC ABROAD
PROGRAM ANNOUNCES
OSCAR WILLIAMS JR. AND PERFECTED PRAISE TOUR DATES
*OSCAR WILLIAMS JR. AND PERFECTED PRAISE TOUR DATES CHOSEN FOR
EASTERN EUROPE AND LEBANON TOUR TO PROMOTE CULTURAL EXCHANGE***

[For High Resolution Photos](#)

Who/What:

Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs announced that the Oscar Williams Jr. and Perfected Praise will tour Eastern Europe and Lebanon with *The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad* program. The gospel group from Saint Louis, Missouri, was selected from a pool of 132 applicants to travel abroad and promote cross-cultural understanding. International tour activities will include public concerts, master classes, lecture-demonstrations, workshops, jam sessions, collaborations with local musicians and media outreach.

As part of *The Rhythm Road*, Oscar Williams Jr. and Perfected Praise also performed two concerts in the United States. The first was performed in Washington, D.C. at the National Geographic Society and the other in New York City at Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola* at Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Where/When:

Oscar Williams Jr. and Perfected Praise will tour to Cyprus (June 17 - 21), Lebanon (June 22 - 28), Poland (June 29 - July 5), Romania (July 6 - 11).

**Dates and locations subject to change*

How:

For more information visit *The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad* at jalc.org/TheRoad, now with additional elements including featured countries, bands, stories from the road, and more.

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.

Jazz at Lincoln Center proudly acknowledges *National Geographic Live* as the Washington, D.C. concert series partner. WPFW-FM is the media sponsor for this series.

For more information:

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Oscar Williams Jr. and Perfected Praise is an award-winning gospel ensemble with a spiritually refreshing sound uplifting and intriguing audiences worldwide with gospel music. The group combines an array of talents and styles which converge into a cutting edge melodic sound. Oscar Williams Jr. and Perfected Praise has performed in the Vatican for the Pope, toured with international pop star Elisa, and performed with GRAMMY® winner Jason Mraz. Oscar Williams Jr. and Perfected Praise has also toured extensively throughout the United States and Europe including performances in Switzerland, Italy, and Germany, and most recently the Czech Republic.

Oscar Williams Jr. (piano and voice) writes spiritual, uplifting melodies that speak to audiences. Williams' music is for the people, and it offers antidotes to life's problems and difficult situations while reminding them of the good things in life. He is inspired by a variety of sources, ranging from renowned musicians such as Wynton Marsalis, Elisa and Erykah Badu to spectators tapping their feet and humming. He released *Unstoppable*, his first album, in 2005 through Aleho/Warner/Ryko Records. He has toured extensively throughout Jamaica, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, France, and Austria. Williams received bachelor's degree in music from the University of Missouri-St Louis.

Thelma Guyton (vocals) began singing professionally at age nine. Her sound is a mixture of genres and styles fused to create a melting pot of eclectic soul music. Guyton has been inspired by female artists such as Brandy and Kim Burrell, and now aspires to uplift young women through her own music. She has had the opportunity to write and work with artists such as Faith Evans, 112, Dream, Ne-Yo, and Jack Knight. At the age of 14, Guyton was a contestant on the popular television series *Showtime at the Apollo*, and by the age of 16 was signed by Bad Boy Entertainment as part of the Bad Boy Gospel Project.

Tracy Smith (vocals), born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, has incorporated gospel, jazz, opera, and country styles into her own timeless and creative style. She began singing at age three, and lists her influences as her family, Whitney Houston, Aretha

Franklin, and Donnie McClurkin. Participating in various talent competitions, Smith was the Grand Prize Winner in the “Christian Artist Talent Search” sponsored by the Inspirational Network, and a contestant on the fifth season of *American Idol*. Smith attended Florissant Valley Community College, where she studied music and music theory and received a certificate in business management.

Meaghan Williams (vocals), from St. Louis, Missouri, was born into a musical family that nurtured her talent at a young age. Williams’s style is rooted spiritually and musically in The New Jerusalem Cathedral—Church of God In Christ, and influenced by musicians such as Cecilia Beasley, Tramaine Hawkins and Lady Eneazer Moore. Williams has travelled internationally and sung with such artists as Levi “Too” King, John Legend and Kirk Franklin. Williams’ voice is expressive, unique, and poised, and her music encourages the soul.

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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, a jazz hall of fame and concert series, weekly national radio programs, television broadcasts, 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 and classes, 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 thousands of events each season in its home in New York City, Frederick P. Rose Hall, and around the world. For more information, visit 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 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 exchanges.state.gov/cultural/rhythm.html.

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