

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 4, 2008

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## *Chris Byars Quartet Kicks Off American Music Abroad Tour*

**WHO/WHAT:** The Chris Byars Quartet, comprised of Chris Byars on saxophone, John Mosca on trombone, Ari Roland on bass and Stefan Schatz 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:** February 24 - March 20, 2008\*

**WHERE:** SLOVAKIA (February 24-27); SAUDI ARABIA: (February 29-March 4); CYPRUS: (March 5-11); MONTENEGRO (March 12-16); SLOVENIA (March 17-20)\*

\*Dates and locations subject to change

**HOW:** Please visit **The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad** at [www.jalc.org/TheRoad](http://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 CHRIS BYARS QUARTET** plays original music based on a lifelong study of great jazz masters. The band has 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 2006-07 Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad program. They released a CD on Smalls Records entitled *Photos in Black, White and Gray* in 2007.

**Chris Byars (saxophone)** is a native New Yorker who began playing saxophone at age 12. He has toured in Europe, Asia and South America and has performed as a featured soloist with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, Harry James Big Band, Glenn Miller Orchestra and Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra. Also a noted arranger, Byars has written for the bands of John Pizzarelli and Jerry Dodgion. He and Ari Roland co-lead the group, Across 7th Street, which brings jazz into the New York City public schools.

**John Mosca (trombone)**, a native New Yorker and The Juilliard School graduate, has performed with Pierre Boulez and the Metropolitan Opera, as well as Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, Joe Williams and Stan Getz. In 1975 he joined the Thad Jones / Mel Lewis Orchestra which won a GRAMMY® the following year for the *Live in Munich* album. Mosca currently co-leads The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra, whose latest release, *Up From the Skies*, received two 2007 GRAMMY® nominations. Mosca has been actively involved in jazz education for over 20 years, having served on the faculty of numerous university jazz programs, most recently as Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Connecticut.

**Ari Roland (bass)** was born and raised in New York City. He began playing bass at the age of 12 and was working professionally by age 16. He studied at The Juilliard School and has played in the bands of jazz legends such as Lou Donaldson, Barry Harris and Betty Carter. *Sketches From a Bassist's Album*, his recent CD on Smalls Records, has received widespread critical acclaim.

**Stefan Schatz (drums)** was born in New York City. Trained as a classical percussionist at Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan and Manhattan School of Music Prep, Schatz continued his jazz studies at The New School in New York. Since graduating in 1995, Schatz has worked with many notable artists, including Jon Hendricks, the Glenn Miller Orchestra and the Mark Morris Dance Group, among others. Active in education, Schatz has been involved in arts outreach programs for the Mark Morris Dance School, Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Lincoln Center Institute.

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

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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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