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## *Exegesis Kicks Off American Music Abroad Tour*

**WHO/WHAT:** Exegesis comprised of Nick Demopoulos on guitar, Michael Blanco on bass, David Cook on piano and Tomas Fujiwara 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 18 – March 16, 2008\*

**WHERE:** **BAHRAIN** (February 18-22); **YEMEN:** (February 23-28); **OMAN:** (February 29-March 6); **UNITED ARAB EMIRATES** (March 7-12); **KUWAIT** (March 12-16)\*

\*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.

**CONTACT:**

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**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*.

**Nick Demopoulos (guitar)** has performed and created music in a wide variety of jazz styles. He has appeared in clubs and festivals throughout Europe, Canada, Mexico and the United States, as well as in concerts sponsored by the American Jazz Symposium. Demopoulos composed and performed in the musical *Rhymes with Adventure* (selected as one of the best theater pieces of the 1999-2000 season by *The Village Voice*) and the production *I, Medusa* in 2000. He has also composed music for advertising campaigns for Motorola, Estee Lauder, feature films, documentaries and internet outlets.

**Michael Blanco (bass)** is a two-time recipient of the ASCAP Foundation Young Jazz Composer Award (2005, 2006) and recently released his debut album, *In the Morning*, which includes his winning compositions. In addition to his ASCAP awards, Blanco was a finalist in the International Society of Bassists jazz bass competition in 2003. Over the past seven years, Blanco has been involved in a wide variety of musical projects, including bands led by Doug Wamble, Bob Reynolds and John Chin, among others. In 2001, Blanco toured South America, Central America and the Caribbean under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State. He regularly performs at New York City venues including Carnegie Hall, Birdland, Makor and Barbés.

**David Cook (piano)** is a well-rounded musician with experience in multiple genres. After graduating from the University of Michigan with a jazz performance degree (studying with the likes of Gerald Cleaver, Ellen Rowe and Donald Walden), Cook toured for several years the multi-platinum selling group \*NSYNC. After moving to New York, Cook studied privately with Bruce Barth, Fred Hersch and Kenny Werner. He plays regularly in bands led by tenor player Bob Reynolds and bassist Michael Blanco. Cook has also written, arranged, performed and recorded with artists ranging from Justin Timberlake and Jennifer Hudson to rising stars such as Billy Porter and Shayna Steele.

**Tomas Fujiwara (drums)**, a Boston native, spent eight years under the tutelage of legendary drummer and educator Alan Dawson before moving to New York in 1994. He has toured the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Korea and Japan as a cast member of the Off-Broadway hit *STOMP* and has performed with artists such as Makanda Ken McIntyre, David Murray and Vernon Reid. Fujiwara can be heard on over a dozen recordings to date and is active as a teacher, clinician, composer (for theater and dance) and accompanist.

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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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