

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: NOVEMBER 1, 2011

**For High Resolution Photos:
[The Rhythm Road Program
Bands](#)**



***THE RHYTHM ROAD: AMERICAN MUSIC ABROAD PROGRAM
ANNOUNCES
ARI ROLAND JAZZ QUARTET TOUR DATES
JAZZ ENSEMBLE TO TRAVEL TO WEST AFRICA
TO PROMOTE CULTURAL EXCHANGE***

Who/What:

Jazz at Lincoln Center and the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announced today Ari Roland Jazz Quartet will tour Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Senegal, Niger, and Mali with *The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad* program. The jazz group from New York, New York, was selected from applications by more than 100 ensembles to travel abroad and encourage mutual respect and understanding. International tour activities will include public concerts, master classes, lecture-demonstrations, workshops, jam sessions, collaborations with local musicians, and media outreach. Since 2005, 159 musicians from 41 ensembles have toured with the program, visiting over 100 countries on five continents.

As part of *The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad* program, Ari Roland Jazz Quartet will also perform two concerts in the United States. In Washington, D.C., National Geographic Live! will present the first concert on February 9, 2012 at 6pm at the Grosvenor Auditorium, 1600 M St. NW. The second concert will be presented in

New York City by Jazz at Lincoln Center on February 11, 2012 at 12:30pm at Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola* at Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Where/When:

Ari Roland Jazz Quartet will tour Democratic Republic of Congo (November 5-12), Mauritania (November 13-18), Senegal (November 19-23), Niger (November 24-27), and Mali (November 28-December 4).

**Dates and locations subject to change*

U.S. Concert Dates:

- Washington, D.C.: February 9, 2012 at 6pm at the Grosvenor Auditorium, 1600 M St. NW
- New York City: February 11, 2012 at 12:30pm at Dizzy's Club *Coca-Cola* at Frederick P. Rose Hall, home of Jazz at Lincoln Center

How:

For more information visit *The Rhythm Road: American Music Abroad* at jalc.org/TheRoad, and exchanges.state.gov/cultural/rhythm.html, which include featured countries, bands, stories from the road, and more.

For more information:

Anna Kukowski, Burson-Marsteller for Jazz at Lincoln Center, 212-614-4560, anna.kukowski@bm.com.

Talley Sergent, U.S. Department of State, 202-632-6043, SergentRT@state.gov.

- - -

Ari Roland Jazz Quartet (New York, New York), is inspired by jazz music from the 1930's through 1950's, also known as the "Golden Age of Jazz." The ensemble's repertoire includes pieces by jazz legends such as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Billie Holiday as well as their own critically acclaimed original compositions. In addition to their performances in New York the quartet has a busy touring schedule. They also direct international programs bringing young musicians from different communities together to play jazz.

Ari Roland (Bass) started playing jazz professionally at the age of 16 and also received classical training at The Juilliard School. He has worked with many significant figures in jazz, including Barry Harris, Betty Carter, Lou Donaldson, Wynton Marsalis, Marcus Roberts, and Harry Connick, Jr. Roland's three albums as a bandleader have received critical acclaim in the international jazz press. Through The Rhythm Road and other touring programs, he has traveled to 26 different countries in the past three years. Roland currently co-directs the *Bi-Communal Jazz Futures* program for the U.S. Embassy in Cyprus and *American Jazz In Syria* program for the U.S. Embassy in Syria.

Keith Balla (Percussion) was born in Austin, Texas and moved to New York City in 2004. A student of master drummer and teacher Kenny Washington, Balla began working professionally in New York at the age of 17. In addition to national tours, he performs regularly in New York with many of the city's dynamic young jazz artists. Recognized for his musical maturity, he is also sought after by renowned musicians for his supportive and interactive accompaniment style. He has presented jazz drum

clinics to musicians of all levels in the U.S. and internationally, tours frequently for the U.S. State Department in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, and continues to record in New York.

Chris Byars (Tenor Saxophone) is equally recognized as an outstanding composer and arranger, who received prestigious awards, grants, and commissions from many organizations, including The Tanne Foundation and Chamber Music America. Byars has been on the faculty of Jazz at Lincoln Center's Middle School Jazz Academy and in 2009 was awarded a major grant for an 18 part series bringing jazz and the music of Gigi Gryce/Bashir Assim into New York City Public Schools. He has traveled extensively for the U.S. Department of State and co-directs, with Ari Roland, the *Bi-Communal Jazz Futures* program for the U.S. Embassy in Cyprus and the *American Jazz In Syria* for the U.S. Embassy in Syria.

Zaid Nasser (Alto Saxophone) was born and raised in New York, and is the son of jazz and bluesmaster, Jamil Nasser. From an early age, he learned directly from the legends of jazz. At 19, he moved to Memphis, the birthplace of the blues, where he spent two years working with many greats of the art form. Upon his return to New York, he became a featured soloist with Panama Frances' Savoy Sultans, and worked with the pioneering organist Bill Doggett. His albums have been included on many "top ten" lists of music critics, and he performs regularly in New York. He currently devotes a large portion of his schedule to international touring.

- - -

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, weekly national radio 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 produces 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 a wide range of academic, cultural, private sector, professional, and sports exchange programs. The Bureau's cultural exchanges 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.

###