

Ari Roland, double bass - A fully professional jazz bassist in New York City at 16, Ari also received classical training for 5 years at The Juilliard School. He has worked with many of the most significant figures in jazz, including Barry Harris, Betty Carter, Lou Donaldson, Wynton Marsalis, Marcus Roberts and Harry Connick Jr., and his three CDs as a bandleader on Smalls Records have earned wide-spread critical acclaim in the international jazz press. As a "Jazz Ambassador" for the US Department of State, Ari has traveled to 35 different countries for 86 programs in the past five years. With Chris Byars, he co-directs the continuing "Bi-Communal Jazz Futures" program for the US Embassy in Cyprus, now in its 4th year.

Chris Byars, tenor saxophone - A native of New York City, Chris began his professional career singing with The Metropolitan Opera Company at 6 years old, taking up the saxophone at age 14. He is equally recognized as an outstanding composer and arranger, having received prestigious awards, grants and commissions from many organizations, including The Tanne Foundation and Chamber Music America. Chris has been on the faculty of Jazz At Lincoln Center, and has received major grants for his work in bringing jazz into the New York City Public School System.

Zaid Nasser, alto saxophone - Born and raised in New York, Zaid is the son of jazz and blues master Jamil Nasser and learned directly from the legends of jazz themselves. At 19, he returned to Memphis, the birthplace of the blues, playing for two years with Calvin Newborn. Returning to New York, he was a featured soloist with Panama Frances' "Savoy Sultans", and with the pioneering jazz organist Bill Doggett. His CDs have been included on many critics' annual "Top Ten" lists, and he performs regularly in New York City. He has also toured in Europe, The Middle East and throughout Asia as a bandleader and for the US Department of State.

Keith Balla, drums - Born in Austen, Texas, Keith moved to New York City in 2004. A student of master drummer and teacher Kenny Washington, Keith 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 the older generation for his supportive and interactive accompaniment style. He has presented jazz drum clinics to musicians of all levels in the US and internationally, tours frequently for the State Department in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and continues to record in New York.