

RELEASE IN FULL

June 30, 2010

Dear Mr. John Olver:

We thought you would be interested to know that three members of Kaleidoscope Trio, located in your district, recently traveled to Mali and throughout Cote d'Ivoire as part of the Performing Arts Initiative, a cultural exchange program supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This program is an important way to engage foreign audiences by providing U.S. embassies financial support for presentations of American performing arts and artists.

We received excellent feedback on the Kaleidoscope Trio. This outstanding jazz ensemble delighted hundreds of people in Mali through concerts and many thousands more through feature programming on nationwide radio and TV outlets. During stops in Yamoussoukro, Tiassale, and Abidjan, the group conducted participatory workshops and discussions for nearly 475 students.

The ensemble's packed schedule included workshops at the Bamako School for the Blind as well as music and high schools throughout the capital; an outdoor concert for 500 in a town in southwest Mali; and, a joint performance with Grammy-nominated Malian artist Bassekou Kouyate. The Trio members' willingness to provide free music lessons during their downtime deeply impressed Malian audiences. Perhaps the greatest cultural exchange occurred in Abidjan when group member, Gilad Dobrecky, was presented with an "ahoko," an African percussion instrument, and to the surprise and enjoyment of the audience seamlessly incorporated it into the trio's repertoire.

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to showcase America's accomplished and talented artists through our cultural projects. Your constituents' willingness to undertake the rigors of international travel to engage foreign audiences, foster goodwill and provide insight into our culture and values makes them true citizen diplomats. We are grateful to them for helping us accomplish our country's foreign policy objectives.

Sincerely,

Maura M. Pally
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Professional and Cultural Exchanges

The Honorable
John Olver,
House of Representatives.