the REAL AMBASSADORS

america exports jazz

This poster show is based on Meridian International Center's *Jam Session* exhibition. See the full show at www.meridian.org/jazzambassadors.

Founded in 1960, Meridian International Center is a not-for-profit organization in Washington dedicated to promoting international understanding through the exchange of people, ideas and culture. Its *Art for Cultural Diplomacy* program creates exhibitions and related activities that emphasize socially relevant topics and important world regions. Meridian's *Jam Session* exhibition has traveled to six continents under the aegis of the U.S. Department of State and has reached millions of people. Learn more at www.meridian.org.

Embassy of the United States of America

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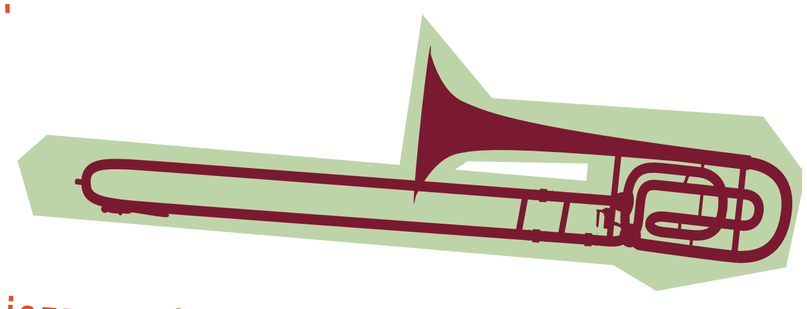
FROM the 1950s to the 1970s —

as jazz took the world by storm, thanks to popular jazz broadcasts like Willis Conover's Voice of America radio show, *Music USA* — the

U.S. Department of State sent dozens of America's greatest jazz musicians to tour the globe sharing their unique talents.

DUBBED "THE JAZZ AMBASSADORS,"



these American jazz greats were embraced by enthusiastic audiences from Africa to the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Latin America. America's jazz ambassadors were thrilled by the opportunity to

"PLAY FOR THE PEOPLE."

They were so committed to reaching out to foreign audiences that several artists refused to play concerts until eager fans unable to afford tickets were admitted for free. Many of the musicians were equally eager to learn about the music and culture of their international hosts and held

IMPROMPTU JAM SESSIONS with local musicians.

THROUGH THE POWER OF JAZZ, these artists were able to transcend national boundaries, build bridges and tell a larger story about freedom in America.

Jazz Ambassador Louis Armstrong explained it best as he sang on the album, *The Real Ambassadors*, produced in collaboration with fellow Jazz Ambassador Dave Brubeck and his wife, Iola:

The State Department has discovered JAZZ;

It reaches folks like nothing ever has.

Like when they feel that jazzy rhythm,

They know we're really with 'em.

That's what we call cultural exchange.

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Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville

Southern University Jazz Ensemble Director Alvin Batiste (left) teaches Togolese musicians to play "Soul Soothing Beach" from Duke Ellington's *Togo Brava Suite* during a workshop at the USIS Cultural Center.

Lomé, Togo 1973

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Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville

Clark Terry and His Jolly Giants perform at the Pakistan American Cultural Center.

Karachi, Pakistan 1978

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Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville

Count Basie at the final rehearsal of the popular Burmese song "Emerald Dusk"

Rangoon, Burma 1971

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Courtesy of the Brubeck Collection, Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific Library, Copyright Dave Brubeck

The Dave Brubeck Trio featuring Gerry Mulligan in concert at the Palace of Culture

Warsaw, Poland 1970

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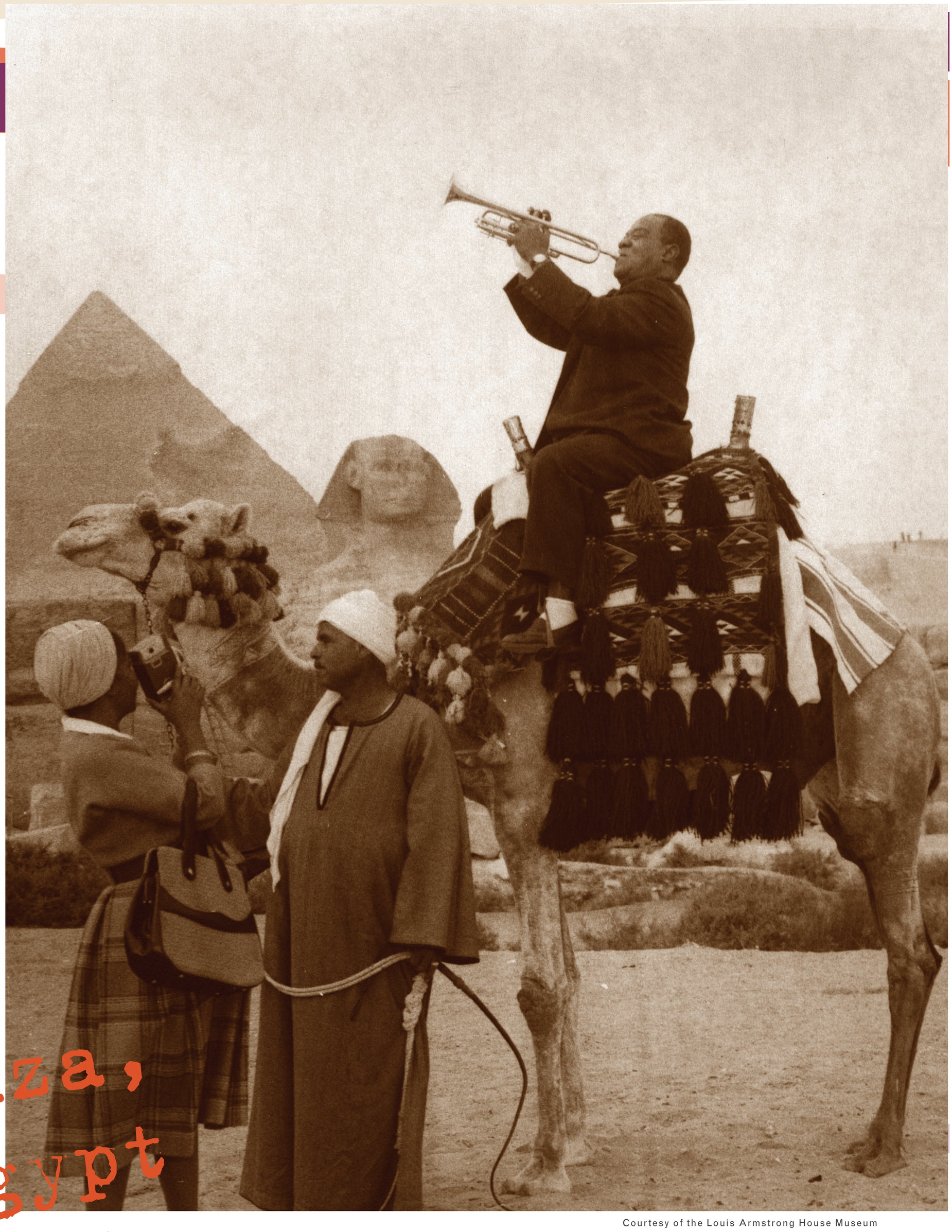

Giza, Egypt 1961

Courtesy of the Louis Armstrong House Museum

Lucille Armstrong films Louis in a classic tourist setting.

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Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville

Duke Ellington addresses the audience at a reception in his honor hosted by the U.S. ambassador.

Buenos Aires, Argentina 1971

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