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U.S. Envoy rocks Pacifika Stage



The Magic Number Trio, U.S. Arts Envoy to the 2012 Festival of Pacific Arts performing an item during the official *'Fourth of July' reception* in Honiara, Solomon Islands. The Jazz group travelled from New York to Honiara to participate in various events during the Festival, under the Department of State's Educational and Cultural Affairs Program.

The Magic Number, an American jazz ensemble led by violinist Zachary Brock, travelled all the way from New York to the Solomon Islands to participate in the 11th Festival of Pacific Arts (FOPA), which coincided with the 236th Independence Anniversary of the United States of America on July 4.

The band touring as musical ambassadors for the US State Department in the South Pacific, gave an energetic special *Fourth of July* performance at the Festival village arena which also featured members of the American Samoan contingent to FOPA.

The evening also saw the Jazz ensemble perform for guests at the official '*Fourth of July*' reception hosted by U.S. Ambassador to the Solomon Islands, H.E Teddy Taylor. Guests included Prime Minister Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo, government ministers, senior officials as well as heads of the diplomatic corp, business community and Pacific Islands heads of delegations to the festival.

On Thursday, July 5, '*The Magic Number*' travelled to Doma, a FOPA satellite venue and performed to a packed arena of enthusiastic locals, who for the first time had seen a violinist.

Band leader Zach Brock, drummer Frederick Kennedy and bassist Matt Wigton said the experience was overwhelming and the welcome from the locals was too good.

"We would very much like to come back here to the Solomon Islands and perform for the people. They are all so friendly and the place is beautiful. *Tanggio tumas* for the hospitality shown," commented Mr. Brock.

The group's impression of the Solomon Islands was amazement as it was their first time in the Pacific. They also appreciated that they were able to experience firsthand the richness and diversity of the cultures that exist in the region as showcased at the FOPA opening ceremony at Lawson Tama Stadium.

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