

# Jazz festival ends in Apia and misses Pago

SAMOA



The U.S. military band performing at a school in Samoa (Photo Supplied.)  
By Alexander Rheeney • 06 May 2023

The 7th Samoana Jazz and Arts Festival – after a three-year hiatus brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic – closed in Apia after four nights of performances and skipped the Pago Pago part of the event.

In a press release issued on Saturday, the festival's organisers said they were dismayed that they were not able to move the festival to American Samoa. This normally would have been done in collaboration with their counterparts in the territory, but couldn't due to the detection of measles cases there.



Royal Samoa Police Band led by Bandmaster Senior Sergeant Tanuvasa Seiuli Muao. (Photo: Supplied.)

What makes the festival in the archipelago special is the fact that Samoa is the first country in the world to welcome the dawn of International Jazz Day, the festival's flagship event and American Samoa is the last country to see the international day's sunset. The festival in Samoa was held from 27-30 April 2023.

This year's festival involved the participation of the U.S. Pacific Fleet Protocol Combo led by Bandmaster Lieutenant Corporal Luslaida Barbosa. The festival was a musical tribute to Samoa's 60th Independence anniversary with Samoa joining over a thousand registered events around the world to celebrate the 12th International Jazz Day. The U.S. military band was well received by the Samoa Police Force and had an opportunity to perform alongside the Royal Samoa Police Band led by Bandmaster Senior Sergeant Tanuvasa Seiuli Muao.



Members of the U.S. military band with staff from the American Embassy. (Photo: Supplied. )

The U.S. Pacific Fleet Protocol Combo gave a rousing performance at Leulumoega Fou College and the school surprised the visitors with their powerful voices. On Friday, the U.S. Pacific Fleet Protocol Combo performed alongside other musicians at the Friday Night Market. The musical line-up included the Royal Samoa Police Band, the Ombudsman's String Band, the 2023 Samoana Jazz Band, and Solace.

One of the highlights of this year's festival was a Master Class held at the National University of Samoa, Lecture Theatre D-201. Participants included members of the Police Band, the N.U.S. Community Music Program, members of the National Orchestra, students from Pacific Creatives Music, and other interested musicians. Rosa Vitilesaulofoaleola Solomona, Program Coordinator of the N.U.S. Community Music Program, welcomed the U.S. Pacific Fleet Protocol Combo to the Masterclass and this was followed by a brief introduction by the U.S. Chargé d'affaires Noriko Horiuchi.

A meet and greet event was organised at Sails Restaurant and Bar with entertainment by a Samoan band that was there for a private event. A part of the program also included the screening of the first 20 minutes of a documentary film on music and jazz in Samoa.

International Jazz Day, the main event for the 2023 Samoana Jazz and Arts Festival, was held at Taumeasina Island Resort, where the U.S. Pacific Fleet Protocol Combo was staying.



Local police and some members of the U.S. military band. (Photo: Supplied.)

The event was attended by the Patron of the Samoana Jazz and Arts Festival, Her Excellency Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa. Deputy Prime Minister, Tuala Iosefo Ponifasio was also present among over 100 other guests. UNESCO Cultural Advisor, Ms. Ellen Lekka, opened the evening by reading the message from Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of International Jazz Day.

The event included music by the National Orchestra of Samoa, the Pacific Creatives music students, and the 2023 Samoana Jazz Band. The U.S. Pacific Fleet Protocol Combo closed out the concert.