7th Fleet Orient Express band supports "America in 3-D"

By MU2 James Caliva, U.S. 7th Fleet Band Public Affairs

BAGUIO CITY, Republic of the Philippines (NNS) -- The 7th Fleet Band's "Orient Express" performed at Baguio City, Philippines in support of the U.S. Embassy's "America in 3-D" exhibition July 8-10.

"America in 3-D" is a traveling road show in diplomacy, development, and defense. The event included musical performances, free food sampling, a cooking demonstration, information about visas, and studying in the United States. "Orient Express" kicked off the event with an hour of American Music including "Hotel California" by the Eagles and Taio Cruz's hit "Dynamite."

"I really enjoyed America in 3-D, the audiences were amazing and very responsive. The staff was great and very supportive," said Musician 3rd Class Gabriel Brown. "Baguio was an amazing city and I really enjoyed sharing part of America with everyone in the Philippines."

The band played for an audience of 200,000 people over the three-day weekend, giving them a first-hand look at American music which included classic country, hip-hop and rhythm and blues.

The musicians also conducted a clinic discussing different styles of music and individual instrument demonstrations. The highlight of the clinic was when the band invited local musicians to the stage for a jam session and performed a special encore of American Top 40 music after the clinic.

"The people here were great and I loved how they sang along with most of our songs. There was a lot of great musical talent at the clinic and we really enjoyed getting the opportunity to share this experience with them," said Musician 1st Class Christopher Sams.

To close out the event, Orient Express performed a set of American country music.

"You don't always get to perform country music in Southeast Asia. The audience was up and dancing to Boot Scootin' Boogie, they loved it," said Brown.

The band also visited three universities and the Philippine Military Academy to facilitate clinics in technique and musical performance.

MU3 Joshua Haney, assigned to the U.S. 7th Fleet Band, Orient Express, raps during a performance at St. Louis University July 11. The band is visiting Baguio City as part of the U.S. Embassy's initiative "America In 3D", a program intended to share U.S. culture, values and services in the Philippines.

U.S. Navy photo by MU3 Zachary Buckwash

The event was broadcast live on Ustream.com through the U.S. Embassy Manila's Facebook page and is scheduled to visit cities in the Philippines throughout 2011 and 2012.

Cowpens Sailors build skills, relations with Total Force Integration

Story and photo by MC1(SW/AW) N. Ross Taylor, USS Cowpens Public Affairs

TIMOR SEA - The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) began its total force integration with Commander, Task Force (CTF 70) and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 embarked in *USS George Washington* (CVN 73), along with ships from the Royal Australian Navy to ramp up for the upcoming Talisman Saber (TS 11) joint exercise.

GSM2 Trinadee Jones shows the propulsion auxiliary control console in the central control station to Royal Australian Navy sailors, from the *HMAS Darwin*, aboard the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) July 15. *Cowpens* and *Darwin* are operating together conducting unit level training.

Force integration brings together various types of military aircraft, ships and service members from different countries to train and operate together as one unit in a single environment.

The integration and upcoming TS 11 will provide opportunities like air defense exercises and strike group coordination events with Royal Australian forces such as the frigate *HMAS Darwin.*

"The operations with HMAS Darwin will include carrier air wing air-to-air missions, force air defense identification zone check-ins and check-outs with Carrier Air Wing aircraft, night and day plane guard and integration into the U.S. Navy multi-data link network," said Chief Warrant Officer Rene Cornejo, Cowpens' Air Warfare Officer. "It is important to maintain our relationships with our allies while deployed in the 7th Fleet area of responsibility for many reasons, such as mission execution and proficiency of both navies."

Force integration presents unique challenges and training opportunities.

"The integration of the different assets is important, because communication is essential to the success of any military operation. The importance of this is amplified during joint operations," said Information Systems Technician 1st Class Gene Morsen.

The training also tests the systems ability to integrate properly while communicating track data among the force and still maintain a clear tactical picture.

"In these scenarios and exercises, we all see the same picture. Warfare commanders know that the players in their warfare area need to maintain the same situational awareness, which is the key to maintaining focus and success in their respective areas of responsibility," said Senior Chief Operations Specialist (SW) Damone Fulgham. "Because of the speed of the flow of information and timing required to conduct effective air defense, the integration helps us as air defense commander, to know that all units of the strike group are seeing the same clear and concise picture to effectively accomplish the mission," he said.

Operations Specialist 1st Class (SW) Gerald Crawford said that total force integration is a vital piece to a much bigger picture.

"Force integration is vital to our mission because we have to know how to operate with other countries and different platforms, so that we know the fullest extent of our capabilities," said Crawford. "It provides an opportunity to achieve new ways to surpass our limits of operations, to expound our knowledge, improve our interoperability and hone our decision making skills. These are all key tools to our mission success."