

# PACIFIC BREAK HAS A WINNER!

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MELBOURNE - After a competition spanning five months, five time zones and the widest range of musical styles, Vanuatu band "26 Roots" has been named winner of Radio Australia's inaugural Pacific Break competition.

## THE WINNERS

26 Roots (pronounced Two Six Roots), from the island of Santo, are already a well known story in their small community. In 2007, eight unemployed youths, using a drum kit made from plastic containers and tins cans and other novel instruments, began to forge a rich home-grown reggae sound. Eventually, their community raised funds to help get 'modern' instruments; keyboards, electric guitars and a proper kit. This year they recorded their original song 'Broken Promises' for entry in Pacific Break 2008. Our judges loved it!

26 Roots will now fly to the Pacific's biggest music festival, Fest'napuan (November 12 to 16, Port Vila, Vanuatu), courtesy of Radio Australia and the Festival. They will also be featured on a free Pacific Break 2008 compilation CD along with 11 other acts from all over the Pacific.

## THE COMPETITION

Early in 2008 Radio Australia put together a plan to unearth new musical talent in the Pacific. A simple objective – audition any unsigned local band performing music in any of the countries of the Pacific.

Sounds simple, but think logistics ... how do you get the audio across the Pacific, who records the artists, who judges the competition, and what prize to offer?

Music came in to Radio Australia on every possible medium – CD, MP3, cassette and email and from right across the Pacific. Bands from the Highlands of PNG to Solomon Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Cook Islands put themselves before the judges – one of Australia's most innovative musicians, Ari Ingram, legendary radio and club DJ, SystaBB and Radio Australia's own, Kim Taylor.

Entries have covered a wide range of genres with entrants ranging across the spectrum of the community including villagers, doctors, I.T. consultants and unemployed youth.

Co-producer of Pacific Break, Namila Benson says the most compelling aspect has been the passion and pride of the artists in their culture and traditions. "Music is everyone's language, regardless of culture. It tends to just transcend those borders and boundaries that exist all around us."

Creator/producer of the competition, Steve Hassett, is delighted by the courage of all the entrants "being a musician myself I am really happy for the musicians from the Pacific who have shared their music and now will potentially get to take the next step".

## THE COMPILATION

The Pacific Break 2008 compilation CD is to be released and distributed at the end of the year. This compilation will be dedicated to the memory of 15 year-old Fiji-based Tongan - Tae Kami, one of the most moving entrants of the Pacific Break competition who sadly passed away in August this year after a struggle with cancer. Her inspirational song, Walk On Walk Strong, which was recorded just months before her passing, will open the compilation. The compilation will be distributed for free throughout the Pacific Islands.

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