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### U.S. Singer Anthony Brown Stages Live Concerts In Addis Ababa

Internationally acclaimed baritone Anthony Brown gave a series of concerts in Addis Ababa during his visit from May 6-16, 2007 sponsored by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy. Anthony Brown performed his music to varied audiences this week, and accompanied by local musicians and chanters.

On May 8, Anthony Brown sang folk ballads, spirituals and hymn from the 1800s, as well as several Broadway "show tunes" at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence for a group of invited guests. On Thursday, May 10 Mr. Brown performed at the Italian Cultural Institute along with Mohammed Awol, a well known menzuma performer. One local newspaper reporting on the event described the performers as "two singers from distinct cultural traditions, each possessing a faith based foundation." Mohammed Awol performed "Menzuma" (chanting) which is music from the Ethiopian Islamic Sufi tradition that contains remembrances of God, praises of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), advice on how to live one's life and messages of peace and love. Anthony Brown sang melodies by African American composers Hall Johnson, Harry Thacker Burleigh, and Margaret Allison Bonds. This concert was a rare occasion for Addis Ababa, with Christian and Muslim musicians performing devotional music side by side. As Public Affairs Officer Anthony Fisher remarked when he spoke at the beginning of the event, "the concert was intended to be a bridge to understanding the diversity and at the same time the commonalities between various faiths."

Also included in Anthony Brown's program was a lecture on African American spiritual music to senior students and professors of the Yared Music School in Addis Ababa. Brown's program culminated in a May 15 charity concert to raise funds for the Alliance for Life, an NGO that supports women and children living with HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia. Anthony Brown shared the stage with a "shebsheba" choir, and renowned Ethiopian pianist, Girma Yifrasheba. Anthony sang old American hymns, spirituals and songs from his new CD "Each Other's light," and delighted the audience by singing one of Girma's compositions in Amharic.

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