



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Virgin Islands Department of Education Celebrates the Conclusion of 2025 Artist in Residence Program: “Mentoring Through the Music Arts”

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) proudly announces the successful conclusion of the 2025 Artist in Residence Program in the St. Thomas-St. John School District. This year’s theme, “Mentoring Through the Music Arts,” provided an enriching five-week experience focused on artistic development, technical training, and performance coaching across diverse musical disciplines.

Hosted at Julius E. Sprauve School on St. John and Lockhart K-8 School, Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School, Charlotte Amalie High School, and Ivanna Eudora Kean High School on St. Thomas, the program offered students immersive, hands-on experiences in music production, steel pan, and performance. Sessions were held weekly, providing both group and private instruction for junior high and high school musicians.

A key component of the program was its emphasis on mentorship, with students learning directly from world-renowned musicians, composers, and educators. The curriculum balanced technical skill-building with creative exploration through sectional rehearsals, solo and ensemble development, and general music workshops. Music educators and band directors also benefitted from specialized professional development sessions.

VIDE extends heartfelt thanks to the United Jazz Foundation (UJF) for its invaluable partnership and steadfast commitment to youth empowerment through music. Under the visionary leadership of founders Dion and Nicole Parson and Program Manager Naysa Lynch.

The program featured internationally acclaimed artists, including Alejandro Avilés, Alphonso Horne, Anthony Hailey, Carlton Holmes, Edward Perez, Darryl Jordan, Dion Parson, Elio Villafranca, Gerald Cannon, Henry Cole, Mikael Darmanie, Mike Burton, Ricky Burkhead, Rob Harari, Santi Debriano, and Tychiko Cox.

The program concluded with several school and community concerts showcasing students’ achievements. A standout moment was the culmination concert featuring the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School Steel Orchestra.

A highlight of this year’s program was a generous donation of hundreds of Novation Launchpad Mini mk2 units by Dr. Lee Whitmore, Vice President of Focusrite Education, to the United Jazz Foundation. These innovative grid controllers will enhance digital music production across Virgin Islands music programs, providing students with access to industry-standard tools for creating and performing electronic music.

The VIDE is proud to support initiatives that empower youth, preserve cultural traditions, and elevate the role of the arts in education. The 2025 Artist in Residence Program exemplifies these goals and stands as a testament to the power of music to inspire, connect, and transform.

Watch highlights from the BCB Steelpan Concert and the launchpad distribution and teacher training!

🔗 [Steelpan Concert](https://youtu.be/NFP_8170TZg) - https://youtu.be/NFP_8170TZg

🔗 [Launchpad & Training Highlights](https://youtu.be/JVuxoxOFPcc) - <https://youtu.be/JVuxoxOFPcc>

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