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Virtual 'Jazz in the Park' Happens This Friday feat. Eddie Russell and Kevin Williams Jr. on the Consortium

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Jazz in the Park-Christiansted is back this Friday, and it's going virtual.

Themed "Music from the shores of the Caribbean," the concert will be livestreamed from 6 to 7 p.m. Friday on VI Consortium's [Facebook platform](#) and website.

It will feature original musical compositions from trumpet master Edwin "Eddie" Russell and his Quelbe Jazz Band that includes Mario Thomas on bass, Lennox Joseph on guitar, KC Henry on drums, Ray Isles on congas, and David Bess on percussion. The concert will also feature a special youth showcase performance by Kevin Williams Jr. on steelpan.

Bandleader Eddie Russell said the group is excited to get back to playing music. “COVID-19 has upended life as we know it, but we still must find a way to remain connected, and music can be one of the most powerful ways to do so,” Russell said.

The Jazz in the Park monthly concert series is produced by Community Music Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that promotes social harmony and educational enrichment through music. The free community concerts are traditionally held on the last Friday of every month at the Fort Christiansvaern bandstand, but the event has been on hiatus since March due to the coronavirus pandemic. Organizers partnered with the V.I. Consortium this month to record and livestream Friday’s event from a beachfront location on St. Croix in order to comply with government restrictions on public gatherings. The livestream is also made possible through support from AARP Virgin Islands and Broadband VI.

Proceeds generated from online donations will go toward “Crucian Kids Rock!”, a free afterschool music program for at-risk youth that was slated to kick off in March at the DC Canegata Recreation Center but had to be postponed indefinitely due to COVID-19. Musical instruments for the free program were purchased through a grant from the VI Lottery, but some of the new instruments were stolen in April when thieves broke into the center during the shutdown.

“This valuable program was stolen from our children before it even began,” Russell said. “So we’re hoping the entire community will band together to help us replace these instruments, help us give the gift of music to our children as originally intended.”

Businesses wishing to make a tax-deductible contribution or residents seeking to volunteer or donate should visit www.communitymusicinc.org , email donate@communitymusicinc.org or contact Edwin “Eddie” Russell at 340-227-3914.