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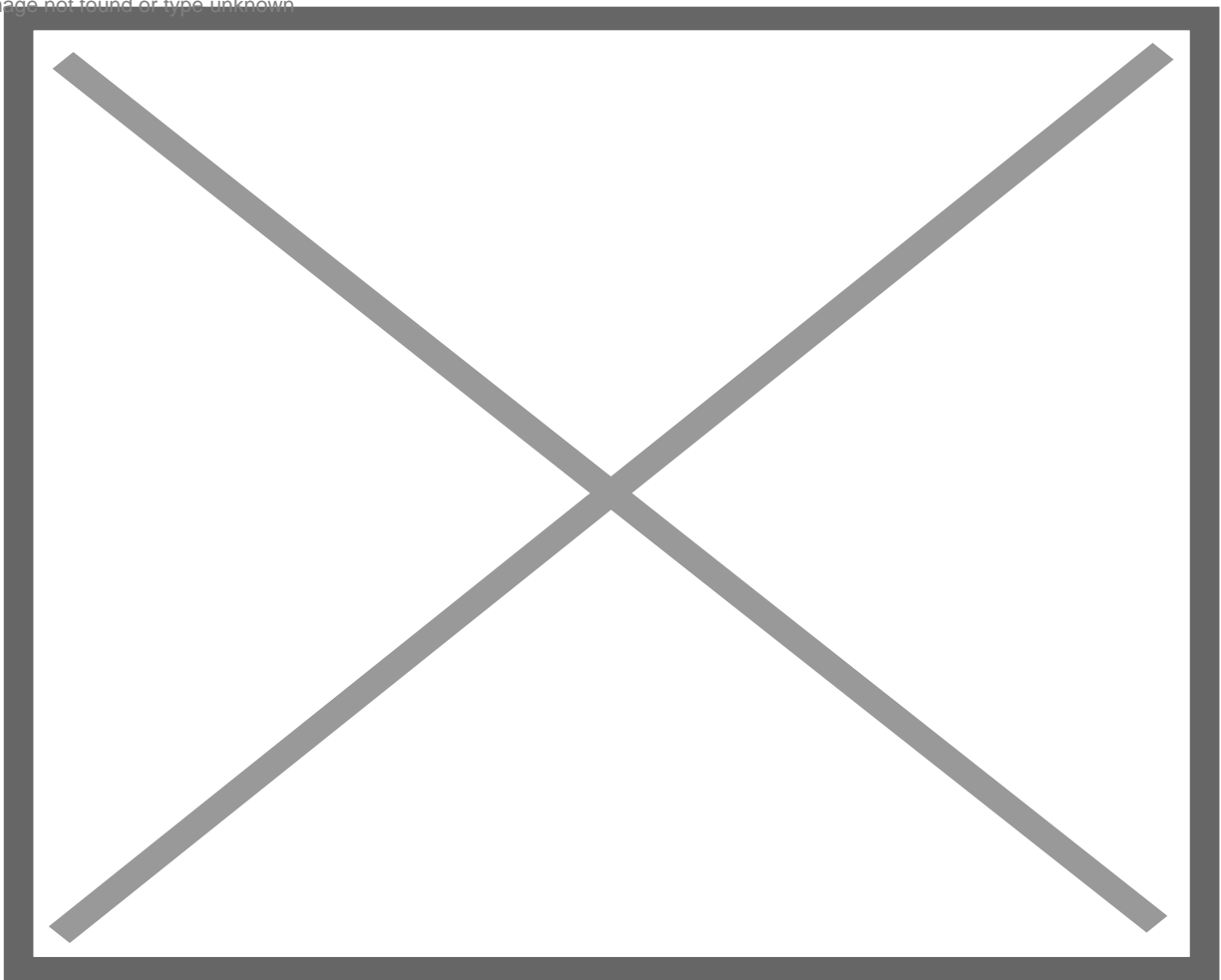
# Crucians First to Hear New Nadia Batson Pre-Release As Female Soca Stars Shine During Melanin Night At MokoVille

## Nikki Brooks, Alison Hinds, Destra & Nadia Batson Give Powerhouse Performances

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Nadia Batson performs on Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024 at the Crucian Christmas Festival Village. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM/DIVISION OF FESTIVALS/SHOT BY SIN

A highly-anticipated show did not disappoint as an all-star lineup of local and regional soca icons graced the stage on Tuesday for Sweet Melanin Night, treating audiences to high-energy performances of some of the most popular soca hits from the Virgin Islands and beyond.

The dynamic Nikki Brooks opened the show with a 45-minute performance, beginning with her 2022 hit “Shiver”, before delving into her extensive catalog. Both on stage and during a post-performance interview, the first woman to win the Calypso Monarch title exactly 27 years ago on Tuesday expressed her delight that the majority of Carnival activities were being held in Festival Village, and her sadness that the Calypso Monarch competition was not among them. “Calypso is who we are,” the veteran singer argued.

She credited her idols including Singing Sandra from Trinidad. “When she stepped on that stage is a regal power she had, and I watched her from small during practices,” Nikki said, explaining that Singing Sandra’s ability to command and control the crowd was her inspiration for developing the intense connection with her fans that she has today. Ms. Brooks was also unrepentant about her loud advocacy on issues affecting Virgin Islanders. “My mother and my kids live here and it’s affecting me bad,” she told Consortium’s hosts for the evening, referring to St. Croix’s water quality woes.

Next up on the program was Destra, the Trinidadian soca powerhouse whose powerful voice belted out a string of hits that had patrons on their feet from the beginning of her set. “Loose”, “Just a Little Bit”, and “Tremble It” were just some of the blockbusters she delivered, before closing her performance to the beloved strains of “It’s Carnival”.

The legendary Alison Hinds followed, opening with the cross-genre song “Aye Aye Aye” before gradually raising the tempo with a succession of party hits going back to her days with iconic band Square One. The Bajan soca queen treated the audience to “DJ Ride”, played with the beat for “Roll It Gyal”, and led enthusiastic patrons in a brief aerobics session while singing “Ragamuffin” and Faluma”. After culminating in a frenzy of dancing to “Togetherness,” Ms. Hinds joined the Consortium crew in their custom lounge for a post-performance chat.

She recounted her evolution from lead singer of Square One to the solo artist titan she became, noting that the shift was catalyzed by the birth of her daughter. Ms. Hinds spoke about her love for performing and her exploration of giving her fans different kinds of experiences. Another trailblazer, Alison was the first female Roadmarch and Party Monarch winner in Barbados, capturing the titles in successive years. Responding to a question about the ubiquity of her music across a variety of Caribbean social settings, she admitted that it was “a little weird” to be at an event and one of her songs begins to play. However, at the same time, it was a really gratifying feeling. “It feels good to be appreciated,” the Bajan soca icon said, especially because she gets to experience people responding with joy to her doing what she loves.

The evening’s third performer was Nadia Batson, who despite being powered by only two hours sleep kept the energy going until the end. She led with last year’s hit single “Market”, followed by a mix of her own music and tracks from fellow Trinidadian artists treating the audience to “First Fete”, “Fatt”, and Farmer Nappy’s “Hooked”, among other favorites. Towards the end of her set, Nadia tested out two new songs, one of which was “Feather”, which according to her during a post-performance interview was supposed to be her last release for the 2024 season.

Asking for permission to try out another new piece and receiving loud approval from the crowd, she launched into her latest - “My All” - a tale of a unrequited suitor dedicating themselves to “de road” instead.

“There’s so much beauty in your own journey,” Ms. Batson told the hosts afterwards, reflecting on her journey as backup singer, writer, and performing artist. Hearkening back to her sparsely-attended inaugural performance on St. Croix approximately six years ago, she expressed gratitude

at the enthusiastic reception she received this time around.

In addition to the large crowds who attended MokoVille in person on Melanin Night, Day 5 of the 2024 Crucian Christmas Festival, thousands of others were able to enjoy via official live streams from the [Consortium](#) and the [Division of Festivals](#) Facebook platforms.

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