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Majestik Estrada-Petersen Crowned 2024 St. Thomas Carnival Queen

Majestik Freedom Estrada-Petersen wins amid fierce competition, captivating the crowd with history and heritage

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Majestik Freedom Estrada-Petersen, 21, was crowned St. Thomas Carnival 2024 on Saturday, April 20th, 2024. By. USVI DIVISION OF FESTIVALS

As the countdown to Carnival moves into high gear on St. Thomas, the island's female mas monarch has been crowned, following fierce competition between three worthy contestants.

Majestik Freedom Estrada-Petersen, 21, Iniyah Griffin, 17, and Caricia Caesar, 18, made their first appearance to the audience in identical black and white gemstone-draped dresses. Each contestant was individually escorted to and from the microphone by a troupe of dancers.

They next appeared in swimwear for the first scored segment of the evening. Majestik's translucent, pearlescent, pleated cover up gave way to an iridescent pink maillot with one slashed shoulder and a deep cutout at the midsection. The edges of the fabric glittered with gems as the leggy contestant #1 strutted in clear platform heels. Iniyah followed, her appearance initially concealed behind two large ostrich-feather fans, before she downed them to reveal a strappy pink monokini, its metallic fabric adorned with rhinestones and her ensemble paired with silver glittered heels. To close the segment, Caricia strutted on stage wearing a yellow chiffon cover-up, which she shed to reveal a Barbie-pink monokini, its straps creating an asymmetric neckline and flattering silhouette.

Swimwear gave way to ambassadorial presentations, where the contestants made presentations on various aspects of Virgin Islands culture while wearing businesswear-adjacent outfits made of the vibrant official madras fabric. Ms. Estrada-Peterson's skirt suit featured a royal blue jacket, its cuffs, lapels, and button placket trimmed in madras, and a pencil skirt entirely made out of matching madras. A large madras bow was tied around her waist, and she gave the listening audience a brief historical tour of the territory, speaking of the 1733 slave revolt on St. John, the 1917 transfer from Danish to U.S. rule, and reciting a list of native Virgin Islanders who have risen to national prominence due to excellence in their respective fields.



Ms. Griffin's suit jacket was a riot of ruffles and flounces, from collar to accentuated shoulder to tiered sleeves. The elaborate jacket and pencil skirt was fashioned mainly out of madras and accentuated with chartreuse trim. Her presentation focused on the territory's agricultural profile. She noted how the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of those who call the Virgin Islands home has given rise to a unique mix of ingredients and cuisine, and advocated for the establishment of the territory as a force for agro-tourism.

Meanwhile, Ms. Caesar's suit featured a cerulean blue satin base fabric with the madras used to accent the bodice, sleeves, and skirt. Fabric cutouts of musical symbols called treble clefs were affixed to her outfit, tying into her presentation on the unmistakable music of the Virgin Islands.

She highlighted celebrated artists including Theron Thomas, Pumpa, Pressure Buss Pipe, and Reginald Cyntje, as well as cultural icons Stanley and the 10 Sleepless Knights, among others.

The show moved straight into the on-stage interview, with each contestant answering two questions. Majestik argued that a strong grounding in history was essential to ensure that the territory's cultural heritage was maintained among upcoming generations. The teacher-in-training also argued that collaborations between schools and farms, or schools and other private-sector businesses, can bring a host of benefits to both sides of the partnership.

Next, Iniyah suggested that actively seeking more engagement from parents and community members in various decision making processes at schools could foster a greater sense of trust and togetherness among the wider community. Meanwhile, Caricia filtered her answers through the lens of her passion - music. She touted the therapeutic nature of music as a way to strengthen community bonds, and also as a way to deliver cultural education to students in a way they are able to enjoy and appreciate.

With interviews out of the way, contestants then moved to the cultural and historical dress segment. In her portrayal, Ms. Estrada-Thomas paid homage to Sanderilla "Miss Sandy" Indiana Blyden Farrington Thomas, a celebrated market vendor. Majestik's dress was a take on the traditional colonial-style dress of Creole women across the Caribbean — an off-the-shoulder bodice with a large ruffle around the neckline and a voluminous skirt, paired with a headpiece fashioned out of the same madras as the bodice. Her initial costume featured a crocus-bag ruffle with a matching overskirt, which she removed to reveal first a white fabric layer underneath, and then the final skirt of two different madras patterns, one laid atop the other.

Ms. Griffin's costume was a tribute to Enid M. Baa and the library that bears her name. She wore a whimsical column dress of yellow, white and green, the flounces on the skirt holding books, and the white sections made to look like the crumpled pages of books. On her shoulders, Iniyah carried a backpack fashioned in the shape of the library's iconic green-shuttered windows, through which the audience could see rows of book-lined shelves and the queen contestant's statuesque figure peering through. The creative costume even featured a large spider dangling at the back.

Meanwhile, Ms. Caesar chose to commemorate the history of the Virgin Islands. Her costume took the shape of an ornate goblet, its golden top half representing the \$25 million in gold coin paid by the United States to Denmark for the territory. Around her hips was a platform around which flags of all the countries which had, at one time or another, a colonial interest in the territory. The flared skirt bore a bucolic pastoral scene hand painted on the fabric, and bedazzled U.S. and VI flags waved from where they were tucked into the small of her back. As she moved around the stage, Caricia lowered the circular platform from hips to ankles as she totally transformed the garment's shape.

The audience, roaring with adulation, was then treated to a musical interlude before the contestants returned to display their talents. Majestik showed off her vocal skills before breaking into a short dance number, while Iniyah played the role of a "steel pan puppet", playing snippets of popular Soca songs. Caricia danced as she accompanied a medley of international music on her tenor saxophone.

For the evening wear segment, Queen contestant #1 Majestik Estrada-Petersen opted for a white satin and mesh long-sleeved gown with a princess-cut bodice encrusted with glittering gems, which also adorn the skirt and sleeves. Contestant #2 Iniyah Griffin donned an emerald green gown with elaborate gold brocade embellishments, a one-sleeved design cuffed at the shoulder,

and a ruffled two-tier train. The sequinned fabric of contestant #3 Caricia Caesar's gown was accented by strips of the unadorned navy blue base fabric poking through, criss-crossing in strategic locations to accent her figure.

At the end of a night that spanned just over four and a half hours, the judges had tallied the scores. Iniyah Griffin landed the 2nd runner up position, Caricia Caesar was awarded the 1st runner up title, and the 2024 Carnival Queen crown, perhaps fittingly enough, belonged to Majestik Estrada-Petersen.

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