

The Virgin Islands Consortium

"Inflate It": John Gotti Clinches 2024 St. Thomas Calypso Monarch With Clever Wordplay and Snappy Tunes

Song encouraging cosmetic enhancements, 'Inflate It,' captivates judges, while another entry by John Gotti, 'Jack,' questions public agency inefficiencies with probing lyrics

Carnival / **Published On April 28, 2024 07:48 AM /**

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John Gotti's "Inflate It" brought laughter to the audience and judges, helping secure his crown. By. D.E.A.R. PRODUCTIONS FOR V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. THOMAS — Nine calypsonians took the stage Saturday night to vie for the title of 2024 St. Thomas Calypso Monarch for St. Thomas Carnival, hoping to defeat last year's

monarch Richie Buntin as he defended his crown. Ultimately, John Gotti prevailed to be crowned this year's Calypso Monarch.

In the first round, the Richie Buntin was up first, with a performance of Cry For Help, a piece outlining the struggles of survival in the current environment of seeming economic stagnation.

Other contestants followed in rapid succession, with some notable performances by Mighty Pat who had a query for the head of the Internal Revenue Bureau: "Why the hell you're picking on me?" The tongue-in-cheek question framed a piece focused on the rumors of cash donations made from accused sex trafficker Jeffery Epstein to the campaigns of former and current local politicians. With all the talk of "extra income" coming in to those individuals, Might Pat wondered, why did the BIR commissioner only seem focused on his surplus cash?



John Gotti wins the St. Thomas 2024 Calypso Monarch. (Credit: Division of Festivals/Rudy Laplace)

St. Croix calypsonian Blackness performed a lament that the territory's vibrant Carnival culture is in danger of being diluted into a generic "bump and grind" street party. She complained about the prevalence of increasingly more revealing costumes, and implored revelers to take care to respect, preserve and maintain the cultural aspects of the annual

festival so that generations to come can participate in an authentic experience.

Lady Mac began her performance by acknowledging the criticism surrounding the changing face of carnival before launching into her piece, in which she argues that the village to be most concerned about is the one that is raising the next generation. "Lend a hand, help to save our island," she crooned, as she urged residents to get active in their communities.

John Gotti, for his first performance of the evening, presented a song called "Jack", about the titular character asking sharp questions of various public agencies and departments. "Jack asked," sang Gotti, "how St. Thomas lights can't stay on all night...while St. John always burning bright, bright?"

In his introduction, Super T said that "WAPA Generator" was his fourth piece written about the troubled agency. He detailed the lengthy history of WAPA's financial woes and the thus-far unsuccessful attempts to right the ship despite injections of cash and wholesale personnel changes. He counseled that WAPA's generating units may be best disposed of in the Bovoni landfill.

When it came time for the second round, reigning monarch Richie Buntin sang of the way his unshakeable faith in God was his foundation for success. "You can't count me out, not as long as I have him by my side," he crooned, as he gave the audience a testimony of his faith.

Mighty Pat decided to focus his second piece on what he perceives as the devolution of governance in Virgin Islands society. "It's a shame the Virgin Islands gone down the drain," he sang.

Chaplet's second piece was a humorous take on the declining vitality that comes with aging and what that means, especially for men. The crux of the piece was the witty double entendre "all I have is mouth", as the calypsonian lamented that his advanced years have deprived him of certain essential bodily functions.

Blackness returned to the topic of what she argued is the territory's declining cultural celebration. "Calypso, we better bring it back," she pleaded, while Lady Mac's song used a circus riff to musically underline her lyrics in which she accuses the governor of being a mere puppet, acting on behalf of unknown figures "pulling the strings" behind the scenes.

NY-G's second piece took aim at the calypso scene, blasting organizers of the Calypso Monarch show for paying short shrift to performers and the artform in general, while General Val expressed his anxiety about the potential rise of the BRICS bloc of countries, with a corresponding threat to the dominance of the US Dollar as the world's reserve currency.

For his second time on the stage, John Gotti sang "Inflate It", encouraging body modifications that enhance the shape of the female buttocks for those who may feel that their natural shape is not comely enough.

Super T's second song spotlighted the dissolution of Governor Bryan's marriage, suggesting that the real state of emergency is the apparent departure of the First Lady

from the public eye.

At the end of an approximately 4-hour show, the judges had completed their deliberations. The award for most humorous of the evening went to John Gotti, while Lady Mac was adjudged the best political song. Super T was awarded the prize for best commentary. In terms of overall best performances of the night, judges awarded points to place Lady Mac in third place, Super T in second, while John Gotti's clever wordplay and snappy music earned him the title of 2024 St. Thomas Calypso Monarch.

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