

The Virgin Islands Consortium

VI Youth Ensemble To Perform At Concert Featuring Renowned Jazz Musician Wynton Marsalis

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Virgin Islander and Grammy Award-winning drummer, Dion Parson's newly formed VI Youth Ensemble will perform as part of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis concert, "An Evening with the Masters of Jazz," at the University of the Virgin Islands' Reichhold Center for the Arts March 4 at 8 p.m.

The concert is being held in support of Parson's United Jazz Foundation (UJF) and its music education program, Mentoring Through the Arts of Music.

VI Youth Ensemble will give pre-concert and intermission performances, and the group will also perform at an invitation-only, post-concert VIP cocktail reception hosted by

International Capital and Management Company (ICMC). Students will also have an opportunity to attend a free master class on March 4 at 4 p.m. at the Reichhold Center.

According to information released by UVI, the Jazz at Lincoln Center and Marsalis have been working closely with UJF and Parson, the organization's president, to increase the quality and level of music education in the territory. For the last three years, they have collaborated with and brought a number of jazz musicians to perform at free community concerts on St. Thomas, including the West Indian Company Limited's concert series, "Jazz on the Docks" and at ICMC's "Jazz in the Park" concert series.

"Our orchestra plays music from every stylistic period of jazz and features a soloist in every chair and 10 arrangers," said Marsalis, managing and artistic director for the Jazz at Lincoln Center. "As always, we incorporate education into everything we do. In most every city, we open our sound checks to students and we also host education initiatives, which may include master classes, workshops and lectures."

In 2009, Mentoring Through the Arts of Music began providing music education in elementary, junior high, and high schools in the territory.

"Having the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis on the Virgin Islands is truly an exciting moment for us," said Nicole Parson, UJF executive director and CEO. "This event will serve to help raise awareness for Mentoring Through the Arts of Music and music education on the Virgin Islands and to solidify our partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center, one of the most renowned music education and performance centers in the world. With the orchestra coming here, people will have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enjoy the same high-quality cultural entertainment and music that other communities around the globe enjoy regularly."

The VI Youth Ensemble was launched in 2014 and is designed to help hone the musical skills of a specially selected group of high school musicians across the territory, according to the organization. In partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center and with the V.I. Department of Education, in 2014 UJF also established Jazz For Young People in the Virgin Islands, a program that will mirror the Jazz at Lincoln Center's interactive early-childhood jazz education program, WeBop.

Feature Image: Wynton Marsalis