

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Christiansted Jump Up! Saw Huge Crowds, Display Of Culture And Mocko Jumbies

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ST. CROIX -- The Rising Stars Youth Steel Pan Orchestra serenaded cultural dancers on Strand Street. Mocko jumbies dazzled onlookers on King Street. Further west, near the boardwalk, the Ebenezer Methodist Steel Pan Orchestra soothed a melting pot of Virgin Islanders with memorable tunes -- including the territory's theme song, Virgin Islands Nice -- and vendors lined the streets serving up known and niche local food to partygoers with hollow stomachs, who traded their dollars for toothsome fare.

It's the Christiansted Jump Up! of course. Happening multiple times a year, residents descend upon the downtown area to celebrate Crucian culture, mingle and have a good time.

Thousands of people decided that Jump Up! was the place to be on Friday night, an event organized to stir business activity in the island's east town. The event was even more critical in light the economic woes that have stymied growth here, as St. Croix currently holds the highest unemployment rate in the territory of [14 percent](#). Nonetheless the mood in Christiansted was positive and contagious.

Sen. Kurt Vialet, spotted at the event, told *The Consortium* that Jump Up! has always been an economic booster.

"I think [Jump Up!] has a tremendous impact. It's an opportunity for a number of vendors to come out and make money; an opportunity for the stores in downtown Christiansted to have a good night; the restaurants and bars are having a very, very good night -- so this is one of the events I truly look forward to," Vialet said.

The senator added that the festivity has defined the island and placed it in a realm of its own, "with people all over the streets, food and drinks all over the place -- people that are just having a good time and it's a real good function."

Vialet, who had [earlier attended](#) a Committee on Finance hearing at the Frits E. Lawaetz Conference Room in Frederiksted, said he would not miss Jump Up!

"I always enjoy it and I wish we could have it a bit more," he said. Vialet was also pleased with what he called "a wonderful turnout."

Sen. Sammuel Sanes, seemingly ubiquitous at cultural events, could be seen with his wife, Cynthia Sanes, mingling and enjoying the celebration of culture.

"It's not just because of my job, but [Jump Up!] is a time when family and friends get together, and it's good to see it," Sanes said.

Aside from the back and forth movement of people, small groups stationed themselves on sidewalks, having laughs, eating or watching the enormous crowds. For Mahalia Tyson, who experienced her first Jump Up! on Friday, the experience was good, family oriented, "and it reminds me of the Agricultural Fair [but] at night," she said.

Aja Barretto, who stood next to Tyson, is no stranger to the downtown party. She said the Jump Up! events are perfect for people who don't go to clubs and for those having difficulty finding things to do. Tyson agreed.

By 11:00 p.m., almost all attendees had already left the town, and mostly band members and vendors, along with cleanup crews, remained.

Tonight, another event dubbed "Christiansted Shutdown" will envelop Strand Street as bands, DJs, artists and more entertain what has traditionally been thousands of revelers.

Feature Image: Collage of pictures depicting activities at the Christiansted Jump Up!

Image Credit: Reemy-Reems Photography, VI Consortium.