

The Virgin Islands Consortium

R. City, Writing Hits For The Likes Of Beyoncé, Promotes Virgin Islands Like None Other

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ST. THOMAS -- Their performance during the St. Thomas Carnival Village last week was so laced with energy that one could have mistaken the location for an effort before one of the world's bigger stages, but it was not. It was in little St. Thomas, almost an unrecognizable dot on the world's map, but R. City's Theron and Timothy Thomas gave it their all -- they even surprised the home crowd by bringing Keri Hilson on stage to perform two of her big hits -- because to them, St. Thomas will always be home.

Every song was sang with passion. The duo worked the stage to ensure fans on all sides were tended to as they performed hit and after hit, and culminated the show with their biggest title so far: Locked Away. For that track, Timothy, after asking the crowd if they'd

hold him up if he decided to let himself fall off the stage, took the plunge and was secured by scores of screaming fans, who carried him a distance and then back to the stage.

Following the performance, Timothy told The Consortium that although they bring energy to every performance, the Carnival Village got a special treat because "home will always be home." Timothy spoke briefly of humble beginnings and on numerous occasions mentioned his love for the territory in which he was raised, stating that their success could never grow so big that they would forget where they came from.

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The group has seen great success. Locked Away became a smash hit, topping billboard, and has been viewed almost 350 million times on its [official YouTube VEVO](#). When other links on YouTube with the same song are included, the views surpass 500 million. The group has written songs for the likes of Usher, Sean Kingston, Ashlee Simpson, Nicole Scherzinger, Mary J. Blige, Rihanna and, most recently, a song titled All Night for Beyoncé, which is featured on the megastar's latest album, [Lemonade](#).

"We wrote it for Rihanna and never sent it to her," Theron told The Rolling Stones. "I ain't never met Beyoncé." The brothers were working last year with Diplo and Skrillex on a Jack Ü album. After the session, Diplo played them a beat that the brothers then wrote the song around. "We just wanted to write a good love song and have Caribbean vibes to it," Theron added. He was initially skeptical when he heard through Diplo that Beyonce was interested. "I was like, 'You serious? I mean, it's like reggae. How's that going to sound with her singing that?'"

The production on the initial demo, Theron told The Rolling Stones, was spare – "just guitar and light drums" – but eventually the song was filled out with lush strings and an intoxicating horn sample from Outkast's "SpottieOttieDopaliscious." "I hadn't heard Beyonce's version of it until the album came out," says Thomas. "She killed it."

The brothers' path to success was not easy, however. They were guest speakers at U.V.I.'s 2015 Man Up Conference, where they shared the daunting path to stardom. They spoke of being misunderstood by producers on the mainland, being sidelined because of their St. Thomian accent, and although they had the skills, it seemed impossible to catch that ever-so-important break. Nonetheless, even after being homeless, the brothers stood strong and determined within their hearts that success would not come — they had to go find it.

The message R. City relayed to the young men that "nothing good comes easy," prompted the brothers to ask one of the youth in attendance, who said he had a passion for baseball, "[Are] you willing to be homeless for baseball?"

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"Because we weren't making any money [while pursuing our music career]," the brothers said. "Because if you're making money, you're definitely not homeless. You must love baseball so much that even if you were homeless, you'd still want to play ball and you wouldn't care."

Timothy told The Consortium that the group continues to write songs for artists, and is already working on new music of their own. "We're just going to continue pushing and making new music," he said.

Timothy was seen during j'ouvert activities having a good time, and was spotted leaving the Carnival Village with friends, walking through Charlotte Amalie like any regular St. Thomian, a sign that up to this day, after rising to heights no other Virgin Islands recording artist has attained, the brothers remain Virgin Islanders at heart, representing the territory on the world's stage every time an opportunity presents itself.

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