

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Patrick School Steel Orchestra Wins Virginia International Pan Fest Competition

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ST. CROIX -- The St. Patrick School Steel Orchestra are the “grand champions” of the Virginia International Pan fest (VIP) Competition held on May 13, in Virginia Beach, Virginia, announced the group on Monday. The band competed against 27 other bands from across the United States to include Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Florida, Ohio and Ontario, Canada and prevailed victorious.

The annual competition is comprised of the elementary, high school, private studio and community band categories. The SPS Steel Orchestra entered the competition in the elementary category, according to the release. Organizers stated that the SPS Orchestra made VIP history as the first elementary band to win the overall competition, beating high

school and adult bands. The band also won the elementary division with a rating of “superior” .

SPS Steel Orchestra traveled with a 23-member ensemble under the leadership of Noel C. Wynter, and Program Directors Lydia C. Davis and Sr. Claina Letang. Bruce C. Whyte was the musical arranger and prepared the orchestra for its two-selection performance of “Woman and the Bass” by Scrutner and “Buddhoe” by Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights.

The SPS Steel Orchestra is a component of the outreach ministry of the St. Patrick's Alumni Association, Inc. The after-school program caters principally to at-risk youth, ages 5-15. The program provides homework assistance and tutoring to its students as well as an introduction to music, the arts and culture, and is open to any interested student. Currently, the orchestra is comprised of 35 students from the St. Patrick's Catholic School as well as other public schools on St. Croix, according to the release.

Also known as the “Little Band with the BIG Sound,” the orchestra has been called upon to play at numerous community events locally, but the Virginia Beach competition was the first time that the band had traveled outside of St. Croix.

The release also highlighted the band's strong support from parents, family, friends and the St. Patrick Catholic School. Over the last 10 months, the orchestra has been fundraising to make the trip possible, and it thanked the business community, nonprofit organizations and supporters for making it possible to represent the Virgin Islands.

*Feature Image: SPS Steel Orchestra arrives at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport late Monday.
(Credit: SPS Steel Pan Orchestra)*