

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Send-Off Fit For A Legend: USVI Bids Goodbye To Kylo At Festival Village

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ST. CROIX -- U.S. Virgin Islanders at home and abroad, along with fans around the world came together in person at the Crucian Christmas Festival Village and through The Virgin Islands Consortium's livestream of the memorable event to say goodbye to Kyle "Kylo" Sylvester, one of the most recognizable names in Virgin Islands music, who was known was for his attention-gripping performances with the Stylee Band. Mr. Sylvester died during a plane crash earlier this month that left all five occupants dead. The news sent shockwaves throughout the region.

Artists forewent pay and decided instead to perform in honor of Mr. Sylvester at the tribute. The roster boasted almost every artist in the Virgin Islands, including R. City, the

V.I.'s most prominent duo who performed at the Festival Village on St. Croix for the first time on Friday night.

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From the moment the show began, emotions ran high. Former St. Croix Queen and professional dancer *Elle* Nielsen opened the event with a moving performance to the song Flash Lights, originally sang by Mr. Sylvester and VIBE Band out of Tortola. Emotions only grew stronger and more poignant when Stylee Band played for the first time without Mr. Sylvester, and for several minutes without any singer. That moment evoked strong memories as the intro was very recognizable, and intervals during which Mr. Sylvester's raspy voice would engage the crowd were left only with his memory.

The thousands around the world who gathered to watch The Consortium's live feed, expressed themselves throughout the show in the comments section, most expressing sadness at Mr. Sylvester's passing. And they lauded the Stylee Band, whose members -- even in the face of such a great loss -- held their composure throughout the show, performing not only for themselves, but backing up all the artists, except R. City, for the duration of the hourslong tribute.

Every artist who performed last night honored Mr. Sylvester's memory. At several points, eventgoers were asked to turn on their phones' light and raise them high for Mr. Sylvester. R. City played multiple songs they shared with Mr. Sylvester; Pumpa, another well established Virgin Islands artist, took to the stage and gave it his all, singing multiple of Mr. Sylvester's songs; at one point Pumpa held up a picture of Mr. Sylvester as he paid homage.

A slew of other artists took the mic in succession performing songs known to be performed by Mr. Sylvester, as well as their own hits.

The Festival Village was at capacity; some would argue that the crowd overwhelmed the venue. Residents from all age groups descended on Frederiksted to witness what was destined to be a historic event to be emblazoned in the minds of USVI residents for a long time.

Near the end of the show, those close to Mr. Sylvester, all of them dressed in white, took to the stage one last time to honor his memory. It was there that emotions became the most visible. As the song Flash Lights was played and lit cellphones were held high, Mr. Sylvester's family and friends held each other and let the tears flow. Iaryn Williams, founder of the Stylee Band who writes songs, plays the keyboard and produces the group's rhythms -- a local legend in his own right -- did not attempt to hide his emotions. To him, Mr. Sylvester was more than a band member and leader singer; he was a longtime friend.