

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Voter Registration Drive: Canegata Ballpark Comes Alive Saturday With Nailah Blackman, Big Band And Stanley

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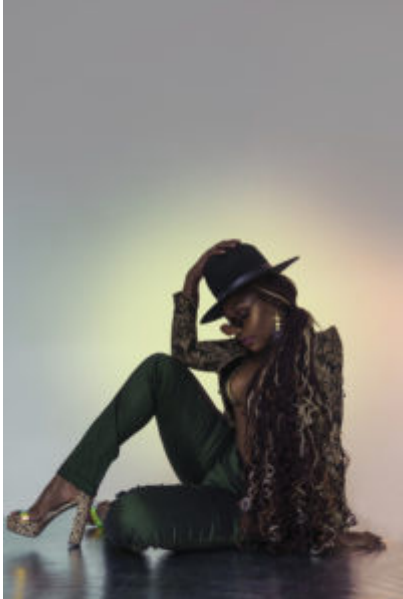
ST. CROIX -- The Canegata Ballpark grounds come alive with a great mix of entertainment and, importantly, a big push by The Virgin Islands Consortium and WTJX to get Virgin Islanders registered to vote in what is believed to be one of the most consequential election cycles in decades.

The event, dubbed Count It Up, takes place on Saturday from 6:00 p.m. to midnight, and is for voters only. That means there's no entry fee to attend the show, however, one must show a valid voter's ID or a document proving American citizenship -- U.S. passport, birth

certificate, DD 214 (military discharge document) or a U.S. naturalization certificate -- to be allowed in. Those who are not yet registered to vote will be given an opportunity to do so on the spot, as members of the Board of Elections and the Elections System of the Virgin Islands will be present to register individuals.

The groups and artists secured to perform are among the Caribbean's and Virgin Islands' best: Big Band and Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights from St. Croix, and out of Trinidad, popular and breakout Soca star Nailah Blackman. There will be deejays juggling as well.

Almost every song Ms. Blackman has dropped has been a hit, most seeing millions of views on YouTube. [Workout](#), which features Kes, has been viewed over 12 million times [ami](#) is nearing 10 million views, and [Baddish](#) is closing in on [Soka](#) and [O' Lawd Oye](#).



Nailah Blackman

Ms. Blackman hails from a heritage rich with music. Her grandfather, the late Garfield Blackman, also known as Lord Shorty or Ras Shorty I, invented the style of music known as Jamoo, and is also credited with inventing Soca as a means of reinvigorating calypso music. Her mother, Abbi Blackman, is a hit-making calypso star in her own right, while countless other family members have found success on the music scene, including Marge Blackman with Soca hit "Full of Vibe", and [Avion Blackman](#), a gospel reggae artist who has been topping the gospel charts for years with a number of hits under her belt. (Who remembers ["To the Ceiling"](#)? It was a 2006 hit from another Blackman, Isaac.)

Little needs to be said about Big Band and Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights. The former was once known as Stylee Band with its superstar producer Iarn "Swanks" Williams. Following the passing of Kyle Sylvester, Stylee Band's leader singer, the group retired Stylee and renamed itself Big Band. Big Band now uses a number of local talent to perform a variety of popular Soca music, as well as the territory's unique rhythms.

As for Stanley and the Knights, the quelbe group is legendary.

WTJX CEO, Tanya-Marie Singh, spoke of the public platform's responsibility to provide information to the electorate during election cycles, while highlighting the need to

encourage civic engagement among young people.



Big Band

“WTJX continues to be the public’s source of information during election cycles as we provide a platform for every candidate to present themselves to the electorate through

forums and debates,” Ms. Singh said. “Our younger, eligible citizens are viewed as the most muted section of our population in the voting booth and it’s high time that we flip that. WTJX is pleased to partner with the Virgin Islands Consortium as well as the Elections System of the Virgin Islands in hopes of attracting qualified residents, especially younger ones, to register to vote while having a ridiculously fun time.”

Ernice Gilbert, president and founder of VI Consortium, echoed Ms. Singh’s sentiments. He said it’s high time that millennials — whose future he said in many ways depend on decisions made by the territory’s leaders — increased their participation in the election process.

“If millennials like myself want change, then we must get involved in the political process. That’s the only way politicians will take our generation serious and address our



aid. “Count It Up we hope will be the start of a wave of people to affect change in the territory.”

Stanley Jacobs

The concert is one of two events that VI Consortium and WTJX are collaborating on leading up to the general election. The next, to be held on October 22 at the Starlight Lounge in Five Corners, will be two debates: the first from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. among the three gubernatorial candidates who place below the top four candidates. This, of course, will be determined by polling. The second, from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., will be among the top four gubernatorial candidates.

The debate will be carried live on WTJX Channel 12 and the station’s Facebook page, along with VI Consortium’s Facebook and YouTube platforms. (The Consortium’s Facebook page has more than 111,000 followers, and its website sees millions of page views monthly.)

Security will be provided by the V.I.P.D. and a private security firm. Vendors will be on hand to provide eats and drinks. And politicians will have the option of purchasing spots to promote their campaigns.