

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Caribbean Dance Company's Showcase Set For Tonight And Saturday At The Island Center

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ST. CROIX -- The Caribbean Dance Company and School (C.D.C) is celebrating 42 years of dance with its annual Students of Caribbean Dance School Performance Showcase, which starts tonight at the Island Center for the Performing Arts and continues into Saturday at the same location. Showtime is 7:30 p.m.

Founded in 1977, the C.D.C has played a vital role in developing awareness and appreciation for the traditional arts of this region, both at home and around the world, according to information provided by C.D.C. The organization says its mission is to unearth, preserve and perform the unique cultural traditions of the West Indies through the vision of its Founding Artistic Director, Monty Thompson. Mr. Thompson has lived on

St. Croix for 43 years and has received dance training in Trinidad, Boston, New York and Mexico.

A full-time choreographer, he teaches and directs C.D.C.'s many programs and has received many awards and honors and served on many prestigious boards and panels, including the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, CaribNet and National Endowment for the Arts. Supporting him is Curliss Solomon-John (asst. artistic director), a founding senior member of C.D.C. and native of St. Croix widely known as a stellar soloist and choreographer for the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Thompson will be accompanied by the following instructors:

Dr. Vanda Espinosa: Known for her literal work *SOAR then ROAR: Preparing the dance for battle*; and its sequel *Season of the Roar!* She is an English and reading professor at the University of the Virgin Islands.

Kemit- Amon Lewis: a native of St Croix who has taught at the C.D.C for the past 8 years.

Jean Buchanan, who has been an instructor for the Intermediate Tap class for the past four years. She has studied and performed Tap, Ballet and, Jaz in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Tennessee and St Croix.

Instructor Essi Gaston-Edwards: a dance enthusiast who has studied dance at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. She is now an assistant director of the St. Croix Educational Complex band program. This spring she had the honor of teaching the beginner Hip Hop class.

This Elite team has led the company on more than 53 tours over the past 42 years, according to the C.D.C. The company has performed for hundreds of thousands and has garnered raves and accolades all over North America, Europe and the Middle East. By means of independent tour promotion efforts, the performing company has served as one of the primary cultural ambassadors for the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The school is offered each week throughout the year in St. Croix, teaching children as young as two years and old as seniors. They undergo a comprehensive curriculum of Caribbean, African, Ballet, Modern, Contemporary and Jazz dance styles with C.D.C. directors and instructors. During that time, prospective company members are brought "up the ranks" before joining an apprentice program, according to C.D.C.

Tickets are just \$15 and can be purchased from any of C.D.C. performers and at the door.