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Limpricht Park Tree-Lighting Showcase Keeps Christmas and Culture Alive in Face of Global Pandemic

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Participants of the third annual "Ah Glow in the Park - Light Dem Up! Tree Lighting" event dance to cultural music on Friday, Dec. 3, 2021. By. CRUSELDA ROBERTS/VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — Limpricht Park in downtown Christiansted came alive Friday night for what was the third annual "Ah Glow in the Park - Light Dem Up! Tree Lighting" event. Kicked off in 2019, the cultural celebration fused with Christmas-season themes was [a showcase like none other](#), but in 2020 the organizers had to scale back the affair in consideration of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Even so, Friday night's event was alive as could be, and it included performances from moko jumbie dancers, models promoting local attire, the Gentlemen of Jones singing Feliz Navidad, steel pan entertainment, storytelling — and it would not be a cultural/Christmas showcase without Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights, which closed out the event.

With all its flare, though, the Covid-19 pandemic still prohibited the large gatherings that marked the first event. And with the Omicron variant of the virus causing further concern, the organizers had to take even more precautions than originally planned. To that end, a small, seated audience of select guests were the only on-site persons aside from organizers and other event participants.

For everyone else, the showcase was streamed live on the V.I. Consortium's Facebook page as well as on WTJX. "We had to make a change in 2020 because of the pandemic, and we tried to figure out how could we still bring the opportunity and the experience to the community," said Vivian Ebbesen Fludd, a key member of the Crucian Cultural Group which organizes the event. She said the C.C.G. had planned a hybrid effort this year which would have included people at the venue and a streaming aspect for those at home and abroad. However, it was abandoned because of Omicron.

Covid-19 notwithstanding, those in attendance were grateful to be able to experience a sense of normalcy. "It's wonderful," said Troy de Chabert-Schuster, state director of AARP USVI. "After being on lockdown for so long and not being able to celebrate Christmas the way we normally celebrate it... it's wonderful to be out and to celebrate Christmas in this beautiful park with all of these lovely lights."

Ms. Fludd said the event has been well received according to feedback the C.C.G. has garnered. She said an important item every year is a focus on offering new aspects of the show to keep things fresh. Giving an example, Ms. Fludd said small bottles of coquito were provided to attendees free of charge along with bite-size pieces of rum cake. "Everyone needs to leave here with a little bit of Christmas," she said.

Following the performances, the lighting of the park with Christmas lights was greeted with applause by attendees.

The park will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily, Ms. Fludd said. "Folks can bring their family to experience it. They can drive by, walk by, take pictures. From the Crucian Cultural Group, we just want to say to everyone compliments of the season and happy holidays," she said.