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# Stanley Jacobs Receives National Heritage Fellowship Award From National Endowment for the Arts

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**Stanley Jacobs addresses crowd during opening ceremony of the 67th Annual Crucian Christmas Festival Village in Dec. 2019. By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM**

Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett on Wednesday announced the National Heritage Fellowship award for Stanley Jacobs from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Ms. Plaskett said Mr. Jacobs is one of the ten fellows, chosen from 180, who will receive a \$25,000 one-time honorific grant.

"The NEA Fellowship is our nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts that celebrates artistic excellence and supports continuing contributions to our traditional arts heritage," she said.

“Mr. Jacobs is known to thousands of Virgin Islanders for sharing the artfulness of "quelbé" music. Born in Vieques, Puerto Rico, to Crucian parents, Jacobs is a master musician, historian, and preservationist within this music and dance tradition that is distinct to the Virgin Islands," she added.

According to the release, in 1970, Mr. Jacobs formed the band Stanley Jacobs and The Ten Sleepless Knights (TSK), which would become the island's premiere quelbé band. The group is still a very prominent musical representation of the local traditions of quelbé music and tunes derived from 19th-century European dances, such as the quadrille, waltz, and two-step. Jacobs and TSK perform for numerous functions across the island each year, including senior citizen functions and Christmas celebrations. In recognition of the tradition's centrality to the islands' identity, the government recently declared it the official music of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“The NEA National Heritage Fellowship was created in 1982 to highlight the artistic excellence of people like Stanley. To date, 458 individuals and groups have received this prestigious honor, including BB King, Mavis Staples and fellow Virgin Islander Sylvester McIntosh in 1987," Ms. Plaskett said.

“A master musician, historian, and preservationist, thank you to my cousin Stanley Jacobs, for sharing and preserving the beauty, quality, tradition, and artfulness of quelbé music. You and the Ten Sleepless Knights continue to be a prominent musical representation of our beloved quelbé music and the best of the Virgin Islands.”