

what's up

A guide to island happenings

Winter Reggae in Paradise coming up Sunday

By **AYESHA MORRIS**
Daily News Staff

Thumping bass lines and militant rebel sounds blend in the second annual Winter Reggae in Paradise, an event bringing some of the Virgin Islands' top roots ambassadors for a show Sunday on St. Croix.

The action begins at 4 p.m. in Cramer Park, with Pressure, Dezarie, Ikahba, Mada Nile, Midnite, Ankh Watap, Dub 340, Jahcob Seed and Iba among the artists performing.

"It's going to be a full moon night," Ras Ile, an event organizer, said. "The venue is ideal with the beach in the background, and the picturesque hillside as a backdrop for the stage."

The concert will feature the Virgin Islands' unique approach to reggae, according to Ras Shalom Farrelly, an organizer.

"It's mostly roots and conscious music and speaks about things instead of the 'laba-laba' business which basically is hot air, talking about insignificant, vain things, violent things," he said. "Most of the reggae music coming out of the Virgin Islands is uplifting and inspiring. People have described it as being more intellectual. It attracts a more serious type of crowd and is not something you just dance and party to and have a good time."

Pressure began playing drums and trumpet at age 9, and by age 12 developed a passion for singing. The member of Star Lion Family eventually decided to pursue a solo career. He counts Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Capleton and Sizzla as some of his influences. His debut album, "The Pressure Is On," includes songs such as "Live What U Talk," "No Limitation" and "Zion is Home." The album was produced by a South Florida based duo, Dean Pond and Eno Stafford of Studio 340 and features a guest appearance by Glen Washington.

Dezarie launched her debut album, "Fya," on I Grade Records in 2001 to much success, including receiving an award for "Best New Female Reggae Artist" in Atlanta the same year. In 2003, she followed up with "Gracious Mama Africa" on the Afrikan Roots Lab label. In 2004, she toured the west coast of the United States culminating in a performance at 2004's Sierra Nevada World Music Festival.

Dezarie has been making music for more than 10 years. She switched from singing rhythm and blues to roots reggae because of the music's positive messages and its ties to the Rastafari movement.

"I want to surprise them. It's gonna be different and unexpected and uplifting and enlightening. A lot of truth is gonna be spoken," she said. "I would like to invite all the empresses to come out and support and every-

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— Ras Shalom Farrelly, co-organizer, Winter Reggae in Paradise

body from the Virgin Islands, 'cause I represent them."

Charles "Iba" Encarnacion became lead singer of St. Croix's Front Line Reggae Band and in 1995 relocated to Connecticut, where he fronted the Survivor's Reggae Band for the next three years. In 2001, Iba recorded several songs with Bambu Station on their award-winning compilation "Talkin' Roots — Volume I." He released his first album, "Jah Lion" in 2003 under Mt. Nebo Records.

Iba said he will be singing songs from "Jah Lion," "Many Lives" and some newer material.

"They could expect a whole heap of vibes," Iba said. "Expect a lot of energy from me. It's been a long time and I'm glad to be on a setting like that."

Ariel "Ikahba" Peterson is the latest roots talent to emerge from the Afrikan Roots Lab. His music was first released in 2000 with the Glamorous Records compilation under the name Ika Melody. His first album, "Troddin To Zion," was released on Afrikan Roots Lab



Dezarie

records in 2004. That year, he toured California.

Jahcob Seed's debut album, "Heed deh Call," is an all-live recording done with a full-band studio and "a humble attempt to give thanks through sound vibration to the Most High." It was released on the Ground Control label.

Mada Nile's songs such as "Send I de Love," "Another Day" and "War Inna Babylon" often give a perspective on African mothers and daughters. Her debut album, "Rise Today," was produced by Sound V.I. Zion Records and boast 12 tracks of conscious reggae.

Ankh Watap contributed two songs, "Massive Hysteria" and "Out Of Control" to the "Talkin' Roots Vol. I" album that Mt. Nebo Records released in 1992, and returned with "Visionary Tools" on "Talkin' Roots Vol. II."

Landmark reggae band Midnite has made their mark around the world representing the music of the Virgin Islands. Lead singer Vaughn Benjamin's soulful chants are complimented by musical directorship by his brother Ron Benjamin on keyboards, along with drummer Dion Hopkins, bassist Philip Merchant and guitarist Abijah.

They have released several albums to date, starting with 1997's "Unpolished," and followed with "Ras



Ikahba

Mek Peace," "Jubilees of Zion," "Seek Knowledge Before Vengeance," "Ainshant Maps" and "Scheme A Things" among others.

Ron Benjamin, another organizer, said the event was meant to be a showcase for the artists, so that promoters from around the world could travel to see them perform in their own home.

The festival is also designed to promote reggae as a viable career option, he said.

"There's more than two things involved, not just musicians and performers, but management, advertis-



Iba

ing, graphic arts, booking agents, and producers. All those people have to come together for it to happen," Benjamin said.

Following the success of last year's show, he said this time around "the music definitely gone be dangerous."

Tickets are \$25, available at Natural Mystic, Ponchos, Purple Papaya in Christiansted, and Alliance Clothing in Frederiksted.

For more information, call **772-1848**.

— Contact Ayesha Morris at 774-8772 ext. 302 or e-mail amorris@dailynews.vi.



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