GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

# PRESS RELEASE

**Tel:** (284)468-2730
**Official Government Website:**
https://gov.vg

# Mr Andre Braithwaite awarded Member of the Order of the British Empire in New Year's Honours 2026

**Release Date:** 30 December, 2025



Mr Andre Braithwaite, Music Director at Elmore Stoutt High School and H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, has been awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in His Majesty the King's New Year 2026 Overseas and International Honours list.

Mr Braithwaite has received the award 'For services to Young People and the Music Industry in the Virgin Islands', recognising Mr Braithwaite's lifelong dedication to music education, cultural preservation, and the development of young musicians across the Territory.

An MBE is awarded for achievement or service in and to the community which is outstanding in its field, has delivered sustained and real impact, and stands out as an example to others.

Commenting on the award, the Governor of the Virgin Islands, Mr Daniel Pruce, said: 'I'd like to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr Andre Braithwaite MBE, the Virgin Islands' newest recipient of the Member of the Order of the British Empire.

'Andre's passion for music and his tireless work teaching and inspiring young people has enriched our community and strengthened the cultural fabric of the Virgin Islands. This honour is a well-deserved recognition of his outstanding contribution to education and the arts.'

Also commenting on Mr Braithwaite's nomination, the Music Department of Elmore Stoutt High School added: 'For over 30 years, he has been a pillar of the music community - mentor, leader, and father figure - instilling discipline, respect, and excellence. As the backbone of the ESHS Music Department, he has recruited and mentored teachers, many of whom were once his students; he knows his students by name, engages their families, and ensures his classroom is a safe haven. Mr Braithwaite is a stalwart of ESHS, a dedicated educator, and a true ambassador of music and culture.'

**###**

**About:**

**BIOGRAPHY – MR. ANDRÉ BRAITHWAITE**

André Braithwaite attended Jacksonville University from 1996 to 2001, and 2004 to 2006, receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education. Mr. Braithwaite has studied with Dr. William Schirmer (composition), Professor Peggy Ezzel (voice), Mr. Don Reynolds (trumpet), Professor Eugene Hudson (piano), and Mr. Peter Miles (drums). During his studies, he performed with the Jacksonville University Wind Ensemble, Orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, Jazz Combo, College Chorale, Chamber Singers and the First Coast Wind Ensemble of Jacksonville Florida. Additionally, he was a founding member of the United Multicultural Association Gospel Choir of Jacksonville University. In 2005, he received the award for Artistic Excellence and Academic Achievement and earned a prestigious teaching internship at Episcopal High School in Jacksonville, Florida. During his college years, he excelled in music, improving on the solid foundation that was laid from a very young age.

Mr. Braithwaite is the Director of the Elmore Stoutt High School Senior, Jazz, and Fungi Bands. Director of the HLSCC Jazz Ensemble, and Choral Director of the Acappella Fellas, Praise Team and Youth Choir of the Road Town Methodist Church. He was also a member of the HLSCC Brass Ensemble. From 2018-2024, Mr. Braithwaite served as the Lay Youth Secretary, in charge of youth work, for the BVI Methodist Church Circuit comprising of 13 congregations.

In his spare time, he enjoys composing different genres of music and arranging gospel music and performing with the bands “Blue Essence,” Virgin Islands Groove Project, The Smuggling Suitcase, The Trumpeters and Natural Groove. Mr. Braithwaite has travelled and performed in several countries, including USVI, Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua, Anguilla, St. Vincent, Montserrat, Dominica, Grenada, Trinidad, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Belize and the United States. Over the years, he has performed at various government-hosted events, including State funerals, Remembrance Day, and Queen’s Birthday parade now the King’s Birthday Parade, and directed and accompanied the Public Service Choir.

Mr. Braithwaite’s passion for music began at the very early age of three when his father, the late Sydney Braithwaite, would sing melodies that André would have to

duplicate on the piano, which was his first instrument. His siblings also played piano and would teach him different songs which he picked up rather quickly. His first piano teacher was Ms. Caines and she was meticulous in her instruction. He played the recorder in the Althea Scatliffe Primary School Recorder Ensemble under the direction of Mrs. Draphen and performed at the Governor's House regularly.

In 1988, Mr. Braithwaite entered the BVI High School (now Elmore Stoutt High School) and began to learn the trumpet and eventually became a member of the Junior, Senior, Jazz, Fungi and Phoenix bands. During his senior year of high school, a fellow classmate composed an additional verse to the school song, while he changed its melody to make it more modern. This version of the school song was adopted in 1994 and is still used today. Mr. Braithwaite also loves singing, as both of his parents, Sydney and Doris Braithwaite (both sadly deceased) were very good singers, who sang in the Road Town Methodist Church Choir.

In 1992, Mr. Braithwaite formed a group with other male teenagers called the Acappella Fellas led initially by Mr. Gregory Adams. André always had a good sense of rhythm and developed quickly on the drums and other percussion instruments. Throughout his high school years, he experimented with any instrument that he could get his hands on and was always quite successful at performing them at the annual High School concerts. While in High School, at age 13, he was asked to play with the BVI All Star Band to accompany local calypsonians for the annual Calypso Show held during the August Festival activities. He performed in the local shows, as well as the international shows, for many years.

Mr. Braithwaite has been teaching at the Elmore Stoutt High School, from 1994, the same year that he graduated from high school with a distinction in Music and Technical Drawing. He has found that he connects well with young people and therefore most of his ministries include and are directly focused on young people. One of his proudest achievements was when he realized a long-awaited dream of opening his business, "The Universal Language Studio", which is a recording studio and teaching lab where students of all ages learn to play a wide variety of instruments.

Mr. Braithwaite was inspired by individuals like Roosevelt Smith, Ashton McCall, Inez Archibald and family, the late Neville and Ethlyn Burke, the late Paul and Leona Wattley, Elmore Stoutt, Arthur Selwood, the late Rosa Vanterpool, Clenell Vanterpool, Dr. Marcia Potter, the late Jennie Wheatley, Sylvia Adams, the late Ralph T. O'Neal and Mrs, Edris O'Neal, the late H. Lavity Stoutt, his late parents, Doris and Sydney Braithwaite, siblings, and other family members such as his late grandmother, Daisy Braithwaite, his late uncles, Edwin and Austin Leonard, and his late cousin, Clarence Leonard who was also a musician and teacher. Having been blessed with such great mentors, he feels a strong desire to pay it forward. So, he uses his God-given talents to inspire other young people to be great and to use their talents to help others as well.

If you do not find Mr. Braithwaite performing, teaching, composing, or arranging music, you might see him playing volleyball in the BVI Amateur Volleyball League or on the BVI National team, which he has been a part of from age 13. Here is yet another area that he uses to help the young people to harness their skills in the sport that he loves. His volleyball teams in the league have consisted of 50-60% teenagers for the past ten years. He was recently appointed to the Executive Body of the BVI Amateur Volleyball League. Mr. Braithwaite also volunteered to assist with the coaching of young up and coming track and field stars from ages 7-13 including his two youngest daughters on Sprint Tech Track Club for about 5 years until 2023.

In 2013, the Lions Club of Tortola bestowed the "Citizen of the Year" award on Mr. Braithwaite for his commitment in developing the music industry. In 2022, Mr. Braithwaite received the "Paul Harris Award" from the Rotary Club of Tortola for his significant contributions to music and youth development in the BVI. On 3rd December, 2023, New Life Baptist Church held its annual 'Unsung Heroes' Ceremony in recognition of persons in the Virgin Islands who have contributed greatly to the community. During that ceremony, Mr. Braithwaite was recognised as an "Unsung Hero" for his community services in the BVI and as a renowned musician and multi-instrumentalist, teacher, and performer who has contributed greatly to music in the VI, along for his ability to connect with youths and as a businessman committed to teaching youths the art and skill of music. In 2004,

2008, 2009, 2014, and 2023, his home church, the Methodist Church of the Caribbean and Americas (BVI Circuit) has recognised Mr. Braithwaite for his dedicated service and unwavering support to the music ministry and youth work.

As much as Mr. Braithwaite loves music, sports, and serving his community, you will see him spending time with his wife, Kishann and his three lovely daughters, Kayla, Amaya and Celina. He believes in his family and realizes the need to spend quality time with them. He loves travelling and when it is feasible, he takes his family and goes somewhere fun. His wife always keeps him grounded when it comes to family time and so if a busy schedule persists over a week, then adjustments must be made to allow for family time. He believes that success is much more rewarding with family to support you.

Mr. Braithwaite believes that “music is life” and therefore feels that God has blessed him with talent to be used to spread God’s Word through song. Therefore, he strives to be the best version of himself daily, to inspire the best in others.

Mr. Braitwaite is often heard saying that his “complexity is his simplicity” as he tends to enjoy the simple things that life has to offer. True to his nature, Mr. Braithwaite reminds young people that “it is not what you do, but how you do it that counts, so always strive to do it well.”

---

**For Additional Information Contact:**

Mr. Jaimeson B.F Hazel
Assistant Information Officer
Office of the Deputy Governor
Governor's Group and Constitutionally Established Offices/Departments
Tel: (284) 468-2350
Email: jhazel@gov.vg

---

## Additional Documents or Media

- press_release_mr_andre_braithwaite_awarded_member_of_the_order_of_the_british_empire_i