GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

PRESS RELEASE

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Exploring the Rhythm of Nature: Workshop Uncovers the History of Fungi Music

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Junior Minister for Culture and Tourism, Honourable Luce Hodge-Smith has underscored the importance of passing on the cultural heritage of The Virgin Islands to the younger generation.

Honourable Hodge-Smith, while speaking during the opening of an Introduction to Fungi Music workshop, pointed out that, “Our culture is the heartbeat of our identity. It tells the story of who we are, where we come from, and the values we share as a people.”

Jr. Minister Hodge-Smith said music, in particular, has always played a powerful role in preserving our heritage and bringing communities together. She said fungi music is one of The Virgin Islands' most treasured cultural expressions. “Through its distinctive rhythms, storytelling, and traditional instruments, fungi music reflects the creativity, resilience, and spirit of our people. It is a living tradition that connects generations and keeps our history alive,” she added.

Honourable Hodge-Smith extended a special welcome to the young people participating in the workshop and emphasised that, “Cultural preservation does not happen by chance, it happens when we intentionally create opportunities for learning, participation, and appreciation. Workshops such as this one ensures that our traditions continue to thrive and evolve.”

The one-day fungi music workshop, on Wednesday 17th June, was hosted by the Department of Culture in collaboration with the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College’s Virgin Islands Studies Institute. Director of the Institute, Ms Rochelle Smith, said she anticipated the interactive aspects of the workshop, as participants explored the roots and evolution of fungi music and the different types of bands. She said: “Culture isn’t just something that you study, it is something that we live everyday and something that we pass on.”

The workshop was being facilitated by Mrs Bernadine Walters Louis of the Virgin Islands Studies Institute and educator and musician Mr Kayron Todman. Twenty-four cultural practitioners and other community members participated in the workshop, which covered topics such as: The Origin of Fungi Music and its History in The Virgin Islands; Overview of Band Types: Fungi Bands, Quelbe Bands, String

Bands and Comparative Distinctions; Fundamentals of Fungi Music; and Instruments Traditionally Used in Fungi Bands.

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About:

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sustainable Development is responsible for advancing the Territory’s tourism sector, preserving and promoting cultural heritage, and implementing policies that support sustainable growth and environmental stewardship.

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