

# Soufriere Jazz Massive

By Gabinus Victor

The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual St Lucia Jazz festival sounded its first note in Soufriere last weekend. Patrons came out in large numbers to enjoy musical performances by an impressive line up of local and foreign artists.

The Soufriere Regional Development Foundation has been organizing the event for four years now. The theme for this year's event was "Soufriere Creole Jazz...the Soul of Soufriere."

The Soufriere Creole Jazz was held at four venues: the Soufriere Stadium, Sulphur Springs and Fond Gens Libre where patrons paid for admission and at the Soufriere Waterfront for free.

The event kicked off at the Soufriere Stadium last Friday with brief remarks from Minister of Tourism, Senator Allen Chastanet, and Parliamentary Representative for Soufriere, Honorab;e Harold Dalson, and officials from the Soufriere Regional Development Foundation.

The homegrown Future Lights band of Soufriere set the stage for what would be a fascinating night for patrons, by playing renditions of sweet and pulsating reggae, calypso and cadence music. Then came Michael "Meshach," Nestor, the dynamic and enthusiastic reggae singer /song writer from Choiseul who performed a variety of his original tunes, including # 1 singles such as "Ethiopian Princess", "Mr. Greedy Joe " and "Hail" much to the delight of the crowd. The group Phaze also graced the stage and performed a variety of local, regional and world music. However, the two main acts for the night were Klimax from Cuba and Grammacks from Dominica. The two groups lived up to their true reputation by providing pulsating rhythm that drove most patrons off their seat at the stand on to the playing field. There was also side entertainment by the Claudia's Dance Academy (of ballet) and the Infinity Models of Soufriere.

Two shows were held on Saturday May 1. The first was held at Soufriere the waterfront from 1:30 pm where the local groups of New Vibes and Phaze provided entertainment to the wider public. The second was at the Sulphur Springs Park at 8:30pm, where the spotlight shifted on Grammacks once again. Other performers for the night were Claudette Adjodha; Mystic from Laborie; the St Lucia School of Music Jazz Band, and Matrix Band from Soufriere.

Soufriere Jazz culminated in the small community of Fond Gens Libre located at the base of Gros Piton. Patrons enjoyed a soothing Reggae night as they sat on the extensive rock platforms and benches made out of sticks, to listen to local groups such as 4<sup>th</sup> World, from Vieux Fort; Daddy Twan, and Idation.

According to Mr. Franklyn Solomon, an official from the Soufriere Regional Development Foundation, this year's Soufriere Creole Jazz was a resounding success.

“We were able to provide quality entertainment to our many patrons, and met one of our major objectives of stimulating economic activities in the Soufriere region,” said Solomon.

Solomon also disclosed that another main objective of Soufriere jazz is to provide an avenue for local artist to showcase their talent.

Solomon also said the quality of Soufriere Jazz gets better each year and he is looking forward to the hosting of an even better show next year.