



Elite Steel Orchestra at the Frangipani Hotel



The Mustique Blues Festival with Dino Baptiste performed on Friday night.



The Country Relatives



Late night at De Reef on Saturday with Soka Kartel.

Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest 2014:

BECKETT headlined on Sunday afternoon to huge crowds at De Reef.



BAJAN BAND OF THE YEAR, Soka Kartel, Cover Drive, NJ30+ and Vincentian Calypsonian Alston 'Becket' Cyrus all rocked De Reef last weekend for the Bequia Tourism Association's 11th Anniversary Bequia Mount Gay Music Fest, which ran from Thursday, January 23rd to Sunday January 26th!

Record numbers of visitors came to Bequia for the weekend, filling every hotel room and apartment to capacity. Over 200 yachts graced Admiralty Bay, adding to the festive atmosphere, while hundreds of mainlanders travelled to Bequia for the weekend to join local Bequians in anticipation of a fabulous weekend of entertainment.

Indeed, the 2014 Bequia Music Fest did not disappoint, with patrons universally agreeing the three-day event was the “best ever”, starting with sweet pan music on Thursday night, fantastic Blues on Friday night with the “Mustique Blues Fest on Bequia”, followed by the open air Jam session with local and visiting artists on Saturday afternoon. Saturday night saw the high voltage performances by Marius Charlemagne and NJ30+, Cover Drive and Soka Kartel, topping off the weekend on Sunday with the famous calypsos of the one and only Beckett!

"A hard act to follow!"

Minister of Tourism, Sport and Culture, the Hon. Cecil McKie visited Bequia for the Festival. Speaking at the official opening on the Friday night event before the Mustique Blues Festival took to the stage, the Minister expressed his

pleasure at being present, and welcomed visitors, yachtsmen and all attendees to the Bequia Music Fest - one of the many festivals that St. Vincent has to offer. The Minister gave thanks to the new Director of the Bequia Music Fest Sabrina Mitchell, and the Bequia Tourism Association, for a job well done.

The Minister acknowledged that the not-for-profit Bequia Music Fest, conceived by the BTA 14 years ago to create a much-needed boost to the tourism economy on Bequia, is now well established as a highly significant event in the national tourism calendar. Sabrina Mitchell also welcomed all patrons and expressed her confidence that the Music Fest has something for everyone, with a wide variety of music genres to please all musical tastes.

Kicking Off

This year's event kicked off Thurs-

Joseph Callender, Kweku Jelani, Marius Charlemagne and Toby Armstrong from NJ30 + rocking De Reef.



day 23rd at the Frangipani Hotel, when a record crowd packed the world famous waterfront bar to hear the outstanding young talent of the 11- piece Elite Steel Orchestra from mainland St. Vincent.

Friday night belonged to the Mustique Blues Festival, with record crowds turning out to see the legendary Dana Gillespie perform with her London Blues Band and guests. Basil Charles introduced the electrifying evening which included guest performances by British Blues guitar legend Ian Siegal, Dino Baptiste on keyboard, “Best New Blues Artist” Zac Harmon and the extraordinary “Queen of the Blues” Shemekia Copeland. With Jake Zaitz on guitar, Jeff Walker on bass, Mike Paice on saxophone and harmonica, pianist Matthew Gest, and drummers Enrico Morena and Jamie Little, Dana Gillespie and her band and guests gave truly sensational performances, leaving the audience hungry for more.

Basil Charles' Mustique Blues musicians graciously volunteer their performance in Bequia in exchange for a generous contribution by the event organisers to the Basil Charles Education Foundation.

'Jamming' on the beach

Music Fest gold sponsor the Bequia Beach Hotel in Friendship provided the perfect venue on Saturday afternoon for a relaxing Jam by the beach. There were impromptu performances by a wide group of local and visiting musicians, including Colin Peters, Honky Tonics Louis O'Neil and Jan Smith, trumpeter Jim Coleman, Bob Berlinghof and Dave “Wry Worry” on guitar, Ken Haltenhoff on bass, drummer Scott Mills, Robert “Patches”



Music Fest Director Sabrina Mitchell opened the event on Thursday night.

Knights on piano, Thomas Richards on bass, “Flour” Haddaway on drums, and Hermus “Sugars” Nelson’s Band Solutions winding up the evening before sundown. The Bequia Beach Hotel was the perfect setting to draw the crowds, as hundreds of people gathered in the lovely hotel gardens by the beach to eat, drink and enjoy the music.

Heating up the weekend

Down at De Reef, the massive crowd on Saturday night enjoyed a perfect evening, with some liming outside under the stars to watch the action on the 20ft live feed screen, but most in the packed nightclub atmosphere inside the venue.

After an opening set on Saturday night from Bequia’s band Infinity, it was the turn of NJ30+ who gave a thrilling, high energy performance, featuring super-talented bassist Marius Charlemagne, brilliant young horn players Joseph Callender Jr. on sax and 19-year old Kweku Jelani on trumpet, Juanita Clarke on percussion, Marlon Braithwaite on keyboards, with guest appearances by silky smooth vocalist Philip Scantlebury, and Music Fest favourite, Toby Armstrong, who won ever more fans with his extraordinary guitar skills.

Then it was the turn of Cover Drive. The young Bajan band gave a great performance, with the sexy vocalist Amanda Reifer mesmerizing the patrons with hit song “Explode”, and setting the stage for the memorable finale, the last act of the night – Bajan Band of the Year Soka Kartel. The house went wild with their electrifying performance, led by Andy “Blood” Armstrong, the 2013 Sweet Soca Monarch Champion of Barbados. Blood and Mikey Mercer’s “Roll it” and “Ah Cant Wait” mashed up De Reef, as patrons put their hands up and partied the night away with soca to a fever pitch till after almost 3am.

Sunday afternoon at De Reef in Lower Bay saw a varied crowd of tourists, yachtsmen, Bequia residents and visitors from the mainland enjoy

the closing day with great performances by the Kids on Pan Steel Orchestra, The Country Relatives, The Bequia Blues Band, Denzil Bacchus Blues Band from St. Vincent, and an electrifying jam session which included Marius Charlemagne, Jim Coleman, Joseph Callender, Kweku Jelani and former Exodus guitarist Richard.

Saving the best for last

Uthan and Carleen Mc Intosh’s Bequia band Infinity, and lead vocalist Juvel Leonard set the stage for the headliner on Sunday, probably the most anticipated performer of the weekend. As the sun went down, De Reef was packed to capacity, as BECKETT took to the stage with his famous hits like “Teaser”, “Small Pin” and “Nanny”. After 18 years of absence from Bequia, Beckett’s performance was legendary! He had the crowd swinging, and left them wanting more.

The visiting musicians were quick to offer their appreciation for the overall smooth running of the event, the hospitality - starting with the reception at Arnos Vale airport by a representative of the SVG Tourism Authority - and the unique, relaxed and intimate atmosphere in Bequia, for which the Bequia Music Fest is famous.

“I am very satisfied with the event this year, the quality of the music and the incredible co-operation of all



Amanda Reifer, lead vocalist with Cover Drive

committee members and volunteers who worked so hard to ensure a well executed weekend for patrons, musicians and all involved,” said Director Sabrina Mitchell.

Need we say more? (Contributed)



“Queen of the Blues” Shemekia Copeland



Right: Ecstatic crowds at De Reef