



Antigua & Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra
c/o Government House
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St. John's, Antigua, W.I.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Playing to Inspire 6" Featuring the Kanneh-Masons and Grammy Award-Winning American Mezzo Soprano Singer J'nai Bridges truly inspires us through music.

Antigua and Barbuda, March 12, 2024: Spectacular! Out of this world! Phenomenal! A night to remember! These were just some of the comments used to describe the Antigua Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Kanneh- Mason's Playing to Inspire- 6 held on 9th March 2024 at the SJPC.

With the support of the Calvin Ayre Foundation coming on board for a second year as Platinum Sponsor and the Creative Caribbean Initiative implemented by UNESCO, CARICOM, and the University of the West Indies with financial contribution of the European Union and the support of the Organization of ACP States, this evening of musical excellence captivated the audience with every note, filling their hearts with much joy.

This extraordinary musical extravaganza, featured performances by members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; with whom the ABYSO recently formed a partnership, The Jersey Music Service, Sophie Biddell from Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford, and of course the ABYSO alongside the incredible Kanneh- Masons. Two-time Grammy® Award-winning American mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges, wowed and mesmerized the appreciative audience with popular pieces such as BIZET's Habanera from Carmen, GRAHAM's You Raise Me Up, and BONDS He's Got the Whole World in His Hands. The fifty-five (55) voice Inspire Choir comprised of Antiguan and Barbudan youth raised the roof of a packed SJPC, as in glorious, harmonious gusto, they belted the words of a Queen Medley, "We are the Champions of the World". Bringing the best out of the 159 musicians who performed at this sold-out event, was none other than Ryan Bancroft who demonstrated his musical prowess and all the animations of a masterful conductor, creating a sound like never before heard on these shores.

The Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Junior Orchestra also delivered two exceptional pieces, marking their second appearance at the Playing to Inspire event. The Junior Orchestra continues to serve as a vital developmental tool for the ABYSO, furthering the orchestral music scene in Antigua and Barbuda. The evening also featured young dancer Cristina Taitt from Island Creatives Dance Theatre and Kejual Peters who added the beauty of the steelpan to a medley of some of Bob Marley's greatest hits.

High Commissioner Karen Mae Hill, Director of the ABYSO Board of Directors, emphasized the collaborative effort and immense support from the board, ABYSO team, partners, and donors, who made this event possible.

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High Commissioner Hill praised the performers for their passionate and dynamic delivery, highlighting the importance of nurturing young talent and inspiring excellence. She expressed pride in the achievements of the young musicians and reiterated the commitment of the organization to their continued development.

J'nai Bridges in expressing her feelings on the event stated that "My heart is so full! There was joy and love shared through music over the last week in Antigua & Barbuda! What better feeling is there than making music together, giving hope and inspiring the next generations? I'm equally inspired by what the 'Music to Inspire Festival' has created and developed. You are some of the most talented and loving young people I've ever encountered. What a treat and I can't wait to return! You have my heart."

As the ABYSO looks forward to a year filled with exciting events and extends heartfelt appreciation to all sponsors and to the general public for their unwavering support and encouragement.

Upcoming events for the ABYSO:

Saturday 6th July: ABYSO Junior Recital

Sunday 14th July: This is Me. A Musical Theatre production

Sunday 21st July: ABYSO & Commonwealth Resounds Go Compose Caribbean! An Evening of music composed by students from across the Caribbean.

Sunday 3rd November: ABSYO Wind Festival

Sunday 22nd December: ABYSO Christmas Concert

Saturday 12th April: Playing to Inspire 6

ABOUT ABYSO

The ABYSO is a year-round, after school music programme committed to providing quality and accessible music education, instruments, performance and mentorship opportunities to young musicians and music educators across Antigua and Barbuda. Since 2018, the musicians in the ABYSO have continued to develop their skills online and in person with our ABYSO music mentors and are excited to share their music with the public once again.

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