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STAR-STUDED LINE-UP FOR SAINT LUCIA JAZZ & ARTS FESTIVAL

Organizers announce new artistic direction for the region's premiere musical spectacle

SAINT LUCIA (January 31, 2013) – Sporting a new name complete with eye-catching logo and a redefined artistic direction, the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia is gearing up to once again welcome the world, as it inaugurates the next chapter in the life of the region's most anticipated musical festival.

Now dubbed the 'Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival', the 13-day event is expected to attract thousands to the iconic and historic Pigeon Island National Landmark, where the bulk of the festival events will unfold. With its new infusion of arts, scores of artisans, entertainers and cultural enthusiasts will take centre stage at scenic vistas across the island.

At a made for television and radio press launch at the awarding winning Sandals Grande St. Lucian Spa and Beach Resort on January 31, it was announced that the revamped festival, now into its 22nd year, will feature some of the best live performances mixed-in with various artistic portrayals from acclaimed local artisans.

Speaking on the new and broadened festival outreach, Tourism Minister Lorne Theophilus noted "That after setting the musical benchmark for over two decades, Saint Lucia as a destination needed to redefine not only itself, but critically its flagship special events activity. According to Minister Theophilus, "As we seek to implement our new strategic focus, it became necessary to forge closer linkages between the traditional festival line-up and a now burgeoning creative industries sector."

Addressing a captive and anticipative audience, Tourism Director Louis Lewis remarked that the redefined festival still boasts an impressive star-studded list of performers

designed to satisfy the most discerning music aficionados. "While certain aspects of the festival needed to be redefined, its over two decade history of attracting some of the most recognizable and sought after names in the music business remains, intact," says Lewis.

The Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival will comprise over fifty (50) artistes performing against some of the best backdrop locales this side of the hemisphere, from the signature Atlantic Ocean backdrop of the Pigeon Island National Landmark, to quaint and rustic village settings like Fond d'Or Heritage Park in Dennery; Rudy John Beach Park in Laborie; and the tranquil Port Castries waterfront setting of the Pointe Seraphine Duty Free Shopping complex. The 2013 Jazz and Arts Festival will also see the much awaited return of the popular 'Jazz on the Square' in the heart of the Capital city Castries and a return to the picturesque open-air venue of Balenbouche Estate in the South.

The festival will open with much fanfare on April 30 at the 'people's auditorium' – the Mindoo Phillip Park - to a line-up that will be announced shortly. From the get go, the musical presentations are unrivalled with Caribbean jazz, creole collaborations and African infused funky rhythms that can only be found on the unique stellar lineup of Jazz in the South, Fond d'Or and the Derek Walcott Square.

The festival's new listings of artistic activities that will incorporate Drama & Dance, Steel Pan, Spoken Words, Fashion Shows and other cultural extravaganzas will follow at key venues stretching from the northern town of Gros-Islet to Vieux Fort in the South. "Several of our traditional community celebrations like the Friday night street parties, culturally rich Fish-Fries, our creole music and the like will be woven in the fabric of the redefined Jazz and Arts Festival and showcased in all their splendor in a made-for-export fresh and exciting way," says Deputy Director of Tourism Tracey Warner Arnold.

Performances at the Gaiety on Rodney Bay on May 8 & 9 will feature Trinidadian born Trumpet player **Etienne Charles**; Cuban jazz pianist **Roberto Fonseca**; contemporary jazz bands from the French Antilles **Fal Frett** and electric guitarist **The John Scofield Uberjam Band**. Main stage activities at the Pigeon Island National Landmark will begin on Friday May 10, with performances from R&B multi-platinum American singer, songwriter, dancer and actor Ginuwine; Saint Lucian songwriter and producer **ACE** and the iconic American popular music family group from Gary, Indiana **The Jacksons**.

Headlining the spanking new Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival is celebrated multiple Grammy-winner R&B mega star singer-songwriter, and record producer **Robert Sylvester Kelly**, more popularly known as **R Kelly**. Kelly has established his name on the music scene as the King of R&B with dozens of chart topping hits. Other musical hard-hitters include the legendary **Ojays**; acclaimed Caribbean maestro **David Rudder**, bandleader and mambo musician **Tito Puente Jr.**; celebrated guitarist and singer **Ronald 'Boo' Hinkson** and accomplished Senegalese-American hip-hop recording artist, songwriter and record producer **Akon**.

The 2013 festival which is presented by the Saint Lucia Tourist Board and is supported by Platinum sponsor Digicel along with other Gold, Bronze and Collateral sponsors, culminates on the traditional Mother's Day, May 12.

For more information on the full lineup for Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival 2013 along with show dates, venues and ticket sales, log onto www.stlucijazz.org.

For more information about the island of Saint Lucia call 1-800 456-3984, or 1-800 4STLUCIA or visit www.saintlucianow.com.

About Saint Lucia

One of the Windward Islands of the West Indies' Lesser Antilles, Saint Lucia (pronounced Saint LOO-sha) is nestled halfway down the Eastern Caribbean archipelago. The "Helen of the West Indies," Saint Lucia is known for its natural beauty and diverse attractions, including the signature Piton Mountains - a UNESCO World Heritage Site - a tropical rainforest and one of the world's few drive-in volcanoes. Culturally rich offerings include the bustling marketplace in the capital of Castries, quaint fishing villages along the coastline, and the annual Saint Lucia Jazz festival. Saint Lucia's wide range of accommodations includes world-class five-star resorts, all-inclusive resorts, intimate inns and value-oriented properties. Saint Lucia also is home to world class cruise and yachting facilities.

For more information, visit www.saintlucianow.com

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