



Cariso!

The Newsletter of the
Alton Augustus Adams
Music Research Institute

SUMMER 2005

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Performance Forum on VI Music and Dance Traditions

There is an African saying, musician and music historian Dimitri Copemann notes: “When a griot dies in Africa, you lose a whole library.” Copemann has a Virgin Islands version: “When a quelbe flute player dies, you lose a set of encyclopedias.”

THE PERFORMANCE FORUM on Virgin Islands Music and Dance Traditions held on July 1, 2005, at the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School Auditorium was another presentation of the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute and its parent agency, the Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago. The forum featured an address by retired educator, historian, and writer Ruth Moolenaar. Dr. Lois Hassell-Habtes, music master and school administrator, was organizer and master of ceremonies for the evening. The event highlighted Virgin Islands words and music, as have the performances, summits, and workshops held in the past by AMRI and CBMR on St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas.

Habtes, together with Dr. Rosita Sands, Director of the CBMR, recently completed co-teaching a weeklong workshop for teachers aimed at integrating music into the curriculum. The forum was a concluding demonstration to the energy, enthusiasm, and information that was created and spread among a group of teachers who willingly gave up an early week of summer freedom for the sake of furthering their knowledge of Virgin Islands music.

The program’s musical offerings began with Alton Adams Sr.’s “The Virgin Islands March,”



The Lockhart Elementary School Dancers performed their rendition of the game song “Brown Girl in the Ring” and several quadrille dance figures



Ruth Moolenaar

performed by Milo’s Kings and the Caribbean Chorale. The Caribbean Chorale performed an arrangement of “Brown Girl in the Ring,” Habtes’ theme for the evening, evocative of the relationship of traditional music to VI society and history. The St. Thomas Heritage Dancers, accompanied by a tireless Milo’s Kings, demonstrated Figures 1 and 2 of a quadrille and a schottische, a stylized round dance. Yvette Finch, AMRI Advisory Committee member, and the Honorable Shawn-Michael Malone, VI Senator, performed as members of the Heritage Dancers. Following the performance, Senator Malone offered brief remarks.



Senator Malone

Alton Adams Jr. introduced Moolenaar, mentioning several of her *(continued on 2)*

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