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ZOUK MASTERS KASSAV AT REICHHOLD CENTER

The sweet sounds of zouk music will fill the air when Reichhold Center for the Arts brings the top live band in the Caribbean. Kassav performs on Saturday, January 12, 2008 at 8 p.m.

From the shores of Martinique and Guadeloupe to the bright lights of Paris and the vibrant streets of New York, Kassav traverses the globe as ambassadors of zouk music.

Zouk music is one of the Caribbean's many contributions to the world. The sound is an eclectic mix of popular rhythms from the region, particularly beats that makes you dance. Kassav's brand of zouk combines strong sounds of percussive instruments and horns with synthetic rhythms.

A mainstay on the Caribbean music scene, this legendary group delights in having its audience dance, taking to heart the true meaning of zouk: to party.

The core group members are Jocelyne Beroard, Jacob Desvarieux, Jean-Philippe Marthely, Jean-Claude Naimro, Georges Decimus.

With almost 30 years in the music business and 20 albums to their credit, the great minds behind Kassav have no interest in slowing down. The Paris-based group will bring new music from their recent release "All You Need is Zouk." The first single from the CD, "Doubout Pikan," is now playing in heavy rotation across the Caribbean region.

Kassav is credited with developing the zouk sounds with their first album "Love and Ka Dance" in 1979. However, it took six more years before Kassav would be recognized globally. The group struck gold in 1985 with the album "Yélélé," featuring the dance hit "Zouk la sé sèl médictaman nou ni," meaning, zouk is the only medicine.

Since then, the band has churned out some of the top songs from the French Caribbean such as the high-octane "Oh Madiana" to the slower, almost hypnotic rhythms of "Ou Lé." Kassav is also one of the top live bands in the world. They perform before sold-out audiences who get up and dance to crowd-pleasers "Rété" or "Mwen Malad."

Kassav has had an influence on many artists Caribbean-wide, from Haiti to Trinidad, Dominica to the Virgin Islands. They have a huge fan base in Latin America and Africa, where many of their songs have been covered by other musicians. Since their first tour in 1985, Kassav has embarked on numerous world excursions, including spirited concerts in New York City and Miami. They are well known in European countries, including Belgium, Switzerland and France. Kassav has also performed in Benin, Algeria and The Ivory Coast on the African mainland.

The legendary band plays before massive crowds in their native Martinique and Guadeloupe. They have made several appearances at Dominica's World Creole Music Festival, the St. Lucia Jazz Festival and St. Vincent's Blues and Rhythms Fest. For the past few years, Kassav has opened the New Year with a lively concert in St. Martin.

Kassav's performance at Reichhold Center is sponsored by First Bank, First Insurance, Marriott Frenchman's Reef Resort, Tropical Shipping, the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts and Innovative Cable TV.

Tickets are \$25, \$36 and \$45. Tickets are available at Modern Music, UVI Bookstore, V.I. Bridal & Tuxedo, Urban Threadz, Essentric Shoe Boutique, Island Video (Nisky), Home Again (Red Hook) and the Reichhold Center Box Office at 693-1559.

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