

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
JANUARY 22, 2008

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Karen Gutloff, Marketing Manager
(340) 693-1563

**IT'S A FUNGI JAMBOREE AT REICHHOLD CENTER
—TRADITIONAL MARKETPLACE BEGINS AT 6 P.M.—**

Reichhold Center for the Arts returns with the third installment of its widely entertaining, educational and successful Playing Ring series.

“Playing Ring: A Fungi Jamboree,” takes over the Reichhold Center on Saturday, February 2, 2008. The night starts with the traditional marketplace at 6 p.m.; featuring local foods, arts and crafts. The public is asked to wear traditional attire. Music begins at 8 p.m. in the theatre.

Fungi music, like the cornmeal dish of the same name, is an eclectic mix of musical flavors. Musicians play instruments such as the triangle, ‘ass pipe,’ tambourine and banjo. This year’s Fungi Jamboree celebrates music from the wider Caribbean, and explores its influence on Virgin Islands music and culture.

Musicians include James ‘Jamesie’ Brewster, Native Rhythms and Smokey and the Boys. Crowd favorite Irvin ‘Brownie’ Brown returns as narrator.

Native son Jamesie Brewster has been hailed as the undisputed “King of Scratch.” Recording for more than 50 years, Jamesie has spread his “humorous, provocative and playful compositions” to audiences throughout the Caribbean and Europe. A favorite among Reichhold audiences, Jamesie was among the esteemed musicians at the inaugural “Playing Ring: A Journey into Quelbe” in 2006.

From the big island of St. Croix comes Native Rhythm. The band recently performed during the festivities for the Rhythm and Blues Cruise on St. Croix; and at December’s Fungi Fest in the BVI. Four years ago, the band released a compilation of Quelbe and Quadrille music. Together for more than 15 years the nine-member band has been consistent with their traditional sounds since winning the “Sound of St. Croix” contest in 1992. The band has gotten hotter since the Division of Tourism chose their song “Sweet Pepper” as the winning entry for promotional ads.

Smokey and the Boys, from Anguilla, have roots on St. Thomas as well. The band started in 1988, and after three years playing to Virgin Islands audiences, relocated to Anguilla, where they are now one of the top traditional bands. The seven-member band can be heard throughout the year, and especially during Christmastime, where they often serenade the community.

Like fungi music, fungi the dish will be aplenty leading up to the Playing Ring concert. The Playing Ring marketplace features native arts, crafts and foods. Vendors will be on hand, selling local favorites such as fish and fungi, chicken and Johnny cakes, and Kallaloo; home-made coconut, pineapple and guava pies; as well as passion fruit, tamarind and sour-sop juices. The marketplace also features artisans, displaying beautiful cloth dolls in madras, hand-made jewelry and wood carvings.

Reichhold Center is also coordinating with the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts and the Department of Education to host some 800 students at this Year’s Playing Ring: In De Yard, scheduled for Wednesday, January 30th. Led by cultural bearers, students learn about traditional toys and games such as jacks, tops, cocks and toe-toe-tom; as well as storytelling.

The Playing Ring series is made possible through partnership with Reichhold Center’s season sponsors: First Bank, First Insurance, Marriott Frenchman’s Reef Resort, Tropical Shipping, the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts and Innovative Cable TV.

Tickets for “Playing Ring: A Fungi Jamboree” are \$12, \$18 and \$35. 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.

###