

News Release
For Immediate Release

JUNIOR CARNIVAL BAND CHAMPIONS JUST US KIDS IN PREPARATION MODE
Stilt-walkers by CIBC FirstCaribbean keep the art-form alive

Castries, St. Lucia, June 27, 2018 - The seven-time unbroken Junior Carnival champions - Just Us Kids - are gearing up to pay tribute to the region's most colourful festival in black and white and have set their sights on yet another win.

If their 2018 portrayal "Black N White In the Sun" captures the imagination of the judges as the band has successfully done since 2011, it will mean a history-making eighth consecutive title for the Junior Carnival veterans.

For the fourth consecutive year, CIBC FirstCaribbean has come aboard as sponsor of the stilt walkers section, now a signature element of the band's annual portrayal. The bank's gold sponsorship support ensures the inclusion of a full costumed section with over 16 junior revellers trained in the art of stilt-walking, while also having the opportunity to experience 'the mas' as a reveller.

Just Us Kids was formed in 2008 to address the problem of the largely adult orientation of Saint Lucian carnival at that time. Just Us Kids Junior Carnival band delivers annual Carnival Arts training workshops to secondary school students to pass on costume design and building skills to ensure there is succession planning in Saint Lucian carnival.

With the proliferation of arts and entertainment events and platforms in Saint Lucia in recent times, a deliberate effort by Just Us Kids and other cultural groups to revive stilt-walking, has brought diversity and a sense of spectacle to Saint Lucian cultural celebrations.

This year's portrayal is "a story of carnival under the Caribbean majestic sun, but given a classical interpretation using predominantly black and white", disclosed bandleader Barry George. "This historical, yet 'fantasy' carnival story explores the dynamic facets of carnival, with a tribute to some of the traditional characters that bring life to the festival, such as fancy clown, the calypsonian, the pan-man and jab jab", Mr. George said.

CIBC FirstCaribbean's Country Manager, Ladesa James-Williams, lauded the band for taking a developmental approach to its participation in carnival.

"Retaining the authenticity of our cultural festivals calls for more than participation. It requires that we also educate the next generation about the history of the festival while bringing out what is innately creative about us." Mrs. James-Williams further stressed the bank's continued interest in collaborations which result "in the empowerment of our youth to take the mantle of leadership in all productive spheres of Saint Lucian life".

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