

Music

Consider the Source — announcements

## ST. CROIX JAZZ SERIES STARTS

by Source staff

April 18, 2004 - Joe Johnson's smooth saxophone sounds jazzed the audience at Island Center in St. Croix last night. His repertoire moved from well known jazz tunes to funky interpretations of hip-hop and rhythm and blues. Saturday was Johnson's St. Croix musical debut and the first in a series of monthly jazz concerts that will continue into July.

The group won rave reviews from the large and enthusiastic audience. Johnson describes his music as a "fusion of smooth jazz with R&B influences". He is a master at weaving hip-hop beats into his sounds. "I want to make hip-hop and jazz collide," said Johnson.

But playing before crowds, big or small, is not the sum of Joe Johnson's parts. His involvement in the community, his active encouragement of the youth and his love of God are the qualities he would most like to leave as his legacy.

Johnson began playing music at age 11 in the church choir of his hometown of Memphis, Tenn. Today, his band regularly plays at church. "We pray before every show and we always include a spiritual song in our concerts," Johnson said.

Eugene "Doc" Petersen, Island Center board president told of Johnson's interaction with St. Croix's youth. "The group came in on Thursday. That afternoon they delivered a music workshop to 50 high school students at Island Center."

Petersen said the one-hour workshop attended by music students and their teachers was both informative and interactive. "The students were very enthusiastic, very interested in what the group had to say."

Petersen said exposing international artists to our youth is critical to their development as musicians as well as in their development into adulthood. "The main purpose of bringing the concert series to St. Croix is to expose the youth to a variety of music."

Johnson reflected on the excitement of the students. "It was awesome! Some of them saw me in a store later and told me again how much they enjoyed the session."

Johnson also attended the Sunset Jazz in Frederiksted on Friday. His impressions of St. Croix? "Its so beautiful, I'm looking forward to



Joe Johnson prepares for his St. Croix concert.