

# **I**nternational **J**ournal of **C**arnival **A**rts

**Volume 6 - December 2022**



ISSN 2752-342X

This volume is dedicated to:

### **Sonny Ramadhin**

1<sup>st</sup> May 1929 - 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Although Sonny Ramadhin was not a carnival artiste, his outstanding cricket performances brought recognition and pride to the West Indies and inspired some memorable calypsos; often associated with his fellow spin bowler, Alf Valentine. The best known is Lord Beginner's (Egbert Moore) 'Victory Calypso':

*“Cricket lovely Cricket,  
At Lord's where I saw it;  
Cricket lovely Cricket,  
At Lord's where I saw it;  
Yardley tried his best  
But Goddard won the test.  
They gave the crowd plenty fun;  
Second Test and West Indies won.*

*Chorus: With those two little pals of mine  
Ramadhin and Valentine.”*

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### **Blaxx (Dexter Stewart) :**

21<sup>st</sup> December 1964 - 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

Dexter Stewart (aka Blaxx) grew up in the southern Trinidadian towns of Penal, Point Fortin, and Siparia before moving to Morvant, Port of Spain. His career started as a mechanic but encouraged by both parents, he found his forte in calypso. He joined a band called 'Succession Brass', where he became "Blaxx" and, after a ten year span, went on to join many other band's such as 'Atlantic, Upstream, 'Byron Lee and the Dragonares' and 'Blue Ventures' before establishing himself with the Roy Cape All Stars in 1999; the latter he referred to as the 'University of Soca Music'. Classics such as 'Leh Go', 'Hulk', 'Mash Up' have been popular at London's Panorama competitions. He was fondly called the 'The Soca Messiah' and will be remembered for his humility, extraordinary genius as a singer, musician and composer, a legend and icon in the Soca Music Industry.

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### **Lionel Jagessar Snr**

12<sup>th</sup> March 1950 - 10<sup>th</sup> September 2022

The cultural veteran mas icon devoted his entire life to Carnival and Mas. He received the Humming Bird Medal in 1999 for his huge contribution to carnival arts. He is considered one of the leading protagonists of San Fernando's contribution to carnival and remembered for his fancy Indian costumes. It was no surprise that he was given a Carnival-like send off in San Fernando for his funeral.

See links: <https://youtu.be/hXF4a90-12> and [https://youtu.be/mJ\\_FLTLXXac](https://youtu.be/mJ_FLTLXXac)

**Lord Explainer (Winston Henry),**13<sup>th</sup> November 1947 -7<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Considered as a cultural emissary for Trinbago, Lord Explainer took calypso around the world, performing at prestigious venues such as London's Carnival Village (Tabernacle) and Commonwealth Institute, The Apollo Theatre, Madison Square Garden, Studio 54 and Brooklyn Academy. His classic 'Lorraine' brought back immense nostalgia to the Trini diaspora and even reinvigorated many to leave the winter and join a steelband back home for carnival. In 2018, he was the recipient of the Hummingbird Medal-Gold National Award for his contribution to the cultural artform.

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**Singing Francine (Francine Edwards)**13<sup>th</sup> February 1943 - 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Singing Francine, feminist and champion of gender equality was one of the most successful calypsonians in T&T winning the National Calypso Queen competition in 1972, 1973, 1981 and 1983. Her songs addressed social issues, particularly those directly affecting women – for example in 1975, she sang 'A Call to Women,' encouraging more women to use calypso music as a vehicle of self-expression. In her 1978 calypso 'Runaway,' she addressed the topic of domestic violence, urging women in abusive living situations to seek help. Her love of parang resulted in the release of many Christmas songs, the most popular being her parang album 'Christmas is Love,' which featured a blend of calypso, soca and parang sounds.

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**Black Stalin (Leroy Calliste)**24<sup>th</sup> September 1941 - 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

The five-time Calypso Monarch (1979, 1985, 1987, 1991 and 1995), whose real name is Dr. Leroy Calliste, passed away at his home in San Fernando just after Christmas. He was raised on San Fernando's fêted Coffee Street where he attended San Fernando Boys' R.C. School. He started his career as a limbo dancer before becoming a calypsonian in 1959 with songs such a Caribbean Man and Ah Feel to Party being played at every party. Initially he sang at the Southern Brigade before joining Kitchener's Calypso Revue Tent.

See link:

<https://www.facebook.com/100064999651356/posts/pfbid0z5fnjK571a9cUEHV28gcX3HC7w4pbvNAfS8AwRv7GQ8QS7EdAWqx7soYypDoV3R2l/?sfnsn=mo>

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## Scope of the ‘International Journal of Carnival Arts: Steelpan, Calypso and Mas’ (IJCA)

[www.steelpanconference.com/journal](http://www.steelpanconference.com/journal)

The ‘International Journal of Carnival Arts; Steelpan, Calypso and Mas’ (IJCA) provides an expansive platform on which to report work on steelpan, calypso and related carnival arts. Authors are responsible for the content of their work and ownership of their material and for seeking permission to report the work from their own establishments. Confirmation of approval for the sharing of material should be submitted with the paper. IJCA conforms to high ethical standards, and published papers will have been subjected to peer-review.

IJCA aims to provide clear, invigorating and comprehensible accounts of early and contemporary research in steelpan, calypso and carnival arts. It unifies aspects of steelpan activities within the carnival arts and welcomes both academic research and the work of grass roots practitioners of the pan yards, calypso tents and mas camps. Its coverage spans both more abstract research as well as applied fields, and welcomes contributions from related areas including metallurgy, acoustics, new technologies and software, databases, steelpan forms, advances and performances, arts and crafts, movement, costumes, archiving, social commentary, music, history and development of calypso, extempo, soca and related genres and pioneering work of artists (biographical or otherwise), and the development of carnival arts globally. The journal strives to strengthen connections between research and practice, and in so doing enhancing professional development and improving practice within the field of carnival arts.

Material in the journal remains the property of authors. Papers in the journal are open access for group sharing and interaction, and do not reflect the editors’ views or ownership.

### Why publish in the IJCA?

- Much of the history of carnival arts – steelpan, calypso and mas – are oral. Statements are often based on personal views and the memory of individuals. This journal provides a forum for diverse views to be expressed and, in doing so, consensus may eventually be derived that reflects a more accurate history of carnival arts.
- Academic papers in carnival arts are published in highly specific and inaccessible journals that are outside the realm of the general carnivalist. We anticipate that this journal will allow authors of such papers to adapt some of their work for the more general audience of this journal where grassroots enthusiasts can learn and appreciate the broader aspects of this field.
- Postgraduate students are doing tremendous work on various facets of carnival arts and will continue to publish their work in well-established recognised journals for their own career development. We envisage this journal could be used by such students to draw attention to their valued work and to make it more accessible to the general public.
- The grassroots workers of steelpan, calypso and mas who drive the development of these artforms are often excluded from direct publication of their valuable work. This journal provides an informal, cost-free means to get their work aired and brought to the forefront of enthusiasts.
- Some of the legends of carnival arts – for example steelpan pioneers such as Anthony Williams, Sterling Betancourt, Cyril Khamai, Lennox ‘Bobby’ Mohammed, Alfred Totesaut and Peter Joseph – are still active and possess a wealth of information. Such individuals contributed to key stages in development of steelpan. They may be interviewed in pieces for this journal, and their incisive contributions thus brought to readers.
- We are encouraging all to write and capture a holistic view of carnival arts and not to feel intimidated by language and grammar - papers will be edited with their consent and brought to the attention of a global audience.
- Initially the journal will be published biannually – first and last quarter of the year but will be responsive to change.

**Types of Papers:**

- i) Original Full-length papers - usually 3,000 - 7,000 words.
- ii) Short Communications - up to 3,000 words.
- iii) Research Papers e.g. carnival arts studies, hypotheses and analyses.
- iv) Reviews - e.g. of relevant books, exhibitions, films etc.
- v) Request for an opinion - an author who wishes to share views on a subject.
- vi) Letter to the Editor – queries or comments on published papers.
- vii) Historical - e.g. carnival in rural town or on a pioneer of carnival arts.
- viii) Social anthropological studies on carnival.
- ix) Personal Experiences of aspects of carnival.
- x) Reports of carnival archives.
- xi) Technological developments e.g. in sound, acoustics, new material for mas etc.
- xii) Erratum – From Volume 2, IJCA will include a designated Erratum page(s) to correct any errors of the previous volume. However, this represents an important part of the feedback, and a mechanism for the informed criticism of papers in IJCA. Because much of the history of carnival arts relies on the memory of individuals, information may be skewed towards the interest and exposure of an individual. By readers submitting comments and corrections on controversial topics, eventually consensus may help to point to the most likely scenario.

**Requirements for Submission****Cover Letter:**

All submissions should be accompanied by a covering letter briefly stating the significance of the work and agreement of author/s and institute for publication. Please also submit the names and affiliations of all authors, including the contact details of the corresponding author.

**Preparation of a paper for submission** (see detailed guidelines <https://www.steelpanconference.com/> - see Journal.)

Most of the process outlined below is standard procedure but is provided to try to maintain a level of uniformity of papers within the journal. The Editors have opted to use ‘Elsevier - Harvard (with titles) Style’. Briefly this follows the format below:

**Title:** A succinct representation of the paper. Use font 14, Times New Roman. Capitalise each word. Centralised, and keep to about 40 words without abbreviation.

**Author Name<sup>1</sup> – Size 14 – Bold**

<sup>1</sup>Institute/Company/Band’s Name and Address - Times New Roman – size 12  
Add- telephone, email address of the corresponding author.

**Abstract:**

Should be informative and self-explanatory, briefly present the topic, state the scope of the paper, indicate significant results and point out major findings and conclusions. The abstract should summarise the manuscript content in less than 500 words.

**Key Words:** Size 11. This follows the Abstract and consists of a list of Key Words (4-10) and any abbreviations used in the text.

**Text: A) Research Papers (B) Reviews and other articles:**

**A) Introduction:**

This should set the tone of the paper by providing a clear statement of the study, the relevant literature on the subject, and the proposed approach or solution. The introduction should be general enough to attract a reader's attention from a broad range of carnival arts disciplines and should lead directly into the aims of the work.

**Description of the work:**

This section should provide a complete overview of the design of the study. Detailed descriptions of materials or participants, comparisons, interventions and types of analysis should be mentioned. However, only new procedures need to be described in detail. Previously published procedures should be cited, and important modifications of published procedures should be mentioned briefly.

**Findings and Discussion:**

This section should provide evidence that supports the conclusion of the study, while speculation and detailed interpretation of data should be included in the Discussion.

**Acknowledgements:**

Acknowledgment of people, grant details, funds, etc may be included under this section.

**B) Reviews and other articles:**

The Abstract and Introduction should follow the above guidelines, however, for the remainder of the paper, authors may devise their own headings and subheadings to follow a chronological order of work presented.

**References in text:**

Published or accepted manuscripts should be included in the reference list. Meetings, abstracts, conference talks, or papers that have been submitted but not yet accepted may be cited as 'submitted for publication', 'personal communication (abbreviate as 'per. com.') or 'Proceedings of the meeting'. References in the text should be listed by the first author's surname followed by year of publication, for example, Brown,1990. or if several authors as Brown *et al.*,1990. Multiple citations should be separated by semicolons eg. Brown, 1990; O'Connor, 1995.

The following are examples for the reference list/bibliography to be included at the end of the paper:

**Book reference:**

Hocking, C., 2005. The story of the Bridgewater Carnival from 1880 to 2005. The Bridgewater Educational Press; Somerset.

**Article reference:**

Ramtahal, Kumaree, Kumar, Marilyn, 2016. Documenting and Archiving the Ramleela Legacy in Trinidad: Practice and Prospects. Caribbean Library Journal, 4, 41-61.

**Conference: e.g.** Shah H.N., 2016. The Fusion of Steelpan with other Art Forms in the 21st Century. Proceedings of the 6th International Biennial Steelpan Conference. London, 7-9th October 2016.

**Tables:**

These should be designed as simple as possible. Each table should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals and supplied with a heading and a legend at the top of the table. Tables should be self-explanatory without reference to the text. The same data should not be presented in both table and graph form or repeated in the text.

**Figures:**

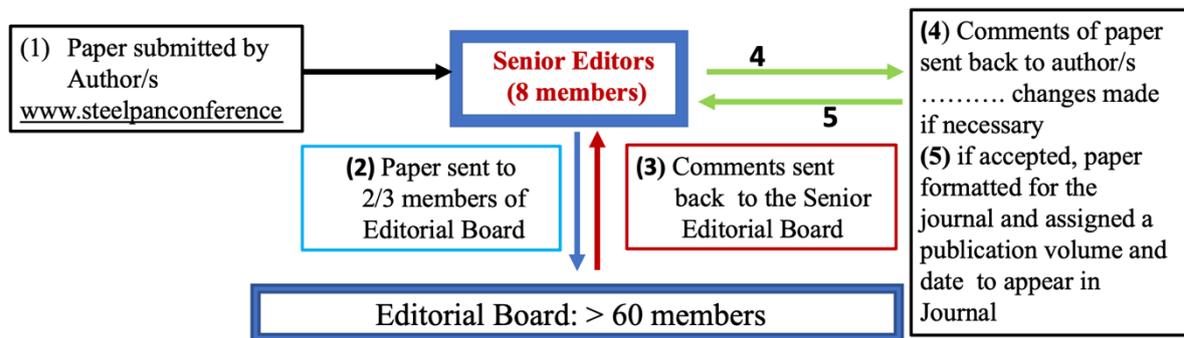
The preferred file formats for photographic images are TIFF and JPEG. Begin each legend with a title (below the figure) and include sufficient description so that the figure is understandable without reading the text of the manuscript. Information given in legends should not be repeated in the text. Label figures sequentially (e.g. Figure 1: ..... ) and cite in the text as Fig 1.

**Process after Submission for Publication – Reviewers, Report & Proofs.**

The figure below illustrates the process that takes place once a manuscript (MS) is submitted to IJCA. It shows the interaction between the Senior Editorial Board and the Editorial Board. Once the review process has been completed, a member of the Senior Editorial Board will send a letter to the corresponding author informing them of the outcome, and if required, detailing suggestions to improve the MS. The senior board member will then liaise with the author to finalise the MS and prepare it for publication.

**Stages in Processing a Paper**

(communications by email)



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## Editorial Board:

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Nikoli Adrian **Attai**, PhD, Provost's Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Toronto, Women and Gender Studies Institute. Women and Gender Studies. Queer Carnival Studies: transgression, sexuality, gender performance, queer tourism, carnival tourism, J'Ouvert, diaspora carnivals.

Darrell **Baksh**, PhD Candidate (ABD), The University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, Trinidad. Caribbean popular culture: Indo-Caribbean popular culture, Caribbean carnival cultures, popular music, identity politics, feminisms.

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Phillip **Beckles-Raymond**, Senior Lecturer in Economics at University of West London's Claude Littner Business School and School of Human and Social Sciences. Interests: Intersectional economics and transgressive pedagogy; economics as valuing human creativity; what it means to Liv Good, particularly within the Caribbean and Black Atlantic contexts; Trinidad and Tobago Carnival as philosophy and methodology.

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Ian **Boggan**, MA, Dipl. Management, Assessor and QA qualified., Retired police officer, Adult trainer (DTTLLS). Pannist, arranger, musician, pan management, Lead - Spangle steel band (Norfolk). Workshops (Spangle Pans). Promotion of pans in Norfolk.

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Glenn **Charles**, Director, UK Trini & Friends. Pannist, carnival arts promoter, teacher, event organiser, performer and youth leader.

Tola **Dabiri**, PhD. Managing Director, UK Centre for Carnival Arts. Intangible cultural heritage of carnival, orality, traditional mas and skills. Organisation of Luton Carnival.

Deborah **de Gazon**, PgDip, MA, PhD (ongoing). (Former Creative Director, Notting Hill Carnival) at Creative Learning Circuit Ltd. Work widely across the field of carnival arts; creative consultancy, researcher, lecturer, management, community worker

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Kela N. **Francis**, BA, PhD. Assistant Professor. Lecturer in Caribbean History, calypso composition, academic writing and Communication. University of Trinidad and Tobago. masquerade, calypso, secularized ritual. Research interests include African diaspora Literature, music, festivals; popular culture; cultural studies; and human spirituality.

Debi **Gardener**, **Executive Officer of the British Association of Steelbands**. Notting Hill Carnival Board Director. Steel pan: performance. business of managing a steel band. Organising steel pan and steel band events. Carnival arts.

Roger **Gibbs**. Shak Shak. Calypso: music history, Caribbean drumming & rhythms, fusion/s, calypso jazz, Caribbean traditional and vintage music. Non-pan instrumental. Choral/a cappella: Calypso & Soca, popular & traditional Caribbean.

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Nesreen N. **Hussein**, BFA, MRes, PhD, AFHEA. Lecturer in Contemporary Theatre, Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries, Middlesex University. Music, theatre and street theatre. The socio-political history of carnival arts and steelpan, legacy of carnival arts and steelpan as a form of resistance, art and activism, connections with global cultures, diversity, multiculturalism, colonialism, relation to the history of empire.

Kal **Juman**, Toronto Caribbean Carnival, Digital Marketing, Sponsorships, Partnerships and New Business Opportunities. Carnival Arts, innovative methods of modernising Toronto Caribbean Carnival including management corporation sponsorship and partnerships.

Linett **Kamala**, BA MA NPQH. Associate Lecturer, University of the Arts London, BA Performance: Design and Practice team. Lin Kam Art Ltd. Director, Notting Hill Carnival. Artist, educator, facilitator, promoter, carnival, mas and sound systems. Use of art to inspire, heal, enrich and transform lives - 'freestyle calligraffiti'.

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Christopher **Laird**, PhD. York University. Caribbean Culture and Society. Digital archiving of carnival arts; publishing and electronic recording. Kalenda and traditional music and dance.

Anna **Lawrence**, BA, MPhil – PhD. University of Cambridge. Steelpan and mas: history, geography, culture, Caribbean diaspora, cultural appropriation, politics of music and race, multiculturalism, (post)colonial Britain.

Frauke **Lühning**. BA Ethnomusicology, University of Amsterdam. School of Arts as ballet accompanist. Founder, teacher and musical director of Bijlmer Steelband, Amsterdam. Conservatory degrees in church organ and World music, Latin American and Caribbean music, piano. Steelband composition, arranging, transcription. History and development of steelpan and steelband music. Methodology for steelpan lessons.

Ray **Mahabir**, Artistic Director, Sunshine International Arts. Hands on artistic director, designer, promoter.

Emily Zobel **Marshall**, PhD. Course Director for English Literature and Senior Lecturer in Postcolonial Literature. Leeds Beckett University. Caribbean Carnival Cultures, Traditional Mas, Gender and Carnival Studies, Carnival and Plantation History, Carnival Poetry and Literature, Trickster Figures in Carnival, Carnival and Folklore.

**Patrick McKay**, Coordinator, St Michael Youth Project. Pannist, arranger, youth steelpan tutor, project leader, fundraiser, community worker

Johanne **Narayan**, PGCE, Dip. Graphic Design, Dip. Fine Arts, Art and Literacy Lecturer. CE/Owner, Flamingo Arts Emporium; Arts & Crafts. Fine artist: exhibiting predominantly paintings inspired by the Flora and Fauna of Trinidad, especially Hummingbirds. Combined poetry, song and arts.

Aneesa **Oumarally**, Lawyer, Public Policy and Administration, MBA, University of Toronto. CEO, Festival Management Committee. Board of Directors, Toronto Caribbean Carnival. History of Carnival Art culture; Growth and change of the culture over time. Vibrant member of the Caribbean Community, carnival arts, Toronto Caribbean Carnival performer, organiser, administration and promoter.

'H' **Patten**, PhD. Artistic Director Koromanti Arts, choreographer, dancer, storyteller, visual artist, filmmaker. Lecturer in African Peoples' dance. Caribbean arts and culture, popular culture. carnival staging, Caribbean History and genealogy, carnival production, dance and music.

Jimi **Philip**. NIHERST- Science of Steelpan. Pannist, numerous awards, steelpan tutor at schools and universities, musician, steelpan innovator, performer, promoter and tuner.

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Lynda **Rosenior-Patten**, MA. CEO Maestro7 Creative Management Consultancy. Board Member, Ebony Steel band, Former Managing Director Notting Hill Carnival Pioneers Community Festival. Origins and Genealogy of Carnival and its links to West African Mas traditions, Notting Hill Carnival, sound systems, strategic management and leadership training programmes, gender and equality issues.

Stacey Leigh **Ross**, MA, FHEA. Life Story Artist at By Leigh, Associate Lecturer and PhD Researcher at University of the Arts London - Carnival of Compassion: curating carnival and art to inspire acts of compassion. Caribbean carnival, mixed media art, social change curation, inclusive teaching/learning, creative practice development, confidence building and social cohesion.

Louise C.F. **Shah**, BA, University of Southampton, MA, SOAS, University of London. Pannist, Tutored by Sterling Betancourt as a youth. From aged 14, played with Nostalgia in the UK and abroad. Co-organiser and author - third steelpan conference 2010. Play piano, guitar and sing. Avid follower and performer of steelpan and carnival.

Laura S. **Singh** – Senior Lecturer in Mental Health. Undergraduate programme lead Middlesex University London. Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, PhD research was in Trinidad Carnival and psychological wellbeing. Interest in transcultural psychiatry and how cultural factors influence and affect the cause, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness.

Dmitri **Subotsky**, MA FIA Actuary, Guy Carpenter, London. Collecting and compiling information on calypso, Soca and steel band recordings. Compiled a database of such recordings from the Caribbean, USA, Canada, the UK and elsewhere, with coverage particularly strong in the vinyl era.

Meagan **Sylvester**, PhD (Narratives of Resistance in Calypso and Ragga Soca). Senior Lecturer, Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies, T&T. Labour market research, academic/government programmes. Music, gender, and national Identity in calypso and soca, music of diasporic carnivals, music and human rights and steelpan and kaisoJazz musical identities.

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Rebecca **Watson**, PhD. Reader, Leeds Beckett University. Editorial Board of the Journal Leisure Sciences. Dance, Gender, Equality, intersectionality public leisure space, popular music. Miscegenation.

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## Foreword

### Emerging from COVID-19 Lockdown, 2022 a Creative, Year for Carnival Arts and Culture - a Call to 'Put a Pan on the Flag'

The year 2022 will be historically documented for carnival arts as we experience a resurgence from the COVID-19 pandemic hiatus of 2020/21. With the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations set to dominate the main headlines for 2022, it was anticipated that carnival arts would be framed against this landmark and as reported in IJCA Vol. 5, exponents of the artform were not disappointed.

### 'Life Between Islands - Caribbean-British Art 1950s - Now' at Tate Britain Gallery

The year began with a roll-over of the exhibition "*Life Between Islands - Caribbean-British Art 1950s - Now*". This opened on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2021 and ran until 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 at London's Tate Britain Gallery. It was a delightful exhibition that cogently explored the work of artists from the Caribbean who migrated to Britain, alongside locally born artists with connections to the homeland. After a hesitant start in December, news of the exhibition ignited the Caribbean community and from January 2022 the high demand dictated the need for an extension of visiting times. The range of media used was enormous, taking the form of visionary paintings, sculpture, documentary photography, fashion, live performance and film installation, which vividly demonstrated the impact of Caribbean art and culture in Britain. Patrons seem to have visited as families and these were joyful experiences, filled with surprise, nostalgia and laughter as many recounted their own lives with their friends and families against various displays in several sections of the exhibition. Over 40 artists were showcased, including renowned names such as Aubrey Williams, Donald Locke, Horace Ové, Sonia Boyce, Claudette Johnson, Peter Doig, Hurvin Anderson, Grace Wales Bonner and Alberta Whittle. Less known, but particularly novel was an extension of the exhibition in which the organisers invited around 40 community leaders and the public to share personal stories (*ca.*120 words each) about the places and spaces across London that held a special significance for them. These were then made into posters and displayed at appropriate sites for public view. Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) featured prominently- and the example below described Nostalgia Steelband's panyard as follows:

#### **Location: Maxilla Social Club**

#### **Headline: STAND-IN AUNTIES AND UNCLES HAPPENED HERE**

**Story:** "Our Maxilla Social Club 'aunties' and 'uncles' looked after us as their own while Dad was busy with the band; people like Sterling Betancourt, his brother Herman (now 95), his late wife Alma, pan players Lionel McCalman, 'Doc', and also Pauline, Margaret, and Albert. Now we have the Tabernacle, but Maxilla holds a special place in our hearts. We ate there, got fed by Trini matriarchs, helped out, got told what to do, fell asleep jammed with other bands after Carnival. It was a place of coming together, acceptance, identity forging, cultural absorption... a safe space for those of us trying to either retain our Caribbean culture or learn ours. It's a place of cultural education no school can give." [Louise C.F. Shah, Camille Y.T. Shah, Global Humanitarian Worker and Teacher, Nostalgia Steelband, 2a Maxilla Walk, Notting Hill, London, W10 6SW].

Such places were the bedrock of carnival arts in the UK. Steelbands have grown in number and stature in London and other large cities in the UK and play a pivotal role in carnivals and cultural events. It is often forgotten that as early as 2006, the UK public voted NHC onto a list of 'Icons of England' in a project commissioned by The Department of Culture, Media and Sport, which stimulated debate about what cultural treasures exist that best represent England

(BBC News, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/4952920.stm>). It is interesting that NHC, just 40 years old then, featured alongside such landmarks as Big Ben, Nelson's flagship HMS Victory, Constable's painting, The Hay Wain, Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Stonehenge, Blackpool Tower, the Eden Project and York Minster etc. and emphasises the high esteem in which this poignant event is held by the British public. Notting Hill Carnival remains a ground breaking endeavour that was strenuously developed and fought for by the Windrush Generation and other migrants and has become a major British Summertime event, therefore its return was eagerly anticipated.

### **Lord Kitchener's Centenary, Calypso/Soca took the British TV audiences by storm.**

One of NHC's pioneers, the late Lord Kitchener would have been 100 years old on 18<sup>th</sup> April and a group from Arima, Trinidad (Kitchie's birthplace) and London teamed up to celebrate the centenary of the "Grand Master" (see Saunders et al., 2022, *IJCA*, Vol. 5 pp. 43-70). Veteran calypsonian Alexander D Great paid tribute to Kitchie on the night with his calypso "Grand Master". A month later (14<sup>th</sup> May) he was on the British TV show Britain's Got Talent with a tribute to Queen Elizabeth II called 'Big Party For Your Platinum Jubilee' and received a standing ovation from all four judges. Although not selected for the grand finale, by mid-May nearly one million viewers from around the world acknowledged his effort and voiced their support for calypso. In another UK TV show, *The Voice*, Rodell "Triniboi Joochie" Sorzano went through several rounds of the competition to reach the semi-final. However, despite a riveting performance of 'Obeyah' he departed graciously on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2022 feeling very pleased that he brought Soca and Trinidad & Tobago's culture to an audience of over 12 million.

### **Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – Pan, Mas and Calypso.**

With the country coming out of the COVID-19 lockdown in 2022, it was evident from the onset that the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations would surpass previous events and the carnival community could hardly quell its excitement. Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Steel Orchestra began the celebrations by performing for Her Majesty and Members of the Royal Family at Windsor Castle on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022. The celebrations continued at street level with 'Trini-Street Parties' throughout the country (Thomas et al, 2022, *IJCA* Vol. 5, pp 115-135). Mas took centre-stage at the Jubilee Pageant on the Mall on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June with Mahogany's Clary Salandy's elegant costumes and masterly performances along the Mall that included Carl Gabriel's exquisite wire sculpture of the Queen, a display that eclipsed all other bands judging by the euphoria of the TV's commentary team. Stationed at Buckingham Palace, UKASPO's 100-player band (made up of Ebony, Mangrove, Metronomes and Pan Nation steelbands) delighted the Royal family and 10,000 visitors with an awe-inspiring performance of Lord Kitchener's 'London is the Place for Me' and 'Pan in A Minor'.

### **The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall (King Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort) visits Carnival Village (at the Tabernacle).**

The formal Platinum Jubilee celebrations ended on 9<sup>th</sup> June during which the Trinidad & Tobago High Commission, along with other Commonwealth nations, nominated representatives to meet The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall at Buckingham Palace at a reception to celebrate the Commonwealth Diaspora of the UK. During brief conversations with his Caribbean visitors, the Prince voiced his huge interest in Calypso and Carnival and was cheekily invited to the Carnival Village. To our utter shock and surprise, they did indeed visit the Carnival Village's Tabernacle on 13<sup>th</sup> July to a fanfare of mas, steelpan and calypso during which the Prince had a steelpan lesson while Camilla chatted with community

activists. A lot of the conversations of the future King and Queen centred around NHC and its return in a month's time as they met practitioners such as Clary Salandy and calypsonian D'Alberto who sang 'Matilda'.

### **Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conferences.**

Our Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conferences began in 2006 as a biennial event in London. At the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting in 2020, which took place at the Carnival Village (Tabernacle), it was proposed that it should become an annual event. Consequently the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference was held in early July 2022 in the medieval city of Oxford. A summary of the meeting is in the current volume of IJCA. The 10<sup>th</sup> conference, scheduled for early December 2023 moves transnationally to Sierra Leone and Ghana and a 'Call for Papers' was issued recently (<https://www.steelpan-conference.com>).

### **T&T National Anthem played on pan at the Commonwealth Games, 6-7<sup>th</sup> August**

With the end of the Jubilee celebrations, the Caribbean community turned their attention to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England in early August and with the success of Caribbean competitors, this soon turned into a carnival. For steelpan, one of the highlights of the Games was the request by champion 200m Jereem Richards on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August to have the Trinidad and Tobago National Anthem played on pan at the Medal Ceremony. This prompted us to start a campaign to **"Put A Pan on Our Flag."** Symbols are common on national flags and may be added as countries become aware of key characters that mark their place in the world. As Kitchie pointed out in his timely 'Birth of Ghana' (see; [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-imEGXqHis&ab\\_channel=YawSankofa](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-imEGXqHis&ab_channel=YawSankofa)), "...a Black star in the centre (of their flag) representing the freedom of Africa." See discussion with David Rudder - this volume). The call has been taken up by calypsonian D'Alberto in a tribute to the late Nestor Sullivan entitled **'Put de pan on de flag'**. It was released in Trinidad & Tobago for carnival 2023. These events set the scene for a vibrant August filled with carnival activities.

### **Opera Holland Park, Panorama and Notting Hill Carnival**

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> successive year, Opera Holland Park opened its doors to calypso and pan, this year bringing in the megastar David Rudder (18 - 20<sup>th</sup> August) to a sell-out performance. Coverage of this electrifying event, reported in SocaNews and in the current volume of this journal, ushered in the triumphant return of Panorama (27<sup>th</sup> August) and NHC to the streets of London (28-29<sup>th</sup> August). NHC was a clear expression of communal joy with many describing it as one of the best in its history. However, there were widespread complaints of a lack of space for the Children's Carnival and the intrusion of 'Dutty Mas' and paint into many bands which will need addressing in 2023.

### **Diamond Jubilee**

Jamaica (6<sup>th</sup> August) and Trinidad & Tobago (31<sup>st</sup> August) celebrated 60 years of independence and its diaspora used every opportunity to mark the occasion. With the latter, so close to NHC, the formal diamond Jubilee celebration was held at the Carnival Village's Tabernacle on 3<sup>rd</sup> October at the start of Black History Month. It took the form of a dialogue with the youth who did PowerPoint presentations of their work. Introducing two young scientists, one of whom (Laura S. Singh) has her paper in this volume of IJCA, co-organiser H.N. Shah appealed to the Trinidad and Tobago's High Commissioner, His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul, to join a campaign to put a **'Pan on our flag'**

## The Procession

Hew Locke, sculptor and contemporary visual artist created a new and exciting large-scale installation for the Tate Britain's 2022 Commission – "Procession - 22<sup>nd</sup> March to 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023". The Procession is part and parcel of the cycle of life in which people gather and move together to celebrate, worship, protest, mourn, escape or simply try to better themselves. For many, Hew Locke's ambitious project, 'The Procession' has strong elements of carnival and seems a fitting way to end a glorious year packed with memorable events, as the community regained its confidence to perform again.

## 2023 and IJCA

Readers of IJCA will be aware of the forthcoming 10<sup>th</sup> Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conference entitled "***Rhythm of a People: Tradition, Connection, Innovation and Decolonisation***" which will take place in December 2023 (exact dates to be confirmed) in Sierra Leone and Ghana. The conference will encompass a diverse range of topics within carnival arts disciplines, including its early history in Africa; the transatlantic slave trade to the Caribbean and the Americas; the emergence of carnival artforms; contemporary performance; diasporic contributions and its return to Africa. It will also showcase the profound development of steelpan in Africa particularly from Nigeria, where there are over 30 steelbands and burgeoning Panorama competitions, to South Africa where there are over 150 steelbands and annual festivals, with many bands fusing the Trinidadian instrument with their native Marimbas. Please see link: <https://www.steelpanconference.com/> for updates or contact Haroun Shah or Laila Shah directly for information on the event. We aim to devote an entire volume of IJCA to papers that emanate from this conference in Sierra Leone and Ghana.

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## “Back on the Road?” Looking back at the 9th International Conference in Carnival Arts in Oxford

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### Abstract

The 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Carnival Arts and Cultures took place at Oxford Brookes University on Friday 1 July and Saturday 2 July. For two jammed packed days, the event presented a programme with speakers from the local community, from the UK and internationally from the Caribbean, Canada and the USA. The hybrid event was free to all, including online, in-person and mixed panels. On the first day, Dr Kela Francis delivered her keynote lecture titled ‘Bikini, Bead and Feathers: The Latent Ritual Potential of Pretty Mas’. The following day, Dr Emily Zobel Marshall explored the subject of ‘Women in Carnival: Mas Intersections’ in her keynote lecture. On both days, the keynote speakers set the stage for intriguing discussions and engagement with key issues in the field. The supporting programme included a photo exhibition on Carnival in Oxford at the Glass Tank Gallery space and the conference dinner at the Spiced Roots restaurant on Cowley Road.

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**Key Words:** 9<sup>th</sup> Conference, Carnival Arts, Post Pandemic Vision, Creativity, Legacies, Digital Media, Diasporic Traditions

### Introduction Carnival and Oxford

At the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Carnival Arts, the plan to take the conference outside its home ground, The Tabernacle in London, was collectively approved. Oxford Brookes University became the host for the following year. The date was aligned with the local carnival, Cowley Road Carnival, aiming to foster relationships and collaborations between academics and creatives as well as practitioners across different regional organisations.

The city of Oxford provides a fruitful environment for an event such as the Carnival Arts conference, not only due to academic study epitomised by its elite university but also the educational institutions which have historically nurtured creative and practice-based learning. As a post-1992 university, Brookes carries the legacies from the 19<sup>th</sup> century School of Arts to the Polytechnic School of the 1970s. Today, its researchers are working together in six newly formed Research, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange networks. One of them is the Creative Industries Research and Innovation Network (CIRIN), which

provided the key support for the conference together with the School of Arts. The organisation of the event built on existing relationships with creatives and members of the Caribbean community and Oxford Windrush group.

Oxford Brookes also shares a long-standing relationship with Cowley Road Carnival. The university has been involved in a variety of outreach activities and the presence of the Oxford Brookes bus is a familiar sight every year. In 2017, the carnival was sponsored by Oxford Brookes under the theme of ‘**Industry and Technology**’.<sup>1</sup> These collaborations would have formed a promising foundation for a shared supporting programme during the conference, however, the charity Cowley Road Works experienced serious challenges following the pandemic. A number of community organisers wanted to become involved and planned (a) several activities in collaboration with the conference organisers, even though the uncertainties following lockdown and COVID restrictions had a major impact on the preparations. In spring, the cancellation of all activities for Cowley Road Carnival were announced, resulting in disappointment not only within the community but across the city. Nevertheless, the conference served as a platform to bring researchers, community organisers and Cowley Road Works together – we hope Cowley Road Carnival will be back on the road in 2023!



Figure 1 Opening of the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference at Oxford Brookes University (OBU). Lecturer (OBU) and conference organiser, Drs Hanna Klein-Thomas (left) and Haroun Shah (Chair) opened Session 1

### Day 1

On the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> July, the conference was opened by chair Haroun Shah and lead organiser/lecturer Hanna Klien-Thomas (Figure 1) who wasted no time in introducing the first speaker from the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), Dr. Kela Francis. Her keynote lecture took a critical perspective on the divisions between traditional mas and pretty mas. Moving away from the compartmentalisation of aesthetics grounded in colonial dichotomies, she proposed various genealogies to understand the ritual potencies in contemporary Carnival. While the initial discussion of ritualistic masking situated Carnival arts firmly in African-derived practices, the role of ‘spectacle’ was investigated more closely by drawing on Yoruba rituals and

<sup>1</sup> <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/cc7f8fc9-9097-461e-8a91-cbbb3135a0b5/1/>

the figure of the priestess relating her to the pretty mas masquerader as well as the participative nature of Carnival as communal ritual.

Concluding that modern Carnival has not lost its ritual potency but rather it has become latent, the argument was underlined by David Rudder's 'High Mas', (Figure 2) which energized the entire room singing along:

*Oh merciful Father, in this  
bacchanal season  
Where men lose their reason  
But most of us just want to  
wine and have a good time  
Cause we looking for a lime,  
Because we feeling fine,  
Lord, Amen  
And as we jump up and down  
in this crazy town  
Send us some music for some  
healing, Amen*

In the following Q &A, the keynote lecturer encouraged the audience to think of Carnival as ritual more rigorously and acknowledge the impact of the lack thereof - "When you open a ritual, you also have to close it!". As demonstrated in this ingenious keynote lecture, Dr Kela Francis is actively shaping and taking forward the field of Carnival arts studies (Figure 2, Francis 2021). Currently, she is associate professor at The Academy of Arts, Letters, Culture & Public Affairs, University of Trinidad and Tobago.

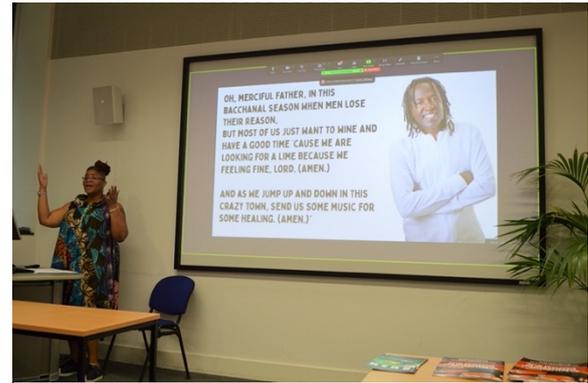


Figure 2. The young, gifted academic, Dr. Kela Francis delivering the first plenary lecture and drawing reference to the lyrics of David Rudder

After the keynote lecture, the first panel 'Carnival communities: space, place and narrative' brought together speakers on Notting Hill Carnival, Carnival in Oxford and Toronto's Caribana. The session was chaired by Dr Meleisa Ono-George, Associate Professor and Brittenden Fellow in Black British History at the Queen's College, who represented the Caribbean Studies Network at Oxford University. In her virtual presentation, Michelle Harewood focusing on narratives of power and rights in Notting Hill's Carnival titled "Masquerading for Humanity". The approach foregrounded embodied memory and how dance tells the story of resistance to colonisation across generations up to today's revellers in Notting Hill. Roger Gibbs shared insights from the perspective of a participating artist and at times member of the Festival Management Committee of Caribana in Toronto. The presentation highlighted the multiple forces playing their part in seeking to contain Carnival, the implications of multiple moves to different areas of the city as well as the pressure to introduce restrictions of access and ticketing.

Taking the audience on a journey through the history of Carnival in Oxford, Junie James (Figure 3) from ACKHI (Afrikan

Caribbean Kultural Heritage Initiative) shared her extensive knowledge and experience from early events in the 1970s to the contemporary Cowley Road Carnival. Essentially, this archive provides a counter narrative to the predominant perception that the local Carnival originated in initiatives of the City Council.



Figure 3. Junie James, local Carnival Artist, and co-organiser of the Cowley Road (Oxford) Carnival taking the audience through the history of event.

She critically examined milestones such as the 1986 Carnival parade organised by the Commonwealth Institute as part of a year devoted to the Caribbean, which included bands, floats and sound systems moving along Cowley Road and through the centre to Hinksey Park gathering people along the route, as well as the relaunch of Carnival in 2001 as part of the regeneration investment for East Oxford, which successfully turned the area into one of the most popular and increasingly gentrified areas. Ten years later, Cowley Road Carnival attracted 50,000 people every year and generated a revenue estimated around £1 million before the pandemic. She was reading the success of the festival along with the continuous efforts to maintain its Caribbean legacies, including initiatives such as the Cari-Fest

and other events attached to the East Oxford Community Centre in Princes Street, which was closed down for redevelopment. Junie James emphasised that there is a profound lack of acknowledgment of achievements by the community and engagement with the significance of claiming public space. Her archival recording of the developments in the local context are invaluable to understand the current crisis Carnival is subjected to in Oxford.

In the Q & A session, Haroun Shah commented on the parallels between the Carnival histories of starting in disadvantaged areas but generating income which in return made the festival attractive to city councils until the now wealthier residents turn against it. In addition, he also highlighted an earlier milestone for Carnival in Oxford, reporting that Sterling Betancourt, Russ Henderson and Cyril Khamai reportedly came to the city for the university balls in the 1950s which would end around 5 in the morning and they would then go on to play on the road. Why did this not take off and lead to wider participation? Drawing on insights from the panel presentation, he concluded that this might not have resonated with the majority of community members primarily constituted by Jamaicans. Junie James responded that the divide between town and gown continues to exist until today. For example, in the past students were advised not to go to the Cowley Road. How forms are perceived continues to be determined on which side of the Magdalen Bridge they are located. Taking this to a transnational level, Roger Gibbs came back to the misconceptions of Carnival arts emphasising that the segmentation of arts into dance, costumes, theatre etc is problematic - Carnival is always multi-

disciplinary and therefore poses a problem for funders.

After the lunch break, Wanda Atkins (Figure 4) opened the panel on steelpan which took the audience across different sites, countries and continents. Her presentation on the French Panorama 2022 ‘We Love Pan - the French Touch’ delighted with a lively presentation conveying the commitment to advancing the art form in the French context and sharing a recording of the 2021 winning performance by the ‘Calypsociation (Paris) Sunday Band’ performing Nailah Blackman’s ‘More Sokah’ - channelling the fabulous energy of the event. The virtual event brought musicians together with participation of 18 groups and 300 pannists, it promises to be an inspiration for future formats using social media to make connections between groups around the world (Atkins, 2022). Andrew Martin from Inver Hills College joined the session virtually as panellist and chair. His approach highlighted the role of steelbands in the Caribbean church, including in the diaspora communities. The example of early steelbands in Antigua fostered by the Anglican clergy illustrated how it led up to churches setting up their own steelbands with more than 48 active church steelbands today. There is a continuity in the Caribbean diaspora with bands formed by Antiguan in New York playing in churches for ‘Sunday Carnival’. Another development relevant for the diasporic context in Andrew Martin’s presentation is the livestreaming of steelpan performances from services, for example, at Mount St Benedict Abbey in Trinidad.



Figure 4. Wanda Atkins sharing the delightful experience of her novel project to hold the first ever French Panorama on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

Returning to the panyard, Paul Massy proposed a framework for understanding the teaching and learning practices situated in this space, which was a topic running through the two days of the conference. Panyards are communal in contrast to the classroom which is structured differently and an inherently competitive space. By giving precedence to collaboration instead of competition, ‘The Panyard Way’ is a pedagogy grounded in the relationships between arranger/teacher and student as well as between students. A historical contextualisation of how steelpan has been taught and learned is essential to the development of contemporary curricula. Paul Massy is currently completing his PhD at Florida Atlantic University College of Education and his research has great potential to contribute to reshaping how steelpan is incorporated into formal teaching establishments across the globe. His proposed framework resonated in comments from the audience, highlighting the significance of the panyard as a second home, a site for exchange between generations and opportunity for skills development. Joining the discussion from across the Atlantic, Alison McLetchie added that the discussion on steelpan and space barely touched on its political

dimensions, in particular as a national instrument in contrast to the panyard as a community focused perspective. Ann-Marie Harry also contributed virtually questioning the role of the digital. Drawing on the juxtaposition between panyard and schoolroom, she asked what characteristics of shared digital spaces in contrast to the panyard might be symbolised as a womb with its established bonding processes and teamwork.

In the second half of the afternoon, a roundtable on Carnival and the archive focused on the challenges of archiving performing arts as well as the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation. Christopher Laird joined virtually to present the incredible work of the Banyan Archives. The collection has digitised 3,000 tapes, which took 4 to 5 years and comprises the largest digitised archives of Caribbean video. The significance of the archive for documenting the post-independence Caribbean lies in the way of video to capture the context of speeches, drama and performance, oratory elements, etc. Christopher Laird also discussed the challenges to sell the rights and making it accessible to the public (Laird, 2020). In person participants were Ruth Tompsett (Carnival Archives Project/Middlesex University, Tompsett, 2022), Tola Dabiri (Museum X and Brick by Brick Communities), Laila Shah (Carnival Village Trust Youth and Windrush Memorial Committee), and Stephen Spark (Soca News). From Oxford Brookes University, Annabel Valentine participated in the roundtable to report on the activities of the host institution in preserving and promoting the Paul Oliver Archive of African American Music, and Rachel Barbaresi, who is a senior lecturer in Art

and Design as well as a visual artist, moderated the discussion.

Participants shared their personal experiences in becoming involved with the archive. Tola Dabiri highlighted her dual experience, working with community as well as major archives such as the National Archives and her research on (and passion for) intangible cultural heritage (Dabiri, 2020, 2022). Similarly, Laila Shah talked about the embodied knowledge acquired growing up in Carnival and contributing to documentation through editing the academic journal International Journal for Carnival Arts. Audience members also shared their experiences, including an engaging reflection by Shabaka Thompson on encountering the archivist in the field from the perspective of the artist - on the one hand, stressing the importance of documenting what otherwise could be lost and, on the other, the risk of value of original artwork being siphoning off - a pressing issue in the context of digitalisation.

At the end of the first day of the conference, the panel on 'Calypso in the Diaspora - Rhythm, Timelines, Lyrical Content and its Future' brought together four leading figures. Calypsonian Roger Gibbs from Barbados and Canada discussed, compared, and contrasted the situation with UK based Alexander D Great (Alexander Loewenthal), De Admiral (Jeffrey Hinds) and Vincent John as chair of the Association of Calypsonians and Soca Artists (ACASA). After a short introduction to the topic framed by Pat Bishop's demand that diasporic practitioners should ensure that Carnival arts are incorporated into what is perceived to be "high arts" in Britain, the chair Haroun Shah highlighted recent achievements such as the representation of

Carnival arts in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade by Clary Salandy and Mahogany Mas and Triniboi Joojie or Alexander D Great's participation in Britain's Got Talent, and at the same time addressed the many challenges from producing new material annually, recruiting new talent, expanding audiences, management and funding (Thomas et al., 2022).

The first paper was introduced by Haroun Shah with a reference to Jit Samaroo's arrangement of 'Mystery Band' by Lord Kitchener which illustrates perfectly that the rhythm makes the difference. Roger Gibbs took off from there, presenting his argument that in order to name what makes Calypso rhythm fundamentally different we need to move away from looking at the art form through a Eurocentric lens. Rooting the history of rhythm in the Caribbean in West African dance music and the experience of displacement and enslavement, he proposed a classification of four rhythms. Each one was demonstrated with an example of music clips as well as teasers performed by Roger Gibbs. At the core of the argument is the problematic of the division between music and dance in Eurocentric frameworks, whereas in African traditions they do not exist separately - thus the rhythm should be captured by moving to the pulse rather than in a complex of notes. The implications are particularly far-reaching in the education of upcoming generations of artists. For this purpose, it is essential to be able to name the parts and moving away from listening to music in tonal terms towards the rhythmic. The significance of this approach was reflected in the enthusiastic responses from the attending audiences, with the hope and expectation that this research will find wide dissemination.

Following this enlightening opening talk, the panel explored the role of the calypsonian in the diaspora. One of the emerging key issues was the contingency of the creative practice with locality. Calypso is local and commenting on local events, calypsonians from different islands sing about what is relevant to those islands in the UK. As an example, De Admiral mentioned his song on 'Justice for Child Q', demonstrating the critical engagement with the continuing pervasive racism in British society. Alexander D Great reported on his experience at Britain's Got Talent and the need to adapt resulting in his Jubilee song which seemed less controversial than 'After the Windrush'. His entry received 950,000 views, which is an invaluable contribution for Calypso's standing in the local context. However, artists felt the disconnect with local audiences, mas bands and steelbands, who are directing their attention primarily to the songs coming from Trinidad. Another aspect about this is framing the art form to widen participation and reception - can or should Calypso and steelpan be called



Figure 5. A formidable panel of calypso monarchs (from left), Roger Gibbs, De Admiral and Alexander D Great engrossed in discussions and using rhythm to make their points.

“British folk music”? When audience members joined in the discussion, the importance of Calypso in youth education and skills development was central. The strategic potential of promoting its inherent abilities such as composition, rhetoric and writing, can benefit the wider aspects of wellbeing and knowledge sharing. The role of transnational connections was also discussed in this context, reflecting on successful programmes such as the ABC at Yaa Asantewaa, developing young talents and bringing Trinidad juniors to show youth involvement in the art form as well as working in exchange with Toronto. Closing the session, Roger Gibbs, Alexander D Great and De Admiral joined together to sing ‘Jail Dem’ (Figure 5) and renowned opera singer Anne Fridal giving a spirited performance of Rudder’s ‘Calypso Music’ for the finale of the first day.

## Day 2

Bright and early, conference delegates and attendees reassembled for the second keynote lecture of the conference. Emily Zobel Marshall from Leeds Beckett University presented on ‘Women in Carnival: Mas Intersections’ and her research project in collaboration with Cathy Thomas at Santa Barbara University and artists in Trinidad. Starting with the premise that Caribbean Carnival was born in a very patriarchal society but at the same time challenges predominant gender regimes, the presentation focused on how women are using Carnival in their fight for women’s rights. Firstly, there is the empowering transformative potential of playing mas and general celebration of female sexuality and the body (Marshall, 2021). Secondly, a noticeable shift towards addressing gender inequalities more explicitly has taken place in recent years, epitomised by Calypso

Rose's hit 'Leave me alone' in 2017. The song drew attention towards sexual assault and issues of consent in the Carnival sphere. Against this background, the keynote speaker discussed how Trinidadian artists Amanda McIntyre, Eintou Pearl Springer and Renella Alfred perceive their own creative practices in the wider context of women's movements and activism.

One of the key issues raised in the keynote lecture was the need for new



Figure 6 The erudite Emily Zobel Marshall, academic, writer, poet, participant, and masquerader during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenary Lecture of the meeting – 'Women in Carnival: Mas Interactions'.

methodological and theoretical approaches in academic research on Carnival. The role of women in Carnival remains under-researched and their contributions are often erased in narratives of Carnival art forms, further emphasised by quotations of the interview partners in the research study. From the very beginning of the presentation, Emily Zobel Marshall reflexively engaged with her own positionality in relation to Caribbean Carnival, as an academic, writer, poet, participant and masquerader in Leeds Carnival (Figure 6). Similarly, her interview partners oscillate between and subsume positions as artist, participant, and researcher. The participative research approach is reflected in access of interview partners to all recorded material as well as their active involvement in the symposiums

at academic institutions organised as part of the project. This fosters dialogues and shared understandings that advance the field, as the researcher herself stated, "to develop carnival methodological and theoretical approaches which are grounded in artistic participant and practitioner practices."

Correspondingly, the next panel focused on mas and was chaired by Lynda Rosenior-Patten who introduced herself as practitioner, researcher and founder of Nzinga Soundz, one of the UK's longest running all women sound systems. The first paper 'The Legacy Lives On / The Mas' Lives On' was presented in perfect harmony by Professor Janice Fournillier and Stacey Leigh-Ross (Fournillier, 2022). Their presentation was a beautiful composition of visual, auditory and interactive elements. Drawing on Venus Evans-Winters' concept of 'Daughtering' as a qualitative inquiry, they reflected on their shared history and journeys in Carnival, weaved together with interludes of songs including Andre Tanker's 'Smokey Joe' and Bunji Garlin's 'The Covenant.' (Figure 7 below). In their last application of 'Daughtering as protecting', the speakers reminded the room of the importance to be mindful of sharing the sacred secrets and the responsibility that comes with knowledge.

At the beginning of the next presentation “Come on Fish, Sing to Me”: Traditional Mas and Carnival in the Art Film *Ah! Hard Rain*, Greta Mendez summoned everyone



Figure 7 Professor Janice Fournillier and Stacey Leigh-Ross (left) working together in beautiful harmony as a double act based on Venus Winters’



Figure 8. The engaging Greta Mendez making mas from 6. Anticipation of the release of her film *Ah! Hard Rain*’ Inspiration based on a conversation with a Senegalese man who said the big boats are going to come from Europe and the USA to take all the fish plus also the Lampedusa refugees.

in the room to get on their feet and shake themselves up. “I am not an academic!” she exclaimed while leaving it up to the audience to identify her in her many roles of performer, choreographer, film and theatre director and producer (Figure 7). Diving into the history of mas as an art form as well as part of her personal life experience, Greta Mendez situated her film making practice in the wider context of storytelling in Carnival. The trailer of ‘*Ah! Hard Rain*’ gave a powerful impression

how mas characters such as the Sailor, Moko Jumbie, La Diabliesse and Jab Jab are used to drive the visual narrative and tell the incredibly difficult and complex stories of people fleeing poverty, war and environmental destruction by sea, their hope, tragedy, and fight for survival. The film is completed, watch out for screenings! (Figure 8).

The last paper of a memorable morning was Tola Dabiri’s discussion of patois, orality and traditional mas. Her paper ‘Singing the Past - Singing the Future’ gave insights into the results of her empirical research in Grenada and the UK on intangible cultural heritage in Carnival. She highlighted the uncommon historical case of Carriacou (an island of the Grenadine Islands), where the newly arrived enslaved were grouped with their own people, which facilitated that traditions were preserved. Due to the central role of orality, this intangible heritage is under threat as the use of patois is declining and teaching is limited. Singers and mas players often do not exactly know what they are singing, recordings are increasingly used for learning. Tola Dabiri’s research therefore is vital in terms of understanding patois as a bridge to the past as well as in terms of documentation, as her recorded videos demonstrated.

In the afternoon, the programme continued online with a panel on digital media in and beyond the pandemic titled ‘A Bitter/Sweet Taste of Carnival: Digital Media and the Trinidad Carnival in a Pandemic’. As the chair, Marvin George introduced the session by providing the context of how the ‘A Taste of Carnival’ programme was launched for Trinidad Carnival 2022. Alpha Obika presented his analysis of promotional material and use of digital media in virtual events in 2021, with some of the more successful events attracting

hundreds of paying patrons. The following presentation ‘We Outside...? Perceptions of Virtual Presentations of the Trinidad Carnival 2022’ by Kai Barratt and Kearn Williams summed up the results of a survey identifying trends in audience preferences highlighting the significance of age and generational divides. Both studies highlight possibilities for future use of digital technology and scope for digitisation of specific genres, such as Dimanche Gras or soca concerts. The last paper of the panel ‘Lavway: (Per)Forming Cultural Citizenship in the Virtual Space’ presented by Camille Quamina offered a qualitative inquiry into the increasing presence of Trinidadian dancehall referred to as ‘TriniBad’. Critically questioning access and participation in (virtual) Carnival, the analysis highlighted class differentiated preferences which are fundamentally important to understand the ongoing controversies around the place of dancehall in the Trinidadian context.

Another virtual panel ‘From the Barrack Yard to the World - Promoting Cultural Ownership and Cultural Confidence from an Emic Perspective’ was chaired by Kela Francis. Krisson Joseph started by performing Black Stalin’s ‘Yes, We Should Love Our Own’ accompanied on the guitar. The following discussion of the barrack yard proposes the conflicts of Carnival arts with European cultural norms, with the intellectual property system as a poignant example to contrast collective ownership and authorship. Coming back to the panyard, he ended with a quote from Lloyd Best: “A panyard is what a school should be. It is what a school is assumed to be but currently is not for reasons of society and, of course, for reasons of history.” This fluent transition fed into Roger Henry’s presentation on ‘Codifying Steelpan Music’

making the case for a catalogue of ‘pieces’ rather than ‘arrangements’ to teach Panorama performances. This codification process includes elements such as the aural analysis of structure and revise the lexicon used to describe the music. The last paper was a recorded contribution by Mia Gromandy-Benjamin who provided an insight into how to transform the curriculum and traditional education. Interventions such as the ‘pan programme’ work against the colonial framework of schools by using local terminology, positive representations of pan pioneers and a pedagogy drawing on communitarian principles of the panyard.

At the end of the second day of fruitful and engaging debates (Figure 9), Lynda



Figure 9. Cross-section of participants during Q&A

Rosenior-Patten presented the final paper as a call to action for creative sector professionals: “a collaborative, diaspora-centred, development approach towards a decolonised, community-focused strategy for the arts and cultural development and production”. She described the success of developing the Notting Hill Carnival Pioneers Festival, which started with 200 attendees in 2014 to grow to over 4000. Reflecting on this flagship project and a number of other events, she discussed factors contributing to popularity, sustainability and community engagement,

including the training of local volunteers for qualified paid positions as well as the need to embed the organisation of events in the community, locating suitable places and times to meet regularly.

At the end of this session, plans for a future collaboration with community organisers from Oxford and Lynda Rosenior-Patten were made, including a leadership training involving young people to develop skills for shaping the local Carnival (Figure 10). This was an inspiring transition to the last session of the evening, a discussion focusing on the future of Cowley Road Carnival.

Moving to Oxford seemed to be a small step in comparison to the conference's next journey.



Figure 10. Lynda Rosenior-Patten closing the meeting with a presentation on a strategy for arts and cultural development and production and announced that the 10<sup>th</sup> conference will take place in Sierra Leone and Ghana

Together with Lynda Rosenior-Patten, Haroun Shah announced that Frobe College in Freetown (Sierra Leone) and Ghana University will be the hosts of the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Carnival Arts between 4<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The meeting is titled '*Rhythm of a People: Tradition, Connection, Innovation and Decolonisation*' and a call for papers is in progress.

### Acknowledgement

Our thanks to Oxford Brookes University for hosting this conference, in particular the Creative Industries Research and Innovation Network at OBU, Faculty of Technology, Design and Environment for their unwavering support throughout the process. Our thanks also to the organising team from previous conferences which, this year, also included the support of SocaNews.

Although this meeting was timed to coincide with the Cowley Road Carnival, which did not materialise and its return in 2023 remains uncertain, the Carnival Arts Conference at Oxford Brookes made an important contribution to the recognition of its Caribbean legacies as well as to building a foundation for exchange and networking with Carnival practitioners across the country and overseas. On behalf of the organisers, we would like to thank everyone who participated and made this event a success!

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## **Steel Pan Agency, a Project to Deliver Performances and Workshops at Schools, Community, Private and Corporate Events Across the UK**

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### **Abstract**

The Steel Pan Agency was founded in 2010 and the Steel Pan Trust in 2013, both by its creative lead, Shareen Gray. Prior to this, the author began hosting 'Pan Clash', an annual steelpan soloist competition that was initiated in 2007 during the UK's October Black History Month. Steel Pan Trust expanded to include other events, a notable example being 'Classorama' which took the form of a mini-Panorama with pupils, parents, teachers and local communities showing huge enthusiasm for the competition. This was then passed on to the Steel Pan Trust and by 2014 'Classorama' had expanded into a steelband competition for both primary and secondary school steelbands. These are held annually in July. In that year, the first Steel Pan Trust Classorama competition comprised of a total of twelve primary and secondary schools from across London. The event continues to grow and provides the uninitiated youth with insights into the reality of competing in the UK's Junior Panorama. In 2017, the event transitioned from a theatre in London's Kilburn area to an open-air location outside London in High Wycombe. Thirteen schools created an even more pronounced panorama-style event in the park. Inevitably, Classorama expanded and grew into a festival that included performances and workshops. As a consequence, it was re-named School-O-Rama from 2020. Workshops are done throughout the UK via 'outreach' programmes in cities such as Chichester, Oxford, Eastbourne, Bournemouth, Cambridge, Winchester, Canterbury etc. Thus, the group performs at day centres and residential care homes for community groups and charities bringing live music to those who can rarely access it. The Agency is among the leading promoters of the steelpan artform, along with its culture and its members serve as entrepreneurs, fundraisers for charities, project managers and educators of steelpan and its history. In 2015, the Agency's work was recognised by The British Association of Steelbands (BAS) and the author was presented with an 'Outstanding Achievement Award'. Aspects of the Agency's work were presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> International Biennial Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conferences in 2016 and 2018. The author serves as a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Carnival Arts (IJCA). The work of Steel Pan Agency was highlighted as one of the landmarks in the history of steelpan in the UK during events to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of TASPO (Trinidad All-Steel Percussion Orchestra) in 1951 (Pan Podium).

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**Key Words:** Steel Pan Agency, Steel Pan Trust, Pan Clash, School Workshops, Public Performances, Fundraising, Women in Pan, Pan Education.

## Introduction



**STEEL  
PAN  
TRUST**

The author, Shareen Gray's initiation into the world of steelpan and a yearning for a career in steelpan arts began at aged 11. She lived very close to where the UK Panorama took place on Kensal Road and had never heard of the event. One day, walking to a relative's home, Shareen 'bumped into' the event. Initially, she was unimpressed and oblivious of to their efforts, but nevertheless she stood and watched for a while. Then a steelband came on that sounded phenomenal and she became emotional about the music, their dress code and especially how their dancing made the float rock. Shareen told her mum that very evening - at 11 years old - 'I have got to play steelpan'. Within weeks her mother brought her to a the steelband nearest to their home. After learning to play with this band for a few months, one day they put up some framed photographs on the wall. Shareen recognised the pictures as the steelband that inspired her to learn to play pan. It was the Ebony Steelband. From age 11 into her 20s she was a part of the Ebony Steelband, performed and won several UK Panorama competitions, went to Trinidad Festival Competition in 2000, performed at different events all over Europe and did a countless number of gigs on a regular basis for over a decade (WST, 2017).

I took a four year break away from pan to undertake a university degree. I was interested in publishing - all things publishing including magazines, books, journals, etc. I applied to the University of the Arts London (UAL) and gained entry to their Business/Publishing programme. UAL was ranked in the top two universities in the world for arts and design [QS World University Rankings®] and Europe's largest specialist university for design, fashion and the performing arts. I immersed

myself completely into my studies and obtained a first-class degree in Business Publishing in 2009. When I picked up my first job in publishing, I realised that in the large publishing companies such as Condé Nast, few people had university qualifications but instead learned their skills by growing within the publishing company. University tutors often emphasised 'you will create a successful business from what you know', so applying this to myself, I felt confident that I knew enough about pan and had a passion for it, so I thought, why not explore this as a career? I started exploring the field and my first job was at 'Community Volunteering Service', a charity based in King's Cross, London. They employed me to run a Millennium Volunteer Programme through Ebony Steelband. This was for young people to learn to play pan and perform at gigs - a wonderful project that often ended up with delightful celebrations (e.g. Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall) where the mayor would often attend. Some of these players stayed on with Ebony and played at the highest level such as the Panorama competition.

Without realising it, I was building a career in Fundraising between 2005 - 2013, not just in steelpan but in companies such as Age UK, several charities and being paid on a commission basis. In 2010, I formed Steel Pan Agency and in just that year we did 22 gigs. I did most of the administrative work, but I recall one in the East End of London - a workshop for men with HIV - when Carlene Etienne, their music tutor, needed to leave abruptly and left me to tutor the class. When she returned, she allowed me to continue the class, and this gave me the courage to start tutoring. On one workshop I was tutoring, there was a young girl who was written off as 'not being able to learn anything' and I was told to avoid her. But I went ahead and succeeded in teaching her the C-Major scale and this gave me an enormous boost in confidence. One of the other tutors, Delphine James (James, 2022) saw this and started encouraging me to



Figure 1. Author and president of Steel Pan Agency, Shareen Gray taking a break from playing pan to play percussion.



Figure 2. The two red tenor pans and a shiny purple double-tenor were the first set of pans owned by Steel Pan Trust that were purchased from Trinidad for teaching.

leave the office and do more tutoring, which I acceded to. With me joining the tutoring team, it helped to reduce our costs, so that more and more community schools, who had lower budgets, began recruiting us. With me now doing more and more workshops, my experience grew and soon I would find it impossible not to be part of the practical teaching. Now I am like the

other tutors, I do two 45-minute sets or one 90-minute set, solo or duet etc (Figure 1). When the Steel Pan Trust was formed in 2013, finance was at its lowest point and a decision had to be made to purchase three pans from Trinidad and it was a huge dilemma. In 2013, Steel Pan Agency stopped the fundraising and went into project full time with steelpan as its sole focus. It was a very risky decision driven purely by the love and passion for this beautiful instrument. The two red tenor pans and a shiny purple double-tenor were what we could afford, and the workshops had to be done using just these pans (Figure 2). But the children would line up and patiently wait their turn and this went on from school to school and still there were good reviews. Today we have 15 pans, and this seems so lucrative as we can have a full ensemble.

Carlene and Samuel have been with me since the beginning of this project in 2010 and set the foundation for what we deliver up to today. Carlene, among her other skills, is an expert at teaching beginners (see e.g. Dines et al. 2022). One of the targets we set ourselves is that we can teach absolute beginners to play most of a tune in 15 minutes and by 30 minutes, they are ready to perform. Steel Pan Agency delivers school assemblies, teaching the history of pan, the range of instruments, its use in carnivals etc for children from Reception all the way up to the top classes and this is always well received with incredible reviews from the schools and visitors. The comment is often ‘we can’t believe that children so young could follow the story and stay so focused during the workshops.’ We are confident that it works as we have now done this over a thousand times and we have never had derogatory comments. In creating a pathway to promote the steelpan artform, the birth of ‘Pan Clash’ was in 2007.

### **Pan Clash, A Soloist Competition and Ensembles**

Pan Clash was created by Shareen Gray and was initiated in 2007. It was established with the aim of providing more steelpan opportunities for young people, building their confidence through musical expression while simultaneously increasing the audiences who listen to live steelpan music. In 2013, the 'Steel Pan Trust' was established as a charity to promote steelpan music and took over the organisation of the event. By 2017, there was a team of up to 15 musicians who provided most of the workshops which amounted to hundreds of performances at schools, private functions and corporate events during which over 500 schools were visited.

Pan Clash remained a steelpan soloist competition for children under 16 and young people aged 16-30 and takes place annually during the UK's Black History Month in October. Competitors can take part using any range of steelpans but each year the rules may change. Essentially this entails soloing by competitors for a set number of bars and is performed with a professional 3/4-piece steelband. The winner receives a cash prize, a BAS Award, tickets to the MOBO Awards (Music of Black Origin) and also performs at the MOBO Awards VIP Reception. The MOBO Awards prize took place between 2012 - 2015. The Pan Clash event also features outstanding live performances and presenters to keep the audience entertained. In 2014 Andy Narell, the renowned American Jazz pianist, composer and producer, performed with the winning steelband and this was notably one of the most entertaining Pan Clash events to date.

### **First Steel Pan Trust Classorama.**

The first Steel Pan Trust Classorama on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at the Tabernacle featured 13 schools from across the London area competing in one of two categories, primary and secondary school Steelbands. Organising such an event for the first time presented many challenges such as devising

a programme and format, advertising the event and dealing with queries, including financial and management issues, particularly as there was no model to follow. However, the children took the pressure away from us, as they were wildly excited on the day and immediately made the whole event feel very worthwhile. We did not expect that as many as 13 schools would take part. But to balance this, we had the largest number of volunteers (*ca.* 40) of at this event, who helped to make the process very straightforward. They assisted us in taking the pans, as they were offloaded from the vehicles to a holding area, then up to the first floor and onto the stage for each band's performance. After they were done, then off the stage again and back to the ground floor to be eventually loaded back on to their respective trucks. This needed good coordination as parking was some distance away. It was necessary to employ two people just to help with parking. The local supermarket, Sainsburys, kindly blocked off a zone of their customer parking area for us. The event was considered highly successful and established the format for the ensuing years.

Table 1 lists the names of the schools who took part and the final result while Figure 3 show some of the awardees.

School Steelband	Result
Kingsdale Foundation School	Winner
Stepney All Saints Church of England Secondary School	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Walthamstow School for Girls	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Islington Arts & Media School	4 <sup>th</sup>
Eltham Hill School Year 9	5 <sup>th</sup>
Eltham Hill School Year 8	6 <sup>th</sup>
Roundwood Primary 1	Winner
Manorfield Primary School	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Roundwood Primary 2	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Goose Green Primary School	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ilderton Primary School	5 <sup>th</sup>
St Thomas CE School	6 <sup>th</sup>
Titchfield Primary School	7 <sup>th</sup>

Table 1. The first Steel Pan Trust Classorama on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 at the Tabernacle featured 13 schools from across the London area competing in one of two categories, primary and secondary school steelbands. Interestingly, in 2013, Manorfield Primary School formed a steelband with the sole intention of competing in the new Classorama.

The over 16’s category competition winner Ebow Mensah was the champion in 2018 and also received his first British Association of Steelbands (BAS) Award that year (Figure 4). Mensah went on to perform on BBC Radio 1Xtra, Brainchild Festival and the Royal Albert Hall. (Gray, 2017a). Other prizes included £500 cash and 4 tickets to the British MOBO Awards. In 2017 the event celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary - a great evening that included performances from Carlene ‘Sweetwrists’ Etienne, Debra Romain and Alexander D. Great. The whole event had a natural high as many people involved were recognising how long they have been a part of this event. The evening ended with Shareen Gray giving the closing talk, flowers and a bottle to the presenters Joel ‘Tubbs’ Hamilton-Mills and Kayleigh ‘Loudmouth’ Lewis, who have become the faces of Pan Clash, steelpan musicians Samuel Dubois and Thomas Sinclair for assisting with the event from the beginning and BAS’s Debi Gardner, who has been a strong supporter of this event (Gray, 2017b). This 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pan Clash at the Tabernacle on Sunday 22nd October 2017 represented a significant landmark because within this period a whole new generation of steelpan soloists took part in these events



Figure 3. (Left) Nyle Auguiste who has been taking part since 2013, Carlene 'Etienne and Lola Peach Pan Clash Champion 2017. (Middle) David Ijaduola, champion for over 5 years. He has since gone on to being a judge at Pan Clash. (Far right) Marlon Hibbert champion for last 3 years who recently graduated from Guildhall University using pan as his first instrument.



Figure 4. From left: Carlene 'Etienne, Dan Sadler, Eboh Mensah receiving his award and Shareen Gray who proudly supported him.

The 'Over 16's' category had some pannists who were only 10-years old when this competition began.

The year 2017 also witnessed the fourth year of Classorama and in a bold move, the organisers took the event to a field in High Wycombe. They hired a big top circus tent to enable fun rides for the pupils and challenged themselves to create a festival atmosphere. With 13 schools participating it was again a major success (Gray, 2017c;2018).

#### **School-O-Rama 2022 after the Pandemic**

With Britain experiencing its warmest summer on record and Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) set to return after a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, School-O-Rama was anticipated as a warm up for NHC and it surpassed all expectations. It was promoted in schools as an enrichment experience for pupils to participate in Caribbean culture and enjoy a day of fun outside of their academic curriculum and the students took full advantage of it. The event took place at the Canons Leisure Centre, Mitcham, CR4 4HD in this normally leafy, grassy lush suburb of southwest London on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July. Not surprisingly, it was a bright

sweltering sunny day with temperatures approaching 40°C but it did nothing to restrain the vibrancy and enthusiasm of the children who decided to make it their own carnival; singing and dancing in the field before their steelbands were even fully set up. As soon as the stage was set up, the DJ began playing calypso/soca which added to the ambience of the event. The 12 steelbands, aided by stewards, took up their places, hoisting gazebos to accommodate the steelband and provide some protection from the searing heat. However, even with this, it was necessary to pour cool water over some of the pans to protect them from heat damage and all pupils were continually encouraged to keep up their liquid intake. Soon the bands were set up and each began rehearsing ahead of their official performance, out in the sun dancing and enjoying the carnival atmosphere which only a steelband could engender (see Figures 5 - 11b).

If the legend Lord Kitchener was there, he would have sung his 1964 Road March 'Mama dis is Mas' - within the grounds of Canons Leisure Centre - becoming Frederick Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad:



Figure 5. Pupils from various schools creating their own carnival ahead of the formal competition. The sweltering heat did nothing to deter their spirit and friendship which School-O-Rama seeks to actively promote.

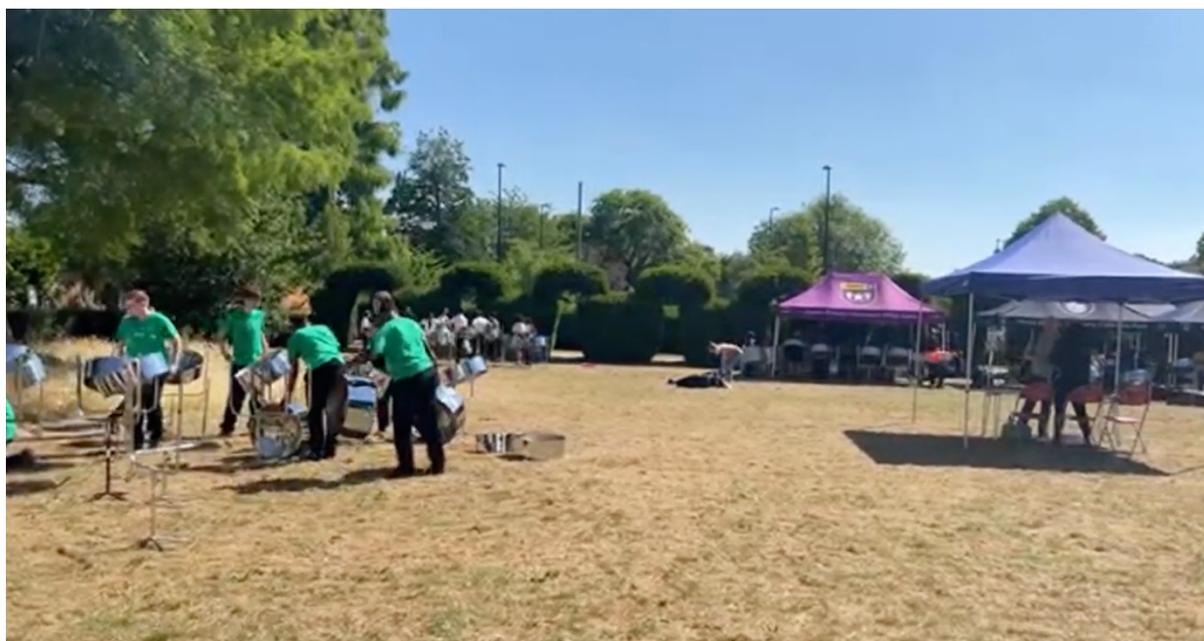


Figure 6. The green tops of Kingsdale Foundation School, a secondary school with a formidable steelpan track record setting up their pans, oblivious to the burning heat. The sun-baked field of a scorching summer, with normally lush green grass, is evident. The marquee to the right (dark blue) being set up for judges.

### **‘Mama dis is Mas’**

(Chorus):

*... “the bands will be passing down Frederick Street  
With a ping pong beat, **in the burning heat**  
And they march very late to the Savanna  
No one aggressive, carnival is strictly conservative ...”.*

- Lord Kitchener

[https://sonichits.com/video/Lord\\_Kitchener/Mama\\_Dis\\_Is\\_Mas?track=1](https://sonichits.com/video/Lord_Kitchener/Mama_Dis_Is_Mas?track=1)

Figure 7. One of the two Harris Academy schools where steelpan has a strong presence. Here Harris Academy Coleraine Park steelband with their winning performance - scoring an astonishing 256 point to win the judges top prize for the primary schools. Their sister school, Harris Academy Phillip Lane also won second prize in the same category with 221 points.



Figure 8. Kingsdale Foundation School performing outside of their marquee to win the first prize in the secondary school category with the judges awarding a staggering 258 points for their performance. This school was highly commended for their consistency (see Table 1)



Figure 9. The Elmgreen School who placed second place in the 2022 School-O-Rama competition, Secondary School category. The judges awarded them 228 points and described them as “a very strong group, we hope to see again next year!”

During the lunchtime break the students were entertained by veteran Barbadian calypsonian, Roger Gibbs who lives in Toronto. Roger was visiting the UK to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> International Steelpan/Carnival Arts conference “Back on the Road: Carnival Community, Creativity and Legacies in and beyond the Pandemic” at Oxford Brookes University, 1-2<sup>nd</sup> July 2022. Like NHC, it was another event to stimulate carnival arts following the pandemic and his invitation by Shareen Gray to perform at School-O-Rama 2022 proved popular with the young audience who perhaps were seeing a calypsonian perform for the first time. Apart from his professional performance, what Roger brought to a young audience is his incisive knowledge of calypso and its varied rhythms which can be used to trace the roots of the artform. He has detailed this in the International Journal of Carnival Arts (Gibbs, 2020).



Figure 10. Unlike the pupils who appeared comfortable in the blistering heat, Roger Gibbs who is normally quite accustomed to the warm temperatures of the Caribbean, was unable to do more than 4 songs due both to the heat intensity and humidity. He nevertheless did a brilliant performance and was heartily applauded by the audience, many of whom were seated in shady positions to listen to his performance.



Figure 11a. (above). The School-O-Rama logo. Figure 11b. (left). The programme has been a real triumph for diversity, attracting students from all ethnic groups and bringing the sound of this beautiful instrument to audiences who hitherto weren't even aware of its existence but now competing at the highest level!



Figure 12. (above) Pan Clash 2018 soloist competition poster

Figure 13. (left) The Steel Pan Trust and the British Association of Steelband combined for the Soloists competition on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

### Pan Clash Explosion and BAS

In 2018 and 2019 Pan Clash amalgamated with the British Association of Steelbands to include their ensembles competition Pan Explosion: modifying the name Pan Clash Explosion! (Figures 12-14). This was to make it an even bigger event and included even more children and young people with opportunities to showcase their musicianship.

**STEEL PAN TRUST PRESENTS  
PAN CLASH**

MONDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2021  
LIVE ON YOUTUBE  
8PM GMT

MORE INFO -  
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STEEL PAN TRUST  
BAS

PAN CLASH

Figure 14. Reporting on Pan Clash on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Like Figure 13, the images of TASPO in July 1951 is highly conspicuous to celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Joseph, 2021)

### Steel Pan Trust Outreach Programme

'Outreach' performances have become a popular part of the Steel Pan Trust programme and attracts onlookers of all ages, particularly when familiar tunes from any era and music genre are played. A wide range of venues are included such as day centres and residential care homes, community groups and charities, bringing music to those who can't easily get out to enjoy live music. The group tours the UK providing public street performances and performs with local musicians to bring joy to communities. Street performances are the favourite activities amongst volunteers. It provides a great opportunity for crowd interaction, to be an entertainer and identify great songs to sing along with, to uplift people's mood. It is also enjoyable to visit places in the UK where the sound of a steel pan is unfamiliar, and witness onlookers enjoying the music. The band has visited some 20 Town Centres, including cities such as Chichester, Oxford, Eastbourne, Bournemouth, Cambridge, Winchester, Canterbury etc. These UK tours take place from Summer to December while Christmas season performances 'Carols on Steel,' are loved by the general public.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Steelpan from Trinidad to Notting Hill:

The annual Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago dates back to the 18th century, through Spanish French and subsequently British colonial rule from 1797. With the Slavery Abolition Act in 1834 and full freedom four years later, Carnival, hitherto restricted to the island's planters, became a tradition among Trinidad's emancipated slaves, who created the jammette (underclass) masquerade to participate in the festivities (Cowley, 2008). The British colonial authorities disapproved of Carnival as it was often marred by clashes between groups of revellers carrying sticks and lighted torches. First, drums were banned from carnival in 1884 as the authorities feared they were being used as a means of communication. Searching for an alternative, the revellers began using pieces of dried bamboo (Tamboo Bamboo) as a substitute for making drum music, which was accompanied by singing and dancing. In 1934 this too was banned, after the instruments were sharpened to a vicious point and used as weapons between rival gangs. Musicians adopted tins (paint, biscuit, pitch-oil tins etc) and metal pieces such as car brake drums for percussion.

Carnival was banned during the latter part of World War II (1942-1945) but during this period much experimentation was taking place surreptitiously in back gardens and pan yards. With the discovery of oil in Trinidad and a burgeoning oil industry, steel drums began accumulating in depots and repositories in the late 1930s. These resourceful innovators saw the advantages of using oil drums and began to experiment. Gradually the tins were replaced by oil drums, whose larger surfaces permitted more notes and were more durable. These new rhythm bands were more audible and laid the foundation for the development of the modern steelband (Steumpfle, 1995). When the war ended and V-E (Victory in Europe Day, 8th May 1945) and V-J (Victory over Japan Day, 15th August 1945) were declared, the government permitted a two-day temporary lift on banned processions. “People from all corners of society poured onto the streets by the thousands, taking anything appropriate to wave and celebrate; some took their steelpans and sang and danced in jubilation. This inadvertently turned the celebrations into a carnival which euphoric revellers, who were banned for years, shrewdly used to reinstate carnival. Costumes were brought out and for two days, fledging steelpans could be used to play simple nursery rhymes and the choruses of a few calypsos to the accompaniment of anything metallic. In San Fernando and Princes Town, individuals recalled seeing bands with steelpans and Tassa drums ... When the first carnival after the war was held in 1946, the steelpan, in just one year, was miraculously transformed into a more mature instrument, fully chromatic, with pannists now being able to play calypsos, hymns and popular tunes which hypnotised onlookers. Importantly, Stuempfle (1995) states that by V-E and V-J day “Steelbands were already prominent in locations as far apart as Cedros, San Fernando, Princes Town, Chaguanas and Sangre Grande”. New advances in pan tuning were taking

place in all parts of the island.” (Sullivan, 2020).

Steelbands soon became the hallmark of carnival and some excelled at street performances and competed unofficially amongst each other to draw in the largest number of revellers during parades. So large were some bands, that people at the front and end of these bands could only hear the base pans and percussion and not the actual tune being played by the band. Sometimes there were skirmishes among supporters of rival bands as eloquently depicted in Lord Blakie’s 1954 calypso ‘Steelband Clash.’ (Lord Blakie, 1954). Official competitions such as best beating band on the road, the mysterious J’Ouvert Bomb competition and commercial sponsorship did much to alleviate the violent elements. By 1963, the first Panorama competitions began and quickly grew in status as the official stage for competition. Among the many strands taken from Trinidad & Tobago’s carnival and repositioned in the diaspora, Panorama stands aloft and in cities such as New York, Toronto and London, steelbands compete fiercely for supremacy to hold the coveted title (Gray, 2018).

Maintaining a steady flow of young pannists as feeders to these larger professional steelbands depends on having an intergenerational system that prepares the youths for this creative transition (Sullivan, 2021). Until the establishment of Steel Pan Agency (2010) and subsequently Steel Pan Trust (2013), the process occurred haphazardly. It is our view that events such as School-O-Rama 2022, described above, better prepares young people to continue to play pan well beyond school years and further provides skilled recruits for the well-established steelbands to flourish. Unlike other cities, including those in Trinidad, where Sound Systems have largely displaced steelbands on the road during carnival (Shah, 2018), NHC boast a total of 14 active steelbands during both days of carnival and should be commended for maintaining such as robust

presence. When NHC began, it was the steelband of Russ Henderson and Sterling Betancourt (who later formed Nostalgia Steelband in 1964) that led to the start of the street carnival in 1966.

Steelbands have grown in number and stature in London and other cities in the UK and play a pivotal role in carnivals. In 2006, UK public voted NHC onto a list of Icons of England in a project commissioned by The Department of Culture, Media and Sport to stimulate debate about what cultural treasures exist that best represent England (BBC News, 2006). It is interesting that NHC, just 40 years old in 2006, featured among such landmarks as Nelson's flagship HMS Victory, Constable's painting, The Hay Wain, Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, the Globe Theatre, Stonehenge and others and emphasises the high esteem in which this event is held by the British public, an event that was strenuously developed and fought for by the Windrush Generation and other migrants.

Steel Pan Agency considers the preservation of this artform of major historical and cultural importance and have

worked steadfastly from 2010 to nurture and support the youth with a group of dedicated entrepreneurs (see Table 2). We aim to maintain the rich culture and heritage of the Caribbean and will continue to fulfil our part by providing inclusive music workshops, public performances and educational projects. Our values are to have fun, we enjoy people being creative, sharing good energy and making time to enjoy music as it improves our wellbeing. We believe in learning and supporting development across all our projects and in encouraging the future leaders of the art and culture. We strongly believe in inclusivity and encourage people of all ages, races, musical abilities, culture or background to join our classes and events. We will always be innovators promoting continuous development, bold creativity and positive change. Collaboration is important to us as we believe in listening and evolving together whilst helping each other to achieve a common goal (see overview, Classorama, <http://mypanyard.co.uk/Events-Classorama.html>)

Member	Key Roles
Shareen Gray Director	Qualified with a first class degree in Business Publishing and an Arts Award officer. In 2015 recognised by The British Association of Steelbands with an Outstanding Achievement Award. At 2018 International Steelpan Conference presented techniques for delivering accessible music-making for children and adults with special needs and disabilities.
Edivaldo Reis	A career background in Marketing with emphasis on improving companies' social and corporate responsibilities. Mr. Reis has worked with Cancer Research and Whizz-Kidz.
Cheryl Auguste	Dedicated more than 15 years to the Carnival Art form and is a professional businesswoman in the health industry. Cheryl is committed to being an avid advocate to the steel pan movement and is the author of the phrase "Pan Therapy."
Kevin Joseph, Advisor	A professional photographer for over 20 years and produced work for a wide range of clientele such as Adidas, Puma, Nike, Mothercare, JD Sports, Amazon, Apple, Google, Timberland as well as many established magazines, corporate firms and PR companies.
Table 2. Steel Pan Trust - Fundraising and Project Management Team	

Regular supporters include:

**Marlon Hibbert** - 3 time winner, founded Endurance Steel Orchestra and built a hugely successful career.

**Jericho Phiri** - who started from simple curiosity to a top player in Ebony and his involvement in Steel Pan Agency over the years. Also, youth ambassador for the 7th international biennial steelpan conference in 2018.

**Kishan Shorter** - is the pan tutor at Kingsdale Foundation School and also performed as a pupil at School-O-Rama 2014-2017. Hit tutoring Kingsdale Foundation School taken over from Marlon Hibbert is a great accomplishment maintaining their championship since 2017. He performed as a pupil at the competition 2014 – 2016.

### **Public Speaking (e.g. Presentation at Steelpan Conference 2018).**

One aspect of the Steel Pan Agency's work was presented by Shareen Gray at the 7<sup>th</sup> International Biennial Steelpan Conference held between 19-21<sup>st</sup> October 2018 titled "**Inspiring the Excitement of Steelband Music to those with Special Needs, Disabilities and Learning Difficulties**" (See <https://www.steelpanconference.com>). The following is the abstract submitted for the conference:

"Steel Pan Agency delivers steelpan workshops and performances to academic institutes all over the country teaching them about the history and range of steelpans. Our services are most popular at primary schools. Steel Pan Agency also provides workshops and performances for private and corporate events and regularly performs at community events, weddings and private parties.

We have now visited well over 10 special needs schools many of which have us visiting a few times of year annually. Since 2010 Steel Pan Agency has learned an increasingly vast amounts of knowledge

on; (A) teaching techniques, (B) suitable workshop layouts and (C) the impact of steelpans on these service users.

Disabilities, Special Needs and learning difficulties crosses a very wide spectrum, however our practices have become general in their practice and for all ages. We have been keen now for over 3-years to have a thorough report published to support the extremely positive impact the steelpan instrument has on these user's groups. Additionally, Steel Pan Trust has a family steelband group inclusive of those with disabilities, special needs and learning difficulties since 2014 which has also allowed those involved with the agency and charity further opportunity to become educated in this field.

### **(A) Teaching Techniques**

The most common technique to get a group of various abilities to play together is to roll harmonies and repeating rhythms. Sensory touch is also a major part of this for those who cannot physically hold the sticks. Key workers also play a key role in supporting pupils through these sessions. Rarely is a song completed but much can be done with rolls, harmonies and rhythms to create lovely sounds at the foundation stage. Additionally, we use various lengths of sticks to support those with physical hand impairments and the best way to place wheel chairs when teaching the steelpan.

### **(B) Suitable Workshop Layout**

Flexibility during these sessions is fundamental and orchestrated by the ability compatibility of those you are working with. The most popular layout is 15-minute turn around sessions of playing and performing. The performances allow dancing and movement and the steelpan playing sessions are short to help keep pupils engaged for long periods of times, such as up to 90-minutes.

### **(C) The Impact of Steelpans on these Service Users**

Working with this group can be rewarding in ways extremely unforeseen. We have had more than 10 case studies where we are informed that a pupil will not engage with

anything but shows an enthusiasm towards the steelpan so unlike themselves key workers are often moved to tears of emotion. The joy our workshops has brought to thousands of service users over the years has been phenomenal. The outcomes achieved over the years should be recorded as steelpan can play a significant role in the developments and well-being of these service users.”

SocaNews for helping to promote events. Huge gratitude to our many supporters/tutors/workers such as Carlene 'Sweet Wrist' Etienne, Samuel Dubois, Delphina James, Debra Romain, Debi Gardiner, Pepe Francis, Marlon Hibbert, Jericho Phiri et al., and the many schools who have participated and continue to do so. To their teachers and parents, we are greatly indebted for your support.

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### Acknowledgement:

The Steel Pan Agency and Steel Pan Trust are indebted to the Tabernacle and Yaa Centre (Carnival Village Trust) for hosting many of our events and the British Association of Steelbands (BAS) for fruitful collaborations, Pan Podium and

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## Carnival Discourses: Reflections on

### (i) ‘The Illustrated Story of Pan’

### (ii) Meditations on Minshall

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#### Abstract

It’s difficult – no, it’s misleading – to try to summarise *The Illustrated Story of Pan* because it was compiled to be experienced like a movie rather than read like a book. In that it’s akin to my hybrid movie *PAN! Our Music Odyssey*, which combines a dramatic story set in 1947-1951 with a documentary about *Panorama* in 2015 and interviews with pan pioneers. Analogously, *TISOP* combines (1) a narrative of the history of pan with (2) photographs that relate to moments in that history but are not necessarily mentioned in the narrative, and with (3) first-person accounts by pan pioneers of other similar moments. The photos and verbatim interviews are intended to take you back to those moments sprinkled along the history as if you were there and experiencing it yourself or at least reading about it in today’s newspaper or hearing recounted by someone who was there yesterday. To summarise that is like trying to summarise a big, joyful family reunion at which you met friends and family, were introduced to relatives you didn’t know, shared jokes and old stories, marked those who had passed in recent years, welcomed new members of the clan.

But I shall try, quoting the “summaries” which preface each chapter with its animating spirit or theme.

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**Key Words:** Photojournalism, Pan, Music, Dance, Innovation, Transformation, Mas, Pedagogy, Minshall, Creative Expression, Theatre.

There are ten chapters, the first of which – *The Archaeology of Memory* – describes my methodology, like any academic text, about collecting the photos and interviews, and what they represent. It was an archaeological exercise, recovering the past through its artifacts rather than its documentation. And I discuss the relationship between photos and words, the first presenting a moment preserved in a physical object not unlike any ancient statue or fossil. The moment frozen on

celluloid is provided with movement by the narratives:

“Photographs are personal, as in holiday snapshots or selfies, or they are public, like most photojournalism. The former are framed by a biography and dense with meaning; the latter are distant and impersonal, even with explanatory captions. Many photos in this book were originally public photos that were acquired and preserved because of their personal significance. Here they are combined with

oral accounts to dissolve the distinction between the personal and the public, to be returned, charged with that aura, to the public domain. The result is to make this book akin to a family album. It could be the family of steelbands and their supporters, or it could equally be the extended family of Trinidadians and Tobagonians. Or it could be the clan of musicians and music lovers, which embraces all of mankind.”

The second chapter – Repercussions – provides a background to the birth of the steelband movement, situating it within the broader context of the musical traditions from Africa that enabled her diaspora to survive the holocaust of enslavement and colonialism, not only in Trinidad but throughout the Caribbean:

“The operative principle underlying the music Africans brought to the New World is that it must help people to live. This is a functional approach to music: it is made to give people strength when they are weak; it must lift their spirits when they are down. With music people can celebrate the joys of life, and indeed it is itself one of life’s greatest pleasures, yet it must also connect people with their ancestors in the land of the dead, and with the gods in the heavens above. Most importantly, music must strengthen the bonds between people because only with and through others do we become fully human.”

Chapter 3 – The Audacity of the Creole Imagination – recounts the impact of the new steelband movement among young people:

“It was love at first sound. The booming, clanging, ringing, banging of the iron band instantly captivated young men throughout the island. It was loud, it was mobile and if it was rudimentary, it was nonetheless

theirs; no inherited, seasonal affair in the bamboo but an all-day, all-night love. There was rivalry and jealousy, so the young men fought like lions amongst themselves, for which they were ostracised and punished. But rivalry also begat innovation, which transformed the duckling into a swan. In just over a decade, from 1939 to 1951, the dustbin and paint-can gang became an orchestra whose unique voice could sing all the songs of all the peoples of the land.”

Chapter 5 – Makin’ Style – carries the stories through the ‘50s as the instrument, the music and the ensembles grew in complexity, and the movement flexed its cultural and political muscles.

“They were the wild ones, the rebels and outlaws, frowned upon, hounded by authority. But they were also the stylish ones, dangerous and sexy, irresistible to women. Politicians enlisted their charisma and strength. And those cocky young men revelled in their potency and power.

But that wasn’t their main concern. Rather, it was to play with greater elan the music they loved, to make it more intelligent and more alluring, so it could sweep you off your feet and carry you further away; to make music that was more stylish in surprising ways.”

Chapter 6 – Mas with Class – explores the symbiosis between pan and Carnival, especially mas, in the ‘50s and ‘60s, when the two could not be separated but rather each spurred the other to greater aesthetic heights.

“A century before pan there was Carnival and there was mas. Indeed, pan was invented to serve them. But the servant transformed himself and in so doing transformed the master. Pan attracted more masqueraders, and mas bands grew in size

and complexity; designers had a broader canvas to portray anything, from the dirty realism of war and history, to ceremonies of the world's tribes or the surrealism of head mas. Through its multitudes of sailors, ships' crew, drunken sailors, fancy sailors and seabees, pan catalysed mas and dance. By bringing the formerly disdainful middle classes off their segregated trucks on to the streets, pan transformed Carnival into a truly national festival."

The steelband movement was not solely a cultural phenomenon but also political, like the trade union movement, and Chapter 7 – *Render Unto Caesar* – recounts its achievements and compromises.

"Steelbands possessed an irresistible magnetism that drew people together in growing numbers, transcending social barriers of ethnicity, race, class, religion, gender and age. The bands also grew in size and organisational complexity until in cases they transformed entire communities into disciplined goal-oriented groups, membership in which was completely voluntary. As a result there was politics within steelbands and politics between steelbands, politics being the pursuit of social power. Most importantly, there was the political power of the steelband movement as it related to the wider society."

As the book moves towards its latter third the chapters become increasingly thematic, while striving to maintain some chronological sequence. So the chapter in politics is followed by a closer look at pan at its most political moments during the tumultuous seventies: Chapter 8 – *New Beginnings*.

"Radical change takes many forms, which are not necessarily political. They can also be technical or scientific, organisational or artistic. The most profound transformations can take place in the mind, such as when panmen attained their autonomy from other people's circumscribed ideas of national culture. And because pan has many dimensions – as an instrument, an ensemble, a kind of music, a community and a popular movement – so too it embodied the radicalism of the 1970s in myriad ways, so that both progressive and conservative bands could be innovative, some in ways that would resonate for decades to come."

Similarly, the penultimate Chapter 9 pulls from pan's earliest days down to recent times to explore the theme of women in pan – *Women of Steel* – while maintaining the chronological momentum of the book.

"Women's role in pan is as elsewhere: vital and varied. Early bands were masculine street gangs, aggressive rivals, disreputable and dangerous – so the indulgence of mothers was indispensable. Their music beguiled teenage girls and working women, devoted sisters and stern teachers, in the 1950s and 1960s – the validators of masculinity and the social repositories of musical theory. The rebellious 1970s saw young women forming school bands. That way they pushed pan into the educational system, transforming themselves, the system and the steelband movement in the process."

The final Chapter 10 – *Tomorrow's People* – took the longest to update because in the decade between the first and second editions my understanding of pan grew significantly. There was an International

Panorama with bands from the US, Canada, Britain, France, Japan, St. Lucia, Jamaica, the US Virgin Islands and, of course, Trinidad and Tobago, and my awareness grew of pan being now a global movement. At home I organized a steelband educators workshop, which sensitized me to the importance of pedagogy in the way forward for pan.

“The future of pan is not inevitable. It is in our hands, always has been. Before, decisions were instinctual, based on a deep passionate love, which is always pure. Now, however, decisions must be reasoned, which leaves them open to bureaucratic caution and conservatism or worse, to delusion, greed and status-seeking. Charting pan’s future, we must be clear about its challenges – the alienation of

youth, of communities, its distance from popular music. And we must recognise its strengths, its entrenchment in our schools, its didactic perfection and its rootedness in Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, pan is also global. Just as sixty years ago it grew to sing the songs of this land, now it can teach the world to sing. All you need is love.”

That then is my summary of *The Illustrated Story of Pan, Second Edition*, taken largely from the book itself.

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## MEDITATIONS ON MINSHALL

### I. Fools Rush In

“You eh see they call theysel *Ship of Fools*?”

It was the declaration by a man propped on the bar complaining about what he’d just seen on TV. Just as the waiter brought my order, the man concluded, “They only playing theysel.”

That conversation in a quiet pub a few nights after Carnival, 2003, was on that year’s Carnival band by Peter Minshall. It called to mind a similar disparagement years before. “Look how he get Trinidadians to pretend they is rats,” observed a friend contemptuously of Minshall’s 1986 *Rat Race*.

At the time the attitude puzzled me. I’d seen only a marvellously didactic torrent of

scurrying, cavorting rodents, grey bodies, black ears, making mas on the stage like a joyous plague from Hamlyn. Now I see connections and disconnections.

Before Minshall, mas was a moment to enact your fantasies of wealth, power, desirability or fearsomeness. For two days you were a Roman or Aztec ruler, a slut or an avenging robber, a wild Indian or African warrior, a bat, vampire or mummy, a demon, imp or Beelzebub himself.

“*What coruscating, mincing fantasies!*” remarked Derek Walcott in 1969.

Then along came a Trini trained in English art school technique, steeped in 1960s street protest and theatrical design, but also saturated from childhood in traditional mas. Minshall combined those influences with his own zany style and wit, his brilliant sense of colour and drama, to produce some of the most *memorable* mas

ever, when the power of any work of art is surely gauged by how long it echoes in your mind.

Who can forget his *Paradise Lost*, leading us down into Hell in 1976? In my mind's eye I can still see them on TV (because I was abroad). Those fallen angels were tinged with black or grey like a dusting of soot, heads down in shame. I did see *Papillon's* 1982 object-lesson in colour live, its hundreds of 7-foot wings each a canvas of unique chromatic harmony. Although I no longer recall specific costumes in *Papillon* other than one of Muhammad Ali (floating like a...), the frisson of surprise at Minshall's colour combinations parading on a street beside the Lapeyrouse Cemetery is still alive in my memory.

Two years before that I was walking along Roberts Street in Woodbrook on Carnival Tuesday, February 19, 1980. Approaching from the opposite direction is a group of stragglers from *Dance Macabre*, mostly women. They are draped with brown burlap ponchos, which dangle bits of bone and ragged feathers that clink and clack as they move, like dismal chimes that evoke the graveyard. Yet, under that grim layer those women are sheathed in skin-tight body stockings, they seem naked, flashing tantalizing bits of smooth brown flesh. They evoke the most life-affirming desire, even as they admit to their own futility and inevitable extinction. I can still after nearly half a century get goosebumps at the experience of threading through the throng.

(Ironically, those body stockings launched the bikini & beads mas.)

Minshall introduced new themes for mas and gave them a contemporary global urgency: the decadence of technological civilization, environmental destruction, the

horror of nuclear war. But he still remained traditional to the core, drawing on the shimmering mobility of bats, the dreadness of Midnight Robbers, the surrealism of Fancy Sailors. He absorbed the satire of Dames Lorraine and the theatricality of military mas – Desperadoes crawling across the stage under fire, their wounded and dying carried on stretchers.

“The mask is a means of creative expression that can give this experience to anyone, anywhere. In Trinidad, to thousands of people who actually participate in the work of art, who are enabled to become other than themselves,” Minshall said in a lecture delivered at Royal Museum of Scotland exhibition of “The Power of the Mask” in 1993.

Referring to the Dame Lorraine he played at Carnival in the 1950s, Minshall described the experience as a liberating transformation, a catharsis. Maybe it was that to the young Minshall, allowing a white, Guyanese-born, gay boy living in the aggressively black nationalistic Trinidad, to become other than himself. Through the mask an outsider experiences belonging. But *the mask* first had to become *mas*. That is, it had to be danced.

In school Minshall became involved in theatre productions and designed for the Trinidad Light Opera organization. In 1963 he went to study theatre design in London, where he achieved great success as a stage designer.

No wonder he views the mas as a form of theatre, of role-play. Describing the Bat character, he explains, “Not the amount of sequins, not the braid, it's just the way he plays the mas, and the verb that we use is *to play* the mas. There you have the operative combination of the word *play*, which every actor knows, you play a part, you go to see the play. And *mas*' – an abbreviation of the

*mask*. The *mask* can either be George Clooney stepping into a character or Meryl Streep impersonating Margaret Thatcher, or a papier mache that you put on...”

“Theatre of the streets”, is what he called it, and his masqueraders played at being actors. That was new. A traditional masquerader enters his fantasies; whereas an actor plays a role. My fantasy is to be more noble, heroic and desirable, but an actor can equally be repulsive in many ways. Nothing’s wrong with an actor playing a cockroach or a rat, which for even the really kinky is hardly material for fantasy.

So masqueraders in Minshall’s band played at being actors playing a new kind of mas. I think it was around that time, in the late ‘70s, that the contradictory, convoluted, self-reflexive phrase entered the Trini argot: “to play yourself”.

## II. Playing Yourself

“The mask is a means of creative expression that can give this experience to anyone, anywhere,” said Minshall at the Scottish exhibition. It was a liberating transformation, a catharsis in Trinidad, “to thousands of people who actually participate in the work of art, who are enabled to become other than themselves.” Playing mas is not merely a matter putting on a mask or a costume to cavort in public. That we do every day, each according to his tribe: mechanics in their greasy overalls or bankers in their jacket-and-ties; schoolchildren in uniforms or medical students with their stethoscopes, judges in robes or bandits trailing low-slung jeans. Our daily costumes present what we think we are. “What constitutes a mask? A reputation with its exaggerations. A face with its expressions. A life-style with its

acquisitions. A pair of eyes with their arranged signals. A body with its poses. Nearly everything personal presented to the world functions as mask. Social life demands this.”

Playing mas, on the other hand, we present our dreams of who we could be. A powerful warrior or sexy go-go dancer, a scary monster or drunk sailor, we are free or fierce, hedonistic or dangerous. The roots of this run deep. Long before Emancipation, before they joined the Carnival, Africans tramped around at Christmas as kings and queens and princes in “convois”, elaborate organizational hierarchies, which were mistaken in 1805 for a rebellion in the making. Meanwhile, in their exclusive, pre-Lenten fete of excess and frivolity. white women played the *mulatresses* their husbands desired, and white men played wild and sensuous *negue jardin* or field slaves.

Other traditions emerged after Emancipation as the formerly enslaved joined the fete. There were African stilt dancers called moko jumbies and various animal masquerades. There were Creole jab jabs (devils dressed like harlequins), who fought with whips. South Indian immigrants were attracted to that mas. There were Pierrot Grenades, who parodied the Pierrots. In the twentieth century Hollywood inspired several types of Indians and robbers. There was Hell’s complex pantheon of Beasts, Beelzebub and Bookman, imps, devils, dragons and Lucifer, launched by Chinese immigrant Patrick Jones.

In an English colony whose immigrants spoke French, Creole, Portuguese, Bhojpuri, Telugu, Urdu, Spanish and several Chinese languages, the mas characters were often verbal. In addition to the emphatic wordplay of calypsonians,

Midnight Robbers boasted grandiloquently, Indian warriors argued in an invented language, Pierrots delivered literary speeches in English (then fought with whips and sticks) and the Pierrot Grenades parodied them in Creole, all celebrating the eloquence of the masqueraders. In Carriacou Shakespeare Mas recited verses from... guess who – and then fought with whips.

After World War II the pre-emancipation convois resurfaced as steelband mas: huge processions in military costume, realistic soldiers in dirty fatigues and drunkenly swaying sailors ashore. The burgeoning urban middle class produced spectacular bands of historical mas – ancient Rome, tribal Africa, the Crusades, Viking marauders. As for the pre-emancipation “mulatresses”, they have dominated the masquerade since the 1980s, alongside their brown and black sisters, in bikinis, beads and feathers.

This mas was not at all like the traditional masking of pre-industrial societies, in which the man behind the mask is irrelevant to the divinity invoked by it. The closest we have to that is the practice of spirit possession, when the worshipper *becomes* the deity who inhabits him. The traditional power of the mask negates the person wearing it in the eyes of the believers and in his own eyes. That traditional mask is not Minshall’s “vehicle for self-expression”. It doesn't make the tribal maskers “bigger than themselves, larger than ordinary life” – that is the power of the *mas*, which is a different proposition entirely, created by a society which is criticized for possessing a “Carnival mentality”, whose vocabulary now interprets everyday life. *Bacchanal* is any disorderly, argumentative or scandalous behavior. To *make a mas* with an adversary

is to devastate him, leave him confused. *Picong*, the insults calypsonians hurled at one another, is stock fare for politicians.

Often foreigners don't quite get it. “Is Carnival, straight Carnival that's all,” wrote St. Lucian poet Derek Walcott: “The beat is base, the melody bobol/ All Port of Spain is a twelve-thirty show/ Those who not playing Kojak playing Fidel Castro.” But just as you can “play mas”, so too you can “play yourself”. Then a Trinidadian, in playing himself, expresses his longings and aspirations. “In so far as this mask represents the conception, we have formed of ourselves – the role we are striving to live up to – this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be,” argued sociologist Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. “We come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons.” The word “person” came from the Old French *persone*, in turn a derivation of the Latin *persona*, meaning an actor's mask or a character in a play.

The bacchanal, confusion and scandal represents a bringing to light. The serious, respectable world is shown to be a facade, a shadow, and the confusion, the scandals – much of which is prompted by the sexual drive – is natural and real and has the important moral value of truth.

There is below that another layer of truth, like an onion, when a person unmask himself. Such nakedness cannot exist in a social context. Only with the woman or man who you love are you without a mask.

### III. The Dance of Africa

Carnival has always been theatrical, with its dance, its drama, its costumes. But it's not *theatre*. It does not have the narrative of the theatre – the story of a protagonist, with an opening setup, a

middle crisis and a concluding resolution. That's what Minshall sought to bring to his bands. He wrote narratives and choreographed dramatic scenes to be performed on stage. I don't think they were very successful but they didn't detract from the mas, and they prompted him to ensure his kinetically expressive mas was mobile. He coined the term "dancing mobiles" to define them.

"Imagine yourself being part of a throng of one or two thousand people of all colours and gender dressed in sacking, rich earth colours, perhaps semi- and some undressed, and your skins adorned with the pigment of the earth, mud, a lovely ochre, everyone, but also jewels, also riches, and imagine yourself dancing down the streets to the music of Beethoven played on drums of steel before the sun rises. I can think of no work of art that I have seen or experienced quite to equal that."

Thus, the tension in Minshall between the European and the Creole. Never Beethoven on J'ouvert Morning but I have heard Handel, Bach and Mozart, and, yes, they were pinnacles of musical experience, but only after those works had been subjected to radical steelband surgery. The results of that operation was described by James Stewart, an Englishman, who attended a ball held by white Jamaicans in 1823: "Even if the music of the violins were better than it is it would be spoiled by the uncouth and deafening noise of the drums, which the negro musicians think indispensable . . . and the dancers strangely continue to tolerate."

Minshall speaks of mas in theatrical terms, the theatre of the streets, which must be *played*. That harks back to his theatre studies and set designing in London. Thus he recalls the mas which inspired him:

"The bat was a mas that really needed to be played and... it was all about mobility and dancing it, making it live... like most of my mas when it's not on a person it just lies there a dead thing on the ground. When he puts it on all that silk is fluttering and he is pirouetting around the savannah in the dusk like a ballerina."

But the dance of Carnival is no ballet, even though Minshall's "Dying Swan" pirouetted on stage to the music of Camille Saint-Saëns. Carnival has (or had) several dances, different characters each possessing a unique choreographic practice, from the drunken sailors ashore, stokers and ship's crew, to the dragons, the imps and jab molassie and, yes, bats. But they all hold one movement in common, described as early as 1830 by English artist Richard Bridgens: "Negro recreation is comprised in the word dancing . . . The bending of the body forwards . . . which is accompanied by an indescribable wriggling motion from side to side, is worthy of notice."

Today we call that wineing.

Dance shifts the discourse away from the costumes, away from the spectators, from the academics who speak about "the carnivalesque". Dancing in the streets leads us into the realms of communion and belonging, of identity and home. It speaks of who we are and where we belong. That is why we carry it with us wherever we migrate.

#### IV. Folly's Reprise

The *Ship of Fools* began in the waterways of medieval Germany and Netherlands, which were plied by ships carrying madmen, who were being taken away from the towns by sailors paid to do so. Folly, you see, wasn't today's mere lack

of good sense; it was lunacy, from the Old French *folie*.

By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the ship of fools, and folly in general, had replaced the *danse macabre* as Europe's main literary and artistic theme. Guyot Marchant's 1485 *Danse macabre* gave way to Hieronymus Bosch's "Ship of Fools". Madness, rather than Death, now haunted Western civilization, according to Michel Foucault.

This folly was not just an absence of reason, however, for the fool saw truths denied the sane. Hence Erasmus wrote *In Praise of Folly*. The greatest literary fool was of course Don Quixote, born in 1604. That same year another old fool, King Lear, was maddened by filial treachery in a tumultuous, dislocated universe not unlike ours.

Here in the Eastern Caribbean an 1873 federation proposed the transfer of convicts and transport of Trinidadian madmen to Barbados. According to Eric Williams, "(it) meant freedom of movement for lunatics and prisoners." In the 1980s the same prisoners transport vans were used in a state attempt to cart off mad vagrants and take them to the already-overcrowded asylum. Alas, our madmen showed more sense than the government, and decamped off the streets for a few days until the fuss died down.

The common sense of the insane was equally expressed by Earl Lovelace's fictional madman (a character based on a

real madman and also mentioned by VS Naipaul). In *The Dragon Can't Dance* he decides to emulate Christ, but changes his mind when the stupid crowd begins to stone him. "Let every sinnerman bear his own blasted burden; who is I to die for people who ain't have sense enough to know that they can't pelt a man with big stones when so much little pebbles lying on the ground."

The real Jesus allegedly died for his love of all mankind, but isn't love the greatest folly? The circle comes back, then, to Don Quixote, who is dismissed as the jokey madman that confused reality with his chivalric fantasies and believed windmills were dragons.

Before doing penance in the mountains he dispatched sidekick Sancho Panza to recount his great deeds to his lady Dulcinea. His squire Sancho Panza laughed: Dulcinea was really Aldonza Lorenzo: vulgar, strong as a bull, loud and rather a whore.

But Quixote knew the transformative power of love, which could change a peasant girl into a noble lady. "It is enough that I think and believe that Aldonza Lorenzo is beautiful and honest," he said. "The question of class is of no consequence... I paint her in my imagination as I desire her... And let the world think what it wants."

Beauty, desire, folly, belonging, love. Is there a better characterisation of Carnival?

## King David Rudder, A Prodigious Composer, Performer, Artiste, Poet, Genius of Calypso and Our Messiah

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### Abstract

This magnificent leafy setting of Opera Holland Park sited on the periphery of London's Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) route was transformed into a colossal calypso tent to host the legendary 'King' David Rudder as part of an NHC initiative with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The Carnival Village's 'Tabernacle Crew' opened the evening with London's reigning Calypso Monarch, G-String who set the scene to pass the baton to the main artiste of the evening, David Rudder. G-String did a stellar job and then introduced Rudder who made an unpretentious entry onto the stage but to a thunderous applause from an already aloft and eager audience. He wasted no time in doing so with his magical Caribbean collective psyche 'Rally 'Round the West Indies' and transformed this amphitheatre into a dancehall. His erudite audience, versed in every line of his compositions, escorts him, and from thence there was no respite in the programme as this veteran virtuoso took his fans with him through his immense repertoire that included songs such as Calypso Music, Bahia Girl, The Hammer and Trini 2 the Bone. The Tabernacle Crew, supported by the professional backing vocals of the Soca Divettes, revelled in their accompaniment and with little prior rehearsal, exhibited a great understanding of each other. Rudder instantly recognised the strength and versatility of his audience, and his performance oscillated between him and his fans. Their familiarity with the lyrics appeared to surprise even this megastar whose audience at times seemed to drown out the Soca Divettes.

At the back of the theatre, 91-year-old Cyril Khamai momentarily dragged out a Scratcher from his bag and began performing so vigorously that he was noticeable from the front of the stage. Frail and unable to walk alone, he could hardly contain his excitement but stood up and beckoned to be escorted by co-author LCFS down the steps of the central aisle and then to the front of the stage. Rudder, aware of Khamai's intentions, met him near the front and escorted him to the front row. Amidst a flurry of waving national flags of Trinidad and Tobago's, Rudder took the microphone to cross-sections of his ecstatic fans and invited them to join him in parts of his songs. There was never a lull in his performance, the hallmark of a genius who like a pied piper led his troops on to the end of the evening. His scintillating rendition of 'High Mass' and vociferous chorus from the audience to close the evening drew in fervent applause for an encore. Even passers-by were drawn through curiosity to the main gates of the Opera House to witness the end of a thrilling evening that concluded this three-day programme of calypso, steelpan and Caribbean jazz.

Before his departure from London, Rudder visited some of the panyards as preparations for Panorama were near its finale. Rudder's journey from his base in Toronto to join this event, organised by the Carnival Village Trust and only in its second year, was facilitated by Sonny Blacks who over the years brought numerous celebrities to London. Sonny Blacks unexpectedly arranged for the authors to meet Mr Rudder at his hotel on 24<sup>th</sup> August, just two days before the start of NHC. This was an awe-inspiring experience and took the form of a discussion rather than an interview and is re-counted in this paper.

**Key Words:** Soca, Calypso, David Rudder, Opera Holland Park, Notting Hill Carnival, Cricket, Haiti, Trinidad

## Introduction

As part of the build-up to the return of Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) 2022 following the COVID-19 hiatus, some notable events involving mas, steelpan and calypso took place in the summer of 2022. Among these were: the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations that included the



Figure 1 Promotional flyer of Sonny Blacks’ Evening with King David Rudder’s concert at Opera Holland Park, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Steel Orchestra (14<sup>th</sup> May), the Platinum Jubilee Parade (5<sup>th</sup> June, Thomas et al., 2022), the Commonwealth Diaspora of the United Kingdom Reception at Buckingham Palace (9<sup>th</sup> June) and the current King Charles III and Camilla Queen Consort’s visit to the Tabernacle (13<sup>th</sup> July). With NHC set to return to the streets between 28 - 29<sup>th</sup> August, numerous events associated with carnival followed (Munro & Campbell, 2022). These included various fetes, blockoramas, concerts, street performances, Panorama and the return of the novel Opera Holland Park carnival arts concerts during the last week of August (Kensington & Chelsea Festival Newsletter, 2022). For the second year, calypso would supplant Opera in a programme that celebrated the culture and heritage of Carnival through the musical genres of calypso, jazz and steelpan by local artists. The event this year brought in its first international superstar, the



Figure 2. Aerial view of Opera Holland Park ‘surrounded by the beautiful formal gardens and wilded woodlands of Holland Park’ in one of central London’s most celebrated spaces (courtesy <https://operahollandpark.com>). This majestic tent would be transformed into an astonishing Calypso Tent on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022 to host the international megastar, David Rudder.

legendary David Rudder, prefixed as ‘King’ by his fans (Figure 1).

Opera Holland Park (Figure 2) boasts a spectacular canopied open-air auditorium that is the perfect place to enjoy critically acclaimed opera in the heart of London. Patrons of Opera Holland Park meet each summer, prior to theatrical events to share the venue’s ‘tailored drinks’ in quiet conversation around its secluded salubrious spaces. However, on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022, these coves would now be packed with vibrant, vocal calypso fans supercharged with excitement and expectation. Their call at 7.30pm to the start of the final night of this three-day extravaganza could not come too soon.

Journalist Stephen Spark covered the event for SocaNews, judiciously capturing the atmosphere, the repertoire, stagemanship, charisma and ecstatic reception for David Rudder as follows:

“Opera Holland Park’s big tent was crackling with the static electricity of anticipation. Saturday 20 August 2022 was a day many of us had been waiting for – the return to the UK of David Michael Rudder. From the first note, it was clear that Rudder was going to be well served by the Tabernacle Crew, which was basically the band familiar to London Calypso Tent regulars, but with Carnival Village Trust chief executive Matthew Phillip on drums and a couple of other changes. Backing vocals were courtesy of the wonderful Soca Divettes and while the imposing figure of Martin Jay, unmissable on stage in a colourful shirt, did the honours as MC.

So we were all set to go, as London Calypso Tent regular G String (Gerry Archer) launched into his set – **High Blood Pressure, In Me Zone** and **Trouble Again**. He was rather more than just the warm-up man, as he’s the current (2021) UK Calypso

Monarch (and Monarch for 2016 and 2020) and has his own following – one lady said the main reason she was coming to the show was to see G String rather than the main act! To judge from the audience reaction, many others in the house rated him too. Along with the rest of the UK calypsonians, you can catch him in his natural habitat at the Tabernacle on Friday 26 August.

Then, to rapturous applause, the man himself walked quietly on stage. For those of us who hadn’t seen David Rudder live for many years, time has left its imprint, but no matter: he commanded the vast Opera Holland Park space from the start as he began with **Rally Round the West Indies**. He soon decided that there was far too much space between him and the audience so he came right up to the front of the doughnut-shaped stage, sometimes venturing off it altogether to interact with the crowd, with one lady even kissing his hand. Another touching moment came when he acknowledged veteran panman Cyril ‘Scratcherman’ Khamai, bringing the mic down to catch the soft rhythm of the scratcher. Cyril’s eyes shone with delight (Figure 3).

After a long Covid-induced drought, the crowd was thirsting for the thrill of live performance from a big star – and no one was left unsatisfied. Rudder ran through much of his repertoire of the classic compositions that will outlive us all –

**Calypso Music, Bahia Girl, The Hammer** and the darkly humorous **Welcome to Trinidad**, his 2017 portrait of a place “where half de country mad”. **Trini to de Bone** got the red, white and black flags flying from the front row to the back of the circle, while **Dus in dey Face** and **Madness** turned the opera tent into a fete, all rules

about keeping the aisles clear forgotten, as even the staff were too busy dancing.

Of course, he wasn't going to be allowed to end on even such a high note as that great hymn to Carnival, **High Mas**. For an encore he wound down the sound to give us his slow, soulful, almost mystical song **Spirits**. The chorus "Ase ase, namaste, hallelujah – dance", had an appropriately hypnotic quality to end a magical and marvellous evening.

Rudder's charisma and the ecstatic reception he received has only one parallel in this reviewer's experience: that of Nelson Mandela, when he visited Brixton in 1996. That's a measure of David Rudder's unique position as the Caribbean's griot, the voice of its spirit and of its conscience." (Spark, 2022)

If you missed it, well, you'll just have to hope it's not too long before the Lyrics Man returns to our shores. When he does, you'd better waste no time booking your ticket

because that show will sell out in hours, I guarantee." (Spark, 2022).

This summary eloquently encapsulates Rudder's mastery of the stage and his talent to provide a real sense of cohesion and an understanding with his audience. He never allowed the momentum and rapport to uncouple as vividly captured by co-author LCFS and subsequently posted up by David Rudder on his Facebook page- see [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=1190207288221134&id=610640583](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1190207288221134&id=610640583)



Figure 3: David Rudder's command of the stage – interacting with 91-year-old veteran pannist Cyril Khamai playing a scratcher



Figure 4. Sonny Blacks' interview with Smokey Joe for the virtual NHC carnival of 2020. See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHRYC3flzDI&ab\\_channel=NottingHillCarnivalLtd](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHRYC3flzDI&ab_channel=NottingHillCarnivalLtd).

### **Carnival Culture at Opera Holland Park, Promoting such Events. Sonny Blacks**

While the spirit of this mythical evening lives on, the role of Sonny Blacks in facilitating this event should not go unmentioned. Notting Hill Carnival, the UK Carnival Community and the Trinidad and Tobago diaspora are privileged to have among their Trinbago diaspora, the veteran carnival arts promoter, Sonny Blacks (Figure 4). With some 50 years' experience, Sonny's monumental work goes back to the start of the career of the Mighty Sparrow, being the first person to put 'The Birdie' on stage. The song Jean & Dinah was first performed on one of Black's early shows. It was prudent of the organisers to involve Sonny Blacks in the Opera Holland Park odyssey. His experiences in promoting Caribbean artists such as Jimmy Cliff, Count Prince Miller, Bob Marley, Dixieland Steel Orchestra, Roy Cape Orchestra and calypsonians such as Sparrow, Explainer, Black Starlin, Denyse Plummer or David Rudder have done much to transform the musical culture of Britain. Like many of the patrons of the Opera Holland Park concert, the authors too thanked Sonny Blacks for this

extraordinary event and in our case the response led to us being able to meet David Rudder on 24<sup>th</sup> August, within just 4 hours of an invitation.

### **Conversations with David Rudder**

We (HNS and LMNS) met Sonny Blacks at 3.55pm in the lobby of the elegant Phoenix Hotel, set in London's exclusive Kensington Garden Square. We were ushered in by hotel staff and seated in a fairly secluded corner of the foyer but shared with a large and vociferous bunch of visitors enjoying the warm summer's day. Punctually at 4pm, Sonny Blacks called David Rudder in his hotel room and with little delay he joined us. We stood up to greet and shook hands and with a warm and friendly smile, he gestured us to our seats. Looking at HNS, his first comment was "I know you". I suggested he might be mistaking me for my late brother, Ken who lived in Toronto and was one of the pioneers of Toronto's Caribana that began in 1967. Ken was an active carnival designer, producing two to three mas bands annually and organising carnival shows, so it's likely they would have crossed each other's path. However, he insisted he saw me before and there was a period of silence while we all tried to figure out where this might have occurred. Laila suggested it might be the BBC's video of us playing pan with Cyril Khamai (scratcher) and calypsonian Alexander D Great on guitar to which he nodded approvingly, "yes that is it". Rudder would have seen us on our final day of the project on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at St Charles Hospital, Notting Hill when the BBC recorded our performance and also conducted interviews. This was part of the government's National Health Service campaign we proposed to reduce COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy (Shah et al., 2021).

His vivid recollection of this video and other related events made it clear from the onset that he is acutely astute, perceptive and knowledgeable about carnival arts globally and this was borne out during our conversations with him. However, he was very keen to learn more about activities in the UK as would be expected of any visiting inquisitive and shrewd calypsonian whose lyrics are topical.

Because this invitation came with such short notice and was anticipated to be just 10-15 minutes, a coherent interview appeared unlikely. Consequently, the dialogue that followed was arbitrary and took the form of interchanges that drifted in various directions, occasionally returning to points made earlier for extended comments or clarification.

Our initial request to Sonny Blacks was simply to say thanks and autograph one or two items for us. We had no pre-set questions and saw it solely as an opportunity to meet this legendary figure who has given so much to the world, to say ‘thanks’ and depart soon after. Co-author LMNS brought her tenor pan and sticks which she would use for Panorama in three days while HNS fetched an old Nostalgia Steelband flag that was used by the author under the leadership of Sterling Betancourt in the 1990s (Figure 5). But what followed was far more than that - it was an epic 90-minute sitting with this incredible, gifted and humble calypso prodigy.

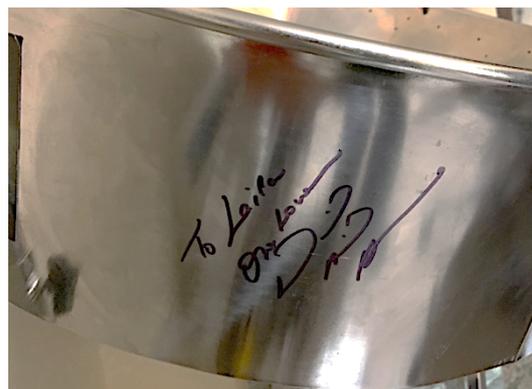


Figure 5. Co-author, LMNS's tenor pan autographed by David Rudder on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022

The discussion was initiated by reference to Rudder's calypso ‘*Engine Room*’, one of his enduring chefs-d'oeuvre but which was not sung at Opera Holland Park.

**HNS:** “It is over 30 years since I heard ‘*Engine Room*’ and up to now whenever I hear it, I feel a thrilling sense of personal pride and delight for your acknowledgment of the steelpan icon with the phrase ‘Bobby Mohammed with the Bell’ along with many others.” He looked curious and his immediate retort was why? He said he wasn't aware of why Bobby used a bell as his metronome during pan practice. I explained that Bobby's father, two brothers and sister were teachers at a Presbyterian school in Claxton Bay. As the school's head, his father not only rang the bell daily but brought it home every day as was the custom then. Bobby would have noted its euphonious quality and power to reach every member of his 100-player band and so experimented with it. During performances he held it aloft, generating maximum impact while simultaneously inspiring self-assurance and gusto to his players. This shrilling sound could be heard across San Fernando during the months of

panorama practice and at competitions and soon became one of his hallmarks.

**DR:** “Bobby was responsible for the establishment of the Big Band.” In the Panorama of 1965, he stunned everybody with his arrangement of ‘Melody Mas’ but he gave us something new by setting the standard for Panorama as we know it today.” Rudder was only 12 years then but by this time he said he was taking a very keen interest in pan and calypso and became a big fan and admirer of Bobby, his band, Guinness Cavaliers from the South. [Rudder’s father was an oilfield worker in La Brea, South Trinidad but he knew little of San Fernando or Cavaliers panyard]. The following year Bobby’s band was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> to Despers but he came back and won Panorama again in 1967 with Kitchener’s ‘67’.” His rendition of Highlights of the Opera Carmen that same year at Queen Hall, Port of Spain showed his versatility and musical acumen.

**HNS:** “Are you aware that soon after he suffered a mental breakdown?” He nodded. HNS continued “while he did have conventional treatment, he was a devout Presbyterian and placed strong reliance on his faith that his health would return, and it did later on, but by this time he lost his band. He was recognised by his peers for his monumental contribution to the development of pan and was very proud of your acknowledgement to him in ‘*Engine Room*.’ He sadly passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and a moving account of his life was narrated by his daughter, Michelle (<https://newsday.co.tt/2021/06/02/daughter-recalls-beautiful-soul-of-bobby-mohamed>).

Rudder commented that he was aware of Bobby’s spirituality and that he too was markedly influenced by religion. He was one of nine siblings but did not live at home

and grew up instead with his grandmother, a devout Baptist who baptised him accordingly. The faith, as practised in parts of Trinidad then, was often associated with the mysticism of Shango and a Shrine in his neighbourhood facilitated interaction. He was subsequently baptised as an Anglican by his mother and then as a Catholic for school. It is hardly surprising that many of his songs carry a strong spiritual undertone. [Shango is believed to have originated in Western Nigeria and West Africa as an integral part of the Yoruba religion and was brought to the Caribbean by African slaves. There is clear evidence of sanctity in many of Rudder’s songs]. Thus, it is not surprising that artists from various countries in Africa are among his favourite and influence his own style. These include singer, songwriter, musician, actor and politician Youssou N'Dour from Senegal, a renowned artist in Africa. Mory Kante, a Guinean vocalist and player of the kora harp who was widely known in Europe. His performances are vibrant and have clear parallels with Rudder’s music. Salif Keita from Mali is often referred to as the “Golden Voice of Africa”. His guttural sound and vocals are very distinctive and engaging. Seydou Koné (stage name Alpha Blondy) is an international reggae recording artist from the Ivory Coast and a particular favourite of Rudder. Like Rudder he began singing from his school days. Interestingly, Mory Kanté, Alpha Blondy and Youssou N'Dour incorporate aspects of Islamic music and chants into their work, analogous to Rudder’s ‘Crescent Moon’ in Hosay (Rough & Ready album). Rudder’s Johannesburg Woman (1990) is perhaps influenced by these artistes.

When asked how early he began seeing himself as an entertainer, he stated that he began singing and taking part in

competitions from about 9 years old. By the age of 11 he joined a band at school called The Solutions, then starting his career with the 'Ink Spots' on Boissiere Lane, Belmont. He launched his professional singing career as a back-up singer in Lord Kitchener's Calypso Revue. It is in this carnival tent where he earned his reputation as a back-up singer, supplementing his income through a job he held in the Accounting Department of the Public Transport Services Corporation.

Following an extended introduction in which we covered enormous ground, we began to focus more and talked about the concert and his association with London. Because his opening song at Opera Holland Park was '*Rally Round the West Indies*', we chose to start with cricket and asked:

**Cricket:**

**HNS:** "Are you a keen cricket fan yourself?"

**DR:** "Oh Yes [instantly] – I live and die with the West Indies" – and smiled "mostly die these days", referencing the West Indies poor performances in recent years.

**HNS:** "Isn't it tragic that we lost that great period of West Indian cricket when to use your phrase 'we ruled the cricket world?'"

**DR:** "There was a hunger at that time – with great individuals such as Worrell and Sobers. Society is now so shallow and hasty that crafts such as cricket, that took time to perfect, have gone and are no longer considered interesting." "**Rally** was a call to arms and always what people want to hear, but I wrote a couple of other songs on cricket" but he did not elaborate. [He was referring to his calypso 'Legacy' which pays tribute to some of the most outstanding names of West Indian cricket going back to the 1950s and even included the late Ramadin (Williamson, 2006)].

We reminisced about playing cricket as youths on every street, breaking a window and running away only to go to play somewhere else. Every Test match was sold out in those glorious days. But later on, as the old soldiers started retiring, the momentum began declining and cricket grounds were now sparse. We both recalled the test match of 1994 in Port of Spain.

**DR:** "I was there at the Oval when Curtly Ambrose produced his best bowling figures in a Test match and yet the ground was only half filled. He was unplayable." [Reference to Queen's Park Oval, Port of Spain when Ambrose took 5 wickets for 60 runs and 6 wickets for 24 runs in March 1994].

**Rudder's Calypsos - 'High Mas' and 'Trini 2 the Bone':**

**LMNS:** I grew up listening to your music and it has been with me all my life - apparently even before I was born, during my mum's pregnancy I used to kick vigorously in her tummy when '*High Mas*' was played. [Rudder interjected – "this was 1998." LMNS – "yes I was born on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1998.

[HNS interjected, "it was because we (Nostalgia Steelband) were learning to play '*High Mas*' under the tutorship of Sterling Betancourt for NHC, 30-31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, a month before Laila was born. It was a difficult tune to absorb as the phrasing and timing were key to perfecting it and it needed listening to repeatedly. The consolation was whenever Laila cried, all we had to do was play '*High Mas*' and it reassured her and crying immediately ceased." We all laughed and wondered if a calypso was ever composed for such a purpose. "We saw you performing at Toronto's Harbour Front and even then, as soon as '*High Mas*' was sung, Laila, now two years old and her first live concert,

kicked so vigorously, that she fell out of my arms on to the floor – but no tears, the music was too good”. After this interruption, Laila got back to her question to Rudder which was not on ‘*High Mas*’ but ‘*Trini 2 the Bone*’.

**LMNS:** “In your song ‘*Trini 2 the Bone*’, there are a few lines that resonate strongly with me as I often see my dad in this context in all the work he does. It’s the following:

... ‘There’s no place like home, some people say

Though some have to leave to make their way

But in their hearts I know their destiny  
To come home and big up de country ..... ‘

**DR:** “First of all, this is one of the few songs that I didn’t write, it was actually written by a guy called Ian Wilshire, but I had good input into it without taking anything away from him. But coming back to the idea of coming back home to contribute is the dream of all our people, whether its Toronto, New York or London, Trinis I meet there tell me they want to come home and do something – give something back and that feeling is very strong in my experience.”

**LMNS:** “I can understand that as I see dad and his friends talk about Trinidad all the time and give up so much of their time to promote and keep its culture alive – and I think that is important for my generation. Calypso is played in our home daily and our pans are in our living room along with our piano, guitars and saxophone, and not in a garden shed as often seen in homes. It has become such an integral part of my life that when I left home to go to university, my pan and a six-foot Trini flag were among my first pieces of luggage to be unpacked in my

room. People like you inspire us so much. You are so passionate about Trinidad, and it is reflected in your music, so how do you feel about living abroad?”

**DR:** “Good question - yes, I live in Toronto, but I spend about six months in Trinidad, and I am always there. For example, when I leave here tomorrow, I fly back to Toronto and the next day I fly to Trinidad for a show. So, I am there often and stay long periods - when Trinidad gets a little too crazy,” he smiled, “I just fly back to Toronto. It works for me.”

### **Toronto, Rudder’s later home and Carnival:**

**HNS:** “Talking about Toronto, how do you feel about the current state of Toronto Carnival (formerly Caribana)?”

**DR:** “I can’t comment too much on Toronto Carnival as I haven’t been to it for several years as it falls on the same weekend as the Antigua Carnival – and in the old days of Toronto Carnival, if you get paid you were lucky whereas in Antigua your business is sure.” And with a smirky smile continued “so, I have been going to Antigua for the last ten years.”

[A long discussion ensued on the history and development of Caribana and the involvement of both our families. Caribana which began in 1967, rapidly grew in stature and was soon billed as North America’s largest street festival as immortalised in the Mighty Sparrow’s ‘Toronto Mas’. For many Caribbean artists, it provided an outlet for performances, yet like most Caribbean carnivals in the diaspora, artists are either poorly or unpaid, thus the sustainability of these events rest heavily on the goodwill of the grassroots and their love for their culture. HNS continued – when we joined the family in Toronto in the 1970s, carnival

used to start in downtown Toronto. It then went via its main street, Yonge Street and took the entire day for the parade which ended near the lakes, following a 3.5 km route along Lakeshore Boulevard. Today it has lost the city centre and much of its regular patrons are losing interest. It was one of the reasons that we organised a conference at York University, Toronto between 26 -28<sup>th</sup> September 2019 titled ‘Calypso, Carnival and Steelband, Expressive Cultures of the Caribbean Diaspora.’ One the main aims of that meeting was to re-energise Toronto’s Carnival and attempt to facilitate collaboration with the organisers of Notting Hill Carnival. The COVID-19 pandemic then dismembered all initial plans.

We were aware that events such as Rudder’s concerts at Toronto’s Harbour Front were free for the public and asked him how he felt about this.

**DR:** “Although these concerts were free to the public, I was paid but the problem then arose when I wanted to organise my own shows, the public was not prepared to pay because they said, ‘we could see you for free, so why pay?’”

**LMNS:** Do you feel artistes such as yourself get the recognition they deserve in Toronto?”

**DR:** “I don’t think so - but the reasons are complex. It’s a place where its migrant residents are still searching for their identity and trying to define who they are. It is an immensely diverse community and this search trickles down to each group who then have their own agenda. My impression is that outside of carnival, Trinis sort of hide.”

**HNS:** “One of the suggestions by the UK participants at the York University 2019 conference was that Toronto should try to follow along the lines of Notting Hill

Carnival and establish a permanent base such as London’s ‘Carnival Village’ which in this case boast two centres, The Tabernacle and Yaa Centre (abbreviation for Yaa Asantewaa). This gives the community a focal point and visual presence to build upon.”

**DR:** “I have been to both your centres and have seen Mangrove’s rehearsals at the Tabernacle during the last two days and I was very impressed by how they function and bring the community together.”

[A protracted discussion followed on the history and development the Tabernacle and the Yaa Centre and their current function in establishing infrastructure and serving the community in carnival arts. It was suggested that similar ideas may help Toronto (where Rudder is domiciled) and provide support for example for a Toronto Calypso Tent which over the decades remains without a permanent home yet produces such great calypsonians. The organisers, OCPA (Organization of Calypso Performing Artistes) need to find a venue each year.

In this context, we returned to the topic of a Calypso Tent.

### **Calypso Tent and the Future**

**LMNS:** “From very small, I joined my family to go to the Calypso Tent before carnival [first at the Yaa Centre and now at the Tabernacle] but I rarely see people my own age. And now even the adults are not supporting the Tent as they did years ago when seats were rapidly sold out. Do you think that this is the end of an era and that new approaches such as stand-alone concerts for example as Opera Holland Park should be pursued to retain interest in the artform?”

**DR:** “Yes, I think this has to be looked at as this was the place where people came to tell

their stories - but my feeling is that the Tent is dying. For this reason, I decided to make my Facebook page my Calypso Tent and use it as such for a wide range of subjects. In the Trinidad Calypso Tents, I feel there is too much lament because of what is going on in society and that can't be helped. But the Tent was also a place where people came out to have good fun also and that is missing now. That is what I tried to say in 'Welcome to Trinidad' - we have the Goods and 'Bards' because of what is going on in society in 2017 when this song was released. The calypsonian's job is to cover all stories i.e. the good ones and the bad ones" (Trinidad Guardian, 2017)

**LMNS:** "In a way it seems to have a similar message to 'Trini 2 the Bone', is that right?"

**DR:** "I did that song that night (20<sup>th</sup> August) - *Trini 2 the Bone* [we yelled out as he said it] - and that reflected the state of the nation 13 years earlier and yes, the message is the similar, but the times are different."

### Current Calypsos

**LMNS:** "So do you feel satisfied with the content and quality of calypsos now?"

**DR:** "Yes, except that as I said before there is too much lament – sure it must reflect how society is moving but where is the laugh? - that is needed also! [HNS - interjects such as the great calypsos of Spoiler, Melody and others – he nodded approvingly].

**HNS:** "How do you see modern day Soca in keeping the momentum of steelpan going as Kitchener did for pan during his heyday?"

There was no simple answer and discussions followed among us about melody in calypso and the challenges that this brings for an arranger of a panorama piece. When Kitchener returned to Trinidad

in late 1962 (for the first Panorama of 1963) and the decades that followed, early arrangers such as Tony Williams, Bobby Mohammed or even up to Jit Samaroo's period, had so much material to experiment with that parts of a calypso could be omitted without affecting the soul and dynamics of the tune. More recently, and with exception, Soca tunes have so little melody that arrangers need to significantly expand the core composition of its test piece. Paradoxically, this could be a valuable tool for steelbands as it stretches the inherent skills of an arranger and intensifies competition - but in general, the song itself becomes more short-lived. Rudder felt that the youths have less support in their lives today, both from society and family and that leads to individuals being less creative. However, he acknowledges that in other ways they have more opportunities through electronic communication, new pyro-technologies in music and production.

**HNS:** "But do they have the ambience around them that helps shape their lives?"

**DR:** "Young people have no melody in their lives – and if that is what is coming at you, this will be reflected in your music." He was not in the least critical about current carnival music as "this will continually be adjusted to reflect various periods of change in society." He continued "Art does not lie, what comes out is real." Rudder was impressed with some of the youngsters, and several were listed which included Kes, (Kees Dieffenthaler), Voice (Aaron St. Louis), Bunji Garlin (Ian Antonio Alvarez), the late Blaxx (Dexter Stewart), Nailah Blackman ... and others who were here with him in London such as Farmer Nappy and Nadia Batson.

**HNS:** "How much does the commercial aspect of calypso drive it?" [We were

thinking here about his 1992 calypso ‘Feeding Frenzy’ but did not reference it].

**DR:** “The market often dictates the economics, but I think the calypso culture should be seen differently – I don’t think we should be worrying about trying to get on the billboard – a calypsonian should write a song about what he feels and forget about the charts etc as pop singers are obsessed with. The community that listens to calypso say in Brooklyn or Notting Hill has changed – it is not the same audience – these areas have become gentrified and therefore perceive calypso differently. Also, artists are no longer confined to one audience and one space - many calypsonians travel, doing an-all-year-circuit at different carnivals in the same way that pannists travel to play in different steelbands for panorama.”

[This predictably triggered a discussion of how this all started and inevitably the discussion reverted to TASPO and their 1951 journey to the Festival of Britain that opened up steelpan to the world. TASPO’s trip was such an epic journey that LMNS recently suggested that the day the band departed from Port of Spain, **6<sup>th</sup> July 1951** should be made a public holiday designated “**TASPO Day**” (Shah, 2020). Rudder nodded approvingly and the discussion moved to pan and prompted the next question].

### **Influencing Factors and Composition**

**LMNS:** “Were you greatly influenced by steelpan while growing up – did you join a steelband?”

**DR:** “No - I absorbed everything around me - I was greatly influenced by the music around me in Belmont, [Post of Spain] where nearly every youth aspired to a career as an entertainer. I started singing calypso at 9 years - but I grew up with Sparrow and Kitchener’s records. Next door to me was

Citygate Steelband, over the fence Dixieland, Sunland, Fortunates, Casa Blanca - so I was surrounded by pan. Sometimes Sparrow would drop by - he was going out with a local girl called Janet Francis and we used to all run out to catch a glimpse of Sparrow when he came to take her out. Above the yard was a Shango Shrine then Ardleigh Yard had a Shrine where they practised another type of African faith by locals who originally came from Grenada. They were brought in as labourers to work in the field. So, I grew up in a rich cultural environment that had all the elements of carnival. I was more interested in narrating stories rather than playing. I wrote a song about this area, my home -Belmont.”

**LMNS:** “How do you write a calypso – do you get the melody first as most pop stars, or do you go for the lyrics first?”

**DR:** “I always write first - I always find writing comes easily. I have been writing all my life from early school days I wrote stories and songs. At school I excelled in English and History – when it came to Maths and Science, I did not have the same passion. But I never felt left back - I knew the answers even before working out a problem and my teachers would often say how did you know the answer?”

**LMNS:** “Your lyrics are so powerful - you are more like a Poet!”

**DR:** “I didn’t study poetry, so I have no training - it is simply the way I write, I put down what comes in my head and get my musicians to work with me.”

**LMNS:** “So how long does it take you to write a song - days, weeks or months? Do you transfer the song to an instrument to help you build up the melody?”

**DR:** “The songs that are good often come out of my head in a few minutes – no, not days nor weeks. Sometimes I will go to the

studio with one song on my mind, but I am always reading, looking around, listening to the news, reading billboards or adverts and by the time I get there, it might pour out of my head in a rush, and I could even end up with several tunes. I don't control it; I don't know how it will work when I start. The longest it takes me is about five to ten minutes. I feel I am lucky and that it's just a gift I have." [we screamed out in delight because for the first time in this discussion, this humble virtuoso acknowledged he had a gift]. He continued "No, I don't play an instrument, I know a few chords on the guitar but I don't really play an instrument. Instead, I rely on my musicians - I gather a few of them and just sing out what is coming out of my head and then it begins to take shape as I go along. I just say to them this is what I am hearing, and they work in harmony with me to create what eventually emerges."

[Composing is one of life's mysteries and is done differently by different artists and we strayed away into a conversation on this, each of us narrating what we have experienced. From youth, HNS has always been impressed by how inspired steelpan arrangers are. For example, seeing Bobby Mohammed for Guinness Cavalier, Sterling Betancourt or more recently Ishmael "Luxy" Zackeralli for Nostalgia at work; spontaneously adding new parts to a calypso during practice - as an introduction or ending or in the body of the tune. These adjuncts are so creative, unique, and instinctive and sometimes so elaborate that by it itself could be the basis of a new song. We again went back to Kitchener and his interviews about writing calypsos. We related his interview about him composing 'Pan in A Minor'. We could not recall the source but remembered him saying he wanted to challenge steelbands more and

decided "to move to the minor key". Kitchie said 'Pan in A Minor' took him months to perfect. But all these people we talked about for several minutes, were accomplished musicians who said they would soon forget what came out of their head if it were not written down immediately. What was enigmatic about Rudder, is that his compositions appear to flow naturally and very quickly that he did not need a musical instrument to consolidate it. The conversation reverted to London and reflection on his concert at Opera Holland Park].

### **Views on London**

**HNS:** "What sort of vibes do you pick up in London - how do you feel about coming here?"

**DR:** "London is one of my favourite places. I used to come here regularly and play at Town & Country and always received a warm welcome. In fact, what happened on Saturday night [reference to Opera Holland Park] was what used to happen in the early days when I came to London. I used to come here every month as I was assigned to London Records and came here to promote my music. The year I did Madness (1987), I went on the BBC, and all went well until somebody at the BBC heard the word 'weed' in the song, thought it was inappropriate and so the show was pulled. That was my first encounter with the British system. From then my visits dropped off, from one then every two years before it fizzled out. In 1986 I came to promote a new album; they got me on to the well-known Terry Wogan show. The producers saw it as a great opportunity to break out, but London Records did not promote the show and that appeared in the Black Press and the controversy led to its demise. There are things that make a success or failure."

[The conversation drifted to copyright, PRS (Performing Rights Society) and PPL (Phonographic Performance Limited) as he became aware that issues of this nature were being discussed widely in London in connection with Notting Hill Carnival and the use of music in public spaces. He was very knowledgeable about the topic as it was highly relevant to his career as a composer and international performer.



Figure 6.1 National flag of Ghana that bears a Black Star that symbolises emancipation of Africa. It was hoisted at Ghana's Independence Day 6<sup>th</sup> March 1957. This watershed moment was celebrated by Lord Kitchener in his commemorative song and 'anthem' 'Birth of Ghana' that highlights the significance of the Black Star.

These management companies issue licences and collect royalties for songwriters, composers and music publishers for the use of musical compositions and lyrics. He saw this as an important aspect to consider for Notting Hill Carnival and other carnivals. Discussions came up about the use of photographs and archived material of Caribbean artists that should be held by the relevant countries but often belong to large overseas corporations to which costly copyright fees are demanded for their use. The use of images of Lord Kitchener are good examples that are mostly held outside the Caribbean. It was pleasing to learn that Rudder has held on to most of his material].

### Pan on our Flag

**HNS:** While cricket is not going great for us as we discussed earlier, our sprinters such as Jereem Richards and cyclist Nicholas Paul excelled at the recent Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, UK [28<sup>th</sup> July and 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022]. They became the pride of the nation and were celebrated by the entire population in



Figure 6.2 National flag of Trinidad & Tobago at Independence 31<sup>st</sup> August 1962 - designed by Carlisle Chang. The red symbolises fire (the sun, representing courage), black - the earth (representing dedication) and white - water (representing purity and equality). Pan represents all these qualities and more and should be inserted.

Trinidad & Tobago. But what gripped the nation even more fervently was the solemn request by Jereem Richards to have the steelpan version of the National Anthem played at his medal ceremony. This stirred up immense emotions in Trinidad and Tobago and its diaspora and in London, such that the steelpan version is now being used on every occasion that calls for the Trinidad & Tobago National Anthem to be played. This prompted Pan Trinbago's President Beverley Ramsey-Moore to reiterate her call that the steelpan should be proclaimed legally as the country's musical instrument (TTT News, 2022). The Trinbago diaspora in London are shocked that this still has not been officially declared

and fully support its compatriots but wish to go one step further. At the Trinidad and Tobago's Diamond Jubilee Celebration anniversary (held 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022), speaker HNS made a public appeal to the Trinidad and Tobago's new High Commissioner in London, His Excellency Vishnu Dhanpaul to support our call to '**Put a Pan on Our Flag**' and put this question directly to David Rudder.

**DR:** "I am in full agreement with this and believe it should have been done at Independence." But he goes on "I am very sceptical because you can see, we have not even succeeded in getting the government to support Pan Trinbago's proclamation to endorse pan as the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago. Many will support this notion to add a pan to our flag but many others will object for reasons I don't know. I think that society is too shallow to see the symbolic depth of Pan and the pride it holds for the nation.

**HNS:** Why do you think there will be objections? As Kitchie pointed out, Ghana inserted a Black Star on their flag as a symbol of African emancipation and many nations carry such poignant motifs, so why would Trinidad and Tobago find this a difficult decision? [see Figures 6.1,6.2].

See Link: Birth of Ghana by Lord Kitchener in 1957.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=057BmLQ9MfU&ab\\_channel=LordKitchener-Topic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=057BmLQ9MfU&ab_channel=LordKitchener-Topic)

**LMNS:** "I totally agree - pan is symbolic of our dedication, innovation, valour, struggle, emancipation, imagination, scientific innovation and experimentation, authenticity, undisputed patience, creativeness, social cohesion, and class unity - it is the thread that links our people and all its art forms and diasporic

communities and above all its sheer joy of music like no other instrument can impart to the soul. Trinidad and Tobago should embrace this opportunity."

There was a lull in the discussion at which point LMNS presented David Rudder with a copy of Volume 5 of the International Journal of Carnival Arts (IJCA), the most recent volume of this biannual journal devoted solely to Carnival Arts. He skimmed through the pages and his eyes were caught on the paper "**Trinidad & Tobago's Carnival Arts Illuminates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations**" (Thomas et al. 2022). Lengthy discussions followed not only on the Platinum Jubilee celebrations and the inclusion of calypso, mas and pan in the Jubilee parade at Buckingham Palace but also on IJCA and the steelpan/carnival arts conferences that led to the launch of the journal. He indicated his interest to help promote IJCA and will join the editorial board at a convenient point. His comment was a big thanks for meeting him and stated: "I did not realise so much work was going on in London, please keep me informed." He was excited at the prospect of the next conference scheduled for December 2023 in West Africa (Sierra Leon and Ghana) and also indicated his willingness to participate. We briefly discussed the last conference (9<sup>th</sup>) in Oxford (1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2022) which was intended to precede the Oxford (Cowley Road) carnival on 3<sup>rd</sup> July this year (see summary this volume). Unfortunately, the carnival was cancelled for 2022 but we explained our intention to try to juxtapose conferences where possible to local carnivals or similar festivals and is one of our aims for Sierra Leone and Ghana, and in 2024 when our 11<sup>th</sup> conference is scheduled to take place in Trinidad.

We were well aware that after 90 minutes we barely scratched the surface of the profound and scholarly work of Rudder's anthologies. Even to get into one of his albums such as his 1990 alone would take days to deconvolute because each of Rudder's song grabs a period in history which he magically transcribes and does what calypso inherently does so well – reinterprets it for the masses. There is hardly an event going on in the world which this enigmatic genius can't speak about with authority and therefore retranslate it into a calypso elegy. For example, so much was going on in 1989/90 as the world cried out for freedom, the cornerstone of so much of Rudder's songs and he again encapsulates it with brevity and scholarly stanzas in an album simply called '1990'. The Berlin wall was being torn down, millions of Chinese were taking to the streets and converging at Tiananmen Square calling for reforms while Nelson Mandela was released on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1990 after 27 years in Victor Verster prison. Rudder takes calypso/soca out of its home in the Shanty towns of Trinidad to its global ascendancy [e.g. 'Calypso Rising'] and is perhaps the only singer internationally to have translated such poignant life changing events into strong positive messages as in his song 'Victory is Certain'.

### Discussion

The work of David Rudder, spanning some 40 years, has been enormously venerated by his peers and his considerable global fan base and academia. In 2015, UWI Chancellor Sir George Alleyne and Vice-Chancellor Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, on behalf of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, conveyed upon him the distinguished title of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) (Figure 7). UWI singled out Rudder classics such as '*Ganges meets the Nile*',



Figure 7. Honorary Graduate David Rudder receiving his Honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt) at UWI Graduation on 24 October 2015. (from UWI website)

'*Hosay*', '*The Power of the Glory*', '*High Mas*' for their impact in further inculcating all facets of the country's social fabric into song saying that he more than any other local artiste has been recognised internationally for his integration and capture of the essence of Trinidad and Tobago's multicultural society through his music. While this is merely a fraction of what Rudder has achieved, this overdue award was widely reported and enthusiastically acknowledged by the media while Rudder too was touched that his music was reaching such depth in society and not "just floating in the wind." (CNW, 2015). More recently, he became part of a very small and distinguished group who received the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC) Award in July 2022. This award is given to "Caribbean nationals whose legacy in the economic, political, social and cultural metamorphoses of Caribbean society is phenomenal." (Loop News, 2022).

There are numerous biographies of David Rudder and while factual, many don't do justice to his incredible persona (see examples; Cuffy, 2016; Wikipedia <http://caribbean.halloffame.tripod.com/Da>

[vid\\_Rudder.html;https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Rudder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Rudder), Snowden, 1992). In an interview in 1994, Debbie Jacob (CaribbeanBeat, 1994) described David Rudder as “the first of a new generation of calypsonian ... opening up a whole new way to write, sing, feel and see the thing. His music transcends culture, race, and class. You don’t have to be from Trinidad to feel the power and the integrity in it”. She cited academics such as Gordon Rohlehr (UWI) who saluted Rudder’s poetic lyrics and music broadcaster Alvin Daniel who stated that “Rudder, like Sparrow, Shorty and Shadow, was responsible for translating the calypso, and its new upbeat form soca, into the musical and lyrical language of a whole new generation.” We would add to that list, Lord Kitchener and the Mighty Terror. Although deeply rooted in Trinidad and Tobago, his songs span the Caribbean islands which he refers to “tiny theatres of conflict and confusion,” (*Rally 'Round the West Indies'*).

Just like the songs/lyrics of Woody Guthrie inspired Bob Dylan who subsequently won the Noble prize for literature in 2016 “for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition,” Rudder elevated the poetic expressions of the very people who inspired him such as Sparrow. Kitchener, Spoiler and others, taking his songs to new heights with savoir-faire. Dylan stated that “**The highest purpose of art is to inspire**’ and Rudder lives by that mantra, continuing to write, perform and inspire hundreds of thousands some 36 years after his meteoric rise with his two big hits, ‘*The Hammer*’ and ‘*Bahia Girl*’ in 1986 when he was crowned Young King, Calypso Monarch, Road March King and wrote the winning Panorama tune. He followed up a year later with his best-selling album to date, ‘*Haiti*’ which

included the title track, which reignites a forgotten period of incredible history and gallantry of the island led by the revolutionary, Toussaint (see below). It also includes ‘*Engine Room*’, [which opened our conversation with Rudder see above] that crystallises the energy of the iron in a steelband, and “*Rally 'Round the West Indies*” often described as the anthem of West Indies cricket (Martin, 2020, see below). The aspiration of his fans is to now see that the depth and vision of his songs gain the approbation of literary scholars of the Caribbean and beyond. His recent OCC award (above) places him among distinguished and internationally acclaimed individuals such as poet and playwright, and 1992 Nobel Prize recipient for literature, Professor Derek Walcott (Loop News, 2022)].

### The Cricket Chronicle:

His love of cricket is infectious and like Kitchener his ability to rally players and supporters in the depth of despair with his music is akin to a military band calling upon on its troops to battle (Figure 8). So powerful is that call, that like C.L.R. James, his appeal appears in the refrain, ‘*this thing goes beyond the boundary*’ (James, 2013). Cricket is not just a game as they both

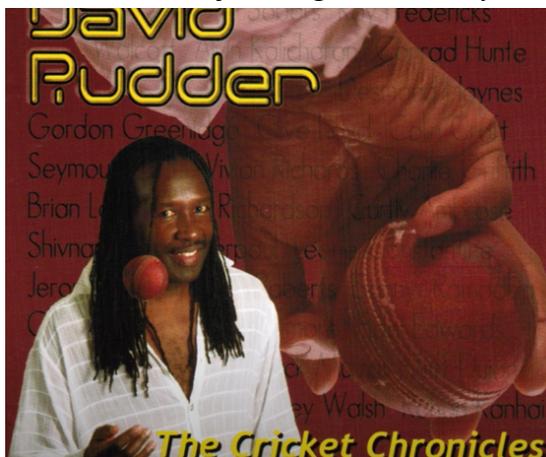


Figure 8. David Rudder’s ‘The Cricket Chronicle.

agree; it evokes a pan-Caribbean spirit for the West Indies, one of aspiration, conviction and courage to express the emerging confidence and stature of these tiny islands as they begin to ascend and challenge the mother country at their own game. Cricket runs deep into the culture and education of the English fee-paying public-school lad and dates back to the late 16th century (Bowen, 1970). Thus, when the West Indies played England in its own backyard at Lords in 1950, both Kitchener and Beginner, who were then domiciled in Britain, went to the grounds to oversee their budding troops in combat. When victory came, it was so preposterous but blissful that Kitchener led his devotees on a two-mile carnival parade to London's iconic Piccadilly Circus (Saunders et al. 2022). David Rudder said he was in awe of the ground-breaking work of Lord Kitchener and said "I wrote a song about 3 or 4 years ago about this period - people coming here in the 1940s and their efforts. It is called the "Windrushers" and should be released in the next couple of months." Rudder witnessed his cricket at home during the heyday of Captain Clive Lloyd and later Vivian Richards during the period when the West Indies legendary quartet of fast bowlers brought fresh impetus to the game (Frindall, 1995). No longer were their team competing on a level playing field, but instead from one of superiority, pride and admiration. Rudder's songs appeal to the younger players at home to come forward as '*Some of the old generals have retired and gone - And the runs don't come by as they did before.*' He is there on the ground with West Indian supporters luring them on. Like all current W.I. cricket enthusiasts, he is disappointed with the state of West Indies cricket, but he accepts that everything has

its ups and downs and W.I. cricket has been on the decline for a while now.

Added to this, the early passing of 'my brother' Malcolm Marshall on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1999 at age 41 after a battle with cancer stirred the deepest sentiment in him and even today speaking about this legendary cricketer noticeable stirred his emotions. Marshall is still regarded as one of the most accomplished fast bowlers of modern Test cricket. We commented on his tribute to Marshall as one of the most moving accolades we have heard – '*The spirit and de melody that sending they soul to the boundary.*' He smiled and immediately said "it's called '**Smiling Eyes of Steel**' but added "I have written other cricket songs." [perhaps referring to Legacy in which he listed many of the great W.I. cricketers]. We continued with '*Smiling Eyes of Steel*' emphasising that we found it one of the most emotional songs anywhere in the history of music and we were astonished at its intensity, packing so much into so few words. Often such music is written in a minor key to enhance its sensitivity, astonishingly, Rudder pitches this poignant ode in the key of C and creates both joy and melancholy. The harmony stretches beyond calypso and is marked by solid rhythms, emotion, elaborate emotive refrains, incorporating elements of spirituals, blues, and jazz - like a gospel song written as a eulogy for Marshall's send-off ['gospelypso' as sometime designated locally]. Some of the verses below lucidly illustrate this but needs its accompanying music to truly appreciate it:

**Smiling Eyes of Steel'**

*"Farewell Mighty Warrior  
Thanks for the Memory  
Thanks for the Joy*

*Who could have ever thought that a **Ball  
of Leather**, could move a people so  
Who could have dream, that a piece of  
**Willow could make emotions flow***

*Farewell, God Speed My Brother  
Thanks for the Rapture, Thanks for the Joy  
(you will always be we boy)*

*You're descended from a line of Kings  
Men of Speed and Feel  
With your smile that hides  
The Pending Thunder  
Smiling Eyes of Steel ...."*

Being able to discuss 'Smiling Eyes of Steel' in such depth with Rudder [while hearing in our heads the powerful melody] was one of the highlights of our meeting him and it became a launchpad into the gravity of his music.

Rudder is such a huge international artiste, and its often stated that he does not associate much with other calypsonians. We saw no evidence of this - even while we were him, he was speaking by phone to some of the calypsonians who were in London to perform for NHC and events such as Panorama. His songs bear testimony to this, paying tribute to his fellow artists and pioneers such as the Roaring Lion, Lord Executor, Lord Invader, Lord Kitchener, Lord Beginner, Mighty Terror, Mighty Sparrow and unsung heroes who inspired him in his native Trinidad. This is elegantly illustrated in one Verse 3 of his classic piece 'Calypso Music'

**Calypso Music**

Verse 3

*"I can still hear **Lion** roar  
Through Greenwich village  
While **Executor** kills them dead at the  
Ribbon Blue  
**Lord Invader** conquers Berlin but their  
hearts this time  
And Lord **Kitchener** make it, Ole London  
feel so new  
**Beginner** and **Terror** too  
**Fitzroy Coleman** fingers dancing on the  
fret  
And when you think that he through  
**He ain't start nothing yet**  
Carnegie Hall graced by the presence of  
**Sparrow**  
And when Slinger done with they tail  
Hear them shouting 'don't go!  
Sparrow, 'don't go!  
Why? .."*

Despite the huge international recognition of the self-taught guitarist Fitzroy Coleman, he remained virtually unknown in Trinidad. Rudder's tribute in just three lines of verse 3 is profound and for those who hitherto were ignorant of his flair, Rudder brings Coleman to the forefront of the music world. Coleman came to London ahead of the Windrush in 1945 as part of the 'Caribbean All Stars Band' and performed with Lord Kitchener and Roaring Lion. He was a regular fixture on the BBC, accompanying international artists such as Tony Bennett and Eartha Kitt and was held in very high esteem by celebrated artistes around the world. Two of the most distinguished classical guitarists in the world, John Williams and Julian Bream considered Coleman "the greatest chord player of all time." (Mendes-Franco, 2016). Like Kitchener and Terror, he returned to Trinidad in the 1960s and although

recognised by the Jazz Alliance of Trinidad and Tobago in 2013, “he was very much an unsung hero in the land of his birth” (Mendes-Franco, 2016). Rudder again acted as his vanguard when news of the death of Coleman was announced with the following post on his Facebook:

*“Fitzie’s gone boy. We wasted his brilliance. We only entered his library now and then. What a people eh! For people like him, let’s hope that there really is an afterlife so that his fingers can dance across the fretboard again. RIP boss.”*

For us, one of Rudder’s most poignant compositions is ‘Haiti’ [‘I am Sorry’] which was not performed at his Opera Holland Park concert. We did not question this but had hope to discuss this song with him but ran out of time. ‘Haiti’ is yet another example of his scholarly genius as a poet and historian. It was recorded as early as 1988, just two years into his solo career was launched and indicates the extent to which Rudder had already perfected his craft. When History is taught in schools in Trinidad and Tobago and perhaps in all the English-speaking Caribbean, no mention is made of Haiti and the gallant effort to throw off the shackles of slavery under General François-Dominique Toussaint. This extraordinary slave led his courageous warriors in their fight for Haitian independence but the repercussions by the superior forces of a combined Empire were excruciating. Volumes are written on this period by distinguished authors such as C.L.R. James’s “Black Jacobins”. James himself who passed away on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1989, said at one of his lectures in London, if you want to understand the history of Haiti during Toussaint’s time, don’t worry to read my book, just listen to David Rudder’s calypso. [James said the same about the short-lived

West Indian Federation and its breakup - again suggesting to the audience they listen to Sparrow’s 1959 calypso ‘Federation’ “who in four verses gives a better account than I did in a whole book.”]

Rudder as an educator is meticulous with his lyrics and like most calypsonians, his statements may be lucid while at other times he uses double entendre to immerse powerful political commentary. His song ‘Haiti’ contains both using the chorus also to enhance his narrative. [This song is sometimes mistakenly associated with Haiti’s devastating earthquake of 2010 but was released in 1988]. This song is so prodigious that all three verses are reproduced herein:

### **Haiti I Am Sorry**

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOBHxgcxu4A>]

#### **Verse 1**

*Toussaint was a mighty man  
And to make matters worse he was black  
Black and back in the days  
When black men knew their place was in  
the back,  
But this rebel he walked through  
Napoleon,  
Who thought it wasn’t very nice,  
And so today, my brothers in Haiti  
They still pay the price*

#### **Chorus**

*Haiti I am sorry  
We misunderstood you  
One day we’ll turn our heads  
And look inside you.  
Haiti I am sorry,  
Haiti I am sorry  
One day well turn our heads and  
Restore your glory.*

#### **Verse 2**

*Many hands reached out to St. Georges*

*And are still reaching out!*  
*To those frightened foolish men of*  
*Pretoria*  
*We still scream and shout*  
*We came together in song*  
*To steady the horn, of Africa,*  
*But de papa Lord come and the baby Lord*  
*go*  
*And still, we don't seem to care*  
*No, noo*

### Verse 3

*When there is anguish in Port Au Prince*  
*It's still Africa crying,*  
*We're outing fires in faraway places*  
*When our neighbours are just burning*  
*They say, the middle passage is gone*  
*So how come overcrowded boats still*  
*haunt our lives*  
*I refuse to believe that we good people*  
*Would forever turn our hearts*  
*And our eyes, away.*

As early as 1988, Weinstein had already foreseen the magnitude of Rudder's pan-Caribbean spirit and depth of his songs. He drew heavily on the work of the eminent black Martinican poet, playwright, and politician, **Aimé Césaire** and John Agard, an Afro-Guyanese playwright, poet and children's writer, domiciled in Britain to critique the work of David Rudder, then at the genesis of his career. Weinstein (1988) states "Much as the literary artists Agard and Césaire used their experiences living in Europe as a means to delve more deeply into the nature of their Caribbean identities, so Rudder will do the same using concerts in New York clubs and the latest American instrumental and studio wizardry. What is astonishing is that a popular Caribbean singer so concerned with the nature of Caribbean experience has won such a

widespread following outside the Caribbean world." His analysis of Rudder's 'Haiti' is remarkable and daring and writes "Rudder comments upon the political turmoil in contemporary Haiti by looking back to the days of Toussaint, offering the Black leader a tribute very much in the spirit of Aimé Césaire in Notebook of a Return to the Native Land. In the most renowned poem of the Negritude movement, Césaire identifies with the passionate commitment of Toussaint ..." Rudder follows Césaire's identification and translates the image so that it resonates to listeners in the Eighties." Continuing his analysis of 'Haiti', Weinstein declares: "Thus far in the song Rudder is building upon the pan-Caribbean spirit that poets like Césaire established in their books nearly a half century ago. What is shockingly new to my ears in Rudder's work occurs in the chorus" (above).

Weinstein (2006) then makes the profound statement: **Not only can I not think of any calypsonian who makes this move of becoming one Caribbean mouth-piece of the masses apologizing to another Caribbean nation, but I cannot think of any literary parallels."**

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### Acknowledgement

Our thanks to Mr Sonny Blacks for arranging this interview at very short notice with David Rudder. We are also indebted to Mr Rudder for giving up so much of his precious time to talk to us and autograph several carnival items. Our thanks to the Carnival Village for bringing him, and Opera Holland Park for affording this opportunity.

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## ‘De power of De Carnival Jumbie’: Spirituality in Trinidad Carnival

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### Abstract

This study explores the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival and how participants experience spirituality. The study takes a phenomenological approach to understand the participants' ideographic experiences. Carnival's components are classified as performing arts. Data for this study was gathered through semi-structured interviews with Carnival participants using a qualitative research approach. The researcher used snowball sampling and attended four Carnival events. Following a review of the findings, thematic analysis was used to identify significant themes within the responses, and participant quotations were used to back up the results. The findings describe how experiencing a sense of spirituality during Trinidad Carnival can improve psychological health, particularly in Caribbean culture. The study discovered that several distinct factors contribute to spirituality during Carnival.

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**Key Words:** Calypso, Soca, T & T Carnival, Spirituality, Performing arts, Thematic analysis, Psychological Health

*“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to life and to everything.” - Plato*

### Introduction

Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) Carnival has significantly impacted my identity and narrative. This is far more than a street or a music festival to me. My soul is nourished by the Carnival's music, art, culture, and history. For me, taking part in the Carnival is an atavistic pleasure that has subconsciously taken on a deeper meaning. Everyone has a "soul food" to which they are emotionally attached: something refreshing their sense of being. For some, it might be the theatre, food, sports or a holiday. For me, it is the Trinidad Carnival. The links between artistic events and sustainable development are becoming more apparent in cultural contexts where revitalization is urgent. Each country's

history forms the foundation of its cultural identity. It is distinctive, robust, and durable. Cultural beliefs are distinctive and occasionally have spiritual overtones (Hai & Thanh, 2020).

T&T Carnival is an example of a multicultural nation that uses its national festival to escape from the daily occurrences of crime and social and economic tension and to unite. The connection between art, music and spirituality is an enigma (Lipe, 2002; Mominova & Malika, 2022). Art can bring comfort and serenity (Bell 2021). Furthermore, it invites us to a spiritual encounter with deeper personal meanings. Trinidad Carnival combines history, people, music, art, and cuisine. These factors represent how people feel and communicate and help them overcome the



Figure 1. The famous Tan Tan & Saga Boy created by Peter Minshall for Trinidad Carnival 2019. Photo by Damian Luk Pat Photography (DLPhotography)

barriers that frequently separate them (Kulbayev, 2017; Syahrial, Dalim, & Abdullah, 2021).

Since ancient times, music and art have been recognised for their therapeutic value, and there are numerous documented cases of individuals whom the arts have successfully treated (Schoen, 1940; Lattman, 1946; Hintjens & Ubaldo, 2020; Dubbini, Mabit, & Politi, 2020).

Every culture has an indigenous component of art connecting it to a deeper meaning in some form or another (Marteau, 1985). Music, for example, was used therapeutically in early cultures to help with healing. (E.g. Egyptian medical papyri<sup>2</sup>, the

Bible and the other religious texts). Pythagoras (c. 570 – c. 495 BC), Democritus (c. 570 – c. 495 BC), Aristotle (c. 384. - 322 B.C.) and Galen (129 CE, - 216 CE) were amongst ancient philosophers who understood the positive impact of music (Rooke, 1986; Pelosi, 2020). Greek physicians treated their patients with flutes, lyres,<sup>3</sup> and zithers.<sup>4</sup>

Carnival has been a utopian art form, a sort of theatre in Trinidad since the 1860s, according to Trinidad Mas expert Peter Minshall (Minshall, 1999). It is a vehicle for Trinidadians to exhibit our ancestral heritage and culture through visual and performing arts (Barratt, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Egyptian medical papyri are ancient Egyptian texts written on papyrus which permit a glimpse at medical procedures and practices in ancient Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> The lyre (/ˈlaɪər/) is a string instrument that dates back to 1400 BC in ancient Greece

<sup>4</sup> A zither is a musical instrument that is similar to a guitar but lacks the neck and has a lot more strings.

Thus, “Mas” is a performance art form incorporating tradition, music, dance, art, performance, and personality (Figure 1). It communicates through movement and gestures and is inextricably linked to history, culture, performance, and narratives. According to Minshall, wearing conventional clothing 363 days a year transforms you into someone or something you are not. Consequently, you are completely yourself during Carnival, while you conform the rest of the year. Carnival therefore is a means for Trinidadians to experience themselves in their present form while reflecting on the past.

Performing arts tend to be linked with improved health outcomes compared to individual activities due to the social component of involvement (Bell, 2017; McCrary, Redding, & Altenmüller, 2021). Furthermore, according to research, art that encourages interaction appears to have a therapeutic and protective effect on spiritual wellbeing (Schwentke et al., 2020). According to this argument, the therapeutic effects in T&T Carnival might be able to help individuals to relax, express themselves, lower blood pressure, boost the immune system, and reduce stress and develop a sense of higher consciousness (Castora-Binkley et al., 2010; Sheppard & Broughton, 2020).

Some authors (e.g. Brathwaite, 2017; Wegner & McIntyre, 2021) advocate that Carnival is an integral part of Trinidadian culture. It is a spiritual, psychological, economic, social, and political art form that can be used to satisfy a variety of objectives. Significantly, its African heritage and essence (concepts of performance, functions, and aesthetics) make it the most well-known socio-aesthetic cultural entity and practice for

increasing individual and pluralistic wellbeing.

Participating in the arts, can result in a variety of positive outcomes, including improved psychological health, increased life satisfaction and development of a more sophisticated consciousness and improving wellbeing (Leckey, 2011; Masika, Yu, & Li, 2020; Carapellotti, Stevenson, & Doumas, 2020).

This study's findings on spirituality in Carnival emphasizes the influence of the Carnival environment on participants' conceptions of spirituality, rather than other spiritual institutions: churches or temples. Partridge (2006) describes a spiritual and holistic setting. This spiritual milieu expresses ideas about external powers, influences, and spiritual ideals (Barratt, 2022). Rather than having strictly religious connotations, spirituality is used in this paper to express real-life experiences that promote alternative viewpoints on space, society, and deeper connections (Partridge 2004; Niu, McSherry, & Partridge, 2021). For example, soca retells memories and attempts to piece together self-identity through the use of history, sensations, imaginations, events, and vitality. It has the ability to evoke time, place, and emotion, making people feel "soulful connections," especially when performed repeatedly, as in the Trinidad Carnival (Barratt, 2022). The prevalence of festival attendees with a spiritual ethos is demonstrated by King's writings (2020). According to King, people seek spirituality outside of traditional religion (ibid).

Carnival's liberating forms of story-telling, music, and dance reflect the spirit's influence on verbal and nonverbal

communication. Slinger Francisco (born July 9, 1935), popularly known as "The Mighty Sparrow Sparrow," (see Figure 2) exemplifies this in his work. His music serves as a reminder of how calypso has evolved over time through double entendres, wit, and deep commentary.



Figure 2. The Mighty Sparrow who has led the world of Calypso since 1956 and still performing at nearly 90 www.google.com, n.d. www.google.com. (n.d.). *the mighty sparrow - Google Search*. [online] Available at: [https://www.google.com/search?q=the+mighty+sparrow&client=firefox-b-d&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj10O2lgvz7AhWzQkEAHZBqAX4Q\\_AUoAnoECAEQBA&biw=1280&bih=595&dpr=1.5#imgrc=7avJvB3cGbgheM](https://www.google.com/search?q=the+mighty+sparrow&client=firefox-b-d&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj10O2lgvz7AhWzQkEAHZBqAX4Q_AUoAnoECAEQBA&biw=1280&bih=595&dpr=1.5#imgrc=7avJvB3cGbgheM)

Academics, researchers, and politicians are becoming more interested in festival research. In-depth research on the complex relationships between cultural festivals and spirituality in ethnic minority festivals, on the other hand, has received less attention. Innovative and distinct approaches to comprehending cultural conceptions of health and wellness are required to meet the needs of ethnic minorities seeking deeper meaning in their lives (Taylor, Nicolle, & Maguire, 2013; Anwar McHenry, 2013; Collins, 2022).

Some researchers argue that in order to be culturally competent and meet the needs of

different societies, Euro-centric perspectives on how art promotes wellness must be modified to include culture (e.g. Garvey et al., 2020; Rowe, 2020; Van Bewer et al., 2021). Thus, it is vital to foster research and learning that exposes the historical and contemporary context of indigenous peoples' life (for example, Trinidad Carnival) in order to better understand what contributes to people finding deeper meaning in local practices. Thus, understanding Carnival performances, rituals, and activities, as well as the impact of participating in the Carnival celebration, is essential for developing a deeper appreciation for the festival and how it influences the spiritual wellbeing of those that participate.

Anyone who has experienced T&T Carnival, whether ornamented in glitter beads and feathers and covered in mud, chocolate oil, or paint, understands the claim that this festival is more than a spectacle, display, or escape. Carnival is a rich embodiment of spiritual and cultural history, from its musical history to the art of mas production to the traditional rituals of stick fighting and carmboulay. This festival has a deeper meaning. Carnival influences how Trinidadians express, mobilise, and give meaning to their citizenship (Hosein, 2012).

Baktin, the Carnival philosophy guru, spoke of spiritual energy overthrowing mediaeval hierarchies and liberating people (cited in Poole, 1998). As discussed earlier, 'spirituality' here refers to liberation and attitude, not necessarily religion (Van Niekerk, 2018). However, according to Elkins et al. (1988), articulating spirituality is challenging due to its dynamic, multi-layered, and created nature. Ashley (2007) maintains that a

broad spirituality allows personal knowledge or self-definition. Therefore, it is helpful to understand Trinbagonians spirituality in the Carnival context (Ortiz et al., 2000; Mohammed, et al 2020) to better understand how this festival appeals to and heightens human senses.

Examples of festivals having spiritual connotations can be seen in the work of Li, (2021) who investigated why individuals attended the ‘Chinese Midi Music Festival’. Li proposed two key concepts: “spiritual escape” (personal liberation) and “spiritual pursuit” (the intrinsic belief in a better world). Furthermore, Li linked these two ideas to Iso-Aloha escape-seek dichotomy (1986), revealing a deeper dimension of motivational discussion (the intrinsic belief in a better world). One of the rare scholarly studies on secular pilgrimage is Strawberry Fields (Kruse 2003).

T&T Carnival cannot be appreciated without considering its history of being portrayed through the African “*world view, belief system, and philosophy of life,*” which is based on a concept of community that encompasses many dimensions of being (e.g. that the spirit world directly influences the human world). In Lovelace’s *The Dragon Can’t Dance* (1979), the people and Carnival - music, costumes, and dance/masquerade - were all constructed with understandings of African ancestry and spirituality (cited in Francis, 2015). Some researchers argue that indigenous culture sustain indigenous worlds and contribute to the formation and growth of wellbeing and joyful life for local people (McCoy, 2008; Moore, Nesterova, 2020; Ryan, Williams, Simpson, 2021). Saying that, it is challenging to articulate

spirituality in the Carnival due to its dynamic, multilayered, and creative nature. Ashley (2007) maintains that a broad spirituality allows personal knowledge or self-definition. However, the findings of this research go some way into defining what spirituality means to people who participate in Trinidad Carnival.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a phenomenological perspective to comprehend the participants' actual spiritual experiences. This study builds on Bakhtin's (1984) concept of the carnivalesque by demonstrating the importance of cultural behaviours and examining spirituality in Trinidad’s Carnival. The cultural domains of the Carnival were investigated, including language, art, costumes, music, cultural behaviour/expression, and connections. This research highlighted the importance of the Carnival in West Indian culture.

Interventions in public health are virtually always complex and rarely under control. As a result, critical realism (CR) is becoming more popular in public health and social research (Fletcher, 2017; Mickelsson, 2021; Carswell, et al 2021). Furthermore, research like these are becoming more common in order to offer more detailed data on government-sponsored events. These serve as a framework for elucidating and exposing the mechanisms as mentioned earlier (*the whys and hows*), as well as for mustering explanations for “*What works, for whom, in what respects, to what extent, in what contexts, and how?*” (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, p.16).

Thus, by employing critical realism as a theoretical framework, I was able to address people who attended the T & T Carnival experienced spirituality. Using a

critical realist lens, the Carnival takes place in the objective world. Therefore, I examined the participants' personal and subjective perspectives to understand spiritual wellbeing better. These criteria let me uncover situations related to Carnival and spirituality and discern what factors were involved in this influence. To ensure that realism ontology's tiered levels of social systems were considered, I used these concepts in this research.

### **Combining phenomenological and critical methodologies in qualitative research**

In recent decades, interest in qualitative techniques has been stimulated by alternative research paradigms in the critical and postmodernist traditions (Wiltshire, 2018). From the critical realist's perspective, these tactics pose distinct but related problems about the Carnival's psychological benefits. They can be used to analyse qualitative data viewed as both lived experience and discursive activity through a dual-lens. Furthermore, I contend that they dynamically informed one another in this study.

The use of a multiparadigm model allows not only for the interpretation of social phenomena but also for the identification of their causes. Being in a crowd reconstructs social and spatial dynamics, and the decreasing in distance between persons improves happiness. These physically limited festival spaces, paradoxically, allow individuals to think freely: "Where else can you investigate lineage, healing, restoration, and empowerment narratives that call into question long-held colonial narratives by

centring Black consciousness, experiences, and voices?"

### **Ethical considerations**

**Ethical considerations and risks must be considered when doing all research. Socially sensitive research is defined as research that may cause significant harm to those who participate in or are affected by it (Lee, 1993, p. 4). If the research has social ramifications or implications for the participants, they may regard it a threat (Sieber & Stanley, 1988; Lee, 1993). Due to its cross-cultural nature, this project necessitated the examination of ethical considerations (Brosch et al. 2020).**

In this section, I will outline the project's primary ethical concerns. I had to be aware of the participants' roles as representatives of Trinidad and Carnival. In addition, there was a possibility of people being identified due to the island's tiny size. As a result, analysis and further data usage (such as publications, poster presentations, speeches, and conferences) were examined and explained. I was permitted to use this data.

Phenomenological studies are primarily concerned with accuracy and capturing "real-life meaning." Thus, I was mindful of the participants' statements and the significance of telling their story on their terms- while respecting their privacy.

#### **(a) Methods**

This research project employed a mixed-methods design and included the following distinct phases of data collection:

- (1) "On the spot interviews" at parties, fetes, and street parades
- (2) Focus group interviews
- (3) One-on-one interviews.

(4) Observations

(5) Participating in events

A mixed-methods approach to analyse a complicated cultural phenomenon, such as the Carnival, has many advantages over using a single method (Hamadani, 2020). The goal is to comprehend the Carnival as a whole through various techniques. Understanding is gained by participation, observation, and the use of the participant's own words, which leads to unexpected findings. This could pave the way for future methods of understanding the influence of cultural festivals on mental health. The study employs a pragmatic approach to comprehend the Carnival experience from the participant's point of view. To understand more about the Carnival experience, questions, observations, and interactions are used. Because they complement one another, mixed approaches are also used to minimise vulnerabilities.

Moreover, in its broadest meaning, mixed methods allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon by contributing to answering research questions (Driscoll, 2011; Moser & Korstjens, 2018). This was helpful when examining a multidimensional event like the Carnival because mixed methods offered complementary data on different aspects of the same phenomenon (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002).

## Discussion

### Motivations to attend Carnival

When people share a common motivation and goal, their strength and potential for solidarity increase. Most of the people in this research did not report that they deliberately went to the Carnival to 'seek

deeper meanings or to be 'in touch with their spiritual side'. However, the findings demonstrated that Carnival's motivations and common understandings aided in the development of deeper meanings and spiritual feelings.

Festivals, according to Songqing, (2021) influence cultural transformations. Writers like Quinn, B. et al (2021) argue these festivals help to combat socioeconomic disadvantages (such as racism and poverty) while also strengthening social ties between communities and their birthplace. The Carnival creates specialised festival time-spaces for participants to generate deeper life meanings. According to the findings of this study, there are fundamental dimensions of motivation that apply to Carnival participation. These include history socialisation, family togetherness, event novelty, escape and relaxation, excitement and enjoyment, cultural exploration, and event-specific and other factors such as learning, intrinsic rewards (e.g., cash), status, and community pride. Suffice to say, there are cross-cultural differences in personality and motivation, as well as how people think and behave (Boyle et al. 2020). This evidence emphasises the significance of incorporating transpersonal themes into existing leisure discourses focused on individual social-psychological connections.

The results show that Carnival was as spiritually healing for some study

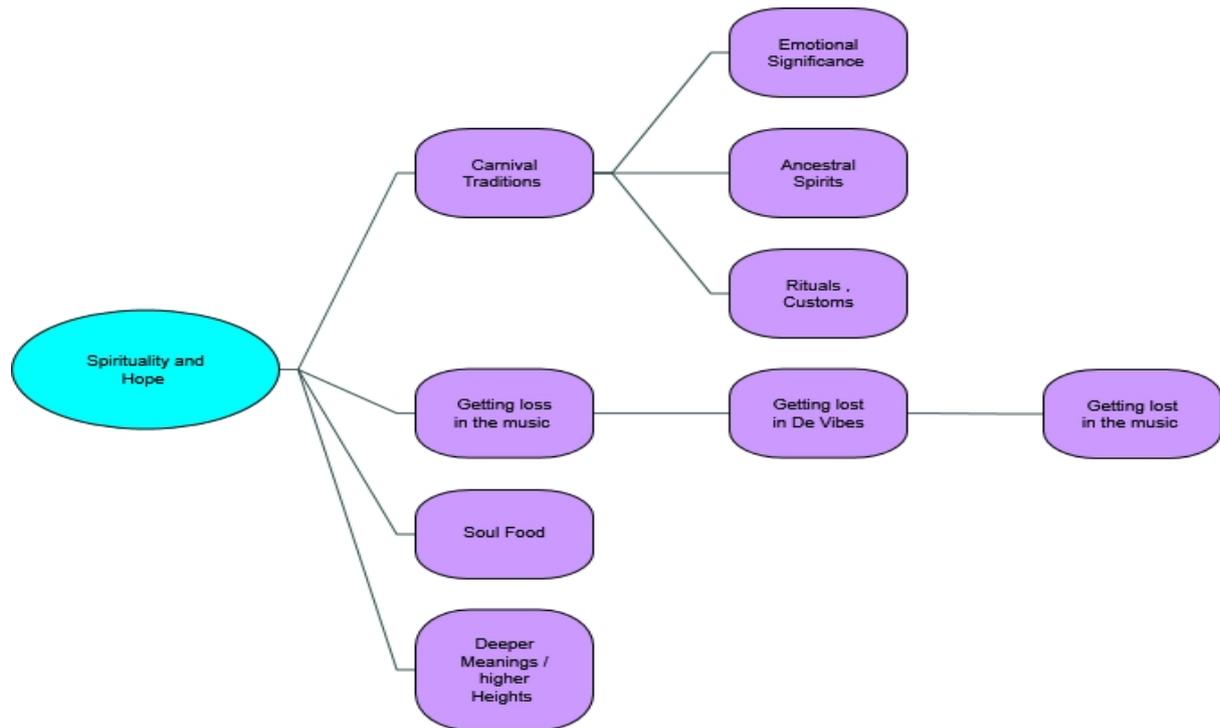


Figure 3. - Diagrammatic representation of the interconnections between Spirituality and Carnival

participants as the church service. People go to Carnivals to feel free and a part of the community, just as some go to church to find a deeper meaning. Performing arts boost self-esteem, social interaction, and emotional well-being (Wang, Mak, & Fancourt, 2020; Tymoszuk, et al. 2021). Some people described that they did not consciously go to the Carnival ‘to seek any deeper meaning’, but this was a consequence of participation.

Performing arts participation is associated with improved health outcomes when compared to individual art activities (Bell, 2017; McCrary, Redding, & Altenmüller, 2021). Carnival's interactive arts AMY have a therapeutic and preventive effect on psychological well-being (Schwentke et al., 2020). Their therapeutic effects help people relax, express themselves, lower blood pressure, strengthen the immune system, and reduce stress (Castora-Binkley et al. 2010; Sheppard & Broughton, 2020). This can possibly lead to establishing deeper

connections as explained by one participant when she said :‘I just feel a higher high when I am jumping and dancing with thousands who do the same. It is like being lost in time where everything is ok’.

### Cultural History

Participants discussed their encounters with several intertwined links between culture, art, music, and spirituality (see Figure 3). Some scholars have referred to music, arts, community, and co-creation festivals as a "transformational festival experience" (Buck-Matthews, 2018; Lucia, 2020).

Not all participants understood how to maintain the solidarity and emotional connection outside of the Carnival space. Some felt that, while they had experienced this "deep meaning" in the Carnival space, they were unsure how to sustain it, and that it had been lost after Carnival. This was particularly true for members of the diaspora who had to leave the culture

behind. All 60 participants interviewed expressed a sense of cultural gain in the Carnival, and a sense of sadness post Carnival. Some said they 'needed to get a Carnival fix' by attending diasporic events and fetes, others said they 'just waited until the next Carnival to regain this feeling'.

Post-subcultural theorists have studied neo-tribal solidarity (Riley et al. 2010), but they have not considered the consequences of severing social and emotional ties.

something you have the chance to experience every day, and sometimes you don't even notice it until after as you are just enjoying life'.

### Rituals

Rituals give meaning to shared behaviour, bring back memories of shared experiences, and help to strengthen stories and life narratives. Carnival has been infused with



Figure 4. Traditions like the Canboulay allow people to reconnect with spiritual and cultural practises. (Loop News. (n.d.). Canboulay's freedom cry rings out on 50th Black Power anniversary. Loop Trinidad & Tobago. [online] Available at: <https://tt.loopnews.com/content/canboulays-freedom-cry-rings-out-50th-black-power-anniversary> [Accessed 15 Dec. 2022].

According to Rill (2006), liminality and *communitas* can shed light on loss following Carnival. Carnival's notions of time, space, and a sense of belonging are fundamental to comprehending cultural spirituality. Some participants compare their Carnival experience to a pilgrimage that helped them change their worldview and is based on a shared cultural experience. Participants may not be aware of or able to describe this experience until they interact with it on a personal level after Carnival, as expressed by Mary: 'Everybody gets on for Carnival, rich, poor, black or white. We are all Trini!' It is not

ancient resistance rituals from the start. The rituals that helped shape the festival's national memory and identity, as well as traditions like "canboulay," (see fig4) are still practised today during Carnival. Traditions like the Canboulay allow people to reconnect with spiritual and cultural practises (Figure 4). Despite the fact that modern-day mas is divided between the memory of the past and the reality of "bikini and beads," traditional figures such as the Midnight Robber are deeply ingrained in the festival's memory and identity (Sofa, 2014).

Turner (1969, p291) explains the effect of ritual, 'The ritual system compensates to some extent for the limited range of effective political control and for the instability of kinship and affinal ties. In his ethnography, Blackman (1998) recognises intimacy and ritual as important components of group dynamics. Blackman explains how ritual helps to fortify people: 'The New Wave Girl's level of intimacy was intense, their collective rituals and basis of group behaviour supported and strengthened solidarity' (p213).

This explains how ritual contributed to the carnival participants' sense of community. Some participants discussed how important rituals were in Carnival and how they helped bring people together. Many people talked about how they met their friends through Carnival, and one woman revealed that she had been coming to Trinidad from America for the past 20 years to "meet my Carnival friends."

She described how the rites for the "Carnival babies," as she called them, fostered solidarity and closeness. Understanding Carnival rituals and activities, as well as the effects of dancing and live music, is critical to comprehending solidarity. Crowds re-create social and spatial processes by reducing space between people and deepening their connections. The same person commented: 'Yuh just cannot explain this feeling when thousands move the same way or sing de same song'. Another person commented: 'There is social and cultural understanding of norms in Carnival.' These create intimate bonds between people. Yuh have to experience this. It's a feeling I just cannot describe, like magic!

Overall, the findings suggest that historical rituals and Carnival participants' inclusive and friendly participation unite and connect them. These are extreme experiences marked by high levels of history, movement, and emotions. All of this facilitates connections between people who are experiencing similar extremes, fostering solidarity through proximity.

### De power of Music

*"Can you hear the distant drum Bouncing on the laughter of a melody? And does the rhythm tell you to come, come, come Does your spirit do a dance to this symphony? Does it tell you that your heart is afire? Does it tell you that your pain is a liar"?' (genius.com, n.d.)*



Figure 5. The legendary calypsonian David Rudder (Davidmichaelrudder.com, 2020) Davidmichaelrudder.com. (2020). *David Michael Rudder – Fan Site!* [online] Available at: <http://www.davidmichaelrudder.com/>

These lyrics, by the internationally renowned calypsonian, David Rudder (Figure 5), beautifully capture the history and meaning of the calypso (Weinstein, 1988). Trinis' creative, religious, and political memories flow through these lyrics. Daynes (2016) claims that collective memory contributes to the historical foundation of collective identity by recalling the past. The Carnival is a place and a space that evokes hope, imagination, and thus "meaning memories," which result in new realities. a location where people

can invest. Participants described how they channel their energy and creativity, and how the combination of their dances, voices and experiences creates meaning and value. Shared language is a recurring theme in Carnival discussions of solidarity and spirituality. This is conveyed through the artists and participants. Carnival's body language revealed a lot about how the festival made people feel. This was difficult to prove empirically. Participants made several attempts to convey emotion through the singing of well-known songs. This was a lovely use of language that was used to reflect Carnival's unique experiences. When one person began to sing, others would join in. New forms of sociality and, by extension, novel ways to define them become possible as social and cultural norms were challenged.

### **Conclusion**

Based on my fieldwork, I have demonstrated that, while the sociality and solidarity observed in T&T Carnival can be fleeting, the connections formed in this space can provide a foundation for longer-lasting meanings. These have significance beyond the confines of the space and are a major draw for Carnival attendees. This study examined how solidarity extends beyond the carnival's space and citizenry by demonstrating the lived experiences of T&T Carnival participants. Some people found meaning in art, history, singing, and dancing. Furthermore, the role of the Carnival in overcoming obstacles and discovering personal significance has

spiritual benefits. This study could help to clarify that providing opportunities for spiritual and cultural expression to ethnic minority cultures is an important factor in promoting well-being.

I contend that spiritual expression is an important aspect of wellbeing practise and hope that this research stimulates discussion and debate about the connection between cultural music festivals and spirituality.

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### **Acknowledgement**

I am grateful to my PhD supervisors Professor Rena Papadopoulos and Dr Linda Bell for their guidance, helpful discussions, continuous support and critical reading of my work. I am indebted to the Department of Mental Health and Social Work, Middlesex University for facilitating my research work and thankful to the many participants who took part in this study. I would also like to thank Mr Randy Dhaniram, my best friend and partner, who has supported me throughout this entire process.

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## The Birth of the UK Steelband Movement Through the Prism of Nostalgia Steelband

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### Abstract

While social historians have suggested that there has been a black presence in Britain since the sixteenth century (Fryer 1884, Gilroy 1989), the Caribbean migration which broadened British notions of our culture began after the end of the Second World War. This migration or diaspora is generally marked in 1948, by the arrival at the port of Tilbury, of the SS Empire Windrush which disembarked those Caribbean ex-servicemen who had responded to the plea to join the labour force to rebuild Britain. They accepted the jobs that were not easily filled in post war Britain. Subsequently, the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO) – the first steel band to leave the Caribbean in 1951, came to London for the festival of Britain – 1951, and this account explains the development in the Caribbean Arts in the UK, since 1951. This account relies on the opinions of others, based on interviews and conversations, thus providing a more cohesive historical narrative by highlighting the contributions of key protagonists within the steel pan fraternity.

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**Key Words:** Nostalgia steel band; UK Steelband Movement, Russell Henderson; Sterling Betancourt; Philmore ‘Boots’ Davidson; TASPO.

### Introduction

This paper will start and end with Nostalgia steel band, concentrating on the contributions made by three pioneers of the steel band movement in the UK, namely, Sterling Betancourt, Russell Henderson and Philmore ‘Boots’ Davidson. Two of these gentlemen have passed away and only one remains with us. Sterling Betancourt celebrated his 92nd birthday in March 2022, making him the only surviving member of the original Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra of 1951. Sterling is affectionately known to many as the teacher, band leader, musician, pan manufacturer, community organiser, co-founder of the Notting Hill carnival, and

mentor to countless students, and is, by a mile, the historical figure of the steel band movement in the UK.

This paper will also set out, firstly, to examine the cultural history of Nostalgia steel band, and the Notting Hill Carnival, along with the Pan-around-neck steel band tradition, through an extensive analytical literature, exploring the issues of carnival and the steel pan. It will add to the pervasiveness of policy discourse around community cohesion and integration. Secondly, it explores the relationship between the Notting Hill Carnival and the pan-around-neck steel band, as one of carnival’s enduring disciplines. The pan-

around-neck steel band is a marching band that encompasses a creative vision within different cultural components. It is employed in regional festivals, wedding celebrations, protest marches, funeral processions, corporate functions, workshops and carnivals.

Reviewing the Trinidad Carnival's



Figure 1. Nostalgia Steelband on the road during Notting Hill Carnival 2012 soon after the band's performance in the opening ceremony of the London Olympics.

contribution to popular culture, Ho (2000) identifies the distortions of "...the enterprise of empire building in the past and nation building in the present, precisely because of its ability to articulate emotions and its capacity to connect us to a wider world" (Ho 2000: 27). No less obvious, a glaring omission of these claims is the carnival as an avenue for personal expressions of social rebellion. From its origin in the carnival, it generated considerable controversy as a highly charged political event – invoking anarchy and challenging the status quo through its focus on the collective power struggle (Cohen 1993) and the development or otherwise of working-class consciousness (Nehusi 2000). The cultural landscape of the 1950's and 1960s, in Britain could be characterised by increased immigration from the Caribbean, some class/ social

resentment from some aspects of the white working class, which correlated significantly with pride for one's own cultural capital. Within this paradigm, each sub-cultural group within the Caribbean community, took it upon themselves to organise around a single carnival discipline, mapping out their own interpretations of these, and rehabilitating the image of African and Caribbean societies, both in the eyes of Caribbean and non-Caribbean people.

The most enduring characteristic of the Notting Hill carnival is its conservatism in sticking with the established form. The disciplines, Costume (mass bands), Calypso, Steel bands, Soca sound systems (both mobile and static) made up the strands of influence within carnival culture. However, is this culture a direct result of the Caribbean heritage? Does the evidence lead to a culture introduced by marginalised groups, and preserved - maybe modified in religion, folklore, satire, social commentary, or even in political and economic forms?

### **Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO)**

Nostalgia Steel band's origin could be traced back to 1951, when the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO) left Trinidad in July of that year to take part in the Festival of Britain. Twelve musicians were originally chosen from different steelbands across Trinidad for the tour, though one of the original group members, Sonny Roach, became ill in Martinique and missed the tour. The other members of the group were Lieutenant Griffith, Philmore 'Boots' Davidson, Patsy Haynes, Dudley Smith, Anthony Williams, Elliot Mannette, Theo Stephens, Winston 'Spree' Simon,

Andrew DeLabastide, Belgrave Bonaparte and Sterling Betancourt (Blake 1996). After the tour of England and Paris, Sterling settled in London. His tenor pan was probably the only pan instrument still left in Britain at that time (Stuempfle 1995).

In late 1952, Sterling linked up with Russell Henderson, who was in Britain at the time studying music and the art of piano tuning. The two men became the central individuals of the early steel band movement in the UK, along with ‘Boots’ Davidson and Cyril Khamai. Russell Henderson was one of the early Caribbean jazz musicians to be based in the UK, and though his main instrument was the piano, he brought the steel pan into his realm of performance.

It was suggested by a record producer that these two musicians produced a recording of Russell Henderson’s music. Under the label Melo Disc, they recorded six discs, among them, Ping-Pong Blues, West Indian Nights and many others. Anxious to form a steelband, Sterling sent to Trinidad for a single second pan and a single guitar pan to be posted to him in England. This was the beginning of steel bands in Britain after TASPO. The original members were Russell Henderson, Mervyn Constantine and Sterling Betancourt. As Russell was the recognised (jazz) musician in the group, the band took the name of ‘the Russ Henderson Steel Band’ and their first gig was at the Sunset Club in Carnaby Street. The steel band trio then became a quintet when Max Cherrie and his brother Ralph joined the group. The steel band was featured in several radio broadcasts, cinema and television films namely ‘The Saint’, ‘Danger Man’, ‘The Boy who talked to

Animals’ and ‘Upstairs and Downstairs.’ Constantine had by then left the group.



Figure 2. A cross-section of Nostalgia’s pan-around-neck band 2012, far right, two members of the McCalman family.

Like Sterling Betancourt, Philmore ‘Boots’ Davidson was a member of the original TASPO, the first steelband to leave Trinidad and Tobago, to tour the British Isles. He became involved in schools and education, teaching steel pan to children and young people in youth clubs and schools. He was a gentle giant who probably wore the biggest shoe size his participants had ever seen. He was a founder member, and leader of Casablanca steel band back in Trinidad. He left Casablanca to set up a new steel band, City Syncopators in 1950 (de Barry 1998). It was suggested that it was this decision, along with his musical talents, which resulted in him being selected as a member of the TASPO tour in 1951. After the tour, he returned to Trinidad and Tobago, to continue the work he had done with his band, City Syncopators (Gideon 1997). In 1956, his band won The Steelband Music Festival, before he returned to the UK, first working with British Rail for a time, before concentrating his efforts on the growing steel band fraternity. He was a founder member of Mangrove steel band, where he

was the arranger and manager for a time. The first year he arranged for Mangrove Steel Orchestra, they won the UK National Panorama Competition. He was a member of Nostalgia steel band, suggesting the name for the band that remains to this day. 'Boots', as he was fondly known, continued teaching steel pan in schools until his passing in 1993. His funeral was the biggest event for the steel band fraternity, with all his colleagues wearing the black beret and red pom-pom, - a sign that 'we belong' to this great steel band fraternity, and as a tribute to his Casablanca and City Syncopators connections.

Other steel band musicians arrived in the UK, with dreams of making a living as pan musicians here. Musicians such as Ken Johnson, Clyde Dias, Desmond Ming, Ken Singh, Eaman Thorpe and Cyril Khamai, to

name but a few, soon made London their home. In Trinidad, steel bands did not have a great reputation among the wider population. The fear of fighting which occurred regularly in pan yards, and band rivalries, were enough to put most parents off the idea. It was only after the 'college boys' started to take up the pan, (the sons of the middle classes), and formed their own bands, that steel bands became a respectable pursuit for young men on the twin islands (Dias 2003).



Figure 3. Front view of Nostalgia Steelband at Notting Hill Carnival during 2012 showing the tenor pans



Figure 4. Central view of Nostalgia Steelband at Notting Hill Carnival during 2012 showing the seconds and larger guitar pans.

### **Pan and Jazz**

In London, the Russell Henderson steel band also doubled as a jazz band, the Russell Henderson Jazz Quartet. They performed in West End clubs with Russell on piano, Max on the double bass, Sterling

on drums and Gigi Walker on the trumpet. The steelband also performed in all the Mecca dance halls, theatres, as well as debutante concerts. Conrad Martinez joined the band as an accordion player and pianist, giving depth to the repertoire already in existence. The Russell Henderson steel band and jazz band toured the elite university campuses, i.e., Oxford and Cambridge, along with the University of London colleges, and a far-reaching influence on the up-and-coming pan musicians was established (Goddard 1991).

Russell Henderson was the first pan jazz musician to have had a presence on the jazz circuit. He was a trained jazz pianist, and performed with other jazz combos, on the London Jazz scene. He left Trinidad in 1951, and travelled to London, enrolling at the North London Polytechnic, to study piano tuning. A gifted piano player, he set up the first steel band combo, the Russell Henderson Steel Band, in 1952, alongside Mervin Constantine and Sterling Betancourt. He collaborated with other Caribbean musicians, notably, Lord Kitchener, Mark Cherrie and Young Tiger. Soon he was brought to the attention of the 606 Club, a prominent jazz venue in West London. There he performed for over 40 years with some of the best jazz musicians around, including Andy Narrell, Two Lef Smith and 'Halfers' Hadeed (Clarke 2002).

Pan jazz was a new phenomenon at the time but grew as the style and arrangement of the compositions became more harmonious.

In 1965, the steel band and jazz band co-existed side by side, with the same individuals taking up a star roll in both. The Jazz band played regular gigs in the Colherne Pub in Earls Court (every Sunday afternoon) and the steel band played for regular functions at Seamore Hall, Victory House and many other London venues. In that same year Russell Henderson was approached by Mrs Ronnie Laslette to take part in the Children's Neighbourhood Carnival in Portobello Road, Notting Hill. The Steelband, consisting of three steel drums along with percussion played as a 'pan-around-neck' band. Without a specified route, the band made its own carnival route. Some spectators joined in the procession whilst others (local residents), thought it was a demonstration. Some were heard to comment 'Why don't you go back to your own country. What are you demonstrating about?' The pan-around-neck steel band tradition had taken root in the urban Caribbean culture. Some observers suggest the date for the first Carnival event was in 1964, while others disagree, and suggest that it was in 1965. As a compromise, it could be dated as – on or around 1964/ 1965.

Some of the players who were involved in that first event, which later became known as the Notting Hill Carnival, were Vernon Williams, Zigilie Constantine, Philmore Boots Davidson, Victor Critchlow, Selwyn Baptiste, Eamon Thorpe, Hockey Man, Big George, Herman and Elma Betancourt, Brian Henderson, Kass Mathias, Ken and Cynthia Thomas, Gerald 'Castro' Irish, Steve Kaliper, Horace Ove, Errol Phillip,

'Wack' Young, Miguel Barriadas, Pedro Burgess, Bertrand Parris and others remain unidentified. Today Russell Henderson is the acknowledged 'Father of the Notting Hill Carnival' (Bradley 2013).

Currently, the Notting Hill Carnival, predominantly a Caribbean styled festival celebrates the diversity and the blends of history through an 'island' perspective, - a poly-ethnic fair with undercurrents of self-volition and contradictions. To some, it encompasses 'bonds of slavery'. who conveyed a disdain for the Caribbean carnival expression, calling it "a version of the lunacy that kept the slave alive". This is probably a minority view, as many commentators, (Cohen 1993) (Barnes 2000) were more concerned with delving into the socio-cultural, political, and power dynamics of carnival.

#### **Boot's Davidson's Contribution**

The band changed its name twice. In 1969 it was the Twelfth Century Steel Band joining with Aston Charles to bring costumes to the carnival scene. During a discussion at Selwyn Baptiste's residence in Powis Square, the identification of a name for the band materialised. It was Philmore 'Boots' Davidson who suggested the name 'Nostalgia Steel Band'. The band was launched as a traditional single pan band. Today, Nostalgia is the only pan-around-neck steel band, still performing in the Notting Hill Carnival. Many others have tried this art form and failed to maintain the momentum. Band members must walk and play, whilst the weight of the instrument has defeated many grown men and women. Sterling Betancourt, the then leader of Nostalgia was still carrying his steel drum around his neck and completed the entire route at the age of 72.

Rudy ‘Two Lef’ Smith is a Trinidad born pan musician, pan tuner, recording artist, musical arranger and Pan Jazz musician. His style could be described as ‘straight ahead jazz, jazz in bo-bop. However, he is generally acknowledged as ‘the jazz king of steel pan’. (Malm 2009) went on to say, Rudy Smith has married the most important African Caribbean invention in the fields of musical instrument, the steelpan, to the most important Afro-American musical tradition, the jazz. In addition, he has developed a solo style on the steel pan which had not been heard before (Malm 2009; pp18). With the other pan jazz musicians, i.e., Halfers Hadeed, Daniel Lewis, Junior Gill, Andre Ward, to name but a few, the area is alight with talent.

### **Pans in Schools**

Many of the early pan musicians also became teachers in communities and the local school system. Gerald Forsythe, Frank Rollocks, Ricky Decairos, Clyde Dias and others, all set out to pass on their music skills to the next generation (Tiffe 2015). There is a wealth of research literature on music education and its role in the curriculum, but very little on the teaching of steel pans in schools. Analysing the generic sequence of musical development, provides valuable insights into child development as they grow, and how their chosen musical instrument impacts on their style and developmental process. (Dowie, 2004) explained this in detail: his mentors, his choice of instrument in the orchestra, his development as a steel pan teacher, and his determination to improve the actual experience of teaching steel pan in schools. One issue is that despite its distinctive appeal, steel pan has been kept off some schools’ agenda.

Victoria Jacquiss pointed out that “. success is not winning a competition, but when players perform to the best of their abilities. Failure is when they don’t return the following week. Success is when they can play unsupervised. Failure is when they don’t practice regularly” (Jacquiss 2004: 20).

It is probable that the steel band movement in the UK today, owes its survival to the introduction of steel bands in schools, and the new crop of pan tuners that applied their trade, namely, Bigs Yearwood, Dudley Dickson, Tony Charles, Michael ‘Natsy’ Contant, Randolph Baptiste and Gerald Forsythe. It was in 1969, that Gerald Forsythe, a steel band musician, pan tuner and teacher, approached Islington Green school, in North London, with the idea of setting up a school steel band there. The proposal was readily accepted and the success of that project, led to him being appointed as the Special Instrumental Organiser, with a mandate from the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) to introduce steel bands in their schools (LaRose and McCalman, 2001).

Thirty years after introducing the steel pan into the British Education System, Gerald Forsyth published his memoirs, chronicling the development of the steel pan movement in schools so far. Some (McCalman, 2003; Scaife, 2007) saw his efforts as the initiative that changed the course of multicultural music education in this country. In recent years, steel pan in the school music curriculum has been re-conceptualised as an essential component of ethnic minority cultural attributes, which works well in an ensemble as well as in individual musical tuition. Based on personal experience, Forsyth cited in La Rose and McCalman (2001), described the

earlier attitudes of some headteachers to the steel pan who expected only the academically challenged black children to receive steel pan tuition while the academically able would be exposed to other musical challenges, e.g., the trombone or saxophone. Even after the increase in demand and the popularity of the school steel band, the institutions did not adapt quickly enough to the changing expectations of students. The potential for musical development through the studying of the steel pan was lost to many pupils. Unlike the United States, steel pan programmes were not developed and embedded in the Higher Education system. It could be argued that the prevailing perceptions of the steel pan negated the fact that the musical instrument was as versatile or as valuable as any of the equivalent 'western' musical genres.

Reflections have also been encouraged by the grand exposure of the steel pan in musical festivals, in community parades and local street festivals and carnivals. Viewed through various lenses, the steel pan could mean different things to different audiences and different communities. Several ethnomusicology sources (Dudley 2001; Nehusi 2000) suggest that steel pannists embrace technical exercise and the perfection of their musical art form with just as much enthusiasm as do other modern musical counterparts. The clearest evidence of this is the amount of time that pannists – at the top of their field – embrace technical exercise to improve their technique. In many Trinidadian pan-yards, reports of five- or six-hours day rehearsals were not uncommon. In British pan-yards, in the months leading up to the great 'Panorama Steelband Championships', contestants are put through their paces for up to five hours

a day. It is the wish of most community steel bands that having many pupils exposed to the genre through the school curriculum will feed into the community steelbands – thus ensuring a steady flow of fresh, alive and intelligently vibrant musicians. The expectation is that these school steelbands will produce youngsters with enhanced creativity and innovation with this knowledge transfer being of benefit to the community bands. However, this has not always proved true as many steelbands in London are still experiencing difficulty in recruiting new players.

In 2006, a report was commissioned into the state of the steelband fraternity in the UK (Gardner 2006). Among the recommendations proposed was the idea of creating a post, 'a new national 'Steelband Development Officer' - for a duration of a three-year term. The remit would include developing a three-year strategy, leading the implementation of activity, co-ordinating events and providing information' (Gardner 2006: 31). Nothing came from this recommendation.



Figure 5. Layout of Nostalgia Steelband during Notting Hill Carnival 2015. The drum kit and percussion are carried on a float to the front of the band so that it is audible to players. Its placement is critical in helping all players to maintain a steady rhythm while playing for several hours.

### Spreading Steelband Culture to Europe

British steel bands were regularly invited to perform at European events, and in 1976, Sterling Betancourt was among the first to perform at the Nova Park Hotel in Zurich where he introduced the steelpan instrument to an enthusiastic Swiss audience. Two decades later, there were over 200 steel bands in Switzerland. Similarly, the music cultural history of the steel band saw a number of collaborations with other bands from Europe, namely, Sandfloo, in 1987, Funland Serenaders from Bern, in 1993, Pan Kultur, from Germany, in 2000, and a number of French

steel bands, from 2016 to present day. There were two European Steel Band Festivals (in 2000 and 2004) which brought the genre even closer together, with regular pan programmes between pan musicians, exchange of ideas and fostering a fluid connection between steel bands in the UK, Trinidad & Tobago, and in mainland Europe. Jenny Lee explained that the main objective of the Pan European idea, was to unify pan musicians, tuners, arrangers, managers, and schools; in fact, all those who had an interest in steelband culture. She was particularly interested in pooling together the energies, the drive, the administrative capacities – under one European banner, offering opportunities to

the challenges the genre faced (Joseph 2000).

In 1995 Nostalgia steel band entered the Notting Hill Panorama competition, for the first and only time, and as a pan-around-neck band. It was a challenging task competition alongside big, conventional bands, some of whom felt they had no right being in the competition. The objections to the presence of a traditional 'pan-around-neck' steel band in the competition came from carnival officials and musicians alike. Though Nostalgia steel band did not place 'last' in the competition, the band was effectively barred from taking part in future Panorama competitions.

As a traditional steel band, Nostalgia has been fortunate to have had, from time to time, among its membership, some of the top pan musicians in the UK. To name but a few, - Kenrick Isidore, Eamon Thorpe, Rudy 'Two Lef' Smith, Ken Johnson, Ralph Richardson, Irwin Clement, Desmond Bowen, Ralph Bowen, Leslie Edwards, Mike 'Natsy' Contant, Junior Gill, Tamla Batra, Clive Davies, Clyde Diaz, Daniel Louis, Paul Cherrie and Allan Jno Baptiste - have over the years played with Nostalgia. In 2000, Pan Kultur steelband from Dortmund, Germany joined Nostalgia to experience the Notting Hill Carnival atmosphere. Over the next two decades, Pan Kultur has remained a close collaborative musical friend of Nostalgia, even performing together at the Football World Cup, in Germany, 2006.

### **Events that have shaped Nostalgia steel band**

In 2012, Nostalgia was invited to perform at the London Olympic Opening Ceremony, and our tradition and transformation as culture bearers could not

be understated. As a traditional, single pan steel band, our genre provided a unique musical voice that was quite distinct from conventional bands. The band's appeal to the Olympic Organisers was its ability to carry the instrument (as a walking band) and perform in a live parade around the Queen Elizabeth Stadium at the opening ceremony event. We were also expected to produce our own arrangement of a set tune, which was recorded at the Abbey Road Studio, to form part of the musical background track. The 50 selected musicians had to attend numerous rehearsals, choreographed to portray their homeland identity, - which began with the SS Empire Windrush (1948), followed by the arrivals of the West Indians (as we were then called), followed by Nostalgia steel band, then the Mahogany Masquerade band. Nostalgia provided its own costumes for the event, along with instruments and harness to hold up the pans. For many pan musicians, some musical and cultural references can bring out a struggle regarding how they are being portrayed by others, however, the event was well choreographed, and no compromises were made by the musicians regarding identity and legitimacy.

The following year, (2013), Nostalgia steel band was invited to perform at the Shanghai International Trade Fair, the band's first and only trip to China. It was, without doubt, a memorable experience. In 2012, Nostalgia also joined a collaborative country-wide steelband event, performing, and featuring 1,000 pans, all playing a single tune, 'Brazil', arranged by Brent Holder. It was later accepted as a legitimate 'record breaker' for the Guinness Book of World Records.

### **We Stand by our Tradition**

For over four decades, the pan-around-neck traditional steelbands have placed themselves as the cornerstone in the Notting Hill Carnival. Bands like The Russell Henderson Steel Band, Nostalgia Steel Band, Pan Nectar steel band and The Tony Charles Steel Band forged ahead an agenda that politically mobilised the UK Caribbean people to embrace the systematic dynamics of this cultural art-form. In this paper I have argued that the pan-around-neck genre is a particular inclusive vehicle to highlight the emergence of the steelband movement in the UK, as it includes all the elements for intra-cultural bonding. I have also argued that the old-fashioned conveyance is not just reassuring, but its ability to intrigue audiences and to entertain the public in the streets, matches its pulling power for the many (culturally diverse) people who embrace it.

In the Caribbean, there is a time-honoured tradition that when it comes to established forms of cultural practices, musical expression, folklore, etc, community identity demands that respect is due (Johnson 2020). Tracing an African cultural origin, from the drum to Tamboo Bamboo, then onto the

steel pan – the consensus is - pan goes back to its African roots, to Shango and the African Orisha (gods) – and the drum rhythm that evokes them (Nehusi 2000), (Aho 1987).

More recently, with an increasing understanding of scientific knowledge, the influences of globalisation and the ‘psychological’ state on the utilization of educational knowledge, traditions are sometimes forgotten and abandoned. Some practices, e.g., the pan-around-neck steel band tradition seems to be neglected, or even relegated to pasture-land, and to the traditionalists. This conjures up all kinds of emotions that are too deep for words. *We stand by our tradition.*

Nostalgia remains a pan-around-neck steel band, and as such costumes cannot be too cumbersome. Designs need to be simplistic, without obstructing the musical instruments. Nostalgia Steel band wishes to thank all their supporters, friends and players past and present for the support they have given us over the years – 1965 to currently.

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## The Notting Hill Carnival: A Blended and Unique Culture Part 1.

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### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to increase awareness of the policies and strategies which were developed and employed to achieve the successful management of the Notting Hill Carnival between 1989 and 2002, years during which I was its Chairperson and then Chief Executive. It tells the story of a small and cohesive team of staff who worked together to overcome the negative image that had been imposed on it and achieve its stability and financial success. It tells of the importance of the effective management of cohesion at the Notting Hill Carnival, “carnival cohesion” and the successes that could come from carnivalists working and acting together to be able to capitalise on its potential as an important conduit for the achievement of the long-term cultural and economic developmental goals of Britain’s Black Community. The paper is presented in two parts. Part One explores the issues above and concludes that the effective management of carnival cohesion, bringing its people together, is the most important driver of the long-term prosperity of Carnival. And in Part Two, (Volume 7, June 2023) recommendations are made for the restoration of the spirit, culture, cohesion and prosperity of the Notting Hill Carnival.

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**Key Words:** Notting Hill Carnival, Early History, Evolution, Cohesion, NCEL, CDC, CAC, NCT.

### Introduction

The argument in this paper is predicated on the understanding that in order for there to be progress and development in carnival, there needed to be a disciplined social/cultural environment from which developmental goals could be pursued and achieved. It borrows from the concepts of social and community cohesion which are recognised societal imperatives for progress and development. They are appreciated at governmental level for their implications for economic development to provide for the social needs of the people. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

(OECD, 2011, pp.53-65), social cohesion and the absence of socially divisive influences contribute to desirable development outcomes such as growth, poverty reduction, stability, peace and conflict resolution. What is more, social cohesion helps make policies more effective. It went on to state that if a society integrates minorities, has a relatively strong sense of belonging, and provides opportunities for upward social mobility, the effectiveness of its public policies will obviously be greater than in socially fragmented societies. The organisation characterises a society as cohesive if “*it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and*

*marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.*” It recognises that there is a mutually beneficial interplay between social cohesion, growth and development and that better understanding of social cohesion can help to better understand how to measure society’s progress. In terms of world competitiveness, a country’s ranking and standing in the world is not only judged on the basis of hard economic measures, but also on qualitative measures provided by its effective management of social cohesion.

Thus, the paper also argues that within the above understanding of the definition, make-up and importance of the achievement of societal cohesion, the Notting Hill Carnival also contributes to wider societal cohesion, hence the need for community pride in its creation and achievements.

The philosophy underpinning the management of the Notting Hill Carnival by the Notting Hill Carnival Trust (NCT) between 1989 and 2002 was our belief in its ethos as a celebration and commemoration of the freedom for which our ancestors sacrificed and which we must continue to protect and give meaning to. Carnival was never just an event or party, but an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the development of our culture, our way of life. Carnival was seen as a social system in which the cultural, artistic and creative elements of our Caribbean heritage could interplay with the dominant social environment and contribute towards the creation of a unique, credible, and stable celebration of our freedom and ourselves. Our role was not simply to organise an event, but also to grow the culture.

A disciplined social or cultural carnival environment within which the system could successfully evolve, may be defined as one that is well structured and ordered and in which relations between members of the carnival community and its stakeholders are managed by social and cultural mechanisms to achieve co-operation, togetherness and consensus which will enable the management and maintenance of an ordered and stable carnival. It is in relation to the carnival’s function as a social system that the management of social cohesion is illustrated through an examination of the policies and methods used to manage its stakeholder relations. In this regard, the importance of evidence-based, sound policy making ‘framed through the lens of social cohesion’, to address the management of relations between people. It emphasises the importance of developing knowledge and understanding of the social environment and its issues; the importance of an organisational structure; and that the tools for the effective management of social cohesion are readily available and exist in the principles and theories of organisational management which, when properly interpreted and applied through the lens of social cohesion, can be used to enhance a given situation and achieve the desired outcomes.

Carnival cohesion is the imperative for progress and development in its performance, and it can only be managed and improved through practical and appropriate policy making and implementation to address the management of relations between its people and stakeholders.

From its inception in 1966 and throughout the history of the Notting Hill Carnival,

from time to time, events have occurred that challenged, disrupted, threatened, undermined and eroded cohesion with negative impacts and implications for its stability and development. This paper will address in some detail the negative occurrence in Carnival that resulted in a seismic shift from its developmental path with negative impacts still being felt today. The last twenty years have seen rapid and multifarious changes in Carnival that stem from the mistaken belief that the event must only be managed under the terms dictated by bureaucrats of the Local Authorities, the Police and the Arts Council of England, irrespective of whether or not it works to the disadvantage of carnival people, musicians and artists, as they use stooges to try and contain, control and shape the event to fit their own image and remove the challenge presented by a strong and independent black-led event.

### **The Notting Hill Carnival: Historic Recollections**

My first encounter with and participation in the Notting Hill Carnival was in 1973, when as a teenager my older brother, Danny Holder came home one day and excitedly told us that we must take part, just like we used to do in Trinidad. I could sew, make mud-masks and mas, was a general all-rounder and I loved pan and calypso, so why not? We immediately became the West London section of Ebony Steelband, then led by Randolph Baptiste, and had a mas camp in the Notting Hill Methodist Church where we were members.

Even though we were considered to be the youths, we were very much involved in attending meetings and making our contribution. I remember attending meetings in the basement flat of Selwyn Baptiste in Colville Road, one of the many

leaders of the Carnival; and attending the Carnival Office in Acklam Road where people like Vijay Ramlal and Bertie Delandro held court on the basis that they were in “charge of things”; and coming into frequent contact with individuals like Darcus Howe, Granville Price, Merle Major, Herbert Bukhari and Louis Chase, all of whom made important contributions to the development of Carnival. And no doubt there were many others of that era whose names were not known to me or maybe I have forgotten, but whose contributions were just as meaningful and impactful. In later years, after I qualified as a lawyer in 1978, my input to Carnival was on a new level and I encountered a new phase of leadership with individuals such as Oswald Gibbs, Alex Pascall and Victor Crichlow. The point being made by constructing this small list of contributors, is that many persons were involved and whose contributions are valued in the process of the evolution of Carnival.

Even today, carnival people are still divided on and argue about the history of Carnival. Such arguments I consider as nothing but major distractions from discussion of key issues such as ownership, control and the development of its future.

Who started it? Some say Rhaune Laslett and others say, Claudia Jones. What year was it started? Some say 1964 others 1965 and others 1966. Where did it start? Some say Ladbroke Grove and others say in the Ashanti Playground in Tavistock Road. And worst of all, is the denial by some of the African roots of our Carnival, with some preferring to go with the narrative that the roots of Carnival are in the heritage of our European slave-masters. It is a pity that there are so many different narratives and versions of the truth of our collective heritage, as we are missing a very important

opportunity to educate our young people about their history, their heritage and their responsibility to preserve it.

Briefly, experience and research have led me to come to my own understanding of the truth of the origins of the Notting Hill Carnival. The core elements of the Notting Hill Carnival, mas, pan and calypso, are rooted in the Trinidad Carnival and culture, which are in turn rooted in the African heritage of the enslaved Africans deracinated from their lands and shipped to the Caribbean and the Americas by European slave-masters. The form in which Carnival is celebrated is said to have stemmed from the moment the enslaved took to the streets in celebration of their freedom and their victory over their enslavement and slave-masters, hence the importance of Carnival as a street-based celebration. Undoubtedly, there were several cultures represented in the initial carnivals that stemmed from different African and European cultures based on the island of Trinidad, and which were blended to give that carnival its unique identity and flavour.

Trinidadian Immigrants coming to the UK post-World War II brought with them their carnival culture. When Claudia Jones, a known Trinidadian activist was imprisoned in 1953 and then deported from the USA to England in 1955 for being a communist, she too brought with her, her Trinidadian heritage and love of Carnival. When something needed to be done about the racial tensions in Notting Hill and in defence of Black men charged with the offence of riot in the wake of the 1958 Notting Hill Race Riots, Claudia Jones together with other black activists in the UK, individuals such as Trevor Carter, Edric and Pearl Connor, Winston Pinder, Billy Strachan held a fund-raising carnival-

party in 1959 at St. Pancras Town Hall to raise funds to pay for lawyers to represent those charged after the Race Riots. It was the first of several in her lifetime which took place indoors at venues both in London and Manchester.

In 1965, there was a month-long carnival party/expo at the Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, W8, at which mas, pan and calypso from Trinidad were performed, assisted by pan-players from TASPO who had remained in London after the Festival of Britain 1951. The press particularly commented on the calypso and rum punch and the easy mingling of folk.

In 1966, Rhaune Laslett had succeeded in obtaining a licence to revive the Notting Hill Fair that had been traditionally held on the streets in the area until it was stopped at the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries. She invited the steelband led by Russ Henderson to participate in the Fair and be paid a fee for doing the gig. She declared that there was no suggestion that it would imitate a West Indian or any other foreign carnival. Little did she realise that the invitation of the steelband would spark such overwhelming interest of black people in Notting Hill who saw the band on the streets. They too joined in Festival behind the band and created a spontaneous procession through the streets. This was repeated for several years, each year the crowds behind the steelband increasing and overwhelming the Festival, and before long the other performers at the Festival who were mainly children began to withdraw from the event, leaving it to the enthusiastic carnivalists who were mainly Black Trinidadians. Laslett herself withdrew as the event took on a distinctive Caribbean carnival flavour.

As the late Darcus Howe one day reminded me, no one person can be said to have

started the Notting Hill Carnival. The Notting Hill Carnival stems from the spontaneous outpouring of joy by the people whose culture it was and is, on the streets – we, the Black people who came to the United Kingdom and whose culture it was and is.

By way of parallel development and in the area of Acklam Road and North Paddington, Jamaican club culture and sound systems were being displayed and played on front doorsteps, from windowsills and on street-corners from the early 1950s, whenever there was a social occasion to celebrate or indeed commemorate, in the form of after-funeral parties. This expression of Jamaican culture was facilitated by a Ghanaian, Eddie Yebuah, an engineer who built the systems for many of the club-owners. This continued as a parallel development of Black culture throughout the period when the Trinidad-style carnival procession was evolving on the streets. It was not until 1973/1974 when conflict between the two styles began to emerge that Leslie Palmer, as head of the Trinidad style-carnival procession spotted an opportunity, realising that the sound systems were attracting the youths, and formally invited them to participate and blend into the carnival culture. Within a couple of years, the Trinidad style procession headed by steelbands which were pulled through the streets on stalls, adopted the style of the sound systems and began to play the calypso records on systems mounted on trucks. Culturally, this brought all aspects of Black music culture into harmony, creating a blended Carnival with five distinct artistic disciplines – MAS, PAN, CALYPSO, SOCA ON THE MOVE AND STATIC SOUNDS. In addition to this and throughout the 1980s, groups with a

distinctive African cultural bent were encouraged to participate and would do so in the procession and on static sound system sites such as at Nigeria Corner, Cambridge Gardens where Toks of Obalinde Suya had his site for years, or Sir Coxone Sound which showed us how Carnival could be used to make political statements by being the ANC anti-apartheid float and campaigning for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners in South Africa.

Thus, the Notting Hill Carnival has a blended and unique identity, and the challenges we faced in 1989 when I became Chairperson were how to effect cohesion and nurture, manage and sustain that blended cultural diversity to achieve the cultural and economic developmental goals of our community, Britain's black community.

### **Challenges that characterised the development of the Notting Hill Carnival**

Phillips and Phillips (1998, p.284), state that “the unique character of the Notting Hill Carnival stemmed from the fact that it was by definition, beyond control. It was more than an event. It was a market place where everyone was negotiating the construction of a new culture in an atmosphere of anticipation and adventure”. To the West Indian community, the Carnival's rapid growth and influence were reflective of its success; and the community took pride in its informal status of being the “largest event of its type in Europe” and “second only to the Rio Carnival”. To the Authorities however, its unexpected and rapid growth represented risks to the health and safety of the tens of thousands of people in attendance and had financial implications for the use of public facilities

and resources, which they had a statutory responsibility to oversee. To the residents of the host community, the Carnival was hugely disruptive of their daily life. As the Carnival grew, it presented many social and cultural challenges which led to frequent questions and serious concern being expressed by the residents of the area, the Authorities and the wider society about its right to be, its role in society and its continuity.

### **External environmental factors affecting the management of the Carnival**

The Carnival was being staged in the inner-city urban setting of Notting Hill. At the time, it was an area with multiple levels of deprivation, known for the Race Riots of 1958 and the ongoing tensions between the Police and the Black Community. Given the fact that the Carnival was the event of the Black community, it not only reflected the community's culture but also assumed and reflected many of the features of Black life in the UK.

In 1971, there was tension in Notting Hill stemming from the outcome of the trial of the "Mangrove 9". The trial was of nine people who had been arrested and charged after the dramatic and violent confrontation between the police and members of the Black community who had been demonstrating about the constant police harassment of the owner of the Mangrove Restaurant, Frank Crichlow. Frank Crichlow was the proprietor of the Mangrove Restaurant, based in All Saints Road, Notting Hill. The premises also served as a gathering place, a social club and community centre for young Black men wanting somewhere to "lime" and just be together. The police were, however, suspicious of all activities that were being

held there and kept the premises under close surveillance, organising several raids on it and arresting its owner. There were many raids during which the police sometimes wrecked the premises, allegedly assaulted clients, shouted abuse at them, arrested some and demeaned and detained its proprietor. In 1970, there had been an organised demonstration for the Defence of the Mangrove. This ended in violent clashes between demonstrators and the police. Nine people from the Mangrove were arrested and tried at the Old Bailey for orchestrating the violence. The trial ended in 1971 with the acquittal of seven of the accused, and the remaining two being given short, suspended sentences. The trial had been widely publicised in Black communities in the UK and North America and brought notoriety and fame to the restaurant and its proprietor as symbols of Black resistance against oppressive policing (Cohen, 1993). At the time, the Mangrove Restaurant was loosely linked to the Carnival because its proprietor, being a Trinidadian, was fond of the Carnival and pan music. He gave generously to the event and set up the All Saints Road as a Carnival Judging Point for the bands. His brother, Victor Crichlow, became involved in organising the Carnival and gave assistance in his capacity as a book-keeper. Frank Crichlow, while not taking on any formal leadership role in the Carnival, was an influential voice in the background. As a result, there were many instances when the Authorities negatively linked activities at the Mangrove Restaurant with the Carnival and strategized to close down the Carnival just as they attempted to do with the Mangrove Restaurant.

From 1973 for nearly three years, the Carnival was revitalised with the inclusion of music that attracted a younger and more

broad-based audience. It enjoyed a period of expansion and growth. The management and planning for the Carnival was largely about recreating the Trinidad Carnival experience in Notting Hill. Cultural links were forged with the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission and Trinidadians took on the leadership and management of the Carnival. The Trinidadian bias of the Carnival later became a source of conflict, given that Trinidadians were not the largest ethnic group from the Caribbean that enjoyed or contributed to it. There were more Jamaicans than any other cultural group, and while they had a presence at the Carnival with their reggae sound systems in the Portobello Road/Acklam Road area, they were not officially part of the Carnival until invited by Leslie Palmer in 1973. Their official presence accounted for the huge increase in the number of youths attending, since their music represented cutting edge, popular Black culture. The youths descended on Notting Hill on Carnival Day to hear their favourite “DeeJay”, “selector” and “tune”. Reggae was the idiom of their cultural and social expression. Trinidadians complained about how these youngsters had come with an attitude that belied the true significance of the event. This development opened the gateway to other Caribbean cultures which were eventually incorporated into the parade, with input from groups from St. Lucia, Dominica, Barbados and Grenada, joining the procession with their distinctive cultural entries such as “Grenada Shortney” or “Dominica Sisserou”. They also had carnival traditions which though similar, were different from those of Trinidad and were influenced by the culture of their previous colonial masters. As previously stated, by 1973, there were nineteen (19) steelbands with mas bands;

eighteen (18) mobile sound systems; and seventeen (17) static sound systems and enough groups with children’s sections to justify the holding of a “Kids Parade” on a separate day. Audience participation in the carnival that year was estimated as being between 6,000 to 8,000 on the Sunday, and 10,000 on the Monday, with some estimates as high as 30,000 (Moore, 2013). The increase in numbers coincided with the first live broadcasting from a corner of the Carnival by BBC Radio London. They recorded brief and informal interviews with attendees. This broadcasting marked the first mass communication of the existence of the Carnival; and even though it was brief, it raised awareness and an interest in participating from many other community groups.

In 1974, again there was further growth in the numbers attending, with over 150,000 revellers being recorded. There were seventeen (17) mas bands and an increased number of amplified sound systems under the bays of the Westway motorway and in Acklam Road. The impacts of this increase in numbers included pressure on the local environment with the lack of basic public amenities to cater for the crowds; disruption in the flow of traffic; inadequate public transport and an ill-prepared system; and damage to the cars and properties of residents due to the sheer weight of numbers attending the event. The Carnival organisers and the Authorities were equally taken by surprise, most certainly because they had not planned for or anticipated that so many people would attend, nor had they anticipated any environmental impacts. After the Carnival that year, the Local Council offices were deluged with complaints from residents. The Council met with the police who, thereafter, took the

lead in putting in place plans to cater for public safety at the event.

In 1975 the police requested that the carnival committee should agree to a specific area in Notting Hill being designated for the event, and they banned cars from that area. This however proved to be too little too late, as again there was a huge surge in numbers as a result of the pre-Carnival broadcasting by Capital Radio, the new national radio station, about the free Caribbean Carnival in Notting Hill. Tens of thousands more youths turned up to spend their August Bank Holiday in Notting Hill, at Carnival. Police records show that 70,000 people attended on the first day, Sunday 29th August and that those numbers doubled on the second day to 150,000 (Moore, 2013). The environmental impacts were even greater than the previous year. The Local Authority had not anticipated the increase in numbers and so had made no provision for sanitary facilities, even of the most basic type. The police complained about the challenges faced in keeping law and order, with the unlicensed sale of alcohol and street-trading freely going on. There was opportunistic criminal activity with notable levels of theft from the person that went beyond simple pick-pocketing, causing harm to their victims. There was crushing as a result of the absence of crowd management and control, and public safety was notably compromised. The police complained about the inadequacy of the planning, management and organisation of the Carnival, and its impacts on the area and the public (Moore, 2013). The criticisms levelled at the Local Authority of Kensington and Chelsea by the residents prompted an official response from them and commitment to working with the Police to control the event, so that what happened

at Carnival 1975, should not be repeated in 1976.

The Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea wrote to the Carnival's organiser, Leslie Palmer on 15th January 1976 seeking a meeting. He wanted to address the concerns expressed by the residents about the impacts of the Carnival 1975 on the area. He wrote:

“... whilst the Council accepts the value of the Carnival both as an expression of West Indian culture and because of the community spirit which it engenders, they nevertheless have a responsibility to ensure that the minimum inconvenience is caused to the residents of the borough by this event” .

The letter of invitation was sent to Palmer's private home address and those of others on the committee, since the official Carnival Office at 5 Acklam Road, W10 was housed in a building condemned for demolition and which lacked basic security such as a lock on the door. Palmer resigned soon thereafter, going on to pursue his own interests elsewhere. The issues raised were then left to be addressed once again by Selwyn Baptiste, who took on the role of chairman of the Carnival Development Committee (CDC). He took a stance and would not engage with the Police after the removal of the Carnival from the area was suggested. The Police had suggested the removal of the Carnival from the streets to the White City Stadium, Battersea Park, or Stamford Bridge (the home of Chelsea Football Club), as the area had become too congested. They presented evidence of the impacts and congestion caused by the meeting of two large steel bands going in opposite directions in Westbourne Park Road at Carnival 1975. Neither band wanted to give way to the other and this had resulted in long delays and chaos that

impacted on the rest of Carnival. This appeared to have been the incident that triggered the deluge of complaints and the petition from the residents.

The CDC's response to the suggestion was to mount strong political opposition to removing the carnival from the streets, and they would not engage on the key issue of public safety. The various meetings between the two sides, the carnival organisers on the one side and the Police and Authorities on the other, were marred by tension, allegations and counter-allegations and invariably nothing was achieved. The Police therefore took control and introduced the idea of a designated Carnival Route based on dividing the area into six sectors and the bands into six groups and restricting them to an anti-clockwise flow around the route that would enable the procession to be kept moving at all times. Each sector was to have its own command and control centre which was to be headed by an officer of the rank of Chief Superintendent who was then accountable to the Deputy Assistant Commissioner in charge of Carnival Operations (Moore, 2013).

On Monday 30 August 1976, it was estimated that over 150,000 people attended Carnival and only 1600 officers were initially deployed. Two hundred crimes, mostly robberies and thefts from the person, were reported to have been committed, most of them in the area in and around Portobello Green. Groups of youths numbering as many as 20 in each group continued the steaming that had occurred on the Sunday<sup>5</sup>. As the police attempted to arrest the wrongdoers, they ran into the crowds for cover. When the police followed, some youths fought back and this

triggered a full-scale riot that waged for four hours between police and Black youths, with the police calling for reinforcements and hundreds of additional officers were deployed. This incident became known as the Carnival Riot of 1976 (LBC/IRN, 1976; Howe, 1977). The anger of the youths which was manifested in the violence of the riot, was said to be due to their all-year round frustration and anger at the harassment, brutality and racism some had suffered at the hands of the police (Howe, 1977; Gutzmore, 1982; Owusu, 1988; Bunce and Field, 2014).

During the riot, 413 police officers and 188 members of the public were injured and required hospital treatment. Over 1000 crimes were reported. The then Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Robert Mark, blamed a hard core of about 800 young hooligans who had deliberately attended the Caribbean Carnival to mug and rob, secure in the knowledge that other revellers would go to their aid if police intervened. This incident marred and characterised the image of Carnival for decades thereafter and undermined its credibility. Its management was ad hoc and not underpinned by any particular philosophy or strategy.

Darcus Howe was elected as Chairman of the Carnival Development Committee in 1977, and Selwyn Baptiste broke away from it, taking the name with him and forming an alternative Carnival Development Committee. Cohen (1980), suggested that there were many issues involved in the conflict between the two which were financial, personal, island-of-origin loyalties, neighbourhood and whether Carnival was a political or a cultural movement to be promoted as a

tourist attraction. Howe's leadership, however, was soon challenged by a new committee calling itself the Carnival Arts Committee (CAC), led by Louis Chase, a local Notting Hill community activist. Chase, argued that the Carnival should be used as a political lever to press for reforms and concessions for the wider Black community. Others argued that it was a cultural event which held immense economic possibilities for West Indians in the sale of a variety of products associated with it. Howe's CDC adopted the position that the Carnival was essentially an artistic, creative event and should remain as such, which would deny the Authorities the excuse to ban it. He argued that the fact that hundreds of thousands of people came to Notting Hill in the face of opposition from the Police and Authorities was itself a major political event. It did not need any overt politicisation, otherwise people would be deterred from participating, leaving it to only political activists who would inevitably transform it into a political demonstration (Cohen, 1980).

Prior to Carnival 1979, there had been a build-up of press reports calling for it to be banned and removed from the streets. Articles appeared as follows:

**“Curb the Carnival”**

Evening News, 18 June 1979

**“Ban the Carnival”**

Evening Standard, 18 June 1979

**“Notting Hill Carnival Fear”**

Evening Standard, 19 July 1979

Within the Carnival itself, there was also dissatisfaction with the way in which the CDC, with Baptiste back in control, was

once again managing the event. The committee was criticised for having no premises, being too much personality-led and was lacking administration and accountability. There was not even a telephone line. There were internal conflicts between the committee members about accountability and the majority of the committee resigned. The CDC fell apart creating a new leadership vacuum which allowed many other individuals to attempt to claim leadership and assume control. The Carnival simply went ahead with the performers organising themselves in their bands and their performances were facilitated through plans made by the police. After Carnival, the police reported that they had been successful in reducing the incidents of crime and injury. Eventually, the right to lead and manage the Carnival was settled at a public meeting in 1979, and fell to the Carnival Arts Committee (CAC).

The dawn of the 1980s ushered in a new approach by the Authorities to the organisation and management of the Carnival. The Authorities had not banned it for fear of a community backlash that could end in serious violence, nor had they been able to geographically disperse it into mini carnivals. They abandoned that approach and adopted a more strategic one by bringing together the different Public Authorities with a stake in the carnival and influenced their policy development in relation to it. These bodies were: Home Office, the Metropolitan Police Service, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Local Councils of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster, the Greater London Council and the Arts Council of England. Led by the Arts Council, the grouping announced that

a two-committee situation would no longer be tolerated and that the carnival bands would be directly funded. As a result, the bands looked to the Arts Council for leadership, the two committees virtually lost their control over the artistic content of the Carnival, and also lost a major percentage of its funding.

In an attempt to rebuild the image of Carnival and shift the emphasis from reporting on crime, in May 1981, the Carnival Arts Committee elected a new chairman, Oswald Gibbs, the ex-High Commissioner for the island of Grenada. This had little impact as it was reported that the Carnival passed with only minor crime being reported. In addition, there were wider environmental threats over which the Carnival had no control. In both 1981 and 1985, there were urban riots in various cities across the UK which held implications for the manner in which the carnival was to be policed, as the Authorities expected a similar outbreak of looting and violence when the youths gathered in Notting Hill for Carnival.

Nevertheless, the 1982 Carnival, from an organisational point of view, represented a period of consolidation, control and calm. There was now only one committee and the main challenge for organisers was securing enough funds with which to meet their responsibilities.

There then followed a period of relative stability that was influenced by the improved artistic content of the event. There was a proliferation of costumed and other arts groups which were able to access funding from a sum of £30,000 earmarked by the Arts Council of England for the mas bands, and additional support from education authorities and charitable trusts. Broadcasted interviews with the public

suggest that as the spectacle of the carnival improved, so too did their confidence in the management organisation and the planning improve (LBC/IRN, 1982). In 1983, the first ever permanent office for the CAC was established at 7 Thorpe Close, near to the Portobello Green.

Oswald Gibbs, resigned from being the Chairman in 1984 and was succeeded by Alex Pascall, who was at the time a well-known broadcaster from BBC Radio London. He continued the developments started by Gibbs and co-operated with the Authorities over establishing a new Carnival Route; agreed performance spaces; and liaised with the Local Authority for the provision of public amenities. But, it was noted that whilst this contributed towards developing the infra-structure, it could not influence the behaviour of the masses of youths attending from all over London. Pascall described the Carnival as “organised chaos”, whilst the police reported on the crime statistics (LBC/IRN, 1984).

In 1987, trouble broke out at the carnival, and the first murder at the event occurred with the stabbing of Michael Galvin by a group of youths during the heat of an argument. The problems at Carnival 1987, marked a turning point in the attitude of the Authorities towards the management organisation which they held responsible for the occurrence of the murder. There were allegations of mis-management and the competence of the members of the organisation was questioned. The Arts Council, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Boroughs Grants Scheme, came together and supported the commissioning of management consultants from Coopers and Lybrand, the largest firm of accountants

and auditors in the country, to carry out an organisational review of the Notting Hill Carnival. The report was completed in July 1988 and made a number of significant recommendations for improvement in the management of the carnival and for immediate implementation.

Between September 1988 and May 1989, there was a series of meetings between the CAC and the police. Senior Officers met with several members of the CAC to review Carnival 1988 and look at planning for 1989. Discussions broke down at each and every meeting between the police and the committee, and the meetings took on distinctly political overtones with no agreement being reached on the key issues of Carnival's organisation and management. Then, seemingly from nowhere, in January 1989, the police launched an official investigation into alleged fraud at the Carnival. Members of the committee stood accused of misappropriation of funds and were interviewed by the police under caution. The Carnival Office was subjected to a dawn police raid and all records were seized. Information about this was leaked to the press who descended on Ladbroke Grove and articles were published that were distinctly negative, accusatory, and undermining of efforts by the community to manage the Carnival.

Thereafter, there was a complete breakdown in relations between the carnival organisers and the police, and no progress could be made in planning for Carnival 1989. In April 1989, the Statutory Funders who had remained in the background, wrote to the CAC confirming their withdrawal of funding unless changes were made in the management structure and system. They also said that they were statutorily barred from funding

organisations with large financial deficits, such as that being carried by the CAC. Alex Pascall and all the office holders of the committee promptly resigned. The Carnival was once again without leadership. Influential members of the carnival community rallied the community for an emergency meeting at which many opinions were offered about a way forward. On 10th May 1989, approximately 300 members of the community met again. Relying on my legal skills as a lawyer and on my intimate knowledge of the Carnival, its people and the locality, I made a presentation on what I considered the problem to be. The lack of "credibility" that had come about as a result of wider environmental and years of ineffective carnival management organisations. The meeting unanimously mandated me to take on the role of Chairperson of Carnival and establish a new committee that could take it forward and into the future. This was to be the greatest challenge of my life during which there was much personal sacrifice in order to achieve the success that was to come. The misogyny, the racism, the bullying and total defamation of my character by others were testing.

In 1989, I paid for and incorporated a new carnival management organisation, the Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Limited (NCEL) and invited known carnival individuals to join the board of directors which was structured to represent the range of artistic and community interests in Carnival and was made up of five individuals to represent the five artistic disciplines of MAS, PAN, CALYPSO, SOCA SOUNDS and STATIC SOUNDS; and four individuals to represent various aspects of the community (Figure 1). The individuals were:

### **Notting Hill Carnival 1989: A key moment on the road to development.**

In 1989, I paid for and incorporated a new carnival management organisation, the Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Limited (NCEL) and invited known carnival individuals to join the board of directors which was structured to represent the range of artistic and community interests in Carnival and was made up of five individuals to represent the five artistic disciplines of MAS, PAN, CALYPSO,

press about the misappropriation of funds by members of the previous carnival management organisation and were not prepared to be associated with Carnival by allowing us to open a bank account in their bank. I did not approach Barclays Bank in the first instance, because they were my personal bankers, and it was important to keep distance between my personal affairs and the carnival's affairs. Even knowing of our difficulty of no bank account, one funder still sent us a cheque which we could

- Chairperson and representative for the community - Claire Holder
- Representative for the costume bands - Ansel Wong
- Representative for the steelbands – Frank Rollock
- Representative for the calypsonians - Al Hector
- Representative for the static sound systems - Richard Pittman-Weekes II
- Representative for the mobile sound systems - Anthony Munro
- Representative for the community - Frank Sweeney
- Representative for the community - Cilma Desilva
- Representative for the community - Ken Martindale

Figure 1. Composition of Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Limited in 1989.

SOCA SOUNDS and STATIC SOUNDS; and four individuals to represent various aspects of the community (Figure 1 below). The individuals were:

We were unable to use the premises of the former carnival management organisation and were allowed to use desks within another community organisation in Thorpe Close, Unity Association. We were promised some targeted funding from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), London Boroughs Grants Scheme (LBGS), and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Promises aside, our initial difficulty was not being able to set up a bank account. Banks in Notting Hill I approached had seen the allegations in the

not bank, and the others held on to their funds waiting for us to establish a bank account. At the end of the day, I approached Barclays Bank and the bank manager was able to allay my concerns around separation of interests, by assuring me that there would be no conflict since a carnival account would be set up with a separate mandate to which I would have no individual access without approval of the committee. However, I would have to personally guarantee the carnival account, so that any deficit or debt would have to be paid by me personally.

We set up the bank account and immediately this drew criticism from individuals in the carnival community who

published articles criticising me for opening an account with a bank that had investments in South Africa. They did not care to appreciate the difficulties we had in opening an account or that all banks in the UK had interests and investments in Apartheid-ridden South Africa.

Once the account was established, we were able to access funds and appoint staff, each with a three months' contract. We relied on recommendations as to who should be appointed and who could do the job in the 8 weeks leading to the Carnival. Ansel Wong recommended Addai Sebo with whom he had worked at the Inner London Education Authority. Once employed, Addai Sebo recommended his friend Chris Nortey to be the book-keeper. The recommendation of Chris Nortey turned out to be the most important appointment for the restructuring and future development of the Notting Hill Carnival. Chris Nortey was not a book-keeper, but a distinguished Ghanaian Chartered Management Account, former Acting Chief Executive of the Ghana Gold Mining Corporation and Senior Lecturer in Strategic Management Accounting at the Thames Valley University. He was even known at the World Bank for his strategic thinking and focused approach to issues, when negotiating investments for the gold mines of Ghana.

In its planning for Carnival 1989, the organisation's emphasis was on financial accountability, communication and co-ordination at every level, as these were issues about which Carnival was potentially vulnerable. The strategy to deal with these issues effectively involved identifying and communicating with those who had an interest in the event and were important for its effective management; the preparation, dissemination and communication of written plans and reports; and fostering

multi-agency planning and collective responsibility.

The Finance Manager developed the Income and Expenditure Budget that was based on the funds that were committed to the organisation, and pursued budget driven strategies to avoid over-expending on the operational activities and keep within the financial resources available. The Operations Manager provided written Operations Plans, sourced the logistics and liaised with the Finance Director for approval of expenditure. Together with the Administrative Secretary, he established a system for the registration of all the artistic disciplines and created databases for the purpose of future contact. The Stewarding Manager recruited fifty stewards from amongst known, reliable local individuals and made arrangements to provide the logistics such as the radio system to support them, training in First Aid from the St. John Ambulance, and training in crowd management from the police. The Street-trading Administrator worked with officers from the Environmental Health Department of the RBK&C to identify two hundred and fifty trading sites and sold them to individuals wanting to trade at the Carnival, and thereafter arrange for their training in food hygiene.

Throughout the period, the emphasis was on accountability. A system was established for the direct deposit by the traders of the price of the stall into the bank account of the organisation prior to receiving their licenses. This enabled transparency and accountability to the Local Authority which NCEL did by regularly submitting its bank statements to the Authority. The Operations Manager presented plans for erecting a super tent on Wormwood Scrubs to be used as the

Carnival Village for the pre-Carnival Activities<sup>6</sup>. In keeping with financial policy, the Finance Manager treated the pre-Carnival Activities and Carnival on the Road as two separate activities. In so doing he was able to demonstrate the true cost of each activity, and the fact that the cost of the pre-Carnival Activities would be £225,000. There was no funding for these activities and to stage them based on anticipated income from gate receipts would be contrary to the budget driven strategy approach that he had adopted to the management of the financial affairs of Carnival. At a meeting of the Board that started at 19:00hrs one evening and went on until 02:00am next morning, he advised the Board against hosting these activities as there was no budget to do so and they were not core activities. The meeting was particularly difficult, as all the representatives from the artistic disciplines adopted a political position in which they place, as was the custom, in spite of the lack of funds to host them. They were also unrealistically relying on gate receipts. After seven hours of deliberation, a majority decision was reached by the Board of Directors not to host the events, because, quite simply, they were not cost effective. The decision to cancel them was consistent with responsible financial management to which the Board was committed. In addition, lessons were learned from the reasons for the demise of the CAC. Anger and criticisms were hurled at the organisation from a faction of the Carnival Community which published a newsletter castigating the Board for its decision<sup>7</sup>. The Board was able to contain the hostility by direct communication with all carnivalists. It

called a meeting of all the members of the artistic disciplines and presented the financial report and forecast. This served to secure their understanding and support for the cancellation of the events and focused their attention on planning for the two days of Carnival on the Road.

Carnival 1989, though hurriedly prepared, went off relatively smoothly. The people made it happen. The one million plus who had been regularly attending the two days on the streets, still attended and hailed it as the best Carnival yet. After Carnival, we had no more funds to pay staff, as the funding had been given only on a short-term basis. The funders offered to pay external management consultants to do a business plan for Carnival. However, Chris Nortey advised the Board that this would not be necessary and that we had the skills within the organisation to do our own business plan. He suggested that the funders should instead give Carnival the money they would pay for consultants, so that we could begin preparation for the next Carnival by ensuring that staff were in place to provide the necessary continuity that had been lacking from previous organisations. The Finance Manager was therefore tasked with preparing the Financial Report from Carnival 1989 and a Proposed Budget for Carnival 1990. Developing the budget was undertaken as the most important task in planning for the future of Carnival, as it was aimed at securing the continued support of the Statutory Funders as the main source of funding to meet the core activities of the event; and to act as leverage to attract other sources of financial support. Chris Nortey also volunteered to develop a Five-Year Business and Development Plan for

Carnival, which he assured us was necessary not just for fund-raising but also for the stability, growth and long-term development of the Carnival. Some board members, namely Ansel Wong, Ken Martindale and Frank Sweeney simply left, with Ansel Wong saying that he could not risk his reputation with Carnival. In my view, they simply abandoned the organisation because there was no money from which they could earn.

The two financial documents were presented to the Funders and their commitment to funding for the next year was eventually secured, with the proviso that it was their intention to phase out their funding support for the event, as Carnival should aim to achieve self-sufficiency, as per the recommendations of the 1988 Coopers and Lybrand's, Notting Hill Carnival Organisational Review. The funding enabled the NCEL to retain its core staff and begin planning for Carnival 1990 and the future.

One of the objectives of the organisation was to capitalise on fund-raising opportunities to contribute to the goal of self-sufficiency. Initiatives like "Pound in the Ground" and the raffle of a new car worth £20,000 did not yield the profits we anticipated. We then reviewed the policy again and decided that credibility was still an issue, in spite of new management that had demonstrated due diligence, probity and accountability.

Factors that were identified as having contributed to Carnival's lack of credibility included its apparent instability, manifested by the rapid turnover and number of changes in its leadership over the years. Between 1970 and 1989, thirteen such changes had taken place as a result of in-fighting, cultural factionism, allegations

and counter-allegations. The fact that the carnival had evolved without a vision was a major contributing factor to its lack of stability. Without a vision, the carnival lacked direction, definition, and structure. It had evolved without there being a focus and developed into an event that was made up of many disparate elements that needed to be coordinated and harmonised. Its organisational capacity and management capabilities had been overtaken by its popularity, rapid growth and unfettered expansion which brought new responsibilities. There was inadequate financial planning, the lack of controls and ineffective management. As a result, Carnival's operations were conducted on an ad hoc basis and were not effectively coordinated.

Given its lack of focus and structure, it became impossible to shield Carnival from the impacts of occurrences in its immediate and wider social environments, such as the politics and misfortunes of the Mangrove Restaurant and Mangrove Community Association; the tensions of the relationship between the police and the Black community; criticisms and actions stemming from residents' groups; and the omni-present, opportunistic crimes that were a feature of gatherings of crowds at events of the type, but were somehow perceived as being peculiar to the Notting Hill Carnival. These factors served to tarnish Carnival's image, reputation, respectability, acceptance and ultimately its credibility. The perception was that

Carnival was not regarded or appreciated as a serious cultural or arts festival. We concluded that the message of Carnival had not been fully communicated or appreciated and there was a gap in public awareness and understanding of its ethos. The approach towards overcoming this challenge and ensure the credibility and reputation of the carnival was to formulate long-term plans. Planning was viewed as an essential activity to guide decision-making. And thus, the “Five Year Carnival Development and Business Plan” was drafted and implemented. The starting point was the recognition that at the community level, arts, culture, and creativity have

many stakeholders. Arts activities intersect with many other community processes and priorities and are made possible through the collective efforts of both arts specific and other entities. The first step in developing the Strategic Plan, was the identification of the carnival’s stakeholders for the purpose of stakeholder analysis and policy formulation, by taking account of their needs and interests, and managing them. In Carnival, the concept of the stakeholder was used to mean all those who had an interest in Carnival, whether direct or indirect, or were affected by it, and as such had a stake in policy development. Identification and analysis of stakeholders

## Stakeholders of the Notting Hill Carnival

As listed between 1989 and 2002

### The Artistic Disciplines of Carnival

Mas Bands  
Steelbands  
Calypsonians  
Static Sound Systems  
Mobile Sound Systems  
Carnival Associations  
Stewards and Route Managers

### Funders and Major Statutory Authorities

Home Office  
Department of Culture Media and Sport  
Arts Council of England  
London Arts Board  
London Boroughs Grants Scheme

### Transport Facilities Providers

London Buses  
London Underground  
Transport For London

### Local Authorities

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
City of Westminster

### Carnival Franchisees

Carnival Street-traders  
Live Stages

### Police and Other Emergency Services

Metropolitan Police Service  
British Transport Police  
St. John Ambulance  
London Ambulance Service  
London Fire Brigade

### Residents Organisations

Tenants Management Organisations  
Residents Associations  
Private Residents

### Others

Professional Services Providers: Auditors, Solicitors and Bankers

Title and Secondary Sponsors, the Media, and the Carnival Community

Figure 2. Stakeholders of the Notting Hill Carnival between 1989 – 2002

were done with a view to determining their role, the nature of their interests and their importance to the event and developing strategies for the management of their various interests. The stakeholders fell into any one of three categories, namely: those that were affected by Carnival, either positively or negatively; the intended beneficiaries and users of the services; and those who were needed as a resource either physically or in an advisory capacity.

The Carnival had twenty-three, immediately identifiable stakeholders who could be usefully grouped as follows: the Artistic Disciplines Carnival; the Local Authorities; Funders and Major Statutory Authorities; Police and Other Emergency Services; Transport Facilities' Providers; Residents Organisations; and others such as the Auditors, Sponsors, Street-traders, the Media and the wider Carnival Community (see Figure 2 above).

The Artistic Disciplines of Carnival were the providers of the artistic content of the event. They were the main stakeholders around whom the carnival was developed and who provided its attractions. They were therefore integral and indispensable to the process. The Local Authorities were considered prominent stakeholders. They had legal responsibility for the area and the provision of services that affected the daily life of the people. They had the authority to approve or disapprove of any activity that affected their residents and the people who go about their business in the area. The Local Authorities provided essential support of environmental health and safety services.

Funders and the major Statutory Authorities were also prominent stakeholders of Carnival. They provided essential core funding, enabling the

carnival to meet basic essentials of its operations, contributing to the development of the Arts and securing a comfortable Carnival environment. Police and other Emergency Services were prominent stakeholders and providers of emergency services to ensure public health and safety at the carnival by addressing different emergencies simultaneously with their role as emergency services' providers to the people of the area, generally. The Police had their main and essential role of maintaining law and order.

The franchisees of the Live Stages and the street-trading sites were important stakeholders in that apart from providing additional dimensions to the culture of Carnival, they were also important income generating streams that had to be effectively planned, managed and protected. Transport Facilities' Providers were prominent stakeholders and caterers of transport, providing ease of access to the general public to Carnival, and enabling their safe and orderly dispersal from the area. Residents' organisations were secondary stakeholders that protected and represented the interests of some of the residents of the area who were affected by the hosting of the carnival in their streets. Other stakeholders included people or organisations that were service, information or publicity providers whose roles and functions were important to the organisation but not critical to the management of the carnival process.

The Five-Year Carnival Development and Business Plan (1991/92 – 1995/96) was designed for the strategic management of the Notting Hill Carnival and provided the framework within which it was to be planned and developed. It provided a framework of policies and actions necessary to achieve the two ideals of

stability and credibility for the effective management of the Carnival; the general

responsibility for the achievement of these goals. It also had in-built flexibility to allow

The Plan addressed the following aspects of the Carnival process:

Vision, Mission, Aims, Objectives and Priorities.

General Management and Organisational Structure.

Financial Management, Organisation and Control.

Operations and Development.

Marketing and Promotion.

Public Safety and Route Management Responsibilities.

Artistic Disciplines and Affiliated Associations.

Carnival Arts Development Initiatives

The Role of Public Funding Agencies.

The Importance of Business Sponsorship of Carnival Arts.

Figure 3. Core elements of The Five-Year Carnival Development and Business Plan

improvement and enhancement of Carnival Arts; and attaining the long-term objective of generating income to finance specific projects and general activities of the Carnival Arts and the Carnival process.

The main principles underlying the policies outlined in the Plan were unity of purpose and flexibility. It was recognised that there had to be total commitment by Carnival and all its parts and its partner agencies, to provide for the safety of the public and achieve long-term success in enhancing and developing the Carnival process. The Plan would enable each organisation with an interest in the carnival to identify, define and redefine its role and assume collective

the organisation to adapt or change according to prevailing circumstances. Flexibility was important, as adopting a strategic approach to the development of Carnival was something new and therefore an unknown quantity that could be dynamic, challenging, complex and unpredictable. The organisation needed to strategically place itself in a position whereby it could respond flexibly and accurately to challenges and changes in order to meet objectives.

The key strands of the Plan were: Credibility, Stability, Continuity and Integrity. Credibility could be demonstrated through the accumulation of a number of characteristics by which it

could be measured such as: reputation, transparency, accountability, reliability, stability and good leadership. Stability, referred to the extent to which the organisation could sustain and maintain the desired status quo, facilitate change and development, ward off threats and remove uncertainty from its environment through the maintenance of a sound organisational structure with adherence to routines, policies and standards. Continuity could be demonstrated by the capability of the organisation to continue the effective management and development of the carnival and its artistic disciplines. Integrity, referred to adherence to organisational values of freedom, equality, respect, ownership, belonging and others that drove and were at the core of the celebration of Carnival.

In order to achieve and ensure sustainable unity of purpose, effective communication and co-operation with key stakeholders was necessary to enhance the quality of relationships; facilitate conflict resolution and strengthen the basis for teamwork; promote understanding and recognition of each other's strengths and weaknesses, differences and styles; create a balance of skills, talents and attitudes that would come together in productive harmony; encourage transparency and trust; provide opportunities to improve accountability; promote the validity of the process; and achieve goal congruence.

### **Fashioning the new image of the Carnival.**

In fashioning the new image for Carnival, professionalism was required, as good governance was so important. The system of governance, general management and organisation was facilitated within the legal framework of a company limited by

guarantee established in 1989 and later as a registered charity established in 1997, governed by the Companies Acts 1985 and 1989 and the Charities Act 1978 respectively. The benefits of operating within a legal framework were that it provided legitimacy and credibility to its organisation and management; underpinned the stability of the carnival process; and enabled the protection of its directors from legal liability which was limited to £1 in the event of the winding up of the company, as specified in its Articles of Association.

The first level of the Board of Directors, had the role of providing clear and decisive leadership by conducting formal and informal communication on behalf of the organisation, both internally and externally, between the different Carnival associations and stakeholders, generally. The Board was to set the parameters for objectives and initiatives; define the vision and mission of the organisation; form policy and ensure accountability; determine, approve and endorse key programmes and activities to ensure they met the strategic objectives; and plan the long-term development of the Carnival and the organisation.

Given the objectives to be achieved, the company had to ensure that those who were elected onto the Board had the right characteristics that would enable them to contribute to the achievement of objectives and the development of the event. The key characteristics that were identified were, notably: good analytical skills (*the Analytical*), to enable careful dissection of issues, ground clearing and building and developing systems to provide the logic and the rationale to make the organisation work; good organising

skills (*the Organiser*), to manage the people and systems within the framework of the policies and objectives; visionary qualities (*the Visionary*), to provide the entrepreneurial spirit and motivate and stimulate others; and the ability to integrate (*the Integrator*), and develop the good people skills necessary to ensure the success of the Plan, and generally hold the organisation together. The company recognised that in reality, individuals did not immediately come with those characteristics and qualities, and invested in helping to cultivate them through encouragement and training.

The second level comprised the Executive Management Staff which was tasked with the day to day management of the company. The staff was accountable to the Board for the implementation of its policies; and the Board had responsibility for approval of detailed plans and the review of performance in carrying out the plans. Their methods of operation were to translate policies into specific programmes and actions; co-ordinate the work of the agencies that were working to facilitate the Carnival; plan, appraise and project manage all the Carnival activities; let and manage contracts; manage the resources of the Carnival organisation; and monitor and assess progress, and report back to the Board.

The third level consisted of Special Sub-committees which were convened as and when required for specific tasks. They had no decision-making powers and could only make recommendations to Executive Management Staff for suggestions on policy formulation. Issues around which they were engaged included stewarding; the development of the Children's Carnival; and the staging of the pre-Carnival Events.

Apart from assisting staff in terms of fact-finding and discussion, they also served to keep the wider membership and the Carnival associations informed and engaged on the issues around which they were specially convened. The existence and selection of these sub-committees and the integration and use of volunteers were aimed at promoting inclusivity, belonging, and a strong sense of pride in making a contribution to the development of Carnival.

Carnival wealth creation was one of the reasons why the NCT went through the change management initiative. The carnival management organisation did not come into being for the purpose of creating wealth in the sense of a business organisation. The pursuit of carnival wealth creation in practice was an outcome of a stable and effective carnival management organisation. The philosophy behind the concept was the provision of social contact or the appreciation of the indefatigable and not fully rewarded efforts of the artistic carnival designers and performers. Another aspect of the concept of carnival wealth creation was the promotion and maintenance of a secured and comfortable carnival environment for the carnival spectator as well as for the carnival participant. Thus, the general strategy of the NCT was the herculean improvement of the general financial posture of the Notting Hill Carnival to keep it stable and dynamic in order to ensure the safety of the public. Economic rationality was not the only factor that drove the strategic decisions of the NCT. The carnival management organisation was a social entity, made up of a group of people who interacted and bonded with each other and within the carnival community in which it operated.

Through the creation of values that drove its strategies, the NCT had a mechanism for unifying the organisation and which were influenced by its ethical ties to the wider carnival community. Thus, one of the most effective ways of achieving its strategic goals was by the changing of people's behaviour and attitudes. For example, changes to the carnival arts reward system meant that for turning up at the carnival, a band was rewarded. It was an important symbol that making money without winning a prize was important. This was one of the relatively easy ways of changing beliefs and attitudes of some carnival stakeholders towards the organisation

The vision of the Notting Hill Carnival's management organisation was expressed in terms of the aims of its development strategy that was geared to achieving the stability and effective management of the carnival, with the long-term objective of generating income to finance specific projects for the furtherance of the Carnival Arts. The strategy was also aimed at ensuring the safety and comfort of over one million carnival spectators who thronged the streets; and placed emphasis on business planning and marketing to achieve its goal of bringing the best of Carnival Arts in music, costume design and dance to the public within a secure and comfortable environment.

One of the strengths of the NCT was the stability and continuity of its leadership and the vision it was able to communicate of a stable, successful and highly respected event that could be achieved by "working together" to create cohesion which was essential as a launchpad to success. The Carnival's Chief Executive, Claire Holder, was often referred to as being "*focused*", "*energetic*", "*charismatic*" and "*highly*

*capable*", who understood the needs of the people and who got things done (London Arts, 2001).

### **Change Management**

The NCT being a new organisation, the management had strong influence on its culture. To succeed, the NCT needed an appropriate vision and the ability to influence others to accept it. The carnival environment was such that a considerable conflict would evolve if the ideas of the NCT were not successful. Change was needed.

The most important element of the culture of the NCT was the set of beliefs about its distinctive competence that differentiated it from the CAC or the previous carnival management organisation which it replaced. The beliefs included the reason why the NCT was respected and recognised by the carnival funding agencies, the carnival stakeholders and the private sector corporate sponsors, and the internal management processes that accounted for the continued ability to maintain the status quo.

The main objective of the change was to achieve a level of organisational effectiveness to attract funding from corporate sponsorship for the purpose of financially supporting the key carnival stakeholders. It was the reserves of energy, creativity and sacrifice of the carnivalists which drove and developed the Notting Hill Carnival as a major and highly celebrated arts festival. Thus, their attitudes and behaviour had important consequences for the future of the Carnival. Their efforts and imagination shaped the way in which different parts of the Carnival worked or failed to work. Additionally, the Notting Hill Carnival was seen as a union of cultural

diversity that brought people together in celebration and entertainment. Being the cornerstone of the carnival process, the artistic performers were classified as the “carnival community” for the purpose of stakeholder identification. Without this group of stakeholders, there would be no carnival.

Apart from the carnival community, the Notting Hill Carnival had a range and a variety of distinct stakeholder groups who exerted powerful influence over the extent to which the carnival management organisation could function and change. Included in this group were statutory stakeholders, the public funding bodies, carnival spectators, carnival area residents, each with differing views, aspirations and expectations. The nature and the constitution of the carnival environment meant that the NCT was frequently faced with powerful and dominant stakeholders whose activities and behaviour often led to tensions and conflicts which impacted on its organisational effectiveness. Thus, the effective management of this kind of tension, which was both internal and external was an important strategic challenge for the NCT. Among the most important external stakeholders were the carnival spectators, residents of the carnival area and the carnival sponsors on whom the Carnival depended for its survival and acceptance. The key strategy for dealing with this challenge was the communication weapon plus the conceptual skills of the management staff. Effective communication was at the heart of the carnival change initiative. The aim of the communication strategy was to share information, and to allow the exchange of ideas to influence the behaviour or actions of the carnival stakeholders. The methods of communication adopted included

seminars, public meetings, and a carnival newsletter.

The Plan highlighted the importance of an adequate organisational base over which Carnival had control and that would be independent of other community organisations. Thus, salubrious premises were acquired at 332 Ladbroke Grove with a dedicated board room, a large meeting room with the capacity to hold 60 persons, and good amenities for staff. The premises had a good reception area, hospitality and car parking facilities; and the immediate neighbours were Virgin Publishing, Virgin Records and the French patisserie, *Delice Francais*. We were able to use the setting to attract funders to meetings in Carnival, as opposed to their offices, and we were also able to attract high profile sponsors to meetings at the Carnival Office so that they could see for themselves the quality of the carnival’s setting and have confidence in the management organisation as worthy partners and sponsors. The premises functioned as a focal and central meeting point for all the artistic disciplines, members of the organisation, the wider carnival community, and all stakeholders. Many observers of the Notting Hill Carnival have sought to find the ingredients that constituted the rapid organisational development of the Carnival from 1989 to 2002. They should realise that professionalisation underpinned the whole change management process. The professional managers recognised that good decision-making and implementation require attention to be paid to the social and psychological factors at work within the carnival environment. They also knew that strong organisational performance takes place only after a process of idea creation and development in a stable and suitable environment. There were also the factors of

commitment forming and continuous re-examination and refinement of objectives. More importantly, the real art of management is in the process of protecting and enhancing the reputation of the carnival management organisation. This was achieved by driving the change through insights, well-crafted strategies and improvement of activities. The change management was delivered by qualified and quality professionals bound by a code of conduct. During that period two successful five-year development and business plans were implemented resulting in financial success and credibility.

#### **Successes stemming from strategies for change**

By the year 2000, the Notting Hill Carnival which started life as a spontaneous event had grown to one of the most dynamic and most successful cultural and artistic events of its kind in the world and that growth came about largely as a result of good management practices of the previous ten years.

Our main success was the change and amelioration of the Carnival's image making it a much admired, great global event, the success of which others wanted to copy. On behalf of our organisation, I was happy to receive the British Gas Award for the best managed community arts organisation in the country and become a member of the Association of Business Sponsorship of the Arts. And, the ultimate acknowledgement of our regained credibility was the personal invitation I had to be a member of the organising body for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, such was the impact of our competence, credibility and management skills. Other important achievements included the ability to attract corporate sponsors such as Coca Cola

(Lilt), Virgin Atlantic, Western Union, the British Broadcasting Company, Kiss Radio, MTV, Evening Standard and many others; and the many invitations to take Carnival Arts on the road and across continents with performances from the disciplines who were able to obtain direct benefit from the improvement in image.

Our reputational resources included our auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers; the Army, Navy, Air Force and the London Fire Brigade who participated for at least three consecutive years.

Through the effective management of the Notting Hill Carnival, the long-term objective of generating sufficient income from business sources to ensure the future development and possibilities of the Carnival was achieved. In view of the inadequacy and the uncertainty of public funding of the Notting Hill Carnival, the NCT did not only raise funds from business sources but also maintained a reserve

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Income £</i>	<i>Total Expenditure £</i>	<i>Surplus £</i>
1997	Accumulated Reserves as at 1997		99,940
1998	472,350	438,390	33,960
1999	546,830	521,050	25,780
2000	618,620	572,060	46,560
2001	645,350	607,590	37,760
<b>Total Reserves to 30 September 2001</b>			<b>£ 244,000</b>

Figure 4. Cash Reserves from 1997 to 2001.

creation policy with the main objective to buy business premises in the area and truly set Carnival on the road to becoming an important plank for economic development within the Britain's Black community.

In 1989, the carnival management organisation had an overall annual income of £185,000. By 2002, that income increased to well over £1,000,000 and this included income from the street-trading in Carnival which was valued as an important contributor to the burgeoning carnival economy. The organisation had a healthy reserves balance of cash in the bank which it had created and generated through the careful and professional application of management policies and strategies for the realisation of its vision.

During the period 1989 to 2002, the organisation managed to attract three major corporate title sponsors and the income was applied towards the management of the arts

of Carnival, recognising that they were the main stakeholders of Carnival without whom, there would be no Carnival.

In July 2001, the NCT made a submission to the Greater London Authority on the state of the Notting Hill Carnival. In the submission, the NCT stated that the purpose of the concept of the Carnival Arts Development Initiative was to address the imbalances, inconsistencies and the uncertainties surrounding the availability of financial resources to support a carnival which provides entertainment for over a million people in London. The NCT believed that the artistic disciplines of the Notting Hill Carnival deserve a financial provision that recognises the time, effort and resources needed to maintain and sustain the artistic integrity of the Carnival. The NCT submitted the following Carnival Arts Development Grants Target for the consideration of the Mayor of London, the

<i>Discipline</i>	<i>No of units</i>	<i>Arts Grant Per Unit £</i>	<i>Total £</i>
Children's Costume Band	40	12,000	480,000
Adults' Costume Band	60	20,000	1,200,000
Steel Orchestra	15	25,000	375,000
Mobile Sound System	35	5,000	175,000
Static Sound System	45	5,000	225,000
Senior Calypsonian	20	3,000	60,000
Junior Calypsonian	10	1,500	15,000
Junior Pannist	10	1,500	1,000
<b>Total Carnival Arts Grants</b>		<b>£</b>	<b>2,545,000</b>

Figure 5. Carnival Arts Development Grants Target for 2001

London Arts and Arts Council England, which its third Carnival Development and Business Plan would aim to achieve.

The next Five-Year Plan was to be not only about turning Carnival into a formidable institution with links to every London Borough, but also about designing a programme of training so that the next generation of carnivalists could be trained to take over and ensure the continuity of Carnival and the integrity of its ethos for future generations. We were hoping to capitalise on the change we were creating and witnessing in the attitudes of members of the carnival community towards the management of Carnival. No longer were they attending meetings to shout, abuse and accuse. People came to meetings dressed to kill and with a sense of purpose and understanding that their contribution was valued.

However, change and success have a tendency of creating great disturbance and turbulence in an organisation, and the same could be said of the Notting Hill Carnival Trust. Implementing change was not plain sailing. The most restrictive situations were when internal and external constraints were so severe that the NCT could not implement any significant strategy change or function effectively. Some of these occasions were:

For a period of three months in 1991, the NCT had no office space from which to function because of the undesirable behaviour of one member of a stakeholder group.

- The Commission for Racial Equality abruptly stopped its funding for the Carnival which the NCT had applied towards the

maintenance of core staff for operational capability.

- In 2001, the Mayor of London refused to honour his contractual commitment to fund the carnival stewarding operations. To protect the image and reputation of the Mayor, the NCT used its financial reserves to pay for the stewarding cost of £220,000. Thus, the NCT experienced organisational discomfort and stress without its financial safeguard.
- In 2001, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBK&C), without any consultation, decided to licence the Carnival in order to assume absolute control of it. By this behaviour, the local authority changed the ownership dynamics of the Carnival and thereby created unnecessary organisational conflicts and instability which the NCT had worked so hard to keep at bay.

In the corporate world, reputation is everything. It is an important factor in giving organisations access to sources of finance or to good staff. In focusing its planning efforts on the attainment of a disciplined and competent management organisation to enhance the reputation of the Notting Hill Carnival, the NCT was able to raise substantial financial resources from the corporate world. The companies which were happy to provide major sponsorship for the Carnival included Coca-Cola, Virgin Atlantic, Western Union and many others. The corporate

sponsorship opportunities for the Notting Hill Carnival became relentless and the future was going to be bright. By 2002, the NCT had managed a substantial and major corporate sponsorship with the largest food company in the world. Before this sponsorship would come to fruition, one of the trustees had collaborated with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBK&C) to destroy the NCT, because the NCT was apparently becoming too successful and too strong. This was a betrayal.

Other challenges to the organisation resulting from change and the desire of individuals to capitalise on the successes as though they were their own, led to the implosion of the organisation, the undermining of its systems, lies being told and the grab of control of carnival by key individuals within its ranks on behalf of external authorities, thereby bringing an end to what is still seen as the most successful carnival management organisation ever and an end to the glory days, at the same time attacking and devaluing the very values that led to the creation of the annual Notting Hill Carnival.

### **What happened and what happens next?**

Part two of this paper will explore the impacts of the vandalism that took place in 2002 from within the Board of Directors; the defaming of the Chief Executive; the court case in which exonerated her; what happened next to Carnival; and the implications for the future of the Notting Hill Carnival.

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