

VOLUME 7
AUGUST 2023

ISSN 2752-342X

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CARNIVAL ARTS



This volume is dedicated to:

Althea McNish

15th May 1924 - 16th April 2020
Blue plaque unveiled 15th May 2023

Althea McNish was a pioneering force in the world of textile art. With her remarkable talent and boundless creativity, she breathed life into fabrics and colours, leaving an enduring legacy. Althea's designs resonated deeply, effortlessly blending tradition and innovation, captivating all who beheld them. Her work not only adorned countless garments and interiors but also served as a source of inspiration for aspiring artists across generations. Through her vibrant tapestries, Althea McNish immortalised her unique vision, infusing every thread with passion and beauty. As we bid farewell to this extraordinary artist, may her artistic spirit continue to inspire and weave its magic in the realm of textile art.

Pedro Burgess

March 2023

Pedro Burgess, a talented musician, was deeply rooted in the steel band culture from a young age in Trinidad. His skill and passion for the instrument were evident as he progressed from the Falcon Steel Band to the Sun Valley steel band, earning a reputation as a rising star. Upon moving to the UK, Pedro immersed himself in the vibrant London Steelband scene, touring with Cyril Khamai's troupe and becoming a prominent figure in the pan community. He collaborated with various bands, including Glissando and Nostalgia, showcasing his musical arrangements and winning accolades at renowned festivals. Pedro's infectious smile, warm personality, and willingness to share his knowledge left a lasting impact on his friends and fellow musicians.

Vernon Shabaka Thompson

October 1957 – 4th July 2023

Mr. Vernon 'Shabaka' Thompson, a distinguished Cultural Leader, dedicated over three decades to the world of carnival, theatre, and event management. With extensive experience in various countries, including Canada, Trinidad, Britain, and Africa, he left an indelible mark on the industry. As an Executive Director with Zmirage UK and artisan consultant with De CORE Ltd, he showcased his entrepreneurial spirit. Shabaka's passion for carnival was evident through his costume creations for renowned carnivals worldwide. Additionally, he played a pivotal role in establishing cultural institutions such as London's Yaa Asantewaa Arts and Community Centre and the London Calypso Tent, fostering artistic expression and community engagement.

**IJCA wishes to express gratitude to JA Projects for their
generous support of the journal**

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

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 Name¹ – Size 14 – Bold

¹Institute/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:

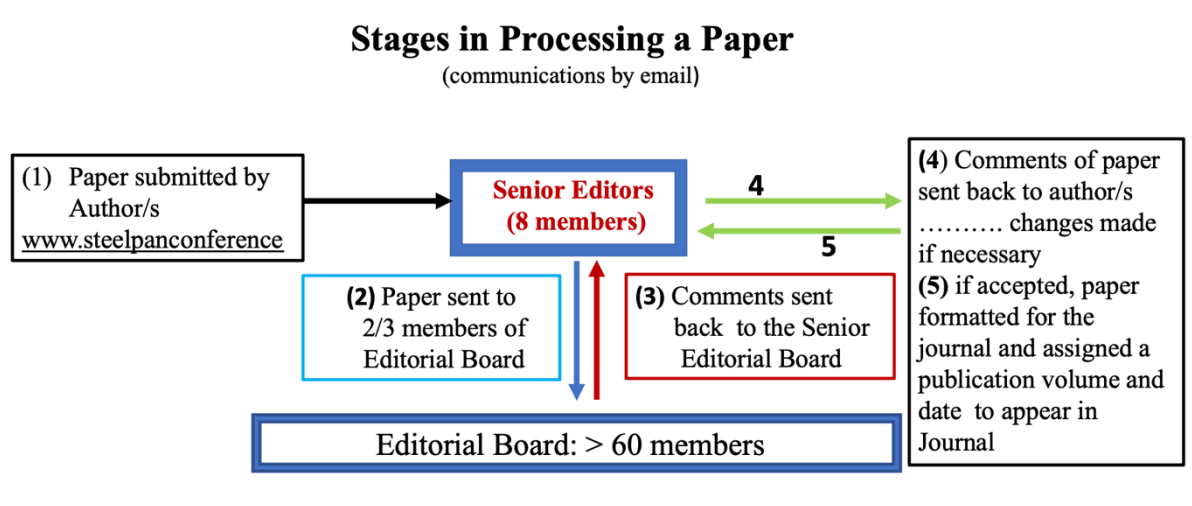
These should be designed as simple as possible. Each table should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals and supplied with a heading and a legend at the top of the table. Tables should be self-explanatory without reference to the text. The same data should not be presented in both table and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



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Senior Editorial Board:

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Suzanne Burke, B.A. York University, Ca, M.A. Cum Laude - ISS, Netherlands PhD. Essex University, UK. Lecturer in Cultural Studies, Carnival arts, Governance, Strategic Planning, Policy Analysis, Cultural Industry Development. Email: imanitt.suzanne@gmail.com

Kim Johnson, PhD, University of West Indies, Historian, Journalist, Researcher, foremost Steelpan Historian in Trinidad & Tobago and Carnival Arts. Email: eshu55@gmail.com

Alexander Loewenthal, B.A. (aka Alexander D Great). Classically trained musician. Calypsonian (Association of Calypsonian UK). Lecturer, Educator. Email: adgreat7@gmail.com

Robbie Joseph, CISMP, Founder/ Editor of *Pan Podium*, Chair; UK Steelpan Tuners Guild, Executive; British Association of Steelbands. Steelpan Journalist and Analyst. Email: robbie@panpodium.com

Andrew R. Martin, PhD, Professor of Music, Inver Hills College. Journalist, Researcher, Author. Prolific writer on Carnival Arts, frequently in the Trinidad Guardian. Email: AMartin@inverhills.edu

Haroun N. Shah, PhD, University of London. Current, Middlesex University, London, Notting Hill Carnival Board, Steelpan and Carnival Arts, Nostalgia Steelband. Email: harounshah@gmail.com

Laila M.N. Shah, PhD Candidate - Dept Physical and Theoretical Chemistry, University of Oxford. Youth Rep., Windrush Generation and Carnival Village Trust. Pannist, Tutor, Youth Representative Carnival Arts, Author, Event Organiser. Email: lailamshah@gmail.com

Stephen Spark, MA, University of Westminster, Consulting Editor, *SocaNews*, Freelance Journalist, Publishing, Calypso, History and Current Events. Email: trafton.editorial@gmail.com

Leon 'Foster' Thomas, BM, MM, Florida International University and Florida Memorial University. Steelpan and musical arts history, Steelpan-Jazz, percussionist, steelpan drill master, composer, arranger. Email: foster.krossoverjazz@gmail.com

Editorial Board:

Camille Y.T. **Allan**, BA, MA., University of Manchester. Pannist, Tutored by Sterling Betancourt as a youth. Played with Nostalgia in the UK and abroad. Co-organiser, first steelpan conference 2006. Play piano, trumpet and sing. Lived in Peru for 11 years - keen interest in Caribbean and Latin American music.

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.

Zuleika **Beaven**, PhD. Lecturer, Middlesex University London. Arts Management: governance, organisational behaviour, enterprise & start-up, event management and carnival arts.

Brigitte **Bogar**, PhD. York University, Canada. Music, theatre and street theatre.

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

Bowie Sonnie **Bowei**, PhD. VistaPan Africa; International Percussion Federation; International Arts Games Committee. Steelpan; African history, development, dissemination, pioneers, carnival in Nigeria.

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

Violet **Cuffy**, PhD, MSc, AICB, Bed. University of Bedfordshire. Sustainable tourism management, carnival arts, educator and community events. arts.

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

Erika Melek **Delgado**, PhD. Leverhulme Fellow - King's College London, Associate Director of Freedom Narratives Project. Brazilian Carnival, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Migration and Expressive Cultures.

Marl'ene **Edwin**, PhD. Centre for Caribbean and Diaspora Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London. Caribbean women writers, carnival, history, literature, linguistics.

Francois **Evans**, PhD. Lecturer, Middlesex University London. Steelpan: composing and arranging for ensemble, contemporary composition for steel pan ensemble, stylistic fusion/s, steel pan music and electronics.

Candice **Falconer**, MChem, B.Ed. Music and Science Teacher. Pannist, youth steelpan tutor, project leader, fundraiser, community worker, STEM Teacher.

Max **Farrar**, PhD Sociology, Emeritus Professor, Leeds Beckett University, UK. Migration, (un)settlement, social meaning of carnival, critical multiculturalism, social movements, David Oluwale.

Harmony **Farrell**, MA Cultural Studies (in prog., BA (Hons) Theatre and Performance w/ Creative Writing, Interest/expertise: Drama in Education, Postcolonial Performance Studies, Arts & Culture Journalism

Nicole **Ferdinand**, PhD. Senior Lecturer, Bournemouth University. Lecturer in carnival arts, events manager, researcher, consultant, International marketing, enterprise, carnival business.

Janice B **Fournillier**, PhD (Educational Psychology). Associate Professor, Research Measurement and Statistics, Educational Policy Studies, College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University. Interest/Expertise. Teaching, learning practices in non-school contexts like Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival was' camps, Qualitative Research Methodologies: Theories and practices. Teacher Education

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.

Jenny **Gilberg**, BA (Fine Art), Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. Multi-Instrumentalist, Musical Director, North Tyneside Steel Band, musician and artist, steelpan soloist, tutor, arranger and composer. Email: Jenny.gilberg@btinternet.com; www.jennygilberg-steelpan.co.uk

Shareen **Gray**, BA (Hons) Business Publishing. Director Steel Pan Trust Business Owner Steel Pan Agency. Provides steelpan performances and workshops for all age and abilities, specialises in teaching people with special needs and learning difficulties. Tutor, training accessories and qualifications.

Malika Rachelle **Green**. BA Music. Director, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. Pannist, arranger, tutor, composer, community music engagement and promoter. Currently based in Trinidad.

Maica **Gugolati**, PhD. Social and visual anthropology. Researcher at Institute of African Worlds, School of Advanced Studies In The Social Sciences (Ehess), Paris, France. Visual and performative art and carnival production. Photography and film, creative industries focused on the Caribbean region, insular and continental, and its diaspora. Postcolonial and decolonial theories and practices.

Rachel **Hayward**, MA. (Music Performance). City University, London. PhD. Author of several books. Leader, Euphoria Steelband. History of steel band, pan-round-neck, worldwide dissemination of pan, repertoire development and arrangement/transcription for pan, pan solos, pan with "conventional" instruments.

Jeffery **Hinds**, Calypso sobriquet; De Admiral. Professional Boxing Referee. Justice of the Peace. Calypso, composer, monarch, pannists, community worker, event organiser.

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'.

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, promotor.

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.

Mia **Maugé**, Notting Hill Carnival Ltd, Head, Marketing; PR and Communications. Notting Hill Carnival art forms, marketing; prompter, producer, communications.

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

Johanne **Narayn**, 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 promotor.

'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, music and choreography.

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

Lamar **Pollard**. MA (Carnival Studies), Production Manager, The University of Trinidad and Tobago Academy for the Performing Arts. Cultural Management, Public Policies for Culture, Cultural Policy, Technical Design and Implementation for Carnival.

Jeannine **Remy**, BA, MA, PhD. Senior Lecturer in Music. Department of Creative and Festival Arts, UWI, Trinidad. Pannist, Educator, Arranger, Writer, Steelpan historian. Percussionist and Tutor.

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.

Katie **Segal**, Post grad. Psychotherapy. Lifelong interest/performer in Trinidad & Tobago and Notting Hill carnivals. Member; Notting Hill Carnival Advisory Council. Sub-editor of Soca News. Mas: roots, history, culture, tradition, and present day, including J'Ouvert/dutty mas. Broad interest in carnival music including Soca, chutney, zouk, bouillon, Denny segment.

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.

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.

Christine **Warrington**, MA. Royal College of Art. Fine Art/Printmaking and Sculpture. ACAVA Barham Park Studios, London. Freelance artist, visual art as a critique in socio-politics. Carnival history, mas, steelpan, calypso related genres of the Caribbean.

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

Jenny **Webb**, BSc. Organiser Pan Jam. Pannist, performer, promoter, tutor, arranger, pan development, globalisation, education. steelpan history and carnival arts.

Allyson **Williams**, MBE, NHS long service. Co-founder of mas band Genesis (1980). Interim Chair, Mas Arena. Notting Hill Carnival Board member. Street theatre. Mas camp administration, mas design, costume making, mas and carnival history, teacher and educator.

Nigel **Williams**, PhD. Senior Lecturer, Portsmouth Business School, University of Portsmouth. Festival management and technology, impact analysis in tourism and festivals, e.g. evaluating Notting Hill Carnival using social media platforms. Development of analytical tools such as FestIM and A.I.

Symone **Williams**, BA. MA. Caribbean Studies, Events Marketing resp. Strategic Creative Carnival Arts & Consultancy. Artistic Director of London's Genesis Carnival Enterprise. Work, Arts Council England and Funding & Acquisition Manager, London's Black Tri Tribe. Designs displayed at Victoria & Albert Museum

Salah **Wilson**, PhD, Lecturer/Performer, York University, Toronto, Canada. Steelpan development/ curriculum development, composer/ arranger of all types of steelpan ensembles/ all genre of music/ Ideas on major pan promotional programs/author of steelpan textbooks.

Ansel **Wong**, JP, BA (Hons), Dip.Ed., MEd., FRSA. Carnival Arts as practitioner, artist, band leader and governance. Educator and Race Relation Advisor. Founder of Elimu Mas Band. Managing editor at multicultural publisher, Hansib Publications.

Natasha **Young**, MA, BA. Teacher of Art and Design, North London Collegiate School, Edgware. Steelpan, calypso and Carnival Arts in general.

Foreword

Volume 7 of The International Journal of Carnival Arts Celebrates a Historic Milestone: The UN Declaration of World Steelpan Day - 11th August 2023 and Preparations for our 10th International Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conference in Ghana- 4-8th December 2023

The UN's declaration of 11th August 2023 as **World Steelpan Day** is a milestone in the history of this captivating musical instrument. The evolution of the steelpan from improvised instruments made from industrial waste to a symbol of national identity is a testament to the power of creativity, resilience, and cultural expression of a nation - eloquently described by the renowned Scottish Painter and Choreographer, Peter Doig on 14th July 2023 on BBC Radio 4. As celebrations unfold throughout the month of August encompassing the Independence Day celebrations of Jamaica (6th August 1962) and Trinidad and Tobago (31st August 1962), it is essential to recognise and appreciate the rich heritage embedded within the steelpan, ensuring its preservation and continued recognition on the global stage. Diasporic communities in the UK, USA, Canada and other regions have been doing their part to propel the status of Pan and join hands with Trinidad and Tobago to commemorate this momentous occasion.

However, it's the long list of Pan pioneers, many of whom regrettably did not live to witness the fruition of their efforts, that we recall and acknowledge. Their contributions hold profound significance in shaping the nation's musical heritage, and this day offers a befitting opportunity to honour their enduring influence. The instrument's evolution from humble beginnings to its esteemed status as an emblem of national identity has been shaped by a convergence of historical events and cultural movements.

Tracing the genesis of the steelpan, we find its roots intertwined with the vibrant tradition of carnival in Trinidad and Tobago. During the 1700s, the arrival of French planters introduced the carnival tradition to the region. Despite facing resistance and scorn from the white and elite middle class, carnival emerged as a potent vehicle to challenge the colonial structures' hegemonic power and epistemological oppression. Historical events like the Canboulay Riots (1881) and the Hosay massacre (1884) exemplify the steadfast resistance of those striving to safeguard their cultural heritage. Carnival gatherings became an outlet for the self-expression of its settled peoples, and the steelpan played a vital role in the evolution of this nascent festival. The 1930s marked a turning point in the steelpan's evolution, as the carnival culture flourished and musicians sought novel forms of musical expression. The ingenuity of these artists led to the creation of the steelpan, a revolutionary instrument fashioned from unconventional materials such as discarded car parts, paint pots, dustbins, oil drums, and biscuit tins. Through skilful craftsmanship involving the hammering of dents into the metal surfaces, these musicians produced distinct notes, each corresponding to the position and size of the indentations. This transformative process elevated the steelpan from rudimentary origins to an instrument of refined musicality, especially post-World War II.

With the passage of time, the steelpan transcended its roots in carnival festivities, permeating into mainstream culture. It assumed a prominent role in Trinidadian musical performances, religious ceremonies, and social gatherings. Its melodious tunes resonated deeply with the nation, fostering a sense of unity and cultural pride. Today, the steelpan stands as a testament to the creativity, ingenuity, and artistry of generations of Trinbagonians.

World Steelpan Day, on 11th August, serves annually as a befitting tribute to the indomitable spirit of Trinidadian culture and its profound contributions to the world of music. Volume 7 of the International Journal of Carnival Arts (IJCA) honour and celebrate the rich tapestry of the steelpan's history, recognising its lasting significance for generations to come.

10th International Conference of Carnival and Masquerade Arts 4th – 8th December 2023 will take place in Ghana

Following Lynda Rosenior-Patten's announcement at last year's **9th International Conference on Carnival Arts and Culture** at Oxford Brookes University, UK in 2022, we are extremely delighted to formally confirm that this year's conference will be hosted by the **University of Education, Winneba (UEW)**, School of Creative Arts, (SCA) Ghana.

This international, multi-platform, interdisciplinary conference will be an historic first staging of the event on African soil, both in person and hybrid form. The conference will also feature contributions from the Peace and Conflict Department, Faculties of Cultural Affairs and History & Cultural Studies, Fourah Bay College (FBC), University of Sierra Leone, Freetown, the second oldest university in Sub Saharan Africa.

Established in September 1992 the UEW brought together seven diploma awarding colleges located in different towns under one umbrella institution. The Winneba

Campus, the main campus of the UEW has three sub-campuses: The North, Central and South Campuses and is the seat of the Vice-Chancellor with a satellite campus at Ajumako.

Entitled *Rhythm of a People: Tradition, Connection, Innovation and Decolonisation* the **10th International Conference of Carnival and Masquerade Arts** will be a landmark gathering of academics, practitioners and artists from across the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, North America and South America. This unique three-day conference and five-day Carnival and Masquerade Arts making workshop events will explore the meanings and value of Carnival and Masquerade Arts, knowledge exchange, and shared experiences and practices across a range of themes, towards the establishment of a unique, co-designed, sustainable global platform.



Professor Emmanuel Obed Acquah, Dean, School of Creative Arts (SCA) states "I would like to express our enthusiasm and commitment to hosting the program at the University of Education, Winneba. We value the opportunity to collaborate with your team and are dedicated to fulfilling our responsibilities and playing our assigned roles effectively ... We look forward to working closely with you to ensure a productive and rewarding experience for all involved".

This year’s conference has been generously supported by the Open University’s (UK) Decolonising Education for Peace in Africa (DEPA) project and the **New Venture Fund**, on behalf of the Public Interest Technology University Network Fund.



Photo Credits: Department of Publishing and Web Development, UEW

The Conference Organising Team is looking forward to working with our Ghanaian and Sierra Leonean colleagues to deliver a world class conference with global appeal that has the pursuit for new knowledge, knowledge exchange, inclusivity, decolonised educational approaches, environmental sustainability, collaboration and connectivity at its heart. For further information on the Conference programme email info@maestro7.co.uk

Akwaaba! (welcome) - See you there!



Editorial

Artificial Intelligence and Media Coverage: Addressing Current Concerns within the Caribbean Community

Current discussions within the Caribbean diaspora centre around two primary concerns; the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the current generation and the negative reporting by Western media on Caribbean cultural events. In the field of science and technology, mathematical analysis of data has seen substantial growth, particularly in the Life Sciences. Statistical analysis has been extensively developed and applied in industrial processing and clinical sciences such as epidemiology, where biological parameters' variability presents challenges. Recent technological advancements, such as hospital scanners (e.g. MRI) have generated vast amounts of data, leading to the emergence of bioanalytical software in areas such as cancer diagnosis. Machine-generated algorithms, including Artificial Neural Networks, have enhanced data analysis precision, aiding in the establishment of acceptance or rejection guidelines. AI has proven immensely valuable in the medical field, revolutionising patient care. The successes of AI applications have extended to various subjects, prompting concerns within universities regarding their impact on student development. Many students have embraced AI to complete assignments, potentially stifling critical thinking. Some universities have already banned AI usage for this reason, whilst others have restricted its use but remain uncertain about the appropriate course of action. In the realm of arts, competitions have emerged featuring AI-derived products that have won top prizes. This presents a dilemma for judges who struggle to determine equitable evaluation methods. In other areas of Art, AI has been used to mimic songs from the deceased, leading to copyright issues. The unstoppable progress of AI will significantly impact the future of the arts, bringing both positive and negative consequences. Notably, at the previous year's Notting Hill Carnival, impressive AI-utilising costumes, mostly created by university students, were exhibited. Questions arise regarding the equitable judgment of such creations alongside those meticulously handcrafted by artists such as Peter Minshall. These considerations highlight the necessity for involving all sections of the community in decision-making processes that will shape the future use of AI, especially against traditionally-crafted products and areas of critical thinking.

Another concern that the Caribbean community has long debated revolves around the underreporting or negative portrayal of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority life and cultural work by the media. Notably, the Notting Hill Carnival serves as a frequently cited example. Despite being described as Britain's foremost summer event, television news coverage rarely extends beyond a few seconds, except in the event of infractions. Minor incidents occurring weekly at football matches receive little media attention, while similar incidents at the Notting Hill Carnival are grossly exaggerated. Although the carnival's participants vastly outnumber those of Glastonbury by tenfold, it receives only brief television coverage, while Glastonbury enjoys hours of continuous airtime over several days. Interestingly, many of Britain's global performances, such as the opening of the London 2012 Olympics or the late Queen's coronation celebrations, incorporated significant components of Caribbean carnival representation. However, little attention was paid to the intricate and visionary work of artists, often dismissing them as mere 'street parties.' The Caribbean community perceives this as racial prejudice, trivialising their cultural arts and considering them inconsequential. They also argue that incidents against Black and Asian individuals receive poor or no media coverage, while participants at the carnival are disproportionately subjected to stops and searches. The community cites the Stephen Lawrence case and various atrocities against their community as examples of underreported incidents. Moreover, the declining presence of journalists at specific events can be attributed to the overwhelming volume of information collected by viewers through telephones and electronic devices. In a recent occurrence, the esteemed

television network Al Jazeera came under intense pressure due to its overt and unfiltered live broadcast of the tragic massacre that took place in the refugee camps of Jenin, Palestine, in early July 2023. Al Jazeera, renowned for its journalistic commitment to reporting from the frontlines of conflict zones, offered unparalleled access to the brutalities being perpetrated in a region where such harrowing events are often obscured or downplayed by mainstream media outlets. They argued that the sanitised narratives often presented by mainstream media outlets can inadvertently shield the public from the true horror of these events. Their journalist, many of whom have been murdered by invading forces, now have the backup of the public who are able to capture live events with their iPhones and forward these to social media. The Caribbean Community expresses frustration with information being processed and directed to them by politicians, who often lack public trust and integrity. They deem the extensive and continuous coverage of events such as the Phillip Schofield's affair (ITV) or the Huw Edwards incident (BBC) as insignificant, as these primarily interest a relatively small cross-section of viewers. In contrast, many Windrush events that commemorated the 75th anniversary received minimal media attention.

Approaching the Notting Hill Carnival 2023, the Caribbean community calls upon television stations to delve deeply into the arts and artists associated with the event. At the Notting Hill Carnival 2023 Press Launch, 'London Live' reporters promised a greater presence during the carnival parade. Carnival holds a deep-rooted culture stretching back to the time of slavery. Similar to Glastonbury, the community advocates for live broadcasting of major events such as the Steelband National Panorama and the parade of 100 bands on the streets during Notting Hill Carnival. This enables a vast audience who are unable to attend these events to understand why over two million people participate in one of the world's most colourful and spectacular street theatres, generating hundreds of millions for the London borough in which it is held. The recent visit of the present King and Queen to the Carnival Village's Tabernacle, epicentre of the Notting Hill Carnival, where they played a steelpan and observed the carnival costumes first-hand, highlights the Royals' admiration for the innovation and dedication of the artists who have devoted much of their lives to this annual event. The community calls upon the media to take a fresh and thoughtful look at carnival, recognising its diversity, creativity, and significant cultural contributions to Britain, and to provide broad access for all to appreciate its artistic value and spectacular displays.

‘San Fernando’ and ‘Mehmetçik’ Steelpan Installations Welcome Visitors to the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2023 Exhibition

Jayden Ali

JA Projects
58 Ewer Street, SE1 0NR
London, England

Abstract

The vast, ship-like forms respond to the Pavilion’s overarching theme of ‘Dancing before the Moon’ – curated by Jayden Ali, Joseph Henry, Meneesha Kellay and Sumitra Upham – which explore how diasporic communities employ everyday rituals to shape spaces and define identities. Through the presentation of six large sculptures by emerging artists and architects, as well as a new film directed by Ali, Henry, Kellay and Upham the exhibition presents an architecture that sits at this meeting point between the immaterial and the material, where the fleeting, ephemeral and spiritual acts of performance, procession and care contrast with inherently heavy neoclassical pavilion building itself, laden with the iconography and legacy of conquest, empire and trauma.

Titled Thunder & Şimşek (the latter being Turkish for ‘lightning’), the architectural-scale installation is Jayden Ali’s sculptural response to his own hybrid heritage, exploring his ancestral connections to the islands of Trinidad and Cyprus – both of which have been shaped and scarred by the impact of British occupation. In their form and metrics, the vessels evoke the confinement and horror of ships used to transport enslaved people, but in their materiality, they also embody positive, celebratory references – to the steel pan tradition of Trinidad (the ‘thunder’) and to the makeshift grill pans that form a cornerstone of Turkish-Cypriot outdoor cooking in diaspora communities, like the one in North London where Jayden Ali’s mother grew up and his grandfather still lives.

Ali saw working on the sculpture as an opportunity to connect more directly with his Trinidadian ancestry. He found friendship in the support of two Trinidadian elders, ninety-two-year-old steelpan pioneer Cyril Khamai and Notting Hill Carnival leader Haroun Shah whose stories of carefree invention and adventure – pan making, tuning and playing – gave Ali the confidence to be prototypical in his contribution. Upon the sculptures’ arrival in Venice, the two pans were raised into position at the entrance to the pavilion, demanding attention and emphasising the portico as a space of transition, of departure and arrival – the ‘ocean’ across which vessels and people travel between islands, from Britain to Trinidad and Cyprus and back again.

The exhibition took place in the context of a Biennale curated by Lesley Lokko, entitled The Laboratory of the Future which sought to foreground the diaspora of Africa and the global south. The commissioner, curators, and artists were awarded the only *Special Mention for National Participation*. On the 14th June 2023, the British Pavilion turned green for Grenfell marking the 6th anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The event was curated by Dhelia Snoussi as part of her fellowship and the film programme is curated by Toby Laurent-Belson representing *Green for Grenfell*.

Key Words: Venice Biennale 2023, Architecture and Art, Steelpan Installations, San Fernando, Mehmetçik, Trinidad, Cyprus, Transatlantic/Mediterranean crossing, Diversity, Culture.

Introduction

The British Council has been commissioning the British Pavilion in Venice since 1937, showcasing the best of the UK's artists, architects, designers and curators. The exhibitions and the Venice Fellowships initiative were introduced in 2016 to help make the British Pavilion a platform for discussion on contemporary art and architecture. The pavilion is curated by a team selected via an open call.

On Thursday 24th February 2022 the British Council announced that Jayden Ali, Joseph Henry, Meneesha Kellay and Sumitra

Upham were selected to represent the UK at the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2023. In the press release of the time the curators stated:

“The exhibition will explore the architecture of the British diaspora through a postcolonial lens to present architecture as a form of material and immaterial cultural expression. It will reveal how respecting and learning from diasporic craft and material cultures can help foster a more sustainable future for architecture, one that is built on principles of care and equity over extraction and exploitation” (Figure 1)



Figure 1. Designers unveiled for British Pavilion at 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale
Left to right: Jayden Ali, Meneesha Kellay, Joseph Henry and Sumitra Upham were revealed as the team to lead the design of the British Pavilion at the upcoming 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale
See link: <https://www.wallpaper.com/architecture/herzog-and-de-meuron-exhibition-royal-academy-london-uk>

Sevra Davis, Director of Architecture Design Fashion at the British Council said: ...”In releasing the open call, we were looking forward to proposals directly addressing the urgent challenges facing society today and that would demonstrate how architecture can proactively respond”. ... the “commission will demonstrate how we can rethink our built environment and the architectural canon through a decolonial lens and learn from diaspora communities and cultures to create a more equitable, sustainable, healthier and joyful future.” (British Council, 2022).

Dancing Before the Moon

‘There is a reason, after all, that some people wish to colonise the moon, and others dance before it as an ancient friend’, James Baldwin noted in *No Name in the Street*, his 1972 reflection on the Black experience in Europe and America of the 1960s and early 70s (Baldwin, 1972). Baldwin refocuses his metaphorical telescope on what it means to live in and among others: other people, other objects, other ways of being. This trilogy neatly sums the curator's definition of architecture which runs contrary to the hegemony of a profession that still pays far too much attention to the literal building of walls, when the space and streets between them is where society unfolds, and our experience of a place is shaped.

This definition of architecture should not be read as radical. It is inevitable that our experience of a city will be informed by the activity that takes place within it. The drama that occurs once the curtain falls in a theatre or concert hall, sending the audience spilling into the streets; the euphoria that engulfs the area around a sports stadium at the strike of a ball. British society values

these rituals – opera, theatre, football – and we construct grand walls around them, and give them roofs to keep them dry in any weather. Where ‘Dancing Before the Moon’ becomes radical is in its advocacy for non-eurocentric pastimes to be afforded the same honour as these historically white-European rituals. Instead of the rituals of Black and Brown communities in the UK – such as activities concerned with the Notting Hill Carnival – taking temporary shelter in community halls perennially at risk of closure, or otherwise resorting to the street, we wish to see these rituals valued, housed and cherished.

Through the presentation of six large sculptures by emerging artists and architects, as well as a new film (also titled *Dancing Before the Moon*) directed by Ali, Henry, Kellay, Upham the exhibition presents an architecture that sits at this meeting point between the immaterial and the material, where (much like Baldwin wrote) a dialogue is set up between that which is inherently light – the fleeting, ephemeral and spiritual acts of performance, procession and care – and that which is inherently heavy: the neoclassical pavilion building itself, laden with the iconography and legacy of conquest, empire and trauma.

A Tale of Two-Pans and Three Islands

In addition to his curatorial and film-making roles, artist and architect Jayden Ali produced one of the six exhibited sculptures. Looming above the entrance to the British Pavilion, two four-metre-long vessels in steel dominate the portico, imposing and celebratory in equal measure. Clamped to the stone columns, the vast, ship-like forms respond to the Pavilion’s overarching theme while also acting as a



Figure 2a. (above) Pan installations being installed at the British Pavilion in Venice. These were suspended outside the portico space, effectively transforming the entrance into an integral part of the exhibition rather than merely a point of arrival. Credit-British Council.

Figure 2b. (Below) Jayden Ali beneath his two installations 'San Fernando' and 'Mehmetçik', his sculptural response to his own hybrid heritage, exploring his ancestral connections to the islands of Trinidad and Cyprus – both of which have been shaped and scarred by the impact of British occupation. Credit Taran Wilkhu



very personal exploration of history and hybridity.

Titled *Thunder & Şimşek* (the latter being Turkish for 'lightning'), the architectural-scale installation is Jayden Ali's sculptural response to his own hybrid heritage, exploring his ancestral connections to the islands of Trinidad and Cyprus – both of which have been shaped and scarred by the impact of British occupation.

Ali has used the form, material and positioning of the vessels to consider and reflect upon the nuances, contradictions and complexities of colonialism, diaspora and immigrant identity in Britain.

Embodying multiple references, and responding to numerous points of inspiration, both personal and global, the *Thunder & Şimşek* sculptures are made from steel, hammered into shape by hand. In their form and metrics, the vessels evoke transport enslaved people, but in their materiality, they also embody positive, celebratory references – to the steel pan tradition of Trinidad (the 'thunder') and to the makeshift grill pans that form a cornerstone of Turkish-Cypriot outdoor cooking in diaspora communities, like the one in North London where Jayden Ali's mother grew up and his grandfather still lives. The latter gives the installation the 'Şimşek' of its name, evoking the heat and energy of the sizzling grill around which the family gathered every weekend.

As well as being rich in meaning, *Thunder & Şimşek* is also a complex feat of architectural engineering. Suspending eight metres and 800kg of sculpture from the portico, without permanently intervening in the fabric of the building is a considerable challenge. Ali developed a non-intrusive frame that allowed the vessels to be clamped in place using the columns of the façade (Figure 2a and 2b). In this sense,

therefore, each vessel – each element of the hybrid identity – is mutually dependent, both sustained and limited by their relationship with Britain and, ultimately and inescapably, defined by it.

“It would be easy to read this work as birthed in the context of horror. And to a certain degree it is, but there is also a tone of celebration. An expression of undiluted trauma would do a disservice to what I get from Britain as an institution, and how I am proud to be British. I am what I am. I live in a hybridised culture. I am the subject of it, and I recognise it has given me immense privilege, and one of those privileges is to be able to exhibit in Venice.” – Jayden Ali

Voyage (to the tune of Don't Stop the Carnival)

Ali saw working on the sculpture as a personal journey and an opportunity to connect more directly with his Trinidadian ancestry. He found friendship in the support of two Trinidadian elders, ninety-two-year-old steelpan pioneer Cyril Khamai and Notting Hill Carnival leader Haroun Shah whom he first met at the Tabernacle, a performing arts venue in Notting Hill that is home to many of the Carnival Arts (Figure 3).

Khamai and Shah's stories of carefree invention and adventure – pan making, tuning and playing – rooted in the twinned geographies of San Fernando, Trinidad and London, gave Ali the confidence to be prototypical. Khamai's role in steering pan making from a single note instrument to the polyphonic steelpans of today was



Figure 3. Cyril Khamai (left) and Haroun Shah (right) taking a close inspection of one half of the installation outside its workshop on a bitterly cold Friday 10th March 2023. The unveiling was accompanied by a one-hour performance with Haroun playing a Tenor Pan while Cyril orchestrated an ensemble by utilising the structure as a 'dudup,' creating resonant tones along various segments of the elongated sculpture. Credit – JA Projects

particularly inspired the form of Ali's pans that break with circular tradition, whilst Shah's commitment to congregating communities around pan playing inspired Ali to make his pans so large that they encourage being played collectively. Both Khamai and Shah and grew up in the town of San Fernando, Trinidad and consequently one of the installations was designated 'San Fernando' to pay tribute to work of these artists in the diaspora (see e.g. Shah, L.M.N., 2020; Shah et al., 2023).

In a symbolic moment, Khamai and Shah joined Ali in the Greenwich workshop of fabricators Jamps – which had been transformed into a modern-day 'Pan Yard' – for the first unveiling of the pans, where they discussed the importance of the artworks going beyond the superficial, and the need for the sculptures to be able to be played, elevating them from purely symbolic into functional ritual objects that transform the trauma of Caribbean history into the sounds of celebratory resistance (Figure 4).

Before the sculptures were put into their crates, for safe keeping on their journey towards Venice, the trio played a selection of carnival classics including 'Don't Stop the Carnival,' in a series of deeply moving sonics that Ali imagines could have filled the air whilst the Windrush Generation boarded ships to England in the mid-twentieth Century. The impact of Lord Kitchener's 'London is the Place for Me' was also discussed to celebrate this poignant moment (Lord Kitchener, 1948).

Upon their arrival in Venice, the two pans were raised into position at the entrance to the pavilion, demanding attention, even partially obscuring the plaque that identifies the building as British, the installation emphasising the portico as a



Figure 4. Photos of the Pan installations in the process of being made in the artistic hub of the Greenwich Peninsula in South East London. Photos capture the ongoing creation of the Pan installations within the workshop, showcasing the area's reputation for impressive art installations. Credit – JA Projects

space of transition, of departure and arrival – the 'ocean' across which vessels and people travel between islands, from Britain to Trinidad and Cyprus and back again.

Opening and Critical Reception

'Dancing Before the Moon' at the British Pavilion as part of the 18th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2023 was formally opened by the British ambassador to Italy (Edward Llewellyn, Baron Llewellyn of Steep), The Commission of the Pavilion (Sevra Davis) and the Curators of the pavilion (Jayden Ali, Joseph Henry, Meneesha Kellay and Sumitra Upham) (Figures 5a and 5b).

The exhibition took place in the context of a Biennale curated by Lesley Lokko, entitled *The Laboratory of the Future* which sought to foreground the diaspora of Africa and the global south.

Within this context, the commissioner, curators, and artists were awarded the only Special Mention for National Participation with the jury noting: *'for the curatorial strategy and design propositions celebrating the potency of everyday rituals as forms of resistance and spatial practices in diasporic communities'*.



Figure 5: (above left) A photograph captures the moment when the pavilion is opened by its four co-curators (from right to left: Jayden Ali (lead), Joseph Henry, Meneesha Kelley, Sumitra Upham), with one installation suspended upside down, symbolically mirroring the vessel that hauntingly recalls the confinement and suffering endured by enslaved people during their harrowing journey from Africa to the New World. Credit Taran Wilkhu.

Figure 6 (Right above) Photo of Jayden Ali playing the other installation as a steelpan during the opening weekend representing the aspect of the sculpture which in its materiality also embodies positive, celebratory references – to the steelpan tradition of Trinidad (the ‘thunder’) and to the makeshift grill pans that form a cornerstone of Turkish-Cypriot outdoor cooking in diaspora communities. Credit Jayden Ali

Sevra Davis, Commissioner of the British Pavilion noted:

“The British Council, curators and artists are overjoyed at the positive response we have received for Dancing Before the Moon, which has been praised by visitors as being at once thought-provoking, confident and uplifting. I am proud of and inspired by the work of this year’s exhibition, which encourages us to reflect on contemporary architecture and to think about how a diversity of voices can help us to create more inclusive and vibrant places.” (British Council, 2023)

Empowering New Generations

On the 14th June 2023, the British Pavilion at the International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2023 turned green for Grenfell marking the 6th anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. To mark this occasion and stand in solidarity with the Grenfell community, the curators of the exhibition ‘Dancing Before the Moon’ for the British Pavilion partnered with Green for Grenfell to host a lighting installation that illuminated the building green - the colour that has become a symbol representing hope and solidarity for those impacted by the tragedy of the fire. Inside the pavilion in the main hall (a space

designed for congregation and sharing), a programme of short films, archival material, animation and photography showcased work from local artists connected to Grenfell and West London. In today’s turbulent political landscape where

priorities and headlines are constantly shifting, cultural spaces play a vital role in ensuring the story of Grenfell is not forgotten and that its long-term fight for justice and reparation is heard. The panyard of Cyril Khamai and Haroun Shah’s



Figure 7 On the 14th June 2023, the British Pavilion turned green for Grenfell marking the 6th anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. The event was curated by Dhelia Snoussi as part of her fellowship and the film programme was curated by Toby Laurent-Belson representing *Green for Grenfell*. The photo captures this poignant moment when the pans were illuminated green. Credit-Clelia Cadamuro.

'Nostalgia Steelband' is directly opposite Grenfell Tower and acted as a trauma centre during this cataclysmic event. The band actively joined fundraising events to support its victims; performing its signature piece, 'Bridge over Troubled Water' which was gifted by the authors Simon and Garfunkel in memory of the 72 residents who died in the tragedy (Shah, 2023) (Figure 6).

The curators of 'Dancing Before the Moon' Joseph Henry, Meneesha Kellay, Jayden Ali and Sumitra Upham said:

"We stand in solidarity with the community of Grenfell whose lives were irrevocably changed by the fatal fire on June 14 2017. This tragedy was a result of systemic negligence and injustices rooted in architecture, policy and building industry. This pavilion stands to support communities who have been excluded from discussions around the planning of the built environment in the UK. We wanted to use



Figure 8. The British ambassador to Italy demonstrates the playing of the Pan at the opening ceremony. This instrument is renowned for its captivating sounds that encapsulate positive and celebratory connotations. Credit Taran Wilkhu

the pavilion to support Grenfell's ongoing battle for justice and provide space to amplify the voices of their community and its creative outputs”

The event was curated by Dhelia Snoussi as part of her fellowship for the Venice Architecture Biennale (hosted by BEYOND the BOX CIC) and the film programme is curated by Toby Laurent-Belson representing Green for Grenfell.

Acknowledgements:

The author wishes to thank Professor Haroun N. Shah for fruitful discussions during the project. To him and Cyril Khamai for participating in the launch of the installations at our Greenwich workshop on Friday 10th March 2023. I also wish to thank Professor Shah for help in the preparation of this manuscript.

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Supplementary Materials

Winning Curatorial team biographies announced by the British Council

Jayden Ali is the Founding Director of interdisciplinary practice JA Projects and works at the meeting point of architecture, urban planning and art, focusing on public facing, cultural projects that strengthen communities and enrich society. Approaching a decade of working; previous projects range from architectural masterplans, new builds, refurbishments and

exhibitions, through to the production of documentaries, urban research and the establishment of community institutions. He is a Senior Lecturer on Central Saint Martins' MArch Architecture course, is a trustee of Open City/Open House and a columnist at Elephant Magazine. He is part of the Hackney Regeneration Design Advisory Group and sits on the London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel. Jayden has been recognised as a key voice in architecture 'shaping a new future for London' by the Design Museum, Wallpaper Magazine and the Architecture Foundation, and is included within the Architects' Journal's prestigious '40 Under 40' list.

Joseph Henry is a designer, urbanist and writer whose practice involves working closely with institutions to be more progressive in how they shape our urban environment. Joseph works at the Greater London Authority as Capital Development Manager in the Culture and Creative Industries Unit. He previously led the Ecological Urbanism research inquiry, where he developed planning policy and guidance to embed circular economy principles into London's planning system.

Joseph, alongside Pooja Agrawal, co-founded Sound Advice, an extra-institutional platform that explores new forms of spatial practice through music. Sound Advice develops projects that foreground narratives and culture critical to designing a more progressive and plural urban environment. Joseph has written for titles such as Dezeen and Casabella. He is a trustee of the Russell Maliphant Dance Company, an advisor to Thearum Mundi and an associate lecturer on the MArch course and Central Saint Martins.

Meneesha Kaur Kellay is a London based curator and writer. She is currently the Contemporary Programme Curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), where she commissions projects and installations, and curates Friday Lates alongside the museum's participation in the London Design Festival, biennales and other one-off exhibitions and displays. Previously she was Public Programmes Curator at the RIBA; led Open House London 2014; produced talks and events at the Architectural Association and was also the Assistant Director of AA Night School. Meneesha has conducted independent projects with Museum of Architecture, London College of Fashion and the Baltic Pavilion at the 15th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia 2016. After studying architecture at the Manchester School of Architecture, Meneesha specialised in curating visual cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London. Meneesha has sat on the RIBA Architects for Change Advisory Board, was appointed on the 2019 London Festival of Architecture Curation Panel and is a Steering Committee Member for Design Can. She is part of the V&A Anti-Racism Taskforce and is passionate about decolonising cultural institutions.

Sumitra Upham is a London-based curator with an interest in making art as a tool for social justice. She is currently Head of Public Programmes at the Crafts Council where she leads the team responsible for the collection, exhibitions and events. From 2017-2021 she was Senior Curator of Public Programmes at the Design Museum, where she was responsible for leading an interdisciplinary programme of events, residencies and temporary projects. Sumitra joined the Board of Trustees at Cubitt, the artist-run gallery and cooperative, in 2020. In 2019 she was appointed Curator of Programmes for the 5th Istanbul Design Biennial, titled Empathy Re-Visited: Designs for more than one led by Mariana Pestana. Previously, Sumitra was Associate Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London where she curated educational projects and exhibitions including Radical Disco: Architecture and Nightlife in Italy, 1965 - 1975 in collaboration with Dr Catharine Rossi, See Red Women's Workshop and Shout Out! UK Pirate Radio in the 1980s. Prior to this, Sumitra was part of the exhibitions team at White Cube. She holds an MA in Curating Contemporary Design from Kingston University in partnership with the Design Museum, London.

Calypso and The Calypso Tent in the Diaspora; A Calypsonian Perspective

Alexander Loewenthal (pka Alexander D Great)¹, Roger Gibbs² and Kela Nnarka Francis³

¹Calypsonian/Composer/Arranger/Educator
Association of Calypsonians and Soca Artists (UK)
www.alexanderdgreat.net
adgreat7@gmail.com

²Calypsonian – Shak Shak
spiritofcalypso.com
http://www.spiritofcalypso.com
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

³Assistant Professor, University of Trinidad & Tobago, John Donaldson Campus, Port of Spain

Abstract

In Trinidad and Tobago, calypso tents were once revered as the primary hub for the local music scene during the Carnival season. These venues drew large audiences seeking both humorous tunes and commentary on current political and social events. However, in recent years, the popularity of the more upbeat and dance-oriented soca music genre has been cited as a primary factor contributing to the decline of calypso tents. Despite the changing landscape, proponents argue that calypso tents can adapt to the times and reinvent themselves with updated marketing strategies. This pattern begs the question of whether this trend is mirrored in the diaspora, where a transnational space may be significantly impacted by migration and ties to the homeland. For first-generation residents, calypso serves as a fundamental aspect of their identity and culture. Failure to preserve this tradition could lead to anguish and a sense of loss. This paper aims to explore the evolution of calypso in the diaspora and assess its long-term viability. Drawing on insights from academic discussions and sources such as John Cowley, Stephen Spark, and Henry Gomez, we highlight the challenges faced by calypso in two major metropolises, London and Toronto, where the Caribbean diaspora has established a formidable presence. Ultimately, this paper proposes strategies to sustain and revitalise calypso's presence in the diaspora.

Key Words: Calypso, Soca, Calypso Tent, Calypso Monarch, Calypso Competitions, Strategies, Tradition, Marketing, Sustainability.

Introduction

Calypso In Britain

John Cowley's presentation at the 7th International Steelpan/Carnival Arts conference in October 2018 titled '*Whence The Calypso In Britain?*' provided a robust

authoritative account of the background and lead-up to the arrival of the calypso in the UK. He states;

'While it is unlikely, we will ever learn the name of the first person to bring calypso to Britain, a starting point might be the First

World War when several “chantrells” served in Britain’s Armed Forces: so recalled Raymond Quevedo, (famous Calypsonian Atila the Hun) in 1936. Mostly these soldiers would have been members of the British West Indies Regiment, which drilled in Seaford, Sussex, before leaving for overseas duties; at least one Trinidadian, bassist Gerald “Al” Jennings, enlisted with the Navy. Other Trinidadians, musicians in their spare time, were in the Merchant Marine. Several chose to stay in the UK after World War I. For example, Arthur “Brylo” Ford, who played string instruments but was also a competent flautist. Cyril “Midnight” Blake was a guitarist who took up trumpet. Gramophone records were one route to becoming aware of different island styles. In 1927 British Parlophone released nine couplings of principally Trinidad-orientated music made by expatriates in New York. Trinidad-born pianist and bandleader Lionel Belasco and vaudevillian Sam Manning arrived from the U.S.A. in 1934. In London, they found the black British orchestra of Guyanese clarinettist Rudolph Dunbar, which they probably engaged when making recordings that year. After organising a black British vaudeville show that toured the country, in 1935 Manning secured a contract for four sides with Parlophone. As the consort of Amy Ashwood Garvey, Manning played a role in the African Friends of Abyssinia, formed under the leadership of C. L. R. James out of a restaurant in New Oxford Street. In 1936 they opened the Florence Mills Social Parlour on Carnaby Street where Rudolph Dunbar acted as musical director. In August of that year, he organised a party there for black American sprinter Jesse Owens, fresh from his legendary victories at the infamous Berlin Olympic Games. A selection of

contemporary calypso records was released in Britain in 1938.” (Cowley, 2017)

On the opening day of the First Test Match between the West Indies and England at Lord’s (24 June 1939), Ken Johnson presented a programme of contemporary calypso records and other West Indian music on the BBC London regional service, to celebrate the cricket tournament. On 3rd September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany and World War II (WWII) began and resulted in a hiatus of musical events. However, calypsos, mostly with the Cyril Blake’s band, were then featured regularly on BBC radio broadcasts to bolster morale during the war.

Amid WWII, the Trinidadian baritone Edric Connor arrived in the UK in 1944 and his impact was phenomenal. He championed calypso on the airwaves and in the years to come he was instrumental in making the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra’s (TASPO) visit for the Festival of Britain in 1951 a resounding success (see review, Sullivan, 2021). Another milestone in this journey of calypso in Britain was Al Jennings's return to Trinidad in mid-1945 which resulted in his ‘All-Star Caribbean Orchestra’ that came to Britain in November 1945 amid WWII. He brought a significant number of highly skilled musicians who could accompany island calypso singers. One year later, with the seeds sown, and the end of WWII, two colossal exponents of calypso, Lord Beginner (Egbert Moore) and Lord Kitchener (Aldwyn Roberts) arrived on the troopship MV Empire Windrush at Tilbury on 22nd June 1948. For the first time, Britain now had experienced Trinidadian performers who dedicated their time to promoting calypso in their new homeland. Cowley (2017) notes that Beginner, with a

reputation from earlier recordings, soon made BBC broadcasts and took a job with the Jose Norman rumba band at the exclusive Churchill's Niterie. Kitchener, accompanied by the band of Guyanese trumpeter Rannie Hart, began singing in south London hotel bars. In the immediate post-war period, London became a mecca for visitors from all over the British Commonwealth, including a return trip from the USA by Lionel Belasco (September 1948), and a visit by another Trinidad calypsonian, Lord Caresser (Rufus Callender), whose sojourn was not particularly successful. However, Kitchener recorded for Renico Simmons' Humming Bird label at the end of that year. Both Beginner and Kitchener built a reputation in London's club and theatre-land that secured them a flow of engagements. These activities led to calypso recording sessions by both performers, accompanied by Cyril Blake's Caribbean band, for Parlophone in early 1950, which established their reputations in Britain (Cowley, 2017). More recordings and other work opportunities followed. Likewise, black West Indian musicians gained opportunities to play idiomatic styles alongside the dance and jazz repertoire that provided regular employment. The arrival of the highly proficient calypsonian Roaring Lion (Rafael de Leon) at the end of August 1951 added another bow to their string. He performed alongside TASPO at the Festival and soon secured recording contracts and singing engagements.

The folk music circuit provided another route by which calypso could reach a wider audience. Cowley (2017) cites an example of an event held in June 1953 titled 'Ballads and Blues' at the Theatre Royal, Stratford, East London in which Lord

Beginner instigated a 'Calypso War' competition based on his experience back in Trinidad which enthralled the audience. It was about this time, (March 1954) that another of Trinidad's foremost calypsonians, Mighty Terror (Cornelius Fitzgerald Henry) arrived at London's Heathrow Airport and immediately set out to meet his friend Lord Kitchener, expecting that the taxi driver would know where to find Kitchener. Terror also produced records soon after his arrival and joined the coterie of experienced vocalists from Trinidad who found singing employment.

Resident Calypsonians Return to Trinidad

Cowley (2017) notes that all the calypsonians who were domiciled in England at this time were finding that full-time assignments were becoming few and far between. Lord Invader, (Rupert Grant) came to Britain via the USA in March 1956 and 'was the last Trinidadian calypsonian to make a mark in the UK during the 1950s'. He composed and perform a calypso on the wedding of film star Grace Kelly to Prince Rainier III of Monaco, which the BBC broadcast two days later. After a relatively brief visit to Europe, Invader returned to the US in 1958 and thence Trinidad. The island's rising and prevailing star, the Mighty Sparrow (Slinger Francisco), was invited to perform at a West Indian Gazette-sponsored indoor 'Carnival' at Seymour Hall, London, on 23rd March 1962. With a new trend of calypsonians returning to their homeland, Cowley notes that Sparrow visited Kitchener at his home in Manchester in an attempt to persuade him to return to Trinidad and join his 1963 Tent. Kitchener did return to Trinidad in late 1962 but not to Sparrow's Tent, but to start his tent called

Calypso Revue which for over 30 years was a tour de force of calypso music. His return home coincided with the start of the National Panorama during Carnival 1963, an event in which his compositions would mark out a new era in the development of steelpan and calypso. His music also “regained its playfulness and abundant risqué sexual euphemisms once he was back home and happy in Trinidad” (Surtees, 2015).

Public Perceptions and Expectations of Calypso

At the 3rd International Conference on Steelpan/Carnival Arts, October 23-24, 2010 held at the University of East London, British calypsonian Alexander D Great expressed his views in a paper titled *‘Calypso in the UK: Public Perceptions, Expectations and Political Impact’* that succinctly provides background to the history of calypso and the calypso tent in the UK. The abstract of this presentation is reproduced here in full:

"Each generation of slaves and freeborn Blacks created new musical genres and performance styles." This quotation, referring to Black American styles of music, encapsulates the substance of musical composition in general. I contend that this process is as marked in Calypso as it is in Blues, Soul, jazz and Hip-Hop.

Calypso has been the premier vehicle for expressing the social and political attitudes of the people of the Caribbean through its griot practitioners. As new styles evolved, Bluebeat, Reggae, Zouk and Soucouso became identified with particular islands. These subsets of the Calypso art form were African in origin but influenced by music genres inherited from their European colonisers.

In the crudest sense, the most obvious variations can be cited simply in the use of instruments. In Barbados, the "fife and drum" (also known as "Jing Ping") has a direct link with the British sailors who would entertain themselves in this fashion. In the French-speaking islands (and also where patois is the prime lingua franca, e.g. St. Lucia and Dominica) the accordion and fiddle have led the way. Trinidad, with its original Spanish domination (and its proximity to Venezuela), uses the cuatro and guitar as the preferred accompanying instruments. With the advent of radio and the gramophone, musicians were able to hear music from a wide variety of sources. They incorporated some of the features of what they heard into their music-making. Musicians, the world over, are therefore 'magpies' and will borrow from other sources to find new modes of expression. As people left the Caribbean to seek work in Canada, the USA and Europe (mainly Britain at first) the content of calypso altered to reflect local conditions. Although Calypso had been heard in Britain since the end of WW1 the so-called "Windrush Generation" reintroduced it to the British public through some of its finest exponents, viz. Lord Kitchener, Mighty Terror, Roaring Lion, Young Tiger and Lord Beginner. The witty lyrics used to express conditions in Britain ("My Landlady's too Rude, in my up here she likes to Intrude" - Kitchener) reflected the feelings of Caribbean immigrants but also caught the attention of aficionados of Folk music and ethnomusicologists who were interested in calypso as a folk-art form. In the 1950s and 60s these songs were seen as amusing and non-threatening, therefore, providing a perfect foil for the then, feared newcomer, Rock 'n' Roll. The social and political content of some Calypsos was often

disguised in humour/double entendre and while it rarely escaped the notice of the Caribbean locals, most Americans and Europeans were unaware of the underlying "picong". (Where it was noticeable, as in "Rum and Coca Cola" by Lord Invader, the lyrics were sanitized by "would-be plagiarist" Morry Amsterdam for the Andrews Sisters version, which sold 4 million in the US).

Much has changed. Trinidad's independence in 1962 saw many Caribbeans returning home, including Lord Kitchener, Roaring Lion, Mighty Terror and Lord Beginner, Calypso's main exponents in Britain. Those who remained continued to perform to small, informed audiences. However, Jamaicans adapted well-known songs by popular international artists and gave them a new beat (Ska, later "Lovers' Rock") and this took over as the staple diet for Caribbean "Blues Parties" in the '60s and '70s.

The advent of Soca (generally credited to Ras Shorty I and the mixing of African and East Indian percussion styles in the early 1970s) brought a faster, more urgent feel to the Calypso. While there are Soca artists who maintain all the political and social commentary that we have come to expect from Calypso, (Shadow, Rudder, Stalin) Soca has itself been subdivided. "Jam 'n' Wine" requires no story, causing a reduction in lyrical content and more emphasis on dancing. Groovy Soca has more lyrical content and mostly confines the topics to "feel good" carnival issues. Chutney Soca is the domain of the Indian citizens of Trinbago and incorporates flavours of the sub-continent's Bhangra and other styles. It is still within Calypso and what I would call Conscious Soca where we find the original Calypso spirit of social commentary and invective.

The calypso tradition was kept alive through the '70s and '80s by British-based performers like Mighty Tiger, (first British Calypso Monarch, 1971), Golden Cockerel (Vivian Comma) and Lord Cloak amongst others. In the 1980s Tobago Crusoe and D'Alberto brought their talents to the UK, and both are models of excellence and much sought-after performers. There are other cities, (Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Reading, Oxford) where calypsonians perform at various times of the year but the London Tent has the highest profile and attracts calypsonians from further afield. In 1991 the Association of British Calypsonians was formed. Apart from a lady called Soca Baby, who won the Monarch title in the early 1970s, the tent had only two female calypsonians in the mid-1990s, Totally Talibah and Sister Sandra. There are now six regular female members, including Helena B and Akima Paul, last year's Monarch. All the female calypsonians have been UK monarchs. The ladies have dominated the competition since 2004. These calypsonians have fantastic, powerful voices, putting them in a league with the great American Soul and R n B singers.

After nearly 20 years, public perceptions and expectations of Calypso in Britain have altered somewhat. The first notable difference is that the "British" calypsonians comprise performers from at least eight Caribbean countries, as opposed to just hailing from Trinbago. Secondly, the topics covered in the London Tent tend to be broader in their scope than those in the islands, often dealing with international issues rather than local politics. This is also true of Caribana in Toronto and reflects my observation that people will carry their culture with them and adapt it to fit new surroundings.

Audiences for Calypso in Britain are usually well-informed and may have a variety of perspectives. There are those who expect the sort of traditional renditions so expertly delivered by Cloak, Tiger, Explorer and De Admiral. Subjects covered include taking those in authority to task for perceived inadequacies. Cloak has had audiences rolling in the aisles with kaisos attacking the competition judges, the Carnival Committee, and even Carnival Village, (the current home of the Tent). He has had the PA system turned off during a performance where he lyrically chastised the trustees for what he perceived as the under-use of Carnival Village for Caribbean activities. While he may not be entirely accurate in his facts, the audience objected vociferously to the attempt to censor his views.

Historically audiences at the Tent expect some statement from Reverend B, Brown Sugar, Giselle Carter and Alexander D Great on matters concerning injustice or equality. G String disguises a serious message with humour and biting wit while Sheldon Skeete and Rondell Donawa represent a new, urgent, strongly innovative feel with their modern street style of delivery.

The Groovy Soca competition (won this year [2018] by Cleopatra) runs alongside the main one. It allows calypsonians to come to the Tent with a slow and a fast tune. This broadens the styles and subject matter of what audiences can expect and there are experiments in Latin and Jazz "feel" in the arrangements. My viewpoint is to encourage experimentation and try to take this art form into hitherto unexplored territory, either in terms of structure, arrangement, or style.

In the Caribbean, one expects calypsos to be dramatically staged with props and

actors to extract the ultimate performance out of the song. However, the prizes on offer are much bigger there than elsewhere and resources are limited in the UK. Consequently, audiences have come to expect the performances in Britain to be more like those of a regular singer, appearing in a fine costume but senza props. Occasionally British-based calypsonians will enlist the help of friends and family to stage their song and when this happens, they usually find themselves on the winners' podium. The tradition of the "complete performance art experience" is still high on the judges' agenda and presentation is of great importance.

There are two Junior Calypso competitions in Britain each year, one just before Notting Hill Carnival and one during Black History Month. This gives youngsters, interested in exploring the art form, the opportunity to perform with a full band and backing vocalists, as they would in competitions in the Caribbean. There is a reciprocal arrangement with the Trinidad and Tobago government for their Junior Monarch to sing as a guest in the London Tent in August. The British Junior Monarch travels to Trinidad in February/March to perform there during the UK's coldest month, a tasty carrot which helps to focus the ABC Juniors' minds on the need for a good, well-crafted topical calypso. There is still a need to find the optimum time to stage these Junior competitions in the UK, because, although attended by supporters and friends of the participants, there is still no occasion when there are large audiences of children. The ABC has run Calypso writing workshops since the mid-1990s for young, aspiring calypsonians. It was organised by Talibah Roberts (Calypso soubriquet Totally Talibah). She ran sessions for children aged 8 to 17 during Half-Terms

and Summer holidays, occasionally aided by some of the other calypsonians, including Wen D, Cleopatra, Mighty Explorer and myself. There are about 12 regular members of the Junior tent and in the coming year, there is to be a focus on getting them to perform in schools so that other children can see members of their peer group performing culturally thought-provoking songs, written by themselves. One successful innovation, which we have tried to implement in Britain, is to have songs written by groups of children. Children in a group (3-6 years) contribute ideas about topics, rhyme schemes, line length, syllabic content etc., all designed to make the best possible representation of the subject under discussion. This kind of interactive creative composition enables less confident or shyer children to engage in the activity, sharing in the success and learning about what works and what does not. In recent years the form, chord progression and melodic content of the ABC Juniors' calypsos have all become more complex and imaginative and, as the participants gain confidence, they take more risks, stretching the bounds of their imagination. The current junior monarchs, Kiki B and Vivi both wrote exceptional songs with a distinctly British R n B flavour, whilst still maintaining the calypso mood and style.

In past years ABC has brought visiting artists from the Caribbean to add a star attraction to the roster of the Tent. This has served to swell the ranks of the audience and provided excellent role models for the younger performers. However, for the past two years, there has been a reciprocal arrangement with Caribana, in Toronto, where the monarchs from either side become visiting guests of one another.

This new spirit of cooperation is now extending to the other art forms. Traditionally, steel bands in Britain have only considered playing hits from Trinidad and Tobago during the Notting Hill Carnival. There have been some faltering attempts to link up with local Calypsonians to play their tunes on the road but these have never come to fruition. This year, however, there have been moves to get the local Calypsonians to write something appropriate for a steel band to play. One song has already been written for that purpose and it is hoped that more collaborations will follow. The day may come when a Calypsonian's song is about a masquerade band, which is jumping up to the said Calypso as it is played on the road by a steelband. This view is growing in strength and was a key vision of this conference.” (Alexander D Great, “Calypso in the UK: Public Perceptions, Expectations” from the 3rd International Conference on Steelpan/Carnival Arts, October 23-24, 2010 - <https://www.steelpanconference.com>)

The London Calypso Tent Celebrates its Silver Jubilee; An Overview Based on Stephen Spark's 'Calypso in London; 25 Years of the London Calypso Tent' (2017).

Stephen Spark wrote: “The London Calypso Tent is truly remarkable. Against all the odds, it has survived to celebrate its Silver Jubilee and it remains the only calypso tent in Europe. It receives little publicity, has been shamefully ignored by most of the Black-run media never mind the mainstream press and broadcasters, and in the past, it has not always received the

support it deserved from Notting Hill Carnival's organisers. Yet its 25th season, in August 2017, was one of the most successful ever - certainly in terms of the quality of the performances enjoyed by audiences at the Tabernacle." (Spark 2017).

Calypso and the Start of Notting Hill Carnival.

The Association of British Calypsonians (ABC) only came into being in 1992. But as both Cowley and Spark pointed out, there is a rich history of calypso in Britain that dates back a century ago. It was also formed following its heyday when renowned proponents such as Lord Kitchener, Lord Beginner, Mighty Terror, Lord Invader, and Roaring Lion were gaining wide recognition and recording with music labels such as EMI-Parlophone, Melodisc, and Lyragon. Nicole Rachele-Moore notes that the Mighty Terror was the UK's first calypso monarch, acquiring the title in a competition held at Chelsea Town Hall, London in 1957. It is stated that the event was organised by the League of Coloured Peoples and David Pitt (one of the first black peers to sit in the House of Lords) with The Roaring Lion and Trinidadian singer, actor, radio broadcaster and filmmaker Edric Connor (1913–1968) as judges. The Mighty Terror (Cornelius Fitzgerald Henry, 1921–2007) won with a song called 'I Walk A Million Miles' to beat a dozen other contestants. Cowley (2017) notes that all the calypsonians who were domiciled in England at this time were finding that full-time employment was becoming sparse and began to rethink their future.

Their exodus could have seen the demise of calypso in Britain, but a new generation of British-born or permanently settled Windrush émigré took up the mantra. Spark

continues: "As the old guard of calypsonians left town, and pop music took over, there was a gap of fourteen years before the next British calypso competition in 1971, the year Ashton Moore (a.k.a. Young Tiger, and later Mighty Tiger) arrived in London. Moore, the founder of the ABC and nine times UK Calypso Monarch, came to work for London Transport as a bus conductor, but had been steeped in the calypso genre since childhood. The competition was seldom unified under one banner throughout the 1970s and 80s. Various crowns were fought for, and the prize money often went missing in the general chaos. Musically, the era was dominated by Tiger and his rival Lord Cloak (Errol Brown). One year, when both men decided to forego the competitions on political grounds, the UK had its first female winner, a singer called Soca Baby." (Spark, 2017). To bring some order to the process, Moore and Al Hector joined forces to establish the ABC in the spring of 1991. On 7th August 1992, the stage at the Yaa Asantewaa Centre, Paddington hosted ABC's first-ever London Calypso Tent. Later on, the Centre's directors, Shabaka Thompson, Ashton Moore and Richard Gibson established the now highly successful 'Carnival Village' at the Tabernacle Theatre, obtaining £4.2 million grant from Arts Council England. In 1994, women started becoming members and by 2004, Wen D Lewis became the first female UK Monarch. Her victory had such an impact on the confidence of women that they held the crown over the next five successive years.

The ABC transitioned to the Association of Calypsonians UK (ACUK) and a commemorative book 'Calypso in London', was published by Stephen Spark to mark the Tent's Silver Jubilee on

Monday 9th October 2017. It is believed to be the first book published solely on London’s calypso heritage. This attractive illustrated book not only includes the history of the Tent between 1992 to 2017 but delves back into the pioneering days of Calypso of 1960s - 80s. The book provides short profiles of 57 members of ABC/ACUK, past and present and a special tribute to the Mighty Tiger. It also includes a glossary and an appendix listing the Tent’s many Calypso and Groovy Soca Monarchs. The launch (1.30 pm - 4 pm and 8pm-10.30 pm) announced by Spark (2017) before the event, included historic DVD footage of past events, talks on calypso’s extraordinary history, live calypso performances and an exhibition of photographs of the London Tent’s stars. However, this announcement by Stephen Spark does not do justice to the depth of courage in his book, ‘Calypso in London.’ It is not only authoritative but written with very personal involvement and intimate knowledge of an art form which he only discovered by accident. But having fallen deeply in love with Calypso, he is omnipresent, genuinely involved with every show and is respected by all artists. Table 1 extracted from his book up to 2017, gives a brief chronological list of some of the key events over the years.

The board of the Association of Calypsonians and Calypso Artists has embarked on a new initiative, to broaden the scope of its activities and try to deliver the art forms of Calypso and Soca throughout the year and not just to feature them in the summer, when the Notting Hill carnival season is at its height. Roger Gibbs, a talented and committed Calypsonian based in Toronto, Canada, made the point in a recent exchange on Facebook that it may be time to look beyond the single “winner takes all” calypso and soca competitions that seem to be the main ingredients of the carnival seasons in those cities where Caribbean Carnival is celebrated in a big way. He suggests that it may be time to celebrate our culture in the form of several events to illustrate the variety and excellence of our culture in more ways than simply competition. This is discussed in more detail by the author below. ACASA held its first-ever winter “World Music Stage” on 15th January 2023 (see Figure 1). It then followed this initiative by having an All Women show titled ‘Women in Calypso and Soca on 17th March of this year (see Figure 2).

1974: The Yaa Asantewaa (‘The Factory’) opened as an Arts Centre.	Spark, 2017 ...”the old Yaa was a friendly place, both intimate and informal, which was ideal for a calypso tent”.
1976 -1978: Calypso Competition at Hammersmith Town Hall	Mighty Tiger wins the first official calypso contest in 1976 and repeats this 1977 and 1978. Led a nationwide tour with The Mighty Sparrow and Paul Keens-Douglas.
1979: Two competitions (1) Carnival & Arts Committee (CAC) (2) Carnival Development Committee (CDC):	Tiger won one and shared the crown with Lord Cloak in the other. Start of Lord Cloak domination for calypso honours over the next 20 years

1983: Tiger and Cloak boycotted the competition	First calypsonian, Soca Baby (Betty Alexander) to win the crown. Mighty Arrow releases 'Hot, Hot, Hot'
1984:	Arrow's follow-up, 'Long Time', puts the spotlight on soca.
1986 - World Stage erected at Powis Square in the heart of Notting Hill Carnival.	Mighty Tiger, Lord Cloak, Lucky (Patrick Humphrey), Wounded Soldier (Leslie 'Teacher' Palmer) performs on the 'World Stage'. Trinidadian Alex Pascall. Hector (Al Hector) founded the European Association of Calypsonians (EAC) which ceased with his death in 1990. His wife Angela
1989: Claire Holder, chair of the Carnival Enterprise Committee (CEC)	Took over from CAC and suggested the name: the Association of British Calypsonians (ABC). Holder, a barrister, drew up the constitution and brings order to the group – she was awarded honorary lifetime membership.
1991: Claire Holder's ABC	Calypso Monarch Semi-Finals – took place without a band.
1992: The Yaa Centre - Mighty Tiger - reluctantly agreed to head the ABC	ABC's Tent very first calypso tent opened its doors at 7.30pm on Friday 7 August 1992 at Yaa Asantewaa Centre at 1 Chippenham Mews, Maida Vale, London) 13 December 1992 - Christmas Calypso Tent
1993: Calypso Monarch held at Willoughby Recreation Ground in Tottenham.	The last of the Socalypso outdoor event put on by L&H Promotions, run by Keith Lakhan and Claire's brother, Danny Holder. These shows were noted for their lineup of celebrated overseas artistes such as David Rudder and Black Starlin. Mighty Tiger brought the first junior Calypsonian (Kerwin Du Bois) from Trinidad to the London Calypso Tent - huge success.
1994: Calypso at two venues: Dougie's Intermezzo hosted Crusoe's Kaiso and the Yaa held Calypso Monarch	Calypso Monarch won by Michael 'Bubbles' Olivierre aka 'Prodigal Son'. Significantly, two female calypsonian joined the Tent - Sister Sandra (Sandra Alexander) and Totally Talibah (Talibah Hawkins).
1995: Calypso Monarch finals held alongside the Grand Costume Gala in the vast echoing exhibition halls of Olympia	Lord Cloak won the Calypso Monarch, with Tiger runner-up and Explorer in third place. The vent was not repeated as the acoustics were poor and with the focus on carnival costumes, Calypso was almost invisible.
1996: the 5 th year of the London Calypso Tent became a significant arm of the Notting Hill Carnival events.	Some of the most renowned calypsonians and bands from the Caribbean now appearing in London. These included David Rudder, Charlie's Roots, Black Stalin, Ronnie Mackintosh, Pelham Goddard and the band Massive Chandelier.
1997: ABC now begins to tour	ABC appeared at carnivals in Reading, Plymouth and Huddersfield. BBC's 'Pebble Mill' television programme interviewed several of the calypsonians.
1998: ABC releases its first CD compilation and local bands began to play their music on the road for NHC	Lord Cloak who won the last seven crowns deposed by the Mighty Tiger, with Alexander D Great in 3 rd place and Cloak in 4 th . The Yaa Asantewaa Mas Band played Sister Sandra's music at NHC.
1999: calls to to have a UK Road March based on local music most popular music played by the mas bands' DJs at NHC	Nostalgia, Eclipse and Mangrove steelbands played some of Tiger's songs but the new Notting Hill Carnival Trust (NHCT) refused to back ABC's 'No Calypso, No Carnival'
2000 - ABC's itinerary now included the Hackney Mare de Gras carnival.	Other venues in Reading and Leicester also added – the former established by De Admiral and still functions. Two shows on the same night may frustrated audiences- Calypso Monarch was held at the Tabernacle while ABC held its popular 'Last Night of the Tent' at the Yaa But both events had packed houses – emphasising the popularity of calypso up to the millennium
2001: some veterans retired	Several new calypsonians entered the Tent including the young Sheldon Skeete. Tobago Crusoe win the crown.

2002: Carnival and Tent in upheaval as Claire Holder is removed as head NHCT.	Rumours that London’s Mayor Ken Livingstone planned to take over NHC and move it out of its cradle into Hyde Park. NHC in turmoil but the Tent went to the Royal Opera House and Cloak wins back the crown. Calypso reverted to the Yaa for the Last Night of the Tent with soca superstar Machel Montano and Black Stalin among the artistes.
2003/2004: start of a decade of dominance by women calypsonians	Brown Sugar, Giselle, Helena B are among the Monarch including the Groovy Soca Monarch competition. Lord Explainer (Winston Henry) brings down the house with his performance of ‘Lorraine.’
2005: Soca Music Awards.	Wen’D won Best Female Soca Artiste and Best UK Calypso Artiste.
2007:	23 rd March - The Mighty Tiger (Ashton Moore) founder and president of the Calypso tent died
2008: Tent moved to the Tabernacle	Took some time for patrons to accept the new venue. Many new calypsonians enter the Tent.
2009	Another female artiste, Akima Paul makes huge a impression in the Tent, beating Brown Sugar (second) and Giselle (third).
2010/2011: Mighty Tiger and Alexander D Great began collaboration with the steelpan conferences; calypso became one of main sessions of these conferences from 3 rd international conference titled: <i>“Integrating the three Elements of Carnival; Steelpan, Calypso & Mas”</i>	Alexander D Great’s wins the Calypso Monarch with ‘Haiti’ (2010) and again in 2011 with pannist, Debra Romain with their composition ‘Pan Woman on Trial’. Soca Divettes make a big impression with another of Alex’s compositions, ‘Soul Fire’. However, female artistes continue to show their gumption with Cleopatra (‘Doh Talk de Talk’) and Kiki B (‘Image is not Everything’) winning the Groovy Soca Monarch and Junior Calypso Monarch titles respectively.
2012: Calypso activities at Tabernacle diversify. Annual Lecture Series – speakers: Alexander D Great, Nicole Rachelle Moore while Ray Funk (USA) spoke on ‘Lord Melody - Calypso Superstar’.	Tobago-born -Toronto-based Macomere Fifi (Eulith Tara Woods) sings for the first at Tent – a memorable performance of ‘Mother and Daughter’. Black History Month, ABC’s Queens in Concert hosted Brown Sugar, Cleopatra, Giselle and Helena B, supported by the Divettes, the ABC Band, Mighty Tiger and Alexander D Great. After several years of Junior competitions and visits from Trinidad, this was terminated. Alexander D Great steps up activities to hold inspiring calypso workshops at schools, community groups and even museums.
2012 -15: ABC’s Calypso Monarch	New rising star Sheldon Skeete wins the Calypso Monarch in 2012 and then goes on to win for four consecutive years.
2016:	After some 10 years of performing at the Tent. G-String’s serious commentary on the kidnapping of Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram in ‘Spoils of War’ brought down the house and won him the coveted prize.
Silver Jubilee 2017: Calypso Tent • 4 th August - Silver Jubilee Opening Night • 11 th August – - Calypso Monarch Competition -Semi Finals • 18 th August - British Groovy Soca Competition • 24 th August	Marking the Silver Jubilee of the London Calypso Tent (left) ABC/ACUK promotion leaflet (right) Stephen Spark’s treatise on calypso. Sadly, it was also the year the Tent lost its founder and president, the Mighty Tiger to a long-term illness.

<p>-Calypso Monarch Finale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25th August <p>- King & Queen of the Tent and People Choice finale</p>	
<p>2018: A panel discussion at the 7th conference raises the issue again: “When will steelbands play our calypsos for carnival?”</p>	<p>After 26 years of competition, another long-standing artiste, De Admiral wins the crown with his ‘The Windrush Generation’ in a fiercely battled competition. De Admiral spoke at the 7th international Steelpan/Carnival Arts conference in 2018- title “Journey to the Calypso Monarch”.</p>
<p>2019: Helena B’s double victory.</p>	<p>Helena B won ACASA Groovy Soca Monarch and Calypso Monarch titles.</p>
<p>2020: The Tent closed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic</p>	<p>Calypso Tent goes virtual, and calypsonians perform at the iconic Abbey Road Studios and broadcast by Notting Hill Carnival organisers as a virtual carnival (see Phillip, 2021).</p>
<p>2021: Indoor activities prohibited but calypso and pan plays outside hospitals to encourage vaccine uptake</p>	<p>See paper in the International Journal of Carnival Arts (2021) Vol. 3, pp 27-45. “CarniVAX’-Steelpan and Calypso at London Hospitals to Boost Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2) Vaccination” (Shah et al., 2021). https://www.steelpanconference.com/volume-3</p>
<p>2022: calypso reaches the wider British public and Lord Beginner’s “I was there” (at the Coronation) in 1953) was played frequently on BBC.</p> <p>Alexander D Great on T’V show ‘Britain’s Got Talent’</p> <p>David Rudder performs with ACASA’s G-String at London Opera Holland Park</p>	<p>King Charles III (then Prince and Camilla) visits the Carnival Village on 13th July - calypsonian D’Alberto performs.</p> <p>Local calypsonian, Triniboi Joojie sings ‘Pan in A Minor’ with a100 piece steelband ‘ukaspò’ at the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Parade on Sunday 5th June at Buckingham Palace. (see Thomas et al., 2022).</p> <p>Gets a standing ovation from all four judges while nearly 1 million viewers from around the UK and abroad hears calypso and voted for his song ‘Big Party for Your Platinum Jubilee.’ (see Thomas et al., 2022).</p> <p>As part of an extension of the Notting Hill Carnival events, calypso moved to London’s premier venue (Opera Holland Park) with David Rudder singing to a packed house. (see Shah et al., 2022).</p>
<p>2023:</p>	<p>ACASA’s World Music Stage (Figure 1 below) on 15th January; ‘Women in Calypso and Soca’ 17th March - (Figure 2 below). And youth workshops and competitions (Figure 3 below)</p> <p>Calypso Lime started the 2023 programme on Saturday 6th May on the day of the coronation of Charles III and his wife, Camilla, as king and queen of the United Kingdom (Figure 4).</p>
<p>Table 1. Some Salient Moments during the Transition from the Yaa Asantewaa Centre (Chippenham Mews, London) to the establishment of the London Calypso Tent, at the Carnival Village, (The Tabernacle, Powis Square, London). (Spark, 2017)</p>	



Figure 1. Leaflet for “World Music Stage Winter Edition”. The show was expanded to include steelpan (Nostalgia) and electronic drums (Dezy Bongo) with the incredible Tabernacle Crew and Soca Divettes as backing. The event took place on (Sunday 15th January 2023) and was a huge success.



Figure 2. The second of the two winter Calypso shows by ACASA titled “Women in Calypso and Soca” held on Friday 17th March 2023. The show was chaired and organised only by women and was a model of a Tent and a resounding success.



Figure 3. In an attempt to stimulate interest among the youth, ACASA began organising a series of Calypso and Soca workshops. A parallel event run by Shareen Gray in steelpan started in 2010 and has been highly successful (see Gray, IJCA, Vol. 6, pp 18 – 33).

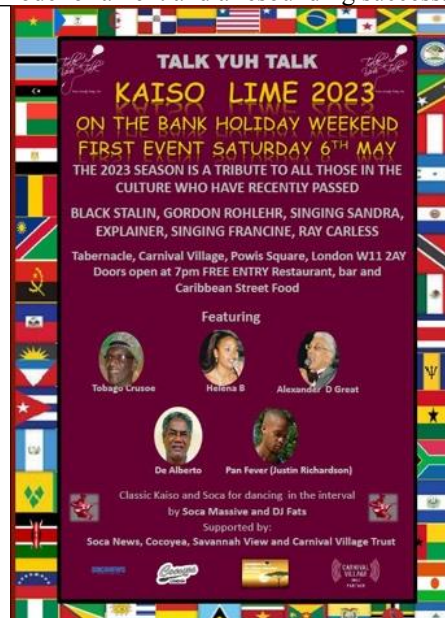


Figure 4. During the last few years, Dexter Khan (Cocoyea Mas Band) and team have been bringing calypso to London for 6 - 7 months of the year. The event titled ‘Kaiso Lime’ has been taking place on the first Saturday of each month and restarted this year on Saturday 6th May 2023.

Toronto: A Vibrant Nucleus of Activity for the Calypso Tent in the Diaspora

The history of Calypso in Toronto is intertwined with the broader Caribbean cultural presence in the city. In the early 20th century, Caribbean immigrants, particularly from Trinidad and Tobago, began arriving in Toronto in search of better opportunities and livelihoods. As they settled in the city, they brought with them their rich cultural traditions, including the lively and expressive music of Calypso.

The first seeds of Calypso's presence in Toronto were sown through informal gatherings and community events held by Caribbean immigrants. These gatherings provided a space for musicians and artists to showcase their talent and share their cultural heritage. Calypso, known for its witty lyrics, social commentary, and infectious melodies, quickly resonated with both the Caribbean community and other Torontonians.

As Caribbean communities in Toronto grew, so did the popularity of Calypso. In the 1950s and 1960s, the genre began to gain wider recognition beyond the Caribbean diaspora, as more people from diverse backgrounds embraced the music's infectious rhythms and lively performances. Calypsonian Lord Caresser made Montreal his home in the 1950s and became a sensation on the club scene.

The emergence of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival (formerly Caribana) in 1967 further solidified Calypso's presence in the city. The carnival provided a prominent platform for Calypso musicians to showcase their talent and for the genre to be celebrated on a larger scale. Calypso competitions became an integral part of the carnival, attracting both local and international artists who competed for

prestigious titles. In 1972, Sparrow's phenomenal release, "Toronto Mas," drew the world's attention to Caribana, elevating the festival to global prominence. The first formal calypso competition was held in 1969 at the Maple Leaf Gardens and won by Dave DeCastro. A decade followed with smaller competitions until 1981 when the first formal calypso body was formed to develop and promote the art form. Incorporated in 1992, the Organization of Calypso Performing Artists (OCPA) has been running an annual programme of calypso tents, competitions, workshops and special concerts. Over the years, Toronto overtook Montreal as the entertainment capital of Canada and Calypso in Toronto continued to evolve, incorporating influences from various music styles and cultural expressions, making it more appealing to a broader audience. Many of the prominent calypsonians from the Caribbean such as Lord Melody, Lord Superior and the Mighty Sparrow, along with popular calypso bands like The Merryman, Kalyan, Byron Lee & The Dragonaires, and others, became frequent performers. In 1998, David Rudder was the featured guest artist at the Calypso Monarch Finals, later making Toronto his family home in 2001 (see Table 2).

Beyond the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, Calypso found its way into various venues, nightclubs, and festivals across the city. Dedicated Calypso bands and individual artists emerged, making significant contributions to the local music scene. Additionally, Calypso's influence can be seen in the works of several Canadian artists who integrated the genre's elements into their compositions. Bands like Kobo Town, led by Trini-born Drew Gonsalves has created a new, younger audience for

calypso by adding hip hop, reggae and jazz, while remaining true to the tradition. As Toronto's Caribbean community flourished, so did the demand for Calypso performances and events. By 2007, there were three calypso tents, promoted by OCPA as the Calypso Tents Music Series and which ran until 2013. In 2023, OCPA established Calypso Stars, an annual 3-hour calypso and soca show at Harbourfront

Centre, one of Canada's premiere entertainment venues. Today, the city's vibrant Caribbean music scene, including Calypso, is slowly rebounding from a 2-year pandemic hiatus and continues to thrive, contributing to Toronto's rich multicultural fabric and serving as a bridge between diverse communities through the universal language of music (see Figures 5-12 and Table 2).

OCPA
Organization of Calypso Performing Artistes (OCPA) presents

2009 Calypso Tents Music Series

Saturday, June 6 to Sunday, July 5

featuring 25 of Canada's top Calypso singers & Special Guests

- Jayson
- Beginner
- Panman Pat
- Connector
- Penzhioner
- Dynasty
- Delee
- Naki
- Black - I
- Redman
- Roger Gibbs
- Yellowz
- Structure
- Calypso Crooner
- Web
- Sailor
- King Cosmos

Plus Special Guests

Venues:
CAW Union Hall
30 Tangiers Rd. (Keele & Finch)
Masonic Temple
15 Chisholm Ave. (Danforth Ave. & Main)
Steelworkers Union Hall
25 Cecil St. (College & Spadina)

For info:
OCPA (416) 795-2722 or
e-mail: ocpacalypsoca@gmail.com
Visit our website www.ocpacalypsoca.com

Artists featured:
Guney
Susan G
Dick lochan
De Garra
Spice
Macomere fiji
lady Pearl

Admission \$15 in advance \$20 at the door
Photography by Tony Sladden

Come feel the vibe

Figure 5. 2009 Calypso Tents Music Series - Highlight in recent calypso history in Toronto featured 25 singers with 'live' bands.



Figure 6. Panman Pat (Pat McNeilly) - Veteran calypsonian, steelpannist and pan music educator.





Figure 7. comere Fifi (E. Tara Woods) - 2023 'Kaiso 365' Monarch, and multi year winner. First won in 1998.



Figure 8. Dick Lochan (1949-2017) - Top humorous calypsonian, recording artists, MC and author.



Figure 9. Structure (Bryan Thornhill) - Leading calypsonian originally from Barbados, multi year 'Kaiso 365' Calypso Monarch



Figure 10. Susan G (Susan Grogan), - Award-winning calypsonian, leader of top soca band Neu Jenarashun, producer of OCPA Junior Showcase



Figure 11. King Cosmos (Henry Gomez),- Award-winning calypsonian and current President of OCPA (Organization of Calypso Performing Artists).

Organization Of Calypso Performing Artistes & Connector Music Presents





Lando Hooks


King Cosmos


Macomere Fill


Panman Pat


Brown Sugar


Susan G


Kenny C


connector


Malibu


Web


Princess Trinidad


Mr Wonderful


Del Lee


Trenyce


Randy B


Mc Shane

CALYPSO SPOTLIGHT

TENT 23

Friday July 14

FUSION
RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

880 Ellesmere Rd
doors open 6:00pm
show 8:00pm

Saturday July 15

music by
Selector
POMPEY LTD

Spade
Bar & Lounge

3580 McNicoll Ave
doors open 6:00pm
show 8:00pm

Admit \$20 Each Night | Children 12 & Under Free

For Info & Tickets

Connector 647-778-1866 / Cosmos 647-225-8977

Colleen 519-240-2737 / Princess 416-770-3809 / Roger 416-484-6914






Figure 12. 2023 Calypso Spotlight Tent - 11-member cast singing to pre-recorded tracks, produced by Joel Davis for OCPA

Calypsonian	Brief Summary
Lord Caresser (Rufus Callender)	First popular calypsonian in Canada. Best known for his 1937 recording of "Edward the VIII" (a.k.a. "Love, Love Alone"), Had own radio show on CBC for 5 years and was a regular performer on Montreal nightclub circuit in the 1950s.
Winston "Gypsy" Peters	Captured the hearts of Toronto's residents with his vibrant performances and infectious calypso melodies, securing a cherished spot among the city's adored calypsonians.
Macomere Fifi (Eulith Tara Woods)	Winner of the 2023 'Kaiso 365' Calypso Monarch competition. Captivating storyteller, enthralled audiences with her commanding voice and captivating stage charisma during her performances.
King Cosmos (Henry Gomez)	Current President of OCPA. Gained fame for his exceptional calypso compositions, delving into diverse facets of Caribbean life and culture.
Lord Canary (Malcolm Corrica)	From Guyana, renowned for his compelling stage presence and profound social commentaries conveyed eloquently within his musical creations.
Lord Melody (Fitzroy Alexander)	A charismatic calypsonian renowned for his enchanting vocals and cleverly crafted lyrics. He graced the stages of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival year after year, captivating audiences with his mesmerizing performances, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of festival-goers.
Jayson (John Jayson Perez)	Jayson made his mark in the 1980s and 1990s. A gifted composer who wrote winning songs for himself and other calypsonians like Beginner (nephew of the original Beginner). Jayson was the first calypsonian to win a JUNO, Canada's music industry awards
Structure (Bryan Thornhill)	From Barbados, Structure dominated the calypso monarch competition 2003-2007 and again in 2013. Known for his social commentary and humorous songs.
Dave Martins & The Tradewinds	Led by Guyanese composer/calypsonian, The Tradewinds owned and operated We Place, a popular downtown Caribbean nightclub in the late 1960s. Had a string of hits in the 1970s, including 'Honeymooning Couple'.
Connector (Joel Davis)	Celebrated for his witty and socially impactful calypso compositions Also known for his chutney influences and soca hits, he remains a prominent icon in Toronto's Caribbean Carnival scene, delighting audiences for numerous years.
Roger Gibbs / Shak Shak	From Barbados, he left his mark with two solo albums - 'Spirit of Calypso' (1999) and 'Calypso Classics on Guitar Vol.1' (2005). With his band recorded 'Hot So' (2012) and 'Shak Shak Party' (2017). A founder and inaugural artistic director of Calypso Stars at Harbourfront Centre.
Mighty Sparrow (Slinger Francisco)	Graced the stages of Toronto on multiple occasions, endearing himself to the vibrant Caribbean community. His enchanting performances garnered a devoted following in the city. In 1972, his remarkable release, "Toronto Mas," drew the world's attention to Caribana, elevating the festival to global prominence.

Lord Superior (Andrew Marcano)	Gained fame for his soul-stirring and emotive performances that delved into themes of love, social challenges, and the essence of Caribbean identity. Along with Valentino, he was featured at the 2007 showing of the Geoffrey Dunn and Michael Horne directed film <i>Calypso Dreams</i> .
David Rudder	Trinidadian-born calypso legend, based in Toronto since 2001, recording and touring internationally with a band led by Canadian arranger / keyboardist Jeremy Ledbetter, until his retirement in 2023.

Table 2. Some of the numerous calypsonians who have graced the illustrious Toronto Carnival over the years demonstrated unwavering commitment to the preservation and perpetuation of this unique art form. Their enduring contributions have been instrumental in sustaining the cultural significance of calypso in the diaspora

Calypso in Crisis or Flux?

The concern that calypso and the calypso tent are dying is well over two decades old by now. Every year, the audience for the calypso tent dwindles. Every year, calypsos appear for carnival and disappear by Ash Wednesday (and it is miraculous to hear any on the radio). To be clear, the concern is about calypso and not soca, and is based on the dissipating audience for and the ubiquity of the older calypso genre. In the twenty-odd years of collective hand-wringing and puzzlement, several culprits have been identified: crime, marketing, natural ageing, and shifting zeitgeists. However, no viable solutions seem to be forthcoming. We are still in a predominantly discursive (and lamenting) phase while concern and anxiety mount.

In light of the anxiety over calypso’s longevity, the University of Trinidad and Tobago hosted a roundtable discussion on calypsos’ sustainability—“Sustaining the Art of Calypso”—held on 18th March 2023. The panel brought together Errol Ince (venerable calypso bandleader), Chuck Gordon (two-time Calypso Monarch), Michael Low Chew Tung (musician and producer), Mike Germain (former chairman of the Little Carib Theatre), and co-author Kela Francis (academic/researcher) to

discuss the current state of calypso as an art form and the calypso tent as the preferred/primary vehicle for showcasing calypso. The aim was not to solve any particular issue, but to generate deeper conversation beyond the lament that “Calypso is dying.” In this sense, the roundtable discussion was successful. The panel shared their thoughts on several of the factors contributing to a decline in the calypso audience, including, artistry, marketing, and cultivating an audience.

One of the primary concerns emerging from the conversation is the need to cultivate conscious craft in calypso. For example, Ince noted that younger calypsonians had little understanding and less respect for the musician’s advice. He related an anecdote where he was approached to arrange a junior calypsonian’s song. However, when he offered advice, the mother dismissed it, arguing that was what she wanted. He contrasted this with interactions he would have had with calypsonians over his 60-year-long career, calypsonians who valued his input in crafting their calypsos. He went on to stress that calypso is a collaborative art. The lyrics must marry with the music, and while a calypsonian may have a rudimentary understanding of chords and

melody, a skilled musician would be able to transform the music into a product that audiences would appreciate.

In response, the panel also discussed the craft of writing lyrics. Various voices chimed in on the quality of the lyrics. Here, the panel mirrored earlier observations. For example, in Peter Blood's 2013 article, "Are calypso tents dying a slow death?" one of his interviewees, Diane Dupres, placed emphasis on the quality of calypso, quipping that she refused to spend her "hard-earned dollars to go to listen to stupidity" and that overall calypsos are boring because of too much "preaching or bashing" lyrics. Similarly, in Blood's article, Calypsonian Bally stated that "the quality of calypsos in any given season is what determines whether people attend the tents or not." In his own commentary, "Death of calypso tents," published in *Newsday's* Blog in 2018, Raffique Shah made the same argument as Dupres, insisting the blame lies in the devolution of the art form: "Sub-standard calypsos fuelled the exodus from the tents: what songs since, say, the year 2000, can anyone remember and hum a few verses and the chorus, other than a few by David Rudder, Gypsy and maybe Chalkie?" For the panel's part, the paucity of lyrics directly correlates with the demands of competition in two ways. First, writers are trying to satisfy the rubric (known or assumed). Second, most competitors prefer to pay for lyrics, contributing little to no input on the song's content or style. The argument here is not so much that calypsonians should write for themselves all the time, but that the potential to have neither intellectual nor

emotional connection to the song significantly increases when singers are not involved in the crafting of the song. Here Ince's observation resonates: calypso is a collaborative art form. It is communal and perhaps functions best as communal rather than composite.

The second concern tackled was marketing. In Blood's article, Lutalo Masimba argued that management needed new marketing strategies to bring audiences to the tents. A decade later, and Gordon cautiously shared his experience trying a new format at Kaiso House for the 2023 Carnival season. As a newly appointed manager of the tent, he and his team attempted to (re)introduce drama and spectacle into the tent¹. The team introduced skits and shortened sets. However, within two weeks of opening with the new format, the tent reverted to the now traditional format of two lengthy sets of individual performances. Gordon's anecdote prompted the panel (and audience) to note that experimentation, good or bad, was necessary to find a relevant and appealing format. Additionally, the panel noted the need for tents to use social media and newer forms of marketing to reach wider audiences.

Beyond direct marketing and advertising, education is also responsible for ensuring that younger generations are at least aware of the richness calypso has to offer. Francis noted that while there is a perceived generational gap when it comes to calypso, she has observed the genuine delight and interest young people have in calypso once they are exposed, singing along and dancing. For Francis, then, it is not that the form is "old" and inaccessible to younger

¹ Francis noted that drama—skits, calypso war, and so on—were part of tent offerings from the 30s

to the 60s, and it was interesting that reverting to an earlier traditional form was breaking with tradition.

tastes, but that most children, teenagers, and young adults simply have not been exposed to calypso at all. She compared the situation to the persistence of classical music which students are deliberately exposed to during music classes. One audience member responded that this is because classical music has “rich, old, white men” who insist that classical music is important. However, this illustrated the significance of including calypso in school curricula. The point was not that a larger audience would be cultivated, but that calypso is important enough to be reified like classical music and disseminated through education. In other words, education plays a significant role in ensuring that future generations at least know what calypso is, that a student knows both The Mighty Bomber and Beethoven. While education is important, Francis continued to stress that the “old guard” must also accept that calypso, as a living and breathing art form, will shift and adapt to reflect the needs of the contemporary society. What education assures, though, is that the new formulations evolve directly out of the tradition; calypso becomes part of the musical lexicon.

It is important to note that the panel did not discuss crime as a major contributor. While the crime situation in Trinidad and Tobago is alarming (to put it mildly), there was an unspoken consensus that crime was not a major deterrent. As Shah points out, while the tents (in 2018) were poorly attended, “note that the fetes, even the expensive all exclusives, are well patronised,” suggesting that an audience will find their way to an event despite the spectre of crime, as long as they are attracted by what is on offer. As Dupres cautioned, no one will risk their lives to hear “stupidness.” If calypso is to survive (thrive), we must ensure that the artistry is prominent, marketing is strong, education is rich, and innovations/changes are encouraged. After all, if successive generations do not make calypso their “thing,” it will actually die

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful for the support of Professor Haroun Shah in the preparation of this manuscript.

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Deconstructing the Panyard: An Autoethnography Case Study on a Single Family's Dynamic Undertones

Camille Y.T. Allan, (née Shah), Louise C.F. Shah, Laila M.N. Shah,
Haroun N. Shah

Nostalgia Steelband
Maxilla Social Club
2a Maxilla Walk
London, W10 6SW,
UK

Abstract

Panyards have a deep sense of meaning, emotion and attachment to their occupants more so when experienced from early childhood. There are abundant metaphors to convey their function but in general, they are depicted as a multifunctional space that encompasses storage, rehearsal, performance, tuning of steelpanns and community interaction. Beyond their practical purposes, these vibrant spaces serve as a gathering place, fostering a strong sense of community and togetherness among members of a steelband. In the autoethnography case study discussed here, Nostalgia Steelband's panyard holds a special place in the hearts of one family, the 'Shahs', as it played a profound role in their connection to the spirit of carnival in Trinidad and Britain. It became a profound, resilient and unbroken bond for three siblings, Camille, Louise and Laila, growing up and developing an integral and lasting connexion with London's Notting Hill Carnival and Trinidad's music and culture throughout their school years, university studies and careers; subsequently drawing in their own family and friends into this tempestuous association. Such nuances generally remain undescribed or reticent but when impulsively confronted as a community-orientated extension to the hugely successful 'Life Between Islands' exhibition in February 2022, the description of what Nostalgia Steelband's panyard meant led to an unexpected passionate reaction, stirring up deep emotions by the local community and the ageing proprietors of the site. This paper articulates the transformative role of the panyard in shaping the lives of four of its devotees, drawing them back like a powerful magnet, even amidst studies, work, and other commitments abroad, especially during the annual Notting Hill Carnival.

Key Words: Panyard, Nostalgia Steelband, Maxilla Social Club, Steelband, Trinidad Carnival, Cultural Significance, Bobby Mohammed, Autoethnography Case Study.

Introduction

'Life Between Islands' Exhibition, Tate Britain and its Aftermath; The 'Life Between Islands in London' Project

The 'Life Between Islands' exhibition that took place at Tate Britain between 1st December 2021 - 3rd April 2022 delved into the artistic endeavours of Caribbean artists who were domiciled in Britain, in

conjunction with British artists whose creative output were significantly influenced and inspired by Caribbean themes and heritage. Life Between Islands encompassed a wide range of visionary paintings, documentary photography, fashion, film, and sculpture, and sought to illuminate the remarkable scope and

profound impact of Caribbean British art within a single setting.

This exhibition served as a celebration of how individuals from the Caribbean forged new communities and identities in post-war Britain. Their transformative actions shaped the current appearance of British culture and society and demonstrated the dynamic interplay between cultural influences across geographical boundaries. The exhibition showcased the work of more than 40 esteemed artists, including Aubrey Williams, Donald Locke, Horace Ové, Sonia Boyce and Peter Doig. By providing a platform for these diverse artists, *Life Between Islands* invited visitors to engage with a multifaceted portrayal of Caribbean British art and its multifarious contributions to the artistic and cultural landscape and judging by the packed rooms daily, it was a resounding success.

The impact of the exhibition was so profound that when it was due to end on 24th February 2022, there were widespread calls for its extension. As a compromise, Tate Britain's set about to organise a hyperlocal outdoor campaign to extend the exhibition to 6th March 2022, using billboards and buildings across London. Vinyl stickers captured exclusive anecdotes and testimonies from markets, cinemas, clubs, restaurants, libraries, and community centres across the city.

Forty-one were selected and printed in a similar format on a 60 cm x 42cm brochure. The opposite side carried a map of London in dark blue with a light-blue image of the Thames to indicate north and south London. Each site recounted by the contributor was displayed as a bold red 0.5cm dot. The densest dots were located around Notting Hill (9/41) with Maxilla Social Club, Trini Hill and The Tabernacle (Carnival Village) being delineated. Close behind was the

Brixton area (7/41) with Windrush Square, Brixton Market and the Black Cultural Archives being prominent. The remainder were fairly evenly scattered north and south of the Thames, with Alexandra Park Palace, Haringey being the furthest north and Crystal Palace being the southernmost.

Testimonials of Notting Hill Carnival Poster Campaign and Nostalgia Steelband.

Nostalgia Steelband, the UK's oldest steelband grew out of the vision and farsightedness of its founders, TASPO's (1951) Sterling Betancourt and the late Allan 'Boots' Davidson in association with the legendary Russell Henderson (architect of Notting Hill Carnival) and has been the bedrock for the development of pan players and steelpan in Britain from the mid-1960s. Renowned for its vibrant traditional 'pan-around-neck' performances and rich musical heritage, Nostalgia served as a conduit for the Shah family's deep-rooted love for Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) which began in earnest at their panyard at Maxilla Social Club in the heart of Notting Hill in 1994, firstly with co-author Haroun Shah. In deeply emotional spontaneous accounts by the authors of this paper, their heartfelt observations of Nostalgia's panyard were expressed when given 24 hours to document their views in approximately 100 words of what it meant to them by the Tate Britain team at the closing stages of the exhibition.

When asked to contribute as a family we (Camille Allan, Louise 'Loulou' Shah, Laila Shah and Haroun Shah) instinctively focused on Nostalgia's panyard 'Maxilla Social Club' but subsequently one testimonial dealt with visions of Trini Hill (also covered by Wyn Baptiste, son of late Selwyn Baptiste, one of the directors and

pioneers of NHC). Wyn Baptiste's testimonial is included below to demonstrate two different perspectives; his as a young participant, looking on at carnival from this vantage point with Trini compatriots while Laila gave her views as a young steelpan performer with Nostalgia, taking pride in playing for this crowd of Trini devotees who on carnival days reminisce mostly about 'back home'.

Regardless of where one travels, the panyard remains a common experience for all. In an interview for 'When Steel Talks' pannist, Danica Livingston referring to her steelband, 'Couva Joylanders Steel Orchestra' and her passion for Pan states "I basically grew up in that panyard. The panyard was my home away from home While I was at the height of my studies, every year I would tell my mother I don't think I would be able to play but come January, there I was at the panyard. It's like a magnet that you just can't resist." (Danica Livingston (Phase II Pan Groove, 2007). Statements such as these are echoed everywhere, often parents are oblivious to the responsibilities passed over to the panyard as evidenced in the first testimonial by Camille and Louise. These were taken directly from the posters that are stuck up at Maxilla Social Club and placed on billboards in surrounding buildings by the company JackArts who were contracted by Tate Britain to use their outdoor experience in Arts. Four of the forty-one displayed around London are reproduced as follows:

OUR PANYARD – Maxilla Social Club

Contributor: ¹Louise C.F. Shah (MSc) and ^{1,2}Camille Y.T. Shah (MSc).

Profession/Title: ^{1,2}Global Humanitarian Worker and ²Teacher

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."

Contributor: Professor Haroun N. Shah

Profession/Title: Scientist, Lecturer in Carnival Arts, Pannist, Director, Nostalgia Steelband.

Location: Maxilla Social Club

Headline: SECOND HOMES AND STEELPAN LEGENDS HAPPENED HERE

Story: "I joined Nostalgia Steelband in 1993 via its founders and Carnival pioneers, Sterling Betancourt and Russ Henderson, at the renowned **Maxilla Social Club** (MSC). Every steelpan legend has played at MSC, and my family grew up there; my daughters, Camille and Louise, first played pan at Carnival in 1994. My youngest daughter, Laila, experienced her first Carnival, aged 11 months, dressed as a sailor, and led Nostalgia to its first Carnival trophy in 2013, while my granddaughter, Amaya, debuted at just 2 months old. MSC is our second home. It acted as a trauma centre for the 2017 Grenfell disaster and my

family played a major role in fundraising for the Grenfell community and in the current COVID-19 vaccination programme.”

TRINI HILL (OR TRINI CORNER)

Contributor: Laila Shah

Profession/title: PhD Student; Pannist with Nostalgia and Mangrove Steelbands

Location: Trini Hill

Headline: PIT STOPS FOR NOSTALGIA HAPPENED HERE

Story: At Carnival, every band makes a point of stopping at “**Trini Hill**” (others call it “Trini Corner”) and play for the hardcore supporters who meet there annually, dressed up and waving Trini flags. Our steelband, “Nostalgia” (plays with pans around the neck) would stay up to 10 minutes playing there, and only moved on when security beckon us. I started carnival in a push chair and by five did the whole route (10am to 10pm) dressed in Nostalgia’s costumes plus Trini colours and flags. I was always excited on reaching Trini Hill. I first played pan with Nostalgia at 10 and was so proud to play for these supports on the “Hill” who came out and cheered us every year.

Contributor: Wyn Baptiste

Profession/Title: Producer and Director

Location: Trinidad Hill, (Westbourne Park Rd, W2 5UH)

Headline: WATCH AND LIME HERE

There's a small patch of green close to the corner of Westbourne Park Rd and Great Western Road just inside the Brunel Estate. It's nondescript and unremarkable. But each year during Carnival it takes on a special significance. It becomes **Trinidad Hill**

where Trinidadians gather to catch up (“lime”) and celebrate their biggest cultural export – Carnival. It's a good vantage point to see all who are ‘on di road’. I used to go there with my Dad. Our annual tradition started in the mid-70s when he was the Director of Carnival and is a good insiders tip. Walk the procession route against the floor. You get to see everything twice as fast (but even that is slow).

See the link for the remaining 36:

https://www.tate.org.uk/documents/1732/Tate_LBI_A2_folded_leaflet_V17_Folder_DIGITAL_VERSION.pdf

Following the publication of this leaflet, a few members of Nostalgia documented their personal accounts of Nostalgia’s panyard to author HNS. Because these were not in the Tate Britain’s leaflet, it was not necessary to adhere to the 100-word limit. Among them was an account by band leader Dr. Lionel McCalman who was a member of the original steelband before the band split and PanNectar was founded under Russ Henderson. The second is by a long-standing member of the band, Christine Davis. Their more expansive commentaries are as follows:

Contributor: Dr. Lionel McCalman, PhD.

Profession/Title: Lecturer, University of East London and Director, Nostalgia Steelband.

Location: MAXILLA SOCIAL CLUB

I am a member of Nostalgia steelband, and an active member of the North Kensington community. I came across Maxilla Social Club in 1993, when we were invited to use it as our permanent home or ‘panyard’. Prior to that, it was an Irish Community Centre, and Nostalgia steelband was a

nomadic band, based in someone's front room for practice sessions, or in pubs, community centres or someone's office. We had no home to store our instruments and our equipment. Our identity was based on where the leader wanted us to be, ... at a said time, and that depended on the membership. All the band members had to own their own instruments, and they were also expected to bring them along to all practices and performances. Being offered permanent premises, allowed us to establish a modern steelband in every sense of the word. We could leave our instruments at our 'panyard' and return there after our performances. It was a base, and our identity was now being forged. Having a permanent base also allowed us to buy new instruments as a band, hold workshops, hold regular practice sessions and recruit new members to expand the band membership. We were able to set up partnerships with similar music groups in other European and North American countries.

It was Roy Watson, a Barbadian immigrant and a long-standing activist of the local community who approached the proprietors of Maxilla Social Club and asked if we could be based there. It was the beginning of the Social Club's amazing relationship with the Notting Hill Carnival community. Today, there are five carnival bands based there, a samba band, a steelband, a costume band and a music ensemble. Maxilla's Irish roots have not been compromised. We often have joint community events with the Irish communities there. It is today a community hub for all, and we are grateful to the proprietors for its embracement of the wider community.

(2nd March 2022).

Contributor: Christine Davis

Profession/Title: School Teacher and long-standing member of Nostalgia Steelband.

Location: MAXILLA SOCIAL CLUB

Joining Nostalgia Steel Band was the start of a long association with Maxilla Social Club. I had long been a Carnival attender and was able, with the warm welcome from the band, to embrace more fully the joy and the spirit of Carnival. This began in 2006, hard to believe it was sixteen years ago. I was the newcomer, but Maxilla had been home to Nostalgia and Carnival since 1969. So long looked after in this special corner of Notting Hill. The weekly practice was skilfully fitted in by Albert Walsh and his son, Joe (Managers) among their other users, such as the darts teams including league matches as well as occasions such as birthdays, christenings and funerals. We were allowed to keep our resources there, pans take up a lot of space, and to have our own events also, birthdays, engagements, pre- and post-carnival parties as well, sadly, as funerals of our members. At all of these we played to celebrate the joy of pan, of being together, the sharing of life's moments. Leading up to Notting Hill Carnival, Maxilla took on a different life, a base for preparation - of costume, of sounds, of nourishment and of the gathering of friends, old and new, all ready 'For The Road'. Albert and Joe smiling through it all. And at the end of Carnival day a place to refresh and relax, a home from home to back to. It is hard to single out a special memory or a single person. Each contributes and is valued, working for a purpose. It has been and continues to be a place of community.

Momentous in the recent past has been the part played by Maxilla at the time of the Grenfell fire. The space it offered to gather

and share is still much appreciated. So to Albert and Margaret, Joe and Siobhan a very heartfelt thanks for your community spirit, and your never-ending welcome to all.

(Christine Davis 1st March 20/22)

Numerous posters were disseminated across the city of London, numbering in the tens of thousands, eventually making their way to Nostalgia Steelband's panyard, Maxilla Social Club on Tuesday, the 1st March 2022. Initially, the local populace remained largely oblivious to the contents and purpose of the posters. However, when co-author, HNS arrived at Maxilla Social Club, at 6.00 pm, he was met with an overwhelming surge of sentiment and jubilation by both proprietors and patrons alike in response to the repeated perusal of the posters that highlighted the Maxilla Social Club. To their surprise, the textual compositions contained therein depicted them in a profoundly moving and delicately empathetic manner, prompting an outpouring of tears and expressions of gratitude. For them, they simply went about their daily lives, conscientiously operating their business, accommodating our needs, and diligently persevering throughout the decades. They were oblivious to the magnitude of their contributions to the community. Consequently, these posters held immeasurable significance for them, eliciting deep emotional resonance.

Maxilla Social Club, The Panyard

Olsen (2016) described a panyard as “ a space where steelpans are stored, rehearsed, performed and tuned. In addition, it serves as a congregating point for people associated with a particular steelband even when the pans are not being played. Often, panyards have food and drinks for sale and

through interaction, a sense of community is created and preserved.” While Olsen's definition effectively captures the physical attributes and functional aspects of a panyard, we contend that such definitions overlook the profound emotional, dramatic, and celestial significance that permeates this cherished space. Here, both performers and listeners alike, forge a prodigious connection to the cultural heritage and traditions associated with this art form. By broadening our understanding and appreciation of the panyard, we can grasp the extraordinary significance it holds within the cultural tapestry of communities that embrace this adored tradition both in Trinidad and Tobago and its diaspora.

The Panyard; Case Study: A view through the prism of one family – The Shah's – recollections of Haroun Shah; San Fernando, 1960s to London.



Figure 1 Our living room at 117 Coffee Street, San Fernando in 1965 showing a vibrant orange painted Pan flanked by my parents. To my mother's left was her grand piano (not visible). This snapshot resonates with a time when the very idea of visiting a panyard was fraught with moral implications. The audacious act of housing a steelpan within one's abode was met with societal disdain.

It would be inappropriate to discuss a panyard without going back to its inception in Trinidad where the panyard is considered the norm. This was even more pronounced in co-author/parent (Haroun) youth because the panyard of the legendary Rhythm Stars was located next to our back garden at 117 Coffee Street, San Fernando. Our matriarch, Farida Shah was a schoolteacher who also offered piano lessons at home. Our living room housed a 5'8" by 7'6" grand piano that was permanently opened, inviting all to play. The arranger for Rhythm Stars, the indomitable Nerlin Taitt (founder of Ska and Rocksteady in Jamaica, see Johnson, 2008) would often use my mother's grand piano or my brother's (Kenn Shah) guitar to practice and work out chord sequences for the steelband. But there would often be several playing simultaneously; some of whom would go on later to become internationally renowned artists. These included the then-young Bobby Mohammed (Guinness Cavaliers), the pianist and guitarist Ottmar and Eugene de Vlucht respectively (Dutchy Brothers), Kentrick Patrick (Lord Creator, who composed the Jamaican Independence Day song) and Ulric Regis (Trinidad's international boxing Heavyweight who died after a fight with Joe Bugner in 1967 in London). I would learn decades later in London that Cyril Khamai (who later joined Nostalgia Steelband in London) was also an arranger for Rhythm Stars (see Shah, 2020). It was, therefore, no surprise that later in my teens when I acquired my first tenor pan, my mother allowed it to be placed next to her piano; an amazing feat of defiance at a time when most families would not even allow their children to be associated with a steelband, never mind play one in their home and leave it permanently hung up alongside a piano (Figure 1). Rhythm Stars'

panyard, therefore, extended to our living room. Its ambience may have helped stimulate the young Bobby Mohammed with a burning ambition to carve out a career as a musician, but not in a traditional instrument as his parents initially thought, but in steelpan!

To the utter dismay of his parents, Mohammed would soon drop out of Trinidad's distinguished Presentation College to pursue a life in Pan! The panyard of his new band, Guinness Cavaliers was directly downstairs of the family's residential home at 25 Lazzari Street, Mon Repos, San Fernando. In just a few years, Cavaliers would become the first band in south Trinidad to win the national panorama (in 1965) and become a household name. With such fame, the band grew significantly in size; from about 20 members originally to five times that size. The panyard, therefore, didn't just stretch under the house at that time but into the surrounding gardens and even out into the streets leading up to Panorama.

Following the band's 2nd victory at Panorama with Kitchener's '67', my studies would take me to London, arriving by boat on the S.S. Antilles on 26th August 1967 at Britain's southernmost shipping port, Southampton. From the port, it required a 3-hour journey by train to London's Waterloo station – my luggage included my tenor pan and a guitar on each shoulder along with several boxes. This was the period when finding accommodation was near impossible as windows proudly displayed the signs '**No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs**'. I moved several times and each time, no landlord would allow the Pan into my room but instead stored in various garden sheds, and over the next decade, it gradually rusted and eventually had to be decommissioned.

The Panyard in London, Maxilla Social Club, initial experiences

In August 1996, a significant juncture befell Nostalgia, marked by the disbandment of the steelband and the abrupt termination of the longstanding partnership between Sterling Betancourt and Russell Henderson. Within the customary ambience of conviviality, animated discourse, and resonating melodies that usually enveloped the panyard, an unusual hush prevailed at Maxilla Social Club on that particular day, punctuated only by the presence of a solitary adherent, Lionel McCalman. The once-vibrant space now exuded a profound stillness as a stroll through Maxilla's premises revealed the scant remnants of musical instruments. From my initial encounter with Sterling in Kuwait over a decade prior, his persona had been characterised by unremitting dynamism, effusive mirth, and a perpetually sanguine outlook, even during periods of elevated geopolitical tension. However, on that evening, he emanated an air of desolation, disillusionment, and detachment, his speech mostly eclipsed by silence. Although he refrained from divulging the precipitating events, he reiterated the urgency of my immediate integration into the ensemble and an imperative to enlist Camille and Loulou into Nostalgia's ranks. Concurrently, I found myself residing in London subsequent to parting ways with my spouse, a geographic distance from Essex where they were situated; the logistical intricacies of commuting for rehearsals loomed as formidable challenges. Yet, Sterling remained unwavering in his expectations, viewing the circumstance as inexcusable. Manifesting an unquantifiable allegiance to Sterling's cause, both Camille and Loulou swiftly

rallied to his side despite the perplexing dissolution of Nostalgia and its reduced membership to a mere duo. The impending Notting Hill Carnival, mere weeks away, assumed an unwritten mandate in Sterling's perspective—non-negotiable participation in the procession was imperative.

It was a daunting prospect at first because in previous years we joined the band at some convenient space and left when needed. We were aware that as part of the band, we would need to leave the panyard between 10 -11am and would not get back there until about 10 pm. But we practised intensely under Sterling's expert tutorship at our Maxilla's panyard, all playing tenor pans except for Lionel McCalman who played a guitar pan and Herman (Sterling's elder brother) playing a dudup. However, on carnival morning there is always a magical spirit that descends upon you that seems to emanate from the bowels of the panyard with its years of stored energy and you are just propelled onto the road and the carnival route. We must have looked a desperate sight with London's oldest steelband, previously filled with players and a huge number of supporters playing at this quintessential event for West Indians with only a skeleton crew. But the many years of Sterling's experience never deterred us – we were oblivious to our meagre ensemble and played with our hearts and souls, being spurred by shouts of encouragement by reassuring bystanders. I was the only one to have occasionally taken my Pan off my neck when the band came to a standstill, the other four played on relentlessly for eight hours, returning to our panyard to a triumphant welcome from family and friends and sumptuous Trini food and a lengthy lime. It was the first time in weeks that we saw Sterling smiling again. His entire family including extended

families and friends were there and the celebrations went on to midnight. For Camille and Loulou, it was a feeling of euphoria, they never flinched once and thoroughly enjoyed playing at their first Notting Hill Carnival. Though Camille would head back to university, some 200 miles away in Manchester, she was back the following year, with many of her friends, including Ross Allan who in 2009 became her husband. Ross never returned to carnival which might be partly due to him having to manually push Nostalgia's float up Ladbrooke Grove's hill during carnival and along the lingering route. As expected, the superiority of PanNectar with its large number of experienced players would win the 'Best playing band on the road' competition (single pan category) that year and for years to come until 2013.

That carnival (2013), to their utter shock, the table would turn and their outstanding veteran arranger Miguel Barradas, would be dethroned by a young Nostalgia's arranger. This was 14-year-old Laila Shah, arranging her first tune for Notting Hill Carnival after an inspirational first visit to Trinidad and seeing Bunji Garlin perform 'Differentology' at Queen's Park Savannah. Before this, she met her cousin Bobby Mohammed for the first time and spent an entire day talking about Pan. Seeing her enthusiasm, Bobby procured tickets for her to see 'Camps in Steel' on 16th February 2013 (Figure 2), a scintillating show in which the best acts from the carnival were showcased. When Bunji performed, she was visibly transported to a different world and could not wait to get hold of a Pan to try to play 'Differentology'.

Once we were back in London, practice for NHC resumed in May 2013, the band began learning several prospective pieces for

carnival. During a break one evening, Laila began playing 'Differentology' very quietly to the back of the band. Several members turned around and before the end of the evening, she was asked to try her hand at arranging this as one of the pieces for NHC. By the following week, she had added a delightful introduction and embellished the body of the tune with several runs and chord progressions. It became Nostalgia's tune of choice for the carnival competition. On carnival day, the band put on such an impressive energetic performance at the judging point that several of the adjudicators left their seats and began dancing. We knew we performed well but when news came that PanNectar was beaten by 17 points, it seemed almost impossible to believe. There is no record of how many parties were held to celebrate this victory but the entire band began counting

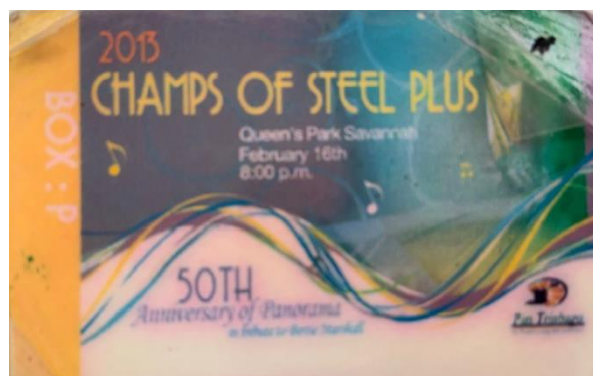


Figure 2. The 'Champs of Steel Plus' concert ticket presented by Bobby Mohammed and hosted at Queen's Park Savannah on 16th February 2013: A prolonged memento safeguarded within Laila's possession, coinciding with the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of panorama and Bunji Garlin's performance of 'Differentology'



Figure 3a Laila dressed as a sailor with her Nostalgia Sailor's outfit during her first Notting Hill Carnival in August 2000 and at 23 months in the photo.



Figure 3b August 2000. Camille in the same band as her sister i.e. Nostalgia Sailor's band.

down the days to the British Association of Steelband (BAS) 15th Annual Awards Presentation on Saturday 7th December 2013 at the Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury, London in which Nostalgia members would walk up to the podium for the first time (see Table 1). A particularly poignant moment of that evening was the reunion between Sterling Betancourt and Nostalgia's members following his departure nearly ten years ago. While Laila was walking back

to her seat from the podium, Sterling, who was seated at the table nearest the stage, stood up and beckoned Laila to him. He shook her hand and said, "I heard you were the arranger – congratulations, I am proud of you." Laila seized upon the moment, and escorted him to Nostalgia's table which was at the furthest end of this magnificent room. Most of the band members were new but knew of Sterling and he was introduced to each by Laila. This meant so much to all t



Figure 3c Nostalgia Steelband Notting Hill Carnival 2006. Loulou (2nd from right) – recognisable each year with her Trini flag.



Figure 3d. Pan Legend Cyril Khamai holds Amaya, the youngest member of Nostalgia. Born 24th June 2012 and at Notting Hill Carnival on 26th August 2012 at 2 months!

Award	Winner
Best Traditional Steelband	Nostalgia Steelband
Best Conventional Steelband	Ebony Steel Band
30 th Anniversary	Stardust Steel Orchestra
40 th Anniversary	Metronomes Steel Orchestra
Pan Clash Champion Soloist	Jenny Gilberg
Junior Panorama Champions	Ebony Steel Band
Crystal Gail Holder Award	Ryan King
J'Ouvert Bomb Competition	Real Steel Orchestra
UK National Panorama Champions	Real Steel Orchestra
Randolph Baptiste Award	Debra Romain
Ezekiel 'Biggs' Yearwood Award	Eustace Benjamin
BAS 2013 Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award	Tony 'Cowboy' Charles

Table 1 British Association of Steelband (BAS) 15th Annual Awards Presentation 2013. Distinguished guests on the night included Russell Henderson OBE, Gerald Forsyth OBE, Sterling Betancourt MBE, Dudley Dickson, members of the BAS Hall of Fame and UK Pan Tuners Guild, Robbie Joseph, Rudo Forteau, Keith Diaz (President of Pan Trinbago) and Ainsley King.

hat they immediately formed a circle with the BAS award in the middle and joined the after-awards party celebration that went into the wee hours of Sunday morning. Laila’s pathway into Nostalgia was very different to Camille’s or Loulou’s as she was literally born into Nostalgia (see interview with David Rudder, Shah, 2022). By the time she was born in 1998, Nostalgia was already restructured, and I was one of the five directors who registered the band as a Non-Profit Company - Limited by Guarantee designated ‘Nostalgia Steelband

and Carnival Club’ based at Maxilla Social Club on 9th May 1999. Because she was born at the end of September, and NHC is at the end of August, her first carnival on the road was in August 1999 and then in a



Figure 4a (Left to right) Loulou, Laila and Camille leaving Nostalgia’s Panyard on carnival day. Camille was draped in a Nostalgia’s flag. (2005)



Figure 4b. Laila (in pink top -left) and classmate Ella (right) leading Nostalgia onto the road from its panyard at NHC 2004

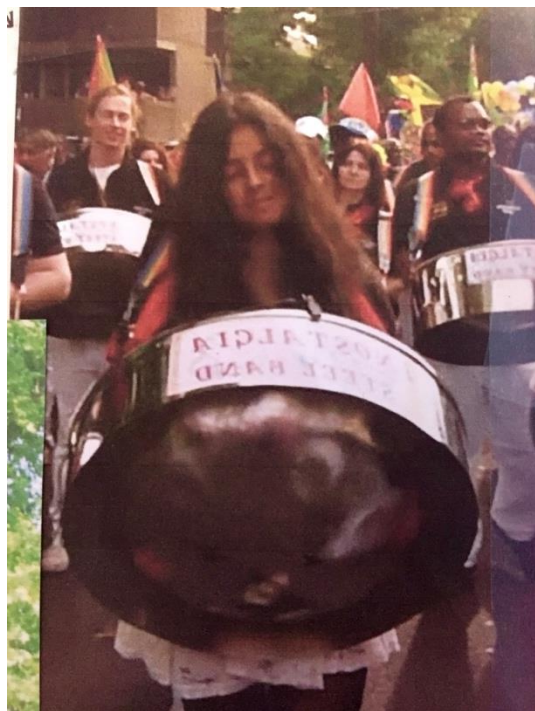


Figure 4c. Laila playing pan-around-neck at the start of NHC 2012; a challenging feat requiring good posture and concentration.

pushchair at 23 months (Figure 3a – 3d). However, during the months leading up to carnival, she was taken regularly to the panyard during practice and was always happy to be there; being looked after by family, Maxilla's staff, patrons and members. She remained the youngest member of the band until Loulou's little girl, Amaya born on 26th June 2012 (just before the London Olympics) and join Nostalgia for both days of NHC in 2012, just eight weeks old! (Figure 4a – 4c).

Memorable Performances in Different Panyards and Events

Camille, Loulou and Laila, positioned at distinct junctures within their respective academic pursuits and professional trajectories, invariably converged exclusively during the annual occurrence of NHC for collective rehearsals within the panyard and subsequent participation in the carnival parades (Figure 4). Nevertheless,

my role as a parent rendered me privy to contrasting encounters within diverse panyard settings in conjunction with each of my daughters. Subsequent illustrations illuminate these disparate experiences as described below.

The Panyard of Funland Seranaders, Bern Switzerland

In mid-2000, co-author, Haroun was invited to present a paper at a scientific conference in Basel, Switzerland between Tuesday 30th January to Friday 2nd February 2001, at Hotel Basel. Concurrently, we received an invitation from Paul Francis, leader of the Funland Seranaders Steelband, to partake in the Bern Carnival event "Funland for Bern Carnival 2001" in October 2000. In preparation for the carnival, Paul supplied us with written musical scores and CDs containing recordings of the band's rehearsals of Gloria Gaynor's iconic song, "I Will Survive." Commencing with an enchanting introduction that traversed the resounding depths of the steelpan and culminated in a lively and intricate arrangement, this rendition possessed an irresistible allure. A single earshot was all it took to be captivated by the performance, fostering an immediate desire to join the ranks of the Funland Seranaders Steelband. Such was the influence of this musical offering that it evoked an immediate and profound compulsion within both Camille and me to become part of the steelband.

Camille arrived in Basel on Friday 2nd February 2001, the final day of my conference and we set about practising almost immediately. Both of us were still relatively unfamiliar with the arrangement, particularly the introduction, which we believe had been inserted by the late Junior Gill, an accomplished arranger and steelpan

virtuoso based in Zurich, who worked closely with Paul Francis. Throughout the afternoon, we diligently rehearsed at the hotel, having officially departed from the ongoing conference. At 5pm, during the peak of Basel's Friday rush hour, we boarded a train without considering the practical implications of rehearsing during travel. Without a second thought, we secured each Pan between adjacent seats in the passageway, facing each other. Immersed in our quest for perfection before arriving in Bern, we scarcely contemplated the fact that we were obstructing the passageway, requiring passengers to exit at the preceding door and circumvent us to navigate through the train. Remarkably, not a single complaint was voiced by fellow passengers. Instead, the typically polite Swiss commuters simply lowered their heads into their books or newspapers, allowing us to continue practising undisturbed.

Approximately one hour later, we arrived at Bern Train Station. Rather than encountering ire from passengers due to our obstruction and racket, many came forward and offered assistance in carrying our Pans. Disoriented and without a clear sense of direction, we did not need to consult a map; they guided us effortlessly. After approximately 30 minutes of walking, we reached the town square amidst cries of "Welcome Camille and Haroun," accompanied by applause, hugs, and kisses. The warm reception and enthusiastic support of the crowd and members of Funland Serenaders were heartening and inspiring.

As the band was already in full swing, our Pans were seamlessly integrated among the other tenor pans, where esteemed musicians such as Junior Gill graced the stage. It felt as though we had entered a state of

euphoria. Camille leaned towards me and whispered, "Dad, thank God I didn't take that job. Look at what I would have missed!" Tears welled up in our eyes as we poured our souls into the music. Under the expansive tent that accommodated around 50 players, a spirited atmosphere pervaded the band. Singing, dancing, and playing, we were utterly enthralled, intoxicated by the electric ambience. Band members exchanged glances, sharing the indescribable spirit of these awe-inspiring moments that would persist uninterrupted for hours on end. Throughout the night, Camille and I played side by side, offering lively commentary on the myriad of activities unfolding in the square.

Unexpectedly, around 1:00 am, snowflakes began to descend, and certain sections of the tent sagged under the accumulating weight. Some players employed brushes to dislodge the snow from the canopy, yet a few areas succumbed to the pressure, resulting in small tears. By this point, we were drenched in sweat, and while the Swiss attendees simply shed a few layers, I removed my top and played unprotected in the snow, finding solace in its chilling embrace. [Regrettably, this decision led to a severe bout of pneumonia, subsequent hospitalisation, and a close encounter with death a few weeks later].

As the night wore on, the carnival atmosphere intensified, and we continued to play into the early morning hours (see Table 2).

We were utterly captivated by Funland's panyard, which was unique in that it exuded an unmistakable sense of home. Situated above a vast warehouse dedicated to transforming massive slabs of rock into polished marble, the space was predominantly occupied by the steelband. Paul Francis and his family resided there,

surrounded by Pans, equipment, dining areas, a kitchen, guest rooms, a bar, and even a theatre space. Most importantly, it served as a haven for creativity. This panyard stood out as the most extraordinary we had witnessed, surpassing even those in Trinidad. Within this space, the band conducted rehearsals, workshops, Pan tuning, concerts, and meetings.

Beyond its diverse array of activities, it was a welcoming and blissful environment for anyone involved in steelpan. It could be considered a mecca, a shrine to steelpan. Pannists from around the world were warmly embraced and hosted by Paul and his family throughout the year, often at their own expense. Additionally, they extended their generosity by preparing Caribbean cuisine for their guests, fostering conviviality and extensive Pan-playing sessions. It comes as no surprise that renowned steelbands such as Renegades, led by Duvone Stewart, and others utilise Funland's panyard as a base for their European activities each summer. Growing up in such an atmosphere, it is hardly surprising that Paul's son, Oobi, exhibits extraordinary talent. He serves as captain of Funland Serenaders, leads the tenor section,



Figure 5. Camille rehearsing intensely with Nostalgia's band leader/arranger Sterling Betancourt at Pan Kultur's panyard prior to Nostalgia's stage performance in 2006.

and plays for both Renegades in Trinidad and Mangrove in London.

Pan-Kultur, a steel orchestra based in Dortmund, Germany started in 1995. The organisation was founded by musicians Jürgen Lesker and Martin Buschmann, along with tuner Eckhard Schulz, who established the Steeldrum Association, known as Pan-Kultur e.V. The primary aim was to promote and preserve the art of steelpan music. Notably, they established a steel orchestra, a traditional 'pan-round-neck' band and a children's steel orchestra. These three groups diligently rehearsed and consolidated their operations in a relocated unified panyard. They were soon established as a formidable pan-around-neck steelband and it was a great honour for Nostalgia to host them during NHC (Figure 6).

Nostalgia did several return visits to Pan Kultur's panyard usually to play for their



Figure 6 Pan Kultur playing under the name Nostalgia Steelband at Notting Hill Carnival. Front right, next to the speaker, Eckhard Schulz (Pan Kultur) with Sterling Betancourt to his right. Front left, Mohammed 'Yves' Dukali (bass guitar) and to is right, Monika Nicoletti-Tung (on Pan). Two rows behind (side turn) Martin Buschmann, (co-founder of Pan Kultur). Other players in the band were from Germany and Switzerland. Nostalgia in Dortmund – see: <https://www.panonthenet.com/articles/germany/dortmund2006x.html>

local carnival and post-carnival evening concerts at the city's Solendo. The experience most frequently documented is the event on Saturday 24th March 2006 when Nostalgia and Pan Kultur's pan-around neck combined band paraded through the narrow cobbled streets, through the market and eventually reached Dortmund city centre.

However, what struck Camille and me on our first visit in 2005 was the sheer uniqueness of Pan Kultur's panyard when we first encountered it. Panyards in Trinidad, usually start by acquiring a small plot of derelict land and shaping the panyard as the band consolidates its position and develops. Pan Kultur's panyard was different in that it was pragmatically planned and purpose-built. Their facilities alone were exceptional and included all stages of steelpan manufacture and tuning, small and large teaching and practice rooms, a café and a bar in which even the crockery and tableware were crafted to mimic aspects of a steelband. Even the safety metal over the glass windows was shaped like the notes of a tenor pan while bins looked like disused Pans. The music and the ambience of the bar and coffee shop transitioned to one in the Caribbean. We sat talking for a long while and reflected on the wonderful comradeship of Pan and what brought us to this place.

We imagined Maxilla Social Club looking like this one day. But we also talked about the passion we have for Nostalgia's panyard, not realising that three years later, on 9th February 2008, we would be decorating this space to hold Camille and Ross's engagement party there. This discussion on the panyard and how they help forge long-lasting friendships would again dominate our conversation when we

met Jimi Phillip on 23rd November 2013 at the Hyatt Hotel, Trinidad with his guest Jomo Wahtuse. Jimi was the recipient of a NIHERST 'Science in Pan' award for his incredible work (NIHERST, 2016, see paper in this volume). When the event was over, we (Jimi, Jomo, Camille and Haroun) sat outside the Hyatt discussing Pan until the early hours of the morning. This waterfront brought vivid memories of my departure when I boarded the S.S. Antilles bound for Britain on 14th August 1967. We talked about these journeys and how emotionally draining they were as they take what seem like hours to leave the quay. We mentioned that we were due to meet Bobby Mohammed, to which Jimi's response was "I am making a Pan now for Bobby ... for one of his family abroad" - we looked at each other in shock, realising that Jimi, whom we only just met that evening, was making a Pan that was commissioned by Bobby whom we would meet the following day. It was my first direct meeting with him since 1980, and yet in 2013 this would be our second meeting that year; first with Laila in February 2013 and then with Camille in November of the same year. Anyone involved in a steelband dreams about being in Trinidad for carnival and seeing a steelband on the road. For Camille, who was visiting Trinidad for the first time, her dream was to see a steelband playing on Coffee Street, an unlikely spectacle in November. However, when we left Port of Spain to stay in San Fernando that Sunday, we drove through the one-way system on Carib Street (that runs parallel to Coffee Street) and could hear a steelband playing on Coffee Street. We leapt out of the car and found ourselves singing and dancing to the music of the legendary Fonclaire Steel Orchestra who was performing directly in front of my old home at 117 Coffee Street.

Our earlier conversations, just two days before at the Hyatt with Jimi and Jomo about growing up on Coffee Street and seeing steelbands play in front of our home seem to have come alive. We later learnt that it was ‘Borough’s Day’ in San Fernando and as part of the festivities, various steelbands perform on Coffee Street, each band performing sequentially. With six steelbands, including the renowned Skiffle Steel Orchestra and Pan Elders Steel Orchestra performing, our entry into Coffee Street, with its long history of steelbands and panyards, could not be more enchanting. We walked along Coffee Street pointing out the panyards of celebrated steelbands such as ‘Free French’, ‘Melody Makers’, ‘Rhythm Stars’ and others that made history in the development of the Pan and the steel orchestra.

The following day, Camille would at last meet Bobby Mohammed and his wife Myrtle at their home which, during the 1960s, was the panyard of “the great Guinness Cavaliers”, that extend onto the road in the lead-up to Panorama. Camille bonded strongly with Bobby, who hoped to go on a church tour playing Pan in Peru (where Camille then lived), but his health issues made it impractical. Though it was the first and last time they met, the experience left an indelible mark on Camille, who remains thankful for the opportunity to have met our dear cousin.

That night, we visited the unique panyard of Pamperi Steel Orchestra, in San Juan, meeting the late Nestor Sullivan who had joined Nostalgia Steelband for many years to play in London’s NHC. As well as showing us their intricately designed carnival costumes and artwork, Nestor led his band in an unforgettable rendition of

“Pan in A Minor”, which brought our trip to an unforgettable close.

On a personal level, this visit and trips to various panyards afforded us a rare opportunity to communicate in person. It was Camille’s first visit to Trinidad, arriving from Peru where she was working and living with her family. Camille started playing with Nostalgia during her first year at the University of Manchester (BSc/MSc 1996 -2000). She never anticipated living and working in Latin America, speaking Spanish and bringing up her family. Life turned again for her when during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, she and her family would move to Switzerland and led her to revisit Funland Serenaders panyard, this time with her family.

A Makeshift Panyard in Hamburg, Germany.

In 2007, Nostalgia was invited to the annual Hamburg Carnival. It was one of the first

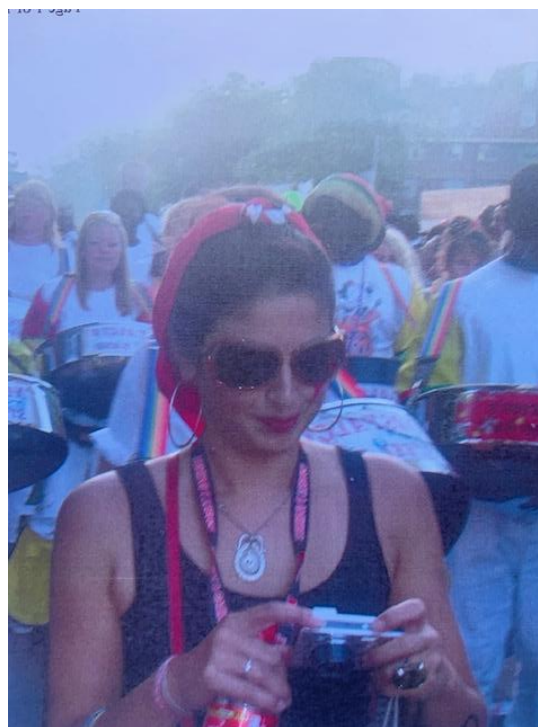


Figure 7. Loulou's Respite: A brief reprieve from the 'pan-around-neck' parade - Nostalgia's strategic approach to enduring prolonged engagements on the road for carnival.

trips Loulou and I did together aboard. Normally, Nostalgia steelband would link up with a local steelband and rehearse in their panyard, but here we were the only steelband at this carnival and therefore had to create our makeshift panyard (Figure 7). We were given the premises of a fairly secluded primary school in the centre of the city for our stay between 16th -18th June 2007 (Table 2). The school was surrounded by a large playing field, hence we could rehearse without fear of disturbing residents. We were accompanied by the newly formed Shern Hall Steel band members on their maiden carnival trip aboard. With both groups playing under Nostalgia for the last few years at NHC, there was complete concordance and one of the most joyous trips abroad. It was a DIY visit in which all helped to create a panyard during this triumphant visit which seem to have been a perpetual party, both at our abode and on the streets of Hamburg. Some members, originally from Columbia also brought their brass instruments and several drums. Sleep was minimal with members singing and playing throughout the nights, interrupted only when needed e.g. once by a member falling asleep in the toilet while smoking a cigarette and the fire alarm shrieking out in the middle of the night and eliciting a visit from the fire brigade services. Cooking presented some amusing problems too as while we had an electric kettle, there were no pots and pans. Having included eggs for 40 people in our shopping and wanting to prepare breakfast we faced a dilemma. Amidst great laughter, the kettle was used to boil the eggs, some of which were perfect, but others broke, congealed and required lengthy cleaning of the kettle. Even though the coffee and tea tasted of eggs and had some floating bits, we welcomed it in the absence of anything else.

For lunch, the two of us took the responsibility to shop at the local market. But we took the cheap and easy way out when a Sri Lankan vendor spotted us and assumed we were famished refugees and thought he would do a good deed. He said his food was about to pass its expiry sale time and offered all his curry, enough for 50 people, entirely free. However, neither he nor we had containers to take back the food on this 45-minute walk. We poured all his curry chicken and rice into 20 plastic carrier bags and taking five filled bags in each hand, we began our long trek back to our panyard which by now seem twice as long. The bags rubbed against each other as we walked, and twenty minutes into the journey, small cracks started appearing and curry began dripping onto the pavement. We had a few comments in German by passers-by which was not too difficult to decipher as we were leaving a colourful trail of curry behind as we pressed on and wondered if the bag would burst. But sufficient remained to feed 40 of us, many saying grace for the first time. We were eternally grateful for the rain that came later that evening and washed the pavements and saved us from confrontation with the law. These trips naturally engender a strong sense of amity and an inevitable ambience for profound discussions on Pan, decolonisation, history, politics and the enduring racial experiences experience of blacks and Asians people and ethnic minorities, the grassroots of most steelbands. These often heated discussions were filled with humour but serious undertones as they are key to the survival of a panyard, establishing the ideology and philosophy on which a long-term future is built. If a band simply came together to practice and perform, perhaps few steelbands would survive the many decades

and cross the many milestones that are so commonly celebrated today. For a family and in this case a father and daughter, it offered an otherwise unexpected experience and a chance to reflect on the inevitable gaps that occur in life and even plan further trips together; in our case, high on the agenda for Loulou to meet her musical inspiration and idol, Bobby Mohammed and her relatives in Trinidad.

Loulou's transformative journey since her initial encounter with Nostalgia at NHC in 1996 has been remarkable. Over the years, she has undergone significant personal progress, growing in experience both emotionally and intellectually. As a parent, I cherished these precious moments with a daughter, who has successfully navigated the challenges of university life (BSc/MSc) and ventured into the professional world, notably in the field of Humanity and Development, gaining experience in the field while living and working under the most challenging situations in various corners of the world, torn apart by the ravages of war, oppression, hunger, disease and colonisation while trying to support destitute and homeless populations in Sri Lanka, Palestine, Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Somaliland, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique. These shared experiences evoke a myriad of emotions within a parent, including a deep sense of pride. Perhaps they would never happen if it weren't for the panyard which provides that ambience to facilitate such personal and moving recollections. We talked a lot about visiting Trinidad together to meet Bobby Mohammed. However, her hectic schedule in February/March each year, when Trinidad carnival is held, was always a deterrent and only materialise in February 2023, when Bobby was deceased. A consolation was meeting his daughter



Figure 8. Panyard of Guinness Cavaliers Steel Orchestra from 1960s at 25 Lazzari Street, Mon Repos, San Fernando. Today all that left of this historic landmark is the boarded-up ground floor of their panyard and dilapidated uninhabited ramshackle with an insignia 'For Sale' and a barely visible sign stating 'home of the iconic Guinness Cavaliers.'

The prodigious steelband brought pride to San Fernando and the entire South Trinidad when they first won the National Panorama in 1965, beating the legendary Pan Am North Stars with their mythical arrangement of Lord Melody's 'Mas'. The band placed 2nd in 1966 but overwhelmingly won the people's choice. They reclaimed the national title again in 1967 with Lord Kitchener's '67') (Credit- L. C.F. Shah, February 2023).

Michelle and sharing views on her dad and his band's impact, both in Trinidad and around the world. Our visit to his panyard at 25 Lazzari Street, Mon Repos, San Fernando on 15th February 2023 beheld a solitary, deserted house and panyard with a sign "For Sale" that modestly read 'Home of the iconic Guinness Cavaliers' (Figure 8). We questioned, how could a place that was so monumental, historic and life-changing for so many just wilt away into oblivion. It stirred deep emotions in us as I went about describing what this panyard looked like in the heyday of this extraordinary band and particularly their triumphant return to San Fernando with the National Panorama trophy in 1965; creating immense pride and confidence, not only for the people of San Fernando but south Trinidad. We walked along Coffee Street

and recollected what it looked like on J'Ouvert morning 1st March 1965 as Guinness Cavaliers paraded to continuous, spontaneous and thunderous applause by onlookers at every vantage point as the Cavaliers traversed Coffee Street. Interestingly, as we walked on bystanders would hear our conversation and join in, sometimes causing the traffic to stop by walking out into the road to describe a moment - and a cousin, whom Loulou had never met jumping out of his car to introduce himself and take a photo. But the icing on the cake was 'Night Mas' on Monday 20th February 2023 on Coffee Street when we joined a small steelband from La Romain at the top of 'the Coffee' near Royal Road playing 'Sugar Bum Bum' and jumped past 117 Coffee Street where I grew up and became aware of the panyard, steelpan and carnival

The Panyard of Southern All Stars, Claxton Bay

On the morning of Wednesday 14th June 2017, the residents of London were awakened by one of the most devastating disasters in recent memory. Television screens displayed images of the 24-storey Grenfell Tower, a residential building in the Notting Hill Carnival area, engulfed in black smoke from a fire ignited in one flat at 1.00 am. The nation mourned as the news unfolded that 72 individuals had tragically lost their lives in the blaze.. Opposite Grenfell Tower stood Maxilla Social Club, our panyard of some 50 years. In the aftermath of the fire, the club served as a trauma centre for injured residents for several weeks and remained closed as a business for several months. Numerous major events in London were cancelled as a mark of respect to the affected families and friends.



Figure 9. Two views of Southern All Stars' Panyard at Claxton Bay where Nostalgia Steelband rehearsed for carnival in 2018. The view to the right shows a minute section of this enchanting panyard with its idyllic green surroundings with coconut trees, along with majestic species such as Royal and Cocorite Palm trees.

Ishmael "Luxy" Zackeralli, our arranger from Trinidad, now affiliated with Nostalgia Steelband, had already arrived in London for carnival and witnessing the magnitude of the disaster, contemplated returning home. However, to everyone's surprise, the residents overwhelmingly voted in favour of proceeding with the Notting Hill Carnival, a mere 74 days away (scheduled for 27- 28th August 2017). This decision posed an emotional and psychological challenge for all steelbands, as many Grenfell residents had been avid supporters of the Notting Hill Carnival for years. For members of Nostalgia Steelband, the situation was even more agonising, as their rehearsals now took place outside Maxilla's panyard, with the burnt-out shell of Grenfell Tower serving as a haunting backdrop.

Nevertheless, a glimmer of hope emerged when it was announced that each participating band in the carnival would pay tribute to the Grenfell victims by pausing on the carnival route at 15.00 on both days to play Simon and Garfunkel's iconic song, "Bridge over Troubled Water". Tentative rehearsals resumed, centred around this song, which soon became symbolic of fundraising events for the Grenfell victims. For the carnival competition, Luxy, with the assistance of Bobby Mohammed, arranged a captivating rendition of Lod Kitchener's "Toco Band". Despite the prevailing gloom and despondency, this tune uplifted everyone's spirits as the band departed from its panyard towards Ladbrooke Grove on the morning of the NHC 2017. When the band turned into Kensal Road, approaching Emslie Horniman's Pleasance Park (the panorama site), its performance was at its peak, resonating with exceptional sound and dynamism. Arranger Luxy, attempting to

contact Bobby Mohammed in Trinidad to share the band's exuberant sound, encountered repeated failed attempts despite using various band members' phones. Frustrated, Luxy approached me and expressed his disappointment, exclaiming that "carnival would end without Bobby hearing the band on the road." Subconsciously I retorted "Why don't we take the band to Trini for Bobby to hear us". A few overheard this remark and interpreted it as a premeditated decision to journey to Trinidad and participate in the 2018 carnival (Figure 9).

News of the potential trip quickly spread among band members, prompting some to immediately check airfares and dates for Trinidad's 2018 carnival. Given that most of Nostalgia's members were teachers, another ripple of excitement surged through the band when it was revealed that UK schools would be closed during that period for their half-term break, making the trip highly feasible. They received offers of accommodation and began outlining preliminary plans to join forces with the legendary 'Southern All Stars'. This band, led by Luxy and run by members of his family, was based in Claxton Bay, near San Fernando. Being a high school teacher at the 'Union Claxton Bay Senior Comprehensive School' he was able to use the back of the school to construct a panyard for Southern All Stars.

An account of this ground-breaking trip was reported in the Trinidad Guardian and presented at the 7th International Biennial Steelpan Conference, 19 -21st October 2018

(Shah, 2018). Laila was in her first year at university and only got permission to go after the band had left London. Her arrival at Piarco Airport, Trinidad marked the beginning of a memorable experience at Panorama. Despite a tiring 14-hour journey, she wasted no time and headed straight to the Panorama drag in Port of Spain, where band members, with Luxy and family, were fully engrossed in the music and arrangement of the finalists as they prepared to enter the competition. This immersive environment and the magical sound of these bands provided Laila with a delightful experience. However, the highlight of her trip would be the morning of Sunday, 11th February 2018. As a tribute, the band decided to perform Lord Kitchener's "67," commemorating Bobby's second panorama victory in 1967 and the year I left Trinidad for the UK. They also

chose to play "Bridge over Troubled Water" to honour the victims of the Grenfell tragedy in Trinidad and pay homage to Luxy, who experienced this melancholic period while residing in London.

During the six hours of rehearsals at the panyard in Claxton Bay, I recall glancing over at Laila several times. Despite her lack of sleep, her face radiated with perpetual joy, reflecting her passion for playing Pan in such an enchanting panyard with its idyllic surroundings. This humble panyard, adorned with a 50-foot square galvanized roof, embodied the dream of every pannist in the diaspora. Akin to a garden, it abounded with 30-40 meter trees, accompanied by a cacophony of bird sounds. The panyard was further enhanced by the presence of four charming lofty coconut trees, along with majestic species



Figure 10. The renowned Abbey Road Studios where the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Oasis, Adele and many more recorded being used as a panyard for Nostalgia's pre-recording of Rick Smith's signature piece "*And I Will Kiss*" for use at the Opening Ceremony of London's 2012 Olympics. Nostalgia Steelband was the only steelband selected to perform at the Opening Ceremony and paraded as a pan-around-neck band of 50.

like the Royal and Cocorite Palm, Cedar, Angelin, Bois Cannon, and the mythical Immortelle intertwined with magnificent green vines, grass, butterflies and an array of colourful insects. The surroundings also featured the Samman Tree and pink and yellow Poui trees in Couva, where the band members stayed. In this tranquil setting, the sounds of the wind blowing through the foliage and the harmonious sound of the Pan blended seamlessly with the environment, illustrating poignantly the central role nature offered in the creation of this divine instrument.

To capture some of these enchanting moments, Gabrielle Heyse-Moore, a visitor from Trinidad, recorded a YouTube video that immortalises the beauty and magic of this experience.

See link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bROwbZM1Y5U>

In the serene atmosphere of a delightful beach house in one of Trinidad's most iconic beaches, on Ash Wednesday 2018, it was a time to pause and reflect and Laila vividly recounted some of her most cherished experiences. Among these was her participation in Nostalgia's recording at the Abbey Road Studios for the London 2012 Olympics, an occasion celebrated in several videos and photographs (see e.g. Figure 10). She recalled her involvement in the "1000 Pans" event, a grand celebration marking the culmination of the 2012 Olympics on the site where the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO) had performed back in 1951. Yet, there was a deep feeling that any encounter with the art of steelpan in Trinidad surpasses all others, transcending the realm of ordinary experiences

see link: <https://youtu.be/acSXXCnqDSM>

Engaging in steelpan performances in its homeland imparts an enduring trajectory that permeates every aspect of one's life. For Laila, despite her professional pursuit in the field of chemistry, steelpan has played a prominent role in her university application statements and student life. I recall an emotional moment when I assisted her in moving into her accommodation at Oxford University on the 27th September 2021. With limited space in the vehicle with three passengers, she carefully selected the bare essentials to transport from her home to her university residence. Laila unequivocally deemed her steelpan an absolute priority, thus making it the first item to be unloaded and carried through the courtyard to her new home. As the strains of classical music resonated across the verdant quadrangle, Laila promptly arranged her steelpan, proudly unfurled a 6-foot Trini flag, and soon had Kitchie competing with Mozart.

In the years that followed her trip to Trinidad, she would play 2-hour long concerts of classical music with St Michaels and All Angels Steel Orchestra (2012-2017) under the tutorship of the legendary Freddy Totesant and play with the UK champion steelband Mangrove (2017 to date) for Panorama practising in their unique panyards. However, following Panorama on carnival morning, it would be back to our panyard, at Maxilla Social Club, to join Nostalgia with her entire family and friends on the road.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w04wi1t4Ld4&ab_channel=HarounShah (Toco band)

Summary and Conclusions

This paper originated from an impromptu reaction by our family, who responded to Tate Britain's April 2022 call to select sites

across the city which held a deep personal meaning for them following the conclusion of the 'Life Between Islands' exhibition. Camille, Loulou and Laila were profoundly influenced by their longstanding association with Nostalgia Steelband based at Maxilla Social Club in the heart of the Notting Hill Carnival and focused on early life experiences at Nostalgia Steelband's panyard and their lasting memories. The very public viewing of this account prompted much debate on the significance of a panyard over the next year. Although consensus emerged regarding its importance as a space and its pivotal role in the sustainability of a steelband, diverse viewpoints prevailed concerning the personal meaning attributed to a panyard. Furthermore, it was noted that the significance of a panyard varied across different periods. For example, during World War II and the late 1940s post-war period, Cyril Khamai underlined the importance of a panyard as a sanctuary for pannists, providing a secure environment for experimentation away from the scrutiny of the law and a disapproving Trinidadian middle-class society. Parents would reprimand their children if found in a panyard. However, as society gradually embraced the presence of this captivating musical instrument, particularly after the conclusion of WWII, acceptance became more widespread. TASPO's historic journey to Britain and Europe in 1951 was considered a crucial turning point, as it transformed the panyard from a purely physical space into a more creative realm. In London, the establishment of Nostalgia Steelband was facilitated by Sterling Betancourt's decision to become domiciled in London following TASPO's epic visit and his subsequent encounter with Russell Henderson (McCalman, 2019). Eventually,

Maxilla Social Club was secured as its panyard and has been its home ever since. However, events in Trinidad markedly affect developments in the UK. By the late 1950s, and especially with the advent of panorama in Trinidad in 1963, the music of large steelbands resonated throughout entire cities in Trinidad leading up to the carnival. Whole families would gather at a panyard, occupying pavements and devoting hours to listening to a steelband's rehearsals. Consequently, the meaning of a panyard differed between band players and local supporters, both of whom made significant contributions to the band's development. Distinctions were also observed between temporary band members, who joined solely for the carnival season, and permanent band members. Variances were further evident across age groups, as exemplified in the testimonials provided by Camille and Loulou, and my perspective as their father. Thus, it proved unfeasible to establish a singular, unified definition that encompassed all viewpoints. Consequently, this paper concentrated on a particular family comprising a parent (Haroun), two daughters (Camille and Loulou) who joined the band simultaneously, and a third younger daughter (Laila), from a subsequent marriage, who was born and grew up within the band 18 years after her sisters. These ephemeral experiences held enormous significance and were regarded as integral to a broader steelpan community, a global collective that shared a common passion for the steelpan instrument. However, among these experiences, Maxilla Social Club, Nostalgia Steelband's panyard holds the most profound place in their hearts in later life. This particular venue was chosen to host gatherings with friends, serving as a

platform to introduce them to the steelpan and to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, engagements, wedding receptions, funeral wakes, christenings etc. A panyard not only appeals deeply to a steelband but also greatly contributes to the overall carnival atmosphere, instilling a desire to spread its message far and wide. It was for reasons such as these that the idea for our inaugural conference in 2006 was conceived by co-author, Haroun, Camille, Loulou, and Lionel McCalman. I opened the first meeting with a presentation on the panyard of Guinness Cavaliers and the advent of the 'Big Band' in Trinidad and Tobago, while Camille concluded the gathering with a summary of the conference. Together with Loulou, they developed questionnaires and consolidated suggestions that would lay the groundwork for subsequent meetings – (today's 10th meeting is being organised in Ghana between 5 - 8th December 5-8, 2023. (see link <https://www.steelpanconference.com>) and news that the UN declared 11th August 2023 as 'World Steelpan Day').

By the time the 3rd Biennial Steelpan Conference was held in 2010, Loulou had become a staunch proponent of incorporating mas and calypso. The meeting was titled *'Integrating the Three Elements of Carnival; Steelpan, Calypso and Mas'* and was proficiently reported by her in Pan Podium and 'When Steel Talks' (Shah, L.C.F., 2010). When Laila joined these meetings, Camille and Loulou already had established careers and were working abroad. Laila presented her first paper at aged 14 at the 4th International Steelpan Conference (2012). Subsequently, she became a voice for the youth and channelled much of her energy and time into developing the programme and promoting these conferences. She took on

tasks such as designing the book covers, creating logos, developing and editing abstracts, producing the conference books, introducing and presenting poster presentations, and transitioning into the digital age. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she devoted considerable time while at university to establishing a new website to archive and report activities arising from these conferences and together with me, launched Volume 1 of the new biannual journal 'International Journal of Carnival Arts' in June 2020.

(see link:

<https://www.steelpanconference.com>)

In this autoethnography case study of a single family, the steelpan and its panyard have served as a strong cultural bond, and its impact has been so profound that no family gathering, celebration, street party or public event is complete without the presence of calypso and Pan. At NHC our extended family and close friends, numbering over twenty, mostly from Canada, meet annually. Sometimes we comprise the entire band at J'Ouvert and our meeting point and concluding venue remains Nostalgia's Steelband's panyard at Maxilla Social Club! (Figure 11)



Figure 11. Nostalgia's family J'Ouvert troupe parades from their panyard onto the paint-splashed path of NHC, embodying the essence of a traditional J'Ouvert morning-from front row left: Haroun, Dominic, Laila, Aisha, Megan and Loulou.

<https://youtu.be/acSXXCnqDSM>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w04wi1t4Ld4&ab_channel=HarounShah (Toco band)

Table 2. Key events in which at least two of the four authors participated over the years. Some of the other activities of Nostalgia Steelband were reported by McCalman (2019, 2022).

Event	Approximate Time	Summary, References where available
Notting Hill Carnival	End of August each year. Our involvement began in 1994.	Nostalgia Steelband's founders, Russell Henderson, Philmore 'Boots' Davidson, Sterling Betancourt, Cyril Khamai and others founded the Notting Hill Carnival. It is therefore the most important annual event for the band. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNAnEIlftcA&ab_channel=GregoryRabess
Busking and Fundraising for charities	From 1998. Played at 2 to 3 places along the route for the London Marathon.	Busk on London's Oxford Street for Xmas from 2005 - 2019 Recognised fundraiser for the Stroke Foundation. Each winter bucket collections are used as we play Pan at Waterloo Station from 7 am - 12 noon. https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/steel-band-london.html?sortBy=relevant
Collaboration with Steelbands	E.g. From 2000, reciprocal performances between PanKultur Dortmund, Germany and Nostalgia e.g. London's Notting Hill Carnival.	Established a strong collaborative exchange programme with several steelbands in France, Germany, Holland and Switzerland. See - Shah, 2013. Proceedings 1 st Conference on Steelpan 2006. https://www.steelpanconference.com/1st-conference https://www.panpodium.com/home/2019/10/22/nostalgia-steelband-the-uks-first-steel-band-established-in-1964
Cricket: Nostalgia played between breaks throughout the day to support the W.I. Cricket team	First played the Oval cricket ground 2 nd June to 4 th Sept 2000. Through this, then played regularly at Lord's Cricket Ground.	A tradition that goes back to Lord Kitchener's victory parade from Lords Cricket ground to Piccadilly when W.I. won the 1950 Test Match at Lords. During events met many of the players and given tours of the Lords and Oval Cricket Pavilion.
Support for Clinical Science and Healthcare	From 2000 - 2021 Nostalgia performed annually at international clinical sciences conferences at Public Health England, London.	Played during the COVID-19 Pandemic to help boost the waning vaccination programme. Titled: "CarniVax". H.N. Shah and Cyril Khamai interviewed and appeared on BBC, TTT and on Guyana Television (see Shah et al. (2021) CarniVAX'. International Journal of Carnival Arts. 3 , 27 – 45.
Science conference in Basel and Swiss Carnival.	Bern Friday 2 nd February 2001. Depart; Sunday 4 th Feb at 10.55 am.	Panyard: Scarlet Roots Pan Company GmbH Postfach 326, Riedbachstrasse 51 CH-3027 Bern, Switzerland See text – 'The Panyard of Funland Serenaders, Bern, Switzerland'. Event: Funland Bern Carnival 2001
Festivals in Parks	From 2002. The most memorable was '1000	Earliest recorded on Sunday 14 th July 2002 at the Thurrock Park Festival. Also, Manchester, Nottingham, Leicester,

	Pans' at London's South Bank in 2012	Coventry, Brighton, Birmingham, Leeds and the Midlands, Somerset, Norwich and throughout the UK.
Stop the War - demonstration from London's Embankment to Hyde Park.	Saturday 15 th February 2003 - 10.00 - 4.00 pm. Nostalgia Steelband played at Parliament Square on 14 th February 2003 to show its solidarity with the 'Stop the War Coalition.'	Over 1 million demonstrated (including Nostalgia's members) in London against the imminent invasion of Iraq but it did nothing to avert a war in which over >1 million died. https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/politics/a19547603/iraq-15-years-george-bush/ Speakers at the rally included Tony Benn, Jesse Jackson, Ken Livingstone, Mo Mowlam and Harold Pinter.
Bridgewater's unique 400-year-old Night Carnival	Nostalgia began participating from 2003, playing in the city during the day and joining the night parade through the city.	Hocking (2005), Shah, 2013. https://www.bridgewatercarnival.org.uk/history/ Magnificent spectacle of illuminations on the streets of Bridgewater each year in early November. All bands on large floats -Nostalgia the only band on the road during the parade.
Local Elections: Support local candidates in London's East End where racial issues were endemic	Nostalgia played in London's Brick Lane to support the Respect Party 2004 and independent candidates.	Several Black and Asian candidates stood for local election aiming to stem the tide of racist transgression in London's East End – Nostalgia supported many of these campaigns.
Carnivals and Workshops	From 2004 to date undertake workshops in schools, parks, festivals etc	https://www.nostalgiasteelband.com/ Over 100 workshops have been conducted throughout the UK, some for the severely impaired, Alzheimer's, Dementia patients etc
Steelband Conferences; Research, Publication and Archiving of Carnival Arts - its history and pioneers.	First steelpan conference 2006. Launch of the 'International Journal of Carnival Arts' (IJCA) as a biannual journal in 2020.	https://www.steelpanconference.com/ 1 st Conference - University of East London E.g. Workshop with Opera Singer Anne Fridal at the 7 th Biennial Steelpan Conference https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=036dRhFB_U8&ab_channel=HarounShah https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndam26GE0wQ&ab_channel=HarounShah https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndam26GE0wQ&ab_channel=HarounShah (Toco Band 2018 conference).
FIFA World Cup in Germany 2006. Nostalgia travelled to Germany with pans to support Trinidad & Tobago.	10 th June 2006. Sweden vs Trinidad & Tobago in Dortmund.	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_FIFA_World_Cup_Group_B Nostalgia teamed up with PanKultur Steel Orchestra to play in Dortmund to support the T & T Soca Warriors Football Team. T & T secured a 0-0 draw against a powerful Swedish team.
Support for Calypso e.g through workshops and conferences	From 23-24 th October 2006, one session of each conference has been devoted to calypso.	Nostalgia's efforts to support Calypso and promote the artform throughout the year -e.g. performed at The Association of Calypsonians and Soca Artists UK (ACASA) Winter Event: World Music Stage" on 15 th January 2023.
Carnivals in Europe.	E.g. Hamburg, 16 - 18 th June 2007. Dept. 8am from Gatwick	Hamburg, the city of Germany's legendary composers, pianists, and conductors Felix Mendelssohn and Johannes Brahms. 15 members of Nostalgia Steelband played. We

	Airport. Stayed at a school in Hamburg's city centre.	played at the Street Carnival along with dozens of bands on Sunday 17 th June 2007. As the only steelband at the festival, it attracted great interest (see text)
Funeral Cortege Because of our mobility as a 'pan-round-neck' steelband, we have led many funeral processions over the years	25 th September 2007 e.g. Ezekiel 'Biggs' Yearwood at St Marks Church, Hackney. 19 th September 2015. Russell Henderson	As the founder of 'Pantonic Steel Band' and a renowned self-taught Pan tuner, many pannists played at St Marks Church before the funeral service - Nostalgia was the only steelband to join the procession to the cemetery. Co-organised the funeral procession- 30 members of Nostalgia Steelband and Pan Nectar played a single band on the streets from Russell's home along the Harrow Road to the West London Crematorium (Harrow Road, W10 4RA). The two-hour long procession included an elegant towering white Angel from Mahogany Carnival Arts https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/news/russ-henderson-inspirational-jazz-pianist-and-steelpan-player-who-played-a-central-role-in-establishing-the-notting-hill-carnival-10492098.html
International Concerts and Festivals E.g. Toronto and Shanghai	31 st July - 3 rd August 2008 e.g. University of York's Carnival Arts Conference, Toronto. 11 th -17 th September 2013 (Shanghai)	Nostalgia, the only steelband to perform at the conference; opening ceremony- 31 st July 2008 and presented five papers (see Innes et al., 2013). Played 'Pan-Round-Neck' at China's Shanghai Festival parade and several open-air concerts.
J'Ouvert – Notting Hill Carnival (NHC)	From 2008, The Shah family has taken the responsibility to host the band's performances at J'Ouvert.	Only a few bands participate in Notting Hill Carnival's J'Ouvert. Nostalgia only began taking part in 2008, appealing to a small cross section of the band. https://www.steelpanconference.com/7th-conference
Trade Union support.	From 2012, Nostalgia has consistently supported Trade Union activities.	E.g. UNISON -Trade Union Congress (TUC) National Demonstration to support public services, including local government, education, health and outsourced services. Nostalgia played in several demonstrations in London.
London's 2012 Olympics: Recording at the renowned 'Abbey Road Studios.'	Monday 18 th June 2012. Recorded Rick Smith and Karl Hyde's signature tune "And I Kiss" for the opening ceremony	https://www.steelpanconference.com/archive Nostalgia was selected as the only steelband to perform at the opening ceremony of London's 2012 Olympics. We added about 40% more of our own arrangement to "And I Kiss" and was welcomed by Smith and Hyde who danced in the studio after listening to the recording.
Carnival Appointments	June 2017 Directors: Notting Hill Carnival Board, Carnival Village Trust, Windrush Memorial Committee	Input into the organisation, planning and outcomes of major carnival events in London such as Notting Hill Carnival. Outside London - e.g. Cowley (Oxford) Road Carnival 9 th July 2023. Hired coach and organised our steelband but activity called off by the Oxford group on 2 nd June 2023 due to inadequate funding.
Grenfell Tower, Maxilla Social Club acted as a trauma centre in the aftermath of the Grenfell inferno	14 th June 2017. Nostalgia played regularly to fundraise for the victims. Practise suspended at the panyard.	72 residents died tragically in a fire that started at 1.00 am. Despite calls to suspend the forthcoming Notting Hill Carnival 2017, the residents cried out to retain it (see text). https://www.vice.com/en/article/zmmyaa/the-inside-story-of-how-notting-hill-carnival-is-responding-to-grenfell
Honouring members of the carnival community	2017 and 2021 e.g. 86 th and 90 th birthday parties for Cyril Khamai	Organised and hosted by Nostalgia Steelband (see Shah, Louise C.F. (2021). International Journal of Carnival Arts. 4, 88-101). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67NluwXnoJE&ab_channel=PanPodium

Nostalgia in Trinidad	2018 -Trinidad carnival with T'dad's Southern All Stars	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acSXXCnqDSM&ab_channel=HarounShah First steelband in the diaspora to take its own pans and play on the streets for Trinidad's carnival.
Virtual Carnival during the COVID-19 Pandemic	Recorded at the Tabernacle on 1 st August 2020. Interviewed about the history of Nostalgia and carnival	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi-XuzqQnhs&ab_channel=NottingHillCarnivalLtd The COVID-19 pandemic prevented a live carnival – bands recorded from selected venues and a virtual event was put together for the carnival weekend (24 th -26 th August 2019).
Host Special events	e.g. 19 th April 2022. "100 years of Lord Kitchener."	Nostalgia Steelband linked up with the Arima Rebranding Team, Trinidad to mark this momentous event in Arima and London (see Saunders et al., (2022) International Journal of Carnival Arts. 5, 43-70).
Conferences organised abroad (in progress)	4 th -8 th December 2023. Venue: University of Ghana, Legon,	10 th International Steelpan/Carnival arts conference: Theme: 'Rhythm of a People, Tradition, Connection, Innovation and Decolonisation'.

Acknowledgement:

We gratefully acknowledge Nostalgia Steelband and its founding fathers for creating such a robust foundation to enable this steelband to have survived 59 years. As a family, we are especially grateful to Sterling and Herman Betancourt, Lionel McCalman, Cyril Khamai, Michael "Bubbles" Olivierre and others who at one stage or another provided self-realisation and strengthened identity for our entire family.

They all warmly welcomed our family to the band and successfully rebuilt it following the departure of its former members to Pan Nectar Steelband. We wish to thank Tate Britain and Life Between Island in London team for inviting us to participate in this project by providing testimonies of a place that meant a great deal to our entire family.

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Jimi Phillip Continues His Journey of Steelpan of Discovery

Haroun N. Shah^{1,2} Camille Y.T. Allan¹, Louise C.F. Shah¹ and Laila M.N. Shah^{1,3,4}

¹Nostalgia Steelband, 2a Maxilla Walk, London, UK, W10 6SW

²Department of Natural Sciences, Middlesex University, London, UK, NW4 4BT

³Mangrove Steelband, Tabernacle, 34-35 Powis Square, W11 2AY

⁴Department of Chemistry, University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford, OX1 3QZ

Abstract

Jim 'Jimi' Phillip, a prominent figure in the world of Pan music, was honoured with 'The Anthony Williams Award for Technological Innovation in Arts and Culture' on 23rd November 2013 by Trinidad and Tobago's renowned 'National Institute for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST)' at the Hyatt Regency, Port of Spain. As a distinguished pannist, tuner, inventor, innovator, teacher, musician, and performer, Jimi's recognition, alongside 17 other eminent scientists, during the awards ceremony emphasised the vital role of steelpan and carnival arts in the field of Science and Technology in the region. This prestigious event also paved the way for his participation at the 5th International Conference in Steelpan/Carnival Arts held at the University of East London in October 2014. Jimi's inspiring paper titled 'Innovations in Pan Design and Tuning' captivated the audience, instilling a sense of expectation and enthusiasm among attendees who have rarely engaged with a speaker with such hands-on experience. During his post-conference month-long sojourn in London, Jimi generously shared his pan-tuning skills through workshops and visits to renowned panyards and music centres, leaving a lasting impact on numerous local pan-tuners and musicians. Remarkably versatile as a musician, he astounded audiences in London by displaying proficiency not only as a pannist but also expertly performing on a guitar. In a memorable impromptu performance at a music shop in central London's Charing Cross Road, he delighted a large ad hoc audience by effortlessly responding to their calls, fluently transitioning between calypso, pop, and jazz. Over the last two decades, Jimi has been an annual guest in Canadian cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, where he hones his pan-tuning craft during the summer months. Additionally, his journey to Brazil in 2022 further enriched his pan-tuning expertise, contributing to the burgeoning growth of steelbands in the country. This paper delves into various facets of Jimi's remarkable work and, with due permission, republishes his absorbing interview with NIHERST that was conducted in 2013, soon after receiving their award, and paves the way into his journey of discovery as a pioneering force in the realm of Pan, its music and culture.

Key Words: Pannist, Innovator, NIHERST, Pan Icon, Steelpan Scientist, Tutor, Author, Visionary.

Introduction

Main The cognitive skills in a developing art form such as steelpan are both environmentally acquired and genetically attained. In Jimi's case, the latter is evident by the fact that his dad, an employee of the

formerly thriving Caroni Sugar Factory, also played and tuned steelpan. Growing up in a previously rural area such as Chaguanas, it was necessary to confront the hegemonic power and epistemological oppression inherent in Trinidad's colonial structure. But the youths took up the mantle

and Chaguanas inspired some of Trinidad and Tobago's most eminent scientists and innovators. These include the late Dr Rudranath Capildeo, world-renowned applied mathematician/physicist, Noble Prize contender and fellow NIHERST awardee (NIHERST, 2005) who grew up close to Jimi. Jimi is a product of this procreant milieu, requiring only minimal exposure as it is evident that his pan-musicking skills were already inscribed in his sensorimotor processes. He is a musical prodigy, who with only rudimentary musical skills reached the pinnacle of his art form without formal tuition and soon acquired an international following. In Europe or America, such students are often selected for special training, in Trinidad and Tobago this is acquired mostly through self-application and motivation with which he abounds.

The pedagogical skills of Jimi are often understated in reports of his work. Between November 2013 when we first met to February 2023, co-author HNS's daughters, Camille, Louise and Laila visited Jimi's

workshop seven times, all except the first quite spontaneously. On each visit, we were drawn in by his sheer magnetism, ingenuity, rich creativity and resourcefulness that fills the atmosphere together with the warmth and charisma of Jimi himself. We walked into children as young as five years being fetched in by enthusiastic mothers to be tutored on a Pan by this maestro. Parents speak with superlatives and pride at the way their infants have been learning to play Pan and read music using books entirely written and published by Jimi (Phillip, 1992).

In November 2013, Jimi Phillip was presented with a distinguished award for his immense contribution to the science of development of steelpan by The National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST), a statutory body established to promote science, technology and higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. Jimi, therefore, joined a list of colossal titans of steelpan/carnival who received NIHERST awards previously (Table 1).

Icon	Date of Award	Reference
Elliot 'Ellie' Mannette Steelpan Innovator	2005	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2005), Vol. 1, pp 51 -52
Bertram 'Bertie' Marshall Steelpan Innovator	2005	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2005), Vol. 1, pp 53 -54
Anthony Williams Steelpan Innovator	2005	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2005), Vol. 1, pp 73 -74
Rudolph Valentino Charles Steelpan Innovator	2007	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2009), Vol. 2, pp 3-4
Danzil 'Dimes' Fernandez Steelpan Innovator	2007	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2009) Vol. 2, pp 7-8.
Peter Minshall Mas Innovator	2007	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2009) Vol. 2, pp 37- 38
Geraldo Vieira Carnival Costume Innovator	2007	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2009) Vol. 2, pp 57-58
Brian Copeland; Electrical Engineering, Pan Innovator	2012	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2012) Vol. 3, pp 19-22.
Jimi Phillip; Pan Innovator A Lifetime of Pan	2013	Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology (2016) Vol. 4, pp 49-52

Table 1. NIHERST Awards to Steelpan/Mas Innovators as part of Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology Programme that commenced in 2005. Data taken from NIHERST publications, volumes I to IV.

His outstanding achievements led to his invitation to speak at the 5th International Steelpan Conference held at the University of East London, 12-14th October 2014. Jimi titled his presentation. *'Innovations in Pan Design and Tuning.'* The Abstract of his presentation charts his early life and career and highlights some of the innovative work he undertook over the years and is reproduced below:

"I became aware of the steel band at an early age and developed a great love for it during my life in primary school. Today the steel pan forms the greatest part of my enduring interest and sustains my livelihood.

Amidst learning to become an electrician and welder, I was attracted to and joined a steel band in my area called 'Wonderland' - its leader, Henry 'Bendix' Cumberbach was everything to the band; he taught its members to play the instrument, the rudiments of music and all things associated with steelpan. I was fortunate to be able to learn all the pans forms that existed at the time.

The names Winston Spree Simon, Neville Jules, and Ellie Mannette. Tony Williams stands out in my mind as the Colossuses of the pan world. These are some of the pioneers who not only created the steel pan but were responsible for the progress it has made today. Winston Spree has been accredited as the person, who in the trying times of the late nineteen thirties to the fifties, produced the first notes on the pan which were three then increased it to the full scale. He was also the leader of his band called 'Tokyo' that played with great skill and determination.

Neville Jules, like Spree, was also deeply involved in the creation and furtherance of the steel pan and, in later years, was responsible for what is now the Base Pans and others such as the Cellos. He was the leader of one of the oldest steel bands, 'The Trinidad All-Stars'. The tonal quality of his pans stood out above the rest and All Stars was known, and still is, as the band with the 'sweet pans'. His band was also known to

be among the most disciplined. Ellie Mannette was the youngest of the group of distinct pioneers. As the leader of 'Invaders Steel

Orchestra' he was known for his unyielding discipline of his band. He too commanded a marvellous distinct tone of his Pans. Ellie successfully negotiated for his band to be sponsored by the Shell company becoming the first Steelband to be given sponsorship. He is also recognised for bringing into the Pan world the technique of grooving and concave notes of the Pan. He increased the range of notes on the lead Pan from eight to fourteen and beyond, using the forty-five-gallon drum, placing the octaves on the dominant notes. Added to all this, he strapped rubber to the end of the playing sticks to make the sound more melodious.

Anthony Williams was an astonishing leader of one of our greatest Steel bands, 'Pan Am Jet North Stars' and one of our greatest steel band arrangers. The fine-tuning of his instruments stood out above the rest and was exemplified by his band winning several Music Festivals and Panorama competitions in 1963 and 1964 when the latter competitions started. His Festival winning masterful renditions of Anthony's Prospect's 'Intermezzo in E flat' and 'Poets and Peasants' in 1966 are magical and even today are considered one of the most memorable pieces of Pan. He then went on to combine his skills with the world-renowned Trinidadian pianist, Winifred Atwell in a project called "Ivory and Steel" which is revered as one of the greatest steel band recordings ever made. His spider web arrangement of notes has led to today's format of fourths and fifths which has become the standard practice among tuners today.

Another tuner who showed great ingenuity and foresight was Bertie Marshall. He was the first person to take the instrument into the electronic age by amplifying the lead pan in 1965, a feat which received considerable criticism from his peers. The instrument was ingloriously smashed to pieces on the carnival day of that year by

the members of another covetous band. Bertie, however, continued to make a significant contribution and is on record of having his band, 'Hilanders' become the first steel band to play in the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Port of Spain. Some of his other achievements were in designing and producing the double tenor and also the development of harmonic tuning. Bertie was indeed a genius in his own right, the tone of the 'Despers' pan was that of Bertie's.

Rudolph Charles also stands prominently among the great men of the Pan world. He produced the wonderful sounding 'Quadrophonic Pan', another instrument called the 'Ying Yang' Pan that was tuned to the tenor bass range, the Rocket pan and created the twelve bass section. He left an indelible impression in the Pan world for his chroming of the pans; this discovery not only enhanced the tonal quality of the Pans significantly but give the steel pan the aesthetic appeal it enjoys nowadays. Today that the bore pan is used by soloists and steel bands the world over and was the work of its inventor, Denzil "Dimes" Fernandez. This instrument makes a tremendous difference in tonal quality to the standard pan. The mini pan has always been a part of the steelpan family. Gerald Clarke specialises in producing these instruments which include 4ths and 5ths and the double second pans.

Jomo Wahtuse, my colleague and close collaborator, is not a tuner nor a player but has tremendous knowledge of every aspect of the steelpan. An Aircraft Engineer by profession, he has produced a range of steelpan instruments which he has termed 'The Wahtuse Range of Steel Percussion Instruments'. The first of these instruments called the 'Jomoline' was made and launched at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in 1977. He holds The Guinness World Record for the largest and only elliptical steel pan. I have had the pleasure of playing and maintaining this instrument and for five years it formed a part of the 'Claytone Steel Orchestra' for which I arranged. Other

instruments which he co-invented with me were the 'Xylopan' and the 'Manetone.' It was the first detachable faced pan and the 'JW Acoustic Electronic Venturi Pan', its production of which I also had an integral part. At the present time, Jomo and I are collaborating on what will be known as the 'Divided Detachable Skirt' which will be used mainly on the Base, Cellos and other large pans.

I have been driven to innovate ever since I first became involved in pan-tuning. While my development has been mainly due to my determination to succeed, I have to be thankful to such individuals as Wallace Austin who never hesitated to pass on to me his skills and insightful knowledge.

Apart from this I learnt to play the guitar and taught myself to read music. I also experimented with amplifying the instrument and gained much experience in this field over the years. My meeting with Jomo Wahtuse, over the last thirty years, also added to my encouragement as an innovator which led me to produce my 'Collapsible Pan Stand' and another, 'The Pan Note Measure' which won the first WITCO Rudolph Charles Pan Innovation Award in 1986. In 1988, I also won another award for the 'Portapan'. I have also made an array of tuning hammers and tools which I sell to many parts of the world. Of great pride is my Music book on the steelpan 'How to Play the Soprano Pan' and 'How to Play the Alto Pan' which are now widely circulated.

As a player, I was adjudged third place in the 1986 Steelband Music Festival. I have also arranged for several bands such as Claytones, Crescendoes Miami Pan Symphony. My latest involvement, the production of the Venturi Pan, creates an interest in me that I wish all pannists would experience. The manufacturing of our steel pans and experimentation on the portable pans such as the shortened skirt or skirts which can be collapsed or folded should be concentrated on as such innovations would prove cost and time saving - I am quite



Figure 1. Jimi meeting visitors who are about to visit his workshop. The sign above the workshop also emphasises its function as a 'School'. Many school children and teachers have participated in training courses in steelpan and music at his workshop. (Photo taken by Louise C.F. Shah)

certain that this would be a step in the right direction" (Phillip, 2014).

(Sadly, his lifelong friend and close collaborator, Jomo Wahtuse passed away on 29th November 2020).

Recent Visit to Jimi's Workshop (February 2023)

During the Trinidad carnival period in February 2023, the authors had the privilege of visiting Jimi's workshop and, based on this and previous visits, discovered that this renowned steelpan virtuoso had not lost any of his enthusiasm for his craft (Figures 1). Jimi's multitasking abilities astonished us, as he effortlessly tuned several Pans, worked on numerous projects simultaneously, and engaged in in-depth telephone conversations while also attending to visitors, some from distant parts of the world. Remarkably, everyone felt included, and drawn to the various projects in progress in his workshop. Jimi's attentiveness was evident as he picked up on each person's interests and engaged in conversations while tending to his other responsibilities, even taking a brief break, in his makeshift kitchen to prepare a meal,



Figure 2. Jimi acquired his workshop in 1987 and all parts of his space (20 X 20) are utilised. Here a small cooking space was created which he uses in between numerous on-going projects and speaking to visitors - who joins the meal like we did. (Photo taken by Louise C.F. Shah)

which he generously shared with his guests (Figure 2).

Amidst his busy engagements, Jimi remains approachable, readily explaining his ideas with meticulous detail whenever questions were asked. He maintains an open ecosystem, allowing visitors to take photos freely throughout the space. Notably, most visitors were drawn to a cabinet housing his numerous awards, though Jimi appeared indifferent to its presence, laughing off suggestions to clean and display them properly. The authors were particularly



Figure 3. Jimi proudly displays his 'Stamper' for grooving the pan that is under development. The complexity and immense intricate work serve to also highlight Jimi's craftsmanship and in particular his dexterity with the process of welding. (Photo taken by Louise C.F. Shah)

struck by Jimi's unwavering attention when teaching his young students (some only five years old), ensuring that their Pans were adjusted to the appropriate height, music sheets were visible, and sticks were correctly held and in an impeccable condition.

Jimi's work ethic is characterised by intermittent focus, especially when turning Pans. Rather than persist for hours if he encounters a problem, such as the tuning of a particular note, he would drift to another task and return later that day or the following to it. He explained that often

what he found initially difficult to achieve at a particular time often becomes attainable upon reattempt. When facing deadlines, Jimi showed fierce meticulousness, refusing to let any instrument leave his workshop until it met his highest standards. The authors found ample evidence of this dedication in the many Pans Jimi had produced and delivered to their steelband, Nostalgia, in London, bearing testament to the instruments' high standards and longevity.

As an innovator, Jimi's eyes light up when discussing his numerous parallel projects. One notable undertaking was the development of a "Stamper" for grooving the pan" (Figure 3 and front cover); a work in progress for several years. Remarkably persistent, he approached each challenge with the conviction that every problem should have a solution. His project on the KFC Spicy Steel Bucket is another example of his ability to overcome obstacles (see link:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=jimi+hillip+trinidad&oq=&aqs=chrome.0.35i39i362l8.57906844j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:18f25141,vid:ILRZbyGGdAQ>

Jimi has the mindset of a sound scientist; he methodically formulates hypotheses and employs effective pedagogical techniques and innovative technical methods to create an ontology within his community. In designing new tools such as his "Stamper" for grooving the notes of a pan, (Figure 3 and front cover) his approach is incremental. If there is a failure, he takes precise measurements and applies new countermeasures to address issues such as the metal stress that appears to be affecting the buckling of the skirt of the Pan. Another project that caught the authors' attention was Jimi's resourcefulness when he repurposed a discarded buoy from a scrap metal yard into an "oven" for tempering pans before tuning (Figure 4). His



Figure 4 (left). Jimi's shrewd use of a recovered buoy from the sea and re-purposed as an 'oven' to heat Pans ahead of tuning. When the Pan has been heated sufficiently (~8 -10 minutes), the ramp (in his right hand) is laid at the door of the buoy and a metal rod used to drag the heated drum out of the oven and on to the ground where cold water is immediately poured on it to temper the metal. (Photo taken by Louise C.F. Shah)

Figure 5 (below). View to the right side of Jimi's workshop where much of the sinking of the Pans take place. The far mid-centre shows a white drum in the process of being sunk with a hydraulic hammer. These open spaces provide a wonderful ambience and tranquil atmosphere for working and teaching. (Photo taken by Louise C.F. Shah)



continuous pursuit of innovation was evident in his adoption of a hydraulic hammer to simplify the Pan-sinking process which, prior to the use of a manual hammer, reduced the sinking preparative time by over 75%, also saving him enormous personal energy (Figure 5).

Transporting large Base Pans became a cumbersome task when steelbands began to expand significantly in the early 1960s. To resolve some of the transport issues, Jimi embarked on major projects that will revolutionise this process. Through experiments with light metal substitutes and even plywood, he successfully achieved similar sounds to that of a conventional Base Pan. His ongoing projects for the transportation of multiple pans, such as the 12-Base Drum set, already revealed substantial improvements and promises to significantly reduce costs and simplify the logistics for large events such as Panorama and for occasions abroad in which airfreighting costs are colossal.

From an early age, Jimi built his own sound-proof studio where he hammered out the notes of his pans (Figure 6). Outside of his workshop, Jimi's love for music and the steelpan was evident in his voracious reading and enthusiastic discussions. He is not only a steelpan innovator but also an advocate, passionately participating in debates within the steelpan community and at international conferences. Following the Panorama results in 2023, where tied positions led to the elimination of certain steelbands, Jimi ardently argued in favour of retaining the sequencing of places in competitions. He contended that tied bands should not skip a place, as it could lead to automatic elimination of the subsequent band. This advocacy sparked a heated debate, with many supporting Jimi's call for re-examining judging criteria.

In a recent discussion with him, he was jubilant and celebrated heartily when news broke on 21st July 2023 that the UN has recognised the Iconic Status of the Steelpan



Figure 6. Jimi sits proudly in his recording studio which doubles up as his office also. His tenor Pan (without a skirt) hangs to the left. He has sound-proofed the inner walls himself to minimise noise from the traffic of this bustling part of Chaguanas. (Photo taken by Louise C.F. Shah)

in Trinidadian Culture and will declare 11th August as “**World Steelpan Day**” (Doughty, 2023). Jimi, as one of the pioneers of this incredible instrument, says it stands as a tribute to the indomitable spirit of Trinibago’s culture and its profound contribution to the world of music. The evolution of the steelpan from improvised instruments made from industrial waste to a symbol of national identity is a testament to the power of creativity, resilience, and cultural expression of a nation as described so eloquently by the world-renowned Scottish Painter and Choreographer- Peter Doig (BBC, July 2023). As celebrations unfold on this auspicious day, it is essential to recognise and appreciate the rich heritage embedded within the steelpan, ensuring its preservation and continued recognition on the global stage.

See ‘Jimi Phillip Heroes in Pan’ - TheAquilite
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR4EGmTycds&ab_channel=TheAquilite

Workshop. (see video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0kZgt6tTE0&ab_channel=ChasSheppard

Books and Tuition in Pan

Unlike many of his peers, Jimi distinguished himself by devoting considerable effort to self-learn the intricacies of reading music. He attributes a lot of his early guidance to Henry ‘Bendix’ Cumberbatch, leader of his local steelband, ‘Wonderland’ where he learnt to play any of the Pans in their band. It is interesting that Jimi would go to such lengths to become proficient in reading music at a time when such approaches were frowned upon and even actively discourage. Munzenrider (2021) notes ... “The steelpan is traditionally taught by rote, the art of mechanical repetition and methods of digesting the material without sheet music. Rote teaching is valuable for people that are new to music because it removes all the prohibitive musical terminology...” Today this is considered a valuable asset, especially for those involved in large events such as Panorama where players can familiarise themselves with arranged scores ahead of the band’s practice sessions.

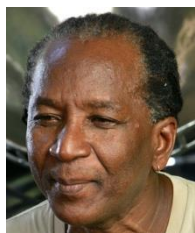
Jimi, always forward-thinking, went a step further by plunging into the deep and producing a book on steelpan tuition as early as 1981. He copyrighted and produced an accessible step-by-step manual to learn to play pan for the then commonly used high tenor (soprano) or D pan. Unlike his predecessors of the NIHERST Awards (Table 1), Jimi's audacious step to produce a book was resourceful and visionary and delved confidently into musical scales, chords and arpeggios for the beginner. Its layout is lucid and immaculate and designed for self-teaching and therefore an enormous asset for the steelband movement. In accord with Lord Kitchener's decree for the Pan idiom in his memorable 1978 release 'Pan in 21st Century', there is perhaps a shared vision that the "... use of music sheets will be made mandatory ...". His first book was endorsed for primary and secondary schools by Melville Bryan, retired Primary School Principal and Ex-President of Pan Trinbago (Bryan, 1981, 1992) who also commended it for 'universal use.' Bryan goes on to emphasise that "its simplicity suits the big winner but it is also very instructive for the more accomplished band player (pannist) who wishes to learn to read music". A decade later and it was more common to see C# and C notes being added. Jimi, therefore, responded by introducing a second book titled "How to Play the Soprano Pan (from Middle C)" which also included an excellent introduction which expertly throws down the gauntlet for the steelpan as a musical instrument. Jimi summarises it as follows; "The music text starts with the basics of music theory and then moves into the notes of the pan and their positions on the staff. The main part of the text then deals with scales and chords on the pan" (Phillip, 1992).

He summarises his view of Pan as follows: "Born in the underbelly of the highly creative but restrictive society that was colonial Trinidad, the steelpan emerged from being primarily in the ghetto

subculture to arguably the most defining cultural characteristic of the country of Trinidad and Tobago and a gift to the world" (Jimi Phillip, 1992). Because of these humble beginnings, the traditional method of teaching pan is by rote; learning through notation was moped upon even when the most challenging music was presented to an arranger. Author (HNS) recalls the Music Festival of 1966, when south Trinidad's steelband, Guinness Cavaliers elected to play the overture from the opera 'Carmen' (Acts 1& 1V). When it was announced in the panyard, alarm bells rang out among band members as they approached leader/arranger Bobby Mohammed to emphasise that "none of us can read music." Bobby Mohammed needed to deduce every note of this immensely convoluted piece from listening to the record and scribbling down the notes; at a time when it was not even possible to listen to the music at a manageable pace. Jimi recalls the band's performance at the celebrated Queen Hall intimately and it was among the first discussions we had when we first met at the Hyatt Regency on 23rd November 2013.

Music festivals stimulated more complex classical pieces of the great masters and arrangers of prominent steelbands began to employ music teachers to ensure that their notation was accurate as these were picked up by the adjudicators as part of the judging criteria. Today the entire approach to reading music for Pan has changed which means music written and composed by pannists can be documented and saved for the future as all the great masters have done. When Jimi began to write his book, little did he know how insightful he was! Jimi's interview with the authors of NIHERST is reproduced below:

Reprinted with kind permission (Thursday 6th April 2023) from the National Institute for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) journal, 'Icons in Science & Technology' (Vol. 4, pp 49-50, 2016).



Jim Phillip – A Life Time in Pan

(Date of Birth: 1st Nov 1951)

Trinidad and Tobago
Icons Vol 4

Education:

- Chaguanas Government Primary School

Awards:

- The Anthony Williams Award for Technological Innovation in Arts & Culture, NIHERST Awards for Excellence in Science and Technology, 2013
- Rudolph Charles Pan Innovation Award, WITCO, 1988
- Rudolph Charles Pan Innovation Award, WITCO, 1986

Current Post:

Pan musician, pan tuner, pan inventor, innovator, pan teacher

Jim “Jimi” Phillip is a pan-musician extraordinaire whose early fascination with our national instrument fired his passion and led him on a journey to become an internationally renowned pan maker, pan tuner, arranger, teacher, author and innovator. With over 40 years of experience in the field, his pan-tuning skills have been much sought after by schools and steelband groups in Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and beyond. He has also taught the playing of pan and conducted pan workshops for the Ministry of Culture, The University of the West Indies and The University of Trinidad and Tobago. Phillip is a strong advocate for music literacy for pan players as he believes all players of different musical instruments must be able to relate and communicate with each other.

Q: What was your childhood like?

A: I grew up like any other kid. We lived in Chaguanas off Caroni Savannah Road. When we were small, my siblings and I used to play hide and seek and cowboys and Indians. I went to kindergarten in Chaguanas and then I went to Chaguanas Government School. My dad, Ancil Phillip, worked with the Caroni sugar factory and was a pan tuner for a while and my mother, Ferris, was and still is a homemaker.

Q: Would you share with us some of your first memories of Pan?

A: When I was about two or three years old I saw my father with this thing on the ground and he was knocking it. I didn't realize it was a pan. Later on, I got to know that my dad was a pan-tuner and had his own band. Then, when I was about five or six, I saw this steelband in Chaguanas called Wonderland Steelband. I just got into a trance while they were playing.

Q: So how did you actually get involved in playing the pan?

A: Well, after seeing Wonderland I spoke to my sister who knew one of the guys in the band and they took me into the band and that is where I started to learn how to play. So I got involved in the pan at the age of six.

Q: Who were your early influences or role models in Pan?

A: Yeah, well I came out under, I have to say, the late Henry “Bendix” Cumberbatch from Chaguanas. He was the teacher and arranger for the same Wonderland and I learned a lot of the musical rudiments from him. Then when I got into the making of the pans, which was in 1967 when I was 16, I met Wallace Austin. He is a tuner for Exodus right now and I learned how to tune under him. The reason I started to make my pans was that if I were somewhere and the pan went out of tune I would be able to fix my own pan. After I made one I made another one to try to better it. Then someone wanted a pan and I made it. So making and tuning pans became like a job.

Q: Was it challenging for you to do?

A: When I got into tuning I was doing it from what I saw other pan tuners do when they came to the panyard, but I was making a lot of mistakes. The pan wouldn't sound good. The grooving wasn't good, the notes were not set well and I didn't know how to get it to sound right. But it was when I met Wallace Austin, whom I mentioned earlier, and I started to work with him that I learned the way to properly tune a pan.

Q: What is involved in the making and tuning of a pan?

A: First, you get a drum and you take the bottom and hammer it until it gets into a bowl shape. Then, draw in the notes; shape and groove the notes; then final shaping and setting. Then the length of the skirt is measured and the pan is then cut off from the drum. The pan is then heated on a fire, taken off and cooled (which is called tempering). After that, the pan is cleaned and ready for tuning. Tuning is a very technical thing. If someone is going to get into tuning he or she must have an ear for music and sound and notes because you won't be able to hear when a note is at the level.

Q: What are some of the challenges involved in tuning a pan?

A: Well, I always say that tuning a pan is unpredictable. I can't say that I am going to tune this pan and I will finish it in one hour. It might go to three or five hours. It's an art where the person who is doing it has to use a lot of strategies.

First you have to lift up the note up from behind and get it like a hump and then you have to hammer the hump, shape that hump and carry it back down. There are so many points to hit. Sometimes you hit this point, the note starts to sound good and then you hit that point and it goes totally out. So you have to find ways of knowing how much to lift, how much to hit, where to hit it, at what time, and how hard. That is why I said no

matter how skilful a pan tuner is, there can be problems with a note. Plus, for each drum, the material is slightly different. So each drum has its own feeling or its own flexibility.

Q: So no two pans are alike then?

A: Well, similar but with different vibes. Every pan you make you have to get the feel of it. And how we get that feel of a pan is when we start to hammer it; we will feel the material. It's a feeling. You have to be experienced to feel it. If we select a drum, we hit the drum – boom! And we hit another drum – boom! We hear a slightly different tone with each drum. So then, depending on what we hear, we will take the drum and make a double-second pan or take another drum and make a soprano pan.

Q: What innovations have you made to the steelpan?

A: My first innovation was in 1968, a year after I had started making pans. I wanted to see a pan with just what I called the belly, without the skirt which is the broad edge that borders the circumference of the pan. So my first innovation was a skirtless pan also known as the porta pan. The porta pans are much shorter and are easy to transport because they take up less space and can withstand pressure, so they are not easily distorted. The tone of this pan is also more sonorous. Another innovation was the collapsible pan stand. I saw people going out and they would have this big stand and it could hardly fit in a car trunk and I knew something had to be done. So, I made a stand that could be quickly broken down, folded and fitted into a sack to be carried.

I moved to Canada in 1975 and lived in Vancouver for two years, then moved to Edmonton, then Montreal. During this time, I was making pans and tuning them as a business. People were asking for pans, but you know in these countries if you buy a guitar, you get a booklet. And they want to buy a pan but how are they going to play it? At that time there were no books or anything so I decided to start writing a book

and I wrote a book on how to play the soprano pan. I also wanted to see the bass pan, which is the full barrel pan, shorter because there are lots of problems when you are travelling when you are loading the pan and they take up a lot of space. So my idea was to cut it shorter. That is another innovation.

Q: What about inventions? Have you invented anything?

A: Yes. Sometimes when you are hanging a pair of pans it is like one instrument. Two drums make one instrument because of the range and size of the notes. But when you look, they are not hung level. I came up with a device – a pan balancer – to show where to bore the hole so that when you hang the pans they will be level. Then another invention of mine was the pan note measure. It is a precise measuring device that a pan tuner uses for drawing the notes on the pan when it is being made. Before, notes used to be placed by taking the measurements from other pans which involved a lot of moving back and forth. This device makes it less complicated.

Q: How do you get your ideas? What is your creative process? How do things come to you?

A: To me, when you have a problem, instead of crying about the problem, you have to try to find a solution. So if I have a problem with something, I will try to find a solution to see if I can fix it. And then, I will think about it, go to sleep thinking about it, wake up, look at this, look at that. I like to look at things that move. I like to look at movements and things like that. I think, I look at this and I get pictures in my head. Then I will go and do a little sketch and then go to sleep, wake up, walk, think. Think, watch and just start to put things together.

Q: Which of your innovations or inventions is your favourite?

A: The skirtless pan because of how it looks. Some people don't respect the pan because it looks like a common oil drum.

You know, when you tell somebody the price of a pan, they find it is expensive because it is only made from a drum. I say, well a piano is made from wood, a guitar is made from wood but you don't see it as a piece of wood! So people see it more as an instrument without the skirt.

Q: With regard to technologies that could be applied to the further development of pan and pan making, what do you think would have the greatest impact?

A: Well we have to look into electronics. We have to find proper ways for putting mikes on the pans to get that impact when you play a pan, like the impact you would get from a guitar or a keyboard. So we have to look into electronics to get it right. But it requires an understanding of the instrument because of the way in which sound comes off the pan – how it vibrates, whether the sound is better from above or below (the instrument).

Q: Do you think it is important for pan players to have formal training in music?

A: Yes. In fact, I learnt to read and write music on my own. I did this because I needed to be a musician and you have to know about music and what's going on. I couldn't be a musician and I'm talking to another musician and not understanding. I can't be a pan player and not be able to relate to a sax player. I must be able to talk to them and talk about the same thing. I'm not separate as a pannist. I'm an instrumentalist just like them. I needed to learn music so we could all communicate.

Q: If you look back at your life now, is there any other field you would have wanted to go into?

A: I would have liked to do electronics. I fiddle around a little bit with diodes and resistors. I have a book with electronic projects and I made a little amplifier.

Q: And what is your philosophy with regard to your life and work?

A: Well, if you want to have a go at something, I think you go at it and you keep going, and you see what you could achieve. So if somebody says, I want to play pan before I die, I say you better start now because you never know.

Acknowledgement:

The authors are indebted to Drs. Marleen Lord-Lewis, President, NIHERST, Candice Hector, Manager, Marketing and Communications, Marketing and Communications Department and Stacey-Ann Sarjusingh, Research Officer, International Projects Unit, National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Level 13, Education Towers, 5 St Vincent Street, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad for granting

permission to reproduce their 2013 interview with Jim Phillip in their publication, 'Trinidad and Tobago Icons in Science & Technology Volume 4. (2016). We are also grateful to Jimi Phillip for his valuable time, patience, generosity, openness, and hospitality in accommodating us during each of our visits to his workshop.

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Moving in and Beyond the Field – Early Career Researchers in Carnival

Dr Hanna Klien-Thomas

School of Arts, Oxford Brookes University
 Headington Rd, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP
 hklien-thomas@brookes.ac.uk

Dr Tola Dabiri

School of Humanities and Social Sciences
 Leeds Beckett University
 Leeds Beckett University, Civic Quarter, LS2 9EN
 toladabiri@gmail.com

Introduction

In collating the articles for this edition, we have tried to bring together some of the exciting research that is taking place in Carnival. We are also seeking to promote some of the extraordinary new researchers in this field.

It has been a long, (and at times challenging) process to bring this volume together, but we have persevered, because just as we are compelled to go on the road, sing Calypso and play pan, the spirit of Carnival has driven us forward to write and research, and so we have been able to complete this task!

Below, Dr Hanna Klien-Thomas introduces the articles and researchers in this volume, and Dr Tola Dabiri discusses her own experiences of researching Carnival.

New Carnival Researchers and their work

Carnival is a field that brings together researchers from a multitude of different

backgrounds - academics in the humanities and social sciences, creatives and industry professionals, practitioners and community archivists, knowledge producers and activists. Many of the leading voices also inhabit and oscillate between more than one of these roles. The *International Journal for Carnival Arts* and its annual conferences exemplify this breadth of knowledge.

This provides a unique learning environment for postgraduate students and early career researchers who otherwise are often subjected to rigid training processes within institutions. Despite encouragement and sometimes requirements to work with interdisciplinary frameworks, the challenges the university and its bureaucratic systems can pose to such research practices are familiar to many. Furthermore, programmes that foster research on Caribbean histories and cultures are confronted with existential threats.² On the other hand, there is a current trend in academic institutions to

² Recent examples include:
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/jul/2>

[3/outrage-over-chichester-university-plan-to-cut-african-history-course-and-its-professor](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/jul/2)

respond to anti-racism and decolonisation initiatives with measures “draining the useful parts of [racially minoritised groups’] scholarship to meet institutional metrics and marketise fashionable buzz-words” (Doharty 2021). In this climate, boundary crossing of any kind is made difficult.

In this themed section, postgraduate students and early career researchers present outcomes of their projects. The contributions demonstrate how working across and beyond disciplinary boundaries is not only beneficial but inherent to approaches in Carnival research.

Lara Rose provides a review of her practice-based PhD project on Yoruba culture and its influence on artistic practices in Leeds, with the explicit goal to raise awareness and address new audiences. Focusing on theatre director and educationalist Dr Geraldine Connor, the project combines Rose’s sculptural practice and autoethnographic methods to affectively chronicle the journey to the installation of her 1.7m life-size ultramarine statue, the first of a black woman in Leeds.

Discussing one aspect of her PhD project on Notting Hill Carnival’s narratives of rights, resistance and being, Michelle Harewood explores the role of Calypso in the context of contemporary anti-racist movements and Black Caribbean survival in the UK. Based on interviews, analysis of song lyrics and ethnography, she traces how artists weave together the stories and experiences of anti-Black racism across the globe and situating protest movements such as Rhodes Must

Fall and Black Lives Matter in historical continuities.

Both authors skilfully navigate shifting positionalities in their writing, contesting and expanding notions of Blackness by sounding out the meaning of experiences in the field. This is also reflected in how they firmly situate their practice in participating in spaces such as the theatre hall and the calypso tent, as well as playing mas.

Moving from the UK context to Canada and Jamaica, the contributions by Natalie Wall and Keri Johnson look at the national frameworks that configure Carnival. Formerly known as Caribana, the Toronto Caribbean Carnival belongs to the long-established festivals in the diaspora and, as Natalie Wall argues, is grounded in a national ideal of multiculturalism that relies on the containment and management of diversity. Her analysis of archival material meticulously reconstructs how media representation of Caribana addresses the white (Canadian) gaze and reifies essentialised notions of blackness. By embedding this in the historical intimacies of the camera and coloniality in the proposed model of ‘tourism at home’, she shows that thereby not only the lived experience of Black Canadians is dismissed but also the complexity of Carnival’s ethno-cultural dynamics.

Focusing on a more recent phenomenon, Keri Johnson discusses how Jamaica Carnival has become incorporated into the country’s tourism strategy. Providing an overview of early events in the local context all the way back to UWI Carnival for students at Mona campus in the 1950s, the article traces the emergence of the brand

<https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/rr-news-uk-universities-2021-10-more-than-800-academics-criticise-goldsmiths-redundancies/>

Jamaica Carnival and its successful marketing as part of the national tourist product. This is juxtaposed with statements of representatives from the Trinidadian industry contrasting it with their government's lack of support and resources for Carnival.

This themed section is giving a glimpse into the exciting work of emerging voices in the field and demonstrates how Carnival research nurtures multilayered and interconnected ways of thinking from the early stages of academic engagement. In this wider context of Higher Education and knowledge production, the International Journal of Carnival Arts can offer an alternative space for early career researchers with opportunities to develop

their ideas, outcomes and styles of writing. The presented outcomes demonstrate how Carnival research contributes to advancements in a wide range of disciplines and fields. In particular, the proposed multi-method and practice-based approaches underpin that Carnival itself is epistemic and brings forth methodologies that allow moving beyond the frameworks of Western knowledge production.

Dr Tola Dabiri

Decoding Twenty First Century Carnival and Beyond (Dabiri, 2021).

The opportunity to read, think and write about a subject of deep personal interest which fascinates, disturbs and motivates intense scrutiny is an honour and a privilege. So far, so rose-tinted glasses; the reality of reading for a doctorate, of deadlines and word counts, academic scrutiny and the intellectual itch that you can never scratch, make the actual process of acquiring a doctorate painful and slow for the candidate and those around them ('We *all* have a doctorate' is how my sister expresses the shared family experience of supporting my studies!)

Despite the challenges, my motivation for studying was clear and unwavering: to explore and disseminate the rich and important use of orality and the oral culture of British Caribbean Carnival, and, how this has been used to store and transmit the

intangible cultural heritage of West African masquerade in the Caribbean for centuries, during enslavement, colonisation and migration to the U.K. I first began working with Carnivalists at the UK Centre for Carnival Arts in Luton, as the project manager of the Carnival Archive Project, which was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Carnival's history and development in the Caribbean was seen by many Carnivalists, through a distinctly creolised lens; that stated that Carnival was developed by enslaved Africans on Caribbean plantations, as they imitated the Carnival celebrations of the European plantocracy. Within this perspective, any residual African cultural practices of the enslaved themselves was not considered. Until recently, the dominant theoretical approach describes the deculturalisation of Africans during the middle passage and plantation system (Handler and Bilby, 2013). However there is growing evidence to challenge this theory and I use the work of Liverpool, (2001) Ashie-Nikoi (2007),

contemporary accounts from Thistlewood (in Burnard, 2004), Sloane (in Williamson, 2008) and Long (1774), and my observations from my field research in Grenada and Carriacou to argue that a purely creolised perspective does not fully explain the retention of African cultural expressions which can be seen across the Caribbean and in British Caribbean Carnival in the U.K. However, the lack of literary accounts from the enslaved Africans has made presenting this evidence difficult as literate sources are viewed as credible. However, orality is a reliable source of information on the cultural expression and retained intangible heritage of Carnival and masquerade.

In my research, I use Walter Ong's (2012) theory of orality to challenge the dominance of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1968) theories of Carnival and the Carnavalesque. Although Bakhtin's descriptions of Carnival are superficially accurate, Bakhtin's theories alone cannot fully explain the phenomenon of Carnival and masquerade, and its importance to the people who preserve and perform on the road.

By using an ethnographic approach and Ong's theories of orality, I am able to explore Carnival and Mas from the perspective of Carnivalists themselves, rather than those who observe it as a procession passing by, which I argue is the Bakhtinian description of Carnival and Mas. 'Decoding' (Hall 1997), (Chandler 2007) is a term from semiotic theory which describes how elements of Carnival and masquerade ritual, costume and performance bind the British Caribbean Carnival diaspora to their communities and their cultural heritage of the different and distinct islands of the Caribbean.

Completing my thesis has been the beginning of my research journey; since graduating I have continued to explore the use and importance of orality in preserving and transmitting intangible cultural heritage, and the arguments that I have developed around the impact on race and class on it has informed all aspects of my work in the mainstream heritage, health and cultural sectors. And my research was central to the development of Carnival in a Box (carnivalinabox.co.uk), which allows Carnivalists to curate their own digital performances and tell their own stories.

I am also continuing to explore how orality has been used to preserve and transmit intangible cultural heritage in the language and history of the British Caribbean and African diaspora.

From post-Colonial to decolonisation

Over the past decade, the growing impact of critical race theory (Crenshaw et. al., 1996) has fuelled a narrative and societal shift from post-colonialism to decolonisation when examining culture and history. Terms such as the 'global south', 'global majority', Black Lives Matter and 'culture wars' have all become short hand in the debates which are fuelling the drive towards the demands for restorative justice, reparations and a corrected and accurate record of the past. My research, and the Carnival research presented in this volume, took place during a particularly turbulent social and political in the U.K. The Brexit debate undermined the superficial harmony of British multiculturalism and tolerance. The protests and demands for racial justice, from second and third-generation diaspora communities, have contributed to the atmosphere of conflict. Carnival, always at

odds with authority, provides an excellent opportunity to explore how Caribbean and African communities in the diaspora are responding to the reappraisal of their history and culture, in their costume designs and performances. The pandemic brought completely different challenges to Carnival and Mas; the inability to go on the road and gather together rang alarm bells in many U.K. Carnival groups, who wondered if this was an opportunity for those who oppose and criticise Carnival (such as the police and local authorities) to finally end the annual processions for good. But the pandemic saw an outpouring of creativity which saw Carnival grow in the digital

space, with many online Carnivals streaming interviews with leading artists, dance and performances and costume displays from across the U.K. (Notting Hill, Leeds, Derby and many more).

Researching Carnival can seem dry and academic when it is compared to life the affirming activities of Carnival! But research is important. Research provides Carnivalists with the legitimacy they needs to withstand the ever-increasing pressures from the forces of funding, security and racism. Research shows not only the value of Caribbean and African culture but to many people that it exists at all.

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Dr Geraldine Connor (1952-2011) Carnival Messiah Creator, Aworan Statue: Yoruba Culture Influence on Art Practices and the First Statue of a Black Woman in Leeds

Lara Rose

Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University
Portland Way, Leeds, LS1 3HE
roselara@hotmail.com

Abstract

This paper presents a Practice as Research (PaR) PhD project contributing new knowledge around the influence of Yoruba culture in Leeds and specifically the significance of Dr Geraldine Connor. It is arrived at through a series of sculptural works by the author, from assemblage through lockdown maquettes to civic sculpture (*Aworan*), autoethnography, alongside interviews with key figures including Arthur France (Leeds Carnival). Connor is one of the lesser-known British scholars, ethnomusicologists, theatre directors, composers, and performers of Trinidadian heritage. The author self-commissioned the first statue of a black woman in Leeds a joyous 1-7m life size ultramarine blue civic *Aworan* of Geraldine Connor. Serving both as a memorial and metaphor, proposing that inevitably the future of humanity must be hybrid and carnivalesque.

Yoruba culture endured rupture, fragmentation, and disjunction in the diaspora after colonisation and the transatlantic slave trade. Nevertheless, Connor utilised Yoruba culture in her phantasmagorical *Carnival Messiah* stage production, despite prohibitions and anxieties surrounding Yoruba. In conversation with Connor and on her discovery of the author's Yoruba heritage, Connor urged the author to tell her Yoruba story through her art practice.

The overall PhD research project demonstrates the need to dispel the negative outsider narratives of western ethnography about Yoruba culture and update knowledge about Yoruba philosophy, spirituality, and aesthetics in the diaspora. This paper details parts of the author's autoethnographic experience demonstrating from an insider viewpoint, how Yoruba culture imbibed in carnival arts was inspirational in prompting further research in Yoruba culture and curb anxieties around it. Connor's excursion into the *Third Space* for creative empowerment advocates carnival as a form of peaceful protest within what the author calls an Afropolitan hybrid framework.

More of the Yoruba voice manifested freely alongside British culture resulting in the rediscovery and resurrection of the ancient *Aworan* practice of venerating elders in Yoruba communities.

Key Words: Yoruba, Carnival, Practise as Research, Autoethnography, Art, Aworan, sculpture, aesthetics, culture, afropolitan, third space, hybridity, oriki

Definitions

Afropolitan: A term constructed from the name Africa and the ancient Greek word *πολίτης* ('polis'), meaning 'citizen' (itself from polis, 'city'), an attempt at redefining African phenomena by placing emphasis on ordinary citizens' experiences in Africa.

Afropolitanism: A term originating in South Africa (Achille Mbembe) and popularised by Taiye Salasei defining Afropolitans as '*Africans of the world*' identifying multi local peoples of African descent worldwide. Afropolitan simple defined as, citizens of the world (cosmopolitans) with African roots. It is constructed from the name "Africa" and Greek word(s) "polis" (citizen) or better still the word "kosmopolitēs" ('citizen of the world').

Aworan: commonly refers to any two- or three-dimensional representation (including sculpture), ranging from the naturalistic to the stylized. *Aworan* (Lawal, 2001) is a contraction of *a* (that which), *wo* (to look at), and *ranti* (to recall) the subject for artistic representation.

Ayajora: a naturalistic portrait that summarize the *iwa* (character), observable and recognizable features of a person.

BAME: Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnicities, used to refer to people in the UK not considered to be white. Many people do not like the acronym because it treats diverse peoples and groups as if they are the same.

BAMEover including **#BAMEover:** In March 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the government stop using the term BAME.

BLM: Black Lives Matter.

Esu/Esu Elegba: divine messenger, deity of the crossroads/decision making.

Hybridity: when elements of two or more cultures are allowed to co-exist together, forming a hybrid culture.

Ori: The physical outer head of a person or the inner spiritual person (Lawal, 1985)

Oriki: Glorifying the Head (ori) in Word and Image, literally meaning "head praise," refers to a eulogy or poem (arofo) glorifying the worthiness of an individual. It is chanted at critical moments to goad the head to action and thereby spur a person to greater achievement.

Third Space: ambivalent space of enunciation where diverse cultures should be allowed to freely form.

Introduction

A Yoruba incantation in Leeds, a cold Yorkshire city

'Esu gbaragbo mo juba are, are...'

Ella Andall cried at the back right stairwell of Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds. Her voice crescendoed and resonated around the auditorium. That sounds, I thought, like Yoruba! In what parallel universe is Yoruba singing been done in Leeds, a Yorkshire city, on a cold autumn night? That is Yoruba, the vernacular language we were

not allowed to speak at home or school in case it contaminated our English words.

Why Yoruba?

In my first experience of Dr Geraldine Connor's *Carnival Messiah*, the seeds were sown for further inquiry into a once forbidden Yoruba culture and language. Following numerous conversations with Connor, and on her discovery of my Yoruba heritage, she said to me (2010), "child you need to tell your story, your Yoruba story in your art." At that precise moment, I felt the prohibition lifted and Connor giving me

formal permission to investigate my Yoruba cultural heritage. My quest to explore Yoruba culture in more detail began, albeit with great anxiety due to demonising narratives I still held on to about Yoruba spirituality.



Figure 1. Dr Geraldine Connor 1.7m lifesize ultramarine blue Civic Aworan Statue, new Leeds School of Art Building, Leeds Beckett University, 2022

Statement of Purpose – what I am doing, why and outcome

My PhD is about raising awareness of Yoruba influence in Leeds and specifically the significance of Geraldine Connor (creator of *Carnival Messiah*) as arrived at through my sculptural practice, from assemblage through lockdown to civic sculpture (*Aworan*). The outcome is the first statue of a black woman in Leeds, a joyous 1.7m life-size ultramarine blue Dr Geraldine Connor Civic Statue (Figure 1.), formally unveiled and recognised by Leeds

City Council in November 2022 (Pandey, 2022). I have been educating new audiences about Geraldine, Carnival Messiah, and overall Yoruba culture both via sculptures themselves accompanied by Afropolitan Yoruba/English performances of chants and *oriki* (praise songs). My contribution to knowledge also includes the recent unveiling and trip to Westminster (January 2023) where I presented an *Aworan* bust (Figure 2a.) of himself to Arthur France MBE (founder of Leeds Carnival) at a celebration of his life at the House of Commons in Yoruba *oriki* style carrying the sculpture on my head (Figure 2b.).



Figure 2a. Arthur France Bust I presented at House of Commons Book launch (by Dr Max Farrar) Event celebrating his life, 2023



Figure 2b. Singing Yoruba Oriki, carrying the Arthur sculpture in a Yoruba style presentation at the House of Commons, London, 2023.

This PhD focusses on how Yoruba culture influences and informs both mine and contemporary artistic practice in Leeds, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom. My position is as a practicing artist in Leeds, and I utilised a practise as research (Nelson, 2013) methodology in which my art practice was situated side by side with theory, autoethnography (participation in *Carnival Messiah* and Leeds Carnival Queen) and reflective journaling. Over the course of this study, I refer to Yoruba Sculpture (*Aworan*), Masquerade (*Egunugun*, *Eyo*, *Gelede*) and Caribbean carnival, and consider notions of Afropolitanism, the fluidity of cultural identity (Hall, 1996), hybridity (Bhabha, 1990), third space (Connor, 2005;

Kalua, 2009).) Yoruba spirituality and philosophy (Oluwole, 2015).

This PhD makes sense of the disjuncture, rupture, and fragmentation of Yoruba culture that occurred after the transatlantic slave trade. I am fascinated by how, despite prohibitions, remnants of Yoruba culture have persisted in the diaspora and manifest in contemporary art practices such as in the musical *Carnival Messiah* and the Leeds West Indian Carnival. I wanted to overcome my anxieties about Yoruba culture, spirituality, and philosophy, and allow the Yoruba voice to speak, flow and influence my art practice, thus my choice of utilising a practice as research methodology. My first challenge was to overcome my anxiety about speaking Yoruba and debunking dehumanising narratives about Yoruba deities especially *Esu Elegbra* who had been wrongly ascribed as the Judeo-Christian devil. As urged by Geraldine I explored key Yoruba deities and created, multiple poems, songs, and recordings in Logic ProX, in the early part of the research process to ease overcoming my anxiety.

In the end, pushing through the COVID-19 lockdowns, post BLM and #BAMEover era amazingly resulting in original contributions to art practice and knowledge, that redressed the sculpture stock balance in Leeds to reflect its diverse African and Caribbean community. I am resurrecting the ancient Yoruba *Aworan* practice used to venerate and entrench the memory and legacies of elders and community leaders. In turn I brought to light hidden figures in Leeds exposing countless students and Leeds citizens to Geraldine Connor and her musical *Carnival Messiah* and her use of Yoruba culture in her artistic practice. I achieved this unique contribution by

developing a body of new sculptures especially the blue 1.7m life size civic statue (*Aworan*) of Geraldine Connor installed in the Leeds Beckett University, new Leeds School of Art (LSA) building. This is the first statue of a black woman in Leeds following the post BLM statue controversies (Morris, 2020), (Grovier, 2020) and Leeds statue survey (Newton, 2020). A well-attended formal civic launch was performed by Leeds City councillors including the first black mayor of Leeds, on Nov 16th, 2022. I also performed a Yoruba ceremony utilising the Yoruba opening line from *Carnival Messiah* and spoke about Geraldine Connor.

Autoethnography Case Study – Carnival Messiah participation

Carnival Messiah

In the opening paragraph of the Alfred Hickling's Guardian article, (July 1, 2002) from his interview (Hickling, 2002) he quotes Connor (n.d., personal interview), 'In the words of its creator, *Carnival Messiah* is a "new paradigm which establishes West Indian Carnival practice as a semiotic system of communication". Thankfully, it is rather better in practice than in theory.' I feel incredibly privileged and honoured to have experienced *Carnival Messiah* in practice both as a performer and an observer. As an aesthetic ephemeral experience, Geraldine's aim with *Carnival Messiah* was to move towards collapsing some of the essentialised differences that continued to exist between Europe, Asia, and Africa by creating a hybrid space and place where they can exist equally. Geraldine like Bhabha defined this space as the *Third Space*. In her accompanying thesis, *!HalleluiaH! Excursions into a*

Third Space: Carnival Messiah as an Instrument of Postcolonial Liberation' (2005, p.xi), Connor writes:

Carnival Messiah thus embodies aspirations for an integrity of being, seeking to collapse entrenched and negative notions of difference, whilst guiding its participants and recipients towards a critical consciousness which can only be achieved through self-discovery and self-recovery.

This autoethnography (Ellis et al, 2010) case study consists of a recap of my experience of my own self-discovery and self-recovery as a participator and recipient of *Carnival Messiah*.

My First experience

My first experience of watching the show at West Yorkshire Playhouse was the most delightful, exciting, and exhilarating experience I'd ever had. It felt like heaven had stretched its hand down and cloaked me in its love and warmth. Ella Andall's voice thundering through the theatre and the call and response singing in Yoruba shocked me,

"*Esu gbaragbo, mo Juba, are are...*" (Esu hear us, I greet you...)

The last time I had heard Yoruba like that was possibly at a cultural event in Lagos. I was gobsmacked!! A Yoruba libation of an alcohol (rum) offering being poured in a theatre at the top of the stairs in cold Leeds, West Yorkshire!! The choir responded, "*lagbanga*". It starts off tinny but builds up as the rest of the cast dotted about the theatre join in. "*Yeye Yeye o, Osun, Osun o, Aremi, Osun o....*" Called by Ella Andall (a Trinidadian chantuelle/Yoruba practitioner) and response from the cast. I felt a sense of familiarity and the introduction sounded easy enough!

Next, Mama God dressed in an elaborate ocean like blue green carnival costume accompanied by dancers recites, “In the beginning, there was blackness...”

Jouvert morning

An alarm call, beckoning everyone to wake up was sounded, cow bell clanging, drums, bass, music, then voices sang a simple harmonic “*la la la la la la...*” Then the singing merged to, “*comme bulle le le le hoi, comme bulle, one boy one girl!*” Characters appeared from everywhere, a multi-coloured Poirot character reciting Shakespeare, and giving a speech, Preacher man, Dame Lorraines, Sailor costumed, Blue devils and even a Policeman chasing a Robber boy from the stage into the audience! A stick fight commences, a hip-hop musical dance interlude to the DJ spinning a beat.

I'd never seen a piece of theatre so spectacular; I knew I wanted to be a part of it. I studied profusely all night and day and joined rehearsals and sound checks the next day. I was in the show, costumed in purple leotard and hooded choir apparel on Wednesday. The choir was situated to the left of the audience, ring side seats, this meant we were able to watch the show as well as participate in it, daily.

Shango- the “god” of thunder and electricity- A Yoruba deity.

The Shango scene (Figure 3.) was an actual shock to my system but in a pleasant, pleasurable way. The fusion of a classical scale with Yoruba drums, more Yoruba call-and-response vocal was enchanting yet uplifting and empowering. “*Sango Aye, sango aye...*” Ella and dancers on stage performing what appears as a ritual but

APM NOTES, VID STILL, PHOTOS ETC
SANGO SCENE: CARNIVAL MESSIAH



Figure 3. Carnival Messiah Sango scenes and the crucifixion (bottom right)

tastefully done. Ella starts to sing in Yoruba as the choir and cast sing in response. Then we cease to sing in Yoruba and Ella Sings

in English with a somewhat classical operatic music feel. Suddenly the Yoruba drums are sounded, and the dancers are more frenzied; we sing call and response but in English now, the scene on stage depicting what most will call a “manifestation” of the spirit, “Sango comes, thunder lightning 3x Thunder lightning!” It dies down again, and white dressed jerky bodies slowly leave the stage. *Carnival Messiah* scenes included the birth of Jesus, Jesus going to Egypt, Palm Sunday, Last supper, Gethsemane, Judas betrayal, Pontius Pilate’s trial, the Crucifixion (Figure 3.) and Resurrection!

Crucifixion, Agere masquerade and stilts

This featured three characters on stilts to represent Christ and the two thieves identical to how *Agere* masquerade are also mounted on stilts in Yoruba culture. *Agere* often accompany the *Eyo* Masquerade during the *Adamu Orisha* Play or *Eyo* Festival on the streets of Lagos Island in Nigeria. It is uncanny that *Adamu Orisha* as a play or street theatre initially was one of the ceremonies used to send off a departed King. Jesus Christ is also crowned King of Kings in the Biblical narrative and had been condemned to death. Thereby, the physical aesthetics conferred by mounting stilts represents been nailed to the cross coupled with the conceptual aesthetic of the Yoruba send off for a king. It was a good thing the interval and break occurred straight after the crucifixion scene as it climaxed to one of the most intense moments of the night. We made louds sounds like extreme groanings from hell and black crawling carnivalesque characters filled the stage and black masks descended from above traversing the audience to the stage and remained hung till the scene ended.

The rest of the show portrayed all the resurrection aspects of the Risen Messiah. A show of universality with a colourful portrayal of a host of flags heralding the good news in “How beautiful are the feet of they who preach the gospel”, a Steel pan orchestra rendition of Hallelujah, an operatic and sonorous version of “Redeemer liveth” is sung incorporating an African Kora player and finally the elaborate Hallelujah chorus finale. Watching *Carnival Messiah* sparked some resonance and confidence within me about my hybrid Yoruba/British identity and artistic expression. In witnessing how European classical music was fused with Yoruba singing, I saw that it was acceptable to express my dual cultural heritage and subsequently adapted the term *Afropolitan melodies* to my music. Furthermore, I became increasingly confident in incorporating Yoruba culture within my assemblage sculpture practice for which I coined as *afro-dada* art.

Harewood House - Second encounter with Carnival Messiah

Carnival Messiah was staged on the grounds of Harewood House in an 800-seat custom-built big top (Marquis). Co-produced by David Lascelles. This was Harewood House Trusts' main commemorative event for the celebration of the Bicentennial of the Abolition of Slavery Parliamentary Act in 2007. Some cast members remained the same such as Ella Andall and this production would introduce lots of new faces from the Caribbean in both the community and professional cast. This time the production ran for three weeks following eight weeks of gruelling rehearsals. I found it very challenging to keep up with the dance moves as I tended to join in the evening by which time, I had

missed out on the morning rehearsals and any new steps learned. I felt like an imposter, neither a professional dancer nor even of 'Caribbean' origin, and in agreement with Geraldine, I decided to simply focus on the choir and master all the vocal parts.

Such was the discipline, so much so amidst the "no pain no gain mantra", there were lots of outburst, tears, injuries and even a 'spirit' manifestation! I did however master the 12-hour clock face rib contraction movements which was one of my favourite warm up exercises once I discovered the similarities with Yoruba dancing. Some of the cast members experienced some emotional discomfort and indeed were faced with the dilemma of performing on the grounds of Harewood House with the knowledge that Harewood House profited too from the transatlantic trade of Africans. Others felt a sense of reconciliation, forgiveness and restitution standing as freed people on a ground whence once ancestors were enslaved. The implication of re-enacting carnival on the grounds of once slave owners indeed cathartic, ironic and somewhat jubilant representative of the Emancipation Proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

One afternoon when rehearsals had moved to the grounds of Harewood House, a girl came crashing out of the tent crying and screaming, "they are treating us like slaves?!" The girl was one of the community cast from Trinidad and it seemed in her psyche she had perhaps superimposed the discipline of the theatre with the trauma of her past ancestors. Another incident which could have threatened the entire production happened after a morning dress rehearsal of the Yoruba Shango scene. One of the core dancers from Trinidad seemingly stayed in

character and continued to shriek, jerk and writhe on the floor backstage after coming off stage. This would resemble a 'manifestation in the spirit' as you would witness in Holy Roller Pentecostal churches or perhaps hysterical teenagers screaming and subsequently fainting at a rock concert. Medically or biologically speaking, I wondered, was she having a minor fit, euphoric high, with all the lights and stress, hormones, adrenaline? This phenomenon is beyond the scope of this thesis but will benefit from further research. Chaos, fear, and confusion arose amongst some of the (British) cast members who had probably never witnessed this phenomenon before. Word had got out by the evening and some of the Christian parents requested to withdraw their children from the show as a rumour had spread through the Chapeltown community that 'demons' were being evoked and with only a few days to the opening show, order needed to be restored swiftly and assuredly. Parents were invited to the next debrief but unfortunately a handful of parents would not concur and retained the withdrawal of their children for fear of 'demon' possession. The consensus reached was if dancers keep to the curated and choreographed steps and moves, with strict and pristine observation and adherence, no one need deviate out of character.

Carnival Messiah at Royal Albert Hall

After the success at Harewood House, *Carnival Messiah* excerpts were performed at the 2008 annual Business Awards Ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall in London. This would start preparation to bid for funding to stage *Carnival Messiah* in the West End. I was feeling much more confident about the dance aspect as it was not a whole show; we were simply going to

perform the *Jouvert* morning combined with the finale scenes and sing along to *My Redeemer liveth*.

I attended every rehearsal, there were only a few this time. I paid attention to every detailed step and move, as I was receiving instructions directly from Geraldine. I was quite surprised by the one-to-one coaching and little did I know that Geraldine had earmarked a new large Carnival Queen costume (Figure 4.) for me. This was to compliment the *Carnival Messiah Sun King* costume in the special ‘*Jouvert* morning/finale’ excerpt. I had to rehearse with half of my costume in Leeds and the other half in London. I recall I had to do a sidestep to the right, that traversed the perimeter of the room and facing inwards. I then had to make a corner turn still sideways, lean forward from the waist and keep doing the sidestep for about 6 steps or so. This would now position me facing the audience as it were on stage. A few more side steps will position me centre stage, some forward and backwards steps, side to side and finally backwards to the side of the Sun King costume in the Carnival Messiah finale stance. I would then leave the stage by the middle front stairs between rows of chairs in the middle aisle albeit with side steps again!

I was most shocked when we arrived in London and, Clary Salandy (carnival costume designer and creator of Mahogany Carnival Arts) brought the rest of the carnival costume, two giant wings to attach to the half I'd been rehearsing with!! It thus became clear why I had to lean forward whilst turning the corner - I had to avoid the large corner screen! Geraldine had measured out the approximate number of steps needed to clear the corner and I had to trust and adhere to (stick to the choreography) underpinning the balance

between structured and improvised or loose movement during the show. Failing to do so would have been quite catastrophic, from getting my costume caught in the overhead screen to taking out rows of tables in the central aisle.

I feel so honoured to have had the opportunity to redeem myself from all the times I fled rehearsals to stay within the comfort zone of the choir. This was me, a brown-hued British African girl attempting to make sense of conflicting cultural expressions within herself. I nevertheless found resonance and confidence by simply partaking in the singing and vocalising which in turn allowed me to observe the show in its entirety and witness the fusion of varying cultures. Finally, in some sense at the Royal Albert Hall, I felt retrospectively, that Geraldine fulfilled with me and fuelled within me as with most other cast members, her exploration of allowing free artistic expression within her coined creative, artistic space, the *Third Space* of which she says (2005, p29):

This new cultural space then becomes a tool or space of liberation for all, because it establishes its own unique ideological interpretation of reality, built upon a balanced combination of universal value systems and norms that sometimes converge and sometimes diverge.

Disappointedly, on the coach back to Leeds, I noticed one of the music directors (A Christian probably nervous of the Yoruba songs) hushing a few cast members who tried singing the opening libation song in call-and-response. Was this due to the anxiety about the song being in reverence to Osun the Yoruba deity or because it would have been noisy? I'm guessing the former as they could choose a different song to sing.

It seems negative narratives e.g Noah's Curse (Haynes, 2007) and anxiety about Yoruba spirituality persists, Connor (2005, p39) states: "The *Third Space of Carnival Messiah* is concerned with shifting away from essentialist and negative ideas about any particular cultural identity."

Autoethnography Case Study - Carnival Queen AAA Team

Invitation to be Carnival Queen - Winnie Mandela Mother of The Nation

I awoke from sleep to my phone ringing on the bedside table and Khadijah Ibrahim's name was flashing on the screen. I knew it was possibly a business call or an offer to participate in something cultural. Khadijah is a local poet, Yoruba Practitioner of Jamaican heritage, performing artist and was Carnival Queen (*Queen Yemaya (Yoruba) – Goddess of the Sea*) for the AAA team in the 2017, 50-year anniversary, Leeds West Indian Carnival.

I was right. Arthur France had asked Khadijah to come up with a suitable candidate for his *Winnie Mandela Mother of The Nation* (Figure 5.) themed 2018 Carnival Queen costume. Arthur is also the founder or the Leeds West Indian Carnival and head of the AAA carnival team. Khadijah in conversation about potential queens with Empress Imani had both simultaneously mentioned my name, "Lara Rose" which prompted the call. Empress Imani is a Leeds reggae songstress who often adorned herself in African attire complete with headwrap.

It felt nice to know that I was on the minds of people and considered for the role of Carnival Queen however I was shocked as I am of African and not Caribbean origin with limited carnival troupe experience. My

initial response was thus, "are you sure you mean me? I am not of Caribbean origin." Khadijah explained the African (Yoruba) themed costume with the aim of honouring the departed Winnie Mandela. Khadijah and I discussed researching both West & South African apparel, adornment, beading, ornaments, clothing, headwraps, etc. I realised my African heritage contributed to her choice for me to be Carnival queen so with great excitement and glee, agreed to take up Arthur's offer. Khadijah with her wealth of Carnival experience agreed to mentor me through the process.

I recollected to Khadijah how Geraldine Conner had adorned me with a Carnival Queen costume for the *Carnival Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall. I, however, was unaware at the time that it was the correlating Queen costume to the current King costume in the show as it was a new costume introduced at the showcase. Such was my naivety about the coveted Carnival Queen position during carnival. It occurred to me that I was being offered a position of perceived highest ranking in the carnival troupe.

I lay back in bed exhilarated, filled with joy and glee, I felt like Geraldine Connor was beaming and smiling at me from the heavenly realm of the ancestral home where all the unsung heroes of generations past dwell. In the Yoruba pantheon it is believed that death is a passage to the spiritual realm from whence ancestors can oversee and evolve into deities and orishas.

An orisha may be said to arise when a divine power to command and make things happen converges with a natural force, a deified ancestor, and an object that witnesses and supports that convergence and alignment.

Was this a coincidence or a divine intervention of convergence and

alignment? I felt like I was beginning to understand and yield to the empowering, creative, and metamorphic process that Geraldine had inspired in me in her Third Space.

I am not worthless, overcoming imposter syndrome...

It would seem I was *not* the worthless reject I often saw myself as. I imagined that Geraldine and my grandma would have confronted my departed father's soul (March 2018) and scolded him for stealing the virtue of his young virgin child trusted to his care. As mentioned above, I felt like an imposter sometimes in *Carnival Messiah* rehearsals but now I feel a sense of Geraldine's Third Space magical realism comforting me despite her passing away!

I felt my vindication, transformation, metamorphosis, and resurrection was nigh. It probably would not have meant that much to some other individual or regular carnivalists who were accustomed to annual carnival festivities. I remember feeling like Elle Woods from the movie *Legally Blonde* (2001) the moment she saw her name amongst her Harvard law school mates chosen to be part of their Professor's internship. With excitement and the biggest smile in my heart and face, stomping my limbs on the bed, I screamed out, "Me!" I wondered whom I could call to tell the good news but alas, there was no one I felt inclined to tell. I decided like the Virgin Mary in the Gospel story on receiving the news about Jesus, to keep it a secret close to my heart.



Figure 4. Carnival Messiah Queen Costume at Royal Albert Hall, 2009



Figure 5. Winnie Mandela Carnival Queen Costume, AAA Team, 2018

Conclusion – From Carnival to Assemblage Art to Yoruba inspired Aworan Restoration of Yoruba, embracing hybridity, the third space and afropolitanism

As forementioned, speaking Yoruba at schools was prohibited and labelled as vernacular with dire consequences of punishments if caught using it. Prof Sophie Oluwole (2016), lamented in a Kelani (2016) documentary that, ‘we are committing suicide for not speaking our language!’ This statement alarmed me, and I wondered if that would explain the suicide ideation and compromised mental health resembling latent post-traumatic stress/anxiety symptoms experienced by some ‘black and brown skinned’ people. Couple this with the double consciousness (we mock ourselves as ‘white on the inside, black on the outside’ - bounty bar, coconut or oreo cookie) experienced by people of African or Caribbean descent born in Britain and/or ‘psyche split’ spoken about by Frantz Fanon and reiterated by Geraldine Connor (2005) in her PhD thesis,

In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Franz Fanon examined and documented this ‘psychic split’ as a kind of racial and cultural schizophrenia and found it to be what he described to be the most damaging legacy of colonisation: that wrestling contradiction of a white mind in a black body, which is still a notable characteristic of Caribbean culture today.

Restoration – The Yoruba voice speaks

Rowland Abiodun (2014, 2001) writes about aesthetics in Yoruba artworks from an insider perspective saying,

In transforming their raw material, Yoruba artists seek to realize completely the *ìwà* (identity and essence) of their subject, and *se lógo* (embellish them) through artistic

activity using *ojú-onà* (design consciousness).

On discovery of this framework (*iwa, se logo* and *oju ona*), I utilised what I call a three-prong analytical tool to appraise my hybrid afropolitan art (Hassan, 2020) production.

Embracing hybridity, the third space and afropolitan Aworan

Overall, I begin to tell my Yoruba story both from personal experience and in my art practice through the language of *Aworan* - visual communication and representation. I choose ultramarine blue to represent the *Carnival Messiah* ‘Mama god’ character, inspired by Yoruba sea/ocean/river deities, *Olokun* and *Yemoja* respectively. As forementioned, on my re-discovery of the ancient Aworan practice in Yoruba culture, I felt it was very important to enshrine Geraldine as an *Ayajora* (realistic) *Aworan* (Figure 6.) for future generations to be introduced to her and be inspired by her. Geraldine’s artistic and academic legacy, the *Third Space* blueprint and the joyous rapture of the experience of *Carnival Messiah* by her multiple audiences, are now visually enshrined in the blue colour of the 1.7m statute (*Aworan*), the PhD regalia (*Akanpo*), and the expression of joy captured in her face!

I stress Geraldine Connor’s (2005, p.377) words, highlighting the importance of creating art from within the Third space

(blueprint/paradigm), what *Carnival Messiah* meant to her, and why I believe her legacy needs to live on for humanity as a whole:

This *Third Space* encourages sight from new perspectives, the elimination of boundaries between margin and centre, subversions, transgressions, and the creation of a new universe where all difference is to be affirmed and celebrated. Carnival Messiah thus becomes the embodiment of aspirations toward achieving integrity of being, collapsing entrenched and negative notions of difference, whilst guiding its participants and recipients towards the attainment of a critical consciousness which can only be achieved through self-discovery and self-recovery. From within this Third Space Carnival Messiah strives to exemplify notions of forgiveness, reconstruction, self-affirmation, healing, and unification as an allegory for enabling transformation and enlightenment.

In conclusion it seems ironic that carnival practice has served as an unconscious roadmap that pointed me back to Yoruba culture. Yoruba culture in turn informed me with some of the original philosophies, concepts and thinking that were in danger of been lost post slave trade and colonisation, yet very important to our full emancipation and psyche restoration as peoples (afropolitans) living in the diaspora of Leeds.



Figure 6. Geraldine Connor as an *Ayajora* (realistic) *Aworan 14*” statue (in grey stone colour), 2021

Acknowledgements:

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Geraldine Connor inspiring me to tell my Yoruba story. I am forever grateful for your motherly support to me emotionally, artistically, and spiritually.

It is also dedicated to the memory of Bridget Brown, for pouring yourself into me before you departed, encouraging me to create the sculptures. Grandma Yaba, Auntie Sola Ese O, Ase

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Voicing Living in Difficult Times: Calypso's Role in Black Caribbean Survival in the UK

Michelle Harewood

University of East London,
London, E16 2RD
m.harewood@uel.ac.uk

Abstract

In 2020 the murder of George Floyd seemed to create a tipping point. Many could no longer distance themselves or deny the uncomfortable truths of racist possibilities. And the trauma that accompanies racism was laid bare. Consequently, people joined protests to exclaim 'Enough is enough'. Unfortunately, living while Black means living with the harm that racism does. This is more than a conversation about prejudice this is a matter of life and death. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed racism running through the veins of our society. Although conversations on 'racism' have proliferated over time, the concepts of 'anti-Blackness' and 'anti-Black racism' have often been overlooked. This anti-Blackness renders Black bodies disposable, over-surveilled, over-policed, and under-protected, leading to pain and trauma. Living while Black means constantly hustling to survive. This paper explores some of the complexities involved in that survival. Engaging with the ACASA Calypso and Soca Tents of 2020, it explores how Black Caribbean Calypsonians in the UK connect with contemporary narratives of social justice. These calypso responses occur at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the months following the murder of George Floyd. These four songs from three artists are presented as part of the Black Radical Tradition (BRT) that is rooted in the cultural resources that African captives carried with them to the New World. Each song highlights some of the struggles of living through this time. They aim to instil pride, unite, and create community. Essentially, they inspire hope and the will to continue the fight for freedom founded on the elimination of all discrimination and oppression.

Key Words: UK Calypso, Anti-Blackness, Black Survival, Freedom, Black Radical Imagination, Racism, Calypso & Covid-19, Calypso & George Floyd

Introduction: Anti-Black Racism Across Time and Space

Nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds. The time it took for the life of a Black man to be extinguished in full view of passers-by. Modern technology meant that those who were present were not the only witnesses to this murderous event. Thus, millions across the globe experienced the dehumanisation

and lack of care given to George Floyd in his last minutes. The world watched. Many heard him crying for his mother. Many saw him take his last breath. They saw him lying in a puddle of his own urine and tears. All of this, along with the faces of those responsible was projected onto screens in homes around the world. His words, uttered fifteen times, imprinted on the minds of many, 'I can't breathe'. This murder

committed on the 25th May 2020 seemed to be a tipping point (Winters, 2021). Hearing of one more Black person shot dead by the US police was nothing unique. This time, however, the response was different. What followed was an unprecedented wave of global protests galvanised around the hashtag ‘Black Lives Matter’ (Page, Woodland, 2023). Those nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds did more than spark unrest and protests. It created collective distress and despair among Black people around the world (Kinouani, 2021). Many could no longer distance themselves or deny the uncomfortable truths of racist possibilities. The trauma that accompanies racism was laid bare, resulting in anger and sadness (Kinouani, 2021). It caused us to question yet again, when will freedom come, if not now, when? (King, 2018).

Here on British soil the words ‘I can’t breathe’ replicated the dying words of several Black people restrained by officers on British streets. Again, we remembered and mourned our dead: Joy Gardner, Cynthia Jarrett, Sean Rigg, and Rashan Charles to name but a few. At this moment, it was as though finally the world had sat up and noticed not just racism, but the prevailing anti-Black racism. Consequently, people joined protests to exclaim ‘Enough is enough’ (Winters, 2021). But, yet again we added to our list, Chris Kaba, shot dead by Metropolitan police on the 5th September 2022. Living while Black in the UK means being seven times more likely to die after police restraint when compared with white people (Inquest, 2023). Living while Black means living with anti-Black racism (Kinouani, 2021). This visceral experience ‘dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth’ enacting

‘great violence, upon the body’ (Coates, 2020). Therefore, living while Black means living with the harm that racism does. This is more than a conversation about prejudice this is a matter of life and death (Andrews, 2021; Kinouani, 2021).

Whilst this public murder was taking place, Black communities were coming to terms with another challenge to Black life. In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic further exposed racism running through the veins of our society. In the UK COVID-19 disproportionately affected ethnic minorities due to, amongst other things, their living conditions, higher rates of poverty, and over-representation as key workers (Public Health England, 2020). The result of these inequalities meant that at the height of the pandemic, Black females were 4.3 times, and Black males were 4.2 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than their white counterparts (White & Nafilyan, 2020). This also highlighted issues with structural discrimination which compounds unequal access to care and health inequalities that diminish the life span (NHS Confederation, 2020).

Over the past few years, conversations on ‘racism’ have proliferated. Within this wider conversation, the concepts of ‘anti-Blackness’ and ‘anti-Black racism’ have often been overlooked. This is despite several government and independent reviews showing the existence of inequalities and systematic disadvantages for Black Communities in the UK (Macpherson, 1999; McGregor-Smith, 2017, Timpson, 2019;). However, theorising anti-Blackness allows for a deeper understanding of the Black experience within a context of contempt for and acceptance of violence against Black

people (Dumas, 2015). This behaviour includes devaluing, minimising, and marginalising the full participation of people who are perceived to be of African descent (Williams Comerie et al., 2022). The result is the systematic denial of Black humanity and dignity, which makes Black people effectively ineligible for full citizenship. (Williams Comerie et al., 2022). This anti-Blackness renders Black bodies disposable, over-surveilled, over-policed, and under-protected (Williams Comerie et al., 2022).

Anti-Blackness has a long history that goes back to the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade. It is here that we find the origins of discrimination, oppression, and violence against Black bodies. As early as 1787 Cugoano wrote about the lasting impact that the inhumane, dehumanising, murderous evils of slavery would have on Africans (Cugoano, 2018). The end of slavery resulted in ‘slave owners’ being compensated for their losses. Consequently, their descendants became wealthy. By contrast, the descendants of enslaved peoples were left to pass on the pain and trauma they endured through centuries and generations of enslavement. This violent and abusive anti-Black racism did not end with slavery’s abolition. Instead, it evolved. The inheritance for the descendants of the enslaved is one of continued violence, abuse, discrimination, and oppression, resulting in generational trauma.

Living while Black, therefore, means constantly hustling to survive (Hersey, 2022). It is a testament to our willpower, spiritual strength, and resilience that we are

still here. From the beginning of slavery, Black people have come up with a myriad of ways to survive on the road to freedom. This paper explores some of the complexities involved in that survival. Engaging with the Notting Hill Carnival Calypso Tent of 2020, it explores how Black Caribbean Calypsonians in the UK connect with contemporary narratives of social justice. These calypso responses occur at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic and in the months following the murder of George Floyd. They are presented as part of the Black Radical Tradition (BRT) that is rooted in the cultural resources that African captives carried with them to the New World. They inspire hope and the will to continue the fight for freedom founded on the elimination of all discrimination and oppression. This paper is part of a larger project that examines the potential for Notting Hill Carnival to provide a foundation for the Black Caribbean community’s survival against the impacts of anti-Black racism and oppression in the UK. Calypso is explored as one part of this wider framework. The full project took place over 4 years of the Notting Hill Carnival. It incorporates interviews with Black Caribbean members of the Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) community. It also includes attendance at several NHC events and playing mas³.

Calypso and the Black Radical Tradition.

The struggle for Black freedom is constant (Robinson, 2021; Davis 2022). Whilst there are many stories of individuals who are

³ ‘Playing mas’ is a Caribbean phrase that means to take part in carnival celebrations.

lauded as heroes within this struggle, Robinson's⁴ Black Radical Tradition (BRT) brings them all under one umbrella (Elnaiem, 2021). This collates a collection of cultural, intellectual, and action-oriented labour that originates from anticolonial and antislavery efforts (Thomas, 2019). As resistance, it disrupts social, political, economic, and cultural norms rooted in slavery, imperialism, and capitalism (Thomas, 2017; Thomas & Chavous, 2019). It also maintains cultural traditions, beliefs, and values (Robinson, 2021; Thomas, 2017; Thomas & Chavous, 2019). It is here that we raise calypso as an important part of this tradition. Calypso grew out of the stark conditions of life on the plantations. Enslaved people imagined musical ways to overcome restrictions in communicating whilst working on the plantations (Rao & Sedlaczec, 2012). This music also created 'moments of sanity, relaxation and communal bonding necessary for survival' (Liverpool, 1991:43 cited by Lowe 1993). As Watkins Liu (2019) contends, much of the Black struggle has been to survive and be seen as human. Throughout, this individual need to survive created a collective will to preserve life and ways of being (Robinson, 1983). The result is an archive and a place from which the voices of the past can be heard and projected into the future. Founded on the cultural expressions of Africans who were transported to an alien world, these archives hold methods and tools for survival (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1992). These tools are only limited by the boundaries of the imagination.

The imagination becomes the gateway to freedom by imagining all the routes we can take to get there. We cannot build what we cannot first imagine, hence Black survival is contingent on the Black radical imagination (Imarisha, 2016). By situating Black imaginations as essential to social justice work, we acknowledge the dreams 'buried in the rich black soil of Afrodiasporic culture' (Kelley, 2002:18). Hence, the Black radical imagination (BRI) can be a powerful weapon against injustice (Toliver, 2021). In the Caribbean, the griots, storytellers took up the mantle to supply creative weapons. They evolved into calypsonians, the calypso singers who became the people's voice (Wilson, 2022). Consequently, calypso's performance became a way of expressing identity, aspiration, resistance to oppression and responding to social change (Brown, 1990). Further, although it is seen as a form of entertainment, it is also used for celebrating, praising, affirming, presenting social and political commentary, protesting, informing, agitating, and analysing relationships (McLean, 1986). Within this, calypsonians also believe their role is to educate the people (Lowe, 1993).

It is the BRI that created the foundations for calypso in the Caribbean and supported its evolution. This music, its rhythms and dances originated in the cultures of the West African captives that were brought to the English-Speaking Caribbean (Hill, 1972). The BRI evolved to formulate diverse ways of countering social, economic, and political oppression (Kelley, 2002). Hence, it does not just rest on simply dreaming of alternative futures; it also

⁴ Cedric Robinson was an American professor who coined the term Black Radical Tradition in 1983 in

his seminal text *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*

focuses on bringing those possibilities into the present to inspire new forms of solidarity and action (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2014). Using calypso to explore the radical imagination presents possibilities to remember the power and importance of our past struggles and the way their spirits continue in the present (Haiven, 2011). It allows us to peek behind the masks of carnival and venture into the territory of imagined tomorrows. The BRI is the ‘force that has kept Black people not only alive physically but able to dream of new and better worlds’ (Imarisha, 2016). Without these dreams, we are left with nightmares of hopelessness.

Revolutionary action does not involve creating something new. Instead, it is a process of uncovering what lies in the shadows of the present (Burris, 2017). Hence, NHC becomes a possible site for Black revolutionary action. Replete with Caribbean cultural forms of expression it is a playground for our imagination. Mas, music (calypso and soca), dancing, and our ways of being all present opportunities for us to explore the fruits of that imagination in its natural environment. We are therefore left with the work of digging to expose the radical imaginative roots embedded within the soil of carnival narratives; to uncover narratives that speak not only to the present but from the past and into the future. Calypsonians as storytellers are the essence of this venture (Toliver, 2022). The storyteller’s skill of using wordplay has become an essential part of Black survival (Lavender, 2019); a survival that has relied

on Black people breaking codes to uncover hidden messages, that may be used in the pursuit of liberation (Toliver, 2022). This liberation begins in the imagination (Bailey & Thompson, 2021⁵). Our art that includes calypso is the genesis of that liberation (Jones, 1959 cited in Blagrove, 2014).

Black Lives Matter to us

The ACASA UK Calypso and Soca Monarch competitions are traditionally held in the run-up to Notting Hill Carnival. However, in 2020 the world was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, George Floyd’s murder, and the heightened visibility of the Black Lives Matter movement. The NHC was cancelled, and the community tried to come to terms with carnival tabanca⁶ and the loss of many we knew. The Carnival Village Trust responded by producing an online carnival celebration. And both the calypso and soca monarchs were moved online. For the most part, the performances of calypso represented the unusual events that we were living through. Consequently, six of the seven calypsos presented themes that stemmed from the murder of George Floyd or the realities of living through the Covid-19 pandemic.

In *It’s All or None* De Admiral chose to educate us about recent murders of Black people in the US. Throughout he pays homage to George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Aubery. In all these cases, race became a prominent theme. Hence, De Admiral sets the tone of the song, Anti-Black racism. His

⁵ Bailey and Thompson titled their 2023 book *Liberation Begins in the Imagination* after a well-known John La Rose quote. John La Rose was a Trinidadian activist, poet, and writer. He founded New Beacon Books which was the first Caribbean publishing company in the UK. He was also one of

the founders of the Caribbean Artists Movement in 1966.

⁶ Carnival tabanca is the deep sadness felt once carnival ends. It is also the title of a Bunji Garlin song on the topic.

language is strong and emotive. By calling George Floyd's 'brutal murder', a 'slaying', he equates this to the slaughter of an animal. These vivid images remind us of what happened. Subsequently, De Admiral calls for change. He pleads for us not to let George Floyd or any of the others 'die in vain'. These killings are all tragedies, but by telling their stories the required change could and should happen. For De Admiral, this is a change that needs to happen now. He has hope that this will happen, although he is not sure when. Consequently, he fluctuates between fear and hope, a fear that asks, 'How many more must suffer?'

In further analysing De Admiral's narrative, we start to recognise why these killings in the USA are so important to him, a Black Caribbean man born in Barbados, living in the UK. In calling Rayshard Brooks brother he shows that he relates to him, he sees him as kin. This is not kin due to blood ties. De Admiral introduces Martin Luther King Jr's iconic 1963 speech *I Have a Dream* as a way of showing that they are connected due to history, heritage, and ancestral links. They are tied together as part of the African diaspora. They are connected through their Blackness. King's dream reiterates the foundation of the Declaration of Independence, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal' (King, 1963). He builds a 'beautiful scene' in his dream for 'the sons of former slaves'. This is a dream of both freedom and justice. We can see that these references to slavery and equality are just as important to someone who comes from the former slave colony, Barbados, as they are to African Americans. We also see a link to the challenges of being Black in the UK. These murders could just as well have happened here, and as we have seen, many have. This is a struggle that crosses

the Atlantic, uniting Black people on both sides. Further, in using Martin Luther King Jr's 1963 speech, we see that this struggle has been continuing for a long time. De Admiral, therefore, vents his frustration that Black people keep waiting for this justice while the situation takes one step forward and two steps backwards. He highlights that other calypsonians have also sung about this before him, Sparrow, Kitchener, Gabby and Ajamu but we are still singing and fighting. Despite this, he raises our hopes that events at this moment are creating a much-needed impetus for our struggle for liberation.

De Admiral speaks of resistance, resilience, and defiance. No matter what the challenges of racism and oppression are, we need to 'Tell the oppressors we will never accept defeat'. Throughout history, Black people haven't asked for much. All we are asking is that equality, justice, and human rights 'stand for one and all'. 'Every life matters'. It doesn't matter if you are a 'communist', 'politician', 'sportsman' or, 'a damn racist...every citizen has the right to fight oppression'. Hence, De Admiral is clear about what kind of change we as Black people want to happen. Whilst there is frustration that this has not been achieved so far, there is also determination. 'If we stay strong Cecil Rhodes statue must come down'. De Admiral presents Cecil Rhodes' statue as being synonymous with the oppressive system that Black people are seeking freedom from. Hence, the statue's fall symbolically becomes the objective, and synonymous with the fall of racist oppression and bigotry. Through weaving Cecil Rhodes into this narrative De Admiral again emphasises the global nature of anti-Black racism along with the historical and political links and foundations of racist oppression. Rhodes Must Fall and so then,

must the system responsible for unequal access to opportunity and mobility that is embedded globally as institutional racism. This form of racism in the UK was acknowledged by Lord MacPherson (1999), in relation to the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence a Black man of Jamaican heritage. MacPherson found the police investigation into Stephen's murder to be mired in institutional racism. Contrary to this, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) stated that the 'claim the country is still institutionally racist is not borne out of evidence'. But this is smoke and mirrors. De Admiral contends that Boris Johnson set up the commission 'to cause more confusion'.

If the government are in denial about racism where does this leave the Black struggle for liberation? De Admiral's solution is for us to unite. 'Together we can make it'. He asks that those who have a voice speak out against 'police brutality, bigotry and inequality'. Those who have a platform from which they can be heard should not be quiet. They should decide which side of the fence they wish to be on. However, this is not a real choice. For De Admiral, the only decision that makes sense is for them to join the struggle and let everyone know 'we ain't taking no more'.

COVID Calypsos

G String is a UK artist of Guyanese heritage who in 2020 won the Calypso Monarch title with his song *Ms Corona*. Written during the COVID-19 pandemic, the song uses humour, to speak to issues surrounding the spread of the virus. G String chooses to start his narrative in what might be considered an unlikely place. He highlights the toilet paper shortage caused by people panic-buying during the pandemic in the UK.

'Last night I run out of toilet paper but the supermarket it was empty...the corner shop...it was empty I stand up outside and then a man run past me wearing a mask and telling me he running from the corona'. This serious situation of life and death is juxtaposed against this lack of toilet paper in the shops, something that many people couldn't believe, or found funny at the time. Conversely, the mask-wearing man who is running from 'the corona' impresses on us the seriousness of the situation. Corona is something we need to run from and avoid. This is G String's 'public health warning', therefore we need to mind who we are 'hugging and kissing...'. Whilst G String makes light of this situation, this goes beyond jokes about toilet paper, because 'corona, it's badder than the one call Ebola...the new virus takin over'. However, he has no faith that our political leaders will help us. Boris Johnson doesn't know what he is doing, while Donald Trump is too busy casting blame on the Chinese people. This deepens the need for us to listen to his warning so that we can survive this pandemic. Hence, G String encourages us not to rely on politicians, instead, we must make to right decisions for ourselves.

G String also came second in the UK Soca Monarch competition in 2020. This time with *Social Distance* another song about the COVID-19 pandemic. Again, he infuses his socio-political themes with humour. This is a song of solidarity. Throughout he lets us know that we are not alone in how we are feeling. Much joy has been lost as people around the world can no longer fete. The pandemic is affecting everyone in the world regardless of their location or race. G String expresses and evokes solidarity for fellow artists and promoters whose shows have been cancelled until further notice. They are unable to do what they love, but there are

also financial implications. This is a difficult time, one that G String equates to being a ‘heavy storm’. In this way, he inspires us to have hope. Whilst we are going through challenging times, this like all other storms will blow over.

While the song is not exclusionary, these are messages primarily for Caribbean people. G String uses phrasing familiar to those across the English-speaking Caribbean: Jumpin’⁷, fete⁸, limin’⁹ and whine. Further, his sentiment about carnival shows how important it is not just to him but to others. This is a sad situation, but ‘everybody feelin’ it’. In the end, G String presents the comfort that we are not alone in this. We are united in how we are feeling. However, no matter what we are missing we need to stay safe. Through both *Ms Corona* and *Social Distance*, we recognise G String’s ambivalence towards the government. This is not about their laws and protocols. However, he cares about us, so he encourages us to *Social Distance* and posits himself as an example. He will only be dancing with his ‘gyal’¹⁰, everyone else must keep ‘far far far’ away. Through this song, G String moves from exhibiting self-care to the realms of collective care in the hopes that we will survive the pandemic together.

Brown Sugar’s second-place entry to the ACASA UK Calypso competition of 2020 was also themed around COVID-19. Throughout Brown Sugar highlights not only Anti-Black racism but how it impacts her, leaving her with trauma, pain, anger, and sadness. Her song entitled *4 Times Likely* responded to the UK’s Office of National Statistics figures published in May

2020 that stated Black people in the UK were four times more likely to die of COVID-19 than white people (White & Nafilyan, 2020). The reason given at the time was that Black people lacked the required level of Vitamin D due to their dark skin not being able to absorb enough through sunshine (Giménez et al., 2020). Brown Sugar tells us that she is ‘vex’, ‘sad and mad’ at COVID. She is missing out on events such as weddings, having to self-isolate, and social distance herself. She is also mad at the high levels of death. At first, it seems that these are the reason that she is mad.

However, the real reason she is mad soon becomes apparent. Our Black skin has been given as the reason why we are *4 Times Likely* to die from COVID-19. Brown Sugar uses her calypso to educate us. This is a clear message that she wants us to hear. Blaming our lovely Black skin which is rich with melanin is not only an affront, it is a lie. Hence, Brown Sugar’s narrative becomes as much about anger as it is about Black pride. COVID-19 narratives are trying to penalise her Blackness and, the media is ‘clear that folks like me must take extra care’. In reality, Black people are dying at higher rates because of ‘the unfair living conditions and poor health situations and the racist white system they support’. Hence, racism and inequalities are the real culprits. She is both mentally and emotionally affected and feels she can’t take it anymore. This is the difference between life and death.

⁷ Jumpin’ is a Caribbean term for taking part in carnival.

⁸ Fete is a Caribbean term for a party.

⁹ Limin’ is a Caribbean term for relaxing and hanging out.

¹⁰ Gyal is a Caribbean way of saying girl.

Conclusion

The Black Caribbean communities in the UK are part of a wider African diaspora who still live with the impacts of Anti-Black racism. These impacts are physical, and mental, and can lead to death. The fight against the inequalities that Anti-Black racism produces is not new. It has evolved over five centuries to reflect the context in which it is needed. In the Caribbean calypso evolved as one mechanism within this struggle. Founded in the resources that our African ancestors carried with them to the Caribbean, this music travelled the Atlantic again. Now in the hands of Calypsonians in the UK, it speaks to the challenges faced in this new location. The three artists discussed, have taken up the mantle of the many performers who came before, telling stories, singing, dancing, and educating our communities. As such, in their unique ways De Admiral, G String and Brown Sugar render themselves as part of the African Caribbean struggle for liberation in the UK. As such they are not only concerned with their individual well-being but also the well-being of us as a collective. Each artist varies in the way that they evoke community spirit and care that are central to all the songs presented. G String unites us in how we feel about the COVID-19 pandemic: we share things that give us joy and are now together in our sorrow. Brown Sugar creates a collective love and pride in

the shades of our skin. Alternatively, De Admiral specifically calls for the unity that is embedded within the BRT. Together these performances take us on a rollercoaster of feelings: fear, anger, and sadness. Notwithstanding, they all embody hope. The hope that things will get better. This is a hope that is founded in the dreams of the ancestors. The dreams in which they imagined breaking chains and living a life of freedom. Freedom from not just the brutalities of slavery, but from all discrimination and oppression. Combined, these calypsos remind us to keep that hope alive. It is a hope that dwells within the BRI. This is the place to imagine ways of fighting. But first, we must imagine ways to survive. We must survive COVID-19 and everything else that is thrown at us. In this way, calypso has the power not only to entertain, but to educate, and to give us tools to make it to a future where freedom is no longer only a dream.

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Photographing Caribana: Managing Caribbean Canadians Through the Touristic Gaze

Natalie Wall

King's College London

The Strand, London

natalie.wall@kcl.ac.uk, @RealNatalieWall

Abstract

Since 1967, Toronto's Caribbean carnival, known as Caribana, has evolved into a large-scale annual event that celebrates the city's – and by extension the nation's – diversity and the heritage of its Caribbean inhabitants. This article argues, however, that this celebration is sanctioned only as a spectacle that *contains* and manages the mass of black bodies that participate in it by incorporating them into a disciplinary schema that relies on their *otherness* to the normative (implied white, male) Canadian viewer. Photography, the article suggests, plays a key role in this disciplinary containment, presenting Caribana's participants as alternately (and sometimes simultaneously) hypersexualised and possessed of a latent violence that requires *policing*. Building on the foundational roles of both photography and tourism in shaping Western views of the Caribbean, Caribana spectatorship exerts a proprietorial control over its participants by maintaining a distancing gaze the article characterises as “tourism at home.”

Key Words: Caribana, Caribbean, Carnival, Toronto, Photography, Sexualisation, Exoticisation, Tourism, Violence, Policing

Introduction: Caribana and “Tourism at Home”

The island was a haven for girl-watchers yesterday. Nancy Campbell, a Torontonion formerly of Jamaica, was attending Caribana.

The Globe and Mail, 1967

This quote from *The Globe and Mail* depicts Toronto's Caribana festival via a scene that is metonymic of the festival's function in the Canadian imagination: as an outwardly positive symbol of multiculturalism that – in a manner typical of sanctioned multicultural displays – serves to contain, manage, and homogenise diversity, rendering it pleurably tantalising and exotic but ultimately safe for the dominant culture. It is printed alongside

a photograph that forms part of a visual vocabulary that reinforces this process of containment by establishing a way of viewing Caribana that is at once proprietorial and distancing. In what follows, I trace a narrative through a series of photographic snapshots of Caribana in order to develop a theory of gaze that I call “tourism at home”: a transposition of exoticising, othering ways of looking, more commonly associated with tourism, to a temporarily transformed home-space. I explore the ways in which this gaze has worked in tandem with Caribana's homogenising association of the Caribbean with “black” culture – even as the festival's progenitors in the Caribbean have contested this association – both to celebrate the spectacle of racial and cultural otherness and to defend against the imagined threats

this otherness poses.¹¹ The touristic gaze at home, I argue, performs a dualistic, distancing function that contains a variety of constructions of the transformed home space – from wholly pleasurable (a “haven” that exists solely for the pleasure of voyeurs) to threatening (a space of chaos, lawlessness, and violence) – and is intertwined with the economics of consuming Caribana and of Canadian multicultural spectacle more broadly.

Tourism at home underpins each of the images I analyze in this article. In line with Christopher Pinney’s assertion that “photography’s mimetic doubling becomes a prism through which to consider questions of cultural and self-identity, historical consciousness, and the nature of photographic affirmation and revelation” (2003: 3), I focus on the mimetic representation of the event through photographs, rather than the event itself. I do so in order to offer an illustration of the ways the touristic gaze contributes to

multiculturalism’s management of marginalised identities within a larger national framework, making the non-white *other* by definition, but also contained through the spectacle¹² of black bodies, as “the markings and iterations of blackness are manifested through a deliberate performance of visibility that begs us to consider the constructed nature of visibility” (Fleetwood, 2011: 20). Using a methodology based on theories of visual culture and text-image relationships, I examine the construction of these black bodies in mainstream Canadian media: the sexualisation of women operating in the background and the implied violence of men operating in the foreground. These images become sites of their own deconstruction, as “the singularity of the image, the complexity of black lived experience and discourses of race are effaced. The image functions as abstraction, as decontextualized evidence of a historical narrative that is constrained

¹¹ In this article I follow the prevailing critical trend of viewing Caribana as an event that is constructed overwhelmingly as “black” – participating in “a Pan-African discourse that achieved what Caribana founder Charles Roach described [...] as an agenda of ‘ethno-centric economics’” (Phillip, 2007: 116-7) – and thereby problematically perpetuating a stereotype of the Caribbean as racially homogenous. This is in contrast to the demographic realities of countries such as Trinidad and Guyana – where one sees the progenitors to Caribana in the local annual carnivals – which contain large groups of Indo-Caribbeans (originating from India and migrating to the Caribbean as indentured labourers for the British) and Afro-Caribbeans (largely arriving in the Caribbean as slaves under English colonial rule), among other ethnic groups (such as Chinese-Caribbean, white-British Caribbean, Indigenous Caribbean, etc.) that make up the population of the Caribbean. On the heterogeneous ethnic makeup of the Caribbean and its contrast with the continued representation of Caribana, see especially Premdas (2004) and Trotman (2005), the latter of whom argues that, while “[the] Afro-focused definition of nationalism is now being strenuously challenged and the Trinidad Carnival, the accepted progenitor of Caribana, is one of the major sites of contestation” (2005: 183), this Afrocentrism remains strongly associated with Caribana.

¹² The festival is spectacle because it is *other*. This spectacularisation is evident in Carnivals across the globe, acting as moments of subversion for marginalized groups and acts of containment by those in power. Because of this, race and Carnival are interwoven: “Carnival is [...] both a real event and a putative social aesthetic distilled by theory and applicable to societies with or without carnival, and figures both as a conduit for subversion and as a lubricant for hierarchical control” (Armstrong 2010: 448). Carnival is about empowering those without power: “carnival is perceived as including those who are socially excluded the rest of the year” (Sztainbok 2013: 596). Carnival is also about sexuality, as “there is a history of black women engaging with their sexualization through performance. Studies of both carnival and overtly sexual black women performers have been concerned with whether these cultural practices reify or contest the hierarchical order” (Sztainbok 2013: 596). It is this interplay between empowerment and sexualisation of the socially excluded other that makes Carnival ambiguous, its power relations not straightforwardly comprehensible. Here, I examine specifically how that otherness is expressed through photography and how the normative “Canadian” audience constructs and consumes those moments of empowerment and sexuality.

by normative public discourse” (Fleetwood, 2011: 10) and the women of Caribana operate solely, within the construction of the photographs, for the visual pleasure of others. Tourism at home relies on the objectification of non-white bodies through spectacle in order to allow the passive speculation of white subjects, which, in turn, enables the demarcation between *us* and *them*, black and white, that which needs containing and those who observe the contained.

The formulation I call “tourism at home” plays on the deeply ambiguous significations that space in Toronto, and the black bodies that inhabit and traverse the city during the festival, acquires during the city’s temporary transformation into a quasi-Caribbean location. These black bodies, I argue, simultaneously signify the “hereness” of multicultural Canada and the “thereness” of the Caribbean islands, overlaying two distinct but intersecting traditions of representing blackness that have historically been mediated by a white gaze. The first of these traditions is identifiably North American and has drawn renewed attention in a #blacklivesmatter world. It is a mode of imagining blackness that links Toronto to American cities in the south where racial tensions frequently operate more overtly – and without the counter-narratives of diversity and state-sanctioned multiculturalism to offset them – than in Canada. This is the long history of “how white gazes have attempted to define Black bodies as problem bodies, dangerous and unwanted bodies, desired and hyper-sexualized bodies, strange bodies, curious bodies, always already touchable bodies, violable bodies, freakish bodies, nigger bodies, and dark and mysterious bodies” (Yancy, 2008: xiv). As I argue throughout this article, the deeply dualistic yet mutually reinforcing construction of black bodies as violent, dangerous, and simultaneously desirable, hyper-sexualised, troublingly “always already touchable” is the foundation of the continuum on which media responses to Caribana – from the

lascivious and objectifying to the fearful and paranoid – are found.

The second tradition – which, fittingly, given the preoccupation of this article, is deeply intertwined with both photography and spatial transformation – is specific to the Caribbean, and especially to the long-established tourism industry in the area. This tradition is epitomised by a process that Krista A. Thompson calls tropicalisation – a process that is heavily influenced by visual representation but is not confined to signification alone. For Thompson, tropicalisation is a process in which landscape architecture and visual media (especially photography) work symbiotically to transform the material reality of a space according to an ideal shaped by an external, touristic gaze. In this process, space is remade in the image of *itself*: a photographic image, “itself likely based on past representations” forms the basis of a spatial transformation undertaken “in order to elicit the interest of tourists, who would then, in turn, render [it] into yet another photographic image” (2006: 3). The representation of the Caribbean becomes the reality experienced by tourists, despite the reality of the space, who then replicate that representation in their own photography. Tropicalisation, Thompson argues, inverts the presumed mimetic order of photography: rather than photographs providing an approximation of the Caribbean’s living spaces, these spaces have instead been promoted as a promise of three-dimensional still-lives by an industry that “marketed [the Caribbean’s] landscapes and inhabitants as picturesque, more specifically, as ‘like photographs’” (Thompson, 2006: 8).

During Caribana, Toronto undergoes a similar process of (albeit temporary) “tropicalisation” via the same kind of mutually reinforcing chain of significations: the desire for the “picturesque” informs the spatial transformation of the city, which shapes the photographic constructions of the event that in turn reshape the subsequent

transformations of Toronto into quasi-Caribbean space in future Caribanas. Yet the twinned conceptions of blackness in and around the festival mean that it is not only paradisiacal images that shape the city space and its subsequent photographic rendering (though they certainly play a part), but also the darker intertwining of violence and sexuality at the heart of contemporary North American constructions of blackness from without. I do suggest, however, that the continuing influence of the association between the Caribbean and “picturesque” touristic images makes this a formal as well as a discursive fissure: while there is clearly slippage between the poles of sex and violence around which the exoticising gaze of “tourism at home” operates, it is sexuality and (often voyeuristic) pleasure that dominate visual representations of Caribana, while violence tends to play a more dominant role in narrative constructions.

Caribana 67: Sun, sand, steel bands



It was a sunny Sunday and more than 32,000 persons ferried to the islands yesterday.

Figure 1: Image accompanying *The Globe and Mail's* headline about Caribana, August 7th, 1967

The Globe and Mail's headline, on a middle-pages feature in its August 7th 1967 edition, reads “Caribana 67: Sun, sand, steel bands.” It is Canada’s centenary and the Centennial Commission has challenged the country’s immigrants to make a pledge of

nationalism by celebrating their transnational identities. Toronto’s Trinidadian community responds to this call by recreating its famous Carnival in a new island space, that of Toronto Island. Taking place at the end of July, rather than in the traditional February, this cultural celebration manages to mimic not only place, but also climate; underneath *The Globe and Mail's* headline is a picture of sunbathing bodies on the Toronto islands, demonstrating both the heat of the day and the languor of the visitors. As evidenced by *The Globe and Mail's* first article covering the annual parade, the festival’s inception is “tropicalising” and the touristic gaze of Torontonians and national media prioritises the exotic space of the Caribbean over the cultural contribution of this West Indian community: “sun” and “sand” come first, with “steel bands” bringing up the rear of this tripartite description.



The island was a haven for girl-watchers yesterday. Nancy Campbell, a Torontonian formerly of Jamaica, was attending Caribana.

Figure 2: Image of Nancy Campbell accompanying *The Globe and Mail's* report on Caribana, August 7th, 1967

To the left of the island’s sunbathers is the picture of smiling Nancy Campbell, a black

woman attending the first ever Caribana: Toronto's annual Caribbean parade.¹³ Campbell is described as “a Torontonion formerly of Jamaica” (*The Globe and Mail*, 7 August 1967, B2), highlighting her transnational identity as an immigrant to Canada by naming her Canadian citizenship first and her country of origin second, and thus metonymically representing, within this brief description, the principles of the parade itself: a national celebration that relies on extra-national allegiances. However, this construction of Campbell as a transnational citizen comes only second to her objectification, as only one of the beautiful women on display at the first Caribana parade. *The Globe and Mail* does not even refer to Campbell specifically when it writes that “[t]he island was a haven for girl-watchers” (1967: B2), instead lumping her together with the rest of the women subject to the touristic gaze of the watching public. Campbell's accompanying picture shows her smiling face and her upper torso, including her breasts but nothing further. Campbell's low-cut light-coloured shirt contrasts brilliantly with her dark skin in the black and white photograph. Campbell exists as an object of retrieval, a moment captured by the camera that reminds us¹⁴ (as audience or readers of the image) of the exotic and sexualised spectacle of Caribana. By constructing the space itself as its subject (“[t]he island was a haven”), this brief description of Caribana's attraction to the

average Canadian allows for a non-invasive and non-threatening collapse of women with scenery so that Nancy Campbell becomes merged with the space around her, space that has already been constructed to blend Canadian nationalism with Caribbean exoticism. The preposition “for” in this sentence denotes the intended audience of the parade as the “girl-watchers” rather than the “girls” themselves, who act as vehicles for observation of the exotic and spectacular. Caribana exists as a safe space, a “haven,” for these voyeurs – but not for the women who are being watched.

Photographic Disempowerment and the Power of the Voyeur

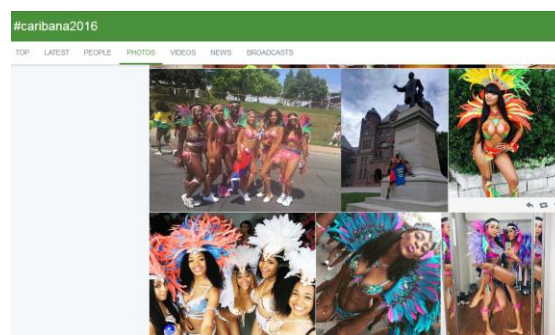


Figure 3: Screenshot of the first page of image search results for the Twitter hashtag #caribana2016

¹³ In recent years, the festival has been rebranded as the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, in some years prefaced with the names of its principal sponsor – first Scotiabank and later Peeks. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will continue to refer to the festival as “Caribana.” This is the name used throughout most of the festival's existence and is still in colloquial use for those discussing it.

¹⁴ Who is us? While I do not mean to erase the diversity of the actual audience, I use “we/us” strategically I am referring both to the non-racialized (white), non-gendered (male) audience that is implied by the modes of representation I discuss in this article, and to the range of possible subject positions that are encouraged to view themselves as non-racialized and non-gendered and

become complicit in the voyeurism inherent to these modes. Here, I am thinking of the interpellation between colonizer and colonized; identities are discursive, never only working one-way. As Pratibha Parmar argues, “[h]istorically, photographic images of black people all over the world have been captured by intrepid white photographers looking for the ‘exotic’, the ‘different’, the ‘anthropological native types’ for ‘local colour’” (115) and thus the “deeply ideological nature of imagery determines not only how other people think about us but how we think about ourselves” (116). The shaping of the *other* is also the shaping of ourselves, whereby we exist in tension with the *other*.

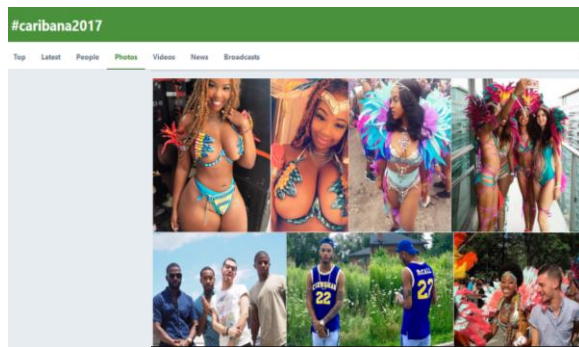


Figure 4: Screenshot of the first page of image search results for the Twitter hashtag #caribana2017

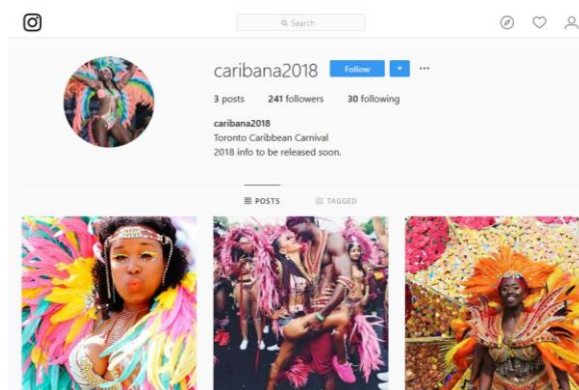


Figure 5: Images grouped under the Instagram tag caribana2018

Photographs of Caribana contribute significantly to the way that this celebration is perceived in Toronto's cultural imagination. Any Google image search will currently show photographs of colourful costumes, black bodies, and scantily clad women. Pre-covid, there was already a distinction between the photographer taken photo and the selfie or amateur-participant photograph. A quick Twitter search of #Caribana2016 and #Caribana2017 and an Instagram search for Caribana2018 will bring back results of colourfully costumed women, exposing skin, and gyrating to music. Above, I show the first photo page of each search with the results overwhelmingly being embodied images of women that reflect the popular association of Caribana as a hypersexualised event, though there is a notable difference in how women construct their own sexuality and how a photographer constructs that sexuality for a (n assumed white) audience. This "hypervisibility," meaning the ways

that the black body can be simultaneously visible and rendered invisible through that exposure, "has particular resonance in contemporary popular culture and mass entertainment where the black body as commodity fetish has a heightened salience" (Fleetwood, 2011: 111). This act of using the black body as commodity fetish "masks power relations and historical contexts that produce systems of inequality and the consumption of difference" (Fleetwood, 2011: 111). I argue here that Caribana has been constricted since its inception by this exoticisation and sexualisation of black women, in direct opposition to the more textually oriented positioning of Caribana as a space of violence. Between the poles of sex and violence, Caribana is *managed* by its viewing audience, from the safe distance of either printed word or photographic lens.

Photographs have an alluring presence, validating the desire to watch someone/something else while remaining unobserved, and thus offering the viewer/voyeur unlimited control over the object(s) of the photograph: "To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge – and, therefore, like power" (Sontag, 1977: 4). In the context of race relations, this power relationship becomes doubly problematic, as the racialised Other now becomes the disempowered object, functioning as referent for the gaze of the normalised majority. And, crucially, "[a]s photographs give people an imaginary possession of a past that is unreal, they also help people to take possession of space in which they are insecure. Thus, photography develops in tandem with one of the most characteristic of modern activities: tourism" (Sontag, 1977: 9). This collapse of voyeurism and tourism, both occupying the same rhetorical space within photography, is critical to my reading of images from Caribana. This is a festival that takes place in Canada, but, through the manipulation of language and nationality, is metaphorically

situated in the Caribbean, allowing for the voyeuristic gaze to collude with the touristic gaze, which, in turn, dispossesses the Caribbean subject of their transnational identity and, instead, reduces them to mere photographic *object*.

This disempowerment through appropriation is metonymic of the nation's treatment of black Canadians as objects that exist somewhere between seen and unseen. As Rinaldo Walcott argues, when discussing the Canadian tradition of rewriting uncomfortable racial moments of the past by erasing the presence of the black victims within those events or moments, "Canadian state institutions and official narratives attempt to render blackness outside of those same narratives, and simultaneously attempt to contain blackness through discourses of Canadian benevolence. Thus, blackness in Canada is situated on a continuum that runs from invisible to the hyper-visible" (2004: 278). Canadian nostalgia relies on focusing on a national ideal that elides the presence of black Canadians from history, a process of nostalgia so pervasive it can lead a group of people to invalidate themselves as national subjects:

The impossibility of imagining blackness as Canadian is continually evident even as nation-state policies like multiculturalism seek to signal otherwise. The simultaneity of being here and not being here is, in effect, an in-between position. The prospect of in-between-ness is, however, not only produced by the state: it's also something black folks have chosen through their multiple diasporic and outer-national political identifications. (Walcott, 2004: 281)

The voyeuristic, touristic gaze characteristic of photographic representations of Caribana illuminates both Sontag's conception of photography as an appropriative process and Walcott's assertions about the difficulty of imagining

blackness in Canada. It is at once distancing and proprietorial, simultaneously insisting on the otherness of black space and spectacle and appropriating an exotic, recreational vision of blackness for the narrative of multicultural Canadian nationhood.

Transforming Toronto into a Tourist Haven

During the two weeks of Caribana, which culminate in the parade, the festival's most well-known event, Toronto becomes transformed. This spectacle of Caribbean Canadian interaction allows for a reinterpretation of Canadian space, so that the immigrant's desire for home and the Canadian-born's desire for the exotic meet in a transformed Toronto; Toronto becomes a space performing its own variation on Caribbean-ness. Jenny Burman analyzes this transformation of space through the lens of what she calls "cultural remittance," a phenomenon that "play[s] out in, and transform[s], diasporic locales (as Caribana does Toronto)," calling upon "a tension between nostalgia and yearning" (2001: 277). Here, Burman uses the term remittance to identify the push/pull of finding an idealised version of home in a simulacrum of home. Caribana's claim to authenticity only reinforces its inability to meet the desires of nostalgia: the festival itself exists as a representation of the Canadian desire for the exotic at home. The transformation of Toronto into a Caribbean space is itself only a reinforcement of the ideals that the city (and the country) holds for itself:

Caribana's determination to take over the streets and the city [...] is yearning, bespeaking a desire to occupy and change Toronto. However, the shape that ephemeral transformation takes and the sharp distinction drawn by many participants between Caribana time and Toronto time, props up Toronto

as monolithic and Anglocentric; thus, veering back into nostalgia. (Burman, 2001: 278)

The city fails at its attempts at transformation due to the nostalgic confusion between the ideal and real, but that does not mean that the desire for exoticisation is frustrated. The voyeuristic gaze thrives, so that although the lived space falls short of its ideals, the framed space captured by the camera always allows for the distance needed to construct the Caribana space as something *else* and contain it. Therefore, although Burman, writing in 2001, argues that during Caribana “masquerade challenges the conventional dynamic between spectacle and spectator” (2001: 278), I suggest that Toronto’s continued demarcation between parade and audience over the last twenty years has neutralised this challenge. This is reinforced by a reformation of Torontonianspace that is constructed not by the performance of the festival but by the recirculation of images of the festival. Through framed productions of Caribana, not only does the spectator gain all power in the relationship, but the photographer becomes author of that dynamic between those being looked at and those performing the looking.



Among the eye-catching delights in the Caribana festival celebrations.

Figure 6: Photograph of a woman celebrating Caribana, captioned as “Among the eye-catching delights in the Caribana festival celebrations,” accompanying the *Globe and Mail’s* coverage of Caribana 1967.

Exoticised by the Camera

As Burman notes, “[t]he media coverage of Caribana by the mainstream press tends to express enchantment with the city’s transformation through the language of travel journalism or celebrations of diversity,” (2001: 281) meaning that the voyeuristic gaze is supplanted by the touristic gaze in looking towards objects of photographic interest. This tourism at home is emblematic of that national challenge thrown to Canada’s immigrant communities, which resulted in the Caribana festival. The festival mirrors the national desire of having a managed and contained diversity that underpins the Canadian ideal of multiculturalism. Mimi Sheller charts the Caribbean’s complicated relationship with tourism from the history of colonial tourism to a contemporary touristic view of the Caribbean to which sexualisation is central. She argues that “[t]ourism can be understood as a form of embodied encounter between foreign travelers and local people that involves corporeal relations of unequal power” (2012: 210) and that “[t]he way tourists and local people face each other, look at each other, hear each other, smell each other, or touch each other are all part of the power relations by which forms of gender and racial inequality are brought into being along with national boundaries of belonging and exclusion” (2012: 211). Sheller sees tourists as the holders of a specialised citizenship, feeling perfectly at home in a foreign place while making the locals of that place feel alienated and uncomfortable. Caribana’s touristic space operates similarly to that created by Sheller’s travel writers, as the objects of the photographs are treated as landscape by the assumed white Canadian public.

The voyeuristic/touristic gaze is a controlling gaze. The reduction of the photographic subject into a sexualised object ensures that not only does the frame itself operate as a source of containment, but that the event becomes reframed so as to contain its own participants. The sexualised space is a containing space: “[s]imply put, blacks can be processed and controlled when they are turned into ethnoerotic objects. They are visualized as objects that are simultaneously attractive and repulsive, different from established cultural norms but at the same time belonging to the human family” (Sheller, 2012: 220). Though Sheller is describing the mechanisms at work in nineteenth-century travel writing, there is a complementary operation in photographic representation of the Caribana festival and parade. The touristic gaze of the non-participant, the gazer of photographs, the non-raced and therefore normative “Canadian” body, acts as a lens of differentiation; the reader of newspapers, the consumer of images uses his gaze to distinguish the space of Caribana as a foreign space, one of hyper-sexualised black bodies, from his own safe “Canadian” space of observance. While the sexuality of the spectacle is attractive from the remote (and sanctioned) space of the voyeur, that sexuality also holds the potential for repulsion.

Returning the Gaze

Inherited from the nineteenth-century is the use of photography to focus this relationship between sex and race through the framing of the camera lens: “[c]ollecting images and being able to make such racial comparisons authoritatively became the central purposes of Anglo-American travel through the West Indies” (Sheller, 2012: 222). The photographing of Caribbean bodies has a historically situated association with the containment and classification of *othered* bodies. As Sheller points out, these black and brown bodies were used to define each other, with no overt discussion of the non-raced (white) bodies of the travel writer. The Indo-Caribbean body was always used as a means of articulating the superiority of the white body by naming particular racial features as superior to the Afro-Caribbean body: straighter hair, thinner lips, and narrower noses were all signs of civilisation in the Caribbean body. The Indo-Caribbean woman also showed her superiority through demure glances and the refusal to *look back* at the camera. Sheller is quick to point out that the white bodies behind the cameras (often enough women themselves) are never judged as impolite or intrusive for initiating the gaze, though the Afro-Caribbean women are often criticised for having the audacity to return that gaze. Sheller sees that return of the touristic gaze to be a site of potential empowerment to those framed within the contained space of the photograph: “gazing on another requires a certain degree of proximity, which puts the gazer at risk: Embodied encounters leave a space for contesting the gaze, deflecting the gaze, returning the gaze, appropriating the gaze, and destabilizing the power of the gaze” (2012: 212). This *looking back* works against the inherent containing force of the photographic frame; by refusing to act as valueless object, the Caribbean subject attempts to disrupt the photograph’s attempt to act as codeless. The return of the

gaze requires a confrontation, and the confrontation between voyeur and object requires a disruption of the frame's construction as a lens that works only one way.

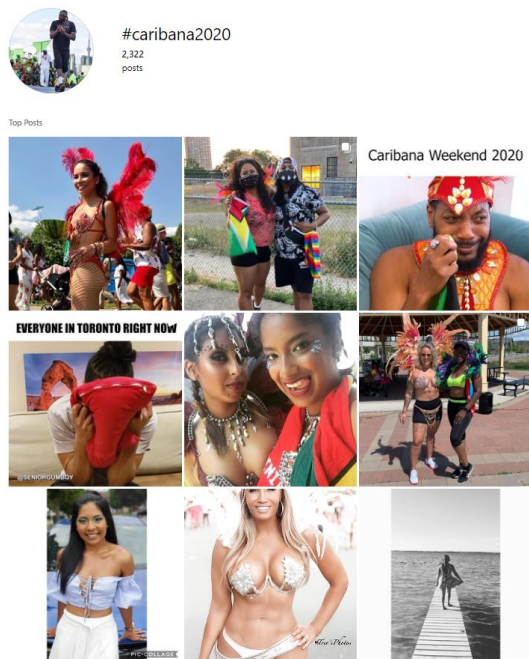


Figure 7: Images grouped under the Instagram hashtag #caribana2020.

The return of the voyeuristic gaze presents an opportunity to confront the anonymity of the camera. The photographic object becomes subject once more and insists on seeking out the source of their objectification, radically unsettling the voyeuristic gaze's attempt to remain invisible. However, although this act of recovery served as a powerful, albeit limited, form of resistance to the desires of the nineteenth-century tourist, returning the gaze of the voyeur empowers the hyper-sexualised black bodies of Caribana, breaking free from Toronto's containment of the event. While Caribana was cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic, the event only took place in digital spaces through the lens of participants' cameras. When you search #Caribana2020 on Instagram, you not only have women looking back into the camera, you have camaraderie and conversation between users, celebrating and commiserating over the loss of the

physical component of the event. Women's bodies are still on display, but these women are looking at themselves and each other: the unracialised Canadian voyeur cannot exist easily in this space.

Containing the Violence: Policing the Crowds at Caribana

So far, I have discussed the construction of "tourism at home" in terms of pleasure – a distancing mechanism that facilitates the pleasures of voyeurism while also keeping the black bodies it consumes reassuringly contained. However, if the primary trope of this gaze is that of the tourist sampling the pleasures of an island paradise, tourism at home also encompasses a second, less pleasurable travel trope: that of the tourist out of their depth in a suddenly threatening, foreign space. This trope still maintains a link to pleasure – the thrill of a distant, ill-defined danger that adds both authenticity and excitement to the tourist experience – but, whereas the more overt pleasures of voyeurism emphasise the proprietorial aspect of tourism at home, the construction of Caribana as inherently violent emphasises the importance of distancing and containment as a means of maintaining the tourist's comfort amid the festival's chaotic otherness.

Along with containment through their sexualisation, Caribana's black bodies find themselves managed through the popular acceptance of the festival's inherent violence via the association of any black crime during the two weeks of Caribana with Caribana itself.

While the bulk of Caribana photographs feature hypersexualised women, a significant subset of the photographs captured and published by local and national media instead show large crowds of featureless black bodies¹⁵, accompanied by suggestions of a form of chaos and disorder that may be exuberant and festive but teeters constantly on the brink of becoming lawless and dangerous. This duality has been evident since the very first parade, with *the Globe and Mail* reporting that “Caribana 67 and the sunny weather attracted a record crowd to Toronto Islands yesterday – 32,000 people. Children pushed one another out of trees, swimmers trampled on each other beneath the waves. Six extra policemen helped the island regulars watch 14 hours of delightful chaos” (“Caribana 67”). The chaos may be “delightful,” but the description of the swimmers carries animalistic connotations of stampede. And while the additional police presence is depicted as benign, the fact that it features at all speaks to a subliminal threat of lawlessness.

This trend has continued to escalate, so that by 2012’s event news outlets were reporting that “[f]ans at this year’s Caribbean Carnival parade on Aug. 4 will be subject to a search for weapons, alcohol and drugs” (Robertson, 2012). Accompanying the first quote is a black and white photo of the first Caribana, featuring a mass of black bodies, indistinguishable one from another, crowding each other and the event. The second quote, from a 2012 article in *The Toronto Sun*, is illustrated by a photograph of a teeming

¹⁵ This mirrors the work of tourism photography in the Caribbean, where “the very process of representing and deeming parts of the landscape and inhabitants as picturesque marked their incorporation into a disciplinary society. That the islands and their native populations were fit to be photographed offered an additional degree of

assurance to travellers that ‘the natives’ and the landscape were tamed” (Thompson 2006: 17). Photographs of Caribana work similarly by emphasizing the uncontrolled and feverish nature of the event, and, thus, the necessity of the police presence and physical containment.

mass of black bodies with a host of different Caribbean national flags and groups of people riding large trucks through the crowd. The trucks are dwarfed by the crowd itself, showing both the immensity and the power of the bodies present.

From its beginnings, Caribana has included a police presence that other, similarly sized and attended Torontonians events have not and, indeed, “[t]ensions between the metro police and the Black and Caribbean communities clearly make up part of Caribana’s context” (Burman, 2001: 285). The construction of Caribana as overcrowded and overcome by black bodies exists side-by-side with the understanding that Caribana is a space that needs policing (and management by that police presence). The tragic death of Rueshad Grant, struck down by a parade truck in 2013, reinforced this understanding as it presented “new questions about the safety of the popular event” (Moore 2012). So, even though “critics maintain that the parade is over-policed, especially since the 1992 shooting incident” (Burman, 2001:281), measures increase every year in the effort to control the parade and the crowds that the parade generates; measures include, but are not limited to, the continual increase of security guards and police presence, the building of progressively higher fencing between the parade and the crowd attending¹⁶, the searching of bags during the parade, and the attempt to organise attendees into stadium seating (as opposed to standing crowds).

assurance to travellers that ‘the natives’ and the landscape were tamed” (Thompson 2006: 17). Photographs of Caribana work similarly by emphasizing the uncontrolled and feverish nature of the event, and, thus, the necessity of the police presence and physical containment.

Though Stephen Weir, the spokesman for the Scotiabank Caribbean Carnival, claims that the instigation of bag searches (as of 2012) has nothing to do with gun violence among black people in Toronto, both *The Toronto Sun* and *The Globe and Mail* have claimed otherwise. In fact, *The Globe and Mail* repeats Weir's opinion that the searches and the recent shootings in Scarborough are unrelated in the article "In Wake of Toronto Gun Violence, Caribana Plans to Search Guests." By using a title which suggests disbelief of Weir's statement, the publication sensationalises these events rather than reporting them. Ignoring that past violent events at Caribana have involved the police themselves (such as the shooting of bystanders during an incident at the 2011 parade), both the organisers of Caribana and the city continually move to increase the police presence at the parade. The policing of Caribana is a reminder that this is a black event, one markedly different from other cultural events in the city. Policing works, if not to explicitly control the event, then to prompt the public's desire to see Caribana contained and managed by the authority.

As a representation of the methods by which Canadian diversity can be contained through the expediency of multiculturalism, Caribana itself needs to be contained. The ideals of multiculturalism rely on this containment of the Other and the management of difference:

"Toronto's Caribana" interrupts the desired masquerading of Toronto

expressed by many celebrants, its rules and politics a constant reminder of the limits of the fantasy ideal. The heavy police presence is part of that reminder as well as mainstream media coverage portraying the event as a potential threat reporting on the success of the barricades, and police predictions about "unruly behaviour." (Burman, 2001: 285)

The physical barricades of Caribana thus have a secondary, metaphorical function. These barricades represent the attempt to contain the uncontrollable, to manage the unmanageable. Like the crowds pushing at the physical barricades, the reality of the chaotic cultural diversity of the nation will always break free from the attempts to simplify through stereotype and marginalisation.

Conclusion:

Escaping Containment

Caribana operates between two political intentions to demarcate along ethnic divides: the construction of the festival as a black event and the containment of the celebration, differentiating black bodies from those of the majority population. This polarised Caribana does not acknowledge a reality of hybrid citizenship and, instead, perpetrates a misperception of what it means to be Caribbean Canadian. The importance of the media-constructed photograph cannot be underestimated with regards to the performance of citizenship, as the photograph inhabits the public imagination in ways that text cannot. The photograph connotes an embodiment that is crucial to the understanding of hybrid citizenship and "the very performativity of citizenship is one of the crucial ways in which political subjectivity translates into

restriction of participants joining the parade has its own contentions and political tensions.

¹⁶ The interaction between masqueraders and the attendees is a long-standing tradition dating back to the originating Caribbean carnivals. The growing

differentiated embodiments” (Sheller, 2012: 21). That is to say, the black bodies of Caribana are always political and never simply a “delight” and it is through “returning the gaze” that transgression is possible when all other avenues are literally fenced in. It is only through challenging these limitations, as seen in 2020’s representations of a digital Caribana, that the Caribbean community of Canada throws the challenge back to the Canadian public and government: will Canada make a pledge of nationalism to finally *see* the black people of Canada as they see themselves, fully and wholly. In the digital age it is becoming harder and harder to manage and *contain* Caribana and its celebrants, beautiful and larger than life, in a Toronto that exists because of its Caribbean communities, not in spite of them.

Acknowledgements:

This article was developed from a chapter of my PhD dissertation (University of Calgary, 2018), which was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Canada Graduate Scholarship.

I am grateful to Dr Richard Brock and Dr Aruna Srivastava who read the manuscript at various stages and provided valuable feedback.

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“Dem ah dweet fi d likes!” An investigation of Carnival in Jamaica; the Country’s Newest Tourism Offering.

Keri Johnson

University of Trinidad and Tobago, John Donaldson Campus, Port of Spain

Abstract

The Chairman of Trinidad and Tobago’s National Carnival Commission, Winston Peters is on record saying that Jamaica’s carnival has the potential to bypass Trinidad and Tobago’s Carnival. The history and purpose of Jamaica’s Carnival, however, are very different from that of Trinidad and cannot be compared with the former being introduced to diversify its tourism product. This paper discusses the history and purpose behind the cultural importation of carnival into Jamaica’s tourism landscape. It proposes that the introduction of the Carnival in Jamaica to Jamaica’s tourist offering, like many other Carnival stops, aims to strengthen Jamaica’s competitiveness as an entertainment destination.

Key Words: Jamaica’s Carnival, Byron Lee, History, UWI, Panoridim Steelband, Tourism

Introduction

June 2019, saw Jamaica being ranked the number one Caribbean Destination on the popular online travel search engine Trip Advisor. In 2018, the country was voted Best Tourism Destination for Adventure by the Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) and its’ tourism minister, the Honourable Edmund Bartlett was voted Tourism Minister of the Year. Immediately after this award, Minister Bartlett was also voted the Caribbean’s Tourism Minister of the Year (2017) by the online Miami-based tourism magazine *Caribbean Journal*. According to Caribbean Journal, Minister Bartlett was selected as the Caribbean’s top tourism Minister because of his effectiveness in providing excellent management and ideas as well as being an exceptional ambassador for the Caribbean and Jamaican brands, attracting new investments and visitors.

One of these new investments is Carnival. After a seven-year hiatus, Carnival celebrations have re-started in the island’s capital city Kingston. What started off as a small parade by university students at the UWI in Mona and the elite in Jamaican society has now morphed into an annual full-scale festival on the Jamaican entertainment calendar with government and private sector involvement. The history of carnival celebrations in Jamaica and the reason and purpose behind its’ reemergence is the crux of this paper.

History

The introduction of Carnival to Jamaica was fraught with controversy, as it was seen as merely a shrewd business venture rather than a celebration of Jamaican creativity and culture (Brown

2005). While the latter part of this statement posited by Brown is a heavily contested topic, this paper will focus on the shrewd business venture and how it came about to be.

The history of Jamaican carnival begins with the history of the UWI (Mona campus) carnival which started as a two-day weekend event on Ring Road beginning on the Friday night before the start of Lent and ending on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. It was introduced in 1955 by Trinidadian and Eastern Caribbean students who were studying in Jamaica.

In addition to the UWI Carnival, there was the Orange Carnival which was started in 1976 by a group of affluent Jamaican professionals led by Arthur Barnes, Garth Moodie, Ruddy Mc Donnough, Richard Fontaine and George Phillip. These men attended Trinidad carnival annually and decided to stage a one-day Carnival in Jamaica which started out as a party of approximately 200 friends.

The story is that as a result of Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 coupled with an election in 1989, the annual pilgrimage to Trinidad for carnival ceased and so the men decided to have their own annual carnival celebrations in Jamaica.

It was held on the first Sunday after Easter in the neighbourhood of Orange Grove (hence the name Orange Carnival) then moved to Cherry Gardens. By 1990, this one-day event evolved into a four-day all-inclusive festival described as the best dam party in Jamaica by Jamaica Records (Brown 2005).

Orange Carnival was however discontinued shortly after and businessman Byron Lee took advantage of this closure and capitalized on it. In 1990 Lee, together with a group of sponsors, friends and business partners mobilized and formed *Jamaica Carnival* a brand that is owned, incorporated and assigned exclusively to Byron Lee under the Lee Enterprises companies (Brown 2005).

On Sunday, April 22 1990, Lee's *Jamaica Carnival* marked the very first masquerade parade in Jamaica. It featured a week of parties from April 14-22 and culminated with the street masquerade parade which Jamaicans refer to as the Road March.

Apart from the Lee Enterprises's, *Jamaica Carnival*, there were Oakridge boys, Raiders, Revellers and Frenchmen who also organized carnival parties and events in Jamaica simultaneously. Oakridge Boys was led by Michael Ammar Jr and organized daytime wet-fete parties and Frenchmen – which still exists today – was led by a group of four businessmen who organized exclusive all-inclusive events. These groups all came together under Lee's brand and were responsible for the creation of carnival celebrations in Jamaica with Lee at the helm.

Nine years into brand *Jamaica Carnival*, Lee decided to establish a separate mas camp and relinquish a lot of his sovereignty within the organization. This enabled the other carnival bands who were working alongside Lee namely Oakridge Boys, Raiders and Revellers to come to the fore and strive for their autonomy. This resulted in the creation of the band *Bachanaal Jamaica* which still exists today.

It must be noted that the timing of the Jamaica carnival was designed not to compete with Trinidad which is celebrated always on the two days preceding the Lenten season. It couldn't be held during Lent as the businessmen and party organizers respected the religious significance of the period and so the carnival week was scheduled to begin on Easter Sunday and end on the Sunday of the following week. There was a Kiddies carnival which took place the Saturday before the Road March on Sunday and the Road March was a competition in which sections of the only masquerade band *Bachanaal Jamaica* were judged based on various

criteria and the top spots were awarded special prizes. The Revellers group/section quickly emerged as the dominant section having won the top prize trophy for the first 3 years consecutively. There was also a Carnival Queen Show and steelband (The UWI's Panoridim Steelband).

Byron Lee died in 2008 from cancer at the University Hospital in Jamaica. After his death, carnival came to a halt in Jamaica with no celebrations taking place in Kingston for seven years. In 2016, carnival reemerged in Jamaica. The purpose for this reemergence is a nationalist one and will be discussed below.

Purpose

Hilary Brown, author and academic noted that it is unfortunate that when the idea for the development of Jamaica Carnival emerged, no significant attempt was made to integrate the new effort with that already existing at the UWI. This statement still holds true when the carnival was re-started in Kingston in 2016 as the UWI celebrations are still held separate and apart from Kingston; also there is no Kiddies carnival, steelbands, carnival queen shows or judging of sections anymore. The modern-day Kingston carnival consists mainly of a plethora of Trinidad-produced and managed parties and the one-day adult masquerade or Road March. In addition to *Bachanaal Jamaica*, there are now two other carnival masquerade bands in the Road March which are Trinidad-led and produced by *Xodus* and *Xaymaca*. There are no Kiddies carnival, no soca/calypso shows, no steelpan music, no competitions, no cultural shows or events. Jamaica Carnival is simply and only this: parties and a one-day adult parade.

The time-honoured ritual of mas, music, pan and revelry which constitutes the celebration of culture that is the Trinidad carnival has spawned a large number of overseas carnivals wherever Trinidad and West Indian communities are found (Brown 2005). Jamaica is the exception to this where the carnival celebrations there take place not as a ritual or custom but as an economic tourist-gaining venture.

In 2016, the year carnival re-started in Kingston, the Tourism linkages network launched the "Carnival in Jamaica" initiative in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport; the Ministry of National Security as well as key private sector entities. Minister Bartlett stated that the initiative's main goal is to strengthen Jamaica's competitiveness as an entertainment destination. He lauded the initiative for its economic value to the country as it generated record earnings in 2017.

"Carnival in Jamaica", (note the difference in not using Lee's trademarked name Jamaica Carnival) the Minister exclaimed, "has emerged as one of the major entertainment festival events that has responded to meet the demands of the visitors for more diverse experiences".

"Carnival essentially stimulates the excitement of the young", Mr Bartlett stated at a carnival press conference at the Pegasus Hotel Jamaica. He stated that "the whole digital transformation currently happening in tourism is about reaching the millennials. More importantly, we are **culturing** a product that is affordable for the millennials."

In another interview, Minister Bartlett proudly claimed that the carnival has not only helped to attract large numbers of visitors to the island but it also provides an opportunity for the country to showcase its various landmarks, foods and culture to a wider cross-section of visitors. (its' importance to tourism).

He stated that The Carnival in Jamaica experience not only provides a powerful addition to what Jamaica has to offer but also helps to bring a wider variety of visitors to the Jamaican space.

“*One of the reasons why we support carnival so much is that it really is a huge puller or driver of visitors into the Kingston area in particular*”, the Minister said. He stated that in 2017 all of the hotel rooms in Kingston were filled and he expects the same for 2018.

“The Government is partnering with carnival stakeholders to market Jamaica as an entertainment destination. This endeavour aims to enhance brand Jamaica while further boosting the global appeal of carnival, Minister Bartlett, stated, and further claimed that this partnership is a part of the Ministry’s overall plan to diversify the country’s hospitality product to ensure the sector’s sustainable development. Additionally, he says it is one of the engagements under the Tourism Linkages Network Initiative. Mr Bartlett further states that carnival is not just a social movement but also an economic movement because every tourist that arrives for the event brings an important potential of up to seventy-five different discrete economic activities. Carnival is one of those entertainment activities that excite and bring a whole range of different demographics into the destination.

Michael Ammar, Director of Carnival masquerade band *Bachanaal Jamaica* states this:

We need to, once and for all, cement Kingston as the entertainment and cultural capital of the Caribbean and carnival is a great first step in doing that. He adds that the economic impact is huge as this is normally the time of year (mid to month end of April) when little or no entertainment is going on on the island in terms of the big events. Most of the big events start in Summer and go through to Christmas. So carnival has now practically taken over all the resources at this time of the year, creating jobs for several industry players.

Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports Honourable Olivia Grange says that her ministry together with the Tourism Linkages Network initiative will facilitate and ensure that the carnival is properly and professionally packaged and showcased. Minister Grange says that the impact of the collaboration will generate significant stakeholder dividends. She says that the event will benefit several other sectors and expose tourists to the unique culture of Jamaica.

Conclusion

Massive kudos must be paid to both the public and private sectors of Jamaica for understanding the immense economics of the carnival and maximizing it to its full potential. Jamaica is not a country that is known for carnival but the success of the 2018 staging of their carnival was so well advertised and documented that the Chairman of the National Carnival Commission in Trinidad Winston Peters is on record as saying in a televised interview that Jamaica’s carnival has the potential to bypass Trinidad’s carnival because “*Jamaica spends hundreds of millions of dollars on their tourism product of which carnival is a part of.*” Peters further added that “*you think New York and Canada and Jamaica need a carnival? They don’t, but there are huge social and economic implications for countries when they host carnivals. Carnival is big business, it fills your hotels, and restaurants and brings tourists to the country*”.

Peter’s reference to Jamaica was in the context of the need for Trinidad to spend more money and pay particular attention to the marketing and promotion of their own carnival product. That

year (2018) the Government of Trinidad cut the monetary allocations to the Carnival Commission significantly and Peters lamented this saying that Jamaica has been hosting carnival now for only a few years and their visitor arrivals for their carnival period by far surpass that of Trinidad, the home and Mecca of carnival. He stated that the Government needs to view Carnival, like Jamaica, as an economic magnet that will bring significant foreign revenue to the country and boost its tourism sector.

Reggae superstar Chronixx must have heard Peters's interview when he wrote his hit song "Likes". Chronixx proposes in his song that so many people sing reggae for the gains (likes) – what they can get out of it, but he sings it out of love.

The Notting Hill Carnival: A Blended and Unique Culture Part 2

Claire Holder

The Notting Hill Carnival Roadshow Company Limited
2nd Floor, 243 Westbourne Grove
London W11 2SE

Abstract

Between 1989 and 2002, the Notting Hill Carnival, London attracted a global audience and was enjoyed by millions who attended to participate in the celebration of the cultural heritage of the Britain's Afrikan-Caribbean community. Until then, the Carnival was criticised by the authorities for being too large and badly organised and their attempts to close it down were thwarted by community action. The carnival's reputation was negative. The funders took the decision to stop it from happening unless there was change of management.

In 1989, Claire Holder, a lawyer, was appointed by the community to be its chairperson. Together with a small and effective staff, the vision to turn Carnival into the premier event that was both culturally and economically strong was implemented. Unity of purpose, flexibility, effective stakeholder management, change management were used to underpin the creation of carnival cohesion for success.

In 1989, the income of the carnival's management organisation was £185,000 from which to organise an event hosting 1,000,000 revelers. By 2002, as a result of effective planning for economic development, that income had risen to £1, 200,000, enabling the organisation to support the artistic units with carnival arts grants.

But the carnival's growth and development were undermined due to the collaboration of some of its trustees with the funders, essentially giving them control of the event at the expense of the community's interests.

This extended paper tells of the policies and strategies behind the successes; the bad faith, betrayal and lies that led to the removal of the Chief Executive, once hailed as the "strength of the organisation"; the breakdown of carnival cohesion; and the loss of carnival's ownership and control by the community.

Key words: vision; stakeholder management; strategic management; carnival cohesion; community event.

Introduction

Part one of this extended essay was written with a view to generating 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 new, exemplary,

prestigiously acknowledged and actually nationally award-winning standards of management enabled the Carnival to achieve organisational stability, wealth as visible in substantial reserves toward future investment and global acclaim and even a modicum of favourable UK press coverage.¹⁷ During that period the Carnival

¹⁷ Between 1995 and 2002, we engaged a professional Press and Marketing Company,

Harwood & Co whose officers ensured that there was good press coverage, enabling the

was professionally managed and organised within the framework of principles and policies of innovative strategic management to achieve goals of cultural, economic and political strength and stability on behalf of Britain's black community. The vision was for a strong and successful carnival management organisation, a vehicle or conduit for the delivery of these goals and the source of our community's pride.

The organisation responsible for this period of growth and development was the Notting Hill Carnival Trust (NCT)ⁱ. 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 fought for so valiantly, and for which the ultimate sacrifice of their lives was the price they were prepared to pay to ensure the freedom of succeeding generations. We owe them our abiding love, honour and respect which we must demonstrate in our daily lives by *“doing the best we can do while we here, until we can do no better because we dead!”*ⁱⁱ.

To me, Carnival was never just an event or party, but an opportunity to pay homage to and make a meaningful contribution to the development of our cultural heritage by building a system in which the cultural, artistic and creative elements of our largely African-Caribbean heritage could interplay with the dominant social environment and contribute towards the creation of a unique,

stable, dynamic, in some respects astonishing celebration of our freedom, our unity and our complex cultural selves¹⁸, and be respected in so doing. Our role as carnival organisers was not simply to organise an event, but also to “grow” our culture using appropriate techniques that would reflect high standards of professionalism, project and promote our community's credibility and ensure the sustainability of our culture.

I ended Part 1 of this essay with the words “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 me, Chief Executive Officer, during the period under discussion; the court case which exonerated me from always baseless, entirely counter-factual claim; what happened next to Carnival; and the implications for the future of the Notting Hill Carnival”. The post-2002 “future” of the Notting Hill Carnival has seen a worrying past and the extremely disturbing present in which a local authority, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBK&C) within whose geographical area the street-based parts of the Carnival mainly occurs, has seized total control and even legally, though entirely questionable, claimed ownership of it whereby it determines how can should be managed and by who. In these circumstances, I write as follows:-

Approach

addition to an overwhelmingly Afrikan racial-cultural mix, embraces a rich mixture of other peoples: Native Caribbeans, Europeans, South- and East-Asians and Jewish and Lebanese People from the Eastern Mediterranean.

organisation to attract the interest of many marketing companies and develop Carnival's reputational resources.

¹⁸ If the major cultural heritage of the Notting Hill Carnival is Afrikan-Caribbean, the population of the regional background in

In order to demonstrate the magnitude of the impacts of those acts of political and cultural vandalism that took place in 2002 on the future development of the Notting Hill Carnival, this second part revisits and summarises the developmental path of the organisation; some of the policies and techniques created and employed to facilitate organisational transformation with the outcomes and achievements stemming therefrom; and the devastating consequences on the future development of the Notting Hill Carnival of the actions of a few who have undermined and act contrary to the interests of the Black community and the future of the Carnival.

The Notting Hill Carnival is “blended” because it comprises an eclectic mix of the culture, and specific arts of a range of communities to form “carnival cohesion”; and political because it is perceived by the authorities as on the one hand a threat and on the other as potentially and actually an object from which there could be both economic and political benefit for their interests. Accordingly, every aspect of the Notting Hill Carnival cultural, political and economic existence is a site of contestation and has had to be negotiated and fought for sadly with decreasing success by Carnival community forces.

I write in the first person because this is largely my story with all due credit being given to relevant others. It is an insider’s truth and perspective which is corroborated by archival, court, media and personal records from the period. Some of this still exists and is easily accessible only because I had them stored on a computer disc and hard-copy, and as a result they were spared

destruction by a certain member of the Board of Trustees which led the carnival coup in 2002, thereby negatively changing the course and fortunes of the Notting Hill Carnival.

My relationship with the Notting Hill Carnival

Since returning to England - actually the place of my birth - in the 1960s with my parents, I have been a resident of Notting Hill. My relationship with the Notting Hill Carnival began when I was 16 years old, and my older brother Danny Holder one day announced that our cousin Keith Lakhan was playing mas in a carnival right on our doorstep and that we should also make mas like we used to in Trinidad¹⁹. Both my sister and I could sew, and the church hall of the Notting Hill Methodist Church in Lancaster Road was made available to us as a workshop. With only a couple of weeks to prepare, it was a case of all hands-on deck and all members of my family were involved in sewing, making costumes, shopping, cooking cleaning and doing whatever was necessary to get the show on the road and support our mas. We put together a group of about 40 young people and became the West London Section of the Ebony Steelband, then under the leadership of Randolph Baptiste,

For several years we continued to make mas, with the size of our section growing by as much as thirty per cent annually. We continued our participation and at the same time my brother Daniel (Danny) Holder became a committee member of the Carnival Development Committee and then the Carnival Arts Committee. I would

¹⁹ Keith Lakhan and Danny Holder went on to form the promotion company, L & H Promotions, promoting calypso and touring

high profile Trinidadian calypsonians in the UK, thereby keeping the traditions alive.

frequently attend meetings with him to provide whatever administrative and management support that was requested of me. I was training to be a lawyer and became a barrister at law in 1978. The training I received at the Inns of Court and in Chambers stood me in good stead, equipping me with some skills to help the community. I was very much in the background of Carnival and continued to assist, understanding and believing that as an educated Black person, I had a duty and responsibility to do so.

In keeping with this sense of responsibility, I made myself available to groups in the area resulting in the persona of a general community person. It was therefore no surprise in 1988 when the Carnival Arts Committee called on me to provide support when the police and funders²⁰ railed and moved aggressively against them, threatening to close down the Carnival if there was no change. The Carnival was by then already hosting 1,000,000 revellers, but it was being organised by well-meaning not always correctly motivated or equipped volunteers. Its management was quite ad hoc, not based on any recognisable principles of management. I provided essential support as the minutes-taker during fractious and highly charged meetings between the police and the funders on one side and the carnival community on the other. There were ignorant attitudes and intransigence on both sides and little progress was being made. The funders refused to implement the recommendations of the 1988 Coopers and Lybrand Report, which they themselves had

commissioned. That Report criticised their lack of support for the Carnival on the one hand, and on the other hand, it criticised the Carnival Arts Committee for its lack of professionalism. The report questioned the fitness of the individuals in charge to manage an event of such magnitude and potential. Coopers & Lybrand were critical of the way in which the Carnival's management organisation had dealt with issues "in a laid back and amateur way with few of the systems and controls necessary to spend £300,000 annually (most of it public money), and manage the largest public event in Europe (equivalent in sheer numbers to 10 Wembley Cup Finals)". The report went on to state that few of those involved seemed aware of "*... the magnitude of the planning, management, financial, logistics, safety and security tasks now involved. Carnival is now very big business. Its problems are not going to be solved by a traditionally British half-hearted approach*" (Coopers and Lybrand, 1988, p.5)ⁱⁱⁱ. It also suggested that commitment to improvement was lacking from all parties and recommended that all parties should commit themselves wholeheartedly to Carnival and to its success, and work constructively together to that end.

In this political battle for the survival of Carnival, the carnival community came off badly with a much-tarnished image fuelled by inaccurate press reporting based on distortions planted by either the police or the funders or both, in their drive to close down the Carnival. The Carnival Arts

²⁰ The funders refer to the amalgam of statutory bodies which provided financial grants to voluntary and charitable organisations. At the time the funders were RBK&C, Arts Council of England, London

Boroughs Grants Unit and the Commission for Racial Equality. They gave small grants amounting to about £200,000 to support a carnival which was hosting over one million revellers.

Committee came back with their own review report with recommendations, but this report fell on deaf ears. Neither the police, nor the funders nor, indeed, the wider Black community was listening. The carnival management organisation had no credibility and the funders stated quite clearly, if there was not a new organisation, there would be no Carnival. In the meantime, there were allegations against several of the directors who were interviewed under caution by the police and the carnival office at 7 Thorpe Close was searched, ransacked, and vandalised as police officers descended on the office in a blaze of publicity.

In early May 1989, I attended a carnival community meeting at the Tabernacle, Powis Square at which Carnival's Chairman, Alex Pascall resigned. And amidst the confusion, the meeting voted for there to be a report on suggestions for a way forward. I was mandated to do some fact-finding and report back to the community.

It was immediately clear to me, as it should have been to anyone around the Carnival, that the Carnival Arts Committee was not financially viable, did not enjoy the support of the funders and therefore could no longer be the management organisation for the Carnival. We, the Black community, needed to re-group. My main recommendation was for change to ensure that Carnival would be put on a more professional footing, run by a limited liability company and managed by a Board of Directors made up of members of the carnival community who had to be prepared to be committed, and who were credible and reliable. On 10 May 1989, I

presented my findings to a packed and rowdy Tabernacle crowd, even surprising myself that I was capable of making such a powerful presentation in which I focused on encouraging us to look within, identifying where we as a community went wrong and not being afraid to be introspective and at the same time critical, with a view to pursuing improvements in our performance.

My speech found favour with the 300 or so members of the carnival community who had come from far and wide to hear what "de lawyer-girl" had to say and whether there would be a carnival. The meeting was convened at 6.30pm and finished at midnight. I was left holding the baby and was mandated to be the new Chairperson of Carnival and to get Carnival on the road again. Loud excitement and joy pervaded the night air, and residents were even looking out to find out what the noise was about. By the time I got home, a mere 10 minutes' walk from the Tabernacle, my phone rang, and it was a journalist from the Times newspaper who wanted the breaking news. For one hour we spoke about what had happened earlier and as she questioned me about the future, it was only then that I began to appreciate the range and magnitude of responsibilities of being the Chairperson of the Notting Hill Carnival.

The first task was to put the Carnival Arts Committee to bed. To start afresh, unencumbered by the £225,000 debt they had accumulated and left^{iv}. Against much opposition from members of the Mangrove Association²¹, I was able to establish a new company to manage the Carnival and which

²¹ The Mangrove Association was a local community association based in All Saints Rd. They were very loud and political and had had negative conflicts with the police and other authorities since the Mangrove 9 trial in 1971.

They wanted to organise Carnival for the prestige and finance that would come into the association. But it was important to organise Carnival separately from the influence of any other entity.

I paid for because Carnival had no money. After selecting the first Board of Directors made up of the five artistic disciplines and interested community individuals, I had to secure funding and a secure base from which to operate. I was able to negotiate a short-term let of the ground floor of premises owned by another community association, Unity Association, of which I was a board member. The next step was to secure the funding grants that had been withheld from the Carnival Arts Committee. But the funders could not provide us with funding because the new entity had no bank account. None of the banks in the area would allow Carnival to open a bank account because of their dealings with previous organisers. In desperation, I appealed to the manager of Barclays Bank, my personal bank, who allowed me to open an account in the name of Carnival, but on condition that I must personally guarantee it. Without hesitation, I did so. At last, the company was able to start planning for Carnival 1989 which was only six weeks away. There was opposition coming from a small but very vocal section of the community, the Mangrove Association, who disapproved of Barclays Bank because of their links with apartheid South Africa, and also the changes in Carnival which meant that they could not wield as much influence or assert control as they had done with the previous organisation. I was subjected to abuse and called a “police informer” and was physically assaulted which left me in tears and wondering why bother about the event. But I persisted and overcame the opposition by engaging them with frequent community meetings at which plans were presented and everyone was kept informed.

We were lucky to have been able to engage good staff to fill the two key roles of

Operations Manager (Aykaaba Addai-Sebo) and Finance Director (Christopher Nortey) and whose high-level skills and talents steered us through the difficult years. The journey to success was by no means smooth and implementing change for the benefit of the wider community came at a price. The abuse was sometimes intolerable. I was abused and bullied because I am a woman and the staff members were abused because they were not Trinidadians, they were Africans from the continent. Both the Operations Manager and the Finance Director were Ghanaians and the cry from an ignorant faction of the community was “*What do Africans know about Carnival*”. A member of the community even threatened to “*chook*” the Operations Manager because he was nothing but a “*dirty African*”. The Operations Manager left the post soon thereafter and we employed a member of the carnival community who proved to be less than capable. He talked a good talk but lacked the necessary skills to carry out that function. I was left with no choice but to step into the breach and take on the responsibilities of the role of Operations Manager.

From 1990, I stepped up my day-to-day commitment to Carnival and performed the full-time roles of Chairperson, Director and Operations Manager with no remuneration because we adhered strictly to the law that the voluntary Chairperson could not be remunerated. Even though this created personal hardship, it was important for me to continue to provide leadership as the Chairperson and oversee the implementation of policies to ensure the stability, development and success of the event. In 1992, we had yet another major upheaval as a result of interference in the carnival management organisation from a

member of Unity Association, the organisation from which we were renting premises. When that individual could not get his own way in Carnival, he unilaterally raised the rent from £1000 per month to £8000 per month, and when we refused to pay, the electricity was cut off and he actively engaged in spreading rumours and untruths aimed at getting rid of me from the Carnival. What motivated him and others who supported him was the fact that they could no longer rip off the finances of the event as their “hustle”. We had raised standards of accountability so high and introduced tight financial controls to ensure that the profits of Carnival would be maximised for the benefit of all, and no money was spent unless the expenditure had been planned for and approved in the widely circulated annual budget.

For over six weeks the company was not able to function. I did much of the administration from home and the Methodist Church allowed us to use its hall and facilities to host. Carnival had no address, no offices from which it could engage with funders and potential sponsors. One day on a walk up Ladbroke Grove, I came across some attractive business units and made further enquiries about hiring one for Carnival. The Estate Agent was aware of the conflict in Carnival which had been on the front pages of the Voice Newspaper and the Kensington Post, but agreed to let a unit to the organisation on the basis that I must personally guarantee it. The let was strictly commercial, and the rent was high. However, we saw the necessity for having a well-appointed office which was removed from the negative and direct influence of the particular member of Unity Association.

The Finance Director presented a revised budget to the Board of Directors which demonstrated how the building could be afforded. Under darkness, four of us re-entered the premises at Unity Association and secretly gathered our filing cabinets and desks taking them to the new carnival office at 332 Ladbroke Grove, W10.

This move was opportune and fortuitous, as it led to us establishing a proper carnival office base that was clean, light, modern, well serviced and spacious and which could accommodate our administration and operational planning. The Carnival's business occupied the three floors, catering for staff and the artistic disciplines with dedicated meeting spaces which held up to 60 persons. Our neighbours within the complex included companies like Virgin Records and Virgin Publishing, Delice Francais, a media company and other reputable companies. The office was on the Carnival Route and in the heart of the carnival community. It was an important stop for overseas visitors and sponsors wanting to view the parade from within the comfort of the office. The new offices heralded an era of change management and success.

Techniques employed for managing change and facilitating organisational development

The rapid and increased rate of change in the external carnival environment at the time made us realise that success or effectiveness of the organisation would require a higher level of skill and some new management competencies. The emphasis was on learning from experience, and activities being planned to facilitate that learning. Our West Afrikan Finance

Director²² developed a Carnival Five Year Business and Development Plan in which the business strategy and policies were outlined, and which required a high level of skill and competence to understand and implement.

Once we moved to Ladbrooke Grove and in order to afford the office, we had only three permanent staff, the Chairman/Chief Executive, the Finance Director and Administrative Secretary. Other staff members were contracted on a short-term basis nearer to the staging of the Carnival to fulfil the following roles: street-trading management, stewarding and security, and press and marketing. As the lead staff member, I retrained, at my own expense, as a Chartered Secretary²³ so that I could better understand the requirements of building and managing an organisation as unique as the Notting Hill Carnival. The Finance Director conducted seminars at which we were all trained in management skills. The Administrative Secretary was sent for training in event management at the local college so that she could provide any necessary support. The five key sector stewards were sent on all day courses in health and safety management and were asked to attend any training sessions being held by the police for their own carnival staff. The Press and Marketing Officer made arrangements for key staff to attend training sessions in interview techniques and presentation before the media. We also encouraged volunteers with skills who

provided much required support in areas such as answering the telephone in a business-like manner and giving out accurate information that would give the organisation an efficient and professional image that could contribute towards attracting sponsorship.²⁴

Impacts of environmental factors

In our attempt to engineer change, the Finance Director and I researched and imported ideas from other well-managed business organisations and transformed them into policies for the management of Carnival's operations. Thus, it can be said that external environment factors, trends and developments led to changes in the internal organisational structures, processes and behaviours of the carnival management organisation.

Stakeholder engagement was pivotal to the whole process of achieving organisational effectiveness. According to Mayfield (2013)^v, change managers who are more focused on their stakeholders and measured in the time they spend in leaning towards people, achieve better results in the end than those who focus rather more on the technical and process aspects of change. We appreciated that the problems of the organisation were due to conflict caused by poor communication and lack of understanding. With this in mind, the organisational developmental approach hinged firmly on the effective management of the multiple stakeholders found in the

²² Christopher Nortey is a Chartered Management Accountant who was also a Senior Lecturer at Thames Valley University with a subject specialism of Strategic Management. His background was in gold-mining and prior to immigrating to England, was the Actg. Chief Executive of the Ghana Gold Mining Corporation, credited with

revitalising the finances of this national institution.

²³ In 1997, I won the prize sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries for being the best Chartered Secretary student in the country.

²⁴ In 1994 the organisation was nominated for and won the British Gas award for the best managed arts organisation in the country.

carnival environment. There needed to be transformational change described as “*large-scale change involving radical, frame-breaking, and fundamentally new ways of thinking, solving problems and doing business*”. But more importantly, success was also associated with a high level of carnivalists’ engagement and collaboration. This had meant a very high level of communication and involvement of the carnival community at all stages of the transformation process.

A meticulous stakeholder analysis was instrumental in planning the required and necessary change at the Notting Hill Carnival. That concept 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 were so designated with a view to determining their role, the nature of their interests and their importance to the overall enterprise 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 viewed; the intended beneficiaries and users of the services; and those who were needed as resources, either physically or in an advisory capacity.

The process of identification and segmentation enabled the management to successfully carry out the following tasks:

- (i) The drawing up of a list of stakeholders affected by the proposed organisational change.
- (ii) The establishment of what each would lose if the change was implemented.

- (iii) The use of the potential benefits to obtain support to strengthen the change for those who might have felt marginalised.
- (iv) To find ways to address the concerns of those who would lose out by altering the nature of the change or reducing their losses.

Through understanding the stakeholders in the carnival environment, prioritising and mobilising them to accomplish the organisational goals, the management gained and sustained the momentum for the change. Further, being able to categorise a frequently large population of stakeholders was crucial for prioritising and identifying appropriate and different influencing strategies. Another important factor was that different stakeholders had to be managed differently. Allies and supporters were kept on side while opponents had to be converted or marginalised. Education, participation, negotiation and support were the normal tools used by the NCT, and these approaches were later reflected in the work of John Kotter and Leo Schlesinger (2008)^{vi}, who identified six methods for managing resistance, notably:

- (i) Education and communication for overcoming misunderstanding and lack of information.
- (ii) Participation and involvement for overcoming fear of the unknown.
- (iii) Facilitation and support for overcoming anxiety and personal impact.
- (iv) Negotiation and agreement for overcoming powerful

stakeholders whose interests are threatened.

- (v) Manipulation and co-option for overcoming powerful stakeholders who are difficult to manage.
- (vi) Explicit and implicit coercion for overcoming deep disagreements and little chance of consensus.

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. The challenge for the organisation was how to balance the various stakeholders' interests. This was effectively done over time and the lesson to be learned from our success is that every organisation is different and successful stakeholder management will depend on the environment in which the organisation operates, the needs of the different stakeholder groups and the organisation's strategic goals to be achieved. The long-term goal was to achieve and crystallise unity of purpose, which we did most effectively.

Promotion of unity of purpose

The management was aware that before the carnival community could support the organisational change required, its members needed to have a vision of a better future that was attractive and beneficial enough to justify any sacrifices and

hardships the change would entail. Additionally, that vision would provide hope for a better future for the Carnival and the belief that the goals outlined in the plan would be attained. The Carnival's vision or what was alternatively called a "Mission Statement" was intended to be meaningful and credible. It was crafted to address the basic assumptions about the organisation and the importance of its ability to relate intelligently to its environment, so that people would treat the organisation with respect.

The vision was also constructed to provide a sense of ownership and a sense of belonging for the carnival community, by linking the potential financial benefits that could be derived from a stable and economically strong carnival organisation to a vivid image of a better future for well-supported and adequately financed participating carnival units.

To achieve better, well-supported and adequately financed carnival artistic participation within the disciplines, there was a planned approach towards unleashing the wealth-creation potential of the Carnival through the attainment of organisational stability and credibility leading to the attraction of major corporate sponsors. Success in this particular area was one of the most significant benefits of the organisational change achieved within Carnival. While some benefits were automatic, benefits realisation, such as the much-needed carnival financial support, was dependent on deliberate management action and co-operation of the major stakeholders. As Jenner (2015)^{vii}, puts it

" ... benefits are the reason that an organisation invests its time, management attention and resources in change initiatives. Benefits

are defined as the measurable improvement from change, which is perceived as positive by one or more stakeholders, and which contributes to organisational (including strategic) objectives”.

In implementing this understanding, we embarked on a programme of securing both financial and in-kind sponsorship for the organisation and especially for the carnival disciplines, so that the benefits would be properly spread. Thus, in accordance with our drafted scale of sponsorship types, the following was achieved:

- (i) The title/primary sponsor was attached to the name of the Carnival and the financial benefit from this went into the general carnival pot/organisation's finances so that everyone could benefit from better organisational management and higher carnival arts grants or appearance fees and prize-monies;
- (ii) Secondary sponsors over the value of £10,000 went into the general carnival pot so that everyone could benefit;
- (iii) Sponsorship of £10,000 or below was targeted to individual groups with the capacity to service the sponsorship and this was overseen by the carnival management organisation;
- (iv) Sponsorship in kind i.e. products, was shared equally amongst all the carnival disciplines and the individual units^{viii}.

The vision of the carnival management organisation entailed new and difficult types of activities, but the core competencies of the management were relevant and appropriate for the tasks to be undertaken. Some major stakeholders doubted and queried our ability and capacity to successfully carry out the required organisational change. It was feared that the core competencies of the organisation were not adequate and it lacked the financial resources to underpin the project. But the NCT was not the first organisation to undertake a crucial organisational change from a point of severe resource constraints and we were to show that it could be done, relying on the core competencies of our management staff. And succeed we did by adopting a very disciplined and focused approach towards effecting change to achieve the vision. Securing title sponsorship from Coca-Cola (Lilt), Virgin Atlantic and Western Union, three leading companies in their respective areas of operations. Secondary sponsorship came from Radio One, Kiss FM and others who franchised the live stages and brought their own audiences. This added to the clear attractiveness of Carnival to new audiences and was no mean feat given the negatives of the institution's history and elements of hostility in the media environment.

Organisational design and structure

We re-designed the organisational structure driven by our effective focus on the actual requirements of transforming the carnival in its given but influence-subjectable environment. The model we conceived and pursued was based on the notion of an organisation comprising servicing and to some extent actually managing various “interest groups” whose power, interests,

aspirations and customs needed to be effectively catered for and as effectively as possible to mutual satisfaction of all parties. NCT operated a decentralised structure or the use of self-managed teams or committees which reflected the belief in individual and small group initiative in the context of shared responsibility. Within this approach to the organisation and management of the unique entity that is the carnival, the various carnival disciplines and associations operated using different structures, making the organisational design and process a complex of effectively focused and practically successful activity. NCT had to ensure that all these elements involved complimented, supported and were aligned with each other.

The new management was and remained under pressure to design and manage a structure that balanced existing, somewhat unpredictable, internal pressures with external demands in order to develop a carnival management organisation that was effective, efficient and sustainable. Thus, the design of the NCT structure emphasised the need to adapt to environmental conditions and to maximise control through reporting relationships in a vertical chain of command. It was a stakeholder-based organisational structure in which the organisation was structured around its main stakeholders. There were few layers between the Chief Executive and the rest of the organisation. It was a flat structure which facilitated speedy decision-making with fewer layers for approval which enabled faster, clearer and more effective communication.

²⁵ These financial controls and regulations were conceived by the Finance Director in

Management control and controls

Drucker (1964)^{ix}, distinguishes between “controls” and “control”. He held that controls are measurement and information, whereas control means direction. In other words, “*controls are purely a means to an end; the end is control*”. Control is the function that makes sure that actual work is done to fulfil the original intention, and controls are used to provide information to assist in determining the control action taken. The broad aim of NCT’s control system was to influence behaviours in desirable ways in order to increase the probability that its objectives would be achieved.

Accordingly, the organisation of the NCT was conceived as a social arrangement for the achievement of controlled performance in pursuit of the purposes defined by its mission statement. As a social arrangement, the NCT had to deal and work with people who interacted with each other as the consequence of their membership of and other relationships with the organisation. This included the Board of Trustees, the management staff, the carnival’s artistic performers, the carnival community, the corporate sponsors etc. The aspect of collective goals implied common membership with shared objectives which promoted unity of purpose.

The following extraction from *the Financial Control Systems and Regulations* of the NCT²⁵ was designed to address the requirements of its management structure and and achieve organisational unity of purpose:

1991, as a necessary vehicle for effective financial management.

1. The need for professionalism in planning and managing the Notting Hill Carnival cannot be over-emphasised. The implications are considerable, both in the safety of the millions of Carnival spectators and the drive for credibility, acceptability and support for the process.
 - (ii) No one person or group dominates the organisation;
 - (iii) The organisation has stability and continuity;
 - (iv) The membership is aware of what is going on;
 - (v) New ideas can be introduced to meet the challenge of growth and change.
2. Management skills which reflect expertise in organising large scale events, financial control, communicating and negotiating at a high level are elements of the level of professionalism required for the effective management of the Notting Hill Carnival.
3. The organisational structure is designed to achieve the above goals. During the period of this development effort will be made to strengthen and sustain the base of the structure as the need arises.
4. Further, the organisation and management structure has been designed to ensure that:
 - (i) Effective decisions are made and policies formulated;

Some remarkable achievements

By the year 2000, after the implementation of a successful, earlier described programme of managerial change underpinned by the successful implementation of two Five Year Carnival Business and Development Plans, the Carnival Wealth Creation Strategy and the Carnival Arts Development Initiative, all conceived and drafted by our Finance Director, we saw massive improvement and turnaround in the image and fortunes of Carnival to the extent that other voluntary and charitable organisations were visiting the carnival office for seminars on methods for achieving such success. From an organisation with an income of £185,000 in 1989, we had become an organisation with an annual income of £1.2 million. That was despite the reduction in grants from public sources. Most of our income was generated from sponsorship, street-trading, carnival wealth creation initiatives such as the promotion of roadshows, franchising, and very careful and imaginative financial management^{xxi}. By 2001, we had also accumulated financial reserves of £244,000 which we had created and set aside for the purchase of a building on behalf of the

Carnival Community to accommodate the range and nature of activities that were not characteristic of the operation. The statutory funders stated in one of the meetings of the Carnival Safety Group, that they do not usually fund organisations with such wealth and that they were going to phase out funding for Carnival. The underlying policy behind their grants was to help Carnival become self-sufficient, and we had achieved that, in their eyes.

There was so much goodwill from well-meaning high-powered individuals within the white community who saw this period as an opportunity to make their contribution towards the cultural development of the UK. The value of that goodwill to Carnival was immeasurable^{xii}. Our internal detractors had apparently been converted and were integrated into the carnival family. External detractors appeared in awe of our achievements. Extraordinary and Annual General Meetings were well attended, and the Carnival Community members were able to have their say. They turned up dressed to kill and with folders of information they had been sent by the organisation so that they could fully participate in proceedings. The artistic disciplines were happy because they were receiving carnival arts grants of £000s from the organisation as a contribution to their costs of participating in the event and as producers of the event which generates millions for the economy of London. The money did not meet their full costs, but it represented an acknowledgement of and respect for their months of hard work towards the achievement of artistic excellence. In 2000, I received an OBE presented by the Queen and on the same occasion it was presented to me, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, further honoured the work we had achieved in

Carnival by inviting me to be part of the management team for her *Golden Jubilee Celebrations*. There was no greater honour, and we were able to use this to leverage commitments of sponsorship of over £1,000,000 for the Carnival. From being perceived as pariahs and a public order threat on the cultural landscape of the UK, the NHC had become highly respected and promoted as a positive example of multi-cultural Britain. How remarkable these achievements were when I look back at some of the negative headlines which used to appear in the press.

Attack and demise

In December 2001, seemingly out of the blue, I saw an article in the Evening Standard newspaper in which one of the trustees, Ansel Wong, accused me of nepotism, stating that I had dishonestly given my family thousands of £s out of the organisation's funds. This was a shock because it was not true and even after he had made that allegation, he turned up at board meetings as though nothing had happened and simply carried on. I also noted that two other Board members who had seen the article because it had been made so public and carnival members were openly discussing it. I even had a visit from the landlord of the building who did not want to be associated with any carnival fraud and who wanted to be assured that all was well, reminding me that I had personally guaranteed the building and would be responsible for any damage to it. About one week later, a Board Member, Avion Mookram, asked to meet with me outside of the office. Even though she lived on the outskirts of London, she made her way early one Saturday morning to meet me at Victoria Station. When we met, she revealed to me a series of emails sent

between Ansel Wong, several other board members who he had identified as collaborators and officers from two of the funders containing the most outrageous allegations about me and my alleged dishonesty. The emails also revealed that Ansel Wong had been having secret meetings with a sub-section of the organisation's Board of Trustees engaged in planning to remove me from office. The allegations of nepotism and dishonesty were palpable falsehoods that were entirely contrary to the record of the prestigiously audited accounts passed at the AGM and vetted by the Board, that very Board of Trustees. Their real charge was that "Claire's face has become the face of Carnival".

Another Board Member, Antonn McCalla, who they tried to isolate because he would not support them, called an Extraordinary General Meeting and presented the emails and what had been going on to the members. The members called for Ansel Wong's immediate resignation from the Board. He walked out of the meeting and refused to resign and in the days that followed although he did not come into the carnival office, I became aware of the fact that he was collaborating with officers from the funders as though he was managing the operations of the organisation and I was being portrayed as a trouble-maker²⁶. Not only did he not have the legal power or community support to do so, but also the funders knew this and were prepared to overlook this as they began their assault on the Carnival. As a board member, Ansel

²⁶ These were officers from RBKC and the Arts Council. They knew better because they had been dealing with me at the office for years. Indeed, in July/August 2001, the Arts Council conducted an audit of the organisation and spent two days meeting with staff and members of the carnival disciplines. The report

Wong had never been involved in the day-to-day management of the organisation. Additionally, as an organisation, we had practiced clear separation of powers between the Board and staff, so that there could be accountability.

The staff carried on working in the office because there was a Carnival to plan. There were no wages and salaries being paid because the errant trustees refused to discharge their cheque-signing duties for reasons never explained but entirely without legitimate justification²⁷. There was in fact no actual shortage of money in the bank account for outgoings under those heads. This was true even though the Greater London Authority (the GLA) owed Carnival nearly £200,000 from the previous September. That was money that the GLA was contracted to pay for the carnival stewarding and which was withheld by the Mayor's Adviser, Mr Lee Jasper, who tried to play politics with Carnival's money and influence the demise of the trust as a grudge he had been holding against me and my family since 1989 when he was a member of the Mangrove Association and had ambitions to be Carnival's chairman. There is evidence that Mr Jasper was behind the GLA's odd refusal to honour a properly signed contract in a timely manner. I also found out from one of the trustees who was not supportive of the coup, that Lee Jasper had even advised them that he would release the money if they got rid of Claire Holder. This was clearly an abuse of power on his part and amounted to misconduct in public office as there was no justifiable

stemming from this audit was glowing and they referred to me, the Chief Executive Officer as the strength of the organisation.

²⁷ In accordance with the rules of the organisation and to ensure accountability, all cheques over £750 had to be signed by three persons, two of whom had to be trustees.

basis for his actions. Full audited accounts in relation to the stewarding had been submitted and the money was payable. I still have copies of the vicious correspondence around the issue.

In the two weeks that followed, Ansel Wong's collaboration with officers and politicians within official bodies connected to the Notting Hill Carnival as funders became even more clear. I attended an interview with the BBC ostensibly to talk about planning for Carnival 2002. This was something arranged by our Press Officer. The other interviewee was the Leader of RBKC, who started by saying that the carnival management organisation was in disarray and had even withdrawn its own operational plan, putting safety at risk. This was absolutely not true, and I interjected firmly to scotch the lie. Those who heard the exchange over the radio were shocked by what was being said about Carnival. However, I later found out that the council officers who had briefed the Leader had been liaising with Ansel Wong who purported to be managing the Carnival from his home address and in the process was undermining the staff. He had told them to ignore everything that came from the office. This was RBKC playing politics and assisting the errant trustees to take over the organisation. They knew better as they had been dealing with the officers of the carnival management organisation for the previous twelve years, at the carnival office.

The divide and rule strategy was being rolled out, for soon thereafter the errant trustees agreed to the Council licensing the Carnival, which could now only take place if the Council consents and only on terms determined by them. The Leader and some officers of RBKC appeared to be motivated by a desire to bring the Carnival

organisation to heel and I was the obstacle. The strategy to get rid of me involved them totally traducing my reputation by spreading lies not just at community level, but also at an official level. They even met with the Charity Commission to report me for "mismanagement" of the trust. The Charity Commission communicated with me, requested accounts etc and then rejected the allegations put forward by RBKC, the Arts Council and the errant trustees as baseless and declined to get involved in removing me from the Trust.

The ultimate betrayal

On 10 May 2002, I locked the carnival office as usual and went home. At about 7pm that evening, I received a call from a person who we would normally employ as a Head Steward, who informed me that he has seen three Board members, Ansel Wong, Debi Gardner and Ashton Moore changing the locks on the office and that the police were present. I rushed to the carnival office and saw the three board members inside of the office with a locksmith changing the locks. The three police officers outside of the office stood on either side of me and the sergeant told me that I was barred from going into the office. There was also a marked police van opposite with other police officers. The sergeant also told me that they had been asked to attend just in case I caused trouble. Passing drivers were honking their horns and people began to gather, some even stopped to make enquiries. I assured them that physically I was alright, but in a state of shock. When the Board members finally emerged having changed the locks, they even stepped forward, thanked the police and shook their hands for preventing me from entering the office. Ansel Wong handed me a letter and told me that I was barred from the office. No explanation was

given, save for the fact that he kept repeating “*We are here to protect the assets of the Trust*”. They all jumped into their respective cars and drove off, leaving me standing on the pavement in total shock.

However, while they were able to change all the internal locks, they did not change the lock on the back door because it was a highly sophisticated lock which needed special tools which their locksmith clearly did not have with him. Later that evening, the Finance Director who did not know what had gone on, turned up at the office in order to do some work and entered the building through the back door from the car park where he had parked. When he could not get beyond the lower ground floor, he phoned me to find out why the locks were not working. After I informed him what had happened earlier that evening, he called two of the board members who were not involved to inform them. Antonn McCalla rushed from Ilford and ordered the locks to be changed so that the staff could get back to work the next day. Ansel Wong and company were not aware of this overnight development and put out a report on BBC Radio and Capital Radio stating that Claire Holder has suddenly “*resigned from Carnival*”. The secretary who was on her way to work heard this over her car radio and called me to find out whether the broadcast was true.

At 9am the next day, I rushed down to Scotland Yard to speak with Commander Messinger, the then lead officer of the Metropolitan Police’s carnival operations to ask why the police were ordered to be at the office the night before. He appeared to know very little about it, saying that he, himself, had first heard about it on the radio; that the police officers involved were from the local police office in Notting Hill. Furthermore, he said, the only

persons/authorities - other than himself - who could have authoritatively requested the police to attend those premises in this way were either from the Greater London Authority or the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. This may well have been an instance of Mr Jasper acting ultra vires from within the GLA to order a Metropolitan Police operation when the lawful power of that body in relation to that force relates solely to policy matters.

That event made it even more clear to me that certain officers and politicians within those “funding bodies” to which must sadly be added the Arts Council of England, were determined to bring down Claire Holder by amongst other means, facilitating their agents amongst the trustees of the Notting Hill Carnival Trust to do so, even though there was no basis on which this could be done legitimately. They made allegations of mismanagement, nepotism and theft by myself and family members, they could not but know to be lies. Their move on the Carnival was purely political and risked undermining the reputational credibility of the Carnival itself, were they actually to be true. There was absolutely no evidence of any care for me personally, and the impacts of their actions on my professional and personal reputation. I was mocked, ridiculed, attacked and demeaned by members of the community who “*spread and embellished the bacchanal*”. Those making the false allegations appeared to fear not to face any immediate consequences from the Carnival nor wider Black community, nor from any institutional quarter if their falsehoods were uncovered.

Officers and politicians of the above named “funding” and other bodies continued to support Ansel Wong and his cohort and even arranged for them to be represented by

the prestigious firm of solicitors Farrar and Co, solicitors to the Monarch. The solicitors advised them, but their advice was based on the lies that they were told. They encouraged them to have carnival meetings at their offices in Lincoln's Inn for a fee, even though the carnival office which had been the extremely well-equipped and suitable base for years, was available for use of that kind. What the trustees were doing was keeping up the illusion that Claire Holder was tricky and difficult, an enemy of Carnival to whom they could not speak. They portrayed me as unreasonable, when in actual fact not one of them was brave enough to talk to me and they kept me in isolation while they spread their lies. None of them even asked me about the operations of Carnival and what plans were in place etc.

During those three months leading to Carnival 2002, funders, led by RBKC were able to push through some far-reaching changes in consultation with Ansel Wong, which were not in the Carnival's or the Black community's interest. The community was not consulted and did not know what was going on, as no meetings were being held with them. Decisions were being made by people who did not have the locus standi to do so. Their strategy was to keep the community ignorant of what was going on in the planning and engage the community's proclivity to digest "bacchanal" by peddling lies against individuals, most especially directed against Claire Holder. I heard Ansel Wong say that I had stolen over £200,000 from the organisation and that they were going to conduct "a forensic audit" so that they could bring me to account. This he said while he and his group squandered the £244,000 that the Finance Director and I had carefully accumulated over a period of

10 years, so that a Head Quarters and office building could be purchased for Carnival.

The funders knew that what was being said was lies, as they had, over the years, commented on the quality and honesty of my service to Carnival. Furthermore, they were sent copies of the organisation's minutes and financial reports on a regular basis and expressed their admiration of the Carnival's wealth creation strategy. But it suited them to ignore the proof of my innocence and continue to support the wrongdoers.

In that period of confusion, the RBKC took the opportunity for the first time dubiously to impose a licence on the Carnival and increasingly to deal directly with the individual participating units rather than with the organising body of the Carnival. Individual contact details and personal data of all the leaders of carnival bands, sound systems and steelbands which were kept in the office under lock and key, were given over to the Council so that they could have direct access to them, even though this was in flagrant contravention of the *Data Protection Act 1998*. The cohesion we had created was now broken down, and deliberately so. As a direct consequence of this, band-leaders were left exposed to the legal might of the Council as they enforced the terms of the licences against them, even taking a sound-system to court for playing one hour over time at Carnival and leaving him with a legal bill that was beyond his means. He had to withdraw from Carnival. There was an immediate reduction in the number of groups allowed to participate in the Carnival, and the reversal of the policy of groups being awarded Carnival Arts Grants to help, as said, meet their costs.

A totally negative impacting facet of the licensing issue was the fact that the Council was handed full control of the licensing of

street-trading at Carnival which was hitherto the shared responsibility of the carnival management organisation, the Notting Hill Carnival Trust, and the Council. At the time the traders would purchase their sites through the carnival office and the carnival office would send on the applications with proof of payment to the Council for the issue of the street trading permit. The Council would then host a Food Health and Hygiene Training session at which the permits with photographs were handed over to the street traders. The Council in turn would charge Carnival an administrative fee for the permits and Carnival would keep the bulk of the price paid by the trader as a crucial and significant part of its income. The system worked for twelve years, and it was fully accountable, with the carnival management organisation submitting its bank statements to the Council to verify the number of sites sold by the organisation. This money contributed towards the carnival arts grants given to the participating units.

Those who carried out the coup in 2002 did not have the know-how or expertise to administer the street-trading system and handed it over to the Council. Not only did the Council increase the prices of the licence fees for the street traders five-fold, they also increased the number of sites five-fold, thereby maximising their profits while giving nothing back to Carnival. This was the local authority that managed to convince not merely innocent others but itself that via an annual grant it was somehow subsidising the Carnival.

In 2018, when the carnival community woke up to how it had been disenfranchised of its own event, a social movement called Reclaim or Carnival (ROC) came into being and challenged what was being done

by particularly RBKC with the Carnival. When challenged, RBKC's lead officer for the Carnival volunteered to pay for an audit of the financial relationship between RBKC and the Notting Hill Carnival. The offer was immediately accepted by ROC's Chairman, Professor Gus John. Terms of reference reflecting the RBKC view of that relationship were written by Cecil Gutzmore and Prof John and a competent auditor, Charles Dove-Edwin, was found to conduct the audit of the realities of that relationship.

In 2019, Dove-Edwin's report disclosed that ^{xiii}:

The accounts over the audit period show an annual increase in revenues from street trading of 6.9% over 15 years compared to inflation over the same period of just 2.8%. RBKC has seen revenues from Street Trading increase from £99,525 in 2003 to £253,397 in 2017 ... The fee of £55.69 per square metre was significantly higher than the charge for trading licenses in the Royal Borough on other weekends ... The Carnival Community no longer have control over the price of Street Trading.

The auditor also found that the licence cost included the payment of up to 70 officers, the vast majority of whom worked for RBKC and many performed identical roles for the Council throughout the year.

The report concludes that there is no legal basis for RBKC's actions on the Carnival

front. By earlier contrast, the Notting Hill Carnival Trust under my leadership employed three temporary staff to handle the street-trading. And the operation was efficiently conducted. The current situation has resulted in the Carnival's organisers being deprived of a significant source of revenue for the funding of Carnival activities, particularly the artistic content, while a public body gorges itself on exploitative fees.

From the year 2000, following a change of the political leadership at RBKC, I had begun to notice that the officers adopted a different and hostile attitude towards me personally, and to the Carnival. The new leader and officers engaged in behaviour that was both unethical and of dubious legality. They had become very disrespectful and were deliberately fostering conflict in the relationship which had hitherto been reasonable. One officer/politician even dared foolishly to suggest that the Black community no longer needed Carnival as racism was now over. I wrote to the Leader of the Council and complained. Nothing came of it.

Events leading to the “court case”

In early 2002, I was sent emails by a whistleblower from within the Arts Council of England, showing me a chain of emails in which one of their senior officers and his friends at RBKC and the GLA were plotting with Ansel Wong and advising him to take legal action to get rid of me. The officer from the GLA even frustrated my attempts to recover the money they owed to Carnival for the payment of the stewards from Carnival 2001, knowing full well that without that money, the organisation could not function properly. That officer, Mr Lee Jasper, is credibly reported to have the trustees that they will get the money once

they got rid of Claire Holder. So said, so done. He released the £200,000 owed to Carnival to Ansel Wong and his group, and they spent it recklessly, as above indicated. Fortunately for me, at the time of them plotting their coup, the audit of the Carnival's accounts was being done by our auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers, the largest and most reputable auditors in the world who were also the auditors of RBKC. Due to the article that appeared in the Evening Standard the December before, we were able to extend their brief to investigate the allegations made by Ansel Wong about nepotism and my integrity. The auditor's report concluded that there was “*no nepotism, no dishonesty and no unjustifiable large sums of money paid to any relative of Claire Holder*”. In their resounding conclusion, the allegations were false. I immediately sent this report to all funders, the Charity Commission and newspapers, including the Express Newspaper in Trinidad which had repeated the defaming lies under the heading “*Tobago-born CEO of the Notting Hill Carnival accused of Nepotism*”, a headline which my family and others in Trinidad saw and sent to me so that I could clear my name.

In spite of this, Ansel Wong and his co-conspirators continued with my exclusion from the office and held meetings with a selection of carnival members persuading them that I was a thief and that I had run off with carnival's money. Carnival 2002 was looming and in order to hide their ineptitude, they stepped up the allegations against me to distract focus from their bad performance and attribute blame to me. They had thrown me out of the office without any form of hand-over, and they knew nothing about the requirements of the operations, nor the importance of the

administration of the street-trading sites to the financial well-being of the Carnival and its ability to provide grants to the participating units.

Destruction of heritage

While in office, the group ordered the secretary to destroy the archives and records I had carefully created and left behind, but she refused. Concerned carnival members even phoned me to tell me that they had seen Carnival's records in a skip waiting to be collected by the bin-man. Important archival material was destroyed. It beggars belief that something so destructive could be done by individuals who thought of themselves as worthy or deserving to lead the Carnival. Those archives were carefully collated and curated by me over the years and consisted of important film and documentary records, including every issue of the Carnival Magazine published since the inception of the Carnival. These were gifted to Carnival by Victor Crichlow, who as a 17 year old, performed at the first pre-Notting Hill Claudia Jones and Edric Connor organised carnival-related events in St. Pancras Town Hall in 1959-1964.

Personal impacts

In the meantime, I was unemployed. They withheld my wages, and I initiated legal proceedings in the County Court for their recovery. They tried to get the Finance Director to return to the office to work as a bookkeeper, but he refused and took them to the Industrial Tribunal for constructive dismissal. The case was arbitrated by ACAS and the trustees settled the case out of court with them having to pay substantial compensation. They sacked the secretary and accused her of being the enemy within because they suspected that she had informed me of their excesses and looting of the Carnival's assets. She too took them

to the Industrial Tribunal for unfair dismissal and that case also was settled out of court.

I ended up having to sign-on for welfare support while my case took three years to work its way to and through the Chancery Division of the High Court to which Wong and his crew had asked for it to be allocated. During those three years, it had become impossible for me to get a job. My legal practice died once I had committed myself to the management of Carnival and other potential employers had seen the negative press reports about me and told me that it was too risky to employ me.

Yet, in spite of my suffering and proven innocence, three senior members of the Black community called me to a private meeting held between the four of us at the House of Commons, to try and persuade me to call off my legal action because I was "*bringing carnival into disrepute because of the adverse publicity surrounding the case.*" A somewhat inexplicable perspective! I was shocked and disgusted by their attitudes and in that moment lost any respect I had for them or their status within the Black community. They did not even want to hear my side of the story, so committed they were to their private friendship with Ansel Wong.

The day of the trial eventually came in June 2003, and the case was listed before the Leading Judge of the Chancery Division. I had to represent myself because I had run out of money to pay a lawyer. His Lordship asked Ansel Wong whether or not he had seen the PricewaterhouseCoopers report, to which he said yes. The Judge then asked him why then, did he make the untruthful allegations against me. To which Ansel Wong replied, that they were "led to believe that the allegations were true". His Lordship then asked him, who led him to

believe that? After all, he said, you were a board member with access to all the records. Ansel Wong responded by saying that “he would rather not say!”. His Lordship even drew their attention to the audited accounts of the Trust signed by Ansel Wong praising me as Chief Executive and the Board minutes signed by Ansel Wong suggesting and approving the appointment of Patricia Holder to do the catering for stewards and guests because of the value she brings. The case ended in a victory for me, the Judge making it very clear that they were wrong and that they had traduced my reputation and my family’s reputation. The Judge also said that had my pleadings included a claim for defamation and libel it would have been successful.

But the story did not end there because they went back to the community and to Carnival and carried on, ignoring the court judgment and peddling even more lies against me. It took a further two years and the employment of High Court bailiffs to wrestle the court ordered compensation from them. What surprised me, throughout the court process, was the silence of the three statutory funders (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Arts Council of England and Greater London Authority) whose officers’ and politicians’ behaviour towards me had been so egregious. None of them turned up to support Wong and co who they had actively encouraged to get rid of me. I had deliberately included all of their negative emails in the trial bundle so that the parts they played in the demise of the organisation could be recorded in a judicial context. What of their statutory obligation to ensure that public funds were not abused and their quite specific duties of reasonable conduct in accordance with established principles of public law? The apparent absence of structures and

processes of accountability in this regard means that too much depends on recourse to expensive judicial review and other forms of legal action, if justice is to be obtained.

The liability of the trustees was joint and several and there were two trustees who had to be sued because they were trustees, even though they were demonstrably against the actions of Ansel Wong and co. One of the two, who had to be sued because of the principle of joint and several liability, repeatedly told me that he had been approached by the funders and told that if they got rid of Claire Holder, they would get more money for Carnival. That extra funding, the thirty pieces of silver they were promised once they got rid of me, was never given.

The funders disassociated themselves from those who carried out the coup and within a short period of time, another new company was installed to run and manage the Carnival on a basis which the funders liked, and which was more in-keeping with their ethos. The funders did not want to hear the point I reiterated while running the Carnival, that “Carnival is our Celebration of Freedom From Slavery”. They found this threatening and an officer from RBKC even told me that I had a “chip on my shoulder” about slavery. They were dismissive of the suffering of our ancestors during slavery and did not see why I had to mention it at all, did it not all happen a long time ago?

Summary

It has now been 20 years since the coup conducted by Ansel Wong at the behest of white institutional forces some of them overtly racist in their motivation. Since the impact was manifestly destructive questions arise about their motivations – race, greed and personal ambition. There

was far too much about the actual conduct of the carnival's affairs and business that he and others understood very poorly or not at all and that had unexpected negative consequences.

The concept of effective strategic management for the development of Carnival which we practiced is no more. The techniques and mechanisms outlined above were required for successful strategy implementation at the Notting Hill Carnival. There is an assumption that strategies are only realised because people do what is required of them in the organisational setting. But strategies also require organising which involves people, structures and systems. If the organisation is not strong enough to support the strategy, then the strategy is likely to fail because of poor implementation due to lack of organisation or inadequate organisation. That golden era of the Notting Hill Carnival is but a distant memory for some and is unknown to the younger ones who now have no example to follow and who accept low standards of management and organisation as being "Carnival".

Since the coup, Carnival's economy has been totally undermined and has been stymied. There has been no title sponsor to enable the Carnival's participating units to benefit from that interest. There is no street-

trading income from which the artistic disciplines could benefit by way of carnival arts grants. The Black community has lost control of its own event and heritage. The RBKC now claims that it legally "owns" Carnival and had the audacity to put the management of our cultural heritage out to tender, appointing those who currently run the Tabernacle to manage the Carnival. Our community has been side-stepped by the authorities and its interests trampled upon. Lest we forget, Carnival is our heritage, our celebration, our commemoration and our pride, and WE must determine, control and manage its destiny. We do not need the descendants of the slave masters to show us the way. We can do it ourselves. We just need to take stock; be more introspective; own our mistakes and recover from them; call the wrongdoers within our community to account; and develop a vision and work towards achieving it.

What of Carnival's future? Who knows? What I know is this, that for the thirteen years I was there, it was my pleasure to be of service to my community. I gave it my all. My legacy is that we, as a people, were able to demonstrate competence and excellence, create unity and stability, foster credibility and achieve success, making a meaningful contribution towards the growth of our cultural heritage

ⁱ The company started life in 1989 as the Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Limited (NCEL). In 1992, the name was changed to become the Notting Hill Carnival Limited (NCL) as we were not an enterprise. In 1995 we turned it into a charitable trust, the Notting Hill Carnival Trust (NCT) to avoid the burden of Corporation Tax.

ⁱⁱ The wisdom of an old Jamaican woman.

ⁱⁱⁱ COOPERS AND LYBRAND 1988. Carnival Organisational and Management Review Report. London: Coopers and Lybrand.

^{iv} The debt was as a result of an ill-advised investment in a Supertent on Wormwood Scrubs to host Carnival Village activities in 1988.

^v MAYFIELD, P. 2015. Stakeholder strategy. In: SMITH, R., KING, D., SIDHU, R. & SKELSEY, D. (eds.) *The Effective Change Manager's Handbook*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

^{vi} KOTTER, J. P. & SCHLESINGER, L. A. 2008. Choosing Strategies for Change. *Harvard Business Review*, vol. July-August 2008, pp.130-139.

^{vii} JENNER, S. 2015. Managing benefits: Ensuring change delivers value. In: SMITH, R., KING, D., SIDHU, R. & SKELSEY, D. (eds.) *The Effective Change Manager's Handbook*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

^{viii} For example, all carnival units were given 5 cases of Coca Cola products; 5 boxes each of Doritos crisps etc . There were 12 steelbands; 80 costumed bands; 40 static sound systems; 80 mobile sound systems and 10 calypsonians comprising 220 units to be serviced.

^{ix} DRUCKER, P. 1964. *Managing for Results*, New York, Harper and Row Publishers.

^x ALLEN, K. & SHAW, P. 2002. *Festivals Mean Business: The Shape of Arts Festivals in the UK* London, British Arts Festival Association.

^{xi} CENTRE FOR ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS RESEARCH 2012. *The contribution of quality management to the UK economy*. London.

^{xii} COLE, S. & MACLEOD, S. 2016. GOODWILL HUNTING: the value of corporate reputation. *Management Today*, December 2014/January 2016, p.42.

^{xiii} DOVE-EDWIN, C. 2019. *An Independent Audit of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's Involvement in the Financial Affairs of the Notting Hill Carnival*. London: Commissioned by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.