

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CARNIVAL ARTS



This volume is dedicated to:

'Dr. Roy Cape'
1942 - 5th September 2024

Some referred to “him the “Duke Ellington of Calypso” or “Calypso’s Cape Crusader,” his influence on the region’s music scene is incalculable. Leading the iconic Roy Cape All Stars, Cape didn’t just make music, he played on the streets of Port of Spain in the 1960s and crafted a legacy of distinction, proficiency, and commitment to uplifting his fellow musicians” for over five decades (<https://lifeintrinidadandtobago.com/>). Unlike many of our great artists, “Doctah Horn” as he is fondly known in the Caribbean, we are fortunate that through author Jocelyne Guilbault and Cape himself, his intriguing life in music and rise to stardom is charmingly narrated in their book “*Roy Cape: A Life on the Calypso and Soca Bandstand*” (15th October 2014). Many of us came to know him through his recordings with the Mighty Sparrow, the late Lord Kitchener, Black Stalin, and Blaxx. However, he released eight albums with the Roy Cape All Stars and featured on hundreds of other recordings. In 2004, he received the Humming Bird medal (Gold) in the national honours list, while the University of the West Indies awarded him a doctorate in 2011.

Knolly “Brown Boy”
1942 - 10th October 2024

The sad news of the passing of Trinidad and Tobago’s long-standing calypsonian Knolly “Brown Boy” Brown was announced by the ‘Trinbago Unified Calypsonians’ Organisation’ (TUCO) on 11th October 2024. In a social media post, TUCO described him as a cultural stalwart and celebrated him for his sharp wit and humour. The organisation noted that while the nation and the calypso community had lost a true icon, his legacy of laughter would continue to resonate in the country’s cultural history. Brown brought joy to audiences both locally and internationally, particularly in the UK, through his clever and entertaining lyrics. His most famous calypsos included ‘I Believe in Grace’, ‘Discontented Kitten’, ‘No Sex Until Marriage’, ‘I’s Ah Gardener’, and ‘Duncy School Children’, songs he performed regularly. He performed frequently in London as a guest artist of the ‘Association of British Calypsonians’ chaired initially by the late Mighty Tiger.

Front Cover Credit: Stephen Spark: (2024). Steelpan Conquers Cowley Road Carnival!
Fri 04 Oct 2024. <https://socanews.com/tag/cowley-road-carnival/>

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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:

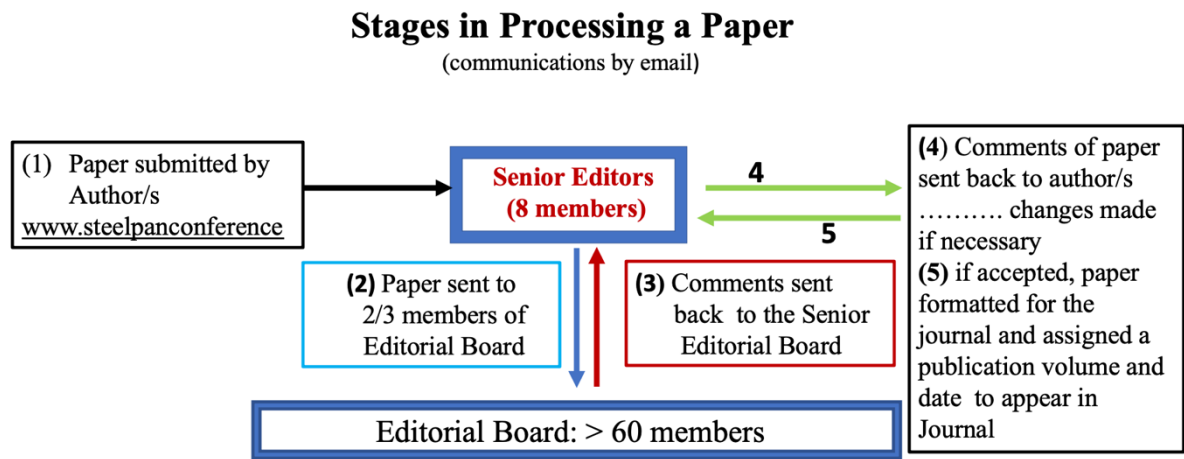
These should be designed as simple as possible. Each table should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals and supplied with a heading and a legend at the top of the table. Tables should be self-explanatory without reference to the text. The same data should not be presented in both table and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

In a BBC report dated 19th September 2024, journalist Victoria Cook published a headline, “*Notting Hill Carnival is poorly run - Met chief,*” referencing comments made by the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Mark Rowley. This critique of the Notting Hill Carnival (NHC), which remains one of Europe’s largest and most celebrated street festivals, came shortly after the 2024 event and echoed longstanding criticisms from various media outlets regarding public safety and organisational efficacy.

However, a study commissioned by *The Voice* earlier in August 2024 offers a contrasting perspective on the festival’s societal contributions. Conducted by JN Bank economist James Williams, the research revealed that NHC generates an annual economic impact exceeding £396 million. Key contributors to this total include visitor spending on accommodations, food, shopping, entertainment, and travel. According to Williams, the carnival supports approximately 3,000 full-time equivalent jobs and attracts around 160,000 international tourists each year, making it a substantial economic force for London’s economy. This study noted as the first in-depth analysis of NHC's economic impact since 2003, highlights the discrepancy between its financial benefits and the negative portrayal it often receives in mainstream media.

Williams emphasised that the economic significance of the NHC has grown considerably since the last economic analysis two decades ago. He stated to *The Voice*, “Carnival is absolutely generating significantly higher sums of money than when we first studied it.” This assertion underscores a broader concern within the carnival community: despite the immense revenue generated by the event, there is a pervasive sentiment that the benefits do not

sufficiently reach the artists, performers, and organisers who sustain the carnival’s vibrant cultural legacy. Notably, masquerade artists, steelpan players, calypsonians, and DJs - many of whom invest significant time and personal resources - have supported this annual event for nearly 60 years, yet they often see little or no financial return.

Historical accounts and first-hand testimonies from the community further illustrate this disparity. For example, pioneers of the event, such as the steelband *Nostalgia* and its founders, Russell Henderson and Sterling Betancourt, played pivotal roles in establishing the NHC in 1966. Marking its diamond anniversary in 2024, the band asserts that it has faithfully participated in the festival each year, with a band that includes a large number of friends and entire families, some carrying pushchairs and buggies for their infants and returning to its home base - Maxilla Social Club - without incident or concerns for personal safety. Such experiences contrast starkly with the sensationalised narratives that sometimes dominate media coverage, where isolated incidents are amplified, arguably shaping public perception toward a more negative view of the event.

The carnival's evolution also reflects broader socioeconomic transformations within its host borough. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), originally home to a significant Caribbean and grassroots community that championed the carnival’s establishment and growth, has since experienced extensive gentrification. As a result, the event is perceived as an imposition by some newer residents of RBKC who do not share the same cultural affinity or interest with the festival. Despite periodic calls to discontinue the carnival, it continues, largely due to its substantial economic contributions, as evidenced in Williams' report.

The NHC community has long contended with biased media coverage, often comparing the scrutiny it faces with the more lenient treatment of other large gatherings, such as sports events (particularly football), music festivals, and concerts in parks. However, in 2024, statements by Sir Mark Rowley escalated tensions significantly in RBKC and beyond. His remarks, likening NHC's organisational challenges to those of the Hillsborough disaster, were met with anger from the NHC community, who viewed this comparison as not only malevolent but also racially insensitive. Critics argue that such statements fail to recognise the NHC's pioneering role in developing British festival infrastructure, including large-scale stages and crowd management techniques, well before iconic events such as the Isle of Wight Festival and Glastonbury became prominent. Unlike these later-established festivals, which charge huge admission, NHC remains open to the public and offers a platform for emerging artists who have often gone on to achieve global recognition. While public safety and event management at NHC deserve careful consideration, it is essential to balance these concerns with an appreciation of the carnival's cultural and economic value. Reports such as Williams' provide a data-driven counterpoint to criticisms that may lack empirical grounding, suggesting that NHC is not only a source of cultural pride for London's Caribbean community but also an economically valuable asset for the city as a whole. The community's longstanding grievances over media portrayal reflect a broader dialogue about inclusivity, respect, and recognition in modern urban festivals.

Understanding the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster and its Misguided Comparison to the Notting Hill Carnival

The Hillsborough Stadium disaster is one of the most tragic events in British sports history, resulting in the loss of 97 lives and remains deeply ingrained in the national consciousness. On 15th April 1989,

approximately 50,000 spectators gathered at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, England, to witness the FA Cup Semi-Final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. Due to severe overcrowding at the stadium's entrance, police opened an exit gate, inadvertently causing over 3,000 Liverpool fans to rush into a section intended for only 1,600 people. This action led to a catastrophic crowd crush that halted the game within six minutes as the chaos became visibly unmanageable.

In the immediate aftermath, law enforcement officials erroneously concluded that the crush was a result of unruly fans attempting to storm the field. However, as documented in the *Taylor Interim Report* (1989), led by Justice Peter Taylor, it soon became clear that fans were, in fact, suffocating and desperately attempting to escape the enclosed pens by climbing over fences. That report provided a harrowing account of the conditions within the overcrowded area: "The dead, the dying, and the desperate became interwoven in the sump at the front of the pens, especially by the gates. Those with strength left clambered over others submerged in the human heap and tried to climb out over the fence." The report goes on to describe the victims, many of whom had turned blue and were unresponsive, with a growing pile of bodies accumulating outside Gate 3.

A 2012 follow-up investigation by the *Hillsborough Independent Panel* further exposed the extent of systemic failures in crowd management and emergency response. According to this panel, critical delays in communication between police and ambulance services compounded the crisis, slowing the response time and exacerbating the fatal outcome. Spectators, lacking first-aid training, improvised by tearing advertising boards into makeshift stretchers to help carry the injured. Despite these heroic efforts, it took organisers nearly 30 minutes to call for medical assistance via the stadium's public address system. By this

time, many lives were already lost, largely due to asphyxiation and injuries sustained in the crush. These failures underscored a severe lack of planning and the disastrous consequences of inadequate emergency protocols in managing large crowds.

The comparison of the Hillsborough disaster to the NHC is incongruous. Carnival advocates question the validity of even comparing an enclosed event with restricted access, such as the Hillsborough football match, to an open-air cultural festival such as NHC, which spans multiple streets and engages a crowd of 1.5 to 2 million people over two days. The Hillsborough tragedy, with just 50,000 people, was marked by specific structural and managerial oversights within a confined stadium environment, while NHC operates with extensive spatial planning, multiple exit routes, and long-standing crowd management practices developed over its six-decade history. In 2024, one fatality was regrettably recorded at NHC, but this is despite its significantly larger and more dispersed attendance.

For many within the NHC community, this association with Hillsborough reflects a broader pattern of negative media narratives. These reports, which carnivalists often view as deliberately inflammatory, tend to surface each year in the wake of NHC and emphasise isolated incidents, portraying the festival in a disproportionately negative light. Many carnival participants and supporters contend that this framing is intended to undermine NHC's standing and discourage its growth. Unlike other major events, NHC faces unique challenges in overcoming this long-standing persistent media bias.

Nevertheless, the carnival community remains steadfast in its commitment to showcasing artistic innovation, cultural heritage, and community unity. To counteract the annual backlash, NHC organisers and participants continuously strive to maintain high standards of safety and behaviour. They emphasise the festival's contributions to British cultural

life and its role in promoting social cohesion, creativity, and economic vitality. By fostering an inclusive environment that celebrates Caribbean culture within a vibrant public space, the NHC community seeks to reclaim its narrative, celebrating its achievements while addressing safety concerns proactively.

The juxtaposition of NHC with the Hillsborough disaster serves as a reminder of the responsibility media and public figures hold in shaping perceptions of large public gatherings. While safety is paramount, the implications of linking distinct events with vastly different dynamics risk reinforcing unfounded fears and overshadowing the positive impact of NHC on London's cultural landscape.

Foreword

With the 11th Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conference, titled “*Famalay!*”: *Carnival Interconnections and Reconnections; Cultural Cadence: Steelpan, Calypso, and Mas and the Global Diaspora Connection*, scheduled to be held in Trinidad from 6th - 8th March 2025 now approaching, this volume is devoted to brief snapshots of carnivals in the diaspora and includes abstracts of a few papers that will be presented at the conference. The meeting is seen as a homecoming of the diaspora of the Trinidad and Tobago’s Famalay.

The University of Trinidad & Tobago (UTT) has kindly opened its doors to host the first of these conferences in its homeland. The very first meeting was held at the University of East London in 2006 and leading organisers and artists such as the late Nestor Sullivan, Mark Loquan and David Waddle from Trinidad travelled to London to present and give the conference a sound launch. Post-COVID, the first meeting outside London was held in Oxford at Oxford Brooks University between 1st - 2nd July 2022. The aim was to juxtapose this conference with Oxford’s Cowley Road carnival on 3rd July, announced to return from its closure in 2019. To the dismay of conference participants and the public, the carnival was unexpectedly terminated again at short notice and repeated in 2023. It was finally restarted on 1st September 2024 and a summary of the event and the view of a participant is reported in this volume. The abstract of another presentation on a novel Arts Council England funded project Notting Hill Carnival, titled “*Aging Gracefully with Art: Empowering Access to Carnival’s Steelband Music*,” is also published in this volume is also included.

It took the conference in Ghana to finally close a conference with a street carnival

which took place on 9th December 2023 (see IJCA, Vol.8A, Feb 2024, pp 1-5). With the forthcoming 11th Conference in Trinidad between 6-8th March 2025 now in preparation, abstracts of presentations are coming in from Ghana, Nigeria, Europe, Canada, USA and many of the Caribbean islands. A snapshot of some of the titles include:

- An Analysis of Ellie Mannette’s Contribution to the Steelpan “Famalay” of Instruments
- Minstrels Mas: from Colonial Mockery to Cultural Resistance and Empowerment in Trinidad and Tobago
- Floral Rhythms: Celebrating Steelpan, our National Instrument
- Lost Memories, The Banyan Archive
- Artificial Intelligence, Oral History, and the Future of Traditional Caribbean Music
- Steelpan in the Diaspora: Tradition as a Catalyst for Cultural Development
- The Enduring Legacy of TASPO’s 1951 Epic Journey: Countdown to its Diamond Anniversary
- Presentation College to Guinness Cavaliers; Untold Stories of Bobby Mohammed
- Bringing the Legacy of Dr (mama) Geraldine Connor back home to Trinidad; persevering the Yoruba culture in the diaspora
- Stamping Caribbean Footprints on Britain’s Artscape
- Strumming Through Time: The Forgotten Guitar Combos of Trinidad and Tobago’s Golden Era
- Calypso Historiography - An Overview of Calypso Scholarship and Writing
- From Sound to Silence: Heritage Terrorism and the Steelpan Movement in Sub-Saharan Africa

Calypso as Pan African Music

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Abstract

Trinidad and Tobago has played a significant role in the Pan African Movement. Henry Sylvester Williams was instrumental in organizing the first Pan African Congress in 1901; George Padmore helps lay the foundation for African Socialism as well as advised Kwame Nkruma, while C L R James' scholarship laid the groundwork for Black Radicalism, and Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) reinvigorated Pan Africanism through the Black Power Movement (and beyond). While Trinidad and Tobago's influence in Pan Africanism as a political movement is better documented, the country's influence on Pan Africanist culture is equally significant. One such contribution comes from Calypso which has influenced (and is influenced by) Black Atlantic musical forms.

This article, first delivered as a Keynote address, uses storytelling to recount Calypso's circumnavigation of the Black Atlantic as Pan Africanism in action. Embedded in the paper are musical "citations"—examples of how music, as a communal activity, reinforces the ties between Alkebulan, the Caribbean/Americas, and Europe; and reformulate the trade triangle as routes of cultural exchange. Clicking on the images will take you to YouTube videos.

Key Words: Pan Africanism, Calypso, Diaspora, Music

Introduction

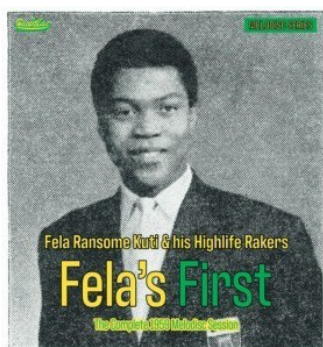


Fig.1 Fela Kuti and His Highlife Rakers, "Calypso No. 1"

I would like to start with three observations. Observation 1: there are two laments that irk me whenever I hear them, in no small part, because I think they are interlinked or co-dependent. The first is that "Calypso is dying!" Which has been proclaimed at least since the 1930s when the genre was solidified enough to warrant a singular name. I will come back to that lament later. The second wail is that "Soca needs to go international!" which is particularly vexing to me. When I respond that soca has always been international, recounting a conversation I had with an Igbo man who ranked Destra Garcia above Faye-Ann Lyons (this would have been somewhere around 2010), the lamenter would blink,

shake the head, and in so many words say that is not what international means. I believe “international” here actually refers to US. The lamentation might even include commentary on soca’s production values, but again, this seems to be based on US standards—the slick plastic pop sound inundating us on radios, television, and film. Wendell Manwarren of 3 Canal observed that “We don’t have to reinvent. We had our rhythm and our jam and our groove. And all them things from a long time. The spirit of the Leggo and whatnot. But we’re trying to constantly tailor our sound to suit some idea of foreign acceptance for the longest while. Like fucking up the whole thing.”

Observation 2: There are three important distinctions to be made when talking about music, pulling from Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel’s book *The Popular Arts*. Hall and Whannel identify three categories of Art—folk, popular, and mass. Folk belongs to us all. Anyone can produce it, at any time. Indeed, folk art comes from us all—it is shaped by the zeitgeist. Popular art, on the other hand, is an individual’s interpretation of the folk. The zeitgeist filtered through an individual’s understanding and peculiarities. Mass art is mass *produced* art. There is no genuine humanity behind it. It is meant to move units, to be mindlessly consumed. I want us to set aside the music industry’s genres, and instead keep these distinctions in mind as we move forward. The music I wish to speak about is inherently folk. As Shadow says “Music have no friends, no enemies, everybody could dingolay!”

I also make this distinction based on J. H. Kwabena Nkeita’s (1974) reminder in *The Music of Africa* that “music making is generally organized as a social event. Public performances, therefore, take place

on social occasions—that is, on occasions when members of a group or a community come together for the enjoyment of leisure, for recreational activities, or for the performance of a rite, ceremony, festival, or any kind of collective activity” (p. 21). In other words, music is communal. Grace Cooper (1983) in “Oral Tradition In African Societies” says it this way: “Black culture, wherever it may be, has a strong sense of group identity, a holistic sense rather than one focusing on the individual” (p. 102). I am not concerned, therefore, with who owned it first or any of the creation myths around the appearance of a genre. I consider these overly Western notions that



Fig. 2 Winston “Shadow” Bailey

potentially “fuck up the whole thing.” And speaking of music as communal, how can we separate music from dance? As Robert Bellinger (2013) in “The Géwël Tradition Project: Supporting A Living Tradition” points out when discussing the Saber tradition in Senegal, “dances [are] inseparable from the rhythms. Together with the rhythms the dances complete the event, allowing it to be brought into existence” (p. 65). Esiaba Irobi (2007) in the article “What They Came with: Carnival and the Persistence of African Performance Aesthetics in the Diaspora” states that we transfer knowledge “through the intelligence of the human body” (p.

898). So, of necessity, any definition offered today must include how one moves to the music.

Observation 3: My name is Kela. At first, my family and I assumed Kela had no meaning, really, other than a root phoneme. It had been extracted from Mikela which means princess. I even joked that my name just meant cess. And then Google came on stream. So, I googled my name and found out that Kela means banana in Urdu—and funnily enough, banana was my go-to fruit as a child. I also found, and this is more to the point, that Kela is the name of a village in Mali where they trained Griots/Djali. So today, inspired by this meaning, I want to tell you a story about Music, Music’s sibling Dance, Music’s children Calypso and Jazz, and the extraordinary journey Music and Dance make, crisscrossing the planet, and reinventing the triangular trade. Bear in mind that Music, Dance and all progeny are not like us. “Music have no friends, no enemies, everybody could dingolay!” We are individuated parts of a web. Music and Dance simply are. You can sort out the divinity in that claim.

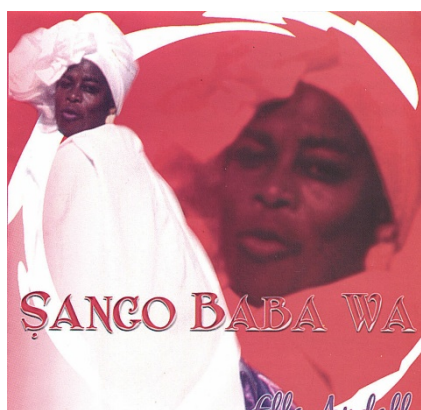


Fig. 3 Ella Andall, “Doption Mix”

Calypso as Pan African Music

Part 1: Music is a Nomad

Our story really begins before mankind when all the earth would sing—the rain beat

rhythms on the ground, sometimes delicate patter, sometimes angry pounding. The winds whistled, the skies boomed, the birds chirped, and the animals greeted each other. The earth made music all her own. And this is what humanity was born into. So, music was always with us. Before there was pen and paper, we sang and danced our histories. In the cradle of humanity and civilizations, Music walked an entire continent of Alkebulan many times without us recording it. Music traveled with the Bantu speaking peoples on what Raphael Chijioke Njoku (2020) calls their “continent-wide” migration some 25,000 years ago (p. 68). At each stop, Music and Dance greeted Music and Dance, often fusing, creating “harmonization of African cultures across all regions” (Njoku, 2007, p. 68). We can say that Music and Dance are nomadic, for all they had known was movement—the freedom to move as they wished, whenever the mood struck them, or nature necessitated. This changed in the 15th century when humans enter a besmirched age, strangely enough juxtaposed with the so-called Dark Ages when the Moors civilized the Iberian Peninsula. Music and Dance were captured, herded into stinking, choked holds, and sent across the great expanse of sea to the “New World.”

We did not come here empty-headed

There was this misconception, and maybe it still exists in pockets, that we in the New World are amputated souls. I suppose, from a Western perspective that puts so much weight in the material, our hands were empty, our bodies naked, what could we have brought with us? What could have survived the rupture of the Middle Passage? But Kamau Brathwaite (1993), in his chapter “The African Presence in the

Caribbean” in *Roots*, reminds us that “those elements of it [African religion and culture] that had survived under the conditions [of slavery]—elements signalled by things like drum, dance, *obeah*, song, tale, and herb” (p. 194). So, let me repeat Irobi’s advice; we must consider our circumstances “with an African and African Diasporic episteme” (p. 898). Put another way, we came empty handed, but not empty-headed. Indeed, Music and Dance had made the long march with us in the coffles. Music and Dance had slept with us in the pens and in the holds of dank and rancid ships. Music sat cramped in our skulls; Dance lay cramped in our bodies. They made their way across the sea, embedded in us.

And what was embedded in us? Grace C Cooper (1983) states that the “oral tradition of Black African cultures has carried over to American Blacks and other Blacks throughout the world” (p. 101). She states that “Books were not the basis of traditional African life. In indigenous African societies, all communication, including education, was oral. Through the oral tradition, the African learned his history, his role in society, his crafts and duties, speaking skills and the traditional myths and legends of his group” (Cooper, 1983, p. 101). She highlights the Gikuyu tradition of teaching through lullabies as an example. As she notes, “Such an early and sustained exposure to song also develops an appreciation of music and rhythm in the young ones.” (Cooper, 1983, p. 101). Cooper stresses that Music in the form of song was used “to entertain and to educate. A song may convey a moral, a warning, criticism, flattery, a request, thanks, abuse, demand, or repulsion. The lesson may be direct or may take an ironic form” (Cooper, 1983, p. 101). This we brought with us.

Cooper (1983) also mentions the “court poets” who, with Music sat in the King’s court whose purpose was “to glorify the deeds of the ruler and his ancestors. The poet preserves history, however, for he also mentions infamous acts or mistakes the ruler has made” (p. 102). Hand in hand with Music, these poets might also “stand in a public place loudly singing the praises of a ruler - or other influential person - until he is paid” (Cooper, 1983, p. 102). In this way Music walked inside and outside of court. Cooper identifies one example of Court Poet as he or she would have been known in South Africa—imbongi. What we would call the griot. Bellinger (2013) says of the term is both “a very generalized and overused one,” an overextension of “the djeli/griot tradition of the Malinke people, who live in many countries in West Africa,” but also a “a useful entry point” for discussion as “griots are a significant part of the cultural milieu of many West African cultural groups and while there is a cultural unity among them, the practices manifest differently in the various cultural groups that have griot traditions” (p. 62). Nevertheless, they bear the same responsibilities “from historian and genealogist to praise singer and ceremony participant” (Bellinger, 2013, p. 62). Bellinger (2013) gives us another name the Gewel of Senegal. This tradition, too, we brought with us. (“Music have no friends or enemies. Everybody could Dingolay!”)

Calypso as Pan African Music



Fig. 4 Jules Sims, “Native Trinidad Kalenda”

Part 2: Music has two children

Music alighted from the ships, blinking in the sunlight, was herded onto platforms, inspected and bid upon, sold off and taken to plantations to be seasoned. Music felt the despair, but also, in time a defiant joy. In the Caribbean this mixture would manifest in Calypso. In the thirteen colonies, soon to be the United States, it manifested as Jazz. Both also depended on Music meeting Music and Dance meeting Dance.

On the islands of the Caribbean, Music and Dance met Music and Dance dressed in petticoats and silk breeches doing the minuet and quadrilles in the ballrooms of the plantations in the festive season from Boxing Day to Shrove Tuesday. Outside, in the barrack yards of the enslaved, Music and Dance again created harmonizations—dance styles like the bele and bamboula—African recreations of memory and reinterpretations of European movements. In turn, the planters experimented with the Bamboula.



Fig. 5 Louis Moreau Gottschalk, “Bamboula”

Music and Dance joined Masquerade, snatching moments of freedom from the days of drudgery, on Sundays and Harvests, to process in defiant celebration. Jonkonnu, Junkanoo, Crop over, and Kambule came from such meetings, and after emancipation expanded and solidified. But we cannot forget that Music and Dance also joined the people in active resistance. Fusing together in Trinidad, they became kalenda—the

revival of warriorhood, a martial art dependent on song and dance to enliven the spirit of the warrior.

These stick men and women became fierce rivals for territory after emancipation. They would meet in the gayelle. They would transform the road from Carnival Sunday to Shrove Tuesday into their gayelles. They were the embodiment of Jamette ferocity. They were the manifest evidence that here was something to fear. It is no surprise, then, after nearly 40 years of the kalenda bands ruling Port of Spain, that Captain Baker upon becoming Inspector-Commandant of the police force in 1877 was “determined to stop the Carnival” (Liverpool, 2001, p. 304). From 1877 to 1880, he posted heavily armed police at carnival band meeting places, arresting stickfighters and forcing them to surrender their *bois*. In 1880, Baker halted the Cannes Brulées procession, and in 1881, Baker “resolved to stop the marchers and revellers” (Liverpool, 2001, p. 305) again. On hearing of his plans, stickfighters prepared to resist even informing Baker of their intentions, burning Baker in effigy as part of their protests, and planning for battle—securing bottle and stone ammunition in the barrack yards, and Maribones, and Diametres, declaring a truce. Meanwhile, Baker prepared 150 policemen for duty that carnival Sunday night. At midnight, the negue jardins “Sounded their drums, blew their horns, lit their torches and broke out into Kalenda singing” (Liverpool, 2001, p. 307-8). Music and Dance were warriors that day. and when it was all said and done, Music, Dance, and Carnival listened to the governor promise “no interference with [their] masquerade” as it was of “much importance” (Liverpool, 2001, p. 310) to them.

But, as we know, this promise did not hold, for by 1884, the drums were snatched from Music and Dance in Trinidad and Tobago too. The Ordinance For the Better Preservation of Peace. No. 1, 1884, Section 1, as J.D. Elder (1972) notes, “sought to suppress drumming in the City” of Port of Spain (p. 14). What was Music and Dance to do? Lucky for us, they are clever sorts, the holders of memory and tradition. They reached back into their past and came up with an alternative or two. In Tobago, they reinvented the frame drum and called it the tambrin—bodiless drum, a wooden hoop frame with taut animal skin stretched across. With fiddle and fife to round out the sound, Music and Dance jiggled to the tambrin band. In Trinidad, as Elder says, “Faced with the outright condemnation of the African drum, conch-shell and horns, the musicians turned to other percussional forms of instruments—the stamping tubes” made of bamboo stems (Elder, 1972, p. 14). According to Elder (1972), “To increase the overall orchestral pitch and to provide a melody instrument, the musicians included the jin-bottle” (p. 14). Music and Dance led the people back out onto the streets with tamboo bamboo. And now the Kalinda bands were tamboo bamboo bands. And it is in the streets that Music and Dance would birth Calypso. For it was around this time that the small but growing black middle class—shop clerks and attendants and such—began to differentiate themselves from the Jamette classes of the kalinda bands. For these aspirational social climbers, kalinda bands became fancy bands.

As John Cowley (1996) states, when “Fancy Bands met in the street they would confront one another in song, but not physically” (p. 234) maintaining the same confrontational attitude of the kalinda

bands. And here Music took on a new guise. The rhythms of Kalinda with European instrumentation and Venezuelan melodies. Music in her Fancy Band costume represents, as Cowley says, “the coming together of two aspects of black musical tradition in Trinidad. *Respectable* music (denoting a Venezuelan influence) accompanied a vocal style evolved from defiant nonconformity for competitions, or *picongs*, between songsters and stand-offs between masquerade bands as they paraded” (Cowley, 1996, p. 234). By the 20th century, Music’s Child still needed a name. Egbert Miller (Lord Beginner) says that up to 20s “the majority of us never said [calypso] like that. Sometimes when a singer was finished singing, if he was good, people would shout out ‘Kaiso’, or ‘Cariso’” (qtd in Antony, 1974, p. 62). But Calypso became her name.

More significantly, for us now, is that Calypso maintained the essence of Music’s African memories. Liverpool (2001) makes the case that Trinidadian music exhibits the “same communal approach” as West African music (p. 72), employs “polyrhythmic patterns” also indicative of West African music (p. 73), uses “an overlapping call-and-response technique” peculiar to “the African call-and-response pattern” (p. 78), elicits communal/audience response and interaction (pp. 79-80), is extemporaneous, and draws upon the “griot tradition of West Africa” (p. 81). Like Gros Jean serving as praise singer for Pierre Begorrat, a Plantation owner originally from Martinique.

According to Andrew Pearse and Mitto Sampson (1956, p 253),

Legend has it that Lawa (King) Begorrat used to hold court in his cave, to which he would adjourn with favourite slaves and guests on

occasions and indulge in a variety of entertainments. The court was attended by African slave singers of "Cariso" or "Caiso", which were usually sung extemporare and were of a flattering nature, or satirical or directed against unpopular neighbours or members of the plantation community, or else they were "Mepris", a term given to a war of insults between two or more expert Singers.

Gros Jean is said to have been the first of these bards or "chantwells" to be appointed Master of Caiso, or Mait' Caiso.

Gros Jean would be summoned by Begorrat's wives to sing the Lawa "back to serenity" (Pearse & Sampson, 1956, p. 253).

Calypso, as Music's child, embodied myriad folk forms by the time she was named. Gordon Rohlehr (1990) notes that Calypso became the umbrella name for several African-descended folk forms, and Michael Toussaint holds that in Calypso we can hear the oral traditions of Africans (notably Yoruba, Igbo, and Bantu) brought to the Caribbean--orikis, bongo, and kalenda. Maureen Warner-Lewis (1994) notes that between 1841 and 1867 "some 9000 Africans" including Yoruba speakers "arrived in Trinidad" as indentured labourers, joining other freed Africans who had migrated to the island between 1807 and 1841 bringing with them a reinfusion of West African culture including orikis (p. 7), and kept them alive through religious and secular practices. Warner Lewis (1994) also asserts that the bongo song and dance can be traced to Central African cultures (Bantu). And thus, Calypso influenced by West African rhythmic arrangements and

communal practices found herself in the Caribbean.



Fig. 6 Scott Joplin, Maple Leaf Rag

While Music was birthing Calypso, Music was also birthing Jazz in the North American South. Blues and Spirituals begat Ragtime and Ragtime begat Jazz. Music and Dance met Music and Dance in bustles and satin breeches, also doing minuets and quadrilles in the ballrooms and halls of Plantation owners. Away from watchful eyes, Music and Dance remembered the stomping and shouting of celebrations, now calling it Juba or Cakewalk. Stripped of balafon and djembe, Music and Dance took up the fiddle, the fife, and the snare. They added the lament sad-celebratory voice and became the Blues, Negro Spirituals, Folk. As Ralph Ellison (1964) states "Negro musicians have never, as a group, felt alienated from any music sounded within their hearing, and it is my [Ellison's] theory that it would be impossible to pinpoint the time when they were not shaping what {Leroi} Jones calls the mainstream of American Music" (p. 255). Coming out of the brothels of New Orleans, Jazz would swing and bop and move. Jazz would meet Calypso by the early 20th Century, and to Calypso's strings and brass. ("Music have no friends or enemies. Everybody could DINGOLAY!")

Calypso as Pan African Music Part 3: The Children Have Hot Foot

Every tale needs a good quest, although, what is sought by this quest is not nameable yet. I have come now, to the part of my tale where we see Calypso retrace Music's steps, helping to reinvest that Transatlantic Triangle with a new meaning. Calypso is Music, and Music is Spirit, and Spirit moves. And so, Calypso sets out on many adventures, each time gaining wisdom in the process. After all, as the Yoruba say, the point of *àjò l'áyé* (life's journey) is to gain wisdom (and leave more of it behind when you go). So, Calypso moves--from the Caribbean to the Alkebulan to North America, the Caribbean archipelago, Europe, and back again. Let us retrace the steps briefly.



Fig. 7 Nigerian Union Rhythm Group "Ojokolobo"

Adventure one: A Slight Return

Indeed, at this point in life, Calypso is young, and the world is a wide-open space. From Trinidad, Calypso (before she had that name) travelled with the West India Militia, and stationed in Sierra Leon and the Gold Coast. As Courtney Micots (2012) points out in "Performing Ferocity: Fancy Dress, Asafo, and Red Indians in Ghana," citing Kwesi Ewusi Brown, "the history of brass bands, used in today's Winneba Masquefest competitions," can be traced back "to the 1880s, when the West Indian Rifle Regiment introduced the brass band to the coast in Cape Coast, the largest port of

the Gold Coast at the turn of the twentieth century" (p. 45). Calypso rode, stowed in the bodies of the West Indian Regiment soldiers, back to Africa. As Micots (2012) says, "Many formerly enslaved Africans from the Caribbean islands were recruited into British regiments to reinforce troops in Ghana suppressing Asante forces as early as 1822 (p. 45). Melissa Bennet (2017) states in "The West India Regiments in the Anglo-Ashanti War, 1873–74" for the British Library, that "The West India Regiment had first been temporarily garrisoned in Ghana in 1843, and in 1863–1864 the men of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th West India Regiments bore the brunt of the second colonial war against the Ashanti." I take small comfort in knowing that in the final and decisive battle in 1873–4 these regiments, some newly released from slave ships and returned to the continent, did not fight, but acted as support staff. After the carriers hired by the British army "ran out," "the soldiers of the West India Regiments were called upon to carry supplies for the white British regiment in addition to their own arms, accoutrements and ammunition." They were not called into action after reaching Kumasi on February 4, 1874, but remained outside the city.

While the Regiments saw little action, and thank God for that, as Frank Tenaille (2002) claims in *Music is the Weapon of the Future: Fifty Years of African Popular Music*, "Much of modern African music is indebted to the musical instruments of colonization brought over by sailors, soldiers, and missionaries" (p. 13). So, while the British claimed pieces of Alkebulan for itself, leaving Colonial Trauma in its wake, the West India Regiment helped influence one form of cultural resistance—Music.

Calypso was back in the Motherland. As Tenaille (2002) notes, by the 1920s, “most forts in the Gold Coast had garrison bands that added local melodies to their military march repertoires” (p. 13). He also points out that the colonial instruments—brass and the like—“were diverted from their original [missionary] purposes and adapted to a new life” in the bars. And to make an obvious inference, these bars would provide spaces for the soldiers and sailors to mingle with the local regulars. To make another inference, Calypso was quite at home, for apart from dancing in the streets for Carnival, Calypso’s domain was the bars and dancehalls of Port of Spain. Along with the “instruments of colonization” of the missionaries, Tenaille (2002) mentions the popularization of the acoustic guitar, “brought by Kru sailors from Liberia who worked on boats that shuttled between England, the United States, the Caribbean, and African ports” (p. 13). Together with the brass instruments, these instruments were put into the service of “numerous guitar bands” (p. 13) and the development of Kro—“a brass-band style reminiscent of the New Orleans genre and also a local calypso style, a kind of pre-highlife” (p. 13). This amalgamation is not surprising because Music is not Like us. “Music have no friends or enemies. Everybody could dingolay.” Music is Music and Music is Spirit, but it is interesting how glibly Tenaille (2002) calls Kro a “local calypso style.” (p. 13)



Fig. 8 Lionel Belasco “Carmencita”

Adventure 2: Recording in New York

Tenaille’s (2002) observations already speak to Calypso’s penchant for circumnavigation and pan-Africanism. Indeed, the Kru sailors were retracing the Triangle of the trade, and in doing so, were giving Calypso free passage to these different enclaves of Africans in the Black Atlantic. Let us look now at the second (overlapping) quest.

In 1914, Lionel Belasco and his orchestra went to New York to record a series of songs for the Black Swan label. Through Belasco, Calypso was being formalized. Put to record was Belasco’s blending of kalenda and Venezuelan music, particularly paseos. Also, through Belasco’s style Calypso and Jazz became reacquainted. (One can find Lionel Belasco’s biography on the website *All About Jazz* which indicates that his music is, in part, recognized as some form of Jazz, and the early instrumental pieces sound very similar to Ragtime which was also piano-based.) Patricia Meschino (2015) states that Belasco “is considered among the most important musician of calypso’s formative years” using “the melodies of folk songs he heard in his travels throughout the Caribbean and South America to help shape calypso’s early identity.” She even goes so far to claim that it was “Belasco’s engaging, genre-blurring style incorporated Dixieland

jazz, Venezuelan folk, European classical music, and the era's ragtime (with Belasco often referred to as the Scott Joplin of calypso), accented by a distinctive Caribbean lilt that established calypso's acoustic foundation and gave the music its initial push outside of Trinidad." There are two significant points to make here. Belasco's "genre blurring style" reminds us that Music is Music, and Music will always recognize Music despite the social constraints placed upon the musicians. Calypso's trips to New York highlights Calypso's twining as Folk and Popular. Calypso would return several times to New York. By the 1940s there was definitely a Calypso fad—spurred by the darkness of World War II and increased contact between the Navy and Calypso in the Bars and houses of "ill repute" in Trinidad. This fad grew into a craze by the 1950s, with Calypso appearing in Movies, and Harry Belafonte's Calypso album selling a million copies in 1957. Calypso felt parts exposed—the Latinate undercurrents of Belasco's paseos manifested in Calypso's renderings by American singers. Calypso is not like us. "Music have no friends or enemies. Everybody! Could dingolay!" in fact, Calypso can do what no human can, be in multiple places at the same time



Fig. 9 Kassav "Zouk-La Sé Sel Médikaman Nou Ni"

Adventure 3: Up the Archipelago

By the 1940s, Trinidad calypso had entered its popular art phase, with individual exemplars of the style traveling throughout the region and the world. Thus, while adventuring in the United States, Calypso also travelled the region. On every island, Calypso met Music, and like in the Gold Coast bars and nightclubs, Calypso blended with folk forms of various islands like quelbe, fungi, tuk band, kompas, and cadence. Many of the modern genres in the region resulted from these meetings—zouk, rake and scrape, mento. Let me stress, the point is not to claim the superiority of Trinidad calypso or to foster any Trinidadian cultural chauvinism. Instead, I want to focus on the cultural syncretism which is facilitated by familiarity. I want us to think about Calypso as a regional phenomenon, of the cultural diffusion, of our interconnectedness.

Adventure 4: Windrush



Fig. 10 Aldwin Roberts, Lord Kitchener "London is the Place for Me"

One of Calypso's carriers, Aldwyn Roberts, the Lord Kitchener, had heard of an opportunity. He was a regular traveller up and down the islands, performing his skillfully crafted songs. In a stint in Jamaica, he heard about the ship coming to recruit good British colonial subjects to help the mother land in her time of need. The War had put Britain in dire straits. Roberts thought this was a fine idea. The catch (one of oh so many) was that he

would have to sail from Jamaica, a double migration—Trinidad to Jamaica to London. On June 22, 1948 the *Empire Windrush* docked in London from Jamaica with 492 passengers from the BWI, including service men who had travelled to re-join the Royal Air Force and “adventurous spirits, mostly young men,” (Phillips, 2011) including Lord Kitchener, Egbert Moore, Lord Beginner, and Harold Phillip, Lord Woodbine, subsequently mentor the Beatles (McGrath, 2020).

Once there, Kitchener and Beginner met what Lloyd Bradley (2016) calls the “collective Commonwealth-comes-to-Britain experience.” Bradley asserts that “nowhere did calypso have a more significant cultural impact than in the UK. From the late 1930s onwards, calypso provided the foundation stone of what would blossom into our unique black British culture” and that “London calypso was always more than just a Saturday night feel-good soundtrack (although its importance there shouldn’t be underestimated).” In the bars, nightclubs, and dancehalls of 1940s London, Calypso “set the template for the black music styles that were to follow”—adapting to a new environment, new audiences, “acknowledge[ing] popularity of existing black musical forms (jazz and swing); and absorb[ing] the not-necessarily Trinidadian influences of the pool of players (West Africa, Guyana, Jamaica, the USA).” And while Calypso was spawning London Calypso (another iteration of self), these West African musicians recognizing Music in the swing, bounce, and lyricism, took the style back with them to the African colonies.

Adventure 5: Back to the Continent



Fig. 11 Gay Flamingos “Black Man’s Cry”

So, Calypso, maintaining the route of the Kru sailors, was on the Continent again. As Tenaille (2002) states, “in the 1950s imported Trinidadian calypso records and Afro-Cuban instruments (maracas, bongos, and congas) modified the dynamics of the local sound” in Ghana (p. 14), encountering acoustic guitars that, as Tenaille (2002) explains, “adapted to the technique of *sanza* (thump piano) or harp players” (p. 13). This acoustic guitar style used “the big urban bands whose repertoire of waltzes, foxtrots, quicksteps, cakewalks, and ragtime” moved the “high-up” (whites) and “the black elite” to dance (nowhere did calypso have a more significant cultural impact than in the UK. From the late 1930s onwards, Tenielle, 2002, p. 14), fused with Calypso’s biting satire and wit. Sonny Oti (2009) says in Nigeria “the ‘near vacuum’, in terms of a repertoire of lyrics, created by the absence of song texts, in the early fifties and beyond, became a stimulus to an incursion by foreign discs” (p 22). Calypso swept into that vacuum, too. Oti (2009) goes on to state that from “Lord Kitchener’s calypso to those of Mighty Sparrow, we listened to great satires pouring in from the West Indian steel-bands” (p. 22). What Oti (2009) describes as a vacuum of song-texts proved to be a ready space for this Highlife

Music to flourish, and out of Highlife, Fela Ransome Kuti would cull Afrobeat.

Calypso has more children

(Although “children” is a limiting concept because Music is Spirit, not like us. “Music have no friends or enemies. Everybody could dingolay!” Ah the constraints of English.)



Fig. 12 Oluko Imo “Disc O Calypso”

Back in Trinidad, Calypso was poised for growth. The wisdom gained in these adventures would serve well in the face of a shifting zeitgeist. It was the 60s. In 1965, about 165 years after Trinidadian lawyer Henry Sylvester Lewis established the term Pan Africanism, Stokely Carmichael, another of Trinidad and Tobago’s sons, popularized the phrase “BLACK POWER.” By 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, four years after Mandela was imprisoned, the phrase Black Power became a radicalized battle cry. In his entry for Britannica.com, Rickey Vincent (n.d.) suggests a link between the “aggressive” civil rights activities of the sixties and seventies Black Power Movement with the aggressively unapologetic Music in the guise of Funk and Soul. As the popularity of funk and soul grew, these genres also influenced calypso of the seventies. It is possible to argue that the militant celebration of blackness embedded in the musical structures of funk and soul also found fertile ground in an art form already exposed to the Black Aesthetic.

Earl Lovelace (1978) points to such a possibility in his essay “Progress and Calypso” in which he notes that the calypso up until the seventies “function[s] on the level of surface, on the level of logic” refusing to “embrace feelings” (p. 131). The fact that Lovelace (1978) identifies soul and funk acts such as Otis Redding and James Brown as exemplars of emotive sound recasts “feelings” as more than mindless sentimentality—these artistes evoked deep emotional responses to socio-political struggle. Rather, as he laments, Calypso had ignored “the rhythm-affirming sound, the soul deep feeling” (Lovelace, 1978, p. 131) of its antecedents (kalinda, orikis, and Spiritual Baptist chants, and so forth). Lovelace (1978) asserts that Trinidadian youth began seeking out African diaspora music as a consequence of the Pan-Africanism embedded in Black Power—reggae, funk, high life, and other Afrocentric music—and this led to extensive experimentation, fusions and reinfusions. As Zeno Constance (2017) states, “It was the time of Disco, Hip Hop, Rapso, Funk.... Soca. Trinbagonians too were searching for new and more entertaining ways to ‘pelt out’ the music.” With the Pan-Africanism embedded in the Black Power movement, this new way of “pelting out” the music also incorporated a heightened and militant sense of the black aesthetic, converging with calypso, churning up the music and fomenting experimentation This created two shifts in Calypso--from lyric-heavy expressions to compositions with music as expressive as the lyrics, Soca, and towards Afrocentric beats and militant/conscious lyrics, Rapso.



Fig. 13 Super Blue “Soca Baptist”

For example, Garfield “Lord Shorty” Blackman in the course of his musical experimentation merged calypso and soul—the “logic” of calypso with the “feeling” of African American expression, reintroducing a focus on the psycho-spiritual. While Lord Shorty experimented with soul (elements of which could be heard in the “leggos” or party songs of Maestro, Calypso Rose, and others of the period), Winston “Shadow” Bailey was also experimenting with funk, especially what Vincent describes as the “hard syncopated bass lines” adding them to the calypso rhythm to create a groove.

In 1980 Brother Resistance (Lutalo Masimba) and his Network Riddum Band first used the term rapso on their album *Busting Out*, but the genre was said to have been developed by the late Lancelot Layne with his song *Blow Away* in 1971. As Brother Resistance (1986) explained “Rapso music was formed out of the spoken word. From the days of the Midnight Robber, the Chantwell and the Griot.” According to Resistance (1986), Rapso embodies the chantuelle and griot, ‘the chant leader in the call and response tradition’ (n.p.), and pulls from the rhetorical structures of the Pierrot Grenade and Midnight Robber. The latter is “credited with being the originator of the speech rap style popularized by today’s

MCs and DJs in the dancehall business” (Resistance, 1986, n.p.). the book goes on to argue that Rapso’s rhythm is a synthesis of pan, Orisha, African drumming, and calypso instruments (guitar, bass, brass, synthesizer). Jocelyn Guibault (2007) says that “Along with its protests over neocolonialism, rapso’s militant stance promoted an Afrocentric identification” (p. 185).



Fig. 14 Lancelot Lane “Yuh Tink It Sorf?”

There and Back Again (again)



Fig. 15 D’Banj “Egweji”

Soca and Rapso would join Calypso in reconfiguring the Triangle, going to North America, Europe, and back to the Continent where Soca recognized aspects of itself in Highlife and Afrobeat while Afrobeat and Highlife heard themselves in Soca. Calypso’s children were to recombine again, along with hip hop (Jazz’s grandchild) and Dancehall (Calypso’s grandchild) to produce Afrobeats or Afro Pop. And you guessed it, Afropop would find its way to the archipelago and mingle

with Soca, Bouyon, Dancehall... but I can end my saga here because really there is no end to the saga.



Fig.16 Nadia Batson “Catching Feelings”
Folklore Riddim

And so?

So far, this tale has, I hope, addressed one of the irritating laments I mentioned earlier—Soca needs to go international. Clearly, Calypso, Soca, Rapso have been international. As Wendell Manwarren put it, “we calypso was always taking on the music of the world, we are world people. We're not insular and parochial.” Not so clear, is the response to the first lament—Calypso is dying. But I hope the tale exemplifies that Music is Music, shaping itself to fit new surroundings. To use Bellinger’s (2013, p. 66) words,

But even though there is a specific structure to this celebratory event, there is an openness that allows the participants to alter traditional rhythms and movements; there is space to add new variations and interpretations of the music and dances; opportunities for the youth to express their reality as an extension of the tradition. This is what helps keep the tradition fresh and makes it a living tradition.

I am taking liberties here, as Bellinger is speaking about the *Géwël tannibeer* “secular manifestation” of spiritual rites

(Bellinger, 2013, p. 66). But Calypso is liked to this griot/praise singer, celebration leader role, so I think his observation applies. Calypso is a living tradition, and I propose we take cues from Bellinger’s (2013, p. 62) *Géwël Project* which while very interested in the past and the early forms of the tradition, it is not only a project of preservation. It does not attempt to freeze the past or hope to bring the past into the present. What the *Géwël Tradition Project* aims to do is support a living tradition so that it can continue with all the natural transformations and permutations that each generation brings. The goal is to ensure that the tradition continues to live and breathe so that each generation will have the opportunity to decide how to utilize their cultural inheritance. To do otherwise would be to hasten its demise.

Also, I hope my tale helps us appreciate Pan Africanism in praxis. You see, it is the fact that Calypso recognizes and readily works with other manifestations of Music and Calypso, is exactly what makes it Pan African. Cecil “Maestro” Hume’s “Black Identity” asserts that it is not enough to don the semblance of blackness—dashikis and afros. To be truly conscious and adopt a Black identity, we must embrace our race and ancestral heritage to the hilt. Maestro’s message is similar to Stokely Carmichael’s call for all Black people to identify as African regardless of what nation we live in. Calypso has done that. Soca continues to do that.

I will add too, that there is much to appreciate in Calypso’s folk status as Hall and Whannel define the term. The

communality of Calypso and Soca—both how they bring communities together and how they are formed communally—are lessons we can apply to our Pan African consciousness. Building on Henry Sylvester Williams, George Padmore, CLR James and others, Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) insisted that all people of African descent must recognize their ancestry and their interconnectivity. For Ture, Black Power became a pan-Africanist ideology—all black people should refer to themselves as Africans and unite in the struggle for freedom and pride. Calypso has borne this spark to all the points of the Triangle (or at this point tangle?).



Fig.17 Terry Lyons “Calypso”

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The Toronto Caribbean Carnival: A Celebration of Culture and Community

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Abstract

The Toronto Caribbean Carnival, originally known as "Caribana," represents one of Canada's most vibrant and widely celebrated cultural events. Established in 1967, this annual summer festival has evolved from its modest origins to become the largest cultural festival in North America, drawing over one million visitors annually. The event serves as a dynamic celebration of Caribbean culture, featuring a diverse array of music, dance, cuisine, and artistic expressions that highlight the rich heritage of the Caribbean region. Similar festivals such as London's Notting Hill Carnival and New York's Labour Day Parade have faced recent criticism for a perceived lack of visionary direction. This paper extends these observations regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of Toronto's approach to its own carnival and those envisioned by its founders. It delves into the contributions of one of its early pioneers of Toronto Carnival, the late Kenneth Shah (aka Ken Shah), whose early efforts are now digitized and housed at York University, Toronto. At that time, truck floats were in its infancy and made of a timber frame by Ken and others. Today, these floats constitute a quintessential feature of Toronto's Caribbean Carnivals, embodying a fusion of traditional cultural elements with contemporary entertainment. These new metal mobile platforms are characterized by their substantial size, intricate decorations, and the incorporation of advanced sound systems, live DJ's, and performers. Despite their central role in the carnival experience, scholarly discussions and accounts of their presence are rarely documented. Nonetheless, truck floats epitomize the vibrant intersection of heritage and innovation that defines the essence of carnival and is unravelled here to illustrate the unseen work that goes into their assembly.

Keywords: Caribana, Toronto Carnival, Artistry, Vision, Digitization, Digitisation, Truck Floats.

Introduction

Caribbean carnivals in the diaspora hold a unique position as vibrant expressions of cultural identity, resistance, and celebration. These events, deeply rooted in the history of the Caribbean, particularly in the traditions of emancipation and resistance to colonialism, have transformed into global spectacles in cities such as Toronto, London, and New York. However, the state of Caribbean carnivals in the diaspora is increasingly precarious. They face multifaceted challenges ranging from cultural erosion and commercialization to insufficient financial support and particularly in London, to gentrification.

One of the primary challenges facing Caribbean carnivals in the diaspora is the dilution of its cultural essence. Elements such as steelpan, calypso, soca, and mas are integral to the authenticity of carnival, however, in the diaspora, these elements are increasingly overshadowed by mainstream influences.

Commercialized music genres or performances catering to broader audiences often dominate stages, pushing traditional forms like calypso and steelpan to the fringes - steelbands on the streets of carnivals in its homeland, Trinidad, is now a rare sight. While soca music retains prominence, its commercialization sometimes prioritizes accessibility over depth, neglecting the historical and social themes central to its origin. This shift threatens the preservation of carnival's authentic cultural identity and its role as a repository of Caribbean history and heritage.

The commercialization of Caribbean carnivals presents another pressing concern. In many cities, these events have become significant economic drivers, attracting millions of attendees and

generating substantial revenue for local businesses. In August 2024, it was reported that the total direct or net economic impact of London's Notting Hill Carnival is over £396 million a year (Williams, 2024) yet little or nothing comes back to the artists; the prioritization of profits often comes at the expense of cultural values.

Corporate sponsors play an enormous role in shaping the narrative of carnival, sometimes reducing it to a mere party devoid of its deeper socio-political significance. Parades and fetes are increasingly geared towards tourist consumption, emphasizing spectacle over substance. Costumes, once handcrafted works of art with intricate storytelling, are now often mass-produced with minimal attention to their cultural symbolism. This commodification undermines the original ethos of carnival as a space for creative expression and cultural pride. The organisers of various carnivals are mindful of these deficiencies and working incessantly to buck these trends.

This paper examines three critical aspects of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival:

- 1) A common theme expressed by the diasporic communities is whether these large-scale carnivals have become so expansive that their original artistic vision and cultural essence are being overshadowed?" Co-author Roger Gibbs expressed his views to *The Caribbean Camera Inc.* on October 7, 2024.
- 2) Carnival floats are a defining element of Toronto's Caribbean Carnivals, yet their creation and journey into the celebration remain underreported. This piece provides a detailed look into the behind-the-scenes efforts, narrated by a grassroots, hands-on practitioner.

- 3) Carnival is a living expression of resilience, joy, and freedom and its rich history and artistry need to be preserved for both academic research and cultural value. Archivists involved in the acquisition of the records of Kenneth Shah (1965-2002) related to Caribana reflect on the importance of preserving the history of community-founded cultural festivals and making material accessible to the public.

Does Toronto Caribbean Carnival Lack Artistic Vision?

The author (RG) observations in *The Caribbean Camera Inc.* on October 7, 2024 titled “Does Toronto Caribbean Carnival Lack Artistic Vision?” is published full with permission and begins by asking the questions: “What is the meaning of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival? How does one make sense of the massive, day-long celebration which takes place on Toronto’s Lakeshore Boulevard on the first Saturday of every August.” It continues: “There are many ways to answer these basic questions: One, the carnival is the Canadian Caribbean community’s cultural gift to Canada on its Bicentennial. This has some symbolic historic meaning, but it does not advance our understanding. Two, the carnival is a celebratory commemoration of one of the greatest human rights achievements of mankind – the abolition of slavery. This is a powerful statement and portrays the carnival celebration as a moral voice in society’s ongoing struggle against racism and classism. Three, the carnival is an indigenous Caribbean form of community/professional open-air theatre, a proven model of making a theatrical

spectacle in the most inclusive way imaginable.

The more business minded prefer to view the carnival as an economic engine which generates substantial tax income and add that it is a massive costumed, outdoors party whose brand brings high publicity and multicultural value to Toronto and to Canada. Indeed, the Toronto Caribbean Carnival is often used as Canada’s poster child for multiculturalism internationally.

I ask these questions because it is around this time of year that businesses and various for-profit and non-profit enterprises, regardless of their nature, undergo some sort of strategic planning process to determine what ideas and aims will guide their operations in the coming year or years. Financial, administrative and logistical plans must be crafted to support the intended goals of the organization. The best of plans must be able to navigate unpredictable circumstances that may arise and overcome them.

In the case of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, there are serious unpredictable outcomes, such as the level and timing of government funding; the success of partnerships with major commercial sponsors; inclement weather which can have a huge impact on ticket sales; and the often-fractious internal politics of the Caribbean Carnival Arts community.

All these challenging circumstances have been met and overcome in the past, sometimes at enormous cost to the organizers of the festival and its clients. The stress on the community of operating a festival that is always on the verge of financial insolvency can be intolerable and many have come and gone, walked away in despair, disgust and disappointment. Nevertheless, the festival endures after fifty-seven years.

I do not profess to have the answers to the problems which face the Toronto Caribbean Carnival. I have been involved with the festival since the early 1900s – as an artist/performer, a producer, a senior administrator, a director, and an observer. I have enormous respect and love for the community of which I have been honoured to be a part of. I will say one thing about the festival: if it is to remain relevant and if the Festival Management Committee is to fulfil its role as leaders of a major cultural organization it must continue to develop and articulate compelling arguments beyond the festival's economic impact. It must develop the huge creative and artistic potential of the carnival. That means having a deep understanding of the Caribbean carnival traditions and the ability to reinterpret them in the Canadian context. In Toronto, Canada's largest city, there are a range of highly skilled cultural workers and resources available which do not exist in the Caribbean. The Festival Management Committee's vision of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival is not well known, if at all. The emphasis on the festival's economic impact is well known. What is not well known is the festival's artistic vision. The arts – music, dance, theatre, visual arts, culinary arts – are what imbue the festival with its public appeal. Without a clear artistic vision and the teams of people to implement that vision, the festival will continue to drift along and never achieve its full potential." (From Gibbs, 2024 - *The Caribbean Camera Inc.* on October 7, 2024).

Truck Floats and Toronto Carnival

Truck floats are an iconic feature of Caribbean Carnivals, serving as vibrant

moving stages that combine music, art, and cultural expression. These floats are large, elaborately decorated vehicles outfitted with powerful sound systems, live DJs, and performers (see Figures 1- 7). At their core, they represent the heart of the carnival, blending traditional elements with modern entertainment. Each float is often sponsored by a "mas band" and showcases costumes, themes, and music that reflect Caribbean traditions and history. The floats play soca, calypso, reggae, and dancehall music, energizing revellers who parade alongside them in colourful, ornately designed costumes. They provide a seamless fusion of mobility and performance, allowing for non-stop music and dancing as the procession winds through the streets. In addition to their cultural significance, truck floats also demonstrate the logistical and creative efforts that make Caribbean Carnivals unique. They highlight the collaborative work of engineers, artists, and musicians, emphasizing the spirit of community and celebration that defines these events. Their visual and auditory spectacle is a cornerstone of carnivals in Toronto, Trinidad, New York, and beyond. In early carnivals in Toronto, pioneers such as Ken Shah were not only experienced creative mas makers but some like him were engineers who brought their engineering skills into the Toronto carnival. The floats were built using standard size 4 x 4 - 2.4m long timber pieces. These were typically sawn pieces of lumber measuring approximately 100mm x 100mm. They were nailed into the wooden floorboard of the truck and several posts were erected from this base to enable a tarpaulin roof to be constructed to house and shelter a vast amount of equipment such as speakers, amplifiers, generators etc for the huge Sound Systems. The floats often carried a

cross-section of masquerades or in some cases, steelbands. The trucks in Toronto are typically 53 feet long by 8 feet wide and subject to parade rules and regulations. None of the timber was recycled as the structures were simply broken down after the parade to release the trucks back to the rental companies. The system now used by the author (RKNS) is entirely constructed from standard scaffolding 6, 8 to 10 ft lengths that are assembled on the truck.

To sustain their craft and ensure economic viability beyond the Toronto Carnival, artists and float designers have strategically diversified their activities by catering to various festivals across Canada, as illustrated in Figures 6 and 7. These festivals include high-profile events such as Pride Toronto, the St. Catharines Grape and Wine Festival in September, and the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest in October. Additionally, they contribute to seasonal celebrations like Christmas festivals and the Winter Festival of Lights at Niagara Falls, among others. Each of these festivals possesses distinctive themes, cultural significance, and audience expectations, necessitating bespoke designs and tailored craftsmanship for every event. This strategic adaptation not only reflects the creative resilience of these artists but also underscores the intricate labour involved in preserving the cultural vitality

of these festivals. By embracing the unique requirements of diverse audiences and locales, float designers demonstrate an exceptional ability to merge artistry with functionality, reinforcing their role as vital contributors to Canada’s cultural and festive economy.

Fig. 2 More advanced stage of assembly



Fig 3. A larger float on the road.



Fig. 1 Initial assemble at the home of the author (RKNS)

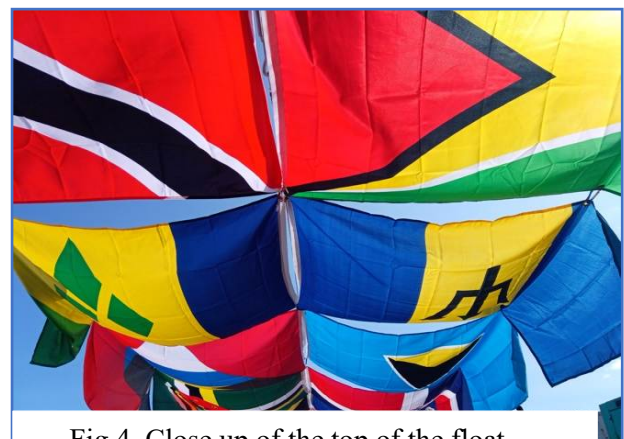


Fig 4. Close up of the top of the float.



Fig. 5a (above) Assembling and testing of a 53-foot trailer prior to signing off for the road

Fig. 5b (below) A fully assembled float in the parade filled with members of the band.





Fig. 6 (above) Outside of Carnival different types of floats are assembled. The one above is for the Oktoberfest, a festival that celebrates Bavarian culture and German Canadian heritage
Fig. 7 (below) A Christmas float with Santa's Workshop that won place at the Festival in 2024.



Tradition Analog Steel Pans vs. Digital DJ: Music on the Float

Analog steel pans and digital DJing represent two poles of the musical spectrum - one rooted in tradition, the other embracing modernity, both forms exist on Floats. Steel pans for many carry the soul of craftsmanship and cultural legacy, captivating audiences with their purity and history and is the older form. The more modern digital DJing offers an exhilarating foray into innovation, providing endless possibilities to reimagine music. Both hold unique roles in Caribbean carnivals, catering to different artistic preferences and cultural contexts. The key differences between these two captivating approaches to music are summarised below and in Table 1.

Analog Steel Drums: The Echo of Tradition

Analog steel pans, (Pans), originated in Trinidad and Tobago in the 20th century and are crafted from repurposed oil barrels, hand-hammered and tuned to create distinct pitches. Steel pans are integral to Caribbean music, known for their bright, melodic tones that resonate with the region's vibrant culture and are seen at most Caribbean carnivals.

Characteristics:

1. **Physical Craftsmanship:** Steel pans are tangible, acoustic instruments made with precision and care. Each Pan is unique, reflecting the skill of its maker.
2. **Rich Acoustic Quality:** The sound of a steel pan is organic, warm, and resonant, producing a distinct timbre that cannot be perfectly replicated digitally.

3. **Performance Style:** Playing a Pan requires physical interaction - striking specific areas with rubber sticks to create melody and rhythm.
4. **Cultural Heritage:** Pans are deeply rooted in the tradition of Trinidad and Tobago, embodying a historical narrative and cultural identity.

Digital DJ: The Frontier of Technology

In contrast, a digital DJ employs advanced technology to manipulate pre-recorded tracks and create dynamic performances. Digital DJing involves the use of software, controllers, and mixers to blend, remix, and enhance music in real-time. Their powerful sounds, simplicity and lower cost have allowed them to surpass the steelbands at carnivals even in its homeland of Trinidad and Tobago.

Characteristics:

1. **Technological Innovation:** Digital DJ equipment leverages various software to provide unprecedented creative freedom, allowing DJs to experiment with effects, loops, and samples.
2. **Versatility:** DJs can access vast libraries of music instantly, mixing genres and tracks to suit any audience or mood.
3. **Performance Style:** Unlike the direct physical interaction of steel pans, DJing focuses on manipulating dials, sliders, and digital interfaces to craft sonic landscapes.
4. **Global Appeal:** DJing has become a global phenomenon, defining genres like electronic dance music and hip-hop, while transcending cultural boundaries.

Despite the increasing complexity, height, and volume of sound systems (see Figs. 8A - 8C), it is improbable that their operation will remain unregulated. Many carnival organizers have begun enforcing maximum audibility limits, as these systems often

overwhelm other bands and disrupt sensitive areas such as hospitals, where strict control over sound levels is necessary.

Table 1. Comparison of the Analog Steelpans vs. Digital

Aspect	Analog Steel Pan	Digital DJ
Instrument Type	Acoustic, physical	Digital, electronic
Sound Production	Organic vibration through steel	Digital manipulation of audio files
Cultural Context	Rooted in the heritage of Trinidad and Tobago	Global, modern music scenes
Performance Interaction	Physical striking with rubber sticks	Adjusting digital controls and software
Creative Flexibility	Limited to the tonal range of the instrument	Virtually unlimited via effects and mixing
Audience Experience	Focused on live, melodic music	High-energy, dance-oriented environments



Figure 8A (left) - Box truss DJ Booth surrounded by Amp Racks; Figure 8B (centre) - Rear facing speaker stacks. Figure 8C- Concert sound system on wheels. (believed to have enough energy to power a small town.



Photo credit: Kenneth Shah in costume in front of Varsity Stadium in Toronto during Caribana parade, 1970. ASC, Kenneth Shah fonds, 2020-002/021 (15).

Preserving the archives of Kenneth Shah, a founding contributor to Toronto's Caribbean Carnival

The Toronto Caribbean Carnival began in 1967 as a gift from Toronto's Caribbean community to commemorate Canada's Centennial. Spearheaded by the Caribbean community, the festival was inspired by the traditions of Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival, a celebration rooted in resistance and liberation during colonial times. Ken Shah and many new arrivals to Canada saw this as an opportunity to continue their involvement in the Trinidad carnival in their new home in Canada. The inaugural event was a resounding success, featuring a parade that captured the spirit of Caribbean culture. Over the years, it has evolved into a globally recognized celebration of multiculturalism and inclusion.

Kenneth Shah and Toronto's Caribana

The archives of Kenneth Neamath Shah, a founding organizer of the event originally known as Caribana, capture the enthusiastic embrace of masquerade, dancing, and

music through 30 years of text, photographs, and film—all of which provide unique insights into the cultural contributions of the Black and Caribbean communities. Kenneth Shah was a founding member of Caribana and the Caribbean Cultural Committee and was involved for more than 30 years with the festival celebrating Black emancipation from slavery across the British colonies.

Caribana arose out of a desire by Caribbean immigrants to share the festival culture of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean with the dominantly white British and European population of Toronto and to educate Canadians. The event celebrates the emancipation of Black people from slavery through Calypso music, dance, and masquerade and provided an opportunity for Caribbean communities to have a voice in the Canadian focus on multiculturalism during the 1970s. Today the Toronto



Photo credit: Kenneth Shah with Cult of the Leopards Band King, 1980. ASC, Kenneth Shah fonds, 2020-002/024 (07).

Caribbean Carnival is an annual event, the largest of its kind in North America.

Born in San Fernando, Trinidad, Shah moved to Canada in 1965 to pursue a career in petroleum engineering. He later left this profession to focus on carnival arts, designing and making costumes, managing mas bands, and taking a leadership role in programming from the first festival held in 1967 until his death in 2002.

Archival legacies: from family archive to scholarly resource

The story of how the archival records created and accumulated by Kenneth Shah (also Ken Shah) arrived at the academic archives of York University has several chapters and reflects the common risks that community archives from the twentieth-century encounter. Shah's archival legacy

is a generous gift that provides a treasure trove of documentation for contemporary and future scholars.

Kenneth Shah died suddenly in 2002 and his personal records related to the festival were passed to his brother Kamal. After a flood almost destroyed the material, Kamal approached the late Professor Christopher Innes (1941-2017) of York University, who took custody of the materials in 2014 and deposited them with the Harriet Tubman Centre, a research centre focused on Africa and its diasporas. When Prof. Innes himself died, the Shah family lost contact with the university and the materials became a resource within the Tubman Centre for student research projects. In 2017-2018 a project funded by an internal teaching grant and led by the Office of the Vice Provost Academic (VPA) and York University Libraries, approached the research centre,

now the Harriet Tubman Institute, about drawing on the Shah materials for a digital humanities project. This project was led by Dr. Samantha Cutrara with support by Anna St. Onge and focused on training York students on using digital technologies in teaching, research, analysis and knowledge-sharing and centring the use of unique archival materials held by the university. Denise Challenger, then a doctoral student in History working in the Tubman Institute, was recruited to work with the Shah material. She digitized a selection of objects and subsequently generated an online exhibit focused on the role of children in Caribana. Although Challenger only scanned a small sample of the over 20 boxes of material held at the university, it opened up the resource to additional scholarly inquiry. Most importantly, Challenger was able to successfully reconnect with the Shah family who generously agreed to release some of their brother's photographs under a Creative Commons licence.

As a result of this successful collaboration between the Tubman Institute and the Libraries, and with the consent of the Shah family, the archives were transferred in 2019 to the Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections, the university's academic archive. Due to the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 global pandemic, processing of these archives was delayed but by 2023 the work was completed by Emma Thomas, who will now pick up the story of how Kenneth Shah's archives were arranged and described.

The Kenneth Shah archival fonds consist of approximately four linear metres of textual material which includes Shah's original costume designs, Caribana programmes, and Black-owned newspapers

from North America and Trinidad; approximately 4000 photographs of Carnival festivals, including Caribana, in Toronto, Montreal, New York, and Trinidad; and moving image recordings all related to Shah's role as a co-founder of Caribana in Toronto and involvement in the Carnival arts. Shah's fonds provide a unique insight into Caribana from the perspective of the community in which it was founded.

The *fonds* (an archival term, derived from French, meaning a group of documents that all share the same origin) is separated into four separate "series" to help facilitate researchers' interests. They include Caribana working files, which include all documents created by Shah while working in Caribana, which includes administrative and creative processes; Promotional literature, which consists of all newspapers and other published material collected by Shah regarding both Caribana in Toronto and Carnival festivals globally; the photograph collection, and the moving image and sound recordings.

The processing of the Shah fonds took place over a four-month period and included what is referred to as the "arrangement and description" of the material. This includes the physical rehousing of all the material from the boxes it arrived in and putting all material into acid-free file folders and boxes, which ensures the material is safe and will preserve it for future researchers. All files are sorted into series and then are described to form what is referred to as a "finding aid." – a document which is meant to assist researchers who are interested in viewing fonds, to locate specific material that would assist them. This finding aid is available online in the university archives' research database. Alongside the physical work that

must be done to prepare archival fonds for use, an archivist must also prepare what is referred to as a “Biographical sketch” of who is referred to as the “Creator” of the fonds, in this case, Ken Shah.

Kenneth Shah’s fonds of working papers, mas costume designs, and photographs explore the roots of Caribana in Toronto. At its inception in 1967, Caribana was about celebrating and sharing the joy and the communities it represents with fellow Canadians. It is, at its core, a celebration of Black and Caribbean presence in Canada. The records would be of interest to the Caribbean diaspora, scholars of Caribbean and Black Studies, and international communities interested in multiculturalism and the celebration of self-expression that commemorates the abolition of slavery in the West Indies.

As an archivist, sorting through material that encapsulates the activities and achievements of someone's life is a privilege. In Shah's archives, I found

reflected the importance and value of his community. Shah's love for costume arts, the Toronto Caribbean Carnival and his joy in having the opportunity to share it with others is palpable. It provides a unique insight into the Caribbean Carnival in its earliest years, as a gift from the Caribbean people to share their culture with others.

In recent months, due to the interest in the Shah fonds by scholars, teaching faculty and students, the university archives digitized 14 film reels of original footage taken by Shah of carnival festivals from 1967 to 1986, including Caribana, Carifest in Montreal, and Carnival in Trinidad. It is our hope that we will be able to make these recordings available for free for research and reuse by the public in 2025 through the generosity of the Shah family.

Kenneth Shah’s archival legacy can be shared and celebrated as a result of a network of community-engaged cultural workers and scholars recognizing the value and importance of preserving the



Photo credit: Celebrating Black Emancipation through Caribana Festival, 1972. ASC, Kenneth Shah fonds, 2020-001/025 (25).

documentary record of festivals such as Caribana and working together to ensure materials are safe, secure and accessible to the public.

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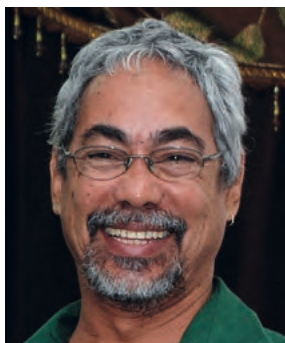
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PAN: THE INSTRUMENT THAT BUILT A NATION A Sociological Journey Through Sound

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Abstract



Nothing unites people, from a couple on a dance or to an entire generation of youth, like music. The counter-culture 60s generation gelled around Bob Dylan and the Beatles, while a decade later the conscience of the world was shaped by reggae. And in the case of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), it was Pan, the music, the instrument and the movement, that took a colony divided into splinters and brought it together around a single purpose. Lt Nathaniel Joseph Griffith, the steelband movement's greatest unsung hero, left Barbados in 1932 to play with an American jazz band, but was soon in Martinique arranging for the Municipal Orchestra. In 1935 he founded the St Vincent Philharmonic Orchestra. The Steelband movement forged an alliance of people from different social classes and races, which seeded the nationalist movement that 11 years later won independence for Trinidad and Tobago

Key Words: Pan, Steelpan, Society, Unity, Nation Building, Pan Nationalism

Introduction

That was a startling about-face. In 1945 the Legislative Council prohibited the public playing of "noisy instruments", for example steelpans. "Fancy you having a musical evening and inviting these gentlemen of the steel band to provide the music for you!" Sir Courtney Hannays, KC, postulated at the Council. "Fancy at any exhibition of the fine arts Trinidad represented by people who beat the steel drums!"

Yet, within a few years Sir Courtney's idea moved from being preposterous to a historical necessity, even as the steelband warfare precipitated widespread social panic. So, by 1949 the Pan movement was drawing a broader and broader cross-section of the community into its fold, and a group of Portuguese and Chinese CIC students, led by Ernest Ferreira, formed a steelband in Sackville Street.

In 1950 this middle-class band of white, brown and Chinese teenagers hit the road as Dixieland Steel Orchestra. One member from Sackville Street, Rolf Moyou, whose sister Suilan worked at the Caribbean Commission, where she became romantically involved with the researcher, Dr Eric Williams, was fascinated by the mixed racial composition of the band. "When he looked at the band he was more interested in who he was seeing," says Moyou.

At the time middle class masqueraders cavorted on the back of trucks, segregated from the hoi polloi of Carnival. With the arrival of Dixieland, however, they came off their high trucks and joined mas on the road.



Figure 1. A postcard from the mid-1940s showing a very early steel band using paint pans and biscuit

Dixieland, now followed by hundreds of middle-class teenagers, was in front the Red House when up comes Casablanca, the most feared steelband in the country. According to one story Curtis Pierre carried in front of the Gonzales band and declared, “Nobody cyar pass!” Such was their shock that the Casablanca “badjohns” put down their pans and hugged this white boy who was obviously drunk on music. The breakthrough unity was made by a different band, however, in 1951, when the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra was formed to represent the colony at the Festival of Britain. Yet the inspiration for TASPO probably came from Antigua. On 21st January 1951, before the thought struck anyone here, the Trinidad Guardian reported that: “Hell’s Gate Steel Band of Antigua is likely to represent the West Indian steel bands at the Festival of Britain

which will be opened in London on 3rd May.”

A month later, president of the T&T Steel Bands Association Sydney Gollop was heading for solicitor Lennox Pierre’s office, where the Association met, when he was hailed by politician and cultural activist Albert Gomes.

“I want you to act now!” Gomes urged. “Go and set up a committee or something to get Operation Britain.” And so by March the Association had decided to send a representative steelband to the Festival and a team of the most gifted panmen was chosen:

Theo “Black James” Stephens, 17, from Free French; Orman “Patsy” Haynes, 21, from Casablanca; Winston “Spree” Simon, 24, from Fascinators; Ellie Mannette, 22, from Invaders; Belgrave Bonaparte, 19, from Southern Symphony; Philmore “Boots” Davidson, 22, from City

Syncopaters; Sterling Betancourt, 21, from Crossfire; Andrew “Pan” de la Bastide, 23, from Hill 60; Dudley Smith, 24, from Rising Sun; Anthony “Muffman” Williams, 20, from North Stars; and Granville Sealey, 24, from Tripoli.

Sealey dropped out. He claims that he was snubbed by the other players, but popular belief has it that he was recently married and had asked for and was refused wages to support his wife. Either way he was

But committees were established. Fundraising began. And the steelband movement, riven by Lt Nathaniel Joseph Griffith, the steelband movement’s greatest unsung hero, left Barbados in 1932 to play with an American jazz band, but was soon in Martinique arranging for the Municipal Orchestra. In 1935 he founded the St Vincent Philharmonic Orchestra.

Then he led the Grenada Harmony Kings, before joining the Trinidad Police Band in



Figure 2. The Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra performing at the 1951 Festival of Britain

replaced by Carlton “Sonny” Roach from Sun Valley. Government refused their request for \$6,000, however, so the Association decided to raise the money. This was at the height of the riot years, when respectable society recoiled from the steelband movement in fear and loathing. “You think they would ever send a steelband to England with them set of hooligans in it?” sceptics told Tony Williams. “Boy, you’re only wasting your time.”

1938. He taught at the Tacarigua Orphanage and led its band, and conducted the Royal Victoria Institute’s orchestra. In 1947 he was appointed bandmaster of the St Lucia Police Band, and there he was when he was asked to lead TASPO. “If I going to England with you, you can’t play any sort of wrong thing,” he warned the panmen. “You have to play real music.”

And he set about teaching them. He put numbers on the notes and wrote scores. Spree queried one note on a Negro spiritual.

“I said to roll that note! You want me to roll your balls?” snapped Griffith.

Thus, he taught them a repertoire that included a waltz, a rhumba, a samba, light classics, a foxtrot, a bolero, calypsos, mambos. He made them tune (invent) an alto (second) pan with 14 notes. He also insisted the bass have at least 14 notes. When the tuners protested that so many notes couldn't fit on one drum, he replied to everyone's surprise, then use more than one.

Griffith's knowledge leavened the genius of men like Williams and Mannette, and they produced better pans than they ever did before. Williams replaced the biscuit drum “tune boom” with an oil drum 2-cello, and discovered the technique of tuning two tones in one note.

“Come down an afternoon when we practising,” Mannette told Maifan Drayton, then in Invaders, who recalled: “When we went we were shocked to see one man playing two pans. Boots was on bass, Sterling Betancourt was on guitar and Tony Williams on cello. We were mystified.”

The public was even more dazzled. After a concert at Globe the audience emptied its pockets into the Pans.

Now that Trinidad realised what a steelband could accomplish, even the elite supported them. Bermudez donated drums, Fitz Blackman offered uniforms, the Himalaya Club, the Little Carib, and the Jaycees held fundraising dances.

The Tourist Board and Sir Gerald Wight each offered \$500. Governor Sir Hubert

Rance's aide de camp organised an auction: Winfield Scott bought a case of whiskey and returned it to the auctioneer, who promptly sold it again. Edwin Lee Lum, a non-smoker, bought 2,000 cigarettes.

The band left on 5th July and spent a week in Martinique, where almost all the players picked up new girls and old diseases. Sonny Roach got a sore throat and returned home, but the rest went on to Bordeaux, Paris and then London.

TASPO's first engagement was at the BBC, after which they performed at the Colonial office, and at the Festival. “A revolution in music reached London today, and experts predict it will sweep the country in a new craze,” reported an English paper: “Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra sat outside the Festival Concert Hall and tapped sweet, swiny music out of rusty Pans still with steamer labels stuck to them after their trans-Atlantic voyage.”

The real revolution, however, had already taken place months before, when TASPO, and by extension the steelband movement, forged the alliance of people from different social classes and races, which seeded the nationalist movement that 11 years later won independence for Trinidad and Tobago.

Acknowledgement

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Imperial College, London; The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2024; Celebrating Science and the Arts

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Abstract

Imperial College London's South Kensington campus is the University's main campus, where most teaching and research takes place and one of the main areas that the 'The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2024' was held during the weekend of 15-16th June 2024. It is sited in an ideal setting to host a festival that fuses Science and Arts against a backdrop of some of the world's most iconic venues, such as the Royal Albert Hall, museums such as the Natural History Museum, Science Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, and institutions such as the Royal College of Art, the Royal College of Music, and the Goethe-Institut. The festival commenced on Saturday 15th June with a plethora of demonstrations and hands-on events ranging from explorations into the solar system, innovative technologies in robotics and AI, environmental impacts of plastics, multisensory installations of the mind, health, and food technologies to a host of practical creations of sensational artworks, creative workshops that drew in over 50,000 of attendees to fully participate.

Music was well represented with up-and-coming acts from the Royal College of Music, Goethe-Institut, Institut Francais and the Royal Albert Hall in addition to live jazz, soul and world music. 'Nostalgia', the oldest steelband in the UK, was selected to represent the music of the steelband. Our involvement took place on day 2, Sunday 16th June, a glorious sunny day. The ensemble also used the occasion to initiate celebrations of the 60th anniversary of its founding by the legendary pioneers of Notting Hill Carnival, the late Russell Henderson and 95-year-old Sterling Bentancourt. With several members of Nostalgia being scientists, members not only performed four times during the day but also used the occasion to meet attendees and discuss the steelpan (Pan), both as a unique musical instrument and one whose development in Trinidad spanned decades through rigorous scientific experimentation and craftsmanship to reach its modern form. Given that many festival attendees are curiously minded, the questions posed to band members delved significantly deeper than those typically received during regular performances. This interaction prompted the band's scientific members to collaborate closely to address complex inquiries, merging artistic and scientific perspectives on the steelpan. This paper provides the rationale and an overview of this project and also documents the band's experience at this interdisciplinary festival, highlighting the distinctive questions encountered and detailing the responses provided.

Keywords: Science, Arts, Festival, Music, Steelband, Experimental Technology, Exhibition Road, Imperial College London

Introduction

Science and the arts are often seen as separate domains, each representing a distinct way of interpreting the world. Science is typically aligned with logic, experimentation, and empirical evidence, while the arts are associated with creativity, expression, and interpretation. However, this perceived divide is more complex than it appears. Despite their differing methods, both fields share a profound connection in their efforts to explore, understand, and represent reality.

At its essence, science aims to explain the natural world through careful observation, experimentation, and analysis. It offers a structured and systematic understanding of the universe, providing explanations for phenomena ranging from the microscopic to the cosmic. The rigorous methodologies of science seek to uncover truths about the world grounded in evidence and repeatability. This pursuit of knowledge is fuelled by curiosity, a fundamental human trait that scientists share with artists.

Conversely, arts explore the human experience, capturing emotions, ideas, and perspectives that defy easy quantification. Through various forms such as painting, music, literature, and dance, arts express the nuances of human existence, delving into themes such as love, conflict, identity, and mortality. Arts challenge audiences to view the world from different perspectives, invoking imagination and introspection.

Despite their apparent differences, science and the arts intersect in significant ways. Both disciplines demand creativity and innovation. Many scientific breakthroughs result from thinking beyond conventional boundaries, a trait often linked with artistic creativity. Similarly, arts can draw from scientific insights, as evidenced by Leonardo da Vinci's precise anatomical

drawings or the application of physics in modern digital art.

Furthermore, both science and the arts enrich society by deepening our understanding of the world and ourselves. Science drives technological advancements that shape our daily lives, while the arts influence culture, shaping our collective identity and values. Together, these disciplines can address complex issues by offering both practical solutions and thoughtful reflections. For instance, environmental challenges can be addressed through scientific research and effectively communicated and explored through the emotional resonance of artistic expression. Thus, while science and the arts employ distinct methods, they are deeply intertwined. They represent complementary approaches to exploring the world, each enhancing the other. Science offers the structure and foundation for understanding reality, while the arts provide the emotional and interpretive means to comprehend the human experience within that reality. Together, they created a holistic approach to knowledge, enriching both our intellectual and emotional lives and were central to themes demonstrated over 15-16th June, The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2024.

Celebrating Science and the Arts

The Great Exhibition Road Festival is a huge collaboration between Imperial College London and many partner organisations along and around Exhibition Road, the main thoroughfare of the area in which 50,000 visitors attend. The Public Engagement Team within the university manages and produces the Festival in collaboration with many partners, some of which are large-scale institutions such as the Science Museum and smaller

organisations such as the Royal Society of Sculptors. Work begins on the planning of the Festival a year beforehand with ideation sessions exploring possible programmes of activities. The university, which contributes 75% of the Festival's content has a plethora of researchers and scientists working on groundbreaking scientific discoveries and research which can provide lots of different activities, experiences, hands-on workshops, performances and much more. The Festival becomes a vehicle for these researchers to use this unique opportunity to engage the public in their specific field of science creating dialogue and discussion around this and furthering the public's knowledge and understanding. Moreover, researchers also gain a better understanding of their research which is enriched through speaking to people outside of the field who could be affected by or interested in it. To enable some of these conversations, over the past six years of the Festivals' history

art, has provided and played an important and crucial way to help break down complex topics and areas of research, and as such this fusing of science and art is seen across many different activities taking place at the Festival.

The Festival site crosses the boundary lines of two London boroughs – Westminster and The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC). The Festival provides opportunities for the many organisations involved to build on their existing relationships and partnerships with local stakeholder communities across the boroughs. Notting Hill, which resides in North Kensington (RBKC) has a rich history with the Caribbean community and carnival. The university, as well as many of the festival partner organisations have engaged over many years in community and partnership working with local organisations, charities and community groups across Notting Hill, as well as many



Figure 1. Overview of the Great Exhibition Road Festival on a brilliant sunny Sunday 16th June 2024
Copyright: Dave Guttridge, Great Exhibition Road Festival

other areas of the boroughs. To continue the work around inclusion and access that the Festival provides a unique platform to not only invite visitors from the borough but also find opportunities to collaborate in mutually beneficial ways.



Figure 2a. Artist in PaintLab creating a dynamic art piece live with the help of a visitor.



Figure 2b. One of many researchers engaged in discussion and dialogue with visitors. Copyright: Dave Guttridge, Great Exhibition Road Festival



Figure 3. Robodog on display from the Imperial Robotics Forum. Copyright: Dave Guttridge, Great Exhibition Road Festival



Figure 4. Artist creating a live piece of work having inspired by the research led by the National Heart and Lung Institute. The work was created with the help of visitors and

Introduction of a Steelband Ensemble into The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2024.



Figure 5. The elegant 2nd floor front entrance meeting area at Imperial College Business School where Nostalgia held its first meeting with Imperial College on 26th March 2024.

The introduction of a steelband into this prestigious event was prudently examined through a series of meetings initially conducted by Sevinc Kisacik from the Public Engagement Team very early on in the planning stages. Initially, the conversations were around knowledge exchange – what is Nostalgia about and its history, and what the Public Engagement

team was responsible for and the work that they do. It was a fact-finding mission to gain an understanding of the Notting Hill history and its sense of community, carnival and steelpan. These meetings took place at The Tabernacle, a historically important building in North Kensington with strong links to carnival. Once the relationship had been established discussions took place around whether Nostalgia would like to take part in the Festival, and in what way could this take shape. It began after several communications and a meeting at Imperial College London with the Public Engagement Team and co-author Haroun Shah between 2 – 4 pm on 26th March 2024 (Fig. 5). The meeting focussed on Nostalgia's bid to represent the many steelbands in the UK. The following document was used to support Nostalgia's case for the event, which also aimed to use the occasion to initiate celebrations of its 60th anniversary, something that the Public Engagement team felt was an important, mutually beneficial output – enabling a grassroots local community a platform to re-group through this opportunity and to help lend support with this. The submitted statement is as follows:

“The Festival of Britain, which commenced on 26th July 1951 at London's Southbank, celebrated Britain's achievements in arts, science, technology, and industrial design. Commonwealth nations were invited to showcase their creativity and innovation. In response, Trinidad & Tobago sent its inaugural steelband, the '*Trinidad All-Steel Pan Percussion Orchestra*' (TASPO), marking a pivotal moment in the country's cultural history. Originally intended for some brief performances over a few days, TASPO captivated British audiences: performing at the BBC and in cities such as

Leeds, Manchester, London (Tottenham), and Edinburgh, demonstrating its unique sound, that led to an extended stay until 12th December 1951. One TASPO member, Sterling Betancourt, remained in London and teamed up with the renowned Trinidadian jazz musician Russell Henderson, and with Ralph Cherrie, formed the “Russ Henderson Steelband” in 1964. They performed in various entertainment venues across the city with intermittent ad hoc members. In 1985, Philmore 'Boots' Davidson, another TASPO member, joined the group, and together transitioned the band to 'Nostalgia Steelband', with Sterling Betancourt as their leader (McCalman et al., 2022).

Nostalgia Steelband, tracing its roots back to TASPO, is the UK's oldest steelband. Maintaining the traditional '*Pan-Round-Neck*' configuration from its TASPO's roots, Nostalgia has made significant cultural contributions, including performances at the London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony, recording at the renowned Abbey Road Studios, collaborative projects such as Steelpan/Mas for the Shanghai Festival 2013, participation in carnivals across Europe, Canada (2004-2019) while playing on the streets of Trinidad with Southern All Stars for carnival 2018. As reported in the Trinidad Guardian in 2018, Nostalgia made history as the first steelband to take its own Pans to Trinidad to perform on the streets during carnival. The band continues to expand its portfolio and innovate, organising international Steelpan/Carnival Arts conferences from 2006 to 2023. The most recent conference was held in Ghana between 4 -8th December 2023, culminating in a street carnival in the city of Winneba on 9th December 2023. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Nostalgia brought its

music to the homes of residents experiencing illness, older adults or people experiencing poor mental health in London's Notting Hill Carnival community (Shah et al., 2020). This initiative helped boost vaccine uptake from just 30% to over 90% in the BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) community, a success reported by BBC National News and the Caribbean media (Shah et al., 2021). To document these milestones, the band launched Volume 1 of its biannual *'International Journal of Carnival Arts'* (IJCA-ISSN-2752-342X) in May 2020, with Volume 9 due to be published in December 2024

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

The aim was for the band to kick off its 60th anniversary celebrations at 'Great Exhibition Road Festival' on Sunday 16th June 2024'. This testimonial, together with PowerPoint presentations, enabled Nostalgia to secure its bid for the event scheduled for 16th June 2024. Nostalgia's ability to perform both as a stationary and parading band had a significant bearing on the Festival teams' selection of a steel band. This was followed up with visits to see the band rehearsals from 17th April 2024 and chart a programme that would fit into the



Figure 6. A cake to mark the start of Nostalgia Steelband's 60th-anniversary celebrations on Sunday, 16th June 2024 and concluded 1st September 2024 in Oxford 2024.

overall plans of the project in mid-June. Four performances were agreed upon, two as a parading band and two as stationary performances.



Figure 7. promotion video of Nostalgia Steelband from rehearsal sessions.

Nostalgia's Predicament

Nostalgia faced an enormous predicament in deciding whether to accept this invitation to collaborate on a project with Imperial College London during a period marked by one of the lowest points in its long history. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the band was thriving, even demonstrating sufficient momentum to travel with its own instruments abroad (Shah, 2020). However, in the aftermath of the pandemic, Nostalgia, like many other steelbands, encountered severe monetary difficulties, primarily due to a substantial loss of performance income. These financial challenges were compounded by mounting debts and the resignation of senior band members. In their absence, a newly formed and inexperienced youth team undertook efforts to preserve the band's legacy from 2021. During this tumultuous period, the band experienced multiple dissolutions, and only a small ensemble was available to perform at the NHC in 2022. Following this event, the band remained inactive for the rest of

the year and the first half of 2023. By the time NHC 2023 approached, an even smaller group took the initiative to represent the band during the carnival on 27- 28th August 2023. Concurrently, the band underwent reorganisation, including re-registration at Companies House.

The invitation to perform at The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2024 was seen as a pivotal opportunity to rejuvenate the band. With a small core team, Nostalgia launched an ambitious recruitment drive, reaching out to former members who had been inactive for over a decade. To the band's great satisfaction, several former members attended the performance at Imperial College on Sunday 16th June 2024. For the festival, the band's repertoire consisted of traditional calypsos, Caribbean folk music, and popular songs, carefully selected to captivate the audience and reignite interest in the band's performances. The first and most frequently asked question pertained to our two performances as a parading band. Typically, those familiar with steelbands were accustomed to stationary performances, where steelpan instruments are supported by racks. Observing a mobile band, with instruments fastened around the necks of the players, was regarded as novel and became a

significant topic of discussion. However, it was primarily during breaks in our stationary performances that we received questions from attendees. For this paper, only the scientific questions posed are reported and discussed below:

1) Please give a summary of the Steelpan:

The steelpan, previously referred as a steel drum, is a unique musical instrument that originated in Trinidad. Though it is often celebrated for its cultural significance and vibrant sound, the instrument is also a remarkable example of science in action. The instrument's design, materials, acoustics, and method of playing are all rooted in principles of physics, engineering, and material science (Blake, 1995).

2) Has the method of making steelpans changed?

Trinidad and Tobago, as an oil producer in the early 20th century, naturally had an excess of oil drums. Resourceful musicians repurposed oil drums to create new musical instruments. Today, modern steelpans are still crafted from steel oil barrels, though newer steel alloys that improve the instrument's resonance and durability are now being used. More recently, sheets of metal are bought and rolled into shape especially when there is a paucity of barrels. The steelpan's body, formed from



Figure 8. Nostalgia Steelband's two modes of performance (left) Mobile - Pans are fastened around the necks of players during the parade (right) Stationary - performances using racks to hold the Pans. Taken on Day-2 on Sunday 16th June on Exhibition Road. Copyright: Dave Guttridge, Great Exhibition Road Festival

the bottom of a 55-gallon oil drum, is hammered and carefully shaped to create different playing surfaces or "notes." Each note is an isolated area on the surface that vibrates to produce a specific pitch when struck, a feature that results from precise material manipulation and tuning (Johnson 2011).

3) Describe the unique sound of the steelpan

The steelpan's unique sound is largely due to its complex acoustic properties, governed by the science of vibrations and harmonics. When a musician strikes a note on the steelpan, that area of metal vibrates at a specific frequency, producing a sound wave. These sound waves are what is heard as musical notes, and each note's pitch is determined by the shape, size, and tension of the metal surface in that area.

Every note on a steelpan is designed to produce a fundamental frequency (the pitch that is primarily heard) and several overtones or harmonics, which give the sound its timbral richness. When a note is struck, it vibrates in complex patterns, producing not only the fundamental frequency but also a series of harmonics that contribute to the overall "ring" or resonance of the note. This balance of fundamental tones and overtones allows the steelpan to produce a warm, full sound that is immediately recognisable. (Saldena, 2020)

4) How is a steelpan tuned?

The process of tuning a steelpan is both an art and a science. The tuner adjusts each note area by hammering the steel to shape it into precise contours, altering the tension in specific regions to change the pitch. This process requires a deep understanding of the relationship between material properties and sound frequency.

When a note is hammered into a concave shape, it has a natural tendency to vibrate at lower frequencies (producing lower pitches). If the shape is more convex, the frequencies increase, and the pitch rises. Fine adjustments are made by altering the tension of the metal in specific regions, which requires expert knowledge of elasticity and material properties. Since each note area is interconnected through the steelpan's continuous metal surface, tuning one note can affect others, requiring a balance of precision and intuition from the tuner.

5) Are there any female Pan tuners?

Women steelpan tuners have historically been underrepresented in the field, which has traditionally been male-dominated. However, in recent decades, women have emerged as accomplished steelpan tuners, breaking barriers and redefining the craft with their expertise, creativity, and dedication. Trinibagonian pioneers such as Dameon Gayle, Bertha Todd, Louisa Bartholomew, Aviel Scanterbury and Michelle Huggins-Watts are increasingly being recognised as they continue to break barriers in the steelpan community. With the late Ellie Mannette based at West Virginia University, others such as Emily Lemmerman and Yuko Asada (now at Northern Illinois University) are paving the way for future generations. These women have demonstrated that tuning is not merely a mechanical process but a deeply artistic endeavour where attention to detail and a nuanced ear are paramount. Their contributions have helped refine the tonal quality of steelpans, ensuring that each instrument is capable of producing rich, resonant music that captivates audiences worldwide.

6) What creates the complex harmonics and beautiful sound of a Pan

One of the distinguishing features of the steelpan is its bright, resonant sound, which comes from the complex harmonic content of each note. Unlike many Western instruments that are built to emphasise the fundamental frequency, the steelpan is crafted to produce strong harmonic overtones. This harmonic richness is achieved by precisely shaping and tuning the steel in a way that maximises these overtones.

For example, a typical note on a steelpan will include not only the fundamental frequency but also prominent second and third harmonics. This harmonic structure contributes to the steelpan's unique tonal quality and makes it capable of a range of expressive sounds. By manipulating the size, shape, and tension of each note area, tuners can adjust the harmonic emphasis, giving the instrument its characteristic "voice."

7) How does the material used affect its resonance and durability

The material of the steelpan plays a critical role in its resonance and durability. While traditional steelpans were made from standard carbon steel, modern steelpans may use special alloys or treatments to enhance sound quality and resist wear. Steel treated with nitriding, a process that hardens the metal's surface by infusing it with nitrogen, is one advancement that increases the pan's durability and tonal stability. Nitriding not only makes the instrument more resistant to corrosion and dents but also allows it to hold its tuning longer.

The thickness of the steel also affects the resonance and sustain of each note. Thinner metal results in a brighter, more resonant

sound but is more susceptible to damage and detuning, while thicker steel provides durability but may have a duller sound. Modern instrument makers balance these factors to create steelpans that are both resonant and durable.

8) What is the science behind its audible sound?

The steelpan's construction allows it to project sound effectively without the need for electronic amplification. The body of the pan acts as a resonator, amplifying the vibrations created by each note. The curved shape of the pan directs the sound waves outward, making the instrument audible over large areas. Additionally, the positioning of notes in the pan is arranged to maximise the acoustic projection of frequently used pitches, ensuring a balanced sound profile across the range of the instrument.

The positioning of notes, known as the "circle of fourths and fifths" in a tenor pan, is not random but rather a result of thoughtful acoustic design. Placing notes that are harmonically related next to each other minimises acoustic interference and produces a clear, resonant sound. This design not only improves sound quality but also helps musicians navigate the Pan, facilitating more fluid and efficient playing.

9) Is the instrument likely to continue to evolve?

Recent advancements in steelpan science and technology aim to improve sound quality, tuning stability, and durability. For example, electronic steelpans use sensors and digital sound processing to replicate the acoustic properties of the traditional steelpan while providing greater control over pitch and volume. These electronic versions allow for experimentation with new tunings and harmonics, further

expanding the instrument's musical possibilities.

Additionally, research in materials science is leading to the development of new alloys and surface treatments that extend the life of the steelpan and improve its acoustic properties. These innovations not only preserve the cultural heritage of the steelpan but also push the boundaries of its scientific and artistic potential.

10) **Has The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2024 given steelpan a platform to link Arts and Science?**

The steelpan exemplifies a harmonious intersection of art and science, seamlessly integrating principles of acoustics, materials science, and engineering to produce its distinctive sound. Its inclusion in a Festival of Arts and Science is particularly fitting, as its creation and tuning are grounded in a profound understanding of vibration, harmonic theory, and the properties of materials. This instrument serves as a vivid demonstration of how scientific principles underpin musical artistry.

As advancements continue to refine its design and performance, the steelpan stands as a remarkable testament to the ingenuity and creativity of its inventors. It embodies the synergy between cultural tradition and scientific innovation, enriching the musical landscape with its unique timbre (Prospect, 1986). Notably, while many instruments have undergone evolutionary changes in modern history, the steelpan holds the singular distinction of being the only instrument to have been truly invented in the 20th century (Brathwaite et al, 2007; Phillip, 1992; Shah et al., 2023; Smith, 1979). This fact underscores its importance as a central feature in musical festivals, where it not only captivates audiences but also

highlights the dynamic interplay between science, technology, and the arts.

11) **Do you know of a book that unravels the Science of the Pan for the Musician and Artist?**

The book *Secrets of the Steelpan* by Dr. Anthony Achong uniquely bridges the gap between science, craftsmanship, and culture to explain the inner workings of the steelpan (Achong, 2003, 2013). At 1200 pages, it stands out as a monumental contribution to both the academic and musical worlds, shedding light on an instrument that blends art and science seamlessly. The book provides a detailed exploration of the physics and acoustics behind the steelpan, making it one of the few works that delve into the scientific principles governing its sound production in such detail. It includes topics such as material behaviour, sound wave dynamics, and tuning techniques. It combines engineering insights with cultural and historical context, offering a holistic view of the steelpan. Readers not only learn how it works but also gain an understanding of its evolution and cultural significance. While the book contains technical details for engineers and scientists, the clear explanations and illustrations make it accessible to non-technical readers.

Dr. Achong (2013) highlights the steelpan as a symbol of innovation and resilience, reflecting the ingenuity of the people of Trinidad and Tobago. This cultural emphasis adds depth and emotional resonance to the technical analysis. It is richly supplemented with diagrams, photographs, and explanations that demystify the intricate process of crafting and tuning a steelpan. This makes it not just theoretical but practical for anyone

interested in steelpan construction or acoustics.

Brief Science Biographies of Nostalgia's authors of this paper:

Laila M.N. Shah

My academic trajectory has been profoundly influenced by a longstanding passion for science, a curiosity that has guided my pursuits from an early age. During my A-level studies, I engaged in rigorous studies of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics, thereby establishing a comprehensive and interdisciplinary foundation conducive to advanced research. This foundation heightened during my undergraduate studies in Chemistry at King's College London, where I first encountered Mass Spectrometry, a sophisticated analytical technique that became pivotal to my scientific aspirations. This interest led me to pursue a Master's degree, with a specialisation in Hydrogen-Deuterium Exchange Mass Spectrometry, through which I investigated the critical issue of antimicrobial resistance.

In 2021, I commenced my doctoral studies at the University of Oxford in the Department of Physical and Theoretical Chemistry. My PhD research builds upon my expertise in Mass Spectrometry, focusing on the study of magnetoreception - a biological mechanism through which organisms perceive magnetic fields. This work exemplifies a commitment to advancing the boundaries of scientific knowledge, utilising innovative analytical methodologies to explore fundamental questions in Life Sciences. Throughout my academic journey, I have actively engaged with the global scientific community, presenting my research at prominent conferences in the UK, Germany, Greece, and the United States. These interactions have provided invaluable opportunities to disseminate findings, exchange ideas, and enhance the impact of my research.

Parallel to my scientific endeavours, I have cultivated a profound passion for music, particularly within the context of the Notting Hill Carnival (NHC). Since infancy, I have participated in the NHC and, despite formal training in piano and saxophone, my musical dedication lies with the steelpan. Playing with three London-based steelbands, my interest was further enriched by a visit to Trinidad in 2013, an experience that inspired me to arrange my first musical piece for the NHC.

This composition secured Nostalgia Steelband its first carnival award that same year. Currently, I serve as both bandleader and arranger for Nostalgia Steelband and have recruited other Oxford students to the band.

Olav A. Johannessen

The sciences have interested me since I was a child, however, it wasn't until high school that I discovered my passion for Chemistry. This passion drove me to apply for the undergraduate program at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, in my hometown Tromsø in the north of Norway in 2018. Over the course of the program, I felt myself leaning more and more towards physics and mathematics and took on extra coursework in these subjects. In the spring of 2021, I graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and a second Bachelor's degree in Physics. Shortly after, in September of the same year, I started a PhD in Physical and Theoretical Chemistry at the University of Oxford under the supervision of Professor Justin Benesch. My research concerns the self- and co-assembly of small heat-shock proteins. This group of molecular chaperones are vital for preventing pathologic aggregation of other unfolded proteins and are therefore of interest in the context of protein misfolding diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease. Due to the structural heterogeneity of these proteins, they have long been difficult to study. My work is focused on applying a combination of novel native mass spectrometry techniques and mathematical modelling to better understand their structural dynamics.

I started playing the trumpet when I was 7-8 years old, and I have since played in a variety of symphonic orchestras and bands, including the Oxford Millennium Orchestra. My first introduction to the steel pan was in 2023, when I played a tenor pan with Nostalgia Steelband at the Notting Hill Carnival in London, both for J'Ouvert and both days of the main Notting Hill Carnival parade. I played with Nostalgia again in 2024 for the Notting Hill and Oxford Carnivals and hope to continue playing this incredible instrument - Steelpan with Nostalgia in the future.

Emina Hadzifejzovic

My scientific career spanned work I did at UCL, the Universities of Glasgow, Sheffield, and Oxford, as well as the Institute of Physical and General Chemistry in Belgrade, Serbia. My research has focused on the development and physicochemical

characterization of innovative materials, with applications in photochemical CO₂ conversion and lithium-ion batteries. As a Physical Chemist, I conducted over four years of fundamental and applied research on alumina-silicates, particularly zeolites, some of which were successfully scaled up for industrial production. After moving to the UK and completing my PhD in Chemistry, specialising in lithium-ion batteries, I spent five years at UCL working on pioneering plasma electrochemistry projects. These projects utilised specialised plasma systems to investigate the thermodynamic properties of various metals and to synthesise and deposit metals for corrosion protection of stainless steel.

Additionally, I contributed to research on the synthesis and characterisation of ferroelectric Titania-based nanomaterials at the University of Glasgow, as well as lithium-based electrode materials for lithium-ion batteries (LNMC) and battery testing at the University of Sheffield.

During my twelve years at the University of Oxford, my work included developing materials and chemical reactions for on-demand hydrogen production, designing highly conductive polymer-based nanocomposites, and advancing photoelectrochemical CO₂ conversion into fine chemicals and fuels. I received a merit award for achievements in hydrogen production. My work on polymer-based nanocomposites, conducted in collaboration with IRPC Thailand, was scaled up to industrial production, while the CO₂ conversion project was part of the HORIZON 2020 initiative, involving collaboration with universities from four EU countries.

In addition to my research roles, I co-supervised and mentored PhD, Master's, and undergraduate Chemistry students, providing support on both theoretical and practical aspects of their projects. I also served as a Lecturer in Inorganic and Analytical Chemistry at the University of East London.

I joined Nostalgia Steelband in 2003 and have played with the band at numerous engagements throughout the UK. This often entailed travelling long distances (Glasgow, Sheffield and more recently Oxford) for weekly practice in London. My most recent performances in 2024 were at the Imperial College Arts and Science Festival (The Great Exhibition Road Festival (16th June), Nottingham Carnival (18th August), London's Notting Hill Carnival (25-26th August) and Oxford's Cowley Road Carnival (1st September). The latter was a poignant moment for me with Nostalgia as this

city was my home for several years and members of my former Department of Chemistry, University of Oxford came out to see the band. My head, Professor Foord commented "it was an enjoyable spectacle to observe. I am impressed at the quality of your band and the honour for your band to lead the (carnival) parade."

Megan B. Wilson

I am currently an FY2 doctor working in Manchester on Paediatrics. I have always loved science, and at school did Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Further Maths for my A-levels, as well as being heavily involved in the science society. I went on to complete my medical degree at the University of Cambridge in 2023. My studies involved an in-depth education on all the basic medical sciences, of which I took a particular interest in anatomy and neuroscience. I chose to do my intercalated BA degree in neuroscience, which involved lecture-style learning on research in many different areas and the completion of a lab-based project looking at the role of the D2 dopamine receptor in cognitive flexibility. In my clinical years, my interest in neuroscience continued and I worked with the paediatric neurosurgery department at Addenbrookes to audit the performance of the vagal nerve stimulation devices in their patient population with intractable epilepsy (research which I then presented at the British Paediatric Neurology Association conference). In my career so far, I have particularly enjoyed critical care medicine due to the medical complexity involved and the ability to become competent in multiple practical procedures. I have loved being involved in Nostalgia over the last 10 years as a percussionist and supporter at their performances around the country while participating with the band at J'Ouvert and the main Notting Hill Carnival over the years. I always enjoy watching the different steelbands at Panorama and can't wait for my trip next year to go to the carnival in Trinidad in 2025.

Matthew Wong Sang

Ever since I was a young boy growing up in Trinidad and Tobago, I have been deeply curious about how the world—both natural and man-made—works. I was particularly excited about the future of robots. Unsurprisingly, this innate drive later led me down a path of science and engineering. After being awarded an Open Scholarship by the government of Trinidad and Tobago for my results in the Caribbean equivalent of A-level examinations, I chose to

pursue a Bachelor of Engineering in Electromechanical Engineering at the University of Southampton. The course was designed to equip me with foundational knowledge in electronic, mechanical, and electrical engineering—necessary for working with electromechanical systems, such as robots!

My final-year individual research project introduced me to biomedical engineering for the first time, specifically a subfield known as rehabilitation robotics. In this field, exoskeletons and other robotic assistive devices help individuals who have lost motor function due to stroke or other neurological diseases. In my research, I designed and developed a low-cost prototype for a rehabilitation device called the X-Finger, which assists in relearning finger extension. Following this work, I decided I wanted to work at the intersection of healthcare and robotics.

A few years and a pandemic later, I opted to undertake a Master of Science in Human and Biological Robotics at Imperial College London. This course focused on deeply understanding the human body to engineer better, safer systems that interact with it. My master's research was again in the field of rehabilitation robotics—this time, working on lower-limb exoskeletons. I investigated the application of offline reinforcement learning to adaptive exoskeleton control for gait rehabilitation. Although I have now completed my degree (with distinction), I am continuing my research alongside my supervisor. We are currently exploring other RL-based control approaches for lower-limb exoskeletons.

Apart from my academic studies and research activities, I enjoy sharing my love for STEM with others through various initiatives. For example, I have volunteered at Imperial's Robotics Academy, which teaches school children from around London to program using LEGO-based robots. I also work part-time in a visitor-facing role at the Science Museum. Additionally, in 2024, I volunteered at The Great Exhibition Road Festival—Imperial's annual event that aimed to promote STEM to the public. As fate would have it, this is where I came across the sweet sounds of the Nostalgia Steelband. I indeed felt nostalgic the moment I heard steelpan in the air. As a Trini in London, I am proud to have joined Nostalgia and look forward to sharing the sounds of our national instrument with the world.

Haroun N. Shah

Held senior academic appointments at the University of London for 25 years with intermittent periods (2-3 years) in Canada and the Middle East (where I met members of Nostalgia Steelband on tour and re-established links with steelpan and became a permanent member of the band). In 1997, I took up my first appointment outside university as Head of Molecular Identification Services, Public Health England (now UK Health Security Agency) to initiate a new laboratory with a remit to study and intercept the threat of emerging, atypical and rarely isolated human infectious disease agents into the UK. My team established a national service for the diagnosis of human pathogens which is still operational today while also building a vibrant research team to develop supporting technologies, the most promising line to emerge being new forms of Mass Spectrometry (MS). Pioneered the development of nano-technologies, using cutting-edge platforms based upon genes (Genomics) and the chemistry of proteins (Proteomics) and from 1998 began hosting annual international conferences to promote R & D in the field. Published three volumes in MS, in 2010, 2017 and 2023; volume 4 is due 2025. These books celebrate an epic period of science which led to a new era in the diagnosis and understanding of human pathogens using various forms of Mass Spectrometry. Published 170 peer reviewed papers, written 52 chapters, written/edited 5 books, procured >£20 million in research grants and supervised 35 PhD students. In 2013, I was awarded the Dr. Rudranath Capildeo Gold Award for Applied Science and Technology by my native homeland, Trinidad and received a DSc from the University of West London (UWL) in June 2023 where I work on a part-time basis. I also serve as a scientific consultant for the University of Oxford-based technology company 'Ramanomics Ltd' to develop a new technology at UWL that would reduce disease diagnosis from days to seconds and work with a vibrant group of young scientists in this fast-moving and exciting field of single-cell nano-technology.

Acknowledgements

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We thank the Imperial College team for their frequent visits to our Panyard during rehearsals from 17th April 2024, where the team actively promoted the band and discussed our role in the festival. We also deeply appreciate the many visitors who shared photos of Nostalgia's performances and sent questions about steelpan and Nostalgia.

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Three Carnivals, One Legacy: Celebrating Nostalgia Steelband's 60th Anniversary

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Abstract

In the summer of 1964, Russell Henderson and Sterling Betancourt established a small steelband ensemble that would eventually evolve into the enduring Nostalgia Steelband. This formation marked a significant moment in the development of steelpan music in the United Kingdom, bringing the vibrant sounds of the Caribbean to British audiences. Despite the ensemble's humble beginnings, it grew into a cultural institution celebrated for its contributions to music, community, and academia through conferences and workshops and eventually to establishing this unique biannual periodical, the *'International Journal of Carnival Arts'* in May 2020. However, due to a lack of precise historical documentation regarding the exact date of its inception, the band chose to commemorate its founding with a special gathering. On 16th June 2024, past and current members convened at the prestigious Imperial College Festival "The Great Exhibition Road Festival 2024," where the band was due to perform to also share this intimate reflection on the past and the commencement of a series of celebratory activities to mark the band's 60th anniversary. Nostalgia Steelband was originally formed with the intention of participating in the emerging carnival culture of the United Kingdom, making its inaugural appearance at the Notting Hill Carnival in 1966 under the leadership of Russell Henderson and Sterling Betancourt. Over the years, the band was buoyant and travelled widely, undertaking unique projects. However, post-COVID-19, it faced numerous challenges, including periods of dissolution and resurgence. Nevertheless, it demonstrated remarkable resilience, pooling its collective energy and passion for music to achieve an extraordinary landmark. The band participated in three successive carnivals; the City of Nottingham (18-08-24), Notting Hill Carnival (25/26-08-24) and Oxford's Cowley Road Carnival (01-08-24) to mark its diamond anniversary in 2024.

Keywords: Steelband, Carnival, Legacy, Diamond Anniversary, Resilience, Tradition

Introduction

To celebrate this historic milestone of six decades, the band embarked on a series of performances at three prominent carnivals, each reflecting different aspects of its legacy:

1. **The City of Nottingham Caribbean Carnival** in the

Midlands, held on Sunday, 18th August 2024. This location holds special significance as it is the current residence of the band's retiring leader, further symbolising Nostalgia's enduring connection to the communities it serves.

2. **The Notting Hill Carnival**, where Nostalgia has performed since

1966, is its so-called home turf on 25 -26th August 2024. This event is particularly meaningful, as the Notting Hill Carnival was the site of the band's first major performance and remains a cornerstone of its identity.

3. **Oxford's Cowley Road Carnival** on Sunday 1st September 2024, where half of the new band members reside and are students. It provided a fitting conclusion to the band's anniversary celebrations with its unique fusion of cultural vibrancy and historical resonance in a city that witnessed the resurgence of carnival after a 5-year hiatus.

The City of Nottingham Caribbean Carnival

This location holds special significance as it is the current residence of the band's retiring leader, Dr. Lionel McCalman. Lionel is a revered figure in the world of steelpan music, as a musician, cultural ambassador, and a pivotal force behind the Nostalgia Steelband for nearly four decades while he lived in London. In the last year, he moved to the City of Nottingham and

formally stepped down as Nostalgia's band-leader, appointing Laila Shah, who was a member of the band from the age of 11 months, as his successor. Lionel was born in Guyana and, while growing up, was surrounded by the vibrant rhythms of calypso, soca, and Pan music. His deep-seated passion for steelpan was kindled during his attendance at Notting Hill Carnival in the 1980s, where he observed the "Pan-around-neck" style performances by Nostalgia Steelband. This transformative experience inspired his lifelong dedication to the steelpan as both an art form and cultural expression. His position as Lecturer in Education at the University of East London allowed this interest to be integrated into his work and enabled us to acquire the university's exquisite Docklands campus to initiate our first steelpan/carnival arts conference in 2006. Following his move to Nottingham, the city acknowledged his contributions to cultural heritage and extended an invitation for him to perform at the Nottingham Caribbean Carnival in August 2024. In celebration of this occasion, the



Figure 1a. (right) Nostalgia Steelband's 18-seater minibus still in use following three years after it was sold post-Covid. It was re-rented and used to take members and instruments from London to Nottingham for their carnival on 18th August 2024. (Figure 1b) Band members, Lionel McCalman (left) and Laila Shah (right) starts to set up on stage for a 3-hour performance.

London-based Nostalgia re-hired its former 18-seater minibus from its current owner and travelled to the City of Nottingham to perform at their historic carnival on 18th August 2024.

Brief History of Nottingham Carnival

The origins of the Nottingham Carnival can be traced back to 1958 when a group of immigrants from the Caribbean island of St. Kitts, residing in Nottingham, sought to express and celebrate their cultural heritage. This endeavour led to the organisation of a small carnival event in the Meadows, a local area of Nottingham. The participants adorned themselves in vibrant costumes inspired by the North American Indian aesthetic, a traditional style deeply rooted in Trinidad and Tobago's carnival culture. Accompanied by the rhythmic sounds of steel bands and the vibrant melodies of calypso music, they paraded through the neighbourhood, thereby introducing the local community to the rich traditions of Caribbean culture (Nottingham Carnival, 2024).

Since then, the event has experienced a tumultuous history. From 1958 to the early 1990s, the Nottingham Carnival was organised sporadically, with numerous efforts to sustain the event proving unsuccessful, primarily due to limited resources. The carnival experienced a resurgence during the early 1990s but faced cancellation in 1998 by the City Council, which cited concerns related to health, safety, and funding. This decision prompted significant public discontent, culminating in a large-scale demonstration in the City Centre. This community action served as a pivotal moment, catalysing the evolution of the carnival into its contemporary form. In 1999, following engagement with the City Council, the Tuntum Housing Association -

a community-based, non-profit housing organisation - assumed responsibility for organising the carnival (Tuntum, 1999). This was achieved through collaboration with the City Council, Nottinghamshire Police, and contributions from the local community. Since this transition, the Nottingham Carnival has flourished into a major multicultural event, featuring an extensive display of high-quality carnival costumes and performances by local, national, and international artists. The event now attracts thousands of attendees annually, reflecting its significant cultural and artistic impact.

Today the event continues to provide a platform to bring together diverse communities, showcase Caribbean traditions, and highlight the contributions of the Caribbean diaspora to British society. It continues to reflect these founding ideals, combining festivity with a strong message of inclusivity. At its core, the Nottingham Caribbean Carnival is a celebration of community. It unites people from all walks of life, transcending ethnic and cultural boundaries. In a city as diverse as Nottingham, the carnival exemplifies the power of cultural events to foster harmony and mutual understanding.

Local organisations, schools, and community groups play a significant role in bringing the carnival to life. Volunteers dedicate countless hours to planning, costume-making, and organising performances, reflecting the collaborative spirit that defines the event. The parade through the streets of Nottingham, featuring floats, dancers, and performers, becomes a moving symbol of solidarity and joy, drawing in spectators and participants alike. Numerous troupes from Nottingham and beyond take part in the colourful Carnival Parade which commenced at 2pm. The

Parade route starts on the Victoria Embankment, then Wilford Grove, Felton Road and Green Street before making its way back down to the Embankment via Bunbury Street to return to the Carnival site via Wilford Grove to meet at the dedicated stage within the Carnival site.

The parade ends up in a large park in which there is a dynamic showcase of the Caribbean's rich cultural tapestry. The carnival's music, costumes, and food serve as vivid symbols of the islands' diverse heritage. DJ's blast out soca, reggae, and calypso through the park, drawing audiences into the rhythms and beats of the Caribbean. Dance troupes adorned in elaborate costumes dazzle the crowd with their movements, each piece of attire often telling a story through its intricate designs and vivid colours.

Traditional foods are integral to the celebrations and there is no shortage of offerings to attendees. Food stalls line the carnival route and park are a reminder of how deeply cuisine is tied to identity, history, and a sense of belonging. At this year's carnival, Nostalgia had the unique distinction of being the only steelband to perform at the event. To honour this, the band was provided with a prominent, covered stage that served as one of the central features of the celebrations. Over the course of three hours, the band delivered a captivating performance that resonated with the audience despite having to contend at times with competing sounds from overly enthusiastic DJs. These DJs operated multiple, highly amplified sound systems, which echoed loudly across the park, creating a lively but challenging auditory environment.

The event took place on a splendidly warm and sunny day, which drew an impressive crowd. Among the attendees, many proudly

waved flags representing Trinidad and Tobago, as well as other Caribbean nations, creating a vibrant and celebratory atmosphere. Numerous individuals approached the band during and after the performance to introduce themselves, sharing heartfelt stories about their lives in Nottingham and the broader Midlands region. These personal interactions highlighted a strong connection to their cultural roots and an eagerness to engage with the steelpan tradition.

A recurring sentiment among the audience members was a keen interest in learning to play in a steelband. However, many expressed frustration over the lack of local opportunities or groups where they could pursue this passion. Recognising this gap, Lionel, instead of stepping back from his musical journey in this new city, has taken it upon himself to address this need. With unwavering dedication, he is now working tirelessly to establish a brand-new steelband in Nottingham, ensuring that the rich tradition of steelpan music continues to thrive and inspire in this community.

The Notting Hill Carnival 2024

Notting Hill Carnival on 25 - 26th August 2024.

This event is particularly meaningful, as Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) was the site of the band's first major performance and remains a cornerstone of its identity.

Both iterations of the Carnival in London - organised by Trinidadian activist Claudia Jones (1959-1964) and featuring indoor events that highlighted Caribbean music and dance during the winter months, as well as the street carnival led by Russell Henderson and Sterling Betancourt in the summer - were initiated by Trinidadians. These events underscore the profound

cultural connections and the enduring passion that Trinidadians bring with them as they establish themselves in new homelands. Initially, cricket held the unity of the Caribbean, but with its decline, NHC soon began to fulfil this role as a vivid celebration of Caribbean culture and heritage and is today one of the most iconic street festivals in the world. Held annually in the vibrant streets of Notting Hill during the August Bank Holiday, this event today is a kaleidoscope of music, dance, art, and community spirit and is now viewed as a profound cultural, historical, and social significance, making it the linchpin of British multiculturalism and a powerful symbol of resistance and unity. The origins of the NHC are intricately linked to the struggles, resilience, and cultural expressions of the Caribbean diaspora in post-war Britain. The arrival of the Windrush Generation from the Caribbean during the 1940s and 1950s marked a significant demographic shift. However, these migrants faced systemic racism, social marginalisation, and economic challenges. Against this backdrop, the 1958 Notting Hill race riots underscored the deep racial tensions in the area. (Ishmahil, 2014). In response to these adversities, cultural initiatives emerged as a means of fostering unity and community healing. In 1959, Claudia Jones, a Trinidadian activist and journalist, organised the first of several indoor carnivals, which are widely recognised as precursors to the modern NHC. Jones envisioned these events as platforms to celebrate Caribbean culture while addressing the racial injustices of the time (Roach-McFarlane, 2014; Wilkinson, 2006).

The outdoor component of what became the NHC began in 1966, catalysed by the actions of Russell Henderson, a Trinidadian

jazz musician and steelpan player. Henderson and his steelband, which included Sterling Betancourt, Vernon "Fellows" Williams (a costume maker), Fitzroy Coleman (a jazz musician), and Ralph Cherry, initially performed at a community fair organised by Rhaune Laslett and Andre Shervington. Taking their performance to the streets of Notting Hill, Henderson and his band paraded through the neighbourhood, attracting a growing audience. Repeating this initiative for two subsequent years, the event expanded en masse, eventually evolving into the NHC we recognise today- a vibrant and enduring celebration of Caribbean heritage and cultural resistance.

Even in contemporary times, NHC remains fundamentally a celebration of Caribbean culture, deeply rooted in African traditions and colonial history. The vibrant sights and sounds of the festival evoke the dynamic atmosphere of Port of Spain, Trinidad, from which its inspiration originates. Over time, the Carnival has expanded to encompass the broader Caribbean diaspora. For instance, Nostalgia Steelband, initially formed exclusively by Trinidadians, has evolved to include members from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In 1994, the band was fractured, with some members joining Russell Henderson to form a new group, Pan Nectar, while those remaining under the leadership of Sterling Betancourt continued as Nostalgia Steelband. Both bands have maintained a prominent presence at the NHC, performing annually as single-pan ensembles. Pan Nectar incorporates racks to carry their pans, while Nostalgia Steelband adheres to the traditional "pan-



Figure 2. Cyril Khamai in the midst of NHC 2024

round-neck", a hallmark of their performances since the band's inception. Because so much of Nostalgia's history is rooted in NHC, Pannist from Japan, Canada, USA, the Caribbean, Switzerland, Germany, France, Holland, Serbia, Romania, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Palestine, Egypt, Iran, Libya and Oman have joined the band over the years to perform at NHC, one of the most iconic and eagerly anticipated cultural events in the United Kingdom. Nostalgia Steelband has never missed this carnival since its inception but Post-COVID, the band faced considerable difficulties that threatened its survival to celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2024 (see Kisacik et al. this volume). However, unexpectedly the band obtained funding from Arts Council England just days before carnival for a project titled, "Aging Gracefully with Art: Empowering Access to Carnival's Steelband Music," Grant No. NLPG-00731925-V2 for Notting Hill Carnival 2024.



Figure 3. Band members and Seniors on board a luxury coach hired of NHC NHC 2024



Figure 4 (above) Physical lifting of the float from storage to our Panyard & Flag (below)





Figure 5 Once the float is moved into place, it is floored and amps and speakers fasten securely to the sides of the metal rails. This will carry a drum kit, bass guitar and several percussion players.

The roots of this project go back to the isolation of the senior citizens of the carnival Community during and post-COVID-19. Nostalgia led a major campaign during the pandemic to boost vaccine uptake. From just 30%, uptake rose to 92% in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), where NHC takes place (Shah et al. 2020). During the COVID-19 lockdown, many senior residents were isolated, troubled and endured periods without food supplies. To alleviate some of their difficulties, members of Nostalgia visited the homes of several, taking food and playing as small ensembles outside the homes of some, especially those who were ailing to help lift their spirits (see Shah et al., 2020, 2021).

Post-COVID and as NHC recommenced, many seniors claimed that they felt disconnected from Carnival for several reasons, perhaps from cultural shifts, changing dynamics of the event, and logistical challenges. The Carnival was initially rooted in celebrating Afro-Caribbean culture and set out to foster good community unity, but post-COVID, some seniors perceive that its original purpose had shifted toward commercialisation and entertainment for a younger, broader audience. Some contend that the dominance of loud, contemporary music styles such as Sound Systems music and soca, while integral to Carnival, alienated them as many preferred the traditional calypso or less intense auditory experiences. The number

of attendees to NHC is not only large, but the bustling crowds can be overwhelming for them, making it difficult to navigate safely or comfortably to participate in the festivities. Several had mobility issues and found the infrastructure of the Carnival challenging, as there were limited seating areas, rest stops, and accessible routes within the crowded streets. They further noted that the interests and activities that dominate the Carnival, including its high-energy parades and parties, did not resonate with older individuals, and there were few events or spaces designed specifically for seniors, which further alienated them from the celebrations. Many were themselves the pioneers of NHC and felt nostalgic for its more community-focused origins and struggled to relate to its contemporary incarnation.

Many of these seniors were previous members of Nostalgia Steelband and band members felt compelled to try to resolve this disconnect. The J'Ouvert celebration was selected as the ideal environment for an experiment to bring them back into carnival owing to its short parade route that featured a gentle downhill incline along Ladbroke Grove. This location holds historical significance as the original site of the NHC and remains a central element of its footprint. Most participants reside locally, allowing for efficient transportation arrangements to the starting point at the top of Ladbroke Grove. The parade commenced at 6:00 am. By incorporating wheelchairs and other mobility aids, several senior carnivalists were enabled to join the event with minimal physical exertion required from volunteers. Nostalgia Steelband members performed Pan-round-neck, accompanied by seniors playing a variety of percussion instruments - some using household items as makeshift

instruments. The parade was characterised by exuberant singing, dancing, and widespread jubilation as the group traversed the parade route. The procession concluded at 6:45 am, with participants expressing a strong sense of accomplishment and joy. Conveniently located near the parade's endpoint, the Nostalgia Panyard at Maxilla Social Club provided a welcoming space for participants to gather. Hot drinks, snacks, and bathroom facilities were available, ensuring the comfort of all attendees. By 7:30 am, all participants were safely returned to their homes ahead of the road closures scheduled for 8:30 am, which marked preparations for the larger NHC parade. Plans were initially made to replicate this experience for J'Ouvert 2024. However, with the receipt of an Arts Council England (ACE) grant, a more ambitious project was developed, aiming to



Figure 6. The band stops Kensal Road for a break and share another one of its 60th anniversary cakes with members and onlookers including the police.

include senior participants in the main NHC parade across both days of Carnival.

This extended initiative was conducted in collaboration with St Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra, facilitated by Laila Shah, a member who has played with both steelbands. Joint rehearsals were held in advance, allowing members of each band to learn a common repertoire. Logistical arrangements included the hire of a 60-seater luxury coach, equipped to meet the needs of senior participants, as well as Nostalgia's previously owned 18-seater minibus and a 40-foot truck hired by St Michael and All Angels for their performances. Travelling in convoy, the setup allowed participants to disembark and rejoin the parade at convenient locations.

Day 1: Children's Carnival. The first day of NHC is dedicated to children's participation, and featured a collaboration with a masquerade band comprising 40 children of mostly Caribbean descent, accompanied by their teachers from a London school. This partnership added vibrancy to the parade and fostered intergenerational engagement. At a designated stop, participants celebrated the 60th anniversary of the band by sharing a commemorative cake (see Figure 6). Positioned at the front of the parade, the group experienced minimal interference from the louder Sound Systems, facilitating smooth navigation along the route. The parade concluded at 5:30 pm, allowing for an early return to the Panyard in daylight, ensuring the safe journey home of senior participants.

Day 2: Main Parade. The second day of the parade, held on Monday 26th August, saw a marked increase in attendance, with large crowds visible from the early morning. Adhering to NHC regulations, all vehicles entered the parade route by 8:30 am. A

fresh cohort of seniors participated, as the majority of those present on Day 1 found consecutive participation physically demanding. Given the significant increase in crowd density on Monday, only the most resilient senior participants rejoined the parade.

Conclusion

The project represented a substantial progression from the simpler arrangements of J'Ouvert and was deemed a resounding success. The innovative approach not only enhanced accessibility for senior participants but also reinforced intergenerational and intercultural connections within the Carnival. Based on these achievements, an abstract detailing the initiative was submitted for presentation at the 11th Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conference, titled "*Famalay!*": *Carnival Interconnections and Reconnections; Cultural Cadence: Steelpan, Calypso, and Mas and the Global Diaspora Connection*, scheduled to be held in Trinidad from 6th – 8th March 2025. The submitted abstract is reproduced below:

HONOURING LEGACY: CREATING SPACE FOR SENIOR CARNIVALISTS AT NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL

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Creating space for Senior Carnivalists at Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) underscores the critical importance of recognising and preserving the contributions of senior artists to one of the world's most iconic street festivals. NHC is deeply rooted in the legacy of pioneers such as Russell Henderson, Sterling Betancourt, Cyril Khamai et al. who were instrumental in laying its foundation. These trailblazers embody the history, traditions, and values that make the Carnival unique. However, as the Carnival expanded from its humble beginnings of about 50 participants in 1966 to attracting between 1.5 - 2 million attendees, many senior carnivalists felt side-lined, with a mere handful receiving invitations to participate in related events. Nevertheless, they continued to voice their desire "to take an active part in carnival". In response to this sentiment, Nostalgia Steelband took on the challenge by facilitating a limited performance at NHC 2023. They chose J'Ouvert as the ideal setting to experiment, as it features a short parade route with a gentle downhill incline. By utilising wheelchairs and other mobility devices, several senior carnivalists were able to participate, and they enjoyed every moment of the parade. Following the success of this initiative, and after receiving requests to repeat the process in 2024, Nostalgia Steelband secured funding from Arts Council England for a project titled "*Aging Gracefully with Art: Empowering Access to Carnival's Steelband Music.*" The project expanded to allow participation on both days of NHC. In addition to Nostalgia's 18-seater minibus, a 60-seater

luxury coach was hired to accommodate the needs of senior carnivalists, ensuring they could take part in the celebrations with greater comfort and accessibility. Band members hailed this effort as a significant success, recognising NHC as a cultural institution born from the resilience and creativity of the Caribbean diaspora in the face of adversity. This paper will demonstrate the challenges involved, but also show how numerous obstacles can be overcome to reintegrate such icons into mainstream carnival, celebrate them in public festivities, and fulfil the collective desire for their presence.

We gratefully acknowledge funding from Arts Council England for project, "*Aging Gracefully with Art: Empowering Access to Carnival's Steelband Music,*" Grant No. NLPG-00731925-V2 for Notting Hill Carnival 2024.

The Oxford Cowley Road Carnival: A Celebration of Diversity and Culture

In the mid-20th century, a significant wave of Caribbean immigrants arrived in Oxford, drawn by opportunities created by new manufacturing industries. Post-World War II Britain faced labour shortages, prompting recruitment from Commonwealth nations, particularly the Caribbean. Many of the Windrush Generation settled in Oxford, seeking stable employment and better lives. Living in the Cowley Road area was more affordable compared to the city's historic centre, making it particularly attractive to working-class residents. Historically, the neighbourhood developed as a hub for industrial and manual labourers, especially those employed by the nearby Morris Motors and later Ford car factories. The

abundance of terraced housing, originally built for factory workers, provided lower-cost accommodations that suited the budgets of working families and immigrant communities (Oxford Mail, Oxford City Council, Cowley Road Works, OxMagazine, 2024, Gallery, Cowley Road Souvenir Magazine, 2024). Over the years, Cowley Road's relative affordability has continued to draw a diverse mix of students, artists, and low-income residents, fostering a vibrant, multicultural atmosphere that reflects its working-class roots. This concentration in the Cowley Road area brought rich cultural influences, including music, cuisine, and traditions, significantly shaping Oxford's multicultural identity. However, these immigrants faced challenges, including racial discrimination and difficulties in securing housing. Despite these obstacles, the Caribbean community's resilience helped them integrate into Oxford's social fabric while preserving their cultural heritage. Musical legends such as Russell Henderson, Sterling Betancourt and Cyril Khamai (founders of NHC) said that they played as a steelband for the University of Oxford Students Annual Ball and similar to what Henderson did to initiate the NHC, he would lead his steelband onto the streets of Oxford when the Ball ended in the early hours of the morning (per. comm.) These parades in the 1960s-1970s may have been the legacy and the roots of the Cowley Road Carnival, which is celebrated as a major event that highlights the profound impact Caribbean immigrants have had on the history and culture of this medieval City of Oxford, known globally for its historic renowned university, cobblestone streets, iconic architecture and numerous landmarks, that evoke the city's rich heritage.

The Cowley Road Carnival officially traces its origins back to 1986 and was designed to bring the community together and showcase its rich diversity (Spark, 2024). Over the years, it has expanded into a major event that attracts tens of thousands of attendees from Oxford as well as across the UK. Despite its growth, the carnival retains its focus on celebrating the unique identity of Cowley Road and carries a theme each year. Because of funding setbacks due to the COVID pandemic, there was a hiatus from 2019. On 1st September 2024 the carnival returned and was themed '*Our Nature, Our Future*', and with such a theme, vehicles were barred from participating in the carnival parade.

Cowley Road is located to the southeast of Oxford's city centre, stretching from 'The Plain' roundabout near Magdalen Bridge and extending through the Cowley area where the carnival takes place. It was here at The Plain where Nostalgia members joined the parade after offloading our 16 steelpans from the minibus that took us from London to Oxford. We arrived at 11:30 am for a 12:30 pm start of the parade and began to rehearse at the very back of the procession. However, the carnival stewards moved us to the front of the parade which started promptly at 12.30 pm.

One of the highlights of the Cowley Road Carnival for us was its sensory richness. We could see the streets coming alive with colourful decorations, lively parades, and an eclectic mix of music genres along the route. Businesses look to be booming, and we could also hear calypso, soca, Afrobeat, reggae and contemporary pop by stationary DJs. We felt very privileged to be leading this parade of 24 costume bands. Each DJ kindly switched off their music to listen to the music of the steelband and made cordial

announcements to recognise the only steelband in the parade.



Figure 7. Front: Pax Nindi, CEO and Artistic Director of the Cowley Road Carnival; back left, Chris Smith (Westminster), back right Stephen Spark (SocaNews and Journalist)



Figure 8. Arrival at Cowley Road and the start of the organisation of 16 steelpan with straps to go around the necks of players.

For local participants, the carnival's parade is its crowning jewel and features community groups, schools, and artists.

Looking back behind us, we could see a colourful spectacle of



Figure 9 Laila Shah (right) band leader and arranger, assembling Nostalgia Steelband - started on the Cowley Rd - the band was moved to the front of the parade.

costumes, dance, and instruments being played. In our view, the parade not only entertained but also fostered a sense of pride and belonging among those who took part, which was very different to other carnivals that we participated in. We reached the end of the parade at Divinity Road at 2 pm and felt so uplifted and overwhelmed that Nostalgia played there for a further 20 minutes, making it just in time for our performance on the Main Stage at Manzil Gardens between 2:25 to 3:55 pm. We played a broad repertoire to a large, enthusiastic audience who responded with an uproar and huge ovation to the announcement that half of the band was made up of locals - students from the University of Oxford.

We left Cowley Road at 6.30 pm, every band member feeling a sense of real achievement and joy. There was little doubt that the organisers got this right, that Cowley Road Carnival is a celebration of community. It was evident it provided a platform for local businesses, artists, and charities to showcase their work, fostering a sense of local pride. Importantly, the

event was clearly inclusive, encouraging people from all walks of life to participate and enjoy. Workshops, art installations, and family-friendly activities ensured that there was something for everyone, regardless of age or background. Speaking to onlooker and participants, it was evident that the carnival also highlighted the challenges faced by the community, such as economic inequality and cultural preservation. But they felt that bringing people together like this, fostered dialogue and promoted understanding, helping to address these issues in a constructive way (Spark, 2024). They regretted its loss from 2019, however, managing such a large-scale event requires significant funding and logistical support. Ensuring that the event remains sustainable and environmentally friendly is a growing priority for the community, with efforts being made to reduce waste, encourage recycling, and promote eco-friendly practices among vendors and attendees.

We bid goodbye to local members of the Nostalgia at Manzil Garden having made our final toast to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the band before our departure back to our Panyard in London. With us for the entire day from London were Chris, Alison and 11-year old Max Smith who had experienced their first carnival and at Cowley Road. So overwhelmed were they that Chris Smith soon booked his flight to Trinidad for the 11th Steelpan/Carnival Arts Conference, titled “Famalay!”: Carnival Interconnections and Reconnections; Cultural Cadence: Steelpan, Calypso, and Mas and the Global Diaspora Connection, scheduled to be held in Trinidad from 6th – 8th March 2025. He submitted an abstract for the conference which is reproduced below:

TRANSCENDING THE HEIGHTS OF WESTMINSTER CITY HALL TO CARNIVAL ON THE STREET

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My first experience with carnival festivities was in 1962 in Guyana, where I watched traditional masquerade performers parading past our house on stilts - a sight that inspired both fear and fascination. In 1975, at 18, I attended the Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) for the first time with my younger brother and friends. This experience captivated me, sparking a lifelong involvement in carnival culture, beginning with my role in organising music for the NHC. My engagement with Carnival has since been facilitated through my role with Westminster City Council, a key financial supporter of NHC.

On a personal level, my family and I attended several Nostalgia Steelband rehearsals in August 2024 at their Panyard, located in the Maxilla Pub in the heart of the NHC community. Observing these rehearsals provided valuable insight into the dedication and countless hours involved in preparing a steelband for Carnival.

We later experienced it first-hand when Nostalgia invited us to join them at Oxford's Cowley Road Carnival, returning after a four-year hiatus due to lack of funding. Our journey began at dawn on Sunday 1st September at Maxilla, overlooking Grenfell Tower - a poignant reminder of the 14th June 2017 fire that claimed 72 lives. The rented 18-seater



Figure 10. Nostalgia Steelband leading the Cowley Road Carnival Parade (above) and (below) following the parade, playing on stage (far right) at Manzil Gardens to an enthusiastic audience



minibus for our 90-minute journey to Oxford was filled with lively conversations and a surprise homemade breakfast. We arrived on a beautiful, sunny day at Cowley Road parade's starting point at 11:30 am, quickly unloading 16 pans, four sets of double racks, percussion, and an amplifier. Leading the 24 parading bands, we began at 12:30 pm, playing Lord Kitchener's "Pan in A Minor" to enthusiastic cheers. We played continuously until the parade ended at 2:00 pm on Divinity Road, extending our performance by another hour with calypsos like 'Lorraine,' 'Hammer,' 'Sugar Bum Bum,' and 'Savannah Grass.'

At 3:25 pm, we set up for a stage performance at Manzil Gardens, where Haroun Shah introduced the band, noting that half of the players were new students from the University of Oxford, who hoped to start a local steelband. This announcement received immense applause, with the carnival director subsequently offering support to make it a reality.

This experience highlighted the extraordinary dedication required for a single day of performance and to sustain a steelband year-round. This presentation will capture the visual and emotional impact of this experience, deepening our appreciation for the cultural significance of this instrument. This experience had such

an impact that I am committed to advocating for continued support from Westminster City Council and Westminster UNISON to sustain Nostalgia Steelband and the art of steelpan music for years to come.

Acknowledgements

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