

GUYANA FOLK

And Culture

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FIRST GUYANESE TO HOLD POSITION OF
ASSEMBLY MEMBER IN NEW YORK

Hon. **ROXANNE
J. PERSAUD**



NEW ASSEMBLYWOMAN OF THE
59TH DISTRICT IN BROOKLYN

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The New Year 2015 is nearly a month old. Already much has happened, as it should. We are in life. In this issue of the GCA online magazine, we celebrate that which has passed and look to the possibilities that promise the future.

As you read this month's online, the first lines of the very old hymn may come to mind:

"Through all the changing scenes of life/in trouble and in joy"

We record this month the lives of thespians, authors, poets, community activists, and other remarkable residents in our wide flung community, lives still being experienced as these individuals see fit and lives that have come to a close. For, in Janus fashion, we note also the passages that are ended and that may serve as promotions for endeavor to come. Nevertheless, the combined efforts of the writers this month caution that nothing is static, that change is paramount and movement inevitable. The medical drama television series, Ben Casey, popular about half a century ago, used to begin with the words and corresponding symbols: *man, woman, birth, death, infinity*. In different faces we remain the same; with unique experiences, we constitute life.

There is a confidence in human ability to put the best foot forward that permeates the pages that you are about to read. And we too at GCA go forward anticipating the best; preparing for the new, 2015, season of events – Family Fun Day; Kwe Kwe; the Performing Arts; the Symposium; the Summer Workshop Series; the Art Exhibition; the Video and Film Series; the Literary Hang; acknowledging in our pages to come the amazing variety of your achievements and bringing it all together in one glorious explosion of Guyanese expression and creativity.

Our theme for 2015 – ***"We Bridgin'."***

Enjoy, our edition for January, 2015.

***May 2015 bring you comfort
 and quite a bit of joy!***

Juliet Emanuel.
 January Editor

IT IS TIME FOR
A NEW BEGINNING

Living
a life of
Balance



Dhanpaul Narine



Read, dance, pray, sing, love, laugh, eat, celebrate and appreciate. And yes, you are allowed to worry because positive worry is good. We all want to be happy. We resent being thrown off our axis. Our everyday existence is a search for happiness. Our consciousness is bombarded with wants, desires, information and materialism that we often lose our sense of balance. The tentacles of the social media have us so connected that it is sometimes difficult to look at life with an impartial gaze.

The world is trying to throw you off balance and events are conspiring to make your life miserable. It is time for new beginnings. The moment is ripe for a life of balance where peace of mind will help us to reach our true potential. It is simpler than it seems. **The idea is to realize that material objects alone cannot bring about this balance. We need spiritual and emotional wellness to connect with our inner selves and to create the conditions for a balanced life.**

How does this balance occur? Most people agree that the physical self needs attention. You can accomplish little if you are unwell or unhealthy. **The first goal then is to have a healthy body.** In addition to exercises eating healthy, playing sports, walking or reading are all recommended. The aim is to do these in moderation. If you over exert yourself it would be like burning the candle at both ends and this does no one any good.

Balance means setting goals and priorities. What is really important to you? If it is to get an academic qualification, a job, get married, or start a family the approach is still the same. You need to take your time, make a plan and stick to it. If you run without thinking or planning the

LIVING A BALANCED LIFE

...foster an attitude of gratitude

Dhanpaul Narine

chances are that you will bite off more than you can handle and when that happens you will feel overwhelmed. This becomes a recipe for failure.

It goes without saying that **organizing and structure are important.** There are those that may want to make a list and periodically revisit it to determine what has been achieved and what is still to be done. But in any plan things will go wrong. The rule here is to **expect the unexpected** and when your projects are derailed you should work to bring them back on track. It helps if you can see the funny side of life sometimes and laugh and tell yourself that in life setbacks are just temporary.

We live in a society in which people are on the go most of the time. There are persons that hold down several jobs with little time for anything else. They work seven days a week and will not listen when they are told to take regular check-ups. Unfortunately, an illness in such situations can be serious. You should **try to find time for yourself and also for others.** The maxim 'do unto others' still holds true.

An essential aspect of maintaining balance is how far you are able to **go out of your way to help those in need.** Remember, a kind word from you or a visit to someone who is not well can go a far way to help them and to keep your emotional balance in good health. You never know what difference a word from you can make in the lives of others. The rule is just be nice. Being nice is a powerful tonic and many of us are still to unlock its magic.

It is important to **foster an attitude of gratitude** but to do so silently does not make much sense. Gratitude needs to be expressed. People should know that you care so take time off and let someone know how much you care and appreciate them. In this age of social media expressing gratitude is easy. Then there is service to others. Volunteering your time for a social cause brings enormous benefits. Mahatma Gandhi says, 'The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.' If you can find the time to help others without looking for any thing in return it is even better.

The secret to living a balanced life means **giving thanks for small things**. It is good to be thankful for what you have because in this way the chances are you will end up having more. If you lose sleep and worry about what you don't have you will end up being nervous, unsure of yourself, and envious of others. You will think that you don't have enough and if you keep thinking that way you probably never will. It is only when you have inner peace that you can positively influence the lives of others. At the beginning of each day list four things for which you are grateful and your happiness will multiply.

There is much that has been written about **living life in the present**. It does not mean that you have to forget the past. Indeed in order to live a balanced life one should learn the lessons from the past and use them to plan the present. Everyday is a new day, a fresh start, a beginning with purpose. Don't waste it. Rather, focus on the present, use the sum total of your experiences and choose to be happy. Celebrate yourself by being your own best friend. When this happens you will find it easier to connect with others and to be kind to them.

How would you know if you are living a balanced life? The most apparent sign is that you enjoy life. You **wake up greeting the world with a smile**. You find yourself happy without any particular reason and you want to share it with others. But life is not all about smiles. There are times when your plans might go in a different direction and you find yourself dejected. How do you maintain your balance in such a situation?

When this happens you should listen to yourself. What are you hearing? Once you have identified the problem you should take steps to fix it. Tell yourself that it is no use becoming depressed and go into a shell. Your body and mind want you to find a solution so you should seek help and there are ways in which this can be done if you really try. In many cases speaking to someone can be a good start.

But there are situations that cannot be changed no matter how hard you try. The death of a loved one, the loss of a job, having to move your residence because of various reasons and so on are cases that call for positive thinking. Worrying negatively about them won't change anything and it's no point blaming yourself. Rather, you should emerge stronger from the experience. Positive worry allows you to face reality.

One of the most neglected aspects of balance is patience. We are always in a hurry. We live in an instant society. We want to see the results now. But patience is indeed a virtue. There is the case of a man who was always in a hurry. It so happened that he was working in the Amazon. The arrangement was for him to catch a plane at the end of his first year so he could be home for Christmas.

He was so impatient that he waited all night at the tiny airstrip. At the crack of dawn he heard the sound of the engines overhead and spotted the small plane. He was happy and began to wave in anticipation. The plane, to his dismay, circled twice and went away. The next plane was a year later. This may be an extreme case but the incident taught the man the importance of patience. In the year that he waited for the next plane he learned how to connect with his innermost self. According to one psychologist, 'patience leads to mindfulness and mindfulness brings you balance.' If you practice patience you do not lose your temper in the traffic or waiting in a line to be served. Why get angry over little things when the universe has so much beauty to enjoy?

Finally, how about keeping life simple? You constantly hear that someone wants to live the simple life. What does this mean? Simplicity means keeping things in perspective. It is said that simplicity is perhaps most important in keeping one's balance because in balance everything is simple. Keep it simple because simplicity is the best virtue. If you keep your diet, relationships, work schedules, faith and time-keeping simple it would be easier for you to let go of the unimportant things and to maintain the balance you need to move forward.

LIVING A BALANCED LIFE

Give thanks for small things

Dhanpaul Narine



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A TRIBUTE IN MEMORY OF

Dr. Faith A. Harding



ASTUTE POLITICIAN, EDUCATOR, DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT,
COMPETENT ADMINISTRATOR, TRAILBLAZER.
WORKED TIRELESSLY TO EMPOWER WOMEN OF GUYANA
AND WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Faith was a woman of supreme intellect, incomparable skills and commitment as a public servant, elected official and politician. After earning a PhD in Education from Columbia University, she returned to Guyana in 1983 to serve her people and embark on an illustrious career in government.

Her contribution to the development of Guyana is extraordinary and indelible. She served Guyana as an Assistant Chief Education Officer where she established and implemented Guyana’s current nursery education program, Minister of Planning and Development and Minister of the Public Service.

As Public Service Minister, she spearheaded the Public Service Reform Program in 1991 to rationalize government and eliminate overlap. Faith performed admirably. She transformed and streamlined the entire public service and government bureaucracy. Consequently the number of government ministries was reduced from seventeen to eleven, and other governmental agencies and corporations were harmonized for optimum efficiency.

In every aspect of her tenure in government in Guyana, her work was transformational. Faith’s incredible enthusiasm for, and dedication to, public service fueled her candidacy for her party nomination for President of Guyana in 2011. She wanted to serve in a greater capacity to directly affect decision making. Although she was unsuccessful, she never really left the campaign trail; working tirelessly to empower the women of Guyana, for whom she was a trailblazer.

Dr. Faith Harding has left an ineffaceable footprint in the political landscape of Guyana, the United Nations development system and all of the developing and undeveloped countries where she worked with the UN to help bring about development and a better quality of life for their peoples, especially women.

I will miss her immensely. I will miss her great mentorship, stimulating conversations, generous compliments, wise counsel, beaming smile and big laugh. She was a woman of distinction – an impressive academic, talented psychologist, competent administrator and astute politician.

Guyana has lost a bright light, great leader and indefatigable stalwart, who has transcended to a better place. Dr. Faith Harding has surely earned a commemorable seat in our nation’s pantheon of trailblazers and heroes.

“Guyana has lost a bright light, great leader and indefatigable stalwart, who has transcended to a better place. Dr. Faith Harding has surely earned a commemorable seat in our nation’s pantheon of trailblazers and heroes.”

Rickford Burke





ONE OF THOSE RARE INDIVIDUALS ABLE TO RISE ABOVE THE DIVIDES OF POLITICS

We, of The Caribbean Voice, express our deep, abiding sadness at the sudden and tragic loss of our board member, Dr. Faith Harding, one of those rare individuals who was able to rise above the divides of politics and ethnicity and advance the lives of Guyanese one community at a time, while exuding care and compassion to all who were fortunate to enter her embrace. She will be sorely missed.

The Caribbean Voice

SHE WAS A MENTOR TO MANY IN SUDAN

I am still trying to come into terms with your departure.... you were a great person....a mother, a friend, a mentor and inspiration to many. The Guyanese community has lost a great person

Christine Khei, Juba, South Sudan

SHE ALWAYS GAVE ME GOOD ADVICE

I knew Faith since she was a Minister of the Government but my tribute and reflections here will be as a member of the Caribbean Voice Board.

She was a CARING, KINDHEARTED , OUTSTANDING and VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE LADY.

MY first official encounter was on September 10 when we launched TCV plans on Suicide Prevention Day. She always gave me good advise and guidance in doing my work for TCV. Farewell my mentor, friend and colleague and may your soul rest in peace.

Bibi Ahamad

SHE WAS A WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET PERSON

It was a very hot day in Guyana 24 years ago when I met Faith. She greeted me with a genuine bright warm smile that lit up the entire room. She was more than willing to open up her

home and heart to show me a different side of Guyana. The Guyana she knew was different to what I know, that would include a trip to Bartica Regata, a resort up the Linden high way and even Tiger Bay, and the best hang out spots and parties. She is a what you see is what you get person, love, generosity, selflessness and kindness. It was a privilege and a blessing that I would return to Guyana 24 years later and she would open up her home and heart one more time and greeted me with the same bright smile despite her being under the weather. On



December 28th we sat and talked laughed and ate. I had some delicious garlic port, black cake and drank Rum and Ginger Ale. The conversation was so good I missed the show at the Cultural Center of which I didn't mind. I left later that evening as she waved good-bye with echoes of laughter on her lips and that's how I want to remember her.

Sharon Blue

HER PASSING AT AN UNRIPE AGE STRIKES ME AS A BLOW TO THE COUNTRY AND A LOSS TO THE SOCIETY.

HER HALF-LIFE LEAVES A SENSE OF VACANCY.

The passing of Dr Faith Harding at an unripe age strikes me as a blow to the country and a loss to the society. I hope to learn more of her quality, her history and her works from those who knew her well.

I often write messages to funerals of Guyanese who are not public figures but personal friends. Dr Faith Harding is not a personal friend but a public figure with whom I have had a few respectful email exchanges. To me she was a shining star. She continued in her time that long line of Guyanese with specialised education, training and understanding vital to full human development.. Some of them enjoy more recognition abroad than at home. Her half- life leaves a sense of vacancy. I hope those who speak at her last rites will not fail to question the readiness of our public and private health institutions May her loved ones and her friends be comforted. May her example inspire the young generation.

eusi kwayana

SHE WANTED HER STAFF TO PARTICIPATE, LEARN AND BE INNOVATIVE. SHE BROUGHT JOY & HOPE TO THE HOPELESS.

My former Supervisor , Dr. Faith Harding was a wonderful Supervisor. She was the kind that wanted her staff members to participate, learn and be innovational on both the job and our surroundings. A kind of Supervisor that built the courage of her staff and made each one to take up leadership roles of the day to day activities of the office.

Dr. Harding contributed to the construction of an elementary school in my village. One of the best in that area. She contributed personally to my career development. She never stopped asking about the welfare of my son. In our last conversation a few weeks ago, she said "Please give Ishmeal all he deserves to make it to the top." She also said "it is time for you to take another step Jamilatu. Promise me that I will hear more good news of you in 2015. "

Faith, this is what you were, always smiling and bringing joy and hope to the hopeless.

You got me crying this morning Faith.

You will always be remembered.

You became part of my life, not by mistake, your coming into my life was a called and a perfect one too.

Wherever you are, may God forgive you and make you amongst the people of paradise.

Jamilatu Konneh
Nigeria



She was the coolest of aunts. As pre-teens and through our 20s, we sat at her feet, drinking in her gorgeous, twinkling eyes, her huge, high-wattage smile, her stylish clothes and her highly animated manner of communicating. We all wanted to look like her and be like her.

She engaged with us in a way that other adults did not -- honoring our feelings and emotions; pushing us to get to know ourselves better as young girls and women; and building our courage to make difficult decisions not poisoned by "what other people would say".

She was also the aunt who introduced us to our first nightclubs (Buccaneers' Cove in GT! and Copacabana in NYC); took us on our first trip to Coney Island and to Jones Beach at night; took us camping, but allowed us to sleep in the car (even after spending the whole afternoon setting up the tent for us); taught us how to do the "the bump"; made us watch "Roots"; and bought me my one and only pair of Jordache jeans.

She was a force of nature and larger than life, but somehow made us feel that we were the special ones.

As I grew older, I saw that the group around her feet remained young. And, I realized that this was her true gift -- the ability to connect with young people at their core through her humanity and kindness of spirit. The genuineness of these connections is evident in the numerous photographs on the internet of Faith and her many young friends and mentees.

Our hearts are broken. Words cannot express how much Auntie Faith meant to us, and how much we will miss her. (And now for my good-bye, I send her our usual exchange of greetings: a mutual drawn out "Guuuurrll...", accompanied by an elaborate cut-eye and a long, affectionate hug.)

Auntie Faith ...

**SHE WAS THE
COOLEST OF AUNTS.**

**HER GIFT WAS TO
CONNECT WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE AT
THEIR CORE THROUGH
HER HUMILITY AND
KINDNESS OF SPIRIT.**

Adele Grant



IDENTIFICATION CARDS FOR UNDOCUMENTED NEW YORKERS

IDNYC is the new, free identification card for all New York City residents, which gives all of us the opportunity to show who we are—New Yorkers. As a government-issued photo identification card, IDNYC secures the peace of mind and access to City services that come from having recognized identification. IDNYC benefits every city resident, including the most vulnerable communities—the homeless, youth, the elderly, undocumented immigrants, the formerly incarcerated and others who may have difficulty obtaining other government-issued ID.

USING THE IDNYC CARD

IDNYC cardholders can access services and programs offered by the City as well as by businesses. IDNYC helps enhance public safety, by serving as a recognized ID for interacting with NYPD. It also helps New Yorkers gain access to all City buildings that provide services to the public and is accepted as a form of identification for accessing numerous City programs and services. IDNYC also provides a dynamic series of benefits to cardholders, including a free one-year membership at many of the City's leading museums, zoos, concert halls, and botanical gardens.

GETTING THE IDNYC CARD

Confirm you have the correct documents to apply. The IDNYC program uses a point system to determine if applicants are able to prove identity and residency in New York City. You will need three points worth of documents to prove your identity and a one point document to prove your residency. All applicants applying independently must provide photo identification and a document with your date of birth listed. The IDNYC program accepts more than 65 categories of different documents, so to determine what documents you can submit, use the IDNYC Document Calculator.

Applications will be available at the Enrollment Centers. Applications are available in more than 25 languages.

Find an enrollment center near you. There are enrollment centers across the City. See the full list of enrollment centers or go to the IDNYC map in order to find directions to the nearest enrollment center.

The Enrollment Process: When you visit an enroll-

ment center, you will be asked to submit your application and documents proving identity and residency. Your photo will be taken that will be included on the card. All of your original documents will be returned to you immediately when the enrollment process is complete. Your IDNYC card will be mailed to your home in 10-14 business days. If you do not have an address or have security concerns about an address appearing on your IDNYC card, you will be able to pick up your card at the Enrollment Center where you applied 15 business days later.

DOCUMENTS

- 1) At least four (4) points of documents with:
 - At least three (3) points of documents proving identity.
 - At least one (1) point of documents proving residency.
- 2) At least one (1) of the documents submitted must have a photo of the applicant, unless the applicant is 21 years old or younger and is accompanied by a caretaker who can demonstrate proof of relationship.
- 3) At least one (1) of the documents submitted has the applicant's date of birth.

No expired documents will be accepted except machine readable passports that expired within the last three years. Only original documents and copies certified by the issuing agency will be accepted.

If you are an applicant who does not have a stable home address or is a survivor of domestic violence, you may prove residency by providing a letter from a City agency, nonprofit organization, religious institution, hospital, or health clinic in New York City to prove you are a New York resident, but you will not have an address appear on your IDNYC card. You can also have a nonprofit organization or religious institution provide a "care-of" address that will appear on your card. We also have a letter for Proof of Residency and Proof of Caretaker relationship for an applicant in ACS.

Caretaker Attestation

If you are an applicant ages 14 to 21 and you do not have a photo ID, you will need a caretaker to come with you to an Enrollment Center. If the applicant cannot prove residency, the caretaker can prove one point of residency and fill out a form indicating that the caretaker's address can be used for the applicant.

Musical Life in Guyana

History and Politics of Controlling Creativity



Vibert C. Cambridge

Musical Life in Guyana:

**History and Politics of Controlling
Creativity** (Caribbean Studies Series)

Hardcover – June 1, 2015

by **Vibert C. Cambridge** (Author)

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Musical Life in Guyana is the first in-depth study of Guyanese musical life. It is also a richly detailed description of the social, economic, and political conditions that have encouraged and sometimes discouraged musical and cultural creativity in Guyana. The book contributes to the study of the interactions between the policies and practices by national governments and musical communities in the Caribbean.

Vibert C. Cambridge explores these interactions in Guyana during the three political eras that the society experienced as it moved from being a British colony to an independent nation. The first era to be considered is the period of mature colonial governance, guided by the dictates of "new imperialism," which extended from 1900 to 1953. The second era, the period of internal self-government and the preparation for independence, extends from 1953, the year of the first general elections under universal adult suffrage, to 1966, the year when the colony gained its political independence. The third phase, 1966 to 2000, describes the early postcolonial era.

Cambridge reveals how the issues of race, class, gender, and ideology deeply influenced who in Guyanese multicultural society obtained access to musical instruction and media outlets and thus who received recognition. He also describes the close connections between Guyanese musicians and Caribbean artists from throughout the region and traces the exodus of Guyanese musicians to the great cities of the world, a theme often neglected in Caribbean studies. The book concludes that the practices of governance across the twentieth century exerted disproportionate influence in the creation, production, distribution, and consumption of music.

Vibert C. Cambridge

*Vibert C. Cambridge, Athens, Ohio, is professor emeritus, School of Media Arts and Studies, Ohio University and President, Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. He is the author of *Immigration, Diversity, and Broadcasting in the United States, 1990-2001* and coeditor of *International Afro Mass Media*. His work has appeared in such journals as *Arts Journal (Guyana)*, *Caribbean Affairs*, and *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*.*



Caribbean Film Project: In Search of Caribbean Script

CARIBBEAN SCRIPTWRITING COMPETITION

Movies are a popular form of entertainment in the Caribbean. American movies in particular have always been a big hit. But Caribbean nationals have been writing, shooting and producing their own films for some time. Over the last few years, the Caribbean film industry has taken off. The emergence of filmmakers like Storm Saulter, film festivals such as Trinidad & Tobago Film Festival and Caribbean culture/media organizations like caribBEING have not only helped to grow and support the industry, but have inspired a new generation of storytellers in the region and throughout the diaspora to take up a camera.

But before any acting, filming or editing can take place, you first need a script. A strong one. A talented director and amazing actors may be able to pull great moments out of a weak script, but nothing built on a weak foundation can be expected to be stellar. To this end the Caribbean Film Academy has partnered with ChantiMedia, SASOD Guyana, Groundation Guyana and The Audiovisual Society of Dominica to launch the Caribbean Film Project, a scriptwriting competition that seeks to showcase the unknown and emerging writers of the region and in the diaspora.

So how does this competition work? Read on:

Who's eligible? The competition is open to writers of Caribbean heritage/descent (who are writing Caribbean stories) and living in the diaspora, but will focus on writers who are residents/nationals of

Dominica, Guyana, St. Kitts & Nevis and Grenada, countries that haven't been well represented in the new Caribbean film renaissance.

How do you enter? [CLICK HERE](#) to fill out the submission form. In the same link you must upload your script, logline and synopsis (as one document) and proposed budget. Submissions will be accepted until February 28, 2015 at midnight EST.

What kind of scripts are they looking for? Short film scripts, 15-20 pages long that explore the themes of love, loss, domestic violence, mental illness, folklore and humor. Scripts should showcase the culture of the writer's home country. For writers in the diaspora, your scripts should showcase the Caribbean culture as it exists in your location.

What does it cost? \$20 USD

What do you win? A winner and runner-up from each location will be chosen. Each winner will be paired with a writing coach who will work with them to get their script production ready. Once the coach deems the script ready, it will be produced. Other prizes include memberships to scriptwriting organizations and written feedback on your script.

More information as well as script writing and budget writing resources can be found at CaribbeanFilm.org. Any questions about the submission process can be sent to submissions@cafafilmproject.org

So get to work writers. Your voices are needed. Our stories are unique and relevant and deserve to be told.



Lokono Arawak Artist

**GEORGE
SIMON**

Lokono Arawak Artist **GEORGE SIMON**

“His artistic practice and his dense, dynamic and vividly oneiric artworks are defined by their unique exploration of indigenous Amerindian cultural and spiritual traditions in Guyana as well as their explorations of other spiritual traditions, including Haitian vodun (Voodoo), Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism,”

George Simon spent his early childhood living close to the forest, travelling on the river, and experiencing the full range of Nature’s gifts.

The community was self-sufficient, and there was very little use for money; hence there were no shops, the artist disclosed. This easygoing lifestyle is very important to Simon, as the simple things in life still matter to him, even though he has left the community for a less traditional lifestyle.

Simon obtained primary education in his village; but at age 12, he was adopted by an English Anglican priest named James William Pink, who was at the time serving the Mahaica River churches. When the priest was reassigned to serve parishes in the Upper Demerara River, he took Simon with him to the mining town of Linden. When the priest was reassigned to the St George’s Cathedral in the capital, Georgetown, Simon, then a youth, was enrolled at Christ Church Secondary School, where he pursued studies in English, Mathematics, Geography, Hygiene and Physiology.

There were no teachers available at the school to teach art, but young Simon began studying art books on his own, and practising charcoal drawings. His hard work in art was rewarded when he passed that exam.

In 1972, he enrolled at Grey’s Technical College in Thurrock, Essex, England to do the Advanced Level examination in Art, and focused on Painting and Drawing. He later read for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Fine Art at the University of Portsmouth, and graduated with Honours in 1978. His studies focused on Art History and 19th Century Art.

On his return to Guyana in 1978, Simon was appointed to the Burrowes School of Art as a lecturer. He got close to Founder and Director Dennis Williams, who introduced him to the disciplines of Archaeology and Anthropology, and their revelations of the indigenous cultures of Guyana, which were to so stimulate and enrich his future work.

In 1985, Simon won the Painting Award in the National Exhibition of the Visual Arts, this country’s major fine art exhibition; and in 1998, he received the Golden Arrow of Achievement (A.A.) for exceptional contribution to social and community work among the

Amerindian Peoples of Guyana, and for exceptional contribution to the arts and culture.

Simon has described his work as concentrated on drawing attention to the indigenous people, and how they have lived with the environment in mind.

Simon’s earlier works and the techniques he employed — particularly during the 80s, when he reflected his heritage by depicting Amerindians in

traditional costumes and activities — were influenced by his travels to Africa, North America and the Caribbean.

He has been an influential supporter of fellow Lokono artists of his native St. Cuthbert’s; and has been involved in numerous exhibitions, workshops and cultural institutions in Guyana, the Caribbean, Canada and Africa, including ‘Moving Circle’ 2002 and ‘Shamanic Signs’, a solo exhibition staged in 2006 at the National Gallery.

Simon became research assistant to Denis Williams at the Walter Roth Museum from that period, and worked with him until 1992. He accompanied Williams, or appeared on his behalf working at sites throughout Guyana.

At sometime around 1988, he set up a workshop in drawing and design in his village of St Cuthbert’s in an effort to guide many of the artists then in early stages of development. From that effort, a group of 10 artists emerged as Guyana’s finest, including premier sculptor Oswald Hussein (one of Guyana’s finest) and sculptors Lynus Clenkien, Ronald and Telford Taylor, and Foster Simon.

Simon travelled to the African Republic of Chad in December 1998, and worked with the Language Centre of the Public Affairs Department of the United States Embassy, serving as Director of the American Language Centre; but his love of art and of mentoring others soon set in.

His keen interest in African art and African artists moved him to mobilise a group of African artists to set up an Art Studio called House of African Art in Chad’s capital city, N’Djamena. The sale of African art helped to raise funds to sustain the studio; and when Simon left Chad, the studio was handed over to the Government of Chad.

He went to Lyons, France in 2001, where he was Artist in Residence at the Arts and Spices Gallery, and exhibited there before later moving back to Canada. In that same year, he moved to northern Haiti and set up Escola Nueva, a school where he taught English, Art and Music. There he also set up a musical band.

Simon is now a member of the Teaching Faculty in the School of Education and the Humanities at the University of Guyana, and has had considerable influence on young artists.

He was one of the speakers at a three-day conference, hosted by the Institute for Colonial and Post-colonial Studies at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom, which brought together scholars, professionals and arts practitioners to investigate the ways in which sacred traditions have shaped discourses and practices of empowerment, emancipation, change, resistance, and survival in different cultural and historical contexts.

This inclusion attests to the importance of his work and his international acclaim as one of the best known Lokono Arawak artists in Guyana, the Caribbean, and indeed the world.

Simon became the most recent inductee to the Anthony N. Sagba Caribbean Awards for Excellence (ANSCLAFE), launched by the ANSA McAL Foundation in October 2005 and now the English-speaking Caribbean's leading recognition programme in Arts, Science and Technology, and Public and Civic Work. Simon is the fourth Guyanese Sabga Award winner, and his achievement is credited to his outstanding work in archaeology, which follows an important discovery in Guyana that might cause history books about the pre-Columbian past of the Americas and world civilization to be radically rewritten.

Leading artist and anthropologist **George Simon, A.A.**



At the beginning of every year, it is a common practice for people, all over the world, particularly in Guyana and the Caribbean, regardless of religion, class or creed, to commit to New Year's resolutions, which often do not last beyond the month of February.

The main reason for this failure to follow through is that some resolutions are unrealistic and impractical, as they are usually quantified, leading to uncompromising disappointments based on the ups and downs that life offers.

Making resolutions is a useful habit and helps to make people accountable. However, unforeseen circumstances may alter how we accomplish the goals we set. You may set a resolution to perhaps lose 50 pounds of body weight in the year, but your plan may be hampered by the loss of a loved one or other unpredictable circumstance. The grief associated with your resolution is likely to alter the course, and that is the curve that life offers.

The making of resolutions simply boils down to the environment in which we live. Success may involve more disabling elements, and careful evaluations or assessments may not have been considered to ascertain whether the resolutions were pragmatic at the time they were made.

Most people tend to make resolutions as a defense to make them feel good, since the promise at times is a personal one and no one is likely to follow-up for progress; and if broken there are no penalties. Soon after resolutions are made, the old stresses resurface and the results are inevitable. The relatively few individuals, who make resolutions and manage to keep them, are generally the ones that make them for a short

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS Yours to Make or Break!

Edgar Henry

duration.

While some people use the New Year to think about what they would like to change in their personal lives, a laundry list of the things for which they are thankful can shape their philanthropic efforts this year. Make a commitment to someone else; it does not necessarily have to be all about you. Doing something special for the elderly, underprivileged children, imparting knowledge to those that are lacking, being a community volunteer, helping the impoverished, doing a chore for autistic persons, helping someone with his/her monetary expenses, assisting the disabled and the hungry. These are some areas to which contributions in kind or cash could be very gratifying for 2015.

As you reflect on the past year, try to evaluate your mistakes and ensure they do not reoccur. Build on your accomplishments and use them to uplift others. List your cherished memories, triumphs, awards and the new challenges that confront you as you forge forward. You can now evaluate what direction or course you intend to pursue in harmony and peace for your proposed life ahead.

Confidently forecast what the New Year will bring, what the future holds, including the anticipated ownership of a new updated state-of-the art smart phone, new and convenient appliances, perhaps a new car or house, or remodeling and decorating the existing one. This is certainly much better than making and breaking resolutions.



Roxanne J. Persaud:

First Guyanese to hold position of Assembly member in New York

Claire Patterson-Monah

On Sunday January 11, 2015, a diverse and dynamic group of family, friends, clergy, elected officials and community leaders gathered at PS 272, Curtis Eastbrook School Canarsie Brooklyn to witness the Community Swearing-in Ceremony for new assembly member Roxanne J. Persaud.

Guests were ushered in to the beat of drums and followed by the daughter of the soil, who majestically joined her parents, family and elected officials center stage. She was regal and radiant in a one of a kind Cole Facts creation, designed especially for the occasion by Michelle Cole. It was her day. It was her moment. Roxanne Jacqueline Persaud would soon be sworn in as the first female, first black, first Guyanese to hold the position of Assembly member for the 59th Assembly District in Brooklyn, New York.

During the afternoon's proceedings, Hon. Roberta Sherman, district leader of the 59th AD served as the mistress of ceremony. Bishop Nathan Williams of the Rose Baptist Church and Rev Albert Morrison led the invocation(s) while Fr. Edward Kane of the Holy Family Catholic Church and Rabbi Avhrohom Hecht led the benedictions.

Musical selections, the Spoken Word and dance from multiple origins of the Diaspora were presented by Anthony Alleyne, Sesame Flyers, Modupe Ojabode, and Brithney Malchan. The celebration drew a wide array of dignitaries including Senator Chuck Schumer, who said in his remarks, "Roxanne is a person who had been productive and unyielding in her advocacy for the community. Springing up from this community, she's an example of the 'ladders up' that our society must maintain and strengthen. The world was her oyster and she chose to give back to the community."

Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, former Assemblyman for the 57th district, also sang her praises, saying "Now is the season for Roxanne J

Persaud to carry the torch, to advocate on behalf of the vulnerable and those who need a voice in government, to speak truth to power."

State Senator John Sampson lauded Roxanne Persaud for her decisiveness, consistency and strength and characterized her as an "authentic friend", and the embodiment of a public servant

The message was consistent from all the speakers, Henry Bolus President of Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club, Cpt. Grandstaff, commanding officer of the 69th precinct and her predecessors City Council member Alan Maisel and Hon Frank Seddio, Kings County Democratic Party Chairman. Assembly member Roxanne Persaud was the best person for the job winning with 73% of the votes. She genuinely cares about the community and has invested time over the years to understand the issues.

Surrounded by her parents Hon. Roxanne Persaud was sworn into the New York State Assembly by Supreme Court Judge Lara Genovese, daughter of Assembly member Genovese who previously served the district.

In her inaugural speech, the Assembly member graciously thanked all who supported her along the way and reached back embracing the Brownie pledge to do her best to continue to work actively with law enforcement, elected officials and the people of the 59th AD toward a better community. She concluded with a quote from Oprah Winfrey "Energy is the essence of life. Every day you decide how you're going to use it by knowing what you want and what it takes to reach the goal and by maintaining focus" This is only the beginning. The work won't be easy and Hon Assembly woman Roxanne Jacqueline Persaud is committed to staying focused on what matters for her community.

Roxanne Jacqueline Persaud was born in Guyana, South America and migrated to the United States with her parents and siblings. She is a graduate of Pace University from which she holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Education Administration. She is a longtime advocate for her community and an avid volunteer. Her dedication to serving her community has motivated her to serve in various capacities. She was President of the 69th Precinct Community Council in Canarsie, member of Community Board 18 and Commissioner on the New York City Districting Commission. In addition, this dedicated and highly respected public servant is a graduate of the NYPD Citizens Police Academy as well as the New York City Office of Emergency Management-Community Emergency Response Team. Furthermore, she is a member of Community Action Board of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development and Chairperson of the Neighborhood Advisory Board - District 18. She also serves on organizations fighting domestic violence and promoting cancer awareness.

Her dedication to community involvement and her interest in helping others stretch beyond Brooklyn. She has traveled overseas on several occasions as a volunteer on medical and social outreach programs. She encourages everyone to be actively involved in the community.

Assemblywoman Persaud has spent her entire career working in higher education institutions and works tirelessly encouraging urban youth to attend college. Her district legislative priorities include funding for schools, youth and senior support services, libraries and parks. She intends to work with her colleagues in government to ensure that the 59th AD receives the resources that it should.

INAUGURATION OF ASSEMBLY WOMAN ROXANNE J. PERSAUD



BUXTONIAN

John Phillips

Star of National Geographic's docudrama titled "The Quest for Gold: Lord of the Mines."

Denis Scott Chabrol

BUXTONIAN

John Phillips

Dennis Scott Chabrol

When Guyanese journalist and actor, John Phillips looks back at 2014, he certainly feels a sense of accomplishment that he is climbing the performing arts ladder relatively quickly in Canada. Using his training, experience and exposure in his homeland, this proud Buxtonian has not only taken his craft to Guyanese and wider Caribbean audiences in Toronto on stage but he has moved on to play key roles in film.

For the now 50-year old John, who hails from the land of El Dorado, coincidentally his biggest 'hit' so far is acting as the richest and most noble king in Mali, a gold producing country in North Africa, in a segment for National Geographic's docudrama titled "The Quest for Gold: Lord of the Mines."

While he was easily and surprisingly selected for the role of King Mansa Musa rather than an old villager for which he had been called, John's encounter with a horse is perhaps the most memorable and "scary" aspect of filming that production.

"I was doing good for about half an hour until the director said he is ready and the Assistant Director said 'action' and just as he said 'action' there we are trying to create the scene of me going to Mecca for Hajj, and then the horse started to behave bad, bucking and jumping up and my feet came out of the stirrup and I started to slide all over the saddle and I threw myself off and the horse ran away and I had to get back on top of the horse to do this all day. It was a bit scary. I don't know if I want to do it again ever," says John.

So how did he first get the 'break' to act on screen?

The boy from Company Road, Buxton on the East Coast Demerara has not forgotten and certainly cherishes his drama roots that began with the fertilization of his talent at the state-owned Guyana Sugar Corporation (Guysuco) that had staged several plays at the Theatre Guild. He also acted in several plays including "Rope and The Cross", "Beef Moh Chicken" and many Link Shows.

By the time he migrated to Canada 10 years ago, John was already a household name among Guyanese in both journalism and drama; something he used to his advantage and took up offers from Guyanese Luther Hansraj and Trinidadian Marvin Ishmael to perform at Caribbean events. "My background from the Theatre Guild and from all the teachings from the Andre Sobryans and the Ron Robinsons, Jasper Adams – all those guys helped me when I came to Canada because it's different the way they do things but because I had that initial training, preparation I was able to slowly penetrate and after a few years on the Caribbean scene, I decided I wanted to try something different which was going mainstream into the heart of the big theatre scene," he said.

John recalls being afforded the opportunity to perfect his craft through more training opportunities and "lots more reading material" to better understand why he needs to do certain things during preparations. "Yes, the initial teaching down there (Guyana) was very good because it helped me to fit in," he said, adding that he has to keep abreast with the various challenges.

Since playing the role of Martin Luther King about one year ago, his colleague who acted as Malcolm X, encouraged him to get an agent who collected his resume and photograph and later called him for an audition. Since then, he has been on several commercials, short films and documentaries. He has acted as a detective in "Murder in Paradise: Stranger Danger" that featured the killing of a Canadian woman in Bermuda. Currently, he is preparing to participate in an episode of the "Untouchables" for Discovery Channel's "Investigation Discovery."

Now, he does not necessarily have to be auditioned intensely for some of the roles. Instead, his agent just presents his track record and other attributes to the contracting company and he is often selected with little or no hiccup.

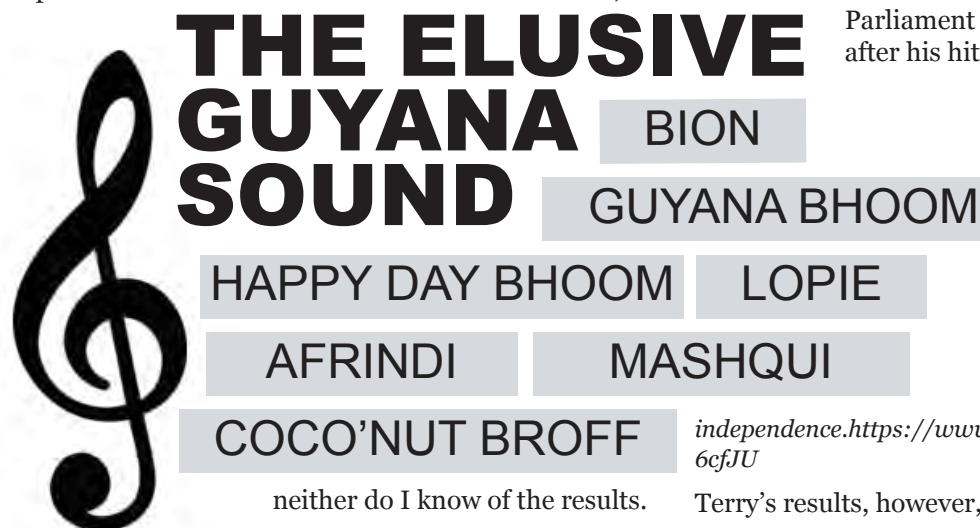
Though John's ascendancy appears to be a big move, he admits that he still has a longer journey before he can quit his 'day job' and concentrate exclusively on the stage and film.

John has made immense strides in a field that he loves dearly, but he remains humble, proud and grateful. "I am just excited at the way things are happening for me. I am all excited but I still have to remain grounded and be thankful for where I came from and the things that have been happening for me. For me, I am being successful, I see it as a collective thing for everybody who was before me and who helped me to be where I am today." He plans to share his expertise with Guyanese actors when he returns home later this year.

Guyana, a land with a rich Cultural heritage, is still to develop a sound, or sounds, of her own!

We were “given” the music and the instruments from the European tradition, so-called “Classical Music”, when we “came” to Guyana. At the same time, we brought our various musical styles, and some of our instruments with us. There was some music already here, that unfortunately, we still do not know much about; that of our Amerindian brothers.

It is my understanding, that in the late sixties or early seventies, Keith Waithe (flute), Keith Joseph (double bass), an Indian musician playing the Tabla, and a few other musicians whose names I don’t recall, did some experimentation. I don’t know of the circumstances,



neither do I know of the results.

© G. Derry Etkins

Ray Seales, and I think, Vibert Cambridge, mentioned another groove/beat, the “Bion”. They credit Al Seales with its development. That might have been in the 50s or 60s, but again, it seems as though there wasn’t wide spread support for that effort.

In 1966, when Guyana became independent, “Tom Charles and The Syncopators”, one of the “Big Bands” at the time, experimented with a groove/beat called, “The Bhoom”. It sounds like it was based on the Masquerade groove/beat. The song I remember clearly is one called, “Guyana Bhoom”. On Independence Day 2014, thanks to Ray Seales, I became aware of another one called, “Happy Day Bhoom”, an instrumental piece.

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=10202955866471201&set=vb.1039808083&type=2&theater>

There was a measure of support from other local bands; Bumble And The Saints recorded, “Bumble’s Bhoom”. There might have been others, but I don’t remember.

In 1971-72, Pat Clarke asked one of the popular bands of the time, “The Gradu8s”, to facilitate an experiment he was working on. He had called it, “The Mashqui” (pronounced, Mash Key). He even went as far as to launch it at The Pegasus Hotel. I think five people turned up! That effort got no support outside of “The Gradu8s”.

Around that same period, Terry “Omar Farouk” Nelson made a valiant effort as well. He started, “Halagala Records” at his Betterverwagting (BV) Studio facility. He experimented with the “Afrindi” groove/beat. I cannot cite any examples of his work, but I remember his being very dedicated. He had set up a store in the Stabroek Market area, in the building opposite a now abandoned Gasoline Station, located just West of Parliament Building. This effort came after his hit song, in honour of Guyana’s

independence. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4hY2Y6cfJU>

Terry’s results, however, were short lived.

In the early 70s, Eddie “Lord Inventor” Hooper experimented with another groove/beat, “The Lopie (Lopey?)”. Maybe because he was a songwriter, his efforts brought him a bit more longevity than his predecessors. His songs may have been more accessible to listeners and would have lingered more in their minds. Someone mentioned, that Eddie also wrote songs, supporting the Bhoom.

In the early eighties, 1982-83, Solo Sounds International (SSI) experimented with the masquerade groove/beat. One of the pieces that resulted, “Coco’nut Broff”, was used as the theme for a Radio Programme, “Culture And Entertainment”. SOLO had sponsored that programme.

One of our local artistes, Lee Houston, recorded two songs, “Banga Mary” and “Free Namibia”, with SSI as the backing band. He allowed us to inflict ourselves on them. We did the recordings at the National Cultural Centre, with Dennis “Willo” Wilson and Joslyn Small as co-engineers. Coming out of the Houston – SSI collaboration, the members of SSI cutely referred to the resulting groove as, “the Fish Beat”! I guess they liked Banga Mary.

THE ELUSIVE GUYANA SOUND



© G. Derry Etkins

MUSIC MUST BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE CURRICULUM IN ALL OF OUR SCHOOLS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YL2h5QMeiJs>

Around the same time, Neil Chan, SSI's manager, sponsored a huge event at the National Park, "Smile Guyana!". The theme music for that show featured the Masquerade groove/beat.

The name, "The Bhoom!" resonated among younger musicians over the years. One such musician, Keith Paul, named his band, "The GT Bhoom Band".

Various people, at various times, have facilitated subsequent experiments. Deodat Persaud is one such person. On one of Keith Waithe's visits to Guyana, he arranged for a session at the now defunct, "Sidewalk Café". Keith Waithe and an Indian ensemble from the Ashram in Cove And John and a group of Drummers from "Buxton Fusion" played together there.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us4QW5HFNm8>

In November 2014, Andrea Mentore facilitated a Jam Session at the National Centre For Education Resource Development (NCERD). Mark Cyrus and Otis Gibson played Masquerade drums; Leary McKenzie played percussion; "Teacher Raghu, an Indian musician, played the Dhantal, an Indian percussion instrument; "Three foot" Cumberbatch from Linden played the penny whistle/fife; Deryck Callender played the electric bass.

In December of 2014, I was part of a similar collaboration, this time at Jerry's All Night Long. The members of the Masquerade band, "Fire In The Land" along with George Reid (bass), Trevor Rogers (keyboard), Michael "Smitty" Smith and Andrew Tyndall (pan) played, and we added to the momentum. Gordon Burnett, Andrea Mentore and Paloma Mohamed lent their support to this venture. This type of musical interaction is a necessary part of our journey to an authentic Guyana sound.

Research into the music of our Amerindian brothers is currently underway. This, too, is a source of raw material that we can incorporate into our soundscape, as well as into our sound.

We came to Guyana from six different parts of the world! There is a wealth of valid material that we can smelt in the furnace of our boundless creativity. The result will be a collection of uniquely Guyanese musical styles.

Brazil, Trinidad, Jamaica, the French West Indies and Cuba are shining examples of some of our neighbours who have successfully made this journey. Having said that, researchers say, that in the case of Jamaica, there was more than "the will of the people" at play, pardon the pun. According to this research, former Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Seaga, was a record producer prior to running for office there and, after becoming a public figure, he took an active part in pushing the development of Jamaican music.

Governmental involvement and facilitation would be definitely be of great help, in developing Guyanese music.

One area in which the Government can assist is, making music an integral part of the curriculum in all of our schools, from Nursery to Secondary. This will require that teachers be trained specifically to teach music. Just for clarification, being trained does not mean knowledge of music, and skill on an instrument; it means, knowing how to teach music!

Further, when these teachers teach, they need to "teach to empower", rather than merely "teach to inform". Their students must be taught the skills to use and apply the knowledge acquired. I refer to skills such as composition, analysis, song writing, music transcription, arranging, conducting, studio production.

In this way, we will create a cadre of people, armed with knowledge, skill and creativity, bringing their varied perspectives to bear on our musical raw material. This new musical army will create the uniquely Guyanese music we so badly need!

Let's make it happen!

Hubert George

One of the main reasons which motivated me to create a website on this topic was to facilitate better access to solo guitar arrangements of Guyanese folk songs. Some might ask, why folk songs? Here I share with you some of my thoughts on why I think building greater awareness of these songs is important. In a subsequent post, I will explore some steps which I believe could be taken to achieve this goal.

What do folk songs tell us?

Folk songs are defined as songs which are transmitted orally across generations through a variety of customs and whose composers are unknown. Folk songs originate in communities and reflect the changing views, values, customs and social issues confronting these communities.

Issues illustrated in Guyanese folk songs include, for instance, the 'craving for children among Indo-Guyanese in the 1960s' (cultural) and the 'hardships of indentureship' (historical) in folk songs collected by Vatuk (1965). The mournful melody and lyrics of the Afro-Guyanese folk song 'Me nah dead yet' alludes to the harsh punishment meted out to rebellious slaves during slavery.

What we are today is a legacy of what has happened in the past. Being more aware of folk songs can therefore help us understand better our roots, feel more secure about who we are, and empower us to bring about desirable changes. The study of the much wider field of History is justified along similar lines.

I believe that Guyanese folk songs are less popular today, especially with the younger generation, because the associated rituals, customs and festivals are in decline.

The 100 Guyanese folk songs included in Dolphin (1996), for example, could be categorized under five broad themes – work, marriage, romance, social issues, and child play (Oddly, I don't find a religious theme). Rituals, customs or festivals specific to our Indo-, Afro- and Amerindian communities are associated with each of these themes. It is largely on these occasions that folk songs are transmitted from one generation to the next. Thus, fewer such occasions translate to lower awareness. Luckily, there are ongoing efforts to revive some indigenous Afro-Guyanese rituals and customs (e.g. Kwe Kwe, Masquerade).

Hubert George

Recent initiatives, such as the Guyanese indigenous song festival, also share a similar objective.

Many work-songs were originally created to 'lighten' psychologically the tedium of manual tasks. However, the nature of work has in some cases changed significantly (e.g. increasing use of mechanization in timber harvesting and boating), making old work songs less relevant to a better equipped younger generation.

Changing lifestyles also play a role in the decreasing popularity of Guyanese folk songs. A few months back this writer chatted with a group of young construction workers on the Corentyne Coast in Berbice. We discussed how ways of life have changed since I attended Manchester Church of Scotland Primary School over 50 years ago. I related times when the school day began with students lining up and marching into their classrooms to the sounds of piano music. I recall in particular the US Marines' hymn lustily played on the piano by a youthful Noel Adams. Self-sufficient lifestyles based primarily on farming were common in the region. Singing folk songs led by elders was a frequent form of evening entertainment.

Today, the situation is much different. Youths reject what they consider to be the 'old style' of rural living when one was closely tied to the land. Most of the group preferred salaried employment in areas other than farming, and supermarket shopping to obtain food staples. Guyanese folk songs do not figure much, if at all, in their lives. In contrast, Jamaican dance hall, reggae and American rap music (or Guyanese versions) are quite prominent.

The large exodus of Guyanese from their native land and subsequent immersion in other cultures would also contribute in some ways to the weakening in popularity of Guyanese folk songs. Repatriating financial assets is far easier than cultural ones.

Lastly, I think that the overtly sexual nature of the lyrics of some Guyanese folk songs, when taken out of context, may also suppress their dissemination to a wider audience owing to self-censorship. It is of interest to this writer to explore the views and insights about the current status and future of Guyanese folk songs, among a cross-section of Guyanese at home and abroad.

In PART II, I will propose some steps that would hopefully reverse the trend of waning interest in Folk Songs among Guyanese.



(back to the beginning)

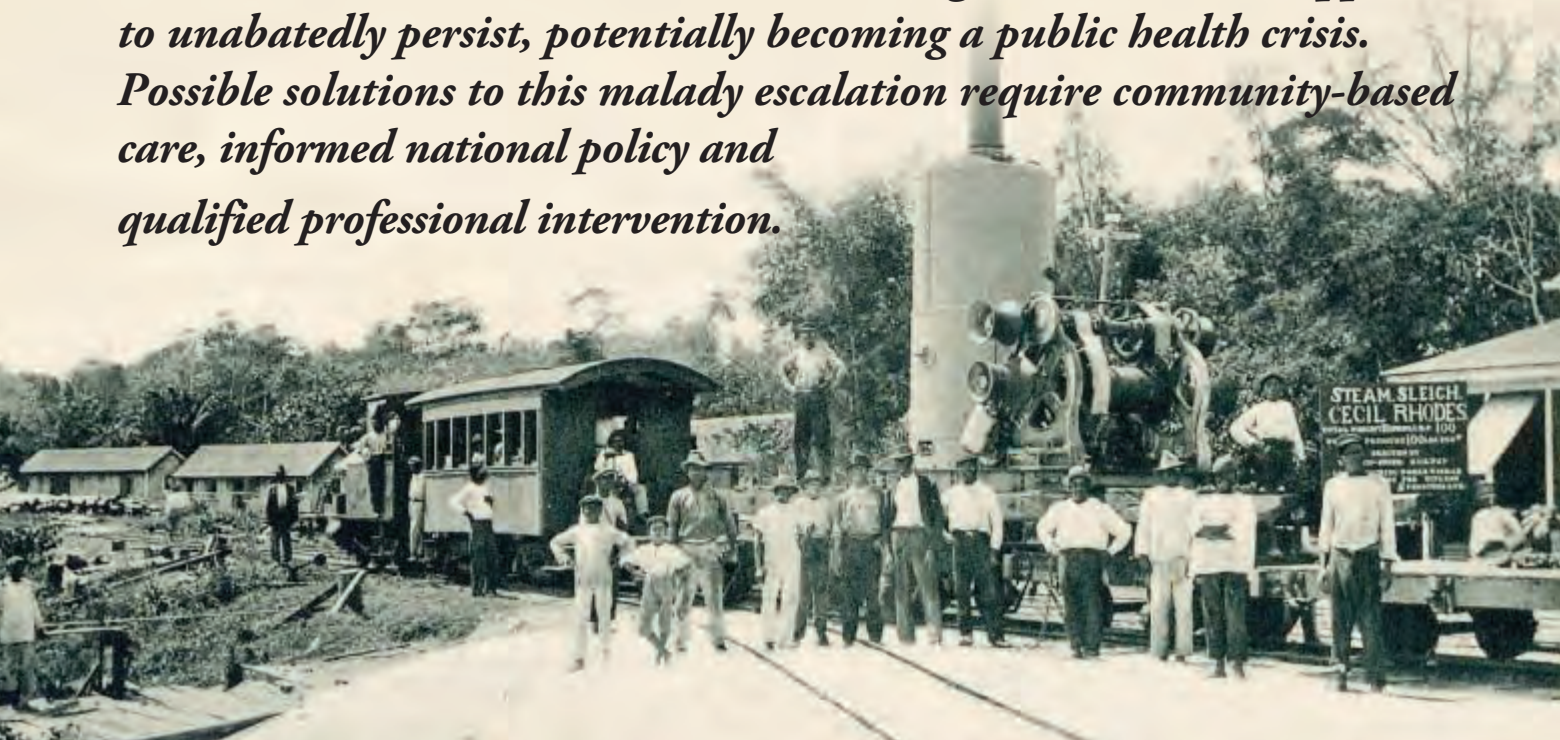
Dis Time Nah Lang Time!

Lear Matthews

D*is time nah lang time! Remember Bertie Vann, Fogarty Bun Down, Kayto, Walker de British, Tuts and Marjorie Monkey (from New Amsterdam), Peas Head, Law an' Order, Mary bruk iron, Memory man Gonzalves and Side-Ways?* They were called mad people or street characters - "Dey head ain' good!" some would say. Although generally tolerated and accommodated, they were teased and ridiculed almost every day. When they tried to defend themselves, taunting youths unsympathetic to their untenable condition and incapacity, desperately took flight to safety. Chinka-Lay-Lay and Cow Manure were known to arm themselves with bricks as a defensive strategy.

Their experience was likely attributed to social pressures, lack of resources and unattended mental disability - One psychiatrist fo de whole society! It was said that some of them "went off" after "studying abroad". Perhaps their challenges were a reflection of how fragile we could be. Indeed mental illness is prevalent in many a society. Hopefully the GT "street characters" and others so afflicted are treated with more respect and empathy.

Dis time Nah lang time! According to the experts, the Guyanese context proves to be one of the most challenging for mental health in this hemisphere. Suicide, disaffected youth, domestic violence, child victimization and the woes of the homeless, appear to be a measure of mental health. We hear about the alarming statistics, which appear to unabatedly persist, potentially becoming a public health crisis. Possible solutions to this malady escalation require community-based care, informed national policy and qualified professional intervention.



Dis time nah lang time. Remember the days of Pan Am flying in and out de homeland with no confusion? Now dey gat nuff different airlines, with all kinds of delays, causing tension and aggravation. No reprieve when you complain, increasing the emotional pain. Lang time when you go back home you could always stay at your family, with no hesitation. Now-a-days hometown visitors increasingly stay at hotels, because of spiraling emigration and family dispersion. Despite such transformation, a growing Diaspora, sometimes wary, persists in efforts to sustain cultural connection.

Dis time nah lang time - Remember when a shilling (24 cents) loaf was a big plait bread, a penny mauby with tennis-roll-an-cheese was a meal, and Bastiani bury de dead? Short Hand and Typing was de in ting, steel band was king and Johnny Braff coulda' really sing. De Bhoom was introduced by Tom Charles and the Syncopaters, Masquerade was prapuh flouncing and Yoruba Singers one of the best cultural entertainers. Dis time nah lang time, when gay was happy; before Watchman turn Security. "Operation" didn't mean surgery; radio and gramophone, but no telephone in de home; no television showing all dem Reality nonsense; "Aunt Mary, a good neighbour" made more sense. Sneaker was yatin' and \$2 dollar could'a get yuh two bunch a plaitain. Remember when a freck for a small boy was a "jil"? Now is more like a hundred dollar bill.

Dis time nah lang time. We used to ride Raleigh and Hercules bicycle or travel by train on de East and West Coast train line. Now some ah we ridin' de subway to stops like Paddington (Lon.), Ossington (Tor.), East Broadway and Far Rockaway - nowhere near Tigah Bay.

Remember the Georgetown yellow bus with routes around our garden city? Imagine a passenger asking: "Is this a Kitty-Campbellsville or Church-Durbun?" and another politely responding: "The latter Madum".

Courtesy, comradery and respect reigned. Dis time when yuh hear somebody sey: "Mistuh please fo a pass" on the Flatbush bus or B 103 to Canarse, yuh smile because yuh know is one ah we.

Dis time nah lang time! Where have all the writers gone? Martin, E.R, Wordsworth, Carew and Mittleholtzer – among those so inspirational. Put out a clarion call to invoke their names for a literary revival!

Dis time nah lang time! Bicycle and dray cyart use to share Georgetown road space and the City Council made sanitation a priority. Now cyar and Mini-bus congesting de place and people crying out for public health sanity to return to the Municipality. As soon as rain set up, Georgetown flooding, while de politicians proroguing and demonstrating. Dis time for a change the focus should be on compromising, BRIDGIN' and developing.

DIS TIME NAH LANG TIME!

Lang time we coulda' mark time.
Dis time we don't have much time!

Lear Matthews



“I come from the gutter”

-part II

I.C. Fraser

... Another flood in Guttertown...

Correction.... Albouystown. The repeated floods are getting to me. It is very distracting. It is a diversion from the usual blackout and the water cut off. And de Market still flood. See the Mayor. Demand he open de market. Regardless of Doppler radar or the City Clerk. Dammit. Dammit.



Photo: Francis Quamina Farrier

COMMENTARY

I come from the gutter (as in Martin Carter's, "I come from the niggeryard".)

I.C. Fraser

D*epression?* I refuse to be depressed. I will not allow the evil forces and pretenders of governance to oppress me into the gutter...there must be a way to rehabilitate the gutter or get out of it. Maybe I should get angry. Resist. Or protest. Or migrate.

It is a bad period. Bad times.

Democracy just took a dive into the gutter. It is now suffocated by the silt, the mud, the plastic bottles and cups, and the rulers' arrogance. Gutter politics.

Who says the pen is mightier than the sword? You are reading the wrong books my friend. You are writing the wrong things. Watch out! We will cut you down. It is the law. I am the law. Watch out!

Another flood in Guttertown... Correction....

Albouystown. The repeated floods are getting to me. It is very distracting. It is a diversion from the usual blackout and the water cut off. And de Market still flood. See the Mayor. Demand he open de market. Regardless of Doppler radar or the City Clerk. Dammit. Dammit.

I refuse to be depressed.

Relief is on the way. All the way from the USA. By private jet. There is a way out. Six hundred and twenty five thousand! More on that later.

So I head for CJIA. Disguise is on. Profiled. Black male, wearing Tshirt, baseball cap and rastafarian slippers. Travelling alone. Confident. To diversify roots the cap is marked GT (for the Mudderland we love or Georgia Tech college football ID).

I move with trepidation to the airline counter. No milk or books or rum, (with or without cocaine), in my luggage. I hope Big Brother is not watching, but I can feel him. Depression is setting in.

Hey... not so fast my friend! Oh hell!

Your burnt sugar, your casareep, your mama's bakes and that tempting black cake are all subject to penetrating inspection. Depression. With a McDonalds straw for each item, my goodies are penetrated, disrespected, violated. Total depression.

As I get to the boarding gate the profile is singled for another pull over. CO Weapons being checked for weapons. I will not be depressed. Safety first. This is surely in the interest of safety.

Disguised, overcoming depression and all, I trundle in to JFK.

The greeting is by dogs. Sniffing. Sniffing at us all. After all this plane is from the the Mudderland. Yes. From the Gutter.

My cap is prominent. It reads GT. For Georgia Tech. Passport in hand I advance.

"Welcome home, Sir".... (Homeland Security).

"Hmmm... ElDorado?...Straight ahead"...(Bureau of Customs)

WHO ARE WE AS GUYANESE? AND WHAT ROLE DO RACE AND ETHNICITY PLAY IN GUYANESE IDENTITY ?



RACE : A GUIDED DISCUSSION A 5 PART SERIES FACILITATED BY **DR. PALOMA MOHAMED**

(Social Psychologist on Sabbatical from the University of Guyana)

5 THURSDAYS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2015
AT MORAY HOUSE TRUST . 5.30PM .

(January 8, 22 and 29. February 10 and 17)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. ADMISSION FREE.

IN GOOD COMPANY

JAN. 31, @ 7.00 P.M.

IN GOOD
COMPANY
JAN 31 @ 7



Chitra... a class act." Spend an intimate evening with **CHITRA**,

Singer, Songwriter, Guitarist, performing her original works and a variety of songs you will know and love! Meet 'n' Mingle with artists, friends and other pros, Avis Joseph (Violin), Howie (Drum), Radha Singh (Vocal/Guitar) and Verna Walcott (Percussion)

Venue:

Last Call Bar & Lounge

81-72 Lefferts Boulevard
Kew Gardens NY 11415

Rail: LIRR Kew Gardens Station

Train: E, F, G, J, A

Bus: Q10, Q54, Q37

Hors d'oeuvres will be served.

Suggested Donation: \$10

" X GNS MEMBERS REUNION 2 GUYANA AUGUST 22 - 30, 2015"

SAVE THE DATE

WE ARE STILL BUILDING

We are planning another exciting program for a memorable experience with people who share a special bond: the National Service experience. Please give us a feedback (a. if you plan or wish to attend, (b. the activities and events you are interested in, and most of all, (c. your ideas and suggestions for a richer experience.

Events and activities under consideration so far are:

- Airfare group rates for direct and one stop flights to Guyana (checking all airlines).
- Hotels and other accommodation recommended (contact info).
- Tours :
 - Kaieteur Essequibo (private tour vendors).
 - Linden/Rockstone Bartica overnight
 - Essequibo Coast Select resort(s)
 - GT/Coastal Tour by Air
- Special Trips/Excursion
 - Berbice Excursion - NA/Coventryne/Sugar factory
 - Splashmin/Linden Highway Excursion
- Gala Evening/Dinner Dance)
- Prayer Breakfast
- Special projects: Donate to Orphanages/Nursing Homes and New projects
- Symposium
- Seven Ponds Wreath Laying
- Youth/Children special interest/activities

Registration forms and program details will be circulated asap. We welcome your feedback.

Contact us by email, telephone, or social media.

Your friend, colleague, and squad-die:

Courtney Parris
Team Reunion



St. Gabriel's Debutante Ball Committee Tea Party

St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church
331 Hawthorne Street, Brooklyn NY 11225

Sunday, March 1, 2015

3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

**Auctions:
Chinese
Silent**

**The
Competition
is on!**

**The Most Creative
Hat**

**The Best Decorated
Teapot!**

The Debutante Committee is excited to host this event, come join us!

Tickets:

Adults: \$25.00

**Children: \$12.00
(under 12 yrs)**

Suzette Ottey 917-586-6675

Andrea Flynn 917-971-5910

Ashley Cox 718-809-4926

Keith Cadogan 917-836-8203

Pearl Johnson 347-357-8903

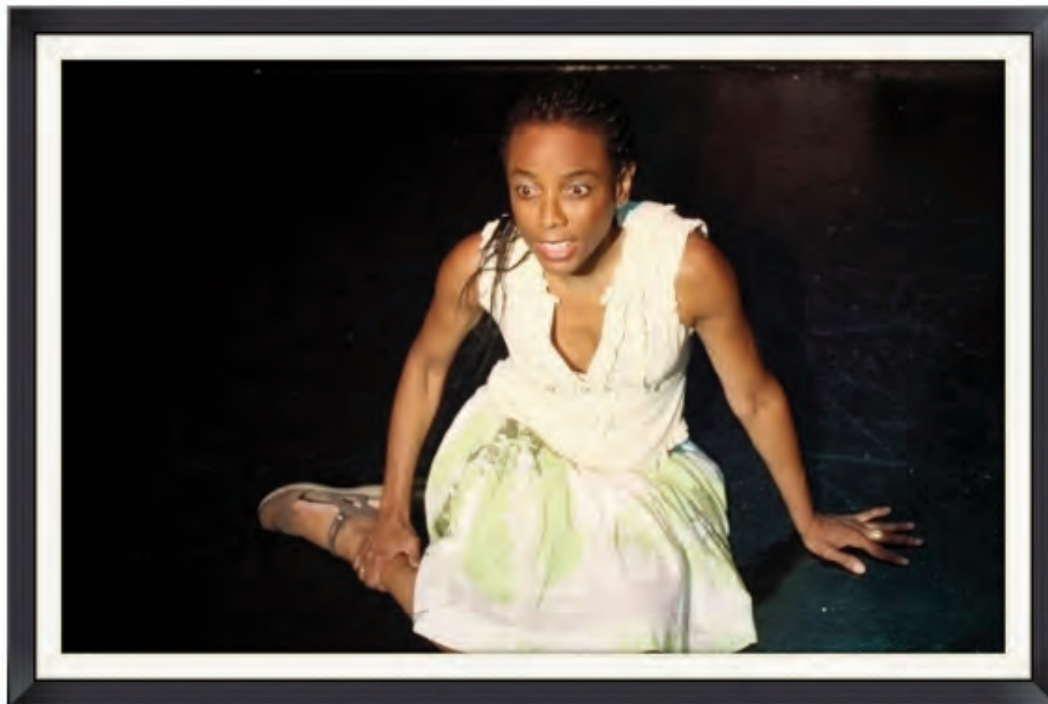
Allison Ross 917-689-0398

Paula Phillips-Douglas 917-797-5211

Linda Watson-Lorde 718-909-8763

DEMERARA GOLD

Written By and Featuring Ingrid Griffith



Demerara Gold is the hilarious and thought-provoking story of a 7-year old girl in Guyana whose parents get visas to America and must leave her in the care of her two grandmothers. One grandmother is a rigid recluse. The other grandmother is a religious fanatic. The girl's dreams are on hold until she finally gets a visa to join her parents in the U.S. Her new home in America proves to be all that was promised but more than she bargained for.

Hosted by Queen's College of Guyana Alumni Association (NY), Inc.



Date: Saturday, February 21, 2015

Time: 3 p.m.

Location: St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church, 331 Hawthorne Street,
Brooklyn, NY

Admission: \$25



GUYANA DAY USA, INC.

A CULTURAL, CIVIC &
CHARITABLE
ORGANIZATION
PRESENTS



2 Great Events to Celebrate Guyana's Rich Cultural Heritage

EASTER IN THE PARK 2015

A PICNIC AND FUN DAY
FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

KITE MAKING WORKSHOP, KITE FLYING CONTEST, EASTER EGG HUNT, EGG AND SPOON RACE
AND OTHER TRADITIONAL GUYANESE GAMES.

BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC BASKETS, FOOD, COOLERS, BEVERAGES, AND CHAIRS. MUSIC WILL BE PROVIDED
ADMISSION FREE. PRIZES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR EVENTS. DONATIONS ARE WELCOME

SUNDAY APRIL 5, 2015
FROM 12:00 NOON TO SUNDOWN

ALLIGATOR PAVILLION, OKEEHEELEE PARK
7715 FOREST HILL BLVD, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, 33413



GUYANA DAY 2015

A CELEBRATION OF GUYANA'S CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN OBSERVANCE OF GUYANA'S 49TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY
WITH AN INDOOR EXPOSITION AND A MEMORIAL DAY JAM IN THE BUFFET HALL AT THE SAME LOCATION

MUSIC, FOOD, BEVERAGES, DANCES, LIVE ENTERTAINERS, ARTISTIC PERFORMANCES & CRAFT WORK, AND A DUCK CURRY COMPETITION

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2015. DAY EVENT FROM 1:00 PM TO SUNDOWN, AT
CANAL 14, 5060 HAVERHILL ROAD, GREENACRES, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA 33463
MEMORIAL DAY JAM AT THE SAME LOCATION STARTS FROM SUNDOWN TO 1:00 AM.

NO COOLERS/FOOD/DRINKS ALLOWED - MUSIC BY OMDAT NRINE (DJ OM)

FOR MORE INFO: BISSOON 718-216-1448; MUKESH 561-254-9074;
HARRY 561-352-7782; OMDAT 561-800-9617

ADMISSION:
DAY EVENT - FREE
MEMORIAL DAY JAM - \$5.00
PARKING:
DONATION
[\$2.00 RECOMMENDED]



HOLI GREETINGS From
GUYANA DAY USA, INC.
"Strength in Unity"



**The Bishops High School
Alumni Association
New York Tri-State Chapter's
Annual Mash Fete**

**Music By
Our Very Own
DJ Flexx!!**

**Door Prizes &
Complimentary
buffet**

**COME OUT AND
"LIVE YUH LIFE!"**

Tickets \$20 in Advance And More At The Door

Friday, February 27, 2015

**Elegance Ballroom
193 Dean Street,
(Corner of Nostrand & Dean Aves.)
Brooklyn, NY 11216**



From: 10 PM until we say when

**BHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NY
TRI-STATE CHAPTER INC
PO BOX 02-0039
BROOKLYN, NY 11202**

<http://www.bhsnytristate.org>

**For tickets, please call
Margaret (917) 692-7028
Wayne (917) 232-6108
Jackie (917) 494-7876
Audrey (516) 815-2907
DJ Flexx (347) 432-5712**