



National Discourse on Carnival Arts

Report by Ansel Wong, October 2009

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This report is dedicated to the memory of

David Roussel-Milner

(Kwesi Bachra)

18 February 1938 – 28 October 2009

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Carnival Village, The ELIMU Paddington Arts Carnival Band, the Victoria and Albert Museum and HISTORYtalk hosted the National Discourse on Carnival from Friday 2 October to Sunday 4 October 2009 with a number of post-conference events lasting for the duration of the month of October.

The programme was delivered through two strands – **ROOTS** (a historical review and critical analysis of Carnival in London from 1969) and **ROUTES** (mapping the journey to artistic and performance excellence for Carnival and its related industries) - to achieve the following objectives:

- Inform Carnival Village's development plans
- Formulate an approach to and build a consensus on Carnival Arts
- Identify and develop a strategic forum of stakeholders, performers and artists
- Recognise and celebrate artistic excellence in Carnival Arts
- Build on the legacies of Claudia Jones and other Carnival Pioneers

The Programme

For the duration of the event, there were two keynote presentations; the first was the inaugural Claudia Jones Carnival Memorial Lecture delivered by Dr Pat Bishop and the second was delivered by Pax Nindi on the future of Carnival.

In addition, there were three plenary sessions during which a panel of experts led discussions on the history and origins of Carnival and the issues to be faced if the event is to have an assured future.

Other features of the programme included

- A Concert, commemorating the contributions of five individuals to the development of Carnival – Vivian Comma, Trevor Carter, Lawrence Noel, Vernon Williams and Philmore 'Boots' Davidson – that featured Calypsonians, Steel Band music and the Engine Room Collective.
- A Commemorative Walk honouring the long African presence in the United Kingdom and recognising the contributors to the progressive development of life in the UK

and the laying of a wreath at the Cenotaph by Her Excellency, Gail Guy, Acting High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

- An Exhibition featuring Carnival Designer, Victoria Lenzo Lee, illustrating an innovative approach to urban planning and architectural design based on a Carnival theme.
- A Book Stall featuring a variety of Caribbean writings published by Hansib Publications Limited.
- An illustrated talk by Patrice Briggs about a practice-led Arts-Based Research Project entitled '*A conversation with we Elders: Mas' Talk*'
- A Carnival Lime featuring ex-tempo by Tobago Crusoe
- A cinematic tribute to Carnival featuring the Don Letts' film "Carnival".
- An Exhibition on the History of Carnival, 1959 – 2009
- Steel Band Workshops for children
- Excerpts from *Dear Comrade*, a play about the life of Claudia Jones, written and directed by Trinidadian playwright, Shango Baku, and performed by Jackie Charles

The following were staged after the main event:

- A conducted Carnival Tour around the major Carnival sites
- The Annual HISTORYtalk Lecture – *The Journey of Carnival* – delivered by local historian, Tom Vague
- A National Carnival Networking Seminar and Mask Ball

Claudia Jones Carnival Memorial Lecture

Dr Bishop is a Carnival luminary with many years' experience of pushing the artistic and performance boundaries of Carnival Arts, particularly music, art and dance. She is a Distinguished Fellow of the University of Trinidad & Tobago and was awarded her country's highest honour, The Trinity Cross, in 1994

Dr Pat Bishop opened her lecture - *The Globalisation of Carnival Culture and its Impact on the Carnival Diasporic People Today* - by addressing the complexity of the topic and her intention to demystify the individual words that stood at the heart of the title of her lecture – Globalisation, Diaspora and Carnival.

Globalisation in Carnival, she said, is about big business running (and ruining) the Mas Camp ethic and morale and the dominance and arrogance of international commerce, without boundaries, in consumerism and the profit motive. 'Globalisation' is "a process of worldwide economic integration. Factors that have contributed to globalisation include

increasingly sophisticated communications and transport technologies and services, mass migration and the movement of peoples, a level of economic activity which has apparently outgrown national markets through industrial combinations and commercial groupings that cross national frontiers, as well as international agreements that reduce the cost of doing business in foreign countries.”

‘Diaspora’ was another loaded term; “another buzz word for something that has been going on since mankind found itself with feet and discovered that it could walk!.... The concepts of population movement, of acculturation, assimilation, of minority versus majority, and of resistance to all of the above – are laid out for us in the Jewish use of and experience of their word Diaspora.”

Dr Bishop then turned to the word ‘Carnival’ and saw it as an opportunity for identity change and role reversal; a time for reversion, for exploring our multiple and impermanent selves, for levelling the complexities of the human condition, for becoming extraordinary.

Driven by the profit motive, “modern mas in Trinidad has become a descent to dreariness, sinking to a level of banality well below that of our predecessors of living memory like Saldenha, Bailey, Chang, Minshall, Ken Morris et al.”

“If Carnival can make any claim to being art, then all that I can say is that art HAS to be made of sterner stuff. But even if today’s mas is foolishness, the underlying principles of masquerade are not.

Mas has to do with change. But it is also about Unmasking. That is to say, we revert, as best as we can to the way we were before we were masked..... and that is the power of the mas..... we really must try to do better with it, given its awesome capacity for the assumption of identity and the proclamation of the complexities of the human condition.

Diasporic art should be unapologetic and cast a more ambitious net and seek, not for tolerance but for art; art that exists in the glorious light of innovation, creativity and the spectacle. This art should be retrieved, re-appropriated and returned to its community – a better, freer place where all the bread isn’t ready-sliced and all the information isn’t transmitted by Power Point!; where a mas is not a computer generated graphic and where a mas camp with its food, its music, its sharing, its skill development and the verbally expressed life of the mind could, in some way return to the people”.

Dr Bishop concluded that we (in Britain) should ensure that Carnival is accredited among the ‘high arts’. We should challenge recognised arts practitioners to give it due esteem and recognition. We should affirm and ensure its continuity.”

Feature Address

The Feature Address was delivered by Zimbabwean-born Pax Nindi who, as Senior Combined Arts Officer at the Arts Council England (ACE), initiated and directed the 3-day On Route International Carnival Conference. He is currently Combined Arts Services’

Artistic Director and serves on a range of Carnival organisations, including St Paul's Carnival, World Carnival Commission in Canada, National Carnival Bands Association - Trinidad and the UK Centre for Carnival Arts.

In his presentation, Pax said that even though Carnival Arts, as an art form and cultural activity, impacts on fashion, design and every area of the mainstream curriculum, it still lacks positive coverage and understanding from the mainstream media.

Notwithstanding this, the main support for Carnival must be the community and the agenda for the future of the Carnival must include:

- Developing Carnival as an 'accessible' art form
- Developing the dedicated Carnival spaces – The UK Centre for Carnival Arts and Carnival Village.
- International networking and sharing of information, developments and good practice
- Making an impact at the 2012 Olympics and with the 5 London Boroughs involved
- Embedding Carnival Arts as a reputable area of study in the curriculum
- Using upcoming events to network, develop co-ordinated responses to funding and the demands of licensing
- Negotiating through the obstacles: Financial payments, engaging young people, self-support.

The Discourses

The plenary discussions covered the broadest remit of the past, present and future. Several recurrent themes emerged during the whole event: the triumph over adversity and sustained challenges; continuity and growth through heroic struggle, individual sacrifices and personal contributions; growth and evolution impacting on millions of revellers and participants for over half a century; a uniqueness of form, fashion, performance, innovation and artistic excellence that remains unparalleled in the British Artscape and a vision for the future that is promising and exciting.

These were the positives.

The systemic failings of Carnival management and governance, inequitable financial returns and non-involvement of youths were some of the perceived failings to date.

Cohesive and inclusive planning, visionary leadership, education, new technology and business development were identified as important aspects of the way forward.

These themes have been formulated into recommendations under the two key strands – Roots and Routes. The challenge will be in 'reshaping' the vision and organisational

strategy for Carnival to address these issues and 'review' each recommendation to draft an agreed Action Plan that will increase the momentum of change for the immediate future, the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and for the next 50 years.

Roots

The various claims for the true origins of the carnival were fully aired and the contributions by each of the four pioneers credited with making a significant impact were outlined. This included

- **Claudia Jones** wanting to take the foul taste of the Notting Hill riots out of our mouths by staging an indoor Carnival in 1959,
- **Rhaune Laslett** organising a "September Fayre" in 1966 that promised the "glamour and happiness of the Mardi Gras" with Russ Henderson and Sterling Betancourt on Pan.
- **Joe Hunte**, with Claudia Jones, organising the "first street Carnival" in Brockwell Park in 1960 under the auspices of the West Indian Standing Conference; and
- **Leslie Palmer** who shaped the Carnival in 1973 into "an urban festival of black music, incorporating all aspects of Trinidad Carnival".

Whilst recognising the part each of the four pioneers played in promoting a Carnival, a plea was made for the recognition of the contributions made over the whole of the 50 years of the scores of other individuals. This needs to be researched, validated and recorded as part of the history of Carnival.

The work of HISTORYtalk and its publication, *50 Years of Carnival 1959 - 2009*, is an important contribution in the mapping of this history of Carnival and this needs to be built on.

The key recommendations resulting from these sessions were:

Recommendations

- Carnival Village take urgent steps to undertake a comprehensive mapping of the many individuals and organisations that have made important and seminal contributions to the development of the Carnival in London.
- Once these contributions are codified and verified, efforts should be made to publicly display the names of all Carnival Pioneers by either forming a Carnival Wall of Respect or embracing the inauguration of a Carnival Hall of Fame initiated by Elimu Paddington Arts Carnival Band in 2009.
- Commemorative Plaques be erected at key sites where various Carnival art forms or events have had a historic connection. Specifically, a statue of Claudia Jones should be erected in Powis Square.

- Carnival Village initiate collaboration with all the Carnival Arts Arenas and HISTORYtalk to agree and promote a Carnival Tour that takes in the major sites in the borough linked to Carnival.
- The contribution made by Leslie Palmer should be commemorated by the introduction of an Annual Award for innovation in Carnival Arts.

Routes

There was general recognition and acceptance that Carnival, as part of its orthodoxy, is an art form that reflects the diverse cultures of London's many communities. But Carnival is not a singular art form but an integrated framework for live performances that are rooted in several other art forms involving the human body, space and time.

In Notting Hill Carnival, this integrated framework includes four art forms that are defined as Carnival Arts Arenas – Mas, Steel Band, Calypso and Sound Systems.

These art forms, with their complex features, will pose a challenge for those involved in defining the routes to the future. These routes will need to lead to the development of Carnival arts to greater heights, change the media profile of Carnival away from anti-social and criminal behaviour to artistic excellence, lay down challenges and standards for future festivals and local artists, encourage synergies with other forms of artistic expressions and ground performance art away from the dominance of dance hall and of the bacchanalia of bump and grind.

A number of key issues affecting the routes to the future were discussed. The first was the extent to which the 'redistributions' and 'reinterpretations' of the Trinidad Carnival into Notting Hill Carnival are supported or resisted. Michael La Rose argues passionately for the retention of the traditional features of the Trinidad Carnival whilst Wendel Clement made an equally strong case for avoiding being caught in a Carnival mindset that refuses to embrace current developments, recognise the attractions of the 'Brazilian costumes', legitimate the participation of London's diverse communities and promote the recruitment of the young.

It will also mean avoiding in the UK what Dr Pat Bishop referred to as the banality of Carnival in Trinidad.

The other main issue revolved around the concerns of Carnival Arts performers in their occupation and use of the public performing space. The challenge for them is not whether any one performer has a legitimate right to occupy the space but how each one will use the space and the impact of the regulatory authorities who are having unchallenged supremacy to define and shape the use of that space.

The future is also determined by the quality and professionalism of the governance and management of the Carnival and the capability of the Directors of the London Notting Hill Carnival Limited to successfully formulate and implement its business, operational and organisational plans.

Over the 50 years of Carnival, the Carnival footprint has evolved to what it is today, each change being mediated through the active engagement of Carnival's leaders. The frequent changes in the governance of Carnival has resulted in a lack of continuity of management and ownership of the change process and so with each change of the Carnival footprint, Carnival has had to negotiate without the hindsight of its knowledge capital and an incomplete understanding of the dynamics and political imperatives that underpin each change.

To guarantee the future of the Carnival for the next 50 years, the following recommendations were agreed:

Recommendations

- Carnival Village should initiate a timed programme to develop a Carnival Arts Forum of all individuals and organisations and this Forum should be the major consultative forum for the planning of future Conferences and conversations and the conferring of the Leslie Palmer Award.
- Identify an appropriate forum or organisation, such as the proposed Carnival Arts Forum, to review all the proposals and recommendations of this report and develop appropriate responses and programmes of interventions to meet the specific demands; specifically, as a matter of priority, to consider:
 - The relevance, rigour, appropriateness and achievability of the major findings of this report
 - The building of a consensus on an aesthetic for Carnival Arts
 - The nurturing of the entrepreneurial potential of Carnival
 - Actively securing a greater emphasis on artistic excellence and innovation
 - A determination, through governance, marketing, partnerships and incentives, to embrace a wider constituency and eradicate the closed shop of participants which could mean actively and aggressively opening access to new communities and new art forms so that there is a more organic and contemporary orthodoxy reflecting the full diversity of London.
 - Open a discourse and conduct 'good conversations' with the younger generation
 - Identify ways of supporting the professionalising of the governance and management of the Carnival so that a democratically elected Board of Directors are in place by January 2010.
 - Embedding Carnival Arts as a reputable area of study in the curriculum

- Brokering a co-ordinated strategy to safeguard and pilot Carnival's contribution to and involvement in the Cultural Olympiad and the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.
- Seek funding for the publication and promotion of this report, in hard copy or on the websites of all Carnival partners, so that it becomes more accessible and available to a wider public.
- Encourage all the Carnival constituents to participate fully and unconditionally in the development of a fully costed business and development plan for Carnival for the next five years.
- There should be independent annual evaluations and periodic reviews of every aspect of the Carnival process including organisational and operational arrangements, artistic achievement, financial viability, community engagement and planned outcomes.

Conclusions

The range of events – Exhibition, Carnival Tour, Carnival Concert, Carnival Lime, Book Shop and the recognition of pioneers - engaged a comprehensive spectrum of Carnivalists and community audiences. The main strands of celebration, remembrance, review and reshaping, gave focus and consistency to the 3-day event. This was a quality experience and a learning curve with informed projections for the future.

The realisation of survival, success and communal pride underpinned all the discussions and an overwhelming number of participants stated that they enjoyed the high standard of the contributions and particularly welcomed the opportunity accorded to all participants to actively contribute to the debates and conversations.

The conference was motivated by a victorious anniversary – hence its visionary programming, orderly processes and positive outcomes.

Despite the statistically small number of respondents completing the evaluation form, many very helpful comments and criticisms – written and verbal - were expressed. These have been reviewed and, together with the specific recommendations from the main sessions, will influence the drafting of the post-Discourse Action Plan.

Introduction

“Carnival has become a symbol of freedom for the broad mass of the population and not merely a season for frivolous enjoyment. It has a ritualistic significance, rooted in the experience of slavery and in the celebration of freedom from slavery. The people will not be intimidated; they will observe Carnival in the manner they deem most appropriate.”¹

The National Discourse on Carnival Arts was held at the Carnival Village, Tabernacle and the Victoria and Albert Museum from Friday 2 October to Sunday 4 October 2009 with a number of post-conference events lasting for the duration of the month of October. For the full programme of events, see Appendix A.

The purpose of this National Discourse was to recall and review the history and current orthodoxy of Carnival and then to re-shape the conceptual, operational, managerial and artistic frameworks for the development of Carnival Arts and its related industries for the next 50 years and, more specifically, in preparation for the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

The programme was delivered through two strands – **ROOTS** (a historical review and critical analysis of Carnival in London from 1969) and **ROUTES** (mapping the journey to artistic and performance excellence for Carnival and its related industries) - to achieve the following objectives:

- Inform Carnival Village’s development plans
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The impetus for this national discourse was the 50th anniversary of Carnival in London. However, there were also other overriding factors that influenced the decision to embrace a national focus for the discussions and to open them up to both practitioners and participants from the many Carnivals throughout the UK. Chief among these is the recognition of the cultural and historical lineage with the Carnivals in Trinidad & Tobago and Brazil. Often termed, Diasporic Carnivals, these events have dominated the artistic landscape in the UK to such an extent that definitions of what constitute a ‘Carnival’ are being extended to incorporate all street events and live performances in public spaces. The impacts of this development on public funding of the arts and the articulation and legitimisation of a Carnival aesthetic and performance excellence remain to be assessed and evaluated.

¹ Hill, E., The Trinidad Carnival, 1981.

Recognising 2009 as the 50th year of the Carnival in London is not universally accepted. However, it is the starting point for discussions on the origins of London's Notting Hill Carnival.

This starting point recognise the first London Carnival as happening on the 30th January 1959 at St Pancras Town Hall. Billed as "Caribbean Carnival 1959" and organised by the West Indian Gazette (WIG), it was certainly seen by everyone at the time as the first Caribbean Carnival in London. The person behind this was political activist and Founder-Editor of the WIG, Claudia Jones. This indoor event was modelled on the Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago, the birthplace of Claudia Jones, and it was timed to coincide with that festival, just before the Catholic Lenten Season.

However, the status of this event in the history of Carnival in London has been vigorously contested with a number of Carnival luminaries, notably, Rhuane Laslett, Joe Hunte and Leslie Palmer, being championed as the true originators of the Carnival. At the heart of this debate is differing views of what constitutes a Carnival and thus there is a need for some definitional clarity on this issue; not just to validate its history and define its legacies but also to inform the future positioning of "Carnival Arts" in the artistic landscape (Artscape) and policies of funding and regulatory agencies.

Funding for this National Discourse was provided by the Arts Council England, London (ACE, London) with support, in kind, from the four partner organisations hosting the whole event – Carnival Village, HISTORYtalk, Elimu Paddington Arts Carnival Band (Elimu) and the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A). (Appendix B).

Without the support and contributions from a number of individuals the event would not have happened nor achieved its objectives. We wish to acknowledge the contributions made by many to this event. (Appendix C for a full list). Particular thanks are due to the contributors – Moderators, Panellists & Performers; Janet Browne, Audience Development Officer, V&A; Joyce Wilson, Head of Combined Arts, ACE, London; Victoria Lenzoi Lee for designing and decorating the venue and providing an Exhibition on Architecture and Carnival; our keynote speakers, Dr Pat Bishop and Pax Nindi; the Event Manager Patrice Briggs who also doubled up as a Presenter; our Rapporteur, Shango Baku, who also directed the dramatic presentation on Claudia Jones, acted by Jackie Charles; The Trinidad Development Corporation for their generous funding of Dr Bishop's flight to London and Her Excellency, Miss Gail P Guy, Acting High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago for her patronage of the event and the provision of hospitality and travel for Dr Bishop.

1 The Discourses

Friday 2 October 2009

A. Exhibition: 50 Years of Carnival 1959 - 2009

HISTORYtalk was founded in 1989 as 'Kensington and Chelsea Community History Group' to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to study, understand and contribute to the history of the local area. This exhibition "charts the journey of the biggest street festival in Europe: from the first London Caribbean Carnival at St Pancras Town Hall organised by Claudia Jones in 1959 to the Notting Hill Fayre procession founded by Rhuane Laslett in 1966, through the Trinidad style Notting Hill Carnival set up by Leslie Palmer in 1973, the militant reggae clash of the late 70s, the addition of rap and rave in the 80s and the commercialisation of the 90s into the 21st century."²

The Exhibition charts this journey in seven parts –

Part 1 *One Foot in the Grove 1959 – 1965* Claudia Jones Indoor Carnivals

Part 2 *Dancing in the Street 1966 – 1969* Rhaune Laslett Fayre Procession

Part 3 *Sound of the Westway 1970 – 1975* Leslie Palmer People's Carnival

Part 4 *The Clash 1976 – 1979* Punky Reggae Party and Riots

Part 5 *Notting Hill Babylon 1980s* Mangrove and All Saints Road

Part 6 *All the Sinners Saints 1990s* Commercialisation

Part 7 *Notting III 2000s* Mas and Mayhem

Colin Prescod, Chair of HISTORYtalk opened the Exhibition and referenced Tom Vague's accompanying booklet – *50 Years of Carnival*.³ In his opening remarks, he highlighted the community history backdrop to the emergence and rooting of the Carnival in North Kensington. This was both a diffuse and diverse backdrop that included the 1958 'race riots'; the growing resistance of the new Black working class migrants and settlers joined by White liberal, bohemian and working class local residents; the founding of a militant local community culture against racism and injustice and the influence of cosmopolitan, self-help 'independent' local organisations and institutions like the North Kensington Law Centre (the first in the land).

² Vague, T., *50 Years of Carnival 1959 – 2009*, p. 2, Booklet, HISTORYtalk, 2009.

³ *ibid*

Colin also paid homage to the many key figures who also brokered the rooting of Carnival in the local community, particularly Claudia Jones, Rhaune Laslett and Leslie Palmer. And in the process, an honourable mention was made of Anthony Perry (first leader of the Notting Hill Housing Trust) for his unstinting support of Leslie Palmer's historic, early 1970's Carnival intervention.

Commending the work of HISTORYtalk's volunteers and staff generally, Colin thanked them for mounting the exhibition and left the gathering with a very sobering thought that he defined as a paradox of celebrating without being triumphalist - since 50 years after the '58 riots and the '59 racist lynching of Kelso Cochrane, the struggle continues against racism and injustice in all its forms. No one was left in any doubt of the need for each to maintain an engagement with this struggle.

The Exhibition was supported by the publication, *50 Years of Carnival 1959 – 2009*, much of it assembled by volunteer Tom Vague, which was well received and spotting 'holes' in the narrative animated some lively discussion around the issue of curating what might be termed a community 'living archive'.

B. Claudia Jones Carnival Memorial Lecture

The Globalisation of Carnival Culture and its impact on the Carnival Diasporic People Today

Dr Pat Bishop, Lecturer, History of Art & Critical Reading, University of the West Indies, St Augustine

One of the prominent planned features of this event was the inauguration of the Claudia Jones Carnival Memorial Lecture. To preserve the memory of Claudia Jones and to commemorate her seminal contributions to the UK's Caribbean Carnival, an Annual Carnival Lecture will be staged featuring innovative ideas, current research and exemplary practice in the Arts of the Caribbean. The person invited to deliver the first lecture was Dr Pat Bishop.

Dr Bishop is a Carnival luminary with many years' experience of pushing the artistic and performance boundaries of Carnival Arts, particularly music, art and dance.

Dr Bishop is a Distinguished Fellow of the University of Trinidad & Tobago and was awarded her country's highest honour, The Trinity Cross, in 1994. Recognition of the excellence of her work is not restricted to Trinidad and Tobago as the UK paid homage to her with an Award from the British Association of Steel Bands for her outstanding service to pan in 1989.

Before taking up her current position as Lecturer in the History of Art and Critical Reading at the University of the West Indies, Dr Bishop was Director of the Carnival Institute of Trinidad & Tobago. Engagement with Carnival spans her whole life starting at Bishop Anstey Secondary School where, as a young school girl, she designed three consecutive winning Carnival Queen Gowns which her mother made to her current project of preparing a full length Handel's Messiah with pans for performance in December 2009 and her book, **Masquerade – The Global Origins of Carnival**, which she is currently writing.

Dr Bishop is Pianist, Musical Arranger, Composer and Conductor, Carnival Designer, artist, teacher, painter, steel band pioneer, author, academic and critical thinker and reader.

Dr Pat Bishop opened her lecture - *The Globalisation of Carnival Culture and its Impact on the Carnival Diasporic People Today* - by addressing the complexity of the topic and her intention to demystify the individual words that stood at the heart of the title of her lecture – Globalisation, Diaspora and Carnival.

‘Globalisation’, she said, is as old as Copernicus and is nothing new – just a contemporary interpretation of an ancient human tradition. “As the word globalisation is used today, it relates to policies of treating the whole world as a proper sphere for political and economic influence. This expresses itself in concepts such as free trade, the free flow of capital and the tapping of cheaper foreign labour markets.”

In making sense of the word, we must beware of cultural theorising and ‘art-speak’. So whilst technology has the capacity to generalise and creativity deals with specifics, the essence of Globalisation is about ‘juxtapositions and impositions’. In the context of Carnival and Trinidad, this global imperative that positions and shapes communities and constituencies is evidenced in the new Chinese workforce ‘invading Trinidad, building a huge new arts centre – next to what passes for our local museum and the adjacent Memorial Park with its small cenotaph’.

It’s also about the majority of mas-making materials and even completed costumes being sourced, en masse, from China.

“In respect of global economies, I may note that most costumes today in Trinidad Carnival are chosen out of brightly coloured Chinese brochures. These in turn are purchased in China, paid for by us “on line” and even delivered to our door in re-labelled Pizza boxes.”

Globalisation in Carnival is also about big business running (and ruining) the Mas Camp ethic and morale and the dominance and arrogance of international commerce, without boundaries, in consumerism and the profit motive.

“There was a time when a Mas Camp was a statement of community. Costumes were made there. Mas Camps had sewing machines and jigs for bending wire and food cooking and music playing and a huge and wonderful amount of Carnival old talk. But nowadays, people ask me to talk about the “business” of Carnival – or whatever aspect of the cultural milieus that seems to them to be capable of yielding monetary profit. No more food. No more music. No more humanity.”

Dr Bishop concluded her exposition of the word ‘Globalisation’ by summarising it as “a process of worldwide economic integration. Factors that have contributed to globalization include increasingly sophisticated communications and transport technologies and services, mass migration and the movement of peoples, a level of economic activity which has apparently outgrown national markets through industrial combinations and commercial

groupings that cross national frontiers, as well as international agreements that reduce the cost of doing business in foreign countries.”

‘Diaspora’ was another loaded term; “another buzz word for something that has been going on since mankind found itself with feet and discovered that it could walk!” ‘Diaspora’ derives from the Greek language and it relates to dispersion, specifically Jewish dispersion. Dispersals and migrations have happened throughout time for a multiplicity of reasons. Population movements are perennial, involving conflicts, changes of identity and assimilations in a constantly changing world.

“There is evidence of the appropriation of the word ‘Diaspora’ in Germany where it has been used to describe the members of any religious body living as a minority among those of other beliefs and especially of Protestants living in Catholic parts and vice versa. What I can’t trace is the appropriation, in contemporary time, of the word to describe the movement of black people from the American southern states to places like New York. Or indeed, the use of the word to describe the ‘Windrush’ generation of West Indian migrants to Britain. But no matter. The concepts of population movement, of acculturation, assimilation, of minority versus majority, and of resistance to all of the above – are laid out for us in the Jewish use of and experience of their word Diaspora.”

Dr Bishop also saw Diaspora as “the dispersal of language”. We can map the spread of words and people over time but not to the exclusion of the past.

“To focus on NOW to the exclusion of the past is to do damage to truth and understanding! When I was at school, we all knew that Columbus landed in Trinidad in 1498. So that’s when history began. It was much later that I found out that the remains of a man had been found in Banwarie Trace, South Trinidad, who had been there, according to carbon dating, 7000 years ago! So that even Trinidad has a longer history of population than we could have ever imagined.”

Dr Bishop then turned to the word ‘Carnival’. But what is ‘Carnival’? An opportunity for identity change and role reversal. A time for reversion, for exploring our multiple and impermanent selves, for levelling the complexities of the human condition, for becoming extraordinary. Painted faces are painted faces – whether for make-up or for tribal mask. These universal impulses are as old as time. When hunter-gatherers became agrarian, ritual entered man’s experience. Demons and gods had to be placated for the land to flourish. Religious rites, rituals and Carnivals arise out of this primal instinct.

“We see Carnival as a pre-Lenten or indeed a summer festival of street parades and fancy costumes (or not-so-fancy costumes); music from sound system black boxes – here and there a steel band perhaps. Crowds – controlled and routed of course. Judges. Disputed judges’ decisions and then the thing starts all over again. It’s a time of hustle and a time for the small man to make a bread. Or lose a bread.”

Driven by the profit motive, “modern mas in Trinidad has become a descent to dreariness, sinking to a level of banality well below that of our predecessors of living memory like Saldenha, Bailey, Chang, Minshall, Ken Morris et al. Or indeed like Kitchener, Sparrow, Bradley or Rudder or All Stars’ Woman on the Bass! Today Las Vegas show girls have gone global and are doing really well in T&T!.....

“If Carnival can make any claim to being art, then all that I can say is that art HAS to be made of sterner stuff. But even if today’s mas is foolishness, the underlying principles of masquerade are not.

“My first contention is that through mas, people – animals, birds, chameleons – give themselves a chance to change the way they look, behave, are perceived and a chance to relate to one another differently..... Mas has to do with change. But it is also about Unmasking. That is to say, we revert, as best as we can to the way we were before we were masked..... and that is the power of the mas..... we really must try to do better with it, given its awesome capacity for the assumption of identity and the proclamation of the complexities of the human condition. No religion, philosophy, system of governance or anything else that I can think of can do That!

“There is a nocturnal bird in Trinidad called the Potoo. Old people in Trinidad call it the Po Me One because of its mournful cry. It’s extremely difficult to see it in daylight because it roosts on the tops of tree stumps which are heavily covered with bark which so closely resembles the colour and texture of the bird’s feathers that you really have to know what you are looking for if you want to see it. He is masked.

But the chameleon is different. His mas is not to hide but to express the state of his mind, his feelings and his emotions. This reminds me of the girls who go to work in the bank, wearing the bank’s uniform and then fall into another uniform in a section of a modern mas band – only to revert on Ask Wednesday morning to become bank clerks again! And that is Mas!

But whither the Carnival of the Diaspora? How come Carnival, Trinidadian style (not Venetian or Brazilian style) happened to come to London? How come it goes to the famous Parkway in Brooklyn? How come the Canadian Caribana? How come, indeed, the Barbados Crop-Over and Kadoomet?

Diasporic Carnivals often stemmed from ‘a need to be looked upon’ so that you may be distinguished from other minorities who may be more respected and less discriminated against. Conversely, Diasporic Carnivals offer the kind of experience of ‘the exotic’ which Gauguin seemed to be in search of when he went to the South Seas. Indeed, ‘Swinging London’, ‘Cool Britannia’ or whatever the contemporary British cultural buzz words might be in vogue now have tended to accommodate the mas folk simply because they enrich spectacle and are exotic.

In any event, permission to do mas does seem to placate the immigrants! And that’s politically serious. Mas in that context becomes a sociological negotiator and mediator!

Diasporic art should be unapologetic and cast a more ambitious net and seek, not for tolerance but for art; art that exists in the glorious light of innovation, creativity and the spectacle. This art should be retrieved, re-appropriated and returned to its community – a better, freer place where all the bread isn't ready-sliced and all the information isn't transmitted by Power Point!; where a mas is not a computer generated graphic and where a mas camp with its food, its music, its sharing, its skill development and the verbally expressed life of the mind could, in some way return to the people.

Dr Bishop concluded that we (in Britain) should ensure that Carnival is accredited among the 'high arts'. We should challenge recognised arts practitioners to give it due esteem and recognition. We should affirm and ensure its continuity. As Ortega y Gasset says: "I know very well that Descartes and his rationalism are outdated but man is nothing positive if he is not continuity. To excel the past we must not allow ourselves to lose contact with it; on the contrary, we must feel it under our feet because we have raised ourselves upon it."

Saturday 3rd October 2009

The formal opening of the event took place with a welcome address by the CEO of Carnival Village, Shabaka Thompson. Shabaka said that the idea for this event was first posed to him by Ansel Wong who proposed that there should be a commemoration of Claudia Jones's groundbreaking event in 1959 and that this should be used to mobilise the community, develop partnerships and build consensus on a way forward.

This resonated with Carnival Village who has embraced a facilitating and leadership role in Carnival Arts and whose mission includes the empowerment of all Carnival constituents in retaining and strengthening ownership of the event, encouraging and showcasing the artistic and professional development of practitioners and performers and mounting timely and appropriate responses to the challenges that lay ahead.

Shabaka recognised the importance of the roles that the public funding bodies played in securing the future of Carnival and indeed acknowledged that this event would not have happened without a generous grant from the ACE, London. Despite this, he believed that one of the challenges that needs addressing during the day is growing evidence of a subtle redefinition of the Carnival art form (in response to both public funding and sponsorship) that could pose a threat to Carnival's 'legitimacy'. Evidence of this shift is the inclusive cloak whereby any public event in a public space – Fayre, Carnival, Live Arts, etc. – seems to be eligible for funding from the same pot as Carnival.

Shabaka then invited Her Excellency, Miss Gail P Guy, Acting High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago to formally open the National Discourse.

Her Excellency indicated that she had no hesitation in offering her patronage of the event and contributing other services of the Mission to the realisation of the objectives and to ensure the smooth running of the event. She counselled that the deliberations to be conducted over the next two days are important for Carnival and the Caribbean Diasporic community in the UK and so any perceived threats should be seen as opportunities.

She wished the event well and hoped that Carnival Village will continue to successfully position itself at the hub of Carnival development.

The Conference Director, Ansel Wong, thanked the Acting High Commissioner on behalf of the partner organisations hosting the event and presented her with a signed copy of Marika Sherwood's book on Claudia Jones, *A Life in Exile*.

Roots: The First Memories of Carnival in London

Moderator: Patricia Jaggs, Elimu Paddington Arts Carnival Band

Contributors: Donald Hinds, Marika Sherwood, Sam King, Leslie Palmer, Corinne Skinner-Carter

The context for this session was the many views on the legitimacy of the various events that could be interpreted as being the beginnings of Carnival in London. Thus the planned discourse for this session concentrated on recalling the memories of Panel members of the various events that have influenced the development of the Carnival as well as offering personal and critical overviews of the impact and legacies resulting from each.

Some individuals were not able to attend and so submitted their views in writing or copies of their published work dealing with the substantive issues to be discussed. These have been reproduced here for completeness.

In preparing for this event, we received four scenarios claiming to be integral to the development of the Caribbean Carnival that evolved into what we know today as the Notting Hill Carnival. They were:

1. The Caribbean Carnival of 1959 organised by the West Indian Gazette whose Editor was Claudia Jones. This event was held on the 30th January 1959 at the St Pancras Town Hall. In her opening statement to the event, Claudia wrote: “ *If then, our Caribbean Carnival has evoked the wholehearted response from the peoples from all the Islands of the Caribbean in the new West Indies Federation, this is itself testament to the role of the arts in bringing people together for common aims, and to its fusing of the cultural, spiritual, as well as political and economic interests of West Indians in the U.K. and at home.*”⁴

“In 1958 following the riots in Notting Hill, Claudia Jones organised a march from Powis Square through to Tavistock Road (ending in the section of what is now Tavistock Square). Fact! The march was meant to be a protest, bringing attention to the plight of the West Indian community in Notting Hill at the time. However, although it was NOT a Carnival, it did involve the use of hand held steel pans and drumming. The effect of the procession was altogether positive by those who saw it. The reason for the music was, Claudia felt it showed another dimension to Caribbean culture hitherto not yet understood in Britain . How do we know this?

⁴ Jones, C., A Peoples' Art is the Genesis's of Their Freedom, Programme, Caribbean Carnival 1959, p.2, West Indian Gazette.

Because we have 2 living witnesses who remember the march. One of which, a certain Winston Pinder, aged 81, also participated in it.

A few months later, in January 1959 Claudia Jones had organised the first Caribbean Carnival in Britain. Albeit held indoors in a hall in St Pancras, it would remain an annual indoor celebration held in different areas until 1964, when Claudia now in failing health, organised, along with a few others, the first Caribbean Carnival on the streets of Notting Hill. How do we know this? Again, because we have a number of people alive who took part in it, including my own uncle, who despite having mental health problems, recalls a precession from Acklam Road to Golborne Road. The late husband of Allyson Williams – current Chair of the London Notting Hill Carnival, and the renowned radio presenter, Alex Pascal OBE, who also spoke at the unveiling, were also present in 1964.”⁵

- 2) The second scenario that was identified as having a significant influence on the development of the Notting Hill Carnival was the events planned by Rhuane Laslett. In September 1966, The London Free School that included Rhuane Laslett and Trini Michael X staged a series of weeklong events following the traditional English Carnival format. However, an important ingredient during this “September Fayre” that promised the “glamour and happiness of the Mardi Gras” was the steel band with Russ Henderson and Sterling Betancourt. Positioned to play in Acklam Road, Russ decided that this performance was too pedestrian and decided to “make a little run”. That little run took the band down the Great Western Road, past Whiteleys into the Bayswater Road, right down and came back up Ladbroke Grove”.⁶
- 3) The third is the case being made for Joe Hunte and his contribution to the shaping of the first “Street Carnival”.

“The first street Carnival was organised by Joe Hunte and Claudia Jones under the auspices of West Indian Standing Conference in Brixton 1960 at Brockwell Park. The march route was from Brockwell Park to Waterloo Bridge. It was funded by Lambeth from 1960-2. When Lambeth failed to fund the Carnival in 1963, it was taken to Notting Hill in 1963 (sic) by Leslie Palmer. People who do not know the history have given the credit to the wrong people. I know the history because I served as Secretary and I am the current Chairman of West Indian Standing Conference..... Claudia Jones has been honoured but Joe Hunte who died in 1983 did not get a mention, even though the advent of the street Carnival was his idea which was orchestrated under the umbrella of West Indian Standing Conference formed in 1958.”⁷

⁵ Beula, J., *The Truth about Claudia Jones*, e-mail copied to the author on Wednesday 10 September 2008

⁶ Vague, T., *ibid.*

⁷ Clarence Thompson, e-mail to the author, September 2009.

“Joe Hunte is not only the Founding Father of Street Carnival. He is also the Founding Father of Community Relations. It was his hypothesis which pushed the West Indian Standing Conference (WISC) to campaign for the establishment of the 1965 Race Relations Act. When the Government was talking about the principle of integration as a panacea for ending the racial riots he proposed the following hypothesis:

"In a democracy, the government of the day has a responsibility to create an environment in which all its people irrespective of race, colour, class, creed, sexuality or disability is given equal access to education and to participate equally in the creation of the wealth of the nation."

The 1965 Race Relations Act has enabled the Carnival to grow in stature and in the past, when there were combatants in the camp, they turned to WISC for its statesmanship and mediation.

The history charting the start of street Carnival by the efforts of Joe Hunte is true.”⁸

- 4) The final submission related to the contribution made by Leslie Palmer in shaping the event in quite a seminal way. Palmer, aided by Anthony Perry and Tony Soares, built on the work done by Merle Major and Selwyn Baptiste and transformed the event into “an urban festival of black music, incorporating all aspects of Trinidad Carnival”.⁹ .

“Clarence has got it wrong as far as my involvement is concerned as I didn't arrive in the U.K. until 1964. Claudia Jones died that year and I never made her acquaintance. It is believed that 1965 was when Mrs. Lazlett engaged Russ Henderson to have a street parade for the Tavistock Adventure Playground which she ran. Russ told me it was such fun, that having made a short jump-up in the street, he told the musicians - "Let we make a rounds" - and with that they headed down into the Portobello Road and the rest as they say, is History....

The following year, the guys from Harvist Road (Blue Notes Steel Band) got involved and brought their side down to play and so it grew with various combinations of Trinidad pan men, usually with one band, sometimes originating from the Colherne Pub, after the Sunday session. In one year, I remember Dixieland playing; they build a small float for that and, of course, Selwyn used to teach the lads at the Wornington Road Adventure Playground that Barry Persad ran and he kept that band on-the-road tradition alive until Merle Major in 1972.

⁸ Thompson, C., e-mail to the author, Saturday 17 October 2009.

⁹ Ibid. Vague,T., 2009.

I took over in 1973 and ran it for 3 years, changing the face of it into what occurs now.”¹⁰

These historical antecedents framed the discussions on the first memories of Carnival and this was interspersed with dramatic presentations on the life of Claudia Jones. Two members of the Panel made presentations followed by an extract from the play *Dear Comrade*.

Dear Comrade is a play about the life of Claudia Jones, written and directed by Trinidad playwright, Shango Baku. Shango is the Artistic Director of CETTIE – *Cultural Exchange Through Theatre In Education* - a registered Charity working in schools, museums, theatres and community venues, using drama as a tool of social inclusion.

Dear Comrade was first written as a one-woman narrative for school audiences. It was later developed as a full-length Carnival production, including elements of calypso, steelband, dance, masquerade and drama.

In 2006 the extended production toured London, Birmingham, Portsmouth and Luton and was enthusiastically received by a wide range of audiences.

The three extracts from *Dear Comrade* were performed by Jackie Charles, who has played the title role since its inception. Jackie is an experienced actor and project leader. A former Director of Youth Theatre at The Tricycle, she has also worked in Africa and the Caribbean on drama-for-learning projects with CETTIE.

Each panel member then spoke of their personal involvement in the early days of Carnival.

Sam King was the first panellist to address the audience. He had worked closely with Claudia Jones. He spoke of his time in the RAF. At the end of World War 2 he had wanted to stay in Britain to work in the construction industry but was forbidden to do by his parents in Jamaica. However, after a short time in Jamaica, he returned to the UK on the *SS Empire Windrush*.

Sam was Circulation Manager for the *West Indian Gazette (WIG)* and was present when Claudia and members of the WIG first suggested the idea of staging a Carnival. The idea arose in response to the Notting Hill riots. Claudia Jones had returned from Russia and was ill. She asked him to organise the Carnival. This initiative, along with the Black churches, has been one of the most significant contributions of the Black community in Britain.

Corrine Skinner-Carter came to Britain in 1955. She married Trevor Carter, who was a cousin of Claudia Jones. They met Claudia at the airport when she was deported from America as a Communist sympathiser. Claudia knew that culture and politics worked hand in hand. “We needed to introduce West Indian culture to the ‘Whites’ who knew nothing about us.” Corrine recalled travelling on the tube (in costume) to the first Carnival that was

¹⁰ Palmer,L., e-mail to the author, September 2009.

held in mid-winter at St Pancras Town Hall – receiving strange glances from the host population.

In 1972 an event was held at the Commonwealth Institute, with Princess Margaret in attendance. There were a number of designers present, including Peter Minshall. Costumed bands first took to the streets playing traditional Mas: *Pierrot Grenade* and the *Midnight Robber*.

Donald Hinds described himself as ‘the quiet one sitting at the back’ in the *WIG* office. His main source of employment was a bus-conductor but he was also an aspiring journalist and writer. It was whilst plying his trade on the bus that he met Theo Campbell who ran the first black music shop under the *WIG* office. Campbell, hearing he was a writer, invited him to come to the *WIG* office. This was the beginning of his connection with Claudia Jones.

Donald has continued to research and record the Carnivals staged by Claudia Jones. There were six of these *WIG* Caribbean Carnivals - 1959 (St Pancras), 1960 (Seymour Hall), 1961 (Lyceum Ball Room), 1962 (Seymour Hall), 1963 (Seymour Hall) and 1964 (Seymour Hall).

On a bleak November day in 1958 in the offices of the West Indian Gazette at 250 Brixton Road, SW9 Claudia Jones, the paper’s editor, asked for suggestions we might consider to take the nasty taste of the racial disturbances which had taken place during the summer at Notting Hill and at Nottingham, Robin Hood Chase. The office was crowded and many of us were sitting on the floor. After a short interval someone suggested a Carnival. It might have been a woman, I could not see who had spoken but I believed to this day that it might have been a Trinidadian. Well, who would think ‘Carnival’ at the start of the British winter?

After a moment of hilarity, Claudia called us to order and asked: “Might we not have it in a hall somewhere?”

And so it was at St Pancras Town Hall on 30th January 1959. In the two months leading up to the event, the call went out and an impressive list of artistes from the Caribbean volunteered their services: Edrick Connor directing the Cabaret programmes; Stanley Jack as Choreographer; Trevor Carter as stage manager with nearly thirty people serving on the Carnival committee.

Looking back there were an impressive roll call of individuals who played a part in this historic event. There was a carnival cabaret with Pearl Prescod who was the soloist with the Sepia Serenaders, Boscoe Holder and his Troupe, Fitzroy Coleman, Cleo Laine with the Mike McKenzie Trio, The Mighty Terror whose calypso was called ‘Carnival in St Pancras’, Nadia Catouse and many others. Among the Panel of Judges for the Carnival Queen Contest was Amy Ashwood Garvey, Dr David Pitt, Edward Scobie, Yvonne Mitchell, Cy Grant, Ernest Eytel, Carmen England, Alan Morais, Cynthia Moody, Maryvonne Harrison and Lena Jeger MP.

If there was any doubt that this was a carnival, the whole event ended with a “Grand Finale Jump-up by West Indians in England”.¹¹

The Fratelli Grimaldi and Sicula Oceanica S.A., whose ships had been responsible for transporting most immigrants to the Mother Country, volunteered a ‘round trip to the West Indies’ as the first prize for the Carnival Queen Contest.

The Carnivals that were staged were as follows:

Date: 30th January 1959
Venue: St Pancras Town Hall.
Carnival Queen: Fay Sparkes

Things were a bit chaotic that night but in a charming way. It was Carnival. Those who had had the experience of Carnival were wondering how they were going to do the road march and jump-up in the confines of a hall. More perplexing was the jobs of the stage manager and the choreographer as every performer and bandleader were offering their services. It was crowded, noisy with spontaneous outburst of activities. In other words it was CARNIVAL!

From a field of 12 contestants, Fay Sparkes, a Jamaican national working in cabaret in London, was crowned Carnival Queen by the then Mayor of St Pancras, Councillor Tom Baker JP. Fay Craig another Jamaican and the favourite of the crowd came second and yet another Jamaican Beryl Cunningham was third.

Date: 6th February 1960
Venue: Seymour Hall
Carnival Queen: Marlene Walker

The headline at the top of WIG’s January 1960 edition was: “Beauties compete for Caribbean Queen Prize.” Venue had been changed and those who knew about carnivals had their costumes ready. This year Marlene Walker, another Jamaican resident in Brixton, won and yet another Jamaican Beryl Cunningham came second. She went on to be a model and a successful business woman running a boutique in swinging London of the 1960’s.

Date: March 1961
Venue: Lyceum Ball Room
Carnival Queen: Cherry Larman

Cherry went on to be a model and a successful cabaret artist in London touring abroad.

Date: 16th March 1962
Queen Venue: Seymour Hall
Carnival: Pauline Henry

¹¹ Jones, C., A Peoples’ Art is the Genesis’s of Their Freedom, Programme, Caribbean Carnival 1959, West Indian Gazette.

WIG's front page boasted: *"It is King Sparrow who will lead our cast of artistes for the 1962 Caribbean Carnival at Seymour Hall on Friday, March 16th from 7-11:30 PM."*

In 1962 the Carnival returned to Seymour Hall where Pauline Henry a seventeen year old student nurse and of Jamaican origin was crowned Carnival Queen. Audrey Jackson was runner-up.

At this point a British Guianese novelist wrote to WIG protesting that everything seemed to be skewed in favour of Jamaican girls winning, but since another Jamaican Carol Joan Crawford was to be crowned the most beautiful girl in the Miss World contest, it was more than a little local difficulty!

Date: 11th March 1963
Venue: Seymour Hall
Carnival Queen: Not Contested

WIG published pictures showing enthusiasts working on steel drums preparing their musical pans. Travel Agents began advertising in WIG urging people to travel to the land of Carnival, Trinidad and Tobago. Also advertised were:

"This year the emphasis is on a Caribbean Carnival (costume) Ball
First Prize: Free First Class Round Trip to the Caribbean
Second Prize: Free Second Class Round Trip to the Caribbean
Third Prize: Twenty Five Pounds Cash".

Date: 21st March 1964
Venue: Seymour Hall
Carnival Queen: Not Contested

It seemed that only four 'Carnival Queens' were 'crowned'! Beryl Cunningham who was 3rd runner up at the first Carnival and 2nd at the 2nd Carnival was treated to a European trip. Carnivals 5 & 6 seemed to have been given over to prizes for the best two costumes whose wearers were awarded a first and a second class trip to the Caribbean. This seems to prove that 'Carnival' was evolving! Had Claudia lived for a few more years would it have reached the streets?

Marika Sherwood spoke of her reason for writing a book about Claudia Jones. Since coming to the UK in 1968, she has been concerned that the history of Black pioneers was being lost. The death of some of her contacts among the older generation of Caribbean activists made her realise the importance of taping the memories of Claudia's colleagues; this led to the book on Claudia. The police attitude to Kelso Cochrane's death was a precedent to Stephen Lawrence's case. Under the Freedom of Information Act she was still trying to get information on Cochrane - as well as on Claudia Jones and George Padmore - which may have been destroyed. She urged that we support the search for Cochrane's and the others' papers. Her new book on Henry Sylvester Williams will be out next year.

Before speaking, **Leslie Palmer** submitted his thoughts on his involvement in Carnival. On the day, he spoke of his work in opening up the Carnival to Caribbean communities and

young people. 1973 was pivotal in this regard. Jamaicans, Grenadians and others were encouraged to participate. The sound-systems, DJ's and live bands added a new dimension to the celebration. If Claudia Jones was the Mother of Carnival, he could claim to be the Father of the street celebration.

In his written submission, Leslie wrote:

“History hasn't always been written or viewed as the truth. Subjective opinions according to one's positioning have usually been used by former colonisers as propaganda fodder for their own people or as brain-washing material to project their supremacist views - one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter!

And what exactly are some truths behind the plaudits of Europe's largest street festival?

From my position, a truth is that before 1973 nobody - I repeat, nobody - had caused 50,000 mainly black people to come out on the streets of Ladbrooke Grove to celebrate our West Indian cultural heritage. This display marked the dawn of the new era of today's Carnival and was due entirely to the blue-print/format drawn up by me as I sat in my residence in the Grove. Although I used to look forward to it and thoroughly enjoyed the annual 'jump-up', I soon came to realise that the other Caribbean communities did not really participate in it. In fact, neither did our young people who, together with the entire community, were under siege from the police. Remember the Mangrove 9, Cricklewood 10, etc...the 'sus' laws (The Vagrancy Act) were still in operation.

The jump-up was a Trini thing, organised by the Trini steel band players and aficionados and the jump-up had been going on for 7-8 years, beginning with Mrs. Lazlett's playground event with Russell Henderson and Sterling Betancourt playing pan. The exception, for a couple of years during the Mangrove Trial period, was when the Talbot residents accommodated and provided the music in Powis Square with rock bands.

In 1972 another strong Trini woman, the late Merle Major, herself a Golbourne resident and the wife of the late Mangrove player, Leonard Waithe, rescued the leaderless Carnival and brought it back home to the Acklam Road area. Merle was able to do this with the assistance of the North Kensington Amenity Trust under the Directorship of the admirable Anthony Perry who was engaged in a regeneration project. Perry worked with the local community displaced by the building of the fly-over to develop leisure facilities and business opportunities under the fly-over.

I have a photo of that year's Carnival which was the usual jump-up. In it there is no evidence of costumes among the revellers. Instead, you can see many noteworthy Carnivalists and musicians on the truck such as Pedro Burgess who had previously led the legendary Blue Notes Steel Band of Kensal Rise. The band performing on the truck is North Stars from Trinidad, the first time that a Trinidad Steel Band had participated. It was Merle Major, a mother of several kids, who insisted on and formalised the tradition of Sunday as Children's Carnival Day.

The following year, with 7 weeks to go and no organiser to continue the tradition, (Merle was heavily pregnant) the Amenity Trust put an advertisement in Time Out, giving notice of a Public Meeting under the fly-over at Portobello Green to discuss any plans for the annual jump-up. I went along and was able to discuss my blue-print which called for the use of the empty bays under the fly-over to accommodate the local Jamaican sound systems and regular music bands from the area and the placement of live youth bands playing funk, soul, afro and other black music forms outside homes and at strategic street corners in the area, leaving the streets free and reserved for the parades which were to include other Carnival loving islanders; notably the French speaking islanders of Dominica and St. Lucia from over the Harrow Road and the Grenadian communities who neighboured with Ladbrooke Grove in Shepherds Bush and Acton.

Participation would be extended to other existing London steel bands from which ever island and also Brass Bands of whatever nationality playing calypso music. Six of these eventually responded and provided the music for the parade which went through the original home and heart of the Carnival - Acklam Rd, St. Ervans Rd, Wornington Rd, into Golbourne, down Portobello to the Mangrove in All Saints Rd, then into Westbourne Park Rd and into Great Western Rd and continuing back down to Golbourne Rd.

I had declined to follow the previous Bayswater route, as a priority, choosing instead to call the bacchanal, 'Mas in the Ghetto', in a gesture to shame the Council for its desperate lack of proper housing in the neighbourhood. Besides Trellick Towers, none of the neighbourhood developments were built at this time, including those in the vicinity of Great Western, Tavistock and Ledbury Roads and black people in particular lived in terrible conditions.

The Amenity Trust welcomed the idea and gave me an office at their address in Acklam Road, a phone and a part-time helper, Tony Soares, who went on to become the founder of Grass Roots Newspaper which was later edited by Ansel Wong, Ujima Housing Association, The Black Liberation Front, Operation Headstart, Westway Housing and numerous other housing projects for black people. The indefatigable, Bigger Hamilton, joined us as a volunteer worker, (we were all unpaid volunteers) and by targeting West Indian suppliers we raised 700 pounds, which we used mostly to hire generators for the parade trucks.

I wrote a basic Association type Constitution, formed a Committee made up of intended participants and launched the new style Carnival with the BBC's Radio London Steve Barnard and later Alex Pascal doing live broadcasts from below the fly-over. Donald Francis and Merle's son, Leon, were teenagers from the neighbourhood who gave us an immense amount of voluntary help over these formative three years and personalities such as Frank Bynoe, Victor Critchlow, Ralph Webster, Vijay Ramlal, Junior Telfer and Joan Bertha Joseph all helped in one way or another.

As fate would have it, two Mas personalities responded to the call to play Mas - Peter Minshall, who had some costumes from an earlier stage show extravaganza and to whom I provided storage and work space next door at No.5 Acklam Road and Mack Copeland, a

Trinidadian band leader on holiday in London at the home of his friend, Lawrence Noel, both of whom put in some marathon hours to bring about the first Mas Camp in Leytonstone with their Aztec portrayal.

Silma Faustin, the Dominican Carnivalist, whose son remains today a respected senior member of the Ebony Steel Band, gathered together a band of Dominican and St. Lucian women and played their traditional Martiniquan Mas. For many years Silma Faustin continued to represent the participation of the French Islanders.

In keeping with our rebellious, youthful natures, the lads from the Grove got their own back on the practices of the Police by having their own truck for their T-Shirt and raggedy short pants portrayal of 'Ladbroke Grove Jail Birds on Remand'.

We gave each Adventure Playground their own trucks which were filled to bursting with the neighbourhood's happy, laughing children and a grand time was had by all.

The local and national media had a field day (Arif Ali's West Indian World newspaper was most prominent) and I got Kodak and the Greater London Arts Association to pay for printing photos by various photographers and we staged an exhibition in the winter of the following year with slides, film and music under the fly-over opposite Ladbroke Grove Station now occupied by Social Services. I continued this exhibition tradition for the following two years, culminating at the ICA for two weeks in the Mall outside Buckingham Palace, where participating Carnival bands performed nightly.

By 1975, two years later, steel bands were being encouraged and created in schools throughout London and the Arts Council of Great Britain had to put up or shut up in the face of the success of this West Indian phenomenon which began to be replicated in other U.K. cities.

The years '74 & '75 saw 1 million people on the streets of the Grove when Capital Radio, the new radio station on the block, got in on the act and bands lined up to be promoted at this excellent Black-inspired Event and new Mas bands and steel bands began to proliferate with Mangrove and Metronomes being formed at this time.

From the start, I introduced the system of selling stall space and encouraged all the black businesses to set up shop and promote their products; this was the beginning of the stalls system.

In 1976 I resigned from the Carnival Committee having been offered a position in the music industry. After my departure, another Committee, led by Louis Chase and Herbert Bukari was formed to challenge the existing Carnival Committee for the leadership of the Carnival. This caused a weakened position which the Police tried to exploit leading to the first major riot led by the youth who saw the heavy handedness of the Police as an attack against black people on their annual day of enjoyment.

All of the above, have nothing to do with Claudia Jones, but I have told you this so that those of you who didn't know of my part in the story of the Notting Hill Carnival could ask

themselves - does this make this guy the 'Father of the Carnival'? Call me 'Carnival Baby Father' if you like.....but the omission of the truth could be as misleading as its distortion.

If you 'Google' Leslie Palmer, you will find some misinformed person referring to me as a Jamaican and thereby further distorting the truth by changing my nationality.

The names Selwyn Baptiste, Vernon Fellows, Merle Major, Bigger Hamilton, Silma Faustin, Darcus Howe, Randolph Baptiste, Miguel Barradas and Frank Critchlow are among some serious early cultural icons whose contributions really ought not to be omitted or ignored by those preserving the truth of black people's achievements and fight-back when our backs were against the wall in our home town of Ladbroke Grove, which is in truth and in fact - 'The Mother of the Notting Hill Carnival' - my version of the truth at any rate. I have been to other Carnivals in the world - Caribana, Atlanta, Labour Day, Zurich, Amsterdam and, of course, in Trinidad. But I say this in all truthfulness - The format or blue-print of the Notting Hill Carnival is unique and came directly out of my own experience of living my life in the black community of London's Ladbroke Grove and my deep appreciation of all forms of Caribbean and black music.

I never met Claudia Jones, but I have a feeling that she, as an activist, Carnival Pioneer and Champion of art as a vehicle for change, would approve of us defining our contributions to Carnival as being testimonies of "The Spirit of Ladbroke Grove" – Champions and bastions of defiance since the days of the Notting Hill Riots to its present position as the home and mother of all Carnivals in the UK.

Should not all of this be commemorated, recognised and celebrated by the creation of a National Trust Heritage Site or even a Carnival Centre on the site of its former home on the Adventure Playground at Wornington Rd?¹²

During the discussions that followed the presentations from the stage, the following issues were raised.

Donald Hinds reminded the meeting of the indisputable link between Claudia's indoor Carnivals and the classic T&T version by citing the participation by the calypsonian, the Mighty Sparrow, to perform here in 1962. In fact, at the very first Carnival, the calypsonian, The Mighty Terror, give a rendition of a locally composed ditty. Being indoors did not disqualify the event being labelled as a Carnival as it was impossible for Carnival to take to the streets in those early days of riot and murder.

Donald asked everyone to support the demand for a Blue Plaque to be erected at 250 Brixton Road which is the site of the offices of the *WIG* and the site of the first Black Record Shop.

Pepe Francis wanted an unequivocal affirmation of the many pioneers that contributed to the development of Carnival and counsel us all that in commemorating Claudia, Rhuane

¹² Palmer, L., e-mail to the author, Sharing Memories with You, 10 December 2008.

and Leslie we do not forget the long-list of Carnival pioneers of the past. He mentioned that we need to also recognise the contributions made to Carnival by Selwyn Baptiste, Merle Major, Bertha Joseph, Vijay Ramlal and Alex Pascall.

Lyn Jones was a member of the original Carnival Committee in 1959 and she described Claudia Jones as a fun-loving person who liked going to parties – contrary to the stern, forbidding picture that had emerged from her activism.

Kwesi Bachra (David Roussel-Milner) submitted, for consideration, his understanding and overview of the contributions made by Rhuane Laslett.

“In 1965 Rhuane Laslett had a dream, a vision of a pageant reflecting the wide variety of peoples she had around her and whom she served as an effective and sympathetic social worker. So she invited the various ethnic groups of what was at that time the impoverished district of Notting Hill in West London, the Irish, Spanish, Portuguese, Ukrainians, Africans, Trinidadians and other West Indians etc. to take part in a week-long series of events that would climax with an international parade on the August Bank Holiday.

Ms Laslett, who claimed to have been born in the East End of London of Russian and Native American parents, was a community activist who had been a nurse. She was already suffering from multiple sclerosis when one morning in 1964 she woke her partner, Jim O’Byrne, excited by the vision that had come to her during the night. She had dreamed of an international fete to reawaken the Notting Dale Gypsy Fair that had disappeared in the 1920s after a century of oppression by the local authority of the large Romany population who had continuously camped in the area.

Amongst white do-gooders Rhuane Laslett stood out as a colourful woman who would get things done. However, on the evolutionary path of Caribbean Carnivals in Britain she was no more than a useful stepping stone.

By 1970 the event was attracting 100,000 people, but that was the year that Laslett tried to cancel the carnival altogether ending up resigning from the chair of the organising group when she could not get her own way. Her way was how the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had instructed her to go. They had become scared by the spirit of ‘Freeness’ that is the essence of a Caribbean Carnival and did not want to have something so African being performed on their streets any more than their forebears had wanted the mystic exuberance of a Romany fair in the previous century.

Rhuane Laslett, who died in April 2004 aged 83, deserves her place in the story of Notting Hill Carnival. Without her knowledge of how to deal with the local police and council officers, it would have taken longer for a Caribbean Carnival to emerge from the chrysalis within which the Black community leaders had been bound by the sudden and devastating death of Claudia, but assuredly from that dark cocoon our carnivalists would arise spreading their colourful wings of musical joy whether or not there had been a helping hand. The lady is entitled to be acknowledged for what she did and for the doors she

opened because she too had felt the cruel hands of racism, oppression and discrimination.”¹³

In closing the session, Patricia Jaggs recounted that when Ansel Wong informed her that Claudia had started Carnival in London fifty years ago, she was adamant it could not be. Her sister, Joan, had worked with Claudia in Stockwell on The West Indian Gazette and that she too met her a few times. The Claudia she met was a very serious person and a committed activist working to better the lives of the downtrodden and could not have been involved in the bacchanal of Carnival.

Patricia added that curiously, although she did not see Claudia as an artistic person, she did inspire her in the 1990s when she was involved in a tapestry project at the Victoria & Albert Museum - The Mughal Tent that looked at Indian women in the diaspora and how they saw their lives.

In closing Patricia commended Carnival Village on the décor and design of the venue which had created a highly positive atmosphere for proceedings.

Commemorative Walk

This walk honoured the long African presence in the United Kingdom and recognised the contributors to the progressive development of life in this country.

The route taken started at Storey's Gate in Westminster and progressed along Great George Street and Parliament Street, stopping at the Cenotaph to lay a wreath and ending in Whitehall Place.

Wreaths were laid by Her Excellency, the Acting High Commissioner of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, Miss Gail P Guy.

Carnival Film Show

HISTORYtalk hosted this session; a mini documentary film festival celebrating 50 years of Carnival. Five short films were shown. They were TIME SHIFT, a film of how Claudia Jones introduced Carnival in London to celebrate the black presence and communal spirit at a time when Oswald Mosley was on the rise; PATHE NEWS – a news clip of the first time a steel band performed in the UK; MOTHER OF NOTTING HILL - Rhaune Laslett, Russ Henderson and others speak of their memories of the first time steel bands were played on the streets of Notting Hill; MAS IN THE GHETTO 1973, directed by Anthony Perry; NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL 1973, an interview with Leslie Palmer conducted in 2009. The session ended with the screening of a brand new documentary feature, CARNIVAL - a film by Don Letts which brings the story of the Carnival to life, following its progress from the swinging Sixties and the tumultuous 1970s when riots threatened to quash the event, to today.

The films provided evocative visual and oral reminders of the whole UK Carnival journey - from early seeds, sown by 'Kitch' and TASPO in 1950s London, through the leadership

¹³ Bacchra, K., Rhuane Laslett – Founder of a Notting Dale International Pageant, October 2009.

provided by Claudia Jones and Rhaune Laslett and Leslie Palmer amongst others, from the 1950s to the 1970s, up to 2009 reflections on where and what the Carnival is today. All of which fed perfectly into the conference discussion sessions addressing the next steps for Carnival.

Carnival Concert

Remembering our Carnival Pioneers – Lawrence Noel, Vivian Comma (The Golden Cockerel), Trevor Carter, Vernon 'Fellows' Williams and Philmore 'Boots' Davidson

Five Carnival Pioneers were chosen to be honoured at this festival of Carnival sounds. Each made significant contributions in extending the boundaries of Carnival.

Trevor Clarence Carter

Trevor Clarence Carter was born on the 9th of October in Woodbrook, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, the eldest of Elene and Clarence Carter's twelve children. Father, Clarence, was a cabinet maker and Mother, Elene, a housewife. He came to England in 1954 to study architecture at the Regent Street Polytechnic.

In November 1955, Trevor's cousin, Claudia Jones, arrived in Southampton on the Queen Elizabeth, having been deported from the USA for her activities as a Communist. Also in December 1955, he married Corinne Skinner. He and Corinne with Cousin Claudia, Pearl Connor and others, were involved in organising the first Caribbean Carnival in St Pancras Town Hall in 1959, in the aftermath of the racist murder of Kelso Cochrane and the Notting Hill riots of that year. Trevor has supported the Notting Hill Carnival ever since then and served as a Trustee of the Notting Hill Carnival Trust.

Trevor has an impressive record of working for and with his community and in the process being involved in a number of seminal developments that are recognised to this day. These include running Easter colleges and summer schools in Westminster with early pioneers of the supplementary school and alternative education movement, Ansel Wong, Cecil Gutzmore and Ricky Cambridge; creating the Caribbean Teachers Association and rejecting the award of an OBE. ¹⁴

Lawrence Noel

Lawrence "Stretch" Noel was instrumental in the development and structuring of many Carnivals and festivals worldwide. He inspired and supported numerous groups and individuals from around the world with his creativity, love and passion for the Carnival arts.

Born in Trinidad in 1935, Lawrence came to England in 1959 to develop his knowledge of engineering. He met Joan whom he married in 1962. Starting a family, Lawrence worked as a colour matcher and sprayer for a vehicle company. After an industrial accident, which left

¹⁴ Taken from the text of the Eulogy – *A Life lived with Purpose* - delivered by Prof Gus John at Trevor's Memorial Service on 18 March 2008 at St Augustine's Church.

Lawrence disabled, he moved on to sales having been partially rehabilitated. Soon after he became a founder member of Trinity Housing which later developed into East Thames Housing. Whilst working as part of the housing association he turned his hand to costume design and construction.

Using his experience of Trinidad's Carnival, knowledge of engineering and his creative flare, Lawrence began to create innovative and mesmerizing costumes. In 1973, alongside his wife and a handful of friends, he introduced costumes made in the U.K to the streets of Notting Hill through their organisation **Trinbago Carnival Club**. With 3 weeks preparation, a limited budget and endless determination they produced over 40 costumes that were paraded on the streets.

Lawrence and Joan became not just a family but a triumvirate of creativity, breaking down many cultural barriers and laying the solid foundations for many of the country's future Carnival artists and community workers. Their efforts were recognised by HRH Prince Charles in 1979 when he invited Lawrence to Buckingham Palace, in appreciation of his artistic and community contributions to British life.

Over the years Lawrence has inspired several individuals, influenced the development of many UK Carnivals and had his costumes featured in numerous plays, exhibitions and productions, the Queen's Golden Jubilee and the Lord Mayor's Thames Festival. The Numerous trophies, awards and accolades that Lawrence has received over the years are a reflection of his high standards, love and commitment for his work, community and family. His most recent award from the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission which he received in October 2008 was said to be one of his proudest.

Many see him as a "creative genius" and a "legend". But for many more there are no words that can describe his positive energy, welcoming charisma and caring nature. What is certain is everyone that has had the privilege of being in the presence of Lawrence Noel has a positive experience to share, a story to tell and a lasting memory of a fantastic and genuine human being.

Vernon 'Fellows' Williams

"Vernon 'Fellows' Williams was born in Trinidad where he developed a passion for the carnival arts. He was a popular band leader in Trinidad in the 50s, with contemporaries such as Harry Bason and Harry Tan Yuk. George Bailey and Harold Saldenah played mas with him before they led their own famous bands.

Vernon came to England in the late 1950s to study dentistry but gave it up after two years and pursued a career in the arts. He travelled extensively over England and Wales and most of Europe as a dancer and musician. He managed his own jazz band after training as a drummer in Paris. He worked in film and television on James Bond films, the Saint and Cleopatra. During these experiences, he learnt to speak fluent French and Turkish.

He was a founder member of the Notting Hill Carnival street parade when, in 1964, he and other fellow musicians left the Colherne Pub in Earl's Court and played music in the streets in Ladbrooke Grove and Acklam Road. This was the foundation of today's street parade. On his return to London in the 1970s, he worked with the band, Sukuya, and won many prizes as an individual character.

In 1980 he founded Genesis Carnival Group and established himself as a master of the carnival arts through his teaching and sharing his knowledge. He earned great respect in the community and media attention for the quality of his work and his attention to detail.

He was a member of the Arts Council Funding Committee for many years and a Board member of the Notting Hill Carnival Trust.

He was commissioned to make costumes and to run countless workshops teaching carnival arts in Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Coventry. His costumes have participated in shows and exhibitions and he has personally helped many band leaders to establish and develop their own carnival bands. He gained a full trophy cabinet in the process, as King of Kings, Best Band on the Road, Best Designer, Best Male Individual, Best Queen and other special awards for his commitment to Carnival. In 2000 he won the Windrush Award for his inspiration and services to the community.

His legacy is lasting and lives on in Genesis Carnival Company which is managed by his daughter Symone Watson since his death in 2002 and supported by his son Kevin and wife Allyson. His legacy was celebrated from October 2004 to January 2005, when a King Sailor puppet made in his likeness was on exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum as part of the celebration of Black History Month and forty years of carnival. Vernon was charismatic and full of energy and enthusiasm for the carnival arts. This passion was infectious and made him a great ambassador of the Notting Hill Carnival."¹⁵

Philmore Gordon 'Boots' Davidson

Philmore "Boots" Davison was born in 1928, East Dry River, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. His nickname, 'Boots', derived from his large feet. He became involved in steelpans soon after the Second World War. Experimenting with remnants from the War, namely oil drums and biscuit tins, like so many others at the time, he stumbled across a new musical sound which became the alternative to Tamboo Bamboo. He was one of pan's pioneers who bridged the gap between the Tamboo Bamboo and the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago, the steelpan.

'Boots' ran away from home at age eleven (11) and attempts were made to dissuade him by sending him from his home in the North of Trinidad to the village of Point Fortin in the South. He began to develop his tuning skills and in the late 1940s he became a founder member of Casablanca, one of the oldest steelbands in Trinidad. Casablanca is also one

¹⁵ William, A.I., E-mail to the author, Monday 26 October 2009.

of the first steelbands to have made recordings of their music. When he left them, he was able to persuade a number of youths to join him in his new band, City Syncopators, which was situated at the upper part of Quarry Street, East Dry River. He made Syncopators into a potential force in the steelband world. The band lived up to its name; for its syncopation, in many a musical clash of steelbands, was the hallmark of the band's performances.

In 1951 at age 23, his musical skills on the bass led to him being selected to join the **Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra** (TASPO) to England. He was one of the chosen pan musicians of an era which included gifted steelpan players like Orman 'Patsy' Haynes of Casablanca, Elliot 'Ellie' Mannette of Invaders, Belgrave Bonaparte of Southern Symphony, Anthony 'Tony' Williams of North Stars, Carlton 'Sonny' Roach of Sun Valley, Sterling Betancourt of Crossfire, Andrew 'Pan' de la Bastide of Chicago, Dudley Smith of Rising Sun, Winston 'Spree' Simon of Fascinators (Tokyo) and Theo 'Black James' Stevens of Free French.

TASPO returned to Trinidad the 12th of December 1951, the only exception being Sterling Betancourt, who stayed in London. Upon his return to Trinidad; he worked tirelessly with the steelband for several years, but the stigma of the instrument at that time forced him into exile. In 1956, he returned to England. It was perhaps a fitting climax to 'Boots' that his beloved Syncopators won the Steelband Music Festival of that year for the Best Performance of the classical piece, '*Poet and Peasant*'.

He arrived in England in 1956 and began to work for British Rail. After several years, he made the decision to leave his job in order to concentrate on supporting the steelpan network. He started by teaching pan in schools and in 1980, with some of his fellow Trinidadians, he formed the Mangrove steelband. The original band took the form of a traditional steelband, which was common for many of the emerging steelbands, but is now a conventional steel orchestra. Under his instruction Mangrove was an instant success, gaining first place at the annual UK Panorama competition in 1981. Since then Mangrove has won Panorama several times and is one of the most successful steelbands in its history. 'Boots' was one of the first pannists to play 'Mozart' on pan. He was known as a gentle giant and has received worldwide recognition.

It was unfortunate that he died just a few days short of receiving an award from the National Trinidad Folk Act Institution in recognition of his life-long service to the culture of Trinidad and Tobago and the steelband in particular. Davidson was still teaching pan up to his passing in 1993. His funeral procession was accompanied by three steelbands playing Amazing Grace.

Sunday 4 October

Routes: The Future of Carnival

Shabaka Thompson dedicated the day's reasoning to looking forward. We should take example from Claudia's vision of Carnival as a force for identity, cultural affirmation and a

catalyst for cultural cohesion. Introducing Pax Nindi, Shabaka reiterated that the Carnival art form was in transformation. Funding for a variety of outdoor festivals was now being accessed from the Carnival Arts allocation.

Pax Nindi spoke of the distinction between Carnivals and Festivals. His presentation was on the future of Caribbean-type Carnival events. Different communities had different perspectives on Carnival. So did the various stakeholders involved. Stakeholders sometimes had a blinkered 1-day view of Carnival. Boroughs and local authorities had different expectations, attitudes and levels of direct or indirect support. Even though Carnival Arts as an art form and cultural activity impacts on fashion, design and every area of the mainstream curriculum, it still lacks positive coverage and understanding from mainstream media.

As a former Arts Council Officer, Pax knew that artistic content was often defined by funding. Despite the Notting Hill Carnival Committee's struggles over the years, Notting Hill Carnival had emerged as Europe's largest street festival, giving the lead and providing hands-on guidance to regional Carnivals and practitioners. He spoke of the different tendencies that had emerged in Carnivals in Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, East Midlands, Preston, Birmingham and Luton – each with a distinctive history, style, character and MO.

The main support for Carnival must be the community. Funding should not be sought only from the Arts Council. Sponsorship should be seen as a viable alternative. Carnival generates £93 million annually but very little trickles back into the development of the art form and the production or management of the celebration. We need to de-intensify the process, rather than everyone trying to do everything simultaneously.

The major possibilities and potential targets for Carnival in the immediate future to the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics and in the longer term for the next 50 years include:

- a. Developing Carnival as an 'accessible' art form: Fashion, design, etc
- b. Developing the dedicated Carnival spaces – The UK Centre for Carnival Arts and Carnival Village.
- c. International networking and sharing of information, developments and good practice
- d. Making an impact at the 2012 Olympics with 5 London Boroughs involved but with a limited budget of just 1.5 million!
- e. Embedding Carnival Arts as a reputable area of study in the curriculum
- f. Using upcoming events to network, develop co-ordinated responses to funding and the demands of licensing
- g. Negotiating through the obstacles: Financial payments, engaging young people, self-support.

The Impact of Carnival Arts on the National Artscape

Moderator: Kofi Debrah

Panellists: Tony Isles, Mary Genis, Peninah Achieng, Chris Boothman, Shabaka Thompson

This session concentrated on both an outline and a critical assessment of the various Carnivals throughout the UK. Each representative of a UK based Carnival was invited to give a short description of their event and identify any cultural or historical links to the T&T based Carnival.

Using the experiences and visions of these individual Carnivals the focus was on what are the major factors or conditions influencing its staging and future and what are any specific challenges emanating from the funding and regulatory agencies.

Tony Isles, Chair of the UK Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA) in Luton, stated that Luton's Carnival started off as a working-class parade in a town famous for hat-making. Immigrants attracted by the car industry created a highly diverse community. The Caribbean community introduced 'walking' costumes that helped to rid the streets of floats. Working in one space had benefited the Carnival movement in Luton. All communities worked within the cultural calendar. The UK Centre was developing a Foundation Course in Carnival Arts. Its second focus was on Business Development.

Mary Genis from Culturemix Arts in Reading worked with an organisation delivering professional services and products. Her aim was to change perceptions in the public, private and voluntary sectors. She felt strongly that Carnival Arts should be taught within the Curriculum. The future was in creating web sites that enhanced access and advertised marketing opportunities.

Peninah Achieng, a Board member of Bristol Carnival, said that Bristol had an Irish festival until 1967. Then came the bus riots. Thereafter the Carnival took on an African-Caribbean character – the only such Carnival in the South West. Following the Emancipation tradition it took place in early July. The Board was outward-looking, contracting out aspects of Carnival, working with cultural partners, museums etc.

The future of Bristol Carnival, like many others in the UK, will be affected by a number of key factors. These include funding which faces reductions due to the impact of the recession, changes in policies and priorities following the anticipated change in government, artistic leadership and legislative compliance on event management, licensing and public safety.

Chris Boothman, the Interim Chair of the London Notting Hill Carnival Limited, manages the country's largest Carnival. Authorities had consistently understated numbers attending the Notting Hill Carnival (NHC). The real count was far more than the published numbers. Though the NHC had set the standard for Europe's Carnivals none of the massive financial benefits return to the organisers and producers – victims of our own success.

We must change the mindset we began with. We must look to new models, possibilities, opportunities. Innovation is a key component of art. We need new packages for international consumption. We need to attract a younger generation – who are often put off by internal conflict.

Shabaka Thompson, CEO of the Carnival Village, believes that space was the unique selling point for Carnival Village. It meant re-positioning the work of Yaa in the Black arts Sector, alongside the evolving partnership with Ebony and Mangrove Steel bands and the Association of British Calypsonians (ACB). This created a new complex and maximised the potential of individual partners. Working with a collective vision in one space, one can achieve much more than as separate and distinct units. It is important to engage the youths more centrally and to use new technology and media in reaching international audiences. We can increase economic markets and merchandising by working more closely together. Institutions are necessary for communities to progress. Our 20-year and 30-year leases allow us the time to develop lasting legacies for the future.

In discussions following the presentations from the podium, **Tony Isles** and **Shabaka Thompson** outlined an ongoing dialogue, linkage, mutual strategies and interactive events between the two centres. UKCCA's focus on accredited courses in Carnival Arts would allow CV to develop other interventions.

Dr Mix believes that we should source community skills to strengthen organisations, use international contacts to develop a co-operative vision and social networking to extend community outreach and involvement.

A special plea was made by **Kofi Debra** who stressed the importance of getting young people involved whilst **Pax Nindi**, noting the combined professional skills of panel members, felt that the future looks promising.

Shabaka Thompson advised that new concepts need to be based on tradition and each Carnival has a duty to retain, develop and champion these traditions.

A New Carnival Orthodoxy?

Moderator: Ansel Wong

Panellists: Tony Isles, Wendel Clement, Ruthven Roberts, Michael La Rose, Pepe Francis, Ashton Moore, Colin Prescod, Ricky Belgrave

The Carnival in 1959 and the Notting Hill one celebrated in 2008 do have common features as well as characteristics that are poles apart – structurally, artistically and operationally. There is a need to define, firstly, what is meant by a Carnival and then, what constitutes Carnival Arts.

For the Carnival in London, there is an acknowledged parentage from the Carnival in Trinidad & Tobago. "Trinidad Carnival exists as a centrepiece in a vast diasporic network which circulates mas, concepts, persons, and all kinds of specific Carnival practices

the diasporic Carnivals are not simply exports but also redistributions and reinterpretations of the 'original'.¹⁶

This session sought to examine what these 'redistributions' and 'reinterpretations' mean for Notting Hill. What is the accepted Carnival orthodoxy as seen by the funding and regulatory agencies, the performers, the spectators and the media? Is the Carnival in London a challenge to the social hierarchies of British society or an affirmation of values and sense of community? Is Carnival free, licentious and spontaneous? Just a big street party? Are the essences of Notting Hill just costumes, bacchanal, calypso, Carnival queens, dancing to steelband and calypso, rum, food, colour, grandeur, height, flags, satire, theatre, masque, etc.?

This session required participants to pose a future for each Carnival in the UK by offering some definitional clarity on the artistic boundaries that define Carnival Arts. Whether defined as 'combined arts', 'Carnival arts', 'Festival Arts', or 'live art'; the London Carnival encompasses the extremes of performance culture. It is therefore not a singular art form but an integrated framework for live performances that are rooted in a diversity of disciplines and discourses involving the human body, space and time.

Thus Panellists, as Carnival Arts practitioners and performers, were invited to define their orthodoxies and explore how their art copes with the limits of theatricality, bureaucratic impositions and the challenges of managing public spaces.

Ansel Wong, the Moderator, encouraged participants to fashion their contributions around these ideas. Within a Trinidadian cultural and linguistic milieu, he posed two key elements of Carnival as being a Street Party (Bacchanal) or Street Theatre (Caray). He challenged participants to break out of this Carnival mind set and develop new forms. In doing so, perhaps, the future Carnival Pioneers would need to legitimise the new forms through academic pursuits, build a consensus on an aesthetic of Carnival Arts and nurture the entrepreneurial potential of the event.

In peering into the future of Carnival there may be a case for being more inclusive with a greater emphasis on artistic excellence and innovation and a determination, through governance, marketing, partnerships and incentives, to embrace a wider constituency and eradicate the closed shop of participants.

Colin Prescod, Chair of Carnival Village suggested that we need another forum to give real time to the many issues raised by the conference – honouring the pioneers, weighing the impact to date, looking to the future. He spoke of the seminal interventions that had brought Carnival to where it was today. And he put the following provocative questions to the conference. Where do we want to take it (Carnival) from here? Are we ready to take on the new opportunities and challenges before us - further developing international networks; re-designing management in order to better exploit commercial opportunities? How will we

¹⁶ Riggio. M.C. ed., *Carnival, Culture in Action – The Trinidad Experience*, Routledge, 2004

do more to reinvigorate the Carnival traditions - pushing and innovating mas', calypso and pan? Where is the new (Leslie Palmer-like) conceptual leap for these new times - looking again, for example, at live-music stages (now gone), and sound systems, as part and parcel of our London and UK Carnival traditions; acknowledging the unanticipated challenges of controlling what this distinctive Caribbean Carnival in the UK has become? And how do we re-shape ourselves to launch the 'new' Carnival era?

Ricky Belgrave, Chair of BASS (British Association of Sound Systems) spoke of the evolution of sound-systems from their arrival in the UK in 1956 to their current context and impact on mainstream culture. The presence of static sound systems at the Notting Hill Carnival over the decades has been a key factor in both the art form and its organisation's growth and development.

Ricky reminded the audience that working in partnership with Carnival's stakeholders is the only way to ensure Carnival's artistic and organisational development.

“By recognising and building on the strengths of each Carnival discipline we can build a new organisational model for the future with a new board working 'with and through' the artistic arenas who have become organisations in their own right.

Carnival in its administration and business development (including development of the brand and those of its foundation arenas) has to change its current mindset and reorganise and become a real corporation (no different than any other similar sized company).

The corporate model is the nationally and internationally recognised model for business success”.

Ruthven Roberts, Secretary of NHMBA (Notting Hill Mas Bands Association), outlined a serious challenge for all Carnivalists by suggesting a revised orthodoxy whose central driver is self-ownership.

There are five core elements of this new orthodoxy:

- Periodic reviews of Carnival
- Financial Self-sustainability
- Inter-Arenas Collaborations
- Entrepreneurial and Promotional Strategies
- New Cultural Networks

Ruthven suggested that there ought to be periodic reviews of every aspect of the Carnival process including organisational arrangements, Carnival Events, the use of performance spaces for both mobile and static performances and judging and adjudication. These reviews will be used to formulate an overall development strategy that can be adjusted annually.

The experience of Carnival's participation in the 2002 Queen's Jubilee celebration on the Mall should help us to think outside the box and visualise a processional route of over 5 miles without huge articulated Lorries.

There is an urgent need to aggressively build on the Greater London Authority's study on the economic impact of Carnival by targeting new and wider funding sources, offering investment opportunities in our own Carnival's Den, introducing income generating streams for each area of activity including sales of materials, consultancies, event management and performance bookings and recruiting specialised staff to drive this agenda.

Each of the five Carnival Arts Arenas – Mas, Calypso, Steel Band, Static Sound Systems, Mobile Sound Systems – and the various artists that generate the performance and artistry in each Arena can be a valuable resource, through collaborations and joint actions, in extending the impact of Carnival Arts on the National Artscape. This can be done through the creation of a central Production Team that can co-ordinate touring, archive the best costumes for exhibition and produce events to showcase the 'champs' of our Carnival Arts.

A similar case can be made for Carnival Arts making an impact on the education and learning landscapes. There is a need to develop an educational policy that should lead to the creation of an Artistic/Educational body to produce films, exhibitions and stage concerts.

With all these developments in place, new cultural networks can be created to provide platforms for the showcasing of cultural collaborations with other performance groups from the many diverse communities of London.

Each of these five elements of this new orthodoxy will foster a new era of increased employment opportunities and overall sustainability of Carnival's financial future and ownership. We have the platform for attracting one of the world's largest live audiences that comprise people from all the continents.

Ruthven issued his challenge for us to embrace this reality.

Ashton Moore, President of the Association of British Calypsonians (ABC) and also known as The Mighty Tiger told delegates that we have made a mess of organising Carnival over the years, through in-fighting, back-biting and power-plays. Over the 50 years of Carnival we have colluded with the funding and regulatory agencies like the Arts Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea to satisfy petty and personal agendas to the detriment of the development of Carnival Arts. There is still too much confusion in the management and promotion of Carnival. Each year, we get pre-occupied with surviving and chasing small grants. This journey has been littered with promises of huge development grants, buildings and access to prestigious sites. All have failed to materialise as local politicians and their officers profit from their engagement with Carnival for their own political futures.

We need to return to the spirit of the pioneers. We need to change.

Pepe Francis of Ebony Steel Band and Chair of the BAS (British Association of Steel Bands) reminded delegates that in 2009, Ebony Steelband will be celebrating 40 years of its existence and for him personally, commemorating 29 years as Chair of BAS. There is a longevity of participation of many individuals and performing units in the Carnival Arts and as we begin to vision the future, we must take steps to capture all of the cultural and artistic aspects of our arts and make sure, in so doing, that we move the event away from the police-led parade that we have today.

He recalled 13 different regimes of Carnival leadership in 45 years. This cannot be a healthy development and we can learn from this as well as from the experiences of other international Carnivals. The time is thus ripe for more networking and the fostering of creative international partnerships. BAS is trying to develop these by exploring potential academic and cultural partnerships with experts and academia in Trinidad & Tobago.

Carnival is not just an artistic discipline but it is also a business. And in visioning the next 50 years the new orthodoxy must be built on these two aspects of Carnival. On the cultural aspects, we need to revive them and retake operational control so that how, when and why we use the public spaces for our performances will be determined by us on artistic grounds and not because it is politically convenient for public servants or local politicians.

International networking and business development will then flow naturally from this leadership and ownership of the creative and performance processes.

Michael La Rose, Carnival Activist presented a full length paper outlining a critical overview of Carnival in London and a draft plan for its future development. Using the Sankofa symbol as the metaphor for his ideas, Michael said that after 50 years of struggle we must look to the past to go forward.

It is now 50 years since Claudia Jones founded the Caribbean Carnival in Britain. It has been 50 years of struggle. What should the Carnival movement do to address the challenges to Notting Hill Carnival in the next 50 years?

I want to invoke the meaning of the Ghanaian Adinkra symbol, the Sankofa, for the context of my contribution and I interpret its meaning as “To go forward we must learn from the past”.

I have been a Carnival spectator, DJ and music section organiser, Mas Band Leader and Designer, Carnival Administrator and Carnival historical researcher since 1973 and I want to draw on these past experiences to inform my own proposals for the continuance of the Carnival in the next 50 years.

There are four key areas that have to be addressed if we are to cope with the challenges ahead. These are:

- Leadership
- Promotion of Caribbean Carnival Culture and Arts

- A Fully Costed Development & Business Plan
- Building the Carnival Arts institution.

But these key areas need to be examined within a contextual framework that situates Carnival firmly within an agreed orthodoxy and definitional clarity about its past, heritage and essences.

The Notting Hill Carnival (NHC) is indisputably Europe's largest festival of popular culture. It reflects the culture, music and food of Black Britain representing all parts of the Caribbean and includes people with similar cultural traditions from West Africa and South America. It is a Caribbean Carnival in Britain.

NHC belongs to a family of Caribbean Carnivals exported to Europe and North America by migrating Caribbean people. The people with the strongest Carnival tradition come from the Eastern Caribbean from Aruba to Antigua. But the Trinidad Carnival is used as the model for all these Carnivals abroad.

Based on its cultural roots, NHC is a Festival that takes place in the streets with a range of constituent elements that include Jouvay, steel bands, masquerade bands, music trucks, calypsonians, brass bands, Soca artistes, traditional mas, Calypso and Soca tents, Panorama competition, Calypso Monarch Competition, Masquerade Gala, Soca Monarch competition, sound systems, Caribbean food stalls, pan yards, mas camps and dancing spectators following bands through the streets.

In addition, NHC is a federation of administrative, community, cultural and artistic activists that are organised through the Carnival creative and performance units – called Carnival Arts Arenas - like Mas Bands, Calypsonians, Steel Bands and Sound Systems.

The Notting Hill Carnival attracts on average 1.5 million people over two days every year. A lot of people from all over Europe who all love the experience. It also generates millions of pounds for business people in West London and London's tourism industry.

Notting Hill Carnival is at the very centre of Caribbean Carnival Arts in the UK and Europe.

LEADERSHIP

It was shocking that in 2009 the Notting Hill Carnival had no credible central organising body. An absolute priority must be the legitimisation of the governance and management of the Carnival by the election of a Governing Body able to attract the support of the Carnival community and demonstrate independent leadership to challenge the growing power of the funding and regulatory agencies.

One of the first tasks of this empowered leadership must be the creation of a developmental plan that has as its key outcomes the maintenance of the unique cultural elements of the Caribbean Carnival and a financial plan for its continued existence. Those in the leadership of the many agencies that make up the Carnival community - London Notting Hill Carnival Limited (LNHCL), the Notting Hill Mas Bands Association (NHMBA),

the Greater London International Mas Association (GLIMA), the British Association of Steelbands (BAS), the Caribbean Music Association (CMA), the Association of British Calypsonians (ABC), the British Association of Sound Systems (BASS) and the Carnival Village - need to be proactive, dynamic, creative and educated on the history and art of the Notting Hill Carnival if they are to be successful in laying the foundations for the future of Carnival in Britain. Most importantly they must have a Holistic Carnival Vision beyond just their narrow interests but with a vision for the development and improvement of the Carnival.

The leadership of the Carnival must be prepared to stand up to challenges from the authorities in London who want to organise the Carnival the way they think it should be run. We must always remember we are citizens of Britain that pay taxes and that the Notting Hill Carnival represents 1.5 million taxpayers. It is tax payers that pay the wages of the Metropolitan Police. As tax payers we are entitled to proper funding from the Arts Council.

The Notting Hill Carnival brings in a lot of money to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, The City of Westminster and the neighbouring boroughs. These boroughs should be the first in supporting the Carnival instead of continually trying to reshape the event to a different form or aesthetic. The Carnival leadership must thus champion the retention of the Carnival in all its traditional forms and this can best be achieved by developing partnerships with other diasporic Caribbean Carnivals in the USA, Canada, France, Berlin and Rotterdam who all have significant experience of dealing with aggressive state authorities.

Finally the current and future Carnival leaderships must ensure that our organisations are publicly accountable, democratic and transparent. The leadership must consult its membership/constituency ensuring that they receive the members' mandate before they make key decisions about the future of the Notting Hill Carnival. All agencies and organisations associated with the Carnival should be involved in an annual post-Carnival meeting between September and December that will assess and evaluate the previous Carnival and make recommendations for improvements in the following year.

PROMOTION OF CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL CULTURE AND ARTS

If we assess each element of what makes a Caribbean Carnival we can see that that the Carnival culture and arts in the Notting Hill Carnival are being marginalised. There are no static sound systems playing any of the traditional musical genres such as Soca, Calypso or Zouk. There is a poorly promoted calypso stage at Powis Square, sometimes disguised as 'World Music'. There are no stages in Carnival for any steel bands or live Soca bands or Soca Artistes.

New partners should be sought in the Caribbean media and music industry to establish these new spaces in Carnival. Synergy TV, Tempo and Gayelle would jump at the idea of running a stage at Notting Hill Carnival. Radio stations like WRL in New York and WACK in Trinidad have a long history of live broadcast links to Caribbean Carnivals. The masquerade arts in Notting Hill which were previously the most diverse is, following Arts

Council cuts, becoming more commercial and less diverse with a proliferation of Masquerade that is just beads, bums and bikinis or T-shirts.

Spectators who come to support and enjoy the music or marvel at the artistry of the Mas must do so at great discomfort because the spectator areas are unsuitable, crowded and poorly serviced and managed.

The promotion of Caribbean Carnival arts in the Notting Hill Carnival should be high on the agenda for the future. This could be facilitated by a Carnival education and archive project. We must seek to promote Carnival education in British Schools i.e. masquerade arts, steel band, calypso, soca and the history of Carnival.

Pioneering work has already been started by Celia Burgess-Macey and Alexander D Great. Carl Gabriel, Mahogany and other mas bands have long experience in this area. There is also Shortnee, Bann Move, Viej La Coup and Dragons Moko Jumbies who do workshops on traditional mas.

People like Gordon Rohler on Calypso and Teddy Belgrave on Pan would be excellent for such a project.

There should also be a Carnival education programme for the new generation of people in the mas bands, steel bands and sound systems in Carnival. The Notting Hill Carnival has to culturally return to the source and tap in to the Caribbean educational resource in the University of The West Indies (UWI) and the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) along with other universities serving the Caribbean Diaspora.

FULLY COSTED DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS PLAN

The Governing Body entrusted with the management and development of the Notting Hill Carnival must exercise their statutory duties informed by a fully costed development and business plan. This plan must be drafted following widespread consultation with all of Carnival's agencies and constituents.

The key elements of such an action plan could include the following:

- Promotional programmes through education, training and skills development
- The appointment of core staff - Artistic Director, Events Manager, Legal Advisor, Health and Safety Advisor, Fundraiser – with an administrative team
- A comprehensive Training and Apprenticeship Programme for individuals and Carnival Arts Arenas
- Strategies and programmes to assist each Carnival Performing Unit to acquire a permanent base in London.
- A business development strategy to achieve financial independence and sustainability

- A plan to improve the organisational and operational aspects of the Carnival, including the provision of key services and an infrastructure to increase participation, performance excellence and facilities for spectators.
- Improved services and facilities for spectators and stall holders
- Strategies and resources to increase the performance and artistic levels of each art form
- Review the position and presence of static sound systems and stages within the Carnival footprint.

And finally:

BUILDING THE CARNIVAL ARTS INSTITUTION

After 50 years this is the time to build Carnival institutions. Any Carnival institution must include an Education department, multi media Carnival archive, Carnival museum, exhibition space and performance space. There are many Carnival archives and archivists in London. Many of us, including Sonny Blacks, Alex Pascal and Ruth Adela Tompsett, have already compiled or possess sufficient materials to form the base of any archival collection.

In addition to the blue plaques erected for Kelso Cochrane and Claudia Jones suggested by Nubian Jak there should be plans for a statue of Claudia Jones at the Carnival Village, the Tabernacle or in Powis Square as suggested many years ago by Alex Pascal.

We should also mark significant locations in the Grove that have had a significant connection to development of the Carnival like the Metro Club, Mangrove Restaurant and Acklam Hall. A permanent inscribed wall honouring people who contributed to Notting Hill Carnival should be commissioned for a location like the Carnival Village, the Tabernacle or other suitable venue in the Grove.

In a new Carnival orthodoxy how do we measure success? It will not be with crime figures or whether there was violence or not at Carnival.

Progress and success of Notting Hill Carnival must be measured in future by the number of people in masquerade bands, the number of new designers, band leaders and mas bands. Progress should be measured in the number of people playing traditional mas and the attendance at Jouvay. It must be measured by the number of pan players, pan tuners, pan makers, pan arrangers and the number of steel bands at Panorama and on the road. The number of next generation Calypsonians, Soca artistes, Soca bands and the number of Calypso and Soca tents. It must be measured by the number of seats for spectators. It should be measured by the increase in media coverage on Caribbean Carnival Arts and progress in the implementation of the Carnival Development and Business Plan.

If we are serious and committed to the art and culture of the Notting Hill Carnival we have produced in Britain, our plans for the future must include the lessons of our past.

Anthony Isles, Chair of the United Kingdom Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA) in Luton. Tony found the passing of 50 years of Carnival as mind-boggling.

Carnival is an exemplar of the nation's diversity and multi-culturalism. There are a multitude of different cultures in Britain and it is inevitable that each will, in time, contribute to the event. But we need to go beyond the Notting Hill model in refining our vision and approach.

UKCCA proposes to do so and build on the 50 years so that all that is talked about today are incorporated into our planning so that we, as the National Centre for Carnival Arts, can become the broker for the developments and sustainability of the Caribbean Carnival in the UK.

Wendel Clement is a Gallery owner and Founder of **Poison UK**.

Drawing on his innovative promotion of Carnival Arts and culture as enterprise, Wendel encouraged delegates to focus on shifting the balance of power over the Carnival by controlling the people and money. Carnival, he believes, must embrace popular culture and all its arts – the traditional Mas, Steel Band and Calypso – as well as the contemporary elements such as Food, Soca, Reggae, Rap and other elements that come together to form Notting Hill Carnival, as they are all rooted in the mass culture of the country of their birth.

Hand in hand with this is the need to open access to the event and all its art forms to new communities by encouraging everyone to participate specifically through a marketing campaign supported by the funders, "Give a man a fishing rod rather than a fish". There is a case to be made for a major Trade Fair for Carnival that will promote the constituent elements of the event, encourage investors and sponsors, nurture partnerships, recruit performers and players, highlight excellence and provide a platform for the year's winners of each Carnival Arts Arena.

The economics of Carnival demand that we no longer put these initiatives on the back burners as Carnival MUST become more cost effective with a truly unified vision that may go beyond the views of the traditional Carnival activist as we know them today.

Finally, Wendel counselled us that we risk being ossified or becoming irrelevant if we fail to embrace some succession planning for the Carnival and motivate younger people to get involved and begin to gain the experience that is required to develop Europe's biggest street party with natural progression from its roots. The future rests with them.

Discussions from the floor raised the following issues.

Gloria Cummings felt that the major challenge facing Carnival is the lack of physical ownership of buildings and bemoans the fact that the financial underpinning of participation is poor, sporadic and insufficient.

Greta Mendez reminded the delegates that the Caribbean, particularly Trinidad & Tobago, is a pot-pourri of national identities whose adherents have all influenced the Carnival here in the UK and in T&T. To focus on any one ethnic group or community or seek to define the orthodoxy within too narrow boundaries will be a disservice to the many pioneers and artists whose ancestry comes from Europe, Africa, China or India or a mixture of all of them.

Mary Genis recognised the wealth of expertise among today's Carnival artists and practitioners and hoped that we would consolidate this expertise for the benefit of the future of Carnival.

Doctor Mix said that we need to create a vision that can take us forward and this vision must include a goal to achieve full Carnival ownership, more creative branding and greater innovation.

Pax Nindi hoped that the recommendations emanating from this report are taken forward as the report will be a comprehensive guiding document. He suggested that consideration should be given to developing an Education Pack that can cover the history of Carnival.

In closing, **Patrice Briggs** (the Event Manager for the National Discourse) spoke of her experience of working with young people in Carnival Arts that resulted in the development of a Project she called **Mas Talk**.

'Mas' Talk' Presentation

Having recently completed the MA in Cross Sectoral and Community Arts at Goldsmiths University, I want to share the experiences and outcomes gained from a practice-led Arts-Based Research Project entitled 'A conversation with we Elders: Mas' Talk'. In this project I attempted to investigate if a gap exists between Caribbean Elders and the younger generation in the UK with respect to the knowledge about the history and traditional practices of Carnival. This was accomplished through:

- Conducting interviews with Caribbean Elders including those with some experience of any one of the traditional Carnival Arts arenas.
- Designing and implementing a creative drama process of doing workshops with Yaa Youth which culminated in a dramatic presentation and interactive sharing with the elders interviewed.

My research and developmental process revealed that gaps did exist and as a result of this I attempted to bridge this gap by bringing about awareness amongst the youth and educating them about the history and traditional practices of Carnival.

I would like to take this opportunity within this National Discourse on Carnival Arts, which seeks to examine the 'Roots' and 'Routes' of Carnival in the UK, to propose that one of the ways that we can try to forge a way forward in preserving and enhancing the celebration of Carnival in the UK for the next 50 years is through 'Conversing with our Youth'.

I attempted, through my research, to bring conversations from the past into the present, to conduct a meeting point in which different ideas and theories can be juxtaposed and re-interpreted, thereby enabling new knowledge to be created.

At the beginning of my process the young people I worked with (7-11 yrs old) had limited knowledge of the history of Carnival here in the UK. So I showed them newsreels of events such as the Notting Hill Riots and video clips of interviews I conducted with elders such as Mr. Gerard Forsythe, Mrs. Corrine Skinner Carter and D' Alberto, to name a few.

The young people interviewed also lacked any basic knowledge or understanding of the Carnival in Trinidad. Similarly, there was a lack of knowledge of the historical and cultural links between Notting Hill Carnival and that of Trinidad and, not surprisingly, the importance of the traditional carnival characters such as the Pierrot Grenade, Dame Lorraine, Baby Doll, etc.

We addressed these gaps through creative drama activities, exploring the history, movement and characteristics of these traditional mas' characters.

Finally this creative led approach culminated in a dramatic presentation highlighting their entire learning process which was presented to the elders interviewed. It is at this point the conversations between the young people and the elders occurred.

It was through the process of conversing or having a conversation about Carnival, its history and traditional practices that both the young people and elders were able to come to an understanding rather than an exchange of fixed views. The effectiveness of this approach in building bridges, increasing knowledge and shaping attitudes, used to such great effect in my research project, must be the approach that should inform this National Discourse.

The challenge to participants during this weekend, as we attempt to chart the 'Routes' as a Carnival body, is to have 'good conversations' amongst yourselves and the younger generations. This discourse must also be a conversation. As stated by philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer, "good conversations bring together the past and present and it's through this dynamic process of interpretation and shared understanding horizons are expanded and as a result lives are enriched."

A video clip of 'A Conversation with We Elders: Mas' Talk' was then shown.

3 Conclusions & Recommendations

Overview

This National Discourse on Carnival Arts covered the broadest remit of the past, present and future. Presentations from widely diverse contributors were inspiring and well received. The range of events – Exhibition, Carnival Tour, Carnival Concert, Carnival Lime, Book Shop and the recognition of pioneers - engaged a comprehensive spectrum of Carnivalists and community audiences. The main strands of celebration, remembrance, review and reshaping, gave focus and consistency to the 3-day event. This was a quality experience and a learning curve with informed projections for the future.

The realisation of survival, success and communal pride underpinned all the discussions and an overwhelming number of participants stated that they enjoyed the high standard of the contributions and particularly welcomed the opportunity accorded to all participants to actively contribute to the debates and conversations.

The conference was motivated by a victorious anniversary – hence its visionary programming, orderly processes and positive outcomes.

Despite the statistically small number of respondents completing the evaluation form, many very helpful comments and criticisms were expressed. These have been reviewed and, together with the specific recommendations from the main sessions, will influence the drafting of the post-Discourse Action Plan.

The main comments, warnings, suggestions and criticisms submitted were:

- Better and more timely dissemination of information about the event, particularly e-mails, flyers and brochures.
- On the whole, a well co-ordinated and presented programme but the absence of the younger members of the community was noticeable.
- A co-ordinated and structured post-Discourse programme should be planned and include an International Conference of all Carnivals; a project to document the history of Carnival and workshops in traditional mas' making
- The Carnival Company entrusted with the planning of the Carnival must include individuals with sound leadership and lay people from the Carnival organisations.
- The issues discussed are not new but the views expressed and the presentations made must be formally recorded in a report and made widely available including on social network sites. But this report should be used to establish a benchmark that will be monitored with progress on implementing the recommendations assessed and reported back to the Carnival community.

- The Notting Hill Carnival is a national inspiring event. If it does not get its act together over its event and take a lead in the celebration of a global event such as 2012 then it will stagnate and die which will be a great loss to black and white people everywhere in Europe.
- Notting Hill Carnival has a reputation among other carnivals around the country as being very unfriendly and unwelcoming and too self centred which is amazing as it is the model of most modern Carnivals in this society.
- Greater consideration must be given to the composition of panels as several presentations were repetitive and lacked specific and practical details.
- We have to define once and for all what we want the Carnival to be - being inclusive is not always relevant to what we want to achieve.

Several recurrent themes emerged during the whole event: the triumph over adversity and sustained challenges; continuity and growth through heroic struggle, individual sacrifices and personal contributions; growth and evolution impacting on millions of revellers and participants for over half a century; a uniqueness of form, fashion, performance, innovation and artistic excellence that remains unparalleled in the British Artscape and a vision for the future that is promising and exciting. These were the positives.

The systemic failings of Carnival management and governance, inequitable financial returns and non-involvement of youths were some of the perceived failings to date.

Cohesive and inclusive planning, visionary leadership, education, new technology and business development were identified as important aspects of the way forward.

These themes have been formulated into recommendations under the two key strands – Roots and Routes. The challenge will be in ‘reshaping’ the vision and organisational strategy for Carnival to address these issues and ‘review’ each recommendation to draft an agreed Action Plan that will increase the momentum of change for the immediate future, the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, and for the next 50 years.

Introduction

This National Discourse was planned in response to a number of representations and conditions that increased the profile and need for a national forum to debate some of the emerging issues that affected the very existence of the Carnival in London.

There were the normal ritualistic calls for the Carnival to be stopped, re-positioned or changed. This was made worse this year by the absence of any structured or democratic governance and effective administration of the Carnival resulting in the marginalisation of the Carnival Arts Arenas and uncertainties of the conditions of participation.

There was an expressed need for Carnivalists and artists to network and develop collaborative approaches to maintain their journeys to excellence in Carnival Arts. By staging this event, it was hoped that it will give Carnival, both as an art form and as a

Festival, a national platform and an artistic high ground at a time when the emergence of the Carnival Village at The Tabernacle and the UK Centre for Carnival Arts at Luton will loom large in the public consciousness.

The impetus for the event was generated by the Elimu Paddington Arts Carnival Band whose 2009 Carnival Theme was a commemoration of the 50 years of Carnival in London. Several other partners were invited to support the Carnival Village in staging this event. In the end, the agencies that agreed to participate included a full range of both individuals and organisations that are all deeply involved in all aspects of the Carnival, here in London and all over the UK. (Appendices B & C).

Another factor that provided a timely justification for this event is the range of innovative and exploratory work being done to introduce Carnival Arts in learning and training. Currently, there is a lot of activity among educational institutions to establish various learning programmes in Carnival Arts. These include Elimu and Paddington Arts Centre's proposals to set up a modular short course programme on Carnival Arts with a progression route to a Foundation Degree validated by The Bucks New University and linked to a Creative Diploma; the attempts by the British Association of Steel Bands to validate its customised training programme for tutors of pan and UKCCA's piloting of a degree programme with Berkshire University.

The National Discourse on Carnival Arts was marketed as a major event of Black History Month and promoted by tagging it as a post-Carnival event. Publicity and marketing to attract delegates included leaflets, press releases, leafleting of imminent community events, e-mail postings and invitations to each of the five Carnival Arts Arenas.

Last but not least was the on-going debate about the true origins of Carnival and a lack of clarity and agreement on the historical and cultural lineage of the Caribbean-based Carnival in London and the UK. This debate on origins and aesthetic, governance and politics, orthodoxy and sustainability, place shaping and public safety is important in defining the future of Carnival and shaping it for the next 50 years.

Carnival's Roots

The various claims for the true origins of the carnival were fully aired and the detailed outline of the memories of Leslie Palmer of his engagement in the Carnival was particularly appreciated. The role Claudia Jones played in staging an indoor event that had as its main features all the aspects of a true Trini Carnival went unchallenged.

For each of the four pioneers highlighted during this debate, the reasons for wanting to stage a Carnival were noted and verified. This ranged from Claudia Jones wanting to take the foul taste of the Notting Hill riots out of our mouths to Rhaune Laslett seeking an event that was " an emergence of an oppressed and disadvantaged people wanting to express itself. It was to prove that from our ghetto, ... we were not rubbish people. It was also a very

healthy way of relieving pent-up emotions in music and dance. It was also the integration of the country regardless of race or creed.”¹⁷

Each pioneer – Claudia Jones, Rhaune Laslett, Joe Hunte and Leslie Palmer – supported by many more who all made significant contributions that made the Carnival in Notting Hill what it is today were recognised. However, it was felt that there is still an urgent need to ensure that the contributions made by everyone, not just the four Pioneers, be identified, verified and recorded.

Participants were willing to add names that they felt were not being recognised and these were noted.

It is very easy to forget what each person did or what contributions they made. It is more difficult to assess how important and significant was that contribution to the overall development of the Carnival.

The work of HISTORYtalk and its publication, *50 Years of Carnival 1959 - 2009*, is an important contribution in the mapping of the history of Carnival and this needs to be built on.

Recommendations

- Carnival Village take urgent steps to undertake a comprehensive mapping of the many individuals and organisations that have made important and seminal contributions to the development of the Carnival in London.
- Once these contributions are codified and verified, efforts should be made to publicly display the names of all Carnival Pioneers by either forming a Carnival Wall of Respect or embracing the inauguration of a Carnival Hall of Fame initiated by Elimu Paddington Arts Carnival Band in 2009.
- Commemorative Plaques be erected at key sites where various Carnival art forms or events have had a historic connection. Specifically, a statue of Claudia Jones should be erected in Powis Square.
- Carnival Village initiate collaboration with all the Carnival Arts Arenas and HISTORYtalk to agree and promote a Carnival Tour that takes in the major sites in the borough linked to Carnival.
- The contribution made by Leslie Palmer should be commemorated by the introduction of an Annual Award for innovation in Carnival Arts.

Carnival's Routes

There was general recognition and acceptance that Carnival, as part of its orthodoxy, is an art form. Peter Minshall, speaking at dinner in 2007, said that “*it is Art when it is worn and*

¹⁷ Caribbean Times, August 1989

danced to bring down the spirit. It is art when it connects up with the avenue, theatre, streets and pavement, alive and living.'

This is the art form that reflects the diverse cultures of London's many communities. And the challenges we face is the extent to which Carnival is recognised as a major festival contributing to the artscape and cultural identities of the nation; Carnival as part of our cultural landscape.

Our place on this cultural landscape is defined by the artistic boundaries that define Carnival Arts. Delegates agreed that Carnival is not a singular art form but an integrated framework for live performances that are rooted in several other art forms involving the human body, space and time.

One of these art forms is Mas. Mas is the seamless fusion of voice, music, movement, costume and text that enables its exponents to retreat into their internal world to find the avenue for the external portrayal of their many characters that are released explosively as they dance down the streets or on the stage proclaiming their beauty and self-worth.

*'The energy of the dancer and the moves of his body are transferred mechanically to the giants that dwarf him. The larger than-life figures, however, are so true to life; and the giant puppets are so true to the style, ease, colour, insouciance, freedom and earthiness of Caribbean people that they have entered our mythology as representative figures and spirit. At the same time they are Promethean, stealing the fire of the Gods.'*¹⁸

The Carnival Mas designer can thus use this art form to address social issues, create innovative art forms and celebrate achievements. In fact, like all the Carnival Art forms, there are no boundaries to creativity.

What is less known is the extent to which Mas as a Carnival Art is recognised or accepted as a legitimate art form. A case has to be clearly made and delegates felt that the challenge facing the Carnival Centres – Carnival Village and UKCCA – is the task of initiating an aggressive legitimating strategy aimed at both funding and regulatory agencies.

Perhaps the case of Mas, unlike Calypso, Sound Systems and Steel Bands as separate art forms, could be seen as the first frontier as this is a visual art form that is more prominent in Carnival and more readily accepted and recognised by the public and the state agencies. Mas is a fusion of all the Carnival art forms as they form integral parts of the whole.

When you look at a Mas Player, there is a complete synergy between the masquerader and the costume. However, in order to achieve this perfect harmony a considerable amount of science, physics, contemporary technologies and specialist skills have to be employed and factored in; from the gait of the masquerader, to the projected wind force, the anatomy of

¹⁸ On Minshall and reading the mas, Kenneth Ramchand, The Caribbean Review of Books, Feb 07, pp 32
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the particular player to the possibility of rain, to levels of sunlight, crowd density, weight of costume, etc.

This art and science must nevertheless be rooted in a historical reality so that interpretation can inform structure, colour and the occupation of space.

Mas also embraces text, dialogue and word. From the Griot, Robber Talk, Toasting, Blues and Calypso to Rap we have always put stories of our daily lives into some form of lyric and song. They are also powerful forms of expression that create a renewed sense of identity and social cohesion and give direction to purposeful and productive community participation.

From the young to the old, from the doctor to the street sweeper, from the full figured to the size zero, all find a place to display their beauty and worth.

Mas with all these complex features will pose a challenge for those involved in defining the routes to the future – as part of the National Artscape and in redefining its orthodoxy. These routes will need to lead to the development of Carnival arts to greater heights as it will add an impetus to the making of Mas, change the media profile of Carnival away from anti-social and criminal behaviour to artistic excellence, lay down challenges and standards for future festivals and local artists, encourage synergies with other forms of artistic expressions and ground performance art away from the dominance of dance hall and of the bacchanalia of bump and grind.

However, underpinning this development of Carnival Arts is the issue of the extent to which the 'redistributions' and 'reinterpretations' of the Trinidad Carnival into Notting Hill Carnival are supported or resisted. Michael La Rose argues passionately for the retention of the traditional features of the Trinidad Carnival whilst Wendel Clement made an equally strong case for avoiding being caught in a Carnival mindset that refuses to embrace current developments, recognise the attractions of the 'Brazilian costumes', legitimate the participation of London's diverse communities and promote the recruitment of the young.

The future can thus become a battle of the Masque vs Bums, Beads and Bikini; the struggle of the Street Theatre vs Dance Hall; Characters vs Jump & Wave. It will be tackling head on what Dr Pat Bishop referred to as the banality of Carnival in Trinidad.

But as we define the place on the cultural landscape of the UK that we should aspire to, we need to address the populist notions of how Carnival is perceived and presented to the mass of people.

Carnival's success is measured by the extent to which arrests and public disorder is reduced from year to year, not the brilliance of the Masquerade, the innovation of its art forms, the choreography of its dancers and the creative genius of its composers, designers or songsters.

The struggle is thus for Carnival to reassert and reshape its orthodoxy to give absolute prominence to aesthetic excellence and artistic performance. Within the Carnival footprint, each constituent element – performers, stall holders, stewards, spectators, emergency

services, police, residents – are jostling for the use of space. Space is occupied by the roti vendor and the Polish hot dog seller. The forbidden. The ritualistic. The moral and immoral. The formal and informal. The black and the white. The Asian and the African. The Jamaican and the Brazilian. The heathen and the Christian. The Samba Band and the T-Shirt band. Clary Salandy's Mahogany and Wendel Clement's Poison UK.

As Carnival Arts performers, we occupy these spaces with all of these constituencies. And the challenge for us is not whether any one constituent has a legitimate right to occupy the space but how each of us will use the space and develop it for the benefit of us all.

Finally, the next consideration is the impact of the place shaping roles of the regulatory authorities who are having unchallenged supremacy to define and shape the use of Carnival space and the duration of its use because of the supine and inconsistent involvement of Carnival's governing body in the business, operational and organisational planning.

Over the 50 years of Carnival, the Carnival footprint has evolved to what it is today, each change being mediated through the active engagement of Carnival's leaders. The frequent changes in the governance of Carnival has resulted in a lack of continuity of management and ownership of the change process and so with each change of the Carnival footprint, Carnival has had to negotiate without the hindsight of its knowledge capital and an incomplete understanding of the dynamics and political imperatives that underpin each change.

The overwhelming impetus of the regulatory authorities is to create a processional linear route for the Carnival, more akin to a horse shoe rather than a circle, as this configuration is best suited to the management of public safety and the control of public disorder. This use of performing space has the net effect of undermining the spontaneity that is essential to the public display of Carnival Arts and minimises the interaction with the public. The agit prop essences of the Mas Player's display (caraying) are being consistently moulded by these physical restrictions and, in time, could lead to aspects of the carnival art forms being divorced from its bacchanalia roots.

The impact of the use of this space on the arts is yet to be fully identified or assessed but remains an important operational and artistic challenge affecting the growth of the Carnival. The imperative remains for a comprehensive review of how the Carnival space and footprint is defined and used and what are the benefits for each constituent using the space. For Carnival Arts, there should be a review concentrating on the specific needs and requirements of the performing units and this can be fed into the more inclusive review of all constituents.

Recommendations

- Carnival Village should initiate a timed programme to develop a Carnival Arts Forum of all individuals and organisations and this Forum should be the major consultative forum for the planning of future Conferences and conversations and the conferring of the Leslie Palmer Award.

- Identify an appropriate forum or organisation, such as the proposed Carnival Arts Forum, to review all the proposals and recommendations of this report and develop appropriate responses and programmes of interventions to meet the specific demands; specifically, as a matter of priority, to consider:
 - The relevance, rigour, appropriateness and achievability of the major findings of this report
 - The building of a consensus on an aesthetic for Carnival Arts
 - The nurturing of the entrepreneurial potential of Carnival
 - Actively securing a greater emphasis on artistic excellence and innovation
 - A determination, through governance, marketing, partnerships and incentives, to embrace a wider constituency and eradicate the closed shop of participants which could mean actively and aggressively opening access to new communities and new art forms so that there is a more organic and contemporary orthodoxy reflecting the full diversity of London.
 - Open a discourse and conduct 'good conversations' with the younger generation
 - Identify ways of supporting the professionalising of the governance and management of the Carnival so that a democratically elected Board of Directors are in place by January 2010.
 - Embedding Carnival Arts as a reputable area of study in the curriculum
 - Brokering a co-ordinated strategy to safeguard and pilot Carnival's contribution to and involvement in the Cultural Olympiad and the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.
- Seek funding for the publication and promotion of this report, in hard copy or on the websites of all Carnival partners, so that it becomes more accessible and available to a wider public.
- Encourage all the Carnival constituents to participate fully and unconditionally in the development of a fully costed business and development plan for Carnival for the next five years.
- There should be independent annual evaluations and periodic reviews of every aspect of the Carnival process including organisational and operational arrangements, artistic achievement, financial viability, community engagement and planned outcomes.

Appendix A: The Programme

ROOTS & ROUTES: Recalling, Reviewing, Reshaping

Under the distinguished patronage of Her Excellency, Miss Gail P Guy, Acting High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago

2nd – 4th OCTOBER 2009

Aim

The purpose of this National Discourse is to recall and review the current Carnival orthodoxy and reshape its conceptual, operational and artistic frameworks to develop Carnival Arts and its related industries for the next 50 years.

Objectives

The key objectives of this conference will be to:

- Inform the Carnival Village's Development Plans
- Formulate an approach to and build a consensus on Carnival Arts
- Identify and develop a strategic forum of stakeholders, performers and artists
- Recognise and celebrate artistic excellence in Carnival Arts
- Build on the legacies of Claudia Jones and other Carnival Pioneers

The Conference

The style of this conference will aim to be inclusive and respectful, enabling us to learn from each other within and outside the Carnival and Festival arts sectors. The conference will be very interactive, combining a variety of techniques that are designed to help delegates identify, assess and plan around issues relating to progression in artistic, managerial and leadership roles and the development of activities to support ACE's core mission of 'Great art for everyone'.

The major features of the Conference are:

- An open learning/ meeting/networking space
- An Exhibition commemorating "50 Years of Carnival"
- A Carnival Concert featuring the best of Carnival artistes
- The inaugural Claudia Jones Carnival Memorial Lecture by Dr Pat Bishop
- A Commemorative Walk
- A Cinematic Tribute to Carnival
- Carnival Book Stall
- A Carnival Lime

Friday 2nd October 2009

Conference Exhibition – Fifty Years of Carnival 1959 - 2009

Opened by Colin Prescod, Chair of HISTORYtalk & Tom Vague, Exhibition Curator

Claudia Jones Carnival Memorial Lecture

Dr Pat Bishop, Lecturer, History of Art & Critical Reading, University of the West Indies
The Globalisation of Carnival Culture and its impact on the Carnival Diasporic People Today

Saturday 3rd October 2009

ROOTS: The First Memories

Welcome and Introduction to Conference, Shabaka Thompson, CEO, Carnival Village

Greetings from Her Excellency, Miss Gail P Guy, Acting High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago

Panel: *The First Carnival in London? Claudia Jones, Rhaune Laslett, Joe Hunte & Lesley Palmer?*

Moderator: Pat-C Jaggs, Chair, Elimu Carnival Band

Panellists: Marika Sherwood, Donald Hinds, Corrine Skinner-Carter, Leslie Palmer, Sam King.

Three dramatic Interludes from *Dear Comrade* featuring the Life of Claudia Jones, performed by Jackie Charles

Commemorative Walk

Start: Storey's Gate (Westminster) to Great George Street and Parliament Street, Cenotaph (Whitehall), stopping to lay a wreath and ending at Whitehall Place.

Hosted by Yaa Asantewa Centre

Cinematic Tribute: 50 Years of Carnival

Five short films were shown:

- **TIME SHIFT**
- **PATHE NEWS**
- **MOTHER OF NOTTING HILL**
- **MAS IN THE GHETTO 1973**
- **NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL 1973**

The Feature Film – CARNIVAL, directed by Don Letts

Hosted by HISTORYTalk

CARNIVAL CONCERT

Remembering our Carnival Pioneers - Lawrence Noel, Vivian Comma (The Golden Cockerel), Philmore 'Boots' Davidson, Trevor Carter and Vernon 'Fellows' Williams
featuring

The Engine Room Collective, Ebony Steelband with PAs from Alexander D Great, The Mighty Tiger, Brown Sugar and Lord Cloak.

MC: Tobago Crusoe

Sunday 4 October 2009

ROUTES: The Future of Carnival

Feature Address: Pax Nindi, Vice President, World Carnival Commission

Chair: Shabaka Thompson, CEO, Carnival Village

Panel - *The National Impact: Carnival Arts on the National Artscape*

Moderator: Kofi Debrah, Marketing Manager, Carnival Village.

Panellists: Anthony Isles (UKCCA), Peninah Achieng (Bristol Carnival), Chris Boothman (Notting Hill Carnival); Shabaka Thompson (Carnival Village) and Mary Genis (Reading)..

Panel: A New Carnival Orthodoxy?

Moderator: Ansel Wong, CEO, Tsingtac Associates Ltd

Panellists: Colin Prescod, Pepe Francis, Tony Isles, Ricky Belgrave, Ashton Moore, Ruthven Roberts, Michael La Rose.

Mas Talk – Presentation by Patricia Briggs and Yaa Youth

Closing Remarks by Rapporteur, Shango Baku

A Carnival Village Lime featuring Tobago Crusoe

Post-Conference Events

Thursday 8 October 2009

“50 Years of Carnival” – The Carnival Tour

Local Historian, Tom Vague, will conduct a walk around the major Carnival sites starting at Tavistock Crescent.

Wednesday 21st October 2009

The Journey of Carnival

HISTORYtalk Annual Lecture by Tom Vague

Friday 30 October 2009

National Carnival Networking Seminar & Mask Ball

All day Seminar at Camden Centre

Appendix B: Partnership Organisations

Carnival Village, Tabernacle

Carnival Village is a flagship organisation promoting carnival that nurtures and showcases artists, supports the development of carnival related creative industries and does so to enhance the cultural and economic well-being of the communities it serves. Carnival Village is in essence a registered charity constructed by four organisations rooted in the delivery of Carnival Arts. All four organisations have more than twenty years of active participation in carnival and cover the range of carnival arts disciplines such as Steel Band (Ebony Steelband and Mangrove Steelband), Calypso (Association of British Calypsonians) and Costume (Yaa Asantewaa Arts Centre).

Carnival Village is the Carnival Arts Development Agency for London funded by the Arts Council of England to explore and develop new ways of profiling Carnival Arts throughout the year. The organisation has premises in the heart of the Notting Hill area in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (The Tabernacle) and the City of Westminster (Yaa Centre).

ELIMU Paddington Arts Carnival Band

ELIMU, Swahili for “Education” or “Knowledge”, originally operated as a Community Education Centre on the Harrow Road servicing City of Westminster pupils excluded from school or truanting on a regular basis. Part of its intervention strategy was participation in the nearby Notting Hill Carnival which began with the production of a super-8 film of Carnival in 1979. Since then the Band has been involved in producing a Mas Band each year.

Over its 30 years’ experience of successful participation in the Carnival, ELIMU has developed partnerships with other artists and arts organisations, notably Cultural Co-operation and Kinetika International Arts. In 2001 ELIMU joined forces with Paddington Arts and this partnership has flourished since then.

ELIMU’s invaluable knowledge of producing award winning costumes for the Notting Hill Carnival and Paddington Arts’ skill for creating awe-inspiring visual dance and drama are the basis of this powerful and flourishing partnership. A key deliverable of this partnership is the creation of certificated learning opportunities in Carnival Arts and the archiving of the achievements of Carnival artists and performers. This discourse will be complimentary to these deliverables and will enable the Band to build on its cultural and artistic capital to increase its capacity to become an exemplary arts organisation.

HISTORYtalk

HISTORYtalk was founded in 1989 (registered as Kensington and Chelsea Community History Group) to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to study, understand and contribute to the known history of the local area.

HISTORYtalk's broad range of activities include - collecting projects (e.g. Carnival oral archive, and Britain at Work 1945 to 1995; reminiscence at home with over-60s, and inter-

generational work with schools; training courses (e.g 'Before the Westway', 'Spanish Memories', 'Black Britain - from Roman times to today'), and History talk volunteer-learning courses; local roots 'walks and talks'; exhibitions and publications based on collected materials.

It is a volunteer organisation - which means that it is richly and generously supported by volunteers, who actually do the work. See website - www.historytalk.org

The Victoria & Albert Museum

Founded by the British Government following the Great Exhibition of 1851, the Victoria and Albert Museum was established in 1852. Following its move in 1857 to South Kensington (then on the western edge of central London), it was for more than four decades known as the South Kensington Museum, until its renaming by Queen Victoria in 1899.

There is no dedicated gallery space for African art at the V&A. This dates back to the 19th century, when the Museum's specific aim was collecting examples of good design. African art was then categorised as 'ethnography' rather than 'art', therefore the Museum focussed on the products of Europe and Asia. A number of African objects were acquired as examples of skills or techniques, but it is only more recently that the collection has expanded to include work by black artists and makers from Africa and other parts of the world.

The focus on Black Heritage initiatives at the V&A came as a result of two main discoveries. The first being polls indicating that very few black people were visiting the Museum. The second was the realisation of a significant number of objects in the collection linked to the African Diaspora. The V&A has been offering a black heritage programme for over 10 years, which began with collaborations with Mas bands to bring Carnival into a different public space at the V&A, the international museum for art, design and performance.

Major exhibitions, display and the large collection of objects is the main work of the Museum. The V&A has hosted exhibitions and displays with relevance to Africa, the Caribbean and the black British experience, notably - Black British Style in 2003; Uncomfortable Truths - The shadow of slave trading on art and design and Ashanti Goldweights and Gold Regalia in 2007; The Story of the Supremes from the Mary Wilson Collection and Africa Connections in 2008. With most of these programmes there have been large public events that have raised the profile of the V&A to black audiences.

The black heritage season is a three month programme (September - November), of events, a similar time scale to a major exhibition and not just for the month of October. This is significant in the museum's quest to sustain black audiences and their interests in their history and legacies through the relevance of its collections.

Appendix C: Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the contributions, support and assistance given by the following:

Hansib Publications for providing a Book Stall and offering a 50% discount on all titles during the Conference

Mangrove Steel Band for conducting Steel Pan Workshops for children on both days

The following Volunteers who managed key areas and services:

- Barry Jaggs
- Charmaine Hanley
- Debby Romain
- Deborah Steel
- Dorothy Wong
- Elizabeth Oniri
- Helena Greenaway
- Lisa Chu
- Sarah Sadrosa
- Simone Nelson
- Suilin Wong
- Trevor Roberts

Dulcie Joseph of *The Trinidad Roti Shop* for the provision of a buffet at the Claudia Jones Carnival Memorial Lecture at the V&A.

The Yaa Asantewa Centre for hosting the Commemorative Walk

Barbara Innerarity of *Makeda Designs Limited*

Jasmine Cheng (Event Photographer – Carnival Village)

Michael Piper (Event Photographer – V&A)

Carnival Village Staff

- Kofi Debra
- Witty Forde
- Shona Handley

- Royln Cohen
- Yukimi Hagio

The Performers at the Carnival Concert –

- MC Tobago Crusoe
- The Engine Room Collective, featuring Justin Lewis (?)
- Alexander D Great
- Brown Sugar
- Lord Cloak
- The Mighty Tiger
- The Wounded Soldier
- Ebony Steel Band

Appendix D: Notes on Contributors

Ansel Wong

Ansel Wong has a proven track record of success over many decades in working for and with diverse communities. His wide-ranging career has taken him across public and charitable sectors and included public appointments as well as senior management positions.

He held several appointments as Non-Executive Director and Chair of a number of Health and NHS organisations in London and selected community and voluntary sector organisations working in the arts, including The Foundation for Young Musicians, The Rudolph Walker Foundation, Flamboyant Community Association, Elimu Carnival Band, the Notting Hill Carnival and Cultural Co-operation Limited.

Some of his notable achievements included securing the commemoration of October as Black History Month in the UK, Founder and Artistic Director of the Black Arts Workshop, Founder of the Indo-Caribbean Society and the CLR James Supplementary School.

His published works include *Notting Hill Carnival – A Visual Symphony* (Caribbean Communities in Europe), *My Home in Trinidad* (Macmillan's), *Carnival in Trinidad* (Macmillan's), *The Language of the Black Experience* (Blackwells), *The Afro – Caribbean Presence in Britain* (Early Child Development and Care) and *Our Story* (Hansib Publications).

Anthony Isles

Tony Isles is the current Chairman of the Board of Directors of the UK Centre for Carnival Arts. During his three-year term in Office, the £7m state-of-the-art capital project building of the UK Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA) was realised. It opened its doors to carnival enthusiasts and the public in May 2009, with the vision of raising the status of carnival arts.

Previously, as a board member, he fostered working relationships with UK based Carnival committees, the National Carnival Bands Association (NCBA), PanTrinidad (the National Committee for Steelbands) and the National Carnival Committee (NCC) of Trinidad and Tobago. These ongoing relationships enable stronger networking and opportunities for professional development and sharing of expertise between UKCCA, national and international Carnival artists and organisations. His renewed mission is to build on this model and continue to develop relationships with other national/international carnival-related organisations and individuals.

In addition to his voluntary role at UKCCA, Tony is also a true 'masman'. As an active Carnival enthusiast, he designs and constructs costumes. In addition, he has played an Individual/Major 'King' costume for Rampage Carnival Band for over a decade, winning the 'King' of Carnival title on several occasions at annual competitions across Britain. As the principal choreographer for Rampage's high-octane stage and street dance routines, Tony is also credited for helping to maintain the band's motto: Rampage- Energy of Mas.

His day-to-day job involves managing one of the Luton Drugs Services but he also serves on a range of other organisations. He is currently a Board member of the Luton based African and Caribbean Arena (ACA), having served as the Chairman in the past. The organisation provides training and development for young people within culturally specific

events and activities. He is also one of the co-ordinators and Trustee for the One Foundation Organisation for over a decade. This charity provides supplementary education for young people aged 5 to 18 years, working with the school curriculum within a peer education model. Tony also continues to be an active school governor.

His other interests include being a socaerobics instructor and dance choreographer, playing badminton and cycling. Apart from Carnival, he is passionate about mentoring both young people and his peers in the sphere of creative arts and learning, as he sees the creative arts as a powerful tool for unlocking inhibitions and empowering the individual which facilitates growth and develop potential.

Ashton Moore

Ashton Moore, The Mighty Tiger, is the President and one of the founding members of the Association of British Calypsonians (ABC), the only body in the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe that promotes the art, culture and ethos of calypso.

Ashton started his performing career as the Young Tiger in the Southern Brigade. From there he moved on to Lord Kitchener's Calypso Review Tent and then decamped to the Victory Tent singing with all the calypso greats in his native Trinidad and Tobago. He toured the UK with The Mighty Sparrow and Paul Keens Douglas before getting involved with the Notting Hill Carnival.

In 1975, he won his first British Calypso Monarch title in Hammersmith and went on to win the crown a further nine times.

He is now retired from competition and remains the undefeated UK Calypso Monarch. He founded The London Calypso Tent in 1992.

Augustus Leith "Pepe" Francis

Augustine Leith Francis, better known in the Steel Band world as 'Pepe', has been involved in various organisations in the United Kingdom, including London Brotherhood of Steel (LBS), Carnival Committees in Manchester, Devon, Huddersfield and Bagneux in France. Pepe is also well known in the voluntary sector for his consulting and community advice, for example Cryptic 1 and Lancaster Youth Clubs. He has been and continues to be a major driving force within the steelband community. He also won the Notting Hill carnival Mas King Competition on seven occasions and came second twice; a record yet to be broken.

Pepe has been the Chairman of the British Association of Steel Bands for the past 29 years. During that time, he was the main organiser and Administrator of the London Steel band Panorama competition. He has also acted as the European representative for Pan Trinbago, the governing body for the steel pan in Trinidad, with whom he works very closely and uses all the criteria for competitions set by the governing body. He also works closely with Steelband Associations in New York and Dortmund, Germany.

It is his involvement with Ebony Steel band and Ebony Steel Band Trust for which Pepe could be considered a 'legend' in the development of steel band in the UK.

Chris Boothman

Chris Boothman is a member of a well known Trinidadian family of artists and musicians. But paradoxically he is also a British born Black who is a product of South London in the

70's. His first proper job was as a part time youth worker but professionally he has been a solicitor since 1982.

Over 20 years ago he was the Chairman of the Society of Black Lawyers and the first Black member of the Law Society Council. In the past he has specialised in criminal law, employment lawyer and different aspects of local government law. He was also the Legal Director of the Commission for Racial Equality for ten years and during that time was heavily involved in the Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

After the CRE he became the Head of Legal Services for the Standards Board for England a new public body governing the conduct of local politicians. Chris was named by "The Lawyer" as one of the Hot 100 lawyers shaping the law in 2006.

Outside of work Chris has been attending Notting Hill and various other Carnivals for nearly 40 years. During his time Chris has been a teenaged member of a Sound System, a food stall assistant, a founding member of a Steel Band, a pirate Calypso DJ, and a member of various costume bands.

Chris has also served on the Notting Hill Carnival Board in the past as the elected representative of the Notting Hill Costume Bands. He is currently a consultant, an Independent Member of the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Lead Director of London Notting Hill Carnival.

Colin Prescod

Since leaving a twenty-year academic career to join the BBC in 1989, where he became Head of the African/Caribbean Programmes Unit (TV) (1991/1992), Colin Prescod has worked mainly in film, TV and theatre. He is currently an Advisor to two new major permanent galleries, opened in November, 2007 – *London, Sugar and Slavery*, Museum in Docklands, London and *Atlantic Worlds*, National Maritime Museum, London.

Colin has a distinguished and exemplary record of engagement and leadership in the arts and community sectors. He is a member of the Greater London Authority's Heritage Diversity Task Force and Co-Director of the not-for-profit, cultural animation company, 'Manifesta' – which delivered, 2008/9, "*Belonging*" a trans-European, creative video workshop for groups of 15 to 19 year olds, across Paris, Lisbon and London.

He is Chair of the Institute of Race Relations, London and a member of the editorial working committee of its international journal, *Race and Class*; Chair of the Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art (ACAVA), London; Chair of the 'HISTORYtalk', RBK&C, London and Chair of Carnival Village Trust Ltd, London. In addition, he sits on the Board of 'Artsworld' as well as the management committee of the Association of Dance of the African Diaspora (ADAD) and serves on the Jessica and Eric Huntley Archive Advisory Group.

Publications since the late 1990s include '*Dealing with Difference, Beyond Ethnicity*', in *Intercultural Arts Education and Municipal Policy*, 1997, *Zapping Through Wonderland - social issues in art for children and young people*, 1998; and chapter contributions to *Changing Britannia - life experience with Britain*, 1999, *Claudia Jones - a life in exile*, 1999 and *Symbolic Narratives/African Cinema*, 2000. He has also written two theatre pieces, commissioned and toured in the UK by the Midlands-based Duende production company -

Who Sen' Me?, in Spring 2000 and *Banged Up*, in Autumn 2001. In 2007 he contributed to and co-edited "Voicing Black Dance – The British Experience 1930s to 1980s".

Corrine Skinner-Carter

For over forty years Corinne Skinner-Carter has been a feature of black British film and television: *Empire Road* in the 1970s, *Burning an Illusion* (d. Menelik Shabazz, 1981) and *Elphida* (d. Tunde Ikole, 1987) in the 1980s, *Hallelujah Anyhow* (d. Matthew Jacobs, 1991) and *Babymother* (d. Julien Henriques, 1998) in the 1990s. Between screen appearances she has worked with most of the black theatre companies: Temba, Carib Theatre, Talawa, Umoja, Black Theatre Cooperative, appearing in key theatre drama of the period such as Trevor Rhone's *Two Can Play* at the Arts Theatre in 1983 and the 1987 production of James Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* at the Tricycle.

Skinner-Carter arrived in Britain in 1955 from Trinidad planning to be a teacher. While she trained, she supplemented her income by dancing and acting in film and television. Even though this sideline became increasingly significant she continued to teach for Islington Council. Her first role was a small part in a BBC Sunday Night Theatre play, *The Green Pastures* (tx 14/9/1958). In the 1960s she appeared as a dancer in *Cleopatra* (d. Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1963), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (US, d. Richard Lester, 1966) and *Live and Let Die* (d. Guy Hamilton, 1973). Other bit parts followed until the late 1970s and her breakthrough role as Hortense Bennett in the television drama

In the 1980s television work predominated, and she regularly appeared in the BBC's thirteen part courtroom drama *Jury* (1983), *South of the Border* (BBC, 1988-90) and *Happy Families* (BBC, 1989-90). She also appeared in other television series *The Gentle Touch* (LWT, 1980-84), *Black Silk* (BBC, 1985) and starred in the short film *Dreaming Rivers* (Martine Attille, 1988) produced by Sankofa Film and Video.

In the 1990s she featured in *Rides* (BBC, 1991-3), a series about an all-women taxi firm, in episodes of *The Bill* (LWT, 1984-), *A Touch of Frost* (ITV, 1992-) and *Casualty* (BBC, 1986).

Outside of her dual acting and teaching career, Skinner-Carter has had a long association with Notting Hill Carnival and in 1997 was one of the judges.

David Roussel-Milner

David Roussel-Milner was a singer, writer, journalist, historian and a well known member of the Black community in Britain who campaigned fervently against racism. He had an illustrious and distinguished role in the development and defence of the Black community, working with many other activists and campaigners.

This spirited defence started when he joined his adopted mother's firm, **Carmen Commonwealth Hairdressers**. She was **Carmen England** from Trinidad, Europe's first Black hairdresser. From 1967 to 1980 he conducted a prolonged trade mark dispute with the multi-national conglomerate, Bristol-Myers, over the use of the name *Carmen* employing the Black press as his main weapon and persuading readers to boycott that company's products.

As a journalist, he contributed to the *West Indian Gazette* and *Westindian World* as well as magazines such as *Sepia* and *Flamingo*. David was a founder member of the **Martin**

Luther King Foundation with **Lord Constantine** and **Lord Pitt** until it was taken over and smothered by **Christian Aid**.

In 1976 David discovered and in **Grassroots**, the newspaper of the Black Liberation Front, blew the whistle on the illegal export of military equipment (rocket motors for jet fighter ejector seats) to apartheid South Africa and, as a result, he was harassed for some time by **BOSS**, the South African security police.

In 1972 David married Jean from Jamaica and they opened a drug store in Harlesden, London, later selling it to **Ujima Housing Association** in 1974 for use as its advice centre and offices. Until 1979 David accepted a number of short-term accountancy assignments, culminating with the **Arts Council of Great Britain** as a finance officer. During his eight years of employment at the Arts Council, he worked against the institutionalised racism he found within that august organisation and for proper recognition and fair treatment of ethnic minority arts.

In 1988 David moved with his family to Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire, where he dedicated himself to research, writing and lecturing in history. David involved himself in various aspects of the local community and passionately worked to promote Black history and the significance of Black History Month. By 1997 he was an active member of the **Wellingborough African-Caribbean Association** (WACA). As a member of the WACA Board of Directors he played a fundamental role in preserving the existence of the association. It was during this time that he researched and published a ground breaking dissertation entitled 'Columbus - Liar Amongst Liars' in 1992.

As a journalist David wrote for many Black periodicals under the name **Kwesi Bacchra** and other pen-names during the last 40 years. He acknowledged a debt to his political mentor, the late **Claudia Jones**, having written for her **West Indian Gazette** from its early days. In spite of disabling heart disease he continued to write occasionally for papers such as **Caribbean Times** in England and the **Basava Journal** in India. David was closely involved with **Notting Hill Carnival** from soon after its embryonic beginnings in 1959 at various times as a Committee member, stallholder, Arts Council assessor and financial adviser to the board of **CAC**, serving on its Finance Committee until 1988 when the police and funding bodies wrested control from the Black people who made Carnival.

David tirelessly campaigned against racism in all its forms and worked to make a difference in society throughout his life. He died just weeks after contributing some of his writings to the National Discourse on Carnival and started to record his memories of that first Carnival in 1959. Sadly, he did not complete it but he will be remembered by many for his passion for life, his strong principles, his conversation, his good humour, his humanitarian kindness and his hard work to help others. Above all he was a loving husband and a devoted father. He leaves these precious memories and legacy to his wife Jean Patricia; his sons, Nicholas Nigel, Richard Tschaka and Llewellyn Paul; his daughter-in-law, Teresa Margarita; his loving grand-daughters Lucia Dolores and Eva Teresa; and a host of family and friends.

Donald Hinds

“I joined my mother in London in August 1955 and the age of 21. I brought with me my Jamaica Local Third Year Certificate - the highest qualification one could achieve without going to secondary school. I also brought with me my poems and my first and still unfinished novel; all eight exercise books of it and of course my inflated ambition of getting a BA and returning home in five years!

My first job was as a bus conductor. We were London Transport's guinea pigs. I think I was number five at Brixton Garage. I met Claudia Jones in June 1958 through Theo Campbell who owned 250 Brixton Road and ran a record shop on the ground floor. He rented the first floor to Claudia and the West Indian Gazette and the top floor to some Law Clerks who linked clients to lawyers.

On our first meeting, Claudia challenged my boast that I was a writer by asking me to submit an article which I did in three days. Although it was never published I was to write for the paper until it closed in July 1965, seven months after the death of Claudia. During that time I wrote on the aftermath of the Notting Hill disturbances; I sat in on the planning of the first carnival which took place on 31st January 1959.”

Janet Browne

Trained as a Textile Artist and Teacher Educator of artists, crafts people, historians and designers at Middlesex and Trent Polytechnics respectively and the Institute of Education, University London. She taught in Adult Education for over 20 years and was Director of Studies for Visual Art at Morley College, London (1996 – 2006). Until recently Janet was a key programme officer specialising in building a black and sustainable audience base, on the 3-year Heritage Lottery funded Capacity Building and Cultural Ownership Project.

In 2007 the V&A won the Visit London Best Visitor Attraction of the Year Award from Time Out, for a number of audience development projects including the Black Heritage events programme, which attracted visitors from a wide range of cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds, many of whom were first time visitors to the Museum.

Janet was recently made a permanent member of the V&A staff to manage, develop and deliver Black Heritage programmes, with a special interest in Schools, Families and Young People and to contribute to programmes and initiatives which encourage participation of Black British communities in a broad range of V&A activities and services.

The purpose of Janet's role is to manage, develop and deliver Black Heritage programmes within the Schools, Families and Young People Team and to contribute to programmes and initiatives which encourage participation of Black British communities in a broad range of V&A activities and services. Apart from her own personal interest in black heritage and history, she enjoys collaborative interventions with cultural institutions, organisations and individuals. Not only do they bring an in depth understanding of their culture and creativity that enriches the V&A's programming, but, in many situations, both have benefitted from managed sustainable partnerships where advice and information are equally shared and exchanged. A good example of this is the recent V&A's collaboration with the Carnival Village and the ELIMU Paddington Arts Carnival band to programme this year's Claudia Jones Inaugural Carnival Arts Lecture in the Museum's Sackler Centre for Arts Education.

Janet is currently a member of the Museum's Africa Curator's Group. where she has contributed to Africa and the Diaspora collecting policy, research, training and programming, and the 5 year HLF Staying Power Project Team, a partnership with the

Black Cultural Archives to explore Black British identity between 1950 and 1990, through the purchasing of photographic materials, oral history and the programming of events across all age groups and an exhibition.

Kofi Debrah

Kofi has been marketing and managing events for the past 10 years; he's always had an eye for running major events including his own carnival while studying at Southampton University.

Since graduating he has worked mainly within the Carnival arts sector where he developed, marketed and distributed the commemorative 40th anniversary Notting Hill Carnival calendar, developed the Notting Hill Carnival website and helped increase web traffic by 65%.

In 2006 Kofi was appointed as the marketing manager for the UK Centre for Carnival Arts in Luton and in 2008 he became the marketing manager for Carnival Village, Notting Hill London.

Carnival Village also manages West London's iconic venue, The Tabernacle, which hosts high profile events such as Lily Allen's secret MySpace gig, various prestigious album launch parties, dance classes, music studios, an art gallery as well as a host of community led events all under one roof.

Kofi has also worked with Out of Africa and helped develop the club night into London's first 7 day outdoor African festival in Carnaby Street in 2006.

Kofi has recently been mentored by carnival arts guru Pax Nindi and festival guru Fiona Stewart.

Kwesi Bacchra, formerly known as David Roussel-Milner,

Leslie Palmer

The Notting Hill Carnival owes its unique format or blue-print to the innovatory vision of Leslie 'Teacher' Palmer. The creative use of public spaces for performance arts within the boundaries of the West Indian community in Ladbroke Grove was a new and novel concept not found today at any of the Trinidad style Carnivals recreated world-wide.

After 3 years establishing the event on the national landscape, he joined Island Records helping to promote their artistes world-wide and later becoming a Licensed Agent and Promoter, touring acts in Europe and the U.S.

The lack of educational facilities in London for musically talented young blacks led to the establishment of a music academy/complex, namely the Brent Black Music Co-op (BBMC) where, with the assistance of the Department of Trade & Industry, he created a Manpower Services Programme providing employment and training for up to 47 persons aspiring to work in the music industry. The complex provided music tuition, rehearsal, recording and touring opportunities for a multitude of local professional and semi-professional groups and artistes of all nationalities and music genres. He also recorded and performed his socio-political material under the pseudonym 'Wounded Soldier'

Teacher Palmer retired to his country of origin in 1997 where he currently publishes an annual Leisure & Entertainment Guide and other tourism related literature, which can be viewed on his website www.whatsonintobago.com

Marika Sherwood

Hungarian-born Marika Sherwood has lived in many parts of the world. In England she taught in schools before undertaking research on aspects of the history of Black peoples in Britain, more particularly the political activists of the past hundred years or so.

In 1991 with colleagues she founded the Black and Asian Studies Association, which campaigns on various issues with a focus on education; she edited the *BASA Newsletter* until 2007. The author of a number of books and articles, her most recent books are *After Abolition* and *Britain, the Slave Trade and Slavery from 1562 to the 1880s*. *The Life and Times of Henry Sylvester Williams* is due out in 2010.

Mary Genis

Mary Genis is the award winning artistic director of CultureMix Arts Ltd, providing a highly respected UK wide carnival arts education service in music, costume and dance. Based in Berkshire at the CultureMix Centre for Steel Pan Music, Mary leads RASPO Steel Orchestra, empowering aspiring young musicians with professional business development training and creative industry work experience.

She has worked with WOMAD, is an Arts Council England advisor and a guest lecturer at Thames Valley University. Her non-executive roles include trustee for music charity Readipop and visual arts company the Jelly, she is the chair of mentoring charity Refocus and a board member at South Hill Park Arts Centre.

Mary is a Clore Fellow and a Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts. She is a regular contributor to music education publications, radio and television.

Michael La Rose

Michael La Rose was born in Trinidad and grew up in Britain. He is a consultant, researcher, author and lecturer on Carnival history and culture. He also writes on popular culture of the African Diaspora.

He currently chairs the black archive and charity the *George Padmore Institute (GPI)*. His involvement in Carnival started as a young DJ at the *Hibiscus Club* in Stoke Newington in 1973. With his brother Keith they participated in Notting Hill Carnival as the music section for the mas band *Lion Youth*. Michael was elected Vice Chair of the *Carnival Development Committee (CDC)* the organization of carnival bands in the late 1970s.

With his brother he formed *People's War Carnival Band* in 1983 and was designer and bandleader until 1998 when the organization was disbanded. With other concerned supporters of Carnival he founded the *Association for a People's Carnival (APC)* in 1989, to inform and educate people in Britain and throughout Europe about the history, art, music and culture of Carnival.

He puts a high priority on promoting *Carnival in Education*. Michael has produced many articles and publications on the social history and development of the Caribbean Carnival and its arts especially in Diaspora carnivals like Notting Hill. In 2006 he edited a biography of Gerald Forsyth and the book for young people "*The History of the Steel Band*" for

Tamarind Books. His article for *Carnival Grooves* on the 40 year history of Notting Hill Carnival was republished by journals in Trinidad, New York and Nigeria.

He is currently researching a “*Short History of Carnival in Britain and the Caribbean*”, a book of interviews on the “*Pioneers of Notting Hill Carnival*” and an untitled publication on masquerade as radical art.

Pat Bishop

Pat Bishop was born on the 7th May in Woodbrook, Port of Spain, Trinidad. She attended Bishop Anstey High School and graduated from The University of the West Indies with a MA in West Indian History and is a distinguished Fellow of the University of Trinidad & Tobago.

Her record and range of achievements and accomplishments are truly impressive; making her a true Renaissance woman. She was awarded the Trinity Cross in 1994, the highest order of Trinidad & Tobago.

As a Musician she is noted for arranging for several steel bands of note, including Despers, Phase 11, Skiffle Bunch, Fonclaire, Exodus, All Stars and Renegades. She is perhaps best known for establishing Lydian Steel, a completely literate steel ensemble accompanying the Lydian Singers and, among its most notable achievements, participating in the Miami Bach Society’s Tropical Baroque Music Festival.

As an artist, she designs jewellery, work in wood and ceramics and paints. Examples of her work can be seen on the walls of The Central Bank of T&T, the National Art Gallery of Jamaica and in many private collections throughout the world.

As an academic she lectured in Visual Arts at UWI, St Augustine and held the posts of Director of the Carnival Institute of T&T, Professor of Fine Art and the Public Art Process at the University of T&T and is currently a Lecturer in the History of Art & Critical Reading at UWI.

Patrice Briggs

Patrice is a passionate Theatre Arts Practitioner who has currently completed her Master’s Degree at Goldsmiths, University of London in the Cross Sectoral and Community Arts Programme. She has been a Part-Time Lecturer in the Certificate Programme in T.I.E and Educative Theatre at the Department of the Centre for Creative and Festival Arts, University of the West Indies over the last eight years.

Since 1998 she has worked as a Project Manager and Business Development Manager with one of the premiere Applied Creative Arts Consultancy in the Caribbean, ‘Arts-in-Action’. She graduated from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine with a post graduate diploma programme in Arts and Cultural Enterprise Management (ACEM) and a B.A. in English Literatures and Theatre Arts.

Patricia Jaggs

Patricia sailed from T&T, this happy isle of carnival, of sunshine and warmth to pursue her studies under the cool cloudy skies of England. In England, a true renaissance woman, she pursued various disciplines in several places: she studied to become a company secretary in Leeds, in London she qualified as a Montessori teacher and worked in the High Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, in Leicester she obtained a degree in youth work.

Well qualified, she returned to Trinidad to pursue a successful career with the support of family and friends. But Eros had other plans and her career flourished back in England.

Whilst working as a senior youth worker in Westminster, following the Notting Hill carnival riots in the late 70's, she founded the Elimu Carnival Band with Ansel Wong, the Director of the Elimu Youth Project in the Harrow Road. The aim was to raise awareness of carnival among young people who did not perceive it as part of their culture.

In 1981 she exhibited a tapestry map of Africa at the Africa Centre, London. In 1992 she researched for "Antilleana", a tent hanging depicting a lady in traditional Caribbean costume for the Mughul Project in the Nehru gallery of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Antilleana was inspired by a quotation from Claudia Jones: "I think of my mother a machine worker in a garment factory I began then to develop an understanding of the suffering of my people and my class and to look for a way to end their suffering".

Her academic enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity were rewarded when she gained a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban Studies.

Patricia is currently Chair of Elimu Paddington Arts Carnival Band which in 2009 gained many prizes at Notting Hill carnival 2009, participated in Kingston Carnival and a Caribbean evening for young diplomats at Marlborough House, the Commonwealth HQ, took part in the Thames Festival and represented the United Kingdom at the Shanghai Tourism Festival.

Pax Nindi

Zimbabwean born Pax Nindi was Senior Combined Arts Officer at the Arts Council England (ACE) for ten years till June 2006. Whilst there, he initiated and directed the 3-day On Route International Carnival Conference; designed and managed the Carnivalnet website; wrote the Arts Council's National Carnival Arts Strategy; produced and edited the On Route carnival book and researched and initiated International Carnival Fellowships in Brazil, Trinidad, Germany, Italy and Miami.

Pax is currently Combined Arts Services Artistic Director and serves on a range of Carnival organisations, including St Paul's Carnival (Artistic Director), World Carnival Commission in Canada (Vice President), National Carnival Bands Association - Trinidad (International Consultant and Rep), Wales Arts Council (National Advisor), UK Centre for Carnival Arts (Consultant) and Circus Development Agency (Board Director).

As Creative Producer he managed the outdoor opening of Hackney Council's Black History Month 07, Carnival Village in Glastonbury Festival 05 and the GLA Carnival Education Zone and Film Lounge 06 in Hyde Park.

Pax has also appeared at several conferences including, International Youth Circus Conference in France, ICCA Carnival Conference in Miami and Boston, World Carnival Commission International Carnival Conference in Montreal and Circus Futures Conference in Bristol.

Peninah Achieng

"I am the current Chairperson for St Paul's Carnival. I joined the committee in 2006 following a review that was carried out jointly by the Arts Council and Bristol City Council.

When I joined I held the position of Treasurer until 2007 when I was elected to the position of Chair.

My background is in community development and trade union activism. I was the Regional Chair for Unison's Black members group in the South West region for 6 years before I went into community development. I'm a Trustee of the African Voices Forum and Beira Bristol Link organisation.

Professionally I am an accountant and I have worked within local government for 12 years in various finance positions. I currently work for the NHS Foundation Trust in Bristol as a Senior Management Accountant.

My experience in the art sector draws on my African heritage and also my involvement with St Paul's Carnival over the past 4 years."

Ricky Belgrave

Ricky Belgrave is the Chairman of the British Association of Static Sound Systems (BASS) and was also the 1st Chairman of the Executive Committee of Carnival Arenas (ECCA). A die hard music lover, avid record collector and a veteran DJ/ sound system owner with a lifelong commitment to promoting sound system culture. Ricky still performs on the 'Rapattack' Sound System, located along the All Saints Road, during each and every August Bank Holiday Weekend.

Within a year of BASS forming an executive committee in October 2001, Ricky was nominated to chair the association and has since represented the static sound arena both within the Notting Hill Carnival organisation and externally.

Ricky is very well qualified for the role, having business management/administration, corporate governance, HR, political and representational skills gained from performing his job for more than 22 years as a UKTI Trade Manager/Diplomat for the British Government. On 1st June 2009 he was appointed to a Senior Trade Manager's position - managing the Environment & Water sectors of trade to the Asian Markets including the most important overseas markets of China & India.

Ruthven Roberts

I started dance training in the 70's through the Prime Minister's Best Village programme in Trinidad and later in the 80's at Point Fortin Foundation of Performing Arts which included theatre and carnival performances in Caribbean folk, West African and Modern dance and drama. I have been honoured to have gained training from some of the Caribbean dance legends: Astor Johnson, Cyril St Lewis, Beryl Mc Bernie, Professor Rex Nettleford to name just a few. Additional performance skills were gained through National and regional Music Festivals performances with St Augustine Singers.

In the mid to late 80's I became dance drama director, working with the Trinidad and Tobago Anglican Church Youth Forum. On migrating to London in 1990 I studied social sciences and drama at Lewisham College and later at Goldsmith University where I attained my degree. The year of 1987 also saw my introduction to the Notting Hill Carnival while on a Commonwealth youth exchange programme. Since my emigration to London I have been involved in carnival, beginning as an apprentice mas maker, becoming band leader and later Artistic Director of Lighthouse Players which was founded in 1997. Not only

did we produce carnival presentations but also theatre presentations which toured nationally and abroad.

Presently I am Secretary of Notting Hill Mas Band Association and have been the Artistic Director for the Grand Carnival Splash hosted by NHMBA held for the last two years.

Sam King

Born in Jamaica in 1926, Samuel King worked with his father on the family farm with every intention of eventually taking over after his dad retired.

When war was declared, he was a schoolboy interested in everything that was going on in Britain and Europe.

In 1944, he responded to a Royal Air Force advertisement in The Gleaner Newspaper for volunteers. Having passed a series of tests soon afterwards, he and other volunteers received intensive training in Kingston before travelling to England. Sailing along the American coastline, past Newfoundland and then cutting across to the British Isles, they evaded German submarines and experienced a cold that few of them had ever felt and would never forget.

After three months of training at Filey, Yorkshire, the men were split up into categories for ground crew training – Sam was posted to the fighter station RAF Hawkinge near Folkstone and served as an engineer. He had heard from good sources that if Germany won the war, Hitler would re-introduce slavery in the West Indian colonies.

After the war ended, Sam was demobbed and returned to Jamaica. But, he was not happy with life there and so he took the opportunity of travelling back to England on the Empire Windrush. He rejoined the RAF and later worked for the Royal Mail.

In 1983/84, he was elected Mayor of the London Borough of Southwark. In 1995, Sam King and Arthur Torrington established the Windrush Foundation, the first charitable organisation whose objectives are to keep alive the memories of the young men and women who were among the first wave of post war settlers in England. In 1998, Sam published his autobiography, *Climbing up the Rough Side of the Mountain*.¹⁹

Shabaka Thompson

Shabaka Thompson is a cultural activist and social engineer working in community politics for over two decades in Canada, Trinidad, Britain and Africa.

As the Director of London's leading African combined arts centre, the Yaa Asantewaa Arts and Community Centre, Shabaka initiated a major capital project called the Carnival Village that will contribute to the development and sustenance of African art, especially Carnival Arts and all its related industries of which he is now the CEO.

In 2005 he was seconded from Yaa to take up the position of acting CEO of the London Notting Hill Carnival where he provided the necessary strategic support and expertise toward the development of a viable and more independent carnival organisation with

¹⁹ Torrington, A., Windrush Pioneers, Windrush Foundation, pg. 3, 2008

increased authority for governing, producing and marketing the Notting Hill Carnival and all its relevant products

Shabaka also lectures in schools, colleges and universities on Carnival Arts and conducts workshops in primary and secondary schools across Britain and has presented papers at national and international Carnival Arts conferences.

His vision is for the economic liberation of African people. His mission is to achieve this through empowerment, leadership and the development of sustainable institutions and communities.

Shango Baku

Shango Baku is an actor/writer/director with a wide experience of theatre for development. He is the author of *Three Plays of our Time* and a repertoire of bio-plays on Black achievers. A former Board member of the Black Theatre Forum, Shango has worked in Britain, the Caribbean, and Africa on a range of projects involving heritage and achievement.

Shango is Artistic Director of the award-winning Charity CETTIE (Cultural Exchange Through Theatre in Education), which has worked throughout Britain in museums, schools, theatres, and community venues, bringing Black History to life for audiences of all ages.

Wendel Clement

After schooling at Diego Martin Secondary School in the 70's he went on to study Telecommunications at John Donaldson Technical Institute under a scholarship from the then Trinidad and Tobago External Telecommunications Company. In 1983 he left Trinidad for the USA to pursue an Electrical Engineering degree at Rutgers University New Jersey. Upon graduation he was immediately recruited by Citi Federal Bank and then Nortel Networks where he worked on various Engineering research and development projects in digital technology. He was then posted to the UK in 1992 as an Ex-pat working on assignments at BT and then taking up permanent Senior roles as the Engineering Directors at both Telewest Broadband and COLT Telecoms. This phase of his career saw him managing multi-million pound budgets, pan-European staff and the commercial introduction of several commercial technologies. Of particular notoriety is his Leadership of the international standards body who introduced Digital TV to the World DAVIC.

But his love and desire for his culture attracted him to the Arts and Entertainment business. In 2003 he made a crazy jump out of the high flying world of Technology and into the starving but personally gratifying world of the Arts. On one front he acquired an Art Gallery in South Kensington, Campbell's of London, as well as starting up an entertainment enterprise called PoisonUK, a spin-off from what was then the largest Carnival movement in the world Poison out of Trinidad.

With Campbell's Wendel used the prestige of the gallery with a 40 year history of elite clients to introduce the upper echelons of the Art industry in the Caribbean and their comparable excellence to the UK art world 'As one man venture'. The gallery opened up in Harrods and in Dubai and it was not long before the likes of Boscoe Holder, Stanford Watson and LeRoy Clarke were being exhibited in these centres. The gallery has since exhibited over 60 artists from the Caribbean Islands serving to kick start the Caribbean Art

Scene here in London. All still with the aim of not compromising standards and having them hang side by side with the best of the established UK market.

On the social scene PoisonUK has transformed the Caribbean style entertainment scene here in London by importing the best performers and party concepts to a wider audience in the UK and even further into Europe. Wendel's vision at the time was to bring the progressive Caribbean scene out from the edges of London and into the centre with After Work limes, parties and other events in trendy venues in Central London on a regular basis. Although pioneered by PoisonUK this is now taken for granted and offered by many others. Another major element was the introduced of a 'build up' to Notting Hill Carnival. Although having one of the best carnivals across the globe he felt that the 'merry monarch' spirit was missing in the weeks leading up to the parade itself. Here he and the organisation pioneered hosting events such as concerts, parties and excursions to complement the street parade and the other various cultural shows. Today this has paved the way for many other event promoters who have now added to this important element of a Caribbean carnival and making Notting Hill carnival a regular season with several visitors and locals here in London.

Appendix D – The Leslie ‘Teacher’ Palmer Award

The Leslie ‘Teacher’ Palmer Award for Innovation in Carnival Arts

Carnival encompasses the extremes of performance culture. It is therefore not a singular art form but an integrated framework for live performances in public spaces that are rooted in a diversity of artistic disciplines involving the human body, space and time.

This award will be for an individual or organisation that has pushed the boundaries of this framework by extending the limits of theatricality, dance and visual arts, creating new boundaries for choreographic and musical conventions, exploring the fullest performance potential of public spaces and exhibiting exemplary leadership and scholarship.

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