

National Cultural Foundation  
Barbados

50th ANNIVERSARY  
CROP OVER  
YEARS OVER

SUMMER 2024

# Barbados

MAGAZINE





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# Message from the Prime Minister



This year, Barbados has reached yet another significant milestone in our nation's history—the 50th anniversary of the Crop Over festival. This is such an exciting moment for me as it is for many others. This is a moment that represents the power, beauty and importance of Bajan heritage, creativity and expression. Decades of evolving and documenting the vibrance of our indigenous cultural landscape through literature, song, costume, art and dance. But importantly - it is also a moment where we can now begin fully crafting a vision that enables us to stride confidently and purposefully towards the next 50 years.

For me, Crop Over is the encapsulation of the beautiful nuance of bajan culture—from our pride and industry as we bring yet another successful sugar cane harvest to a close, to the deep friendships, the food and liming, the wit and wordplay immortalized in scathing social commentaries and energetic bashment soca tunes. As the lyrics so poignantly express for me “Crop Over is a blessing, not a curse; iz de best ting in de world. Iz de best time I ever had!

It's simply a marvel how we have successfully interwoven the richness of our ancestral traditions into a modern age. To borrow another phrase, this time from The Most Honorable Dr. Anthony ‘Mighty Gabby’ Carter, “like wine made from dunk and guava, donkey stake out in pasture, and flying fish floating pon coucou—Crop Over is we culture; dis is we ting.”

I want to heap thanks and praises to the Crop Over stalwarts, the pioneers, the historians, the visionaries, the creatives and the cultural practitioners who have built this festival from the ground up. Your passion, creativity and tenacity have helped create a robust and enduring framework upon which we will continue to build. This festival has always been a celebration of the best parts of our culture, and may we guard these traditions steadfastly to ensure that the Crop Over festival continues to be one that we are proud of.

The beauty of culture - just like a good bajan wukup - is the ability to stay in timing while being in motion. It is true that we may no longer burn Mr. Harding, and the Grand Kadooment route has taken many different twists and turns since the early days of jumping from the National Stadium to the Garrison Savannah. Cavalcades may have transitioned into ‘sweet limes’, and the days of the Party Monarch finals being held on the island's East coast have transitioned to mega concerts in the National Botanical Gardens.

Change is inevitable and we must welcome it - but it must always be a case of advancing and celebrating Bajan identity and culture, as we mold and shape it into new, vibrant forms, while maintaining a deep sense of who we are.

I'm sure that this special publication commemorating Crop Over's golden jubilee will be both a source of nostalgia and of inspiration, and in 50 year's time, we will again marvel at how far we've come.

Congratulations Barbados, here's to another 50.

*Mia Amor Mottley*  
Prime Minister of Barbados

# Message from the Chairperson



*F*ifty years ago, visionary leaders and passionate artists came together to create an event that would showcase the culture of our nation – the Crop Over Festival. Today, it is with immense joy and pride that as Chairman of the National Cultural Foundation, I can reflect on this momentous occasion—the 50th anniversary of our beloved national cultural festival.

This milestone marks half a century in which we saw the development and evolution of Barbadian culture, displayed in the many visual art and indigenous craft exhibitions, music showcases and competitions, and parades of creativity on our streets which involved every Barbadian.

Beginning as it did within the first decade of our Independence, the Crop Over Festival sought to keep alive cultural traditions, and develop ways of ensuring Barbadians understood that their identity and culture was something to celebrate.

We are proud that through our Cultural Development programmes we can ensure our heritage continues to live in the varied expressions of Barbadians during Crop Over.

Our current calendar of events is a true testimony to how the festival - and our culture - has evolved over the five decades, and we are especially pleased to see that the private sector maintains its critical support of the festival.

I vividly recall my early days, when I first adorned the extravagant costumes and danced to the rhythmic beats that echo the spirit of our nation. Crop Over has been more than a celebration; it has been a canvas upon which we paint our stories, our heritage, and our identity. Each costume, each melody, and other forms of artistic expression has woven a tapestry of cultural richness that defines us and unites us.

Today, as we commemorate five decades of artistic brilliance and cultural camaraderie, we honour not just the festival itself, but the countless people who have contributed to its success. From the creators and performers to the dedicated organizers and supporters, this milestone belongs to all of us who have poured our hearts into preserving and showcasing our traditions.

Our festival has evolved and grown, adapting to the changing times while staying true to our roots. It has become a beacon of diversity, inclusivity, and creativity—a testament to our resilience and commitment to Barbadian cultural expression.

As we look forward, let us reaffirm our dedication to nurturing and promoting our cultural heritage through this magnificent festival.

Let us continue to inspire the next generation to embrace their roots and explore new horizons through art and tradition. Together, we will ensure that the Crop Over Festival remains a symbol of unity and pride for generations to come.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to this remarkable journey. Your passion and dedication have made this milestone possible.

Here's to 50 years of cultural excellence manifested in Crop Over, and to many more years of celebrating our heritage with love and reverence.

*Jasmine Babb*  
NCF Chairperson

# Message from the CEO



The Crop Over Festival is more than just a series of performances and exhibitions; it is a reflection of our collective identity. It is a space where our history is honored, our present is celebrated, and our future is envisioned. Through music, dance, theater, visual arts, and masquerade, we tell the stories of our ancestors, express our contemporary experiences, and inspire future generations.

Over the past five decades, Crop Over has played a crucial role in preserving and promoting our cultural heritage. It has provided a platform for artists to showcase their talents, for audiences to experience the richness of our traditions, and for communities to come together in celebration. It has also served as a beacon of creativity, encouraging new forms of artistic expression and collaboration.

As we celebrate this golden jubilee, we pay tribute to the countless individuals who have contributed to the success of this festival. To the artists, whose creativity and dedication bring our culture to life; to the organizers, whose tireless efforts ensure the festival's smooth operation; and to the audiences, whose enthusiasm and support make this celebration possible.

We also look forward to the future with hope and excitement. The Crop Over Festival will continue to evolve, embracing new ideas and technologies while staying true to its core mission of celebrating our cultural heritage. It will remain a space where tradition and innovation coexist, where diversity is celebrated, and where the power of art to inspire and unite is fully realized.

Let us take this opportunity to reflect on the journey we have traveled, to honor the legacy we have inherited, and to reaffirm our commitment to nurturing and promoting our cultural heritage. May this festival continue to thrive and inspire for many more decades to come.

Enjoy the celebrations. Happy Crop Over!

*Carol Roberts*  
NCF Chief Executive Officer

# A Note from the EDITOR



**A**s we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Crop Over, it has been both my privilege and pleasure to oversee this commemorative project which focuses on some of the people who have played a seminal part in the development of this annual festival. This publication offers glimpses into the foresight, imagination, and dedication that transformed a vision into an institution woven into the fabric of Barbadian culture, making it a staple on the island's cultural landscape.

As we invite readers to journey with us through some key moments in the modern Crop Over festival, the content reflected therein is by no means exhaustive, nor is it intended to be the final word.

We hope this modest publication contributes to the national conversation and encourages others to contribute to documenting and preserving this vital cultural asset.

We must celebrate all aspects of Crop Over and the people who have made it successful.

Though we may have omitted some special occasions, capturing everything was impossible. Reaching this golden milestone is monumental, and this magazine merely scratches the surface.

My gratitude extends to the National Cultural Foundation's chief executive officer, Carol Roberts and her team, especially Michelle Springer, my invaluable right hand and advisor. Thanks also to graphic artist Marc Hollingsworth for his patience and reliability.

As the Crop Over season continues, stay safe and enjoy the festivities.

*Roxanne Brandner*  
Editor-In-Chief

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# The History Of Crop Over

by Dr. John Gilmore,  
Former Literary Arts Officer

The association of custom and festivity with the rhythms of the agricultural year, and in particular with the completion of a successful harvest, would seem to be almost universal, and as ancient as the tilling of the soil itself. The Yam Festivals of West Africa, which would have been part of the experience and heritage of countless Barbadians of earlier centuries, are a famous example. In the British Isles, the celebration of Harvest Home, which marked the end of reaping the grain which provided for food for all, was a venerable folk tradition, though it was almost by the end of Queen Victoria's reign, having been to some extent replaced by the Harvest Festival introduced by the Anglican Church in the middle of the nineteenth century. (We may note that many churches in Barbados celebrate "Harvest" though this tends to be, today at least, early in the calendar year, or in other words, at the beginning of the reaping of the sugar cane crop rather than at its end.)

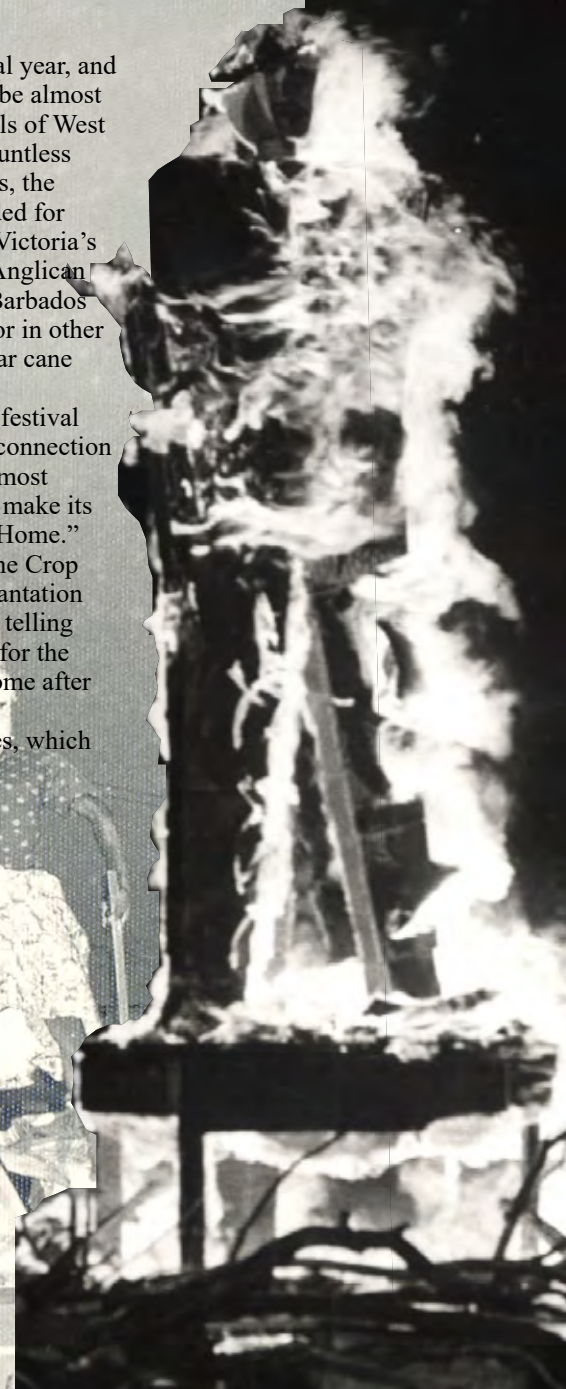
It is therefore not surprising that some sort of festival should have come into existence in Barbados in connection with the sugar cane harvest, or "Crop," as it is almost always referred to, nor is it strange that it should make its appearance under the English name of "Harvest Home."

In what seems to be the earliest reference to the Crop Over festival, we find the manager of Newton Plantation writing in 1798 to the estate's owner in England, telling him that he had held a "dinner and sober dance" for the slaves, saying "Twas a celebration of Harvest Home after the crop."

The slaves had their own dances and festivities, which



Plantation Fair in the early 70s.  
(Photo compliments Barbados Government Information Service)



the planters and authorities in the West Indies sometimes tried to restrict or prevent, and we do not know whether the Harvest Home was introduced by the slaves, or the planters and managers, but both groups would have had reason to celebrate the end of Crop.

For the planter it meant that the last of that year's sugar was finally ready for shipping to the merchant in England who provided him with the necessities and luxuries of life, whilst for the slaves it meant the end of what was normally the longest and most exhausting part of the working year.

After the slave rebellion in Barbados in 1816, some of the planter class complained that slave dances on weekends had been allowed to become so common that it had been easy for the leaders of the revolt to use them as a cover for meeting in order to make their plans ..... In Barbados .... sugar continued to be king for a long time [after Emancipation in 1834], and within the memory of many people still living, the bulk of the population were plantation labourers who were entirely dependent on the estates.

Many aspects of plantation life carried on unchanged after Emancipation, and the Crop Over festival likewise continued. Nevertheless, there must have been an important difference in the way in which the festival was perceived.

Before Emancipation, the planter had no choice but to support his slaves, well or badly as- the case might have been, all the year round. After 1838, for most people Crop Over meant not just the end of a period of hard work, but also the beginning of a period of less work and lower wages.

For many the interval between two crops would indeed have been "hard times," and the symbol of these.... was a figure of a man stuffed with trash (the dried leaves of the cane plant) which was known as "Mr Harding." Mr. Harding was formally introduced to the manager of the plantation, and, according to some accounts, later burnt as part of the celebrations, which must sometimes have had a tinge of desperation to them as people strove to enjoy themselves while they could.

Definite information about how common Crop Over was is very hard to come by, but in the late 1870s and early 1880s the manager of one plantation in the parish of St. Thomas usually paid \$12 or \$15 each year, or occasionally more ' for "Laborers Harvest Home" or money "Given Laborers on finishing the Crop." This may not seem very generous, but \$15 would have bought about sixty bottles of white rum, and it was considerably more than the same estate's annual Christmas donation of five dollars for the



**Plantation Fair in the early 70s.** (Photo compliments Barbados Government Information Service)

poor of the district....

[T]he festival was apparently fairly common at the beginning of the [last] century, by which time the name "Crop - Over" seems to have ousted that of "Harvest Home."

A procession of carts would bring the last canes into the plantation yard, the draught animals being decorated with flamboyant and frangipani and other flowers, whilst brightly coloured kerchiefs would be tied like flags to the canes.

The labourers would parade round the yard, and it was at this point that they would introduce "Mr. Harding" to the manager, after which they would adjourn for a dance, for which the manager or owner of the estate would normally contribute some salt meat and rum.

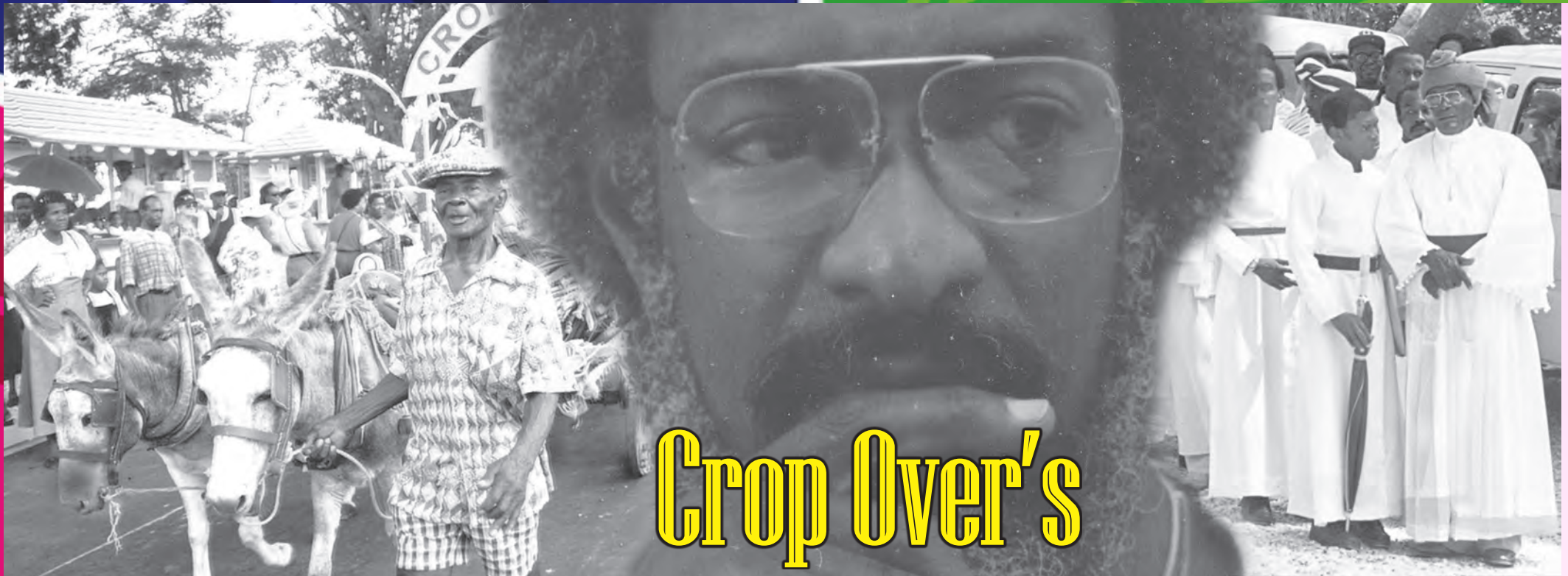
In the early 19th century, quite elaborate groups are described as providing the music at dances held in or near Bridgetown, including some combination of fiddles, tambourines, triangles, maracas-like instruments and

different types of drums, and it is possible that similar music was sometimes found at Crop- Over, though there is no direct evidence of this, and a dance on a plantation would perhaps have been more likely to have been accompanied by a banjo and something like a modern tuk band.

Even by 1940 Crop- Over was being described as a "custom which has very nearly died out," and the continuing decline of sugar and the growing availability of other sources of employment have put an end to much of traditional plantation life.

The modern Crop Over, revived by the Board of Tourism in 1974 and now administered by the National Cultural Foundation, pays tribute to the fact that sugar is still important to Barbados, and to the immense influence which it has had on our history.

\*Excerpted from his original article of the same title that appeared in the 1988 Crop Over Festival Magazine, which was published by the National Cultural Foundation.



# Crop Over's

By Dr. Allison Ramsay

The 1970s was a period of nation building and creating national identities in the Caribbean. It was a time of economic challenges for newly independent Caribbean states, as well as the rise of the Black Power movement that emphasized racial pride, economic empowerment, and the creation of political and cultural institutions across the United States of America and in the West Indies.

Elton Elombe Mottley was influenced by this wave of promoting black consciousness and empowerment and established the Youth Rural and Urban of Barbados (Yoruba) Foundation and Yoruba Yard to do so.

Mottley and this pan-African organisation attempted to revitalise Crop Over, but this effort was unsuccessful.

The festival was later “revived” by a Crop Over committee of the Barbados Tourist Board in 1974 as a national festival. The committee included Julian Marryshaw, a public relations consultant to the Board and Emile Straker, leader of the music band, the Merry-men. By this time, Barbados and other islands were heavily invested in mass tourism. Therefore,

## ‘Revival’ in the 1970s

having a festival to attract tourists outside of the winter season was viewed as a means to increase foreign exchange in the country.

At the time of Crop Over’s “re-invention”, there were two main motives, that is, “to increase visitor flows to Barbados during the depressed month of June” and to establish the festival “as a thorough-going indigenous Barbadian institution.” The research conducted by Flora Spencer was used to develop the Crop Over Fairs held that June and re-establish Crop Over.

“The Festival was seen also as providing added scope and opportunities for more and more Barbadians to participate in indigenous cultural and artistic activities” and provide a linkage between the nation’s two most important and closely related industries, tourism and agriculture. The Festival was to offer opportunities for regional and international intercultural

exchanges as well.

A newspaper advertisement of the Barbados Crop Over Festival June 1974 programme in the Sunday Advocate News notes that Crop Over was to commence with a donkey cart parade at Queen’s Park at 10

a.m. The other events that highlighted Crop Over of the past were two Crop-Over Fairs, one at Spring Hall Plantation, St. Lucy on Saturday, June 8 and the other at, Fairy Valley Plantation, Christ Church on Saturday, June 15 and the cutting of the last canes at Edgehill, St. Thomas.

The other events and their locations did not cater to the average black working class Barbadian, namely a Crop Over Festival Ball held at the exclusive Sandy Lane Hotel on June 1, a Crop-Over Jazz Festival at Southwinds Hotel on June 7, a fashion show that ran from June 22 to June 25, the Crop Over Queen finals; thanksgiving services at churches throughout the island; concert and dance aboard the Jolly Roger; Barge Show at the Carenage; the Dr. John Fletcher and Cathedral concert at St. Michael’s Cathedral; Drama presentation “All

ah We” by Ken Corsbie, the Guyana Players at Queen’s Park Theatre and a Police Band concert at Hastings Rocks.

In the 1970s, activities continued to be held that were not associated with end of crop festivities or Afro-Barbadian culture. Events, which included a barge show, an aeroplane display, skydivers, aquatic sports, regional and international performers such as the Trinidad Carnival Ballet and Cuban National Folklore were activities that became part of the Crop Over Festival. However, there were some traditions that resonated with Barbadians such as goat and donkey races, the Ceremonial Delivery of the Last Sugar Cane, the decorated donkey cart parade, the plantation fairs, calypso competitions and the revival of the custom of burning ‘Mr. Harding’.

The Crop Over Festival of 1974 was organised mainly by the elite and informed by white leisure activities, most of which excluded the wider black Barbadian populace. During the 1970s, visitor arrivals increased but the Crop Over Festival in its early days did not attract the number of tourists to the island that the first Crop Over committee had anticipated. This re-invented tradition brings to the fore the question of whose identity, whose culture and was this a national festival if it did not truly reflect Crop Over’s origins and privilege Afro-Barbadian traditions.

### Decorated Cart Parade

Some of the end of crop festivities associated with the plantation remained as part the Crop Over Festival during the 1970s and 1980s. When this festival was re-introduced in 1974, one of the key elements retained was the decorated cart parade to launch the festival.

In the modern Crop Over Festival, the decorated cart parade symbolically re-enacted dray carts pulling the last load of canes into plantation yards, an activity that signaled the ending of the crop season across the island.

At the opening of the Crop Over Festival in 1974, an estimated 20 000 patrons converged in the capital, the city of Bridgetown to witness “a parade of colorfully decorated donkey carts, led by steel band and drum music, marking the beginning of a month long Crop Over Festival, ’74.”

The parade set off from Queen’s Park in the city shortly after 10 a.m. for their 90-minute journey through the city.



Julian Marryshaw



Emile Straker

Drummers from the Barbados Landship “Director” and Elks Owl Steel band, provided the music for the parade.

In this way, the drum which was pivotal to Crop Over celebrations of the past was kept alive through the masquerade and performance of landships. Eleven donkey carts sponsored by several businesses were judged en route to the Garrison Savannah. Contestants of Miss Barbados Queen of the Crop were also in the procession.

At first, the floats were sponsored by hotels but the event grew to include the participation of local designs, signaling that Barbadians meant that the parade belonged to the people, as it did during the days on the plantation.

In 1975 and 1976, the finishing point of the parade was switched to Pelican Village in Bridgetown, St. Michael.

Into the 1980s, the decorated cart parade remained one of the most popular events at Crop Over as individuals, businesses, schools and communities portrayed themes to win prizes. Winners included businesses such as Mount Gay Distilleries emerging victorious in 1980 depicting Barrel of Fun and the Paradise Beach Hotel won in 1982 with The Garden of Paradise. Cecil Grant was the winner in 1985 with the Cotton House and the Barbados Dance Theatre earned first place in 1986 depicting Fish, Fowl and Flowers.

The decorated cart parade which celebrated the ingenuity of Barbadians who showcased creations that paid homage to the island’s history and cultural and natural heritage.

This parade provided a space for the retention of this plantation tradition. Though not done on individual plantations as was the case in the past, the format of parading through the streets of Bridgetown allowed



From left, Mc Donald “Mighty Grynner” Blenman, Charles “Romeo” Smith and Darcy “Ras Isley” Small.

Barbadians from all walks of life the opportunity to participate whether creatively as competitors or as spectators.

\*Excerpted from the article, “The Crop Over Festival: Re/Inventing Tradition in Post-Independence Barbados”, which appeared in the Journal of the Barbados Museum & Historical Society, issue LXVI 2021 . Reproduced with author’s permission.

The full bibliography and references can be seen in the Journal of the Barbados Museum & Historical Society, Issue LXVI 2021.

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# Crop Over nostalgia through an Economist's eyes

By Keisha Blades

**S**INCE the 18th century, the Crop Over Festival has captivated Barbados annually, typically taking center stage for several weeks and culminating in August.

Originally marking the end of the sugar cane harvest, Crop Over has evolved into one of the island's most significant cultural events. For myself and many others, Crop Over is more than a festival; it is a deep-rooted tradition reflecting Barbados' rich cultural heritage.

It has become a shared identity, uniting all who immerse themselves in this unique, dynamic mosaic of experiences. More than just a cultural spectacle, Crop Over is a major economic driver.

It attracts a flood of regional and international visitors, generating substantial revenue. According to then Prime Minister Freundel Stuart in a 2012 article by the Barbados Government Information Service (GIS), Crop Over brings in around BDS\$80 million, making it a significant revenue earner even during a recession. As Crop Over celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, I feel a wave of nostalgia along with a desire to share my perspective through an economist's lens. Join me as I delve into the diverse perspectives on the festival, ranging from the sentimental to the economic.

## The Sentimental Perspective

My earliest memories of the festivities encapsulate pulsing sweet soca music, the annual tradition of the open-air Bridgetown Market with numerous stalls selling intricate local handmade crafts, aromatic foods, and refreshing drinks/snowcones, a multitude of lively fetes, and the Visual Arts Festival and its exhibitions showcasing Barbadian heritage through dance, music, and theatrical performances.

The highlight was the colourful parade of elaborate costumes glimmering in the sunlight, on Grand Kadooment, the grand finale of the festival.

As a child, I fondly recall watching my mother adorned in exquisite costumes, eagerly anticipating the moment when I could wear the pieces of her ensemble. Each year, receiving these vibrant jewelled and sequined costume pieces became a cherished highlight. Wearing them for my own parade, and the days that followed, felt like Kadooment Day every day.

From then, I knew Crop Over was something I wanted to be part of. From a child masquerading in Kiddies Kadooment to an adult showcasing the most exotic costume designs, it's safe to say that Crop Over has become an integral part of my life.

## The Economist's Lens

As my perspective shifted from consumer to analyst, my view of Crop Over expanded to include a keen interest in its economic dimensions. This vibrant festival serves as a distinct cultural and social platform that has grown in significance, continually generating opportunities and stimulating economic activity across various sectors.

Local vendors and artisans reap significant benefits as the festival provides a platform to showcase and sell their goods. This creates a ripple effect, stimulating various sectors of the economy and offering numerous job prospects, from retail to event planning and logistics.

The season is also incredibly lucrative for a wide range of creative, skills-based services. It generates income opportunities for musicians, singers, songwriters, DJs, choreographers, dancers, Kadooment bands, costume designers, and make-up artists, among others.

Additionally, the influx of travellers increases the demand for accommodation, specialty foods, beverages, entertainment, retail shopping, guided tours, and transportation.

This economic activity fosters growth and employment across multiple industries. Yet, the dynamic ripple effect typically generated by Crop Over was starkly absent during

the two years it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The contrast was palpable, highlighting just how vital the festival is to the community's economic health. Former Central Bank Governor Mr. Cleviston Haynes emphasized the pivotal role of Crop Over in driving economic activity, foreign exchange earnings, spending, and tourism—the backbone of our economy.

As a result, the consecutive cancellation of Crop Over had a profound impact, leading to substantial annual revenue losses across various sectors and further slowing down the country's economic recovery.

This period was characterized by a careful weighing of pros and cons, with efforts focused on navigating the pandemic cautiously despite its significant economic repercussions. The next year, in his economic review for January to June 2022, former Governor Haynes reiterated the positive impact of Crop Over, saying, “Even without an influx of visitors, Crop Over generates significant economic activity. The events over the past few weeks show that these festivities positively impact the economy, and I expect this will contribute to overall growth for the rest of the year.” As expected, the Central Bank of Barbados' Review of Barbados' Economic Performance for 2023 reported an estimated growth of 4.4 percent. This growth was primarily driven by tourism, “bolstered by the vibrant revival of the Crop Over festivities”, among other factors (Central Bank of Barbados, 2024).

### The Intersection of Sentimentality and Economics

When it comes to decision-making in festival planning, pricing, and marketing, economic considerations play a pivotal role. Organizers must strike a delicate balance between honouring the event's historical and emotional significance while ensuring it remains financially sustainable.

This balance is not always easy to achieve, as decisions about ticket pricing, sponsorships, and marketing strategies can profoundly impact attendance and community engagement. Finding this balance has grown increasingly challenging due to a myriad of unforeseen events such as geo-political conflicts, natural disasters, climate change, elevated foreign interest rates, and technological disruptions caused by cyber-attacks. In a recent IMF Working Paper, Cevik and Gwon (2024) asserted, “the impact of weather shocks on supply chains and inflation dynamics is likely to become more pronounced with accelerating climate change.” For Crop Over consumers, this means inflation continues to chip away at their purchasing power, making it harder to keep up with rising costs.

For Crop Over suppliers, this situation forces a tough



Art and craft on sale at Bridgetown Market.



Food vendor at Bridgetown Market.

choice: either absorb the additional costs themselves or pass them on to consumers. Additionally, finding sponsors becomes increasingly difficult as they too are faced with constrained budgets.

In the realm of festivals and cultural celebrations, conflicts often arise between the desire to preserve tradition and the drive to maximize economic returns. Traditional practices and rituals may clash with modern economic realities, leading to tough decisions about whether to adapt or compromise cherished customs for commercial success. After half a century, Crop Over has flourished and transformed, now poised to truly reach its full potential. With this in mind, stakeholders understand the importance of moving to a route featuring wider roads, ample space for vendors and spectators, and a layout that can be efficiently managed by the police and defence force. This was highlighted by Jason Thompson, President of the Barbados Association of Masqueraders. These decisions aren't just about the merriment of the masqueraders; they

also focus on the economic well-being and livelihood of the vendors. This is particularly crucial since vendors were hit hard in 2021 when the route was moved to the ABC highway.

In essence, the intersection of sentimentality and economics in festival management underscores a complex interplay of values, priorities, and practical considerations. Successfully navigating this intersection requires a nuanced understanding of both cultural significance and economic dynamics, ensuring that the festival not only survives but thrives in the face of evolving challenges.

### Finding Balance

Experiencing Crop Over from a consumer's perspective is a joyous dive into a cherished tradition. However, an economic analysis offers a different lens. Behind the scenes, there's a complex web of financial considerations—budgeting, pricing strategies, sponsorship deals, and logistical costs. While consumers revel in the festivities, organizers grapple with balancing emotional resonance and economic viability. A balancing act that is no small feat. From ticket prices to vendor fees, every decision impacts the festival's financial health and sustainability.

### Reflection

Reflecting on my experiences, my view of Crop Over has evolved. Initially, I was captivated purely by the sensory delight and emotional connection.

Over time, as I've come to understand the economic intricacies, I appreciate the festival's resilience and adaptability even more. It is a complex economic entity requiring meticulous planning and strategic financial decisions to thrive.

Crop Over epitomizes the heart and soul of Barbados, showcasing our creativity, and community spirit. Its continued success hinges on our ability to innovate while preserving its unique essence.

More than just a festival, Crop Over celebrates our identity and enduring spirit. By navigating future challenges and opportunities, we can ensure it remains a beloved tradition for generations to come.

*Keisha N. Blades is an economist with a profound passion for economic development, gender equality, climate change, and climate resilience. Keisha holds a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Economics and Finance and a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Financial and Business Economics, both from the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.*

# An African-Barbadian Effigy:

# Bring back

By Dr. Marcia Burrowes

“Should he be beaten to a pulp? Should Harding dolls be given out to Barbadians to do what they like with them? Whatever your views, they are welcomed by the Ministry of Culture”.

In 1983, the Ministry of Culture faced a formidable task; how to end Crop Over without Mr. Harding. Burnt for a mere nine (9) years in independence, the African- Barbadian effigy had been summarily banned. Organisers sought an alternate source of closure; that year they opted to bury, not burn him, at the Garrison Savannah.

John Wickham commented:

The country is now faced with a burning problem. What to do with Mr. Harding? The gentleman was dead and buried ... He was artificially resurrected, a feverish kiss of life reviving him for the purpose of annual cremation signalling the end of carnival bacchanal. ... it was a dangerous resurrection that was achieved.

From circa 1782 to the 1960s, Crop Over was celebrated on plantations between April- August and Mr. Harding was central to festivities. As African-Barbadian masquerade, the effigy of Mr. Harding was burnt for hundreds of years during slavery and emancipation.

Made of dried banana leaves and grasses, he represented the planter, or overseer, who was cruel

to his plantation labourers. Or he symbolized the dreaded months after crop/end, when work was scarce. “His burning became a safety valve through which the slaves could express their vicarious aspirations of independence and freedom with relative impunity,” whether he was an identifiable individual remains unknown. Communal negative energies were released with his burning, encouraging a positive re/birth.

In 1974, Harding was “artificially resurrected”. Re/Designed as spectacle, the former diminutive figure now stood at 20 feet and was ominous.

The basic materials used in the production of Mr Harding were deal and pine. His head and pipe are of mahogany, while the hat is provided by a painted salt-meat pail.”

The effigy was dressed in a suit.

Historically Mr. Harding represents the plantation system and its representative, the planter, the sugar baron. In the day when the tradition started, hardly a black man owned a plantation. Hardly a black man was called “Mister” either.

Flames leaping 20 ft created spectacle; “a dangerous resurrection.” Protests followed.

Duh burn Mr. Harding agen dis year but I tink duh should done wid

# Mr Harding

Calyponians,  
historians,  
directors and  
ministers of  
culture  
have called  
for  
his return.

dat, 'cause mo bottles an' stones get pelt agen dan John read bout.

In the 1980s, an insidious culture of banning prevailed and Mr Harding was banned. Myriad readings regarding race and colour arose, with segments of the elite and middle classes reportedly against the burning.

Many years have passed. Harding has been displayed in fireworks, but not burnt by the state. Calyponians, Historians, Directors and Ministers of Culture have called for his return.

I will be pushing for innovation this year. Our children have no concept of who Mr. Harding was so who will design the new Mr. Harding? Who will modernise our folk characters?

In the Independence period, the controversies around Mr. Harding highlighted the tensions of culture for economic development versus culture as ancestral memory.

In the new republic, let's confront the dilemma and let Mr. Harding burn!

1 "How Can We Deal with Mr. Harding?" *The Daily Nation*, 7 April 1983.

2 John Wickham, "The Disposal of Mr. Harding", *The Nation*, 17 April 1983.

3 Wickham.

4 "Here comes Mr. Harding", *The Nation*, 1 July 1983.

5 "Done de Crop Over", *The Nation*, 8 July 1979.

6 Wickham.

7 Lickmout Lou, "Bare Confusion at Kadooment", *The Nation*, 6 July 1979.

8 John King as quoted, "Big plans for Crop Over", *Weekend Nation*, 3 January 2020.



# King and Queen of the Crop



Francine Cumberbatch, first female awardee of the “Most Outstanding Sugar Worker” introduced in 2017.



Cedric Eastmond, first male winner of the inaugural “Most Outstanding Sugar Worker”.

By Michelle Springer

In 1976, the Festival organisers added a new element to the festivities by introducing the tradition of crowning a King and Queen of the Crop at the Ceremonial Cutting of the Last Cane, which later evolved into Ceremonial Delivery of Last Canes, the event that opened the season of celebrations.

This award was presented to two exceptional cane cutters who cut and piled the highest tonnage of canes in the given year.

The winners received trophies and monetary prizes from the major sponsor, Barbados Sugar Factories Limited, as well as additional gifts from other corporate sponsors such as grocery vouchers, home appliances

**Repeat winners of the King and Queen of the Crop Grantley Hurley (left) and Judy Cumberbatch.**

and furnishings, clothing, and jewellery. Other prizes included a year’s worth of eggs and poultry and payment of utility bills, gallons of paint, staycations, cruises, airline tickets, savings accounts at commercial banks, health and medical insurance, and cable television services.

Hilda Richards was the first Queen to receive this honour. She hailed from the Colleton Plantation in St Peter. Her King counterpart was David Blackman from Edgcombe Plantation, St Phillip.

The selection process was overseen by officials from the sugar industry on the invitation by the NCF to participate.

Plantations were requested by the Barbados Agricultural Management Company Ltd. (BAMC) - formerly known as

Barbados Sugar Industry Limited - to provide the total tonnage of their most skilled male and female cane cutters who were assigned to work independently.

The BAMC then gathered all the submissions and selected the best performers to be sent to the National Cultural Foundation.

Grantley Hurley and Judy Cumberbatch, from Rock Hall Farm in St Peter, were recognised in 2016 for their impressive reign as the King and Queen of the Crop.

Hurley held the title for a remarkable 14 years, while Judy’s reign lasted an impressive seventeen years.

In modern times, mechanical harvesters were introduced in the industry thus reducing the number of manual cane cutters in the

fields. Those transformations in the industry brought about changes in the allocation of the top accolades from what previously existed between 1976 and 2016.

In 2017, with the support and endorsement of industry officials, the category ‘King and Queen of the Crop’ was replaced by ‘Most Outstanding Sugar Workers’, male and female, where the selection process remained the determination of the BAMC. Cedric Eastmond, an expert pan boiler for over 40 years and Francine Belgrave, the industry’s lone female electrician for 18 years, received the inaugural award. Both were workers at the Portvale Sugar Factory.



Nigel Harper

# From plantation fair to Grand Kadooment



By Ricky Jordan

His life ranged from interests in Barbadian sport and trade unionism to government policy, but when Nigel Oslo Harper sipped from the artistic stream that had begun to flow via the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) in 1973, it whetted his appetite for culture and signalled the development of Crop Over as we know it today.

“At the time I was a civil servant and worked as assistant secretary to Prime Minister Errol Barrow (the Right Excellent National Hero). Jeannette Clark (writer, dramatist and cultural enthusiast) and her husband Arden Clark brought a proposal to the Ministry for the inauguration of NIFCA,” Harper, now 88, recalled.

Noting also that the then Permanent Secretary Freddie Forde had previously met with the Clarks, but soon left to attend a conference in Nigeria, Harper said that with Independence 1973 approaching, the responsibility for the NIFCA proposals fell on him.

“I spoke to the Prime Minister and he said, ‘You are a civil servant. You know what to do with it’, so I took the written proposal, spoke to (arts aficionados) Jean Holder and Cynthia Wilson whom I knew, and they helped to put it together”.

Having got a taste of administration beyond the PM’s office, Harper decided to move to the Ministry of Sports where he filled the then vacant post of Chief Sports Officer.

“People including E.A.V. ‘Foffie’ Williams, (Sir) Everton Weekes, O.M. Robinson and others (illustrious former sportsmen) worked in the sports department and it was thought that one of them would fill the role ...but after I showed an interest, the Public Service Commission found my interpretation and outlook on the development of sport most interesting and decided to give me the chance,” Harper stated.

However, another change was destined, and this time against his will.

“I went with my fastness and wrote an article in the Press on the Common Entrance Examination, but little did I know that my brother Dr. Rameses Caddle and Frederick ‘Sleepy’ Smith were vying to be successor to the PM. Sleepy got vexed and said he did not want me to work with the Sports Department which was under the Ministry of Education at the time. The issue ended up even being mentioned in Parliament,” he recalled.

“It really had nothing to do with me (personally), it was because of a struggle between Sleepy and Rameses...so I was moved. They couldn’t fire me but they moved me from the sports department into another area where I did the general run-of-the mill.”

In 1976 the Barrow administration lost the general election, and fortuitously (Sir) Louis Tull, a best friend of Harper since their daily treks from Carrington Village to Harrison College, became the Minister responsible for education and culture. He called on Harper to head the fledgling cultural department.

Meanwhile, two years prior tourism advisor Julian Marryshaw had led the formation of a festival signalling the end of the sugar crop, and Tull asked Harper to take over this.

“One of the first things I told Louis Tull was that I could not do Crop Over how Marryshaw did it, because it was basically a donkey cart parade. I got together all of the people who had been working with Marryshaw, so I did not start Crop Over and it was not like it is now. I brought people together like John and Esmee Wickham, Cynthia Wilson, Jean Holder from the NIFCA days and others.”

Emphasising that the creation of the new-look Crop Over was a team effort by Marryshaw’s committee along with his two department staffers, Omowale Stewart and Beverley Lashley, Harper’s emphasis was on the sugar plantations while proposing uniquely Bajan events like “kadooment” and “cohobblopot”.

“Omowale was my point man because I wanted the festival to reflect the sugar cane industry so he had a good idea of what costumes should look like.... My idea of Crop Over also was that it should be a month-long affair in June, but at the time I proposed this, St. Vincent was having its carnival, which I did not know.



(Photos compliments Nation Publishing)

“The two governments discussed it and we moved ours to July. So said, so done. Believe you me, it was the best thing that ever happened to Crop Over because they were later able to expand it with the Emancipation celebrations and so on. I was not involved in the Emancipation celebrations, but it was easy to fit into Crop Over,” he explained.

Harper, who will celebrated his 89th birthday on July 4, recalled, “For the ceremonial delivery of the last canes, the Government would normally have invited the Anglican Church, but I invited Archbishop Granville Williams and his entourage to be central to the festival. I had not yet become a Member of the Sons of God Apostolic Church but that was how i started. I had always admired the Sons of God!”

Next, Harper and the committee produced plantation fairs every Saturday of July, starting with Spencer’s in Christ Church, then onto Colleton in St. John, Vacluse in St. Thomas and Mount Gay in St. Lucy.

“The structure of those fairs included – and this was my idea – letting the average people get an opportunity to make a penny, so we had different events where we allowed hawkers and so on,” he noted.

His conclusion was that if Crop Over was indeed to be a festival, it could not be a one-day thing.

“I wanted to expand and include the average person. The events, therefore, included the Ceremonial Delivery of the last Canes, plantation fairs, and Bridgetown Market every Saturday to which the merchants objected. I got lashes, man. I am lucky that i survived. Maybe that’s why I survived,” he chuckled.

“The merchants complained because the first time we had it, it was on Broad Street. They complained to Tull so he asked me if I could find somewhere else to stage it. The second place was Pelican Village and then eventually we put it together on the Harbour Road.

“We were moving Bridgetown Market further and further away from Bridgetown, you see. Of course, the Government started to spend money on it as well, and although the Public Service Commission was told that it was a burden on the government, I pressed on,” he added.

“All of the events were crowded. I thought some people would have scorned it, but they liked the new outlook. The committee, they were the ones who produced these events. Crop Over took off. The only unpleasantness was that in the first year Government



gave me \$80 000 and I overspent to about \$101 000, and the then permanent secretary spoke about it.”

The first Kadooment saw revellers parading from the National Stadium to the Garrison Savannah where a 20-foot effigy, Mr. Harding, was the object of a competition whereby anyone who could have knocked off its head would win a prize. This too proved controversial and led to the moving of the parade from the Garrison to its present venue where the effigy eventually ceased to exist.

Controversy, though, was appeared to be Harper’s middle name.

“I was always controversial, but I never forced my will. I had a lot of cooperation from the upfront people in the arts. They didn’t have anything to criticise, and if they did criticise it, they wouldn’t have had the authority. I had the Government behind me. There was an event every day, including Sunday. It was a real festival, and it hasn’t turned back.”

On being told the Bridgetown Market would be moved back to The City this year, he Harper said, “Brilliant idea! That’s good because it prevents things from getting stale and interest falling off.”

He added, “Crop Over has been a very good thing for Barbados. Whoever have not been back home for ages have been coming back, the tourists come, things have been very good. It has lasted 50 years.”

In terms of featuring more events, he said, “Fore day Morning Jam, for instance, I did not think of that. That was an innovation! I think Barbadians are afraid to be original. They do not give things a try and see how it comes off, but they must accept that how it comes off depends on Barbadians.

“I do not think we would have had a Crop Over like the one we have if I was not there,” he said matter-of-factly. “We’ve had 50 years of the ceremonial delivery of the last canes featuring Granville and company. We’ve had Kadooment. What saddened me was when they got rid of Cohobblopot because, as the name suggests, it was to put together all of the different components into one, so we had folk groups and other artists.”

Does he therefore believe that Crop Over today is only about calypso and soca? “Nah, as a matter of fact, we’ve long had room for visual artists at Queen’s Park Gallery.”

And what about private promoters holding a gamut of shows during the season? “The more, the better. The National Cultural Foundation cannot do everything.”

And in relation to the festival’s musical showpiece, Pic o de Crop, Harper says calypsonians truly came into their own.

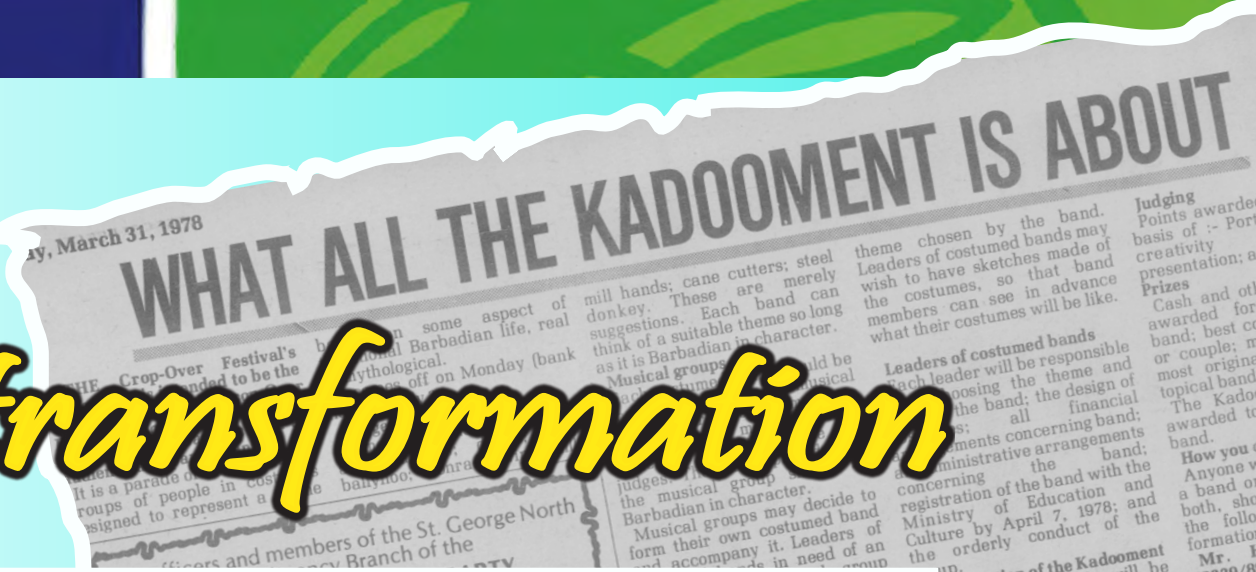
“Plastic Bag (The Most Honourable Stedson Wiltshire) met me once and said he wanted to meet me for so long and said, ‘Had it not been for you, I don’t think I would have been known. Gabby (The Most Honourable Anthony Carter) certainly came into his own.”

So why did he leave culture? “I didn’t leave. They took it away from me. Tom Adams and the Government saw me as an adversary because my brother was a politician and former Minister.”

With that behind him, though, Harper is confident that he did every job to the best of his ability, whether in sport, culture, the labour union sector where he was a fearless firebrand, and as a deputy consul to Canada after his retirement.

“I think I had got a footing in the psyche of Barbados,” was how he put it. “There’s no Barbadian who can say he doesn’t know who Nigel Harper is, but they didn’t know the battles and the fights I had to keep things focused on the average Barbadian.”

# Activism & Crop Over's transformation

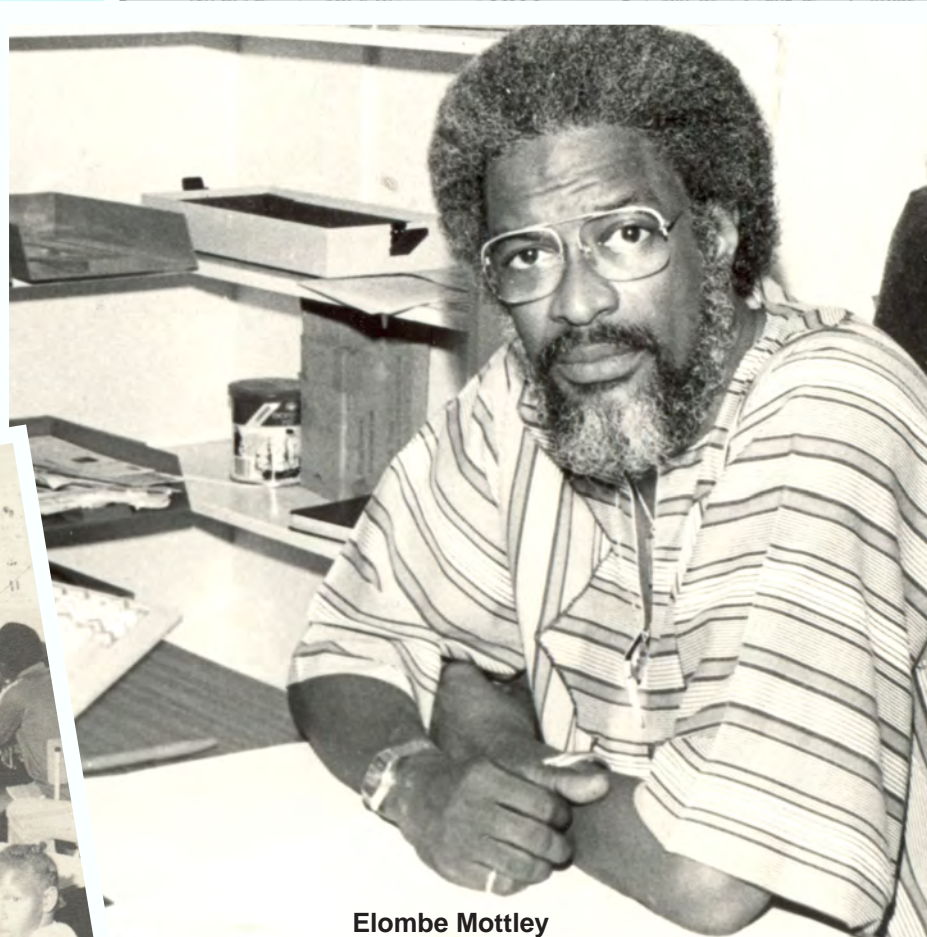


By Michelle Springer

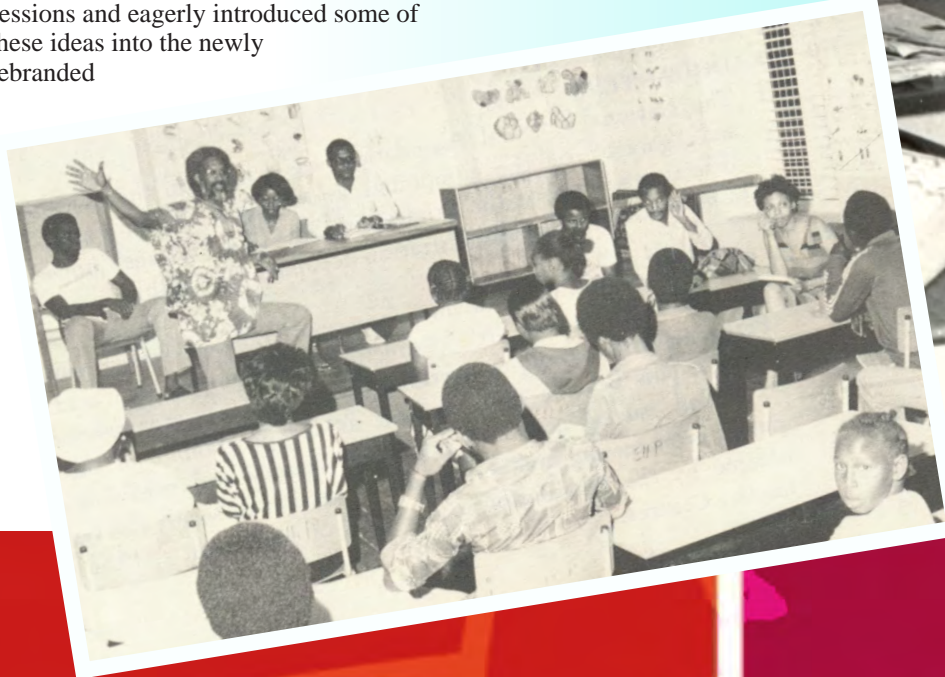
In the 1970s, Government determined that there was a need to attract more international tourists to the island during the summer months. Public Relations Specialist with the then Barbados Board of Tourism, Julian Marryshaw, set up a Crop Over Committee with the mandate to revive the island's summer festival.

It is widely believed that Marryshaw was inspired by the concept after discussions with cultural stalwart and activist Elton 'Elombe' Mottley, now the Most Honourable, who had conducted research on early plantation Crop Over and had shared his findings with other members at the then thriving cultural action group, Yoruba Yard.

Marryshaw attended several of these "reasoning" sessions and eagerly introduced some of these ideas into the newly rebranded

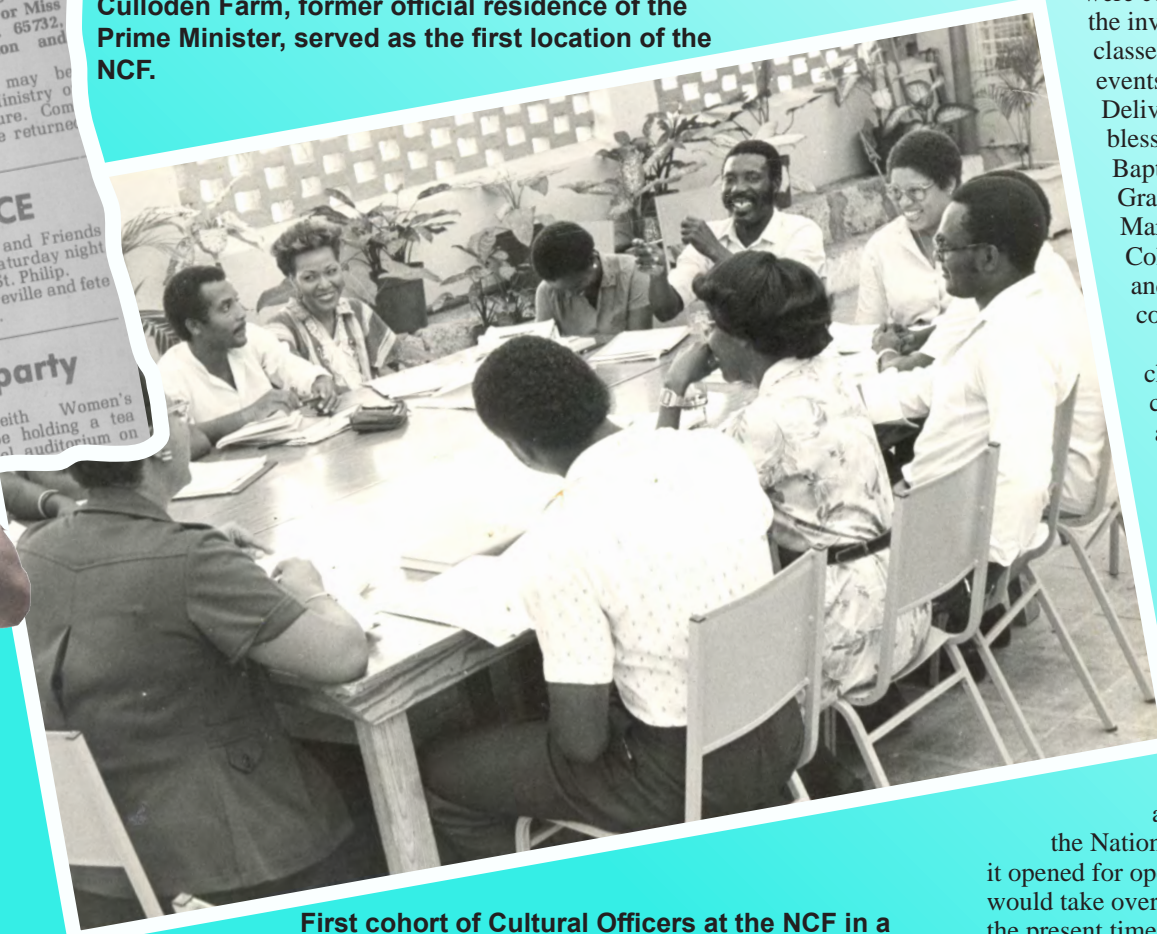


Elombe Mottley





**Culloden Farm, former official residence of the Prime Minister, served as the first location of the NCF.**



**First cohort of Cultural Officers at the NCF in a programming meeting circa 1984.**

festival.

Organisation of the Festival shifted to the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1978 when cultural affairs officer, Nigel Harper chaired the Crop Over Committee. He invited Mottley to assist in the planning. Both were fierce nationalists and Pan-Africanists who agitated for the inclusion of the Afro-Barbadian masses as participants in shaping the Festival, where previously they were relegated to the role of mere spectators and bystanders.

This advocacy brought about policy changes in the staging of the events that were community based and solicited the involvement of the black working-classes from planning to execution; events such as the Ceremonial Delivery of the Last Canes and the blessing of the canes by the Spiritual Baptist leader, the late Patriarch Granville Williams, Bridgetown Market; Grand Kadooment; Cohobbopot; Baxter's Road Mall and the Pic-O-De-Crop calypso competition.

In 1982, Mottley took over as chair of the Crop Over planning committee. Immediately he set about recording the calypso tents for radio broadcast to ensure the widest possible reach.

Another important intervention was the establishment of the Festival Band, constituted by some of the island's finest musicians, to back calypsonians at the Pic-O-De-Crop Competition, semifinals and finals. Mottley was appointed the first Director of

the National Cultural Foundation when it opened for operation in 1984, the entity that would take over the running of the Festival to the present time.

Within its first year of operation the Foundation, under Mottley's stewardship, emerged as an agency that took on the mandate of education, facilitating holistic cultural development of black working-class people and coordinating programming at the community level.

Working directly with community centres and groups was central to its operational mandates.

In the first year the NCF established programmes in the visual arts, costume design and the performing arts with some 236 groups across 111 communities. These workshops were also training platforms for artists and organisers to participate in the national festivals, Crop Over and NIFCA which the NCF has continued to manage since its opening.

In many cases, workshop participants were included in Crop Over initiatives such as Grand Kadooment and Kiddies/Junior Kadooment; Junior Monarch; the Farley Hill Concert; the first iteration of a visual arts and craft exhibition and Pangalang, the Steelpan and Tuk Band competition associated with the Decorated Cart Parade in the late 80s.

The Festival has seen the emergence and growth of other community, heritage, and family-oriented events since the 80s to today. These include Bajan Culture Village, Crop Over Visual Arts Exhibition, Farley Hill Concert, Read In!, Plantation Feast, Crop Over Promenade in Queen's Park, the Folk Concert, Party Monarch, Pan Pun De Sand, Pandemonium, and a range of heritage tours.

These aspects of the festival are a result of the efforts made by Harper and Mottley to reimagine a festival that prioritises the Barbadian people and culture first, while also welcoming and encouraging participation from everyone else.

\*The Most Honourable Elton Elombe Mottley was bestowed the Order of Freedom of Barbados, the highest national honour in the 2022 Independence Day Honours List.

# REFLECTIONS: The African-ness in Crop Over

By Ricky Jordan

**A** man who was destined to be focal in the music that drives the national festival today sees Crop Over as an energy source that brought out the colonially subsumed African-ness in Barbadians from Day 1.

“I see Crop Over as a liberating force for the arts in Barbados and Barbadians’ consciousness in terms of their image and who they are,” says Adisa ‘Aja’ Andwele, in reflecting on the 50 years since the event was revived to signal the end of the sugar crop and the revelry that expressed relief from the crop’s back-breaking toil.

It was in 1974, as a curious teenager seeing the festival’s first decorated donkey cart parade in Queen’s Park, that he strolled from his home in River Road and joined the event. As the display of carts and floats proceeded from the Park up Constitution Road, turned right, passed the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, made its way

down River Road, Fairchild Street and the Wharf Road before ending at Pelican Village, music played, people joined, and people danced.

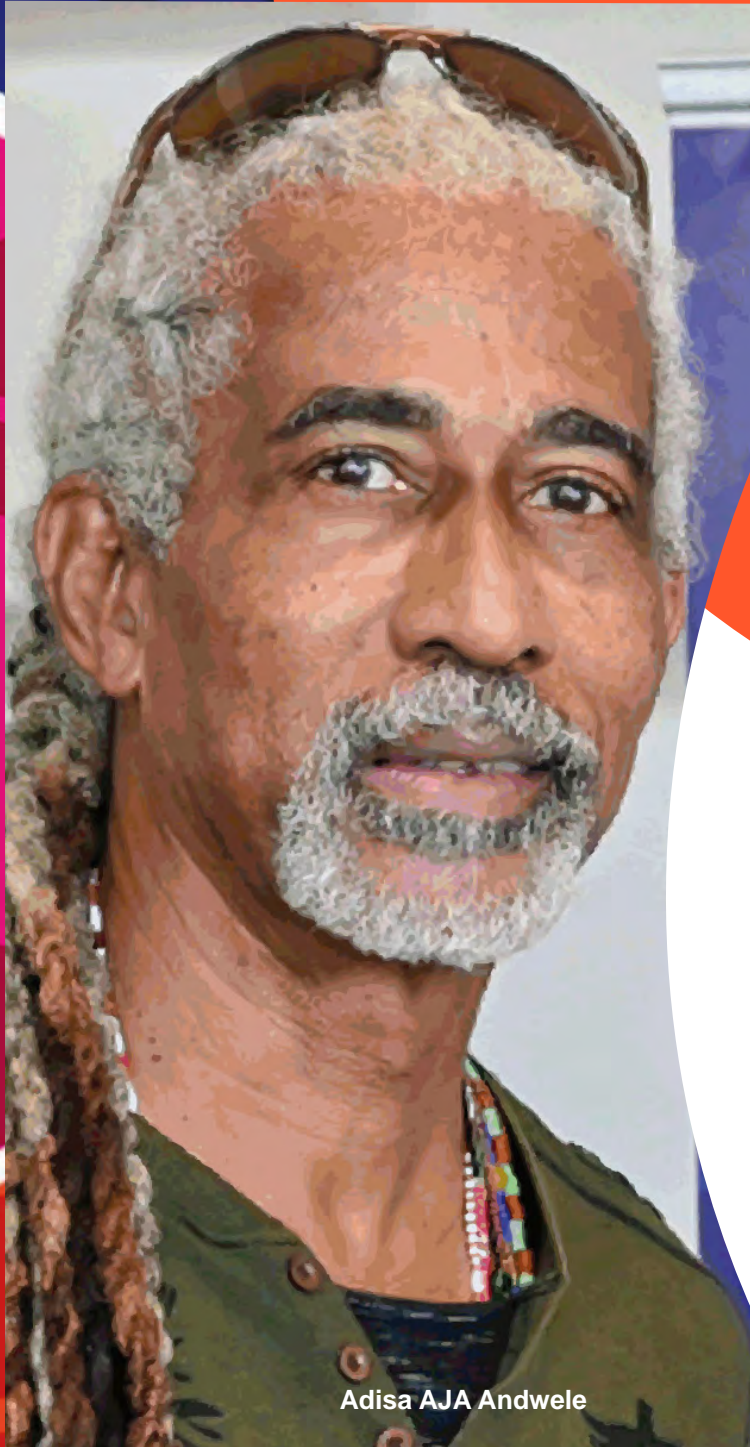
“Why it was significant to me as a 17-year-old Combermere student and what has stayed with me was that the crowd turned it into a kind of road march.

“At the time Barbados had no carnival; carnival had stopped in the previous decade, so it was a release for many of us to jump on the road. That was what it was! I can’t begin to tell you what it felt like, as we went on and people joined.

“My analysis of it later when I started to write was that it seemed to have been hijacked. The people took control, and it was a freeing up, which was supposed to be what the original Crop Over represented; freeing yourself from hard times,” Aja described it.

## Captivated

He was captivated and instantly joined the wave of Barbadian artistic expression that had been simmering



Adisa AJA Andwele

with NIFCA 'but had not fully reached its cultural independence despite political Independence in 1966.

In fact, the cultural movement at the dawn of the 70s, which included Jackie Opel's creation of the spouge beat, the art of Fielding Babb and the DePam movement seemed, in Aja's words, to take Independence by the collar and say, "We got to find a way to become we!"

Therefore, as band shows attracted adult crowds and fledgling calypso showcases were hosted in the schools, this drew Aja further into the swirl of the burgeoning festival.

During a calypso show in the Major Noott hall, he watched Destroyer, his cousin Dragon, Grynner and others on stage. It was an event that coincided with his foray into learning the trombone during his final year at Combermere, and from there his late musical leanings led him to join three of the numerous bands on the circuit – Lunar 7, the Canons and Buccaneers – before helping to form Creative Sounds.

"Then this guy came to us to borrow our sound system for the semifinal of the calypso competition at the Pepperpot, and that was when I realised calypso had that level of organisation and competition, (though) the audience was not big. This was around 1976-77."

Despite the Caribbean-wide popularity of spouge, it was calypso that jumped onto the Crop Over bandwagon and created the marriage with which Aja remains fascinated.

"Based on reliable sources I heard that Dragon had approached Crop Over organisers and suggested a link with Crop Over," he recalled.

"When that happened, it was a natural marriage which led then to Kadooment... Crop Over was making cultural expression legal, Crop Over seemed to be cutting off the chains. Calypso then took



off with Liar helping calypso to explode, with his hit song Liar Sweet."

Creative Sounds joined that explosion as they played with the Banks truck on the road in 1979, playing Gabby's Tune o-de-Crop-winner, Burn Mr Harding.

"So now I was involved as a musician, and in 1982 Gabby came and asked us to play in Battleground calypso tent. That was the year of Jack," he said, pausing for effect at memories of this extremely popular hit whose feel only Creative Sounds could capture, and which sent waves across the Caribbean.

Black Barbadians for their stolen patrimony, had followed the previous year's hosting of Carifesta, Adonijah's Tun-O-De-Crop hit Rock In Ethiopia, the musical revolution from Yoruba Yard and a veritable unleashing of Barbadian popular musical expression.

By 1982, therefore, the battle of country-versus-town battle via the St. Philip-based Conquerors and the City-based Battleground and others, personified in the well-promoted clash between Red Plastic Bag and Gabby, all added fuel to the calypso fire.

This was the cultural environment in which the then young Michael Richards grew up and led in no small way to the opening of his consciousness, his cultural analysis in newspaper pages, his rhythm poetry, and the changing of his colonial name to Adisa "Aja" Andwele.

While today Aja's outstanding work in show production is his forte, few know it all started with a teenager's curiosity about Crop Over's first decorated cart parade.

"I have now come full circle from a 17-year-old to being producer of Bridgetown Market, Pic-O-De-Crop, Soca Royale which was formerly Party Monarch, and Junior Monarch," he concluded.



Al Gilkes

## REFLECTIONS:

# A uniquely Bajan festival

By Wade Gibbons

**I**f one individual could embody all aspects of entertainment and culture in Barbados, then Al Gilkes is perhaps the most ideal candidate. For more than five decades, Gilkes has been involved in the island's cultural landscape - inclusive of the Crop Over festival - as a musician, masquerader, promoter, journalist, executive, marketer, and simply all things related to entertaining Barbadians in general.

And it all might have never occurred if his father had realised his wish. He wanted Gilkes to be a medical doctor, but an early introduction to music and entertainment ensured the young lad would not be walking around in a white coat, armed with a stethoscope, and tending to the sick. Medicine's loss was culture's gain.

Gilkes said entertainment and the excitement of being involved in cultural activities have been like a

drug to him.

From receiving a gift of a miniature steel pan at age nine, to joining a junior steelband called The Teenagers, while still a fourth-form secondary schoolboy, Gilkes' love affair with entertainment and culture was well underway.

He first worked with the Barbados Advocate where one of his beats was entertainment and that extended overtime to sports and community-related activities. He would also later have a productive relationship with the Nation Newspaper.

Prior to the official return of Crop Over in 1974, Gilkes participated in the annual Barbados Carnival celebrations. He played steelpan on the road and this would later be continued during the Crop Over festival. Indeed, Gilkes was very much a part of the transition from a carnival to Crop Over.

He explained that a deliberate effort was made for the Crop Over festival not to mimic Trinidad and Tobago's carnival or any other carnival. Crop Over was to have its own identity. Gilkes noted that up to 1964

Barbados had a carbon copy of the Trinidad and Tobago carnival that was staged by The Barbados Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) which had commenced in Barbados in the mid-1950s. When tourism officials decided to revive Crop Over activities Gilkes was invited to be a member of the planning committee.

“There was the carnival king and queen competition, road march competition and all the other stuff that related to carnival. The only thing we did not have was Jouvart. What you see now is Foreday Morning which I introduced into Crop Over because I used to go to carnival every year and my biggest enjoyment was jumping jouvert morning.

“I said that I didn’t want to copy the name. I grew up talking about foreday morning so that is what I called it.

### Crop Over designed to bring people

“Our carnival back then used to coincide with the Trinidad carnival. The Jaycees at that time included a lot of Trinidadians who had businesses here, including Maurice Jones who used to run the Empire cinema, the Alis who ran the Globe cinema, and other Trinidadian businessmen,” he recalled.

Gilkes said that bad behaviour on the streets started to affect the carnival negatively and The Jaycees decided it was creating the wrong image for them and they terminated it. He explained that the creation of Crop Over was a tourism initiative designed to bring people to Barbados.

“The planners went around to the various plantations and spoke to persons and tapped into their recollections of the period when the annual crop season ended.

“They then started with plantation fairs which was a translation of what used to happen on the plantations when the crop season was concluded.

“The plantation owners and managers used to kill a few pigs and have this feast for all the workers, get them drunk, because you could get cheap Mount Gay rum then by the barrel,



**Masqueraders at the Jaycees Festival, the forerunner to Crop Over in the 1950s.**

and they would enjoy themselves,” he said.

Gilkes explained that when the Barbados Tourism Authority was trying to generate traffic into Barbados, fortunately American Airlines and British Airways were coming into the island every week.

“The authorities started selling the festival to America and Britain, initially to Barbadians living in those countries who would be glad to have something for which to come home.”

The plan to bring home people was directed

at the Christmas season, but that focus soon evolved to the Crop Over period.

“If you check it, we are still trying to sell Crop Over to tourists. A few tourists come here for Crop Over, but if you go to Trinidad and you see the number of people that go there for Carnival, or to St Lucia, there are tons of people, both returning nationals and tourists,” he said.

Gilkes reasoned that Barbados gets a lot of returning nationals and the tourists’ numbers have increased over the last two years, but still not to the extent that tourism officials and government in general would like to see during the Crop Over period. He said Trinidadians in particular, of the regional component, have caught on to the Crop Over festival.

He credited much of this to the likes of Red Plastic Bag, Ras Iley, Allison Hinds, John King, and the older artistes who performed in Trinidad and Tobago over the years and had recognizable hit songs. He quipped that often when a plane left Barbados to go to Trinidad’s carnival there were more entertainers heading there to perform than regular travellers. That, he said, has helped to bring people from Trinidad to Barbados.

Gilkes paid homage to the likes of calypsonians Gabby, RPB, the late Mighty Dragon, Mac Fingall, and the late Romeo, among others, as the personalities who pushed the Crop Over Festival musically in the early days.

Back in the 1970s, 1980s, apart from the remuneration which performers might get from the Crop Over festival, they were able to make money on the hotel circuit, cruise ships, gigs across the Caribbean and record sales. Gilkes recalled that many of the lead singers in the bands crossed over to do calypso and calypso shows and that gave the festival, as well as their earning capacity much needed impetus. He reminded that Jackie Opel also sang calypso in Barbados prior to his death.

“The return of Crop Over coincided with that spurt of local talent and bands - white bands, poor bands, middle-class bands.

There were bands like The Merry-men, The Sandpebbles, The Staccatos, The Troubadours, The Blue Rhythm Combo, The Escorts, The Revelations, and many more.

“Some switched to singing calypsos and then there were the out and out calypsonians. The guys got a lot of work,” he said.

Among the locations where the season’s fetes were first held included the original YMPC which was later destroyed by fire, the Drill Hall, The Children’s Goodwill League which is now the home of table tennis in the island, Marine House, North Point Surf Resort, Coleridge & Parry and Queen’s Park, to name a few.

Gilkes who has promoted some of the biggest shows in Barbados and brought some of the greatest soul singers and pop groups to Barbados, served as head of the National Cultural Foundation (NCF) – under whose authority the organization of the Crop Over Festival falls – from 1998 to 2008. He said that organizing the festival and being in charge of the NCF called for collective internal efforts and drawing from competent external resources.

He said this made it much easier than if one person or a small group undertook such a massive responsibility.

“These days you have stage people, sound people, lights people, everything one wants in terms of setting up venues, you got people that you can hire,” said Gilkes.

Gilkes concluded that in terms of where Crop Over is today and its future, he would like to see the things that work be retained. He was averse to change merely for the sake of change and especially took exception to route changes for Kadooment Day revelry.

“In all the years I have been going to Trinidad I have never seen the routes changed. If something is working, then, I think we should stick with it”, Gilkes said.

**\*EDITOR’S NOTE: The 2024 Grand Kadooment route change was recommended and agreed upon by bandleaders. It was amended slightly and facilitated by the NCF.**



**OMOWALE STEWART**  
- touched every  
aspect of Crop Over.

## REFLECTIONS:

# Art immitates culture

By Andrea King

**O**mowale Stewart is the quintessential Crop Over man and was there from the very start. He was among the first revelers in the first event of the 50-year-old festival, was the first planner of the first Grand Kadooment, and still very much plays a significant role in the festival today.

It was in 1978 while teaching at the then Garrison Secondary School, that he was invited to produce the first Kadooment for the Ministry of Education and Culture, through which the festival was being managed.

That positioned him on the Crop Over committee with cultural stalwarts including Nigel Harper, Elombe Mottley, Andrea Gollop, Brian Springer, Mark Williams, Trevor Marshall, Mark Maynard, Cynthia Wilson, Ralph Walker, Myrna Squires, and Roy Ward.

“Grand Kadooment was ‘introduced’ to Barbadian society,” Omowale asserts. “Prior to that we would have masquerade at fairs and we had some traditional characters used to come out at Christmas and so forth. But this whole thing of Kadooment, mass on the road, portrayal and so forth, that was introduced in 1978, I was the producer of that.

“I say ‘introduced’ because it was brought and introduced by Elombe (the then director of the NCF). The Minister then was Louis Tull, but Nigel

Harper was the director of the cultural process, and he along with Elombe Mottley and the whole team were brought in to produce the new Crop Over, which had new events and everything.

“That’s when we brought back the plantation fairs, brought back the cart parade, all the new events. That’s when they had the calypso tents, the whole calypso competition was brought back. So, I had the opportunity of working with a fantastic team and that was my formal introduction into the new Crop Over,” he recalled.

Omwale then joined the newly formed National Cultural Foundation (NCF) as Cultural Officer for Visual Arts/Crafts, and his Crop Over portfolio included coordinating the Decorated Cart Parade, Junior Kadooment, King and Queen of the Band competition, Grand Kadooment and the Crop Over Visual Arts and Craft Exhibition, until he left in 1989.

During that time, the multi-talented artist started his 31-year journey as a calypsonian with the moniker ‘Musikal’ in 1983. He rarely competed in the calypso competition, but poured his love for the art form in his writing and composing.

Omwale first designed and produced his own Grand Kadooment Band in 1979, and designed and produced a Kiddies Kadooment band with Dorsie Boyce, for the Bay Primary School. The following year, he designed/produced the Kadooment band ‘CARIFESTA Comes to Barbados’, which took second place in the Band of the Year contest. During 1982 to 1984 he designed and produced three Grand Kadooment bands for Sir Wes Hall, CIBC and Barbados National Bank.

After his NCF stint, from 1989 through to 2004 Omwale was designer/producer for numerous Grand and Junior Kadooment bands, and remains a live broadcaster for CBC TV for these two events, when he is not judging. This year, he is again chief judge for both Kadooment bands. There was a period in Kadooment history when Omwale was king of the costume parades. He is best known as a costume designer for both Barclays and Bartel Kadooment bands, with which he has won Band of the Year at least three times, and placed second or third on other occasions. Other notable bands with which he is associated include The Caskaways, and CIBC.

At one time he had five bands passing through the stadium. He has won Band of the Year on three occasions, with Barclays in 1990 and 1991 and with Bartel in 1998. He also won Band of the Year for Kiddies Kadooment with ‘Children of the Sun’ in 1993.

“I started Crop Over spontaneously,” he reminisces.

“I remember the morning that they brought the first decorated cart parade in 1974 in Bridgetown. That was the first time that they declared Crop Over a festival. A group of



**Above, works by Omwale Stewart. At left, the artist practicing his craft.**

us used to lime together, including Winston Jordan and the deceased artist Ian Walcott and his brother, and we followed the cart down the road.

“I remember that morning we jumped and people sucked the cane from off the cart. And we said “we like this”; we pledged our full support, but we just went for the jump up, and that was my first time. It was new to Barbados having this parade. Basically, it was Trinidad style, and it went all the way down Harbour Road, turned and came up Broad Street to Queen’s Park. So, I have the honour of being there at the

beginning of the actual parade,” Omwale recalled.

Omwale’s contribution to the Crop Over festival was not only through Kadooment. He was the first coordinator of what is now the Crop Over Fine Arts exhibition, and a participant in many years after he left the NCF.

His participation in the Crop Over festival through the years played a significant role in his creative output as a designer, calypsonian and a visual artist. It has also made a tremendous contribution to Barbados’ cultural landscape.

By Gercine Carter

In 1974 donkey carts were a familiar scene on the streets of Barbados, daily moving slowly amidst the hustle and bustle of traffic, ferrying all manner of goods.

It was a mode of transportation novel to the visitor to Barbados, but not to those young guests at the Barbados Hilton who had the opportunity to take Sunday donkey cart rides in the tray of Fitz Brathwaite's donkey cart, as part of the hotel's daily Guest Activities programme.

The children were also used to transport Santa arriving in the same donkey cart loaded with presents for them on Christmas Day.

Therefore the Hilton did not hesitate to get on board when local public relations and marketing consultant Julian Marryshaw approached the hotel to suggest its participation in a novel feature of the Crop Over Festival. He was working on the revival of the festival on behalf of the Barbados Board of Tourism.

The month of June was known to be a slow period for tourism and Government had determined there was a need to attract more tourists to the island in the summer months.

Marryshaw set up a Crop Over Committee with the mandate to revive the centuries-old Crop Over festival.

In his first meeting with the Hilton, he shared that a donkey cart parade was one of the major activities being considered and he proceeded to solicit participation by the Government-owned hotel, which had over the years injected a distinct Bajan flavor into its operation.

The idea of participating in the donkey cart parade was a no-brainer to all the representatives of the departments who sat in on that meeting.

An air of excitement pervaded.

# REFLECTIONS: Donkeys on parade

Needless to say, Brathwaite's donkey cart was everyone's choice to be the Hilton's entry.

Personnel manager, the late Ralph "Packer" Parris, assembled a planning committee comprising the late Brian Cheeseman of the Food and Beverage department, as well as heads of the Activities, Guest Relations and Engineering Departments.

The Hilton was on board - one of the first of the hotels to do so. Other participating hotels included the Holiday Inn, Paradise Beach Hotel and Sam Lord's Castle.

Informed by historical data on the early Crop Over activities on the plantations back in the early times of the festival's origins, a design of the Hilton's donkey cart entry was drawn, with a cauldron of "Rumbullion," the spirited rum concoction consumed by the slaves at Crop Over, and a windmill. Canes, fruit and flowers were other features of the decorated cart.

The hotel took on a buzz as the Engineering department went about constructing the form to be mounted on Brathwaite's cart and as word spread and interest built, staff and guests made frequent trips to the carpenters' workshop in the hotel's grounds to sneak a peek at the progress.

Excitement peaked on the morning of the parade as word spread that "the Hilton

donkey cart" was about to leave. Members of the public and off-duty employees along with members of their families assembled at the front of the Hilton to join the trek from the hotel, along Bay Street and through the streets of Bridgetown, led by the Hilton's "Tuk band".

In Bridgetown thousands occupied every possible vantage point to watch the parade. Broad Street was transformed into a sea of people following the decorated carts, asserting the festival's appeal to the masses.

The reward for those who stuck close to "the Hilton cart" was cup upon cup of "Rumbullion" the delicious rum punch prepared for the supporters. Their cheers reverberated through the streets when the Hilton's cart was announced the winner.

Rapturous celebrations continued when the cart returned to the Hilton, with revelers dancing under the Hilton and Barbados flags fluttering high overhead in the Hilton's front courtyard.

The merriment by guests, employees and public supporters continued on the beach into the night.

The Hilton went on to be the winner of the second Donkey cart Parade.



The Hilton Hotel's decorated donkey cart.

## THE VISUAL ARTS - Part I



By Janice Whittle

It is hard to imagine there was once a time when there was no Visual Arts element in the Crop Over Festival! The National Cultural Foundation under director Elombe Mottley took over the organization of the Festival in 1983 with a Visual Arts component being introduced in 1988. The first two exhibitions were mounted in the Grande Salle of the Central Bank of Barbados.

This marked the beginning of the involvement of the Central Bank's sponsorship by providing a venue for the exhibition.

The first two Crop Over Visual Arts exhibitions were without themes as was the norm with group exhibitions at the time. Themes are now mandatory, which started with the Barbados Light and Power sponsorship of the 1988 competition.

That first exhibition was curated by the first Curator of the Queen's Park Gallery, Ms Lois Brathwaite.

The exhibition took place in Mall

34 on Broad Street. This was an excellent location, attracting shoppers into the gallery.

Paintings of various descriptions and media interpreted the theme 'Under the Bearded Fig Tree'. The choice of this title was based on the tree after which Barbados is said to be named, "Los Barbados". The tree as a perennial factor and source of strength, which could be said to be witnessing cultural revolution in the country. The B L & P (Barbados Light and Power) offered a prize for the 'Best Contemporary Fine Art' which was won by artist Ann Dodson. The art community continued to be divided on the concept of themes however.

After the first three years, there was a hiatus where the Visual Arts exhibition did not take place; this was between 1991 -1993.

### Central bank steps in

The Central Bank Sponsorship began in 1994 when they built on their initiatives from the 80s in providing display space in the Grande Salle for reception of the work, judging and display for several months.

This kind of civic involvement through sponsorship and institutional collecting is common to Central Banks worldwide.

The Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago has established a Museum of their art collection and numismatic collections which may be viewed by the public. Many of Trinidad's most outstanding artists are in the Bank's collection.



Dr. Therese Hatchity



Cultural Officer, Visual Arts  
Rodney Ifill



The

VISUAL

Arts

in

CROP  
OVER

(Photos compliments Barbados  
Government Information Services)

The Exchange Gallery on the grounds of the Central Bank of Barbados is open to the public, where we may see the evolution of currency in Barbados. The Bank has had the foresight to employ a curator, who advises on matters of acquisition, conservation of works, as well as display.

The curator of the collection for most of the existence of the Visual Arts exhibition was Denyse Menard-Greenidge, former Head of the Division of Fine Art at the Barbados Community College. The current curator is Dr Therese Hadchity of the Dept. of Cultural Studies at the University of the West Indies. Rodney Ifill, Cultural Officer for Visual Arts at the National Cultural Foundation coordinated the Visual Arts aspect of the festival for over 20 years.

Many suggestions were put forward by Rodney for the future of Visual Arts in the festival. He focused in some cases on increasing the opportunity for sales for the exhibitors.

An idea implemented by Mrs Denyse Menard-Greenidge, the former curator of the Central Bank of Barbados, which Rodney considered to be highly effective, was to set up a display of Art in the context of an interior.

Borrow furniture from a company who would also benefit from the display and arrange art throughout the room. Persuading hotels to set up cocktail evenings where works of art would be for sale was another innovative ploy. Additional staff would be needed by the Foundation to set up, deliver and man the display in the hotel.

"I believe that we should create a National Day of Art!!! Just as for Agrofest, the Ministry of Education is very cooperative in taking students to Queen's Park for Agrofest, they could be taken to selected locations in addition to Queen's Park and the Central Bank to view the displays.

"There could also be a bus tour of murals; Bridgetown Freedom Park, as well as other sites yet to be identified." Rodney said.

The Central Bank of Barbados has been a leader in institutional collecting. Some of their art collections are displayed in various offices in the building, while others are in storage. To quote Mr. Michael Carrington, who was Acting Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados at the Official Launch of the 2018 Crop Over Visual Arts exhibition:

"The partnership (between the Central Bank and the



**Artwork on display during the Crop Over Visual Arts Exhibition.**

National Cultural Foundation) has been mutually rewarding. Our Artists have stirred our imagination, and daily their works inspire and motivate, not only our employees, but also visitors to our tenth floor, where the majority of our national collection is on display...

For the Artists, the benefits are both tangible and intangible in the forms of prize monies and in the opportunity to exhibit their works as part of the world's sweetest summer festival."

In 2024, under Governor Dr Kevin Greenidge, the Central Bank raised its sponsorship to a phenomenal \$80,000 into the Crop Over Visual Arts.

These contests have been organized to support the Visual Arts, as well as increase the Bank's pictorial assets through the competition. During the history of the exhibition not all of the awards were given every year.

Sometimes it was deemed that no entry fit the criteria. Some of the awards were chosen by the Bank's curator, a panel including Bank personnel, as well as the NCF selected judges. Art and craft teachers formed the core of the jury; there were usually 3-5 artists of diverse backgrounds (craft, sculpture, contemporary and traditional art).

Why should there be a Visual Arts component in Crop Over? The exhibition has shown highly creative ways to interpret Art. In the past, artists from other disciplines, such as Dr John Hunte, dancer and choreographer, have been invited to interpret an entry of his choice in the competition.

It provides an opportunity for artists to make sales to the visiting public, as well as institutional purchases.

Apart from Bridgetown Market, there is sometimes an Art and Craft fair on Central Bank Green where artists may display works for sale.

Over the past three years, the location of the exhibition has been exclusively in the Queen's Park Gallery, where it is curated by the Gallery Curator Oneka Small.

A theme is interrogated in different disciplines, such as two-dimensional works, three-dimensional works and craft. This is presented in three exhibitions of less than a month in the Gallery

space. None of the exhibitions are in the Bank. Some of the work this year has been from the National Collection.

The exhibitions could be used to educate the public in art appreciation. The Foundation has produced art appreciation videos in the past, which may be seen on their website, as well as YouTube.

Themes have given us some very innovative and aesthetically pleasing works. By the same token, some artists, who do not adhere to the theme, might create amazing work, which the public do not get to see! We must continue to reach out to the community by bringing Art to them in locations other than galleries as has been done by the Foundation before; in supermarkets; government offices; jewellery stores; department stores.

Reproductions of selected works could be displayed on buses and billboards to familiarize the public with our national treasures. Of course the artist's copyright would be protected.

What a glorious day it will be when our Barbadian masterpieces acquired through the Crop Over Visual Arts exhibition, are as well known to the public as the 'Mona Lisa' or Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers'? The initiatives suggested, as well as the opening of a National Gallery would make this dream a reality.



# Art is everywhere



By Oneka Small

CROP OVER is the premiere cultural festival in Barbados - period.

Other festivals happen, but none touch more than the sweetest summer festival. The eyes of the world are on 'Bim', magnified in recent times by social media. The island is abuzz with activity from June to August and the pot is sweetened each year with new offerings. Gatherings are small to monumental in scales.

Where is the Art in all of this?

As an artist and curator my goal is to have it everywhere and seen by everyone - period.

Through the lens of 50 year spectacles we can safely say it has maintained its position in prime places, encourage the development in others and evolved with the times.

On the road, costumes and decorated floats continue to be an avenue for showcasing the creativity of some of our best artists and designers.

Art is in our galleries. The Central Bank of Barbados continues to sponsor the Crop Over Visual Arts exhibitions during the season of emancipation at the Queen's Park Gallery, triggered by the opening on African Liberation and ending four months later.

### It's everywhere

In 2024, Art is not only in Queen's Park, it's across the island. It is at the Gallery of Caribbean Art, Frangipani

Gallery, Winifred Cumberbatch Art Gallery, The Centre for Hybrid studies and the Grove Gallery. It is in the open studios. We have over 350 people registered as artists in Barbados. Crop Over expands our markets

Art is in the places we pass, moving through our daily lives. We experience it on the side of buildings as murals or on billboards. Art is in the promotion, marketing and calendars.

There is no event without a flyer – graphic arts are a big deal at this time of year. Creativity gets you seen.

Art is also on the street. Our artists take part in Bridgetown market. The commercial aspect satisfies the taste for memories of the island and festival.

We are portrayed to the world as bright and colourful, vibrant and engaging. The artists bring a vibe and captures the vibes.

Art is in our homes, a very important space for the festival. From family time, to liming, to resting, to partying, to cooking and eating, our homes become a hub. Art is on our walls.

Art is in our phones. It is on parade as wearable Art at many events. Even the untrained eye can tell when a piece of Art enters the room. What better place to promote an idea than on a stage where the gaze of thousands is focused?

Art is on our digital screens.

In a festival where most events come with a high price due to a rising quality of production. The experience of the Art is still free. It remains accessible to all.

The ability to shift a person's consciousness, to make them see and experience an event or emotion anew, or through a different lens, is good Art. We come to the festival for an experience. We come for the Art.

Where do we fit between the rum and the whine?  
Everywhere - period.

The Literary Arts and Crop Over

# Spectacular Storytelling

By ArtsEtc

Each year, Crop Over presents an opportunity for storytelling in Barbados on a spectacular scale. Some stories are told through music and performance, in the kaiso tents and on competition stages. Others are told through the creativity and revelry of Kadooment bands.

But there is another storytelling no less integral or vital to the festival. And it is the nation's literary artists who provide it.

Literary artists are sometimes catapulted into the public eye to help promote a season that is about far more than revelry. Crop Over with its origins in sugar and slavery, and the adjacent Season

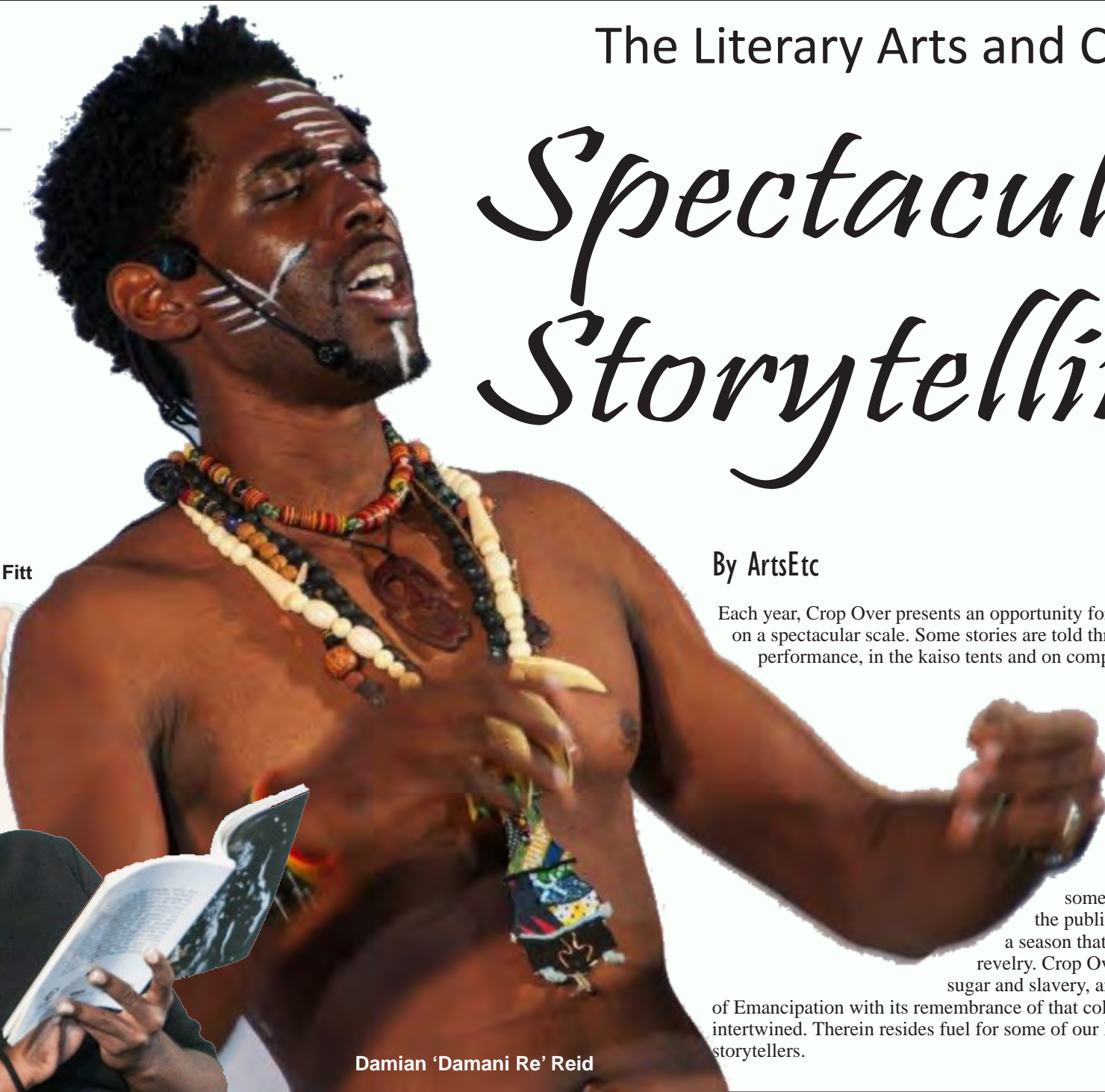
of Emancipation with its remembrance of that colonial history, are forever intertwined. Therein resides fuel for some of our literary and artistic storytellers.



Georgy Fitt



Celia Greaves



Damian 'Damani Re' Reid

Pursuit of their craft year round, in solitude or in collectives, via events and programmes, has fed into the annual festival, culminating on the national stage. Some “cross the floor” to test that craft in calypso tents; others show how the lines of lyrical mastery between calypsonian and poet can blur dramatically.

As observers and commentators, poets and other writers share a common lineage and language with modern-day calypsonians that traces back almost 400 years to the storytellers, minstrels and folksingers of the earliest Crop Overs—and all the way so to a time well before the transatlantic slave trade.

For now, we’re just going back to the early 2000s, to an event called Read-IN!

A year-round NCF programme, Read-IN! took our literary arts into the community one Sunday a month, parish by parish. Venues included Gun Hill Signal Station, the Fisherman’s Pub in Speightstown, Codrington College, and any of the parish branch libraries.

The series offered writers a regular, nurturing showcase for their work. Each year’s programme culminated in a gathering that coincided with the annual festival – and, lo! Crop Over Read-IN! emerged. It developed into a smartly produced, sometimes glitzy, paying event for writers on par with any other show on the festival calendar. Venues expanded to Harrison’s Cave, George Washington House, Tyrol Cot, and Foursquare Heritage Park.

A succession of cultural officers brought cross-platform magic to the national showcase.

In 2014, “In the Spirit” set readers dramatically against a chattel house backdrop in Queen’s Park Steel Shed. The previous year, “Three Sides to Every Story” featured actors’ interpretations of new Caribbean folklore commissioned from Barbadian writers.

Crop Over Read-IN! 2015 was dedicated to the spoken word experience, while an earlier one at Tyrol Cot in 2009 paired writers with musicians and dancers.

At the Barbados Museum in 2016, the cast of writers performed Kamau’s “Negus” as the show’s finale.

In the years immediately preceding COVID, Crop Over Read-IN! took the form of mini festivals or art walks where writers were paired together, or with

visual artists in intimate settings.

Post-pandemic, Read-IN! has re-emerged as Lit Limez. The first one, in 2023, featuring Kerry Belgrave and Cyndi Celeste at Gun Hill, was warmly welcomed.

But connections between Crop Over and our literary artists thrive beyond Read-IN!

Lyrical mastery is rooted in our oral storytelling tradition, which is a cornerstone of our literary tradition. Lil Rick’s compositions have earned him comparisons with Kamau, notably for his engagement with nation language.

Calypsonians such as Adonijah and The Mighty Gabby also write poetry. Musician and spoken word performer Aja has long been involved in the coordination of Crop Over events, while the newer generation of popular spoken word artists is often co-opted to help promote the season.

In the 1990s and 2000s, VOICES: Barbados Writers’ Collective met every month at the Museum. In the run-up to Crop Over, they staged their own calypso competition. At least one member of that collective, Ellyn Stanton (a former Frank Collymore Literary Award winner) went on to compete in mainstream calypso competition as Hurricane Helen.

Poets, writers and spoken word artists who have braved the kaiso arena, if only briefly, include Linda M. Deane, Ridley Greene and Adrian Green.

Pick of the Crop, a romance-suspense novella by author and former literary arts officer Nailah Folami Imoja, published by Heinemann in 2004, took Barbados’ calypso competition as its title and setting. But further confirmation of the prominent role the literary arts play in Crop Over may yet rest with a poet laureate.

Esther Phillips, Barbados’ first ever and appointed in 2018, has placed the plantation and the enslavement witnessed there at the heart of her writing. Given the festival’s origins, and the nesting of Crop Over within the Season

of Emancipation, there is hope and scope for festival planners to embrace and use not only our current laureate, but those still to come.

*ArtsEtc is an independent Barbadian publisher and cultural forum founded in 2003 by authors and literary activists Linda M. Deane and Robert Edison Sandiford. It provides leading and emerging artists and thinkers spaces to be read, seen and heard.*



Linda Deane

DJ Symmons

Carolyn Brathwaite

# Decorated Cart Parade

By Michelle Springer



**W**hen the Crop Over Festival was revamped in the early 70s, events encompassed fancy dress ball, ole mas' competition at Marine House, a dog show, an aero show and gymkhana along with plantation fairs, court yard folk concerts, beauty pageants, and barge shows in the Careenage, featuring local, regional and international artistes.

At the time, several public intellectuals and commentators argued that these events excluded locals and that they were elitist in nature, appealing only to tourists and the upper classes. The donkey cart parade was a notable exception.

First held in 1974 as one of the opening features of the Crop-Over Festival, its aim was to depict some activity related to the sugar industry. It harked back to the days on the plantation when a dray cart was used to haul canes to the mill yard and when they were decorated to mark the end of the harvest and the beginning of the celebrations.

The carts were sponsored corporate entities including some of the main hotels and businesses associated with the tourist industry and vied for prizes ranging from \$500 to \$200.

Oral history accounts of the event made it

clear that while, initially, the intended audience was for tourists, Bajans saw it, loved it and claimed it for themselves. The last large-scale public spectacle resembling a festive cavalcade, took place in the 50s and 60s when the Jaycees staged a Trinidad-styled carnival at Kensington Oval.

## Power of the people

Thousands of people converged on the streets when the cart procession started. Writer, spoken word poet and Pan-African activist, Adisa Aja Andwele recalled the first event.

Adisa: "I was still at school, hundreds and thousands of Barbadians came out. For us, this was no donkey cart parade, this was we carnival. And a whole set of us started jumping behind these floats, because that is what they were.

"BWee (BWIA) had a fantastic float, as well as the Hilton Hotel and other corporate entities. Why that is so vivid in my consciousness is that I witnessed the (re)start of Crop Over and I





saw the power of the People.

“It seemed, the Masses were crying out “we want to express ourselves from a carnival perspective”. They came out and took it over; it was more than it was supposed to be.”

Asked to reflect on why he thought people responded this way, Adisa explained, “I think it was a longing of submerged energies within the bosom of the society that wanted to express itself culturally. Barbados has a history of suppressing its cultural expression, particular from a Black perspective.

“The whole history of slavery was built on that. For whatever reason, the [Jaycees] carnival was stopped in the ‘60s. For almost a decade, there was no carnival in Barbados, where all the other islands had a carnival. There was a longing for that suppressed

culture [of carnival] where the masses just wanted an opportunity, just a glimpse of something called a carnival. That is what transpired back there in 1974.”

Over the years, the scope of this feature was widened and in 1975 it became the Decorated Cart Parade with wider participation and incorporated various types of carts. This was due in part to the declining number of available donkeys and donkey carts on the island.

Floats were also introduced and these were generally carried by large commercial vehicles which tended to overwhelm the smaller animal-drawn carts. This led to a major change in 1982 when the large commercial vehicles were banned and all carts had to be pushed, pulled or animal-drawn.

The Decorated Cart Parade was one of the popular features of the festival and thousands of people lined the streets to witness the gaiety and

colour. In the late 80s, the event was merged with Pang-a-Lang, a steelpan and tuk band competition produced for a brief period.

The route of the parade changed over the years. In 1974, the carts paraded through the streets of Bridgetown wending their way to end at Queen’s Park. Later, it started at the Port Authority and ended at Independence Square. With the inclusion of the Pang-A-Lang competition, the parade started at Independence Square and culminated the Garrison Savannah where the crowds not only gathered to see the carts and floats, but also to witness the musical component of the event.

In later years, the slogan Anything On Wheels, emerged. During the final years it was held, the Decorated Cart Parade started at Independence Square and ended at the Spring Garden Highway, now renamed Mighty Grynner Highway and the National Stadium.



# History of Calypso in Barbados

By Trevor Marshall

**B** Barbados has as proud a history of calypso as any other island in the Caribbean, including Trinidad which is the acknowledged “calypso island”:

Early writers and observers of the practices of Afrikan people subjected to the slave system in this island such as Richard Ligon in the 1650s, Dickson and

Sharp in the 18th century, and George Pinckard in the 19th century all commented on the Afrikan-Barbadian’s love of secular music, and the exciting pulsating rhythms which the latter produced as part of the entertainment which they provided for themselves on the plantations.

Calypso music was played and sung by Afrikan-Barbadians throughout the period of slavery from 1627 to 1838, during which time it was simply known as Afrikan music.

The term ‘calypso’ has come into vogue since the emergence of Trinidad in the 19th century as a foremost calypso island. But Barbadians in the 19th and early 20th centuries gave the name ‘BAN-JUH’ to their own form of this Afrikan music, and the name has stuck ever since, although the term ‘calypso’ is the popular name given to the music wherever it is played throughout the Caribbean and around the world.

## Rich Calypso heritage

Recent research has shown that Barbadian calypso has had a continuity from the slave period to the present, and that the calypso heritage of this island is a rich one, with several outstanding

pieces of music emerging out of Barbados during the long period of settlement.

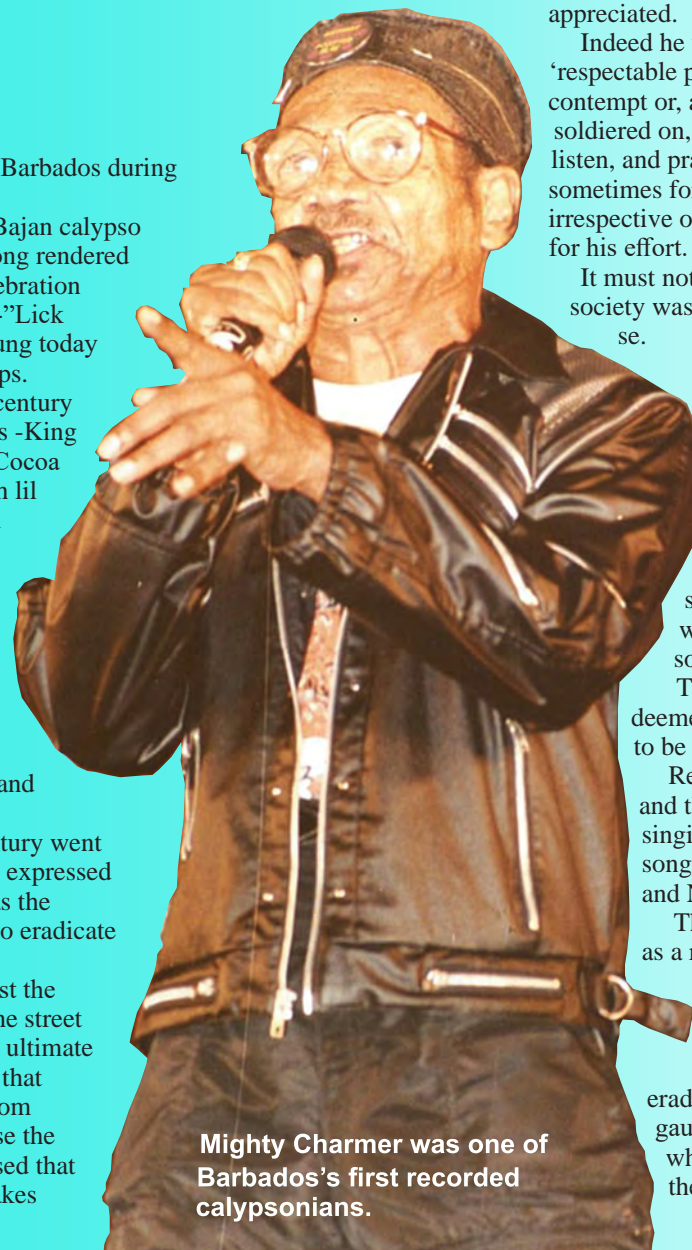
There is literary evidence of Bajan calypso from the 18th century, and the song rendered by the freed slaves in joyous celebration of their freedom in August 1838-”Lick and Lock up done wid”-is still sung today by the island’s folk-singing groups.

As we examine the late 19th century we come across classic calypsoes -King Jaja”, Murder in de Market, Da Cocoa Tea, Brudda Neddy, and See muh lil brown gal, and we are given oral evidence about the legendary calypsonians who composed and sang such items of social commentary in the villages and around Bridgetown.

The tradition of singing songs about life in Barbados and about the idiosyncrasies of the island’s population is a long and resilient one.

Calypson-ians in the 19th century went ‘underground’ as the ruling class expressed disapproval of such music, and as the Christian priests tried their best to eradicate the calypso tradition.

This effort or campaign against the natural melodies and stories of the street poets of our land was doomed to ultimate failure partly because of the fact that music can never be eradicated from human society, and partly because the majority of the population rea-lised that when the calypsonian sings he takes



Mighty Charmer was one of Barbados’s first recorded calypsonians.

us on a guided tour of ourselves, our country and gives us a searching view from the bottom of the interaction between individuals and groups in this society.

The calypsonian has therefore been an essential feature in our society as it entered the 20th century, although his role was not then widely understood or appreciated.

Indeed he was ostracised by so-called ‘decent’, ‘respectable people and his music regarded with contempt or, at best, with patronising tolerance. But he soldiered on, sending out his message to all who would listen, and practising his creative art in quiet villages, sometimes for pittances, or for, the sheer love of music, irrespective of whether there was any tangible reward for his effort.

It must not be believed that the entire Barbadian society was totally against the calypso art form, per se.

There was growing interest in music in Barbados, even indigenous music, but certainly the calypso was considered a lowly music form in the period before the Second World War.

The natural songsters and strolling minstrels were going against a principle accepted by influential persons in the society that ‘Banjuh’ or Barbadian calypso was not respectable since the lyrics were sometimes overtly satirical, or risqué.

The hot, pulsating rhythms were also deemed by priests and other persons in authority to be ‘devil music’, not suitable for chaste ears.

Respectability came slowly to calypsonians, and the route to such a status was by not singing Banjuh/calypsoes, but by crooning songs from the folk-song tradition of Britain and North America.

The extent to which this was established as a rigid social rule is seen in the fact that calypsoes were ‘banned’ on Sundays in most Barbadian homes, and this ‘rule’ is still observed today!

But the Afrikan-derived sound was not eradicated from the cultural life, as we can gauge from the many so-called “folk songs” which are still popular today, decades after they were created.

Through the Tuk Bands and the

impromptu song sessions in Bridgetown and around the country-side, the indigenous calypso was kept alive and potent, although it remained part of a 'submerged' tradition.

The tradition never died out, but remained strong, waiting for the appropriate time to flourish 'above ground' again as it had done during the slave period. This survival must appear remarkable, considering the strength of the other musical forms in the society-English ballads, American western songs, and the hymns of Protestant denominations from both sides of the Atlantic.

The truth of the matter is that calypso or 'Banjuh' could not be easily erased from the cultural heritage of the people. It was too deeply embedded in their subconscious for it to die as some others hoped it would.

Cleverly composed calypsoes struck an appreciative chord in the minds of those who love indigenous music, and despite the class feelings which set the educated middle-class apart from the activities and milieu of those who composed and sang such songs, sooner or later everyone in Barbados came to hear such ditties and to sing them, even though some were considered 'indecent' and 'vulgar'.

The calypso was a link to their Afrikan heritage which almost all Barbadians shared, and it served to bring different classes together on the dance floor, at Tea Meetings, and at various excursions and holiday celebrations when singers would strum their acoustic guitars or banjos and 'release' a new composition, or evoke nostalgia by performing old calypsoes, which became known in the 1940s as 'folk songs', but which older persons continued to call 'Banjuh Songs' or 'Tuk Songs'.

### The road travelled

The role of persons such as Mighty Charmer and DaCosta Allamby is critical to our understanding of the road the calypso and calypsonians have travelled. Charmer was one of the first to record a calypso in the period after the Second World War, and Allamby provided calypsoes for the local group the Merry-men, who launched their successful career singing calypsoes in a "country-and-western" style in the early 1960s.

These men, each in his own way, gave hope to the other calypsonians that one day their music would achieve respectability and importance in Barbados. Today, we acknowledge the pioneering role they performed in a long struggle to bring the calypso to the forefront of entertainment culture in Barbados.

Barbados Carnival lasted from 1958 to 1964 and for the



**St. John Cultural Group, one of the popular folk groups.**

first time calypsonians competed on stage in front of mass audiences.

However, this festival did not provide the scope which calypsonians needed and when Carnival died in Barbados, stage-presented calypso "took a blow".

Calypsonians did receive some valuable exposure, nonetheless, and thus we can argue that the late 1960s represent the 'seed-time' of the calypso 'renaissance', with new faces in the ranks of the entertainers.

Between 1966 and the present, this renaissance has become more marked, and with each passing year the ranks of the calypsonians have swelled.

The coming of Independence has brought new meaning

to the term 'culture', and instilled in Barbadians a willingness to delve into their heritage and their musical culture to provide material expressing their joys and complaints, gaiety and laments.

The new burst of energy among calypsonians in Barbados has pleasantly surprised the rest of the Caribbean, and it has revealed how many persons in this small island can express the folk culture which they have inherited from earlier generations and from their Afrikan forebears.

*(Trevor G Marshall is a former Research Officer, NCF).*

# Women in calypso

By Dr. Allison Ramsay

**B**arbadian women have made a valuable contribution to the development of the art form of calypso through their voices in the calypso arena.

Calypso, an oral tradition of the Caribbean, is regarded as a social instrument used to address local, regional and international issues and can be used to protest against oppression and is a form of satire and entertainment.

In Barbados, the calypso arena has typically been dominated by male calypsonians and monarchs. By 1960, a calypso competition was established on the island and Michael Wilkinson was its first monarch.

The popularity of calypso increased with the re-establishment of the Crop Over Festival by the Barbados Tourism Board in 1974. In that year, Edrick “The Mighty Dragon” Jordan secured the crown.

In 1978, the national calypso competition known as the Pic-O-De Crop competition was introduced.

By the 1980s, the calypso competition became one of the most important aspects of the Crop Over Festival due to an increase in the number of calypso tents, calypsonians and more airplay on the local radio stations. With this rise of interest, there was also more participation of women in calypso.

In 1986, Ann Marie “Lady Ann” Straker of the Conquerors Tent became the first woman to compete at the Pic-O-De Crop finals with the songs “A Woman’s Plea” and “Banana Man” and two years later Barbados had its first female calypso monarch.

In 1988, Rita “Queen Rita” Forrester representing House of Soca was the lone female competitor who triumphed with the songs “Woman Respect Yourself” and “Ah Can’t Party.” Queen Rita’s up-tempo “Ah Can’t Party” said: “Until racism has been wiped out completely, ah can’t party...Until child abuse is stamped out in his country, ah can’t party...”

Rita’s victory was by a close margin, beating

John King 71.1 to 70.9. Rita, a Guyanese born entertainer, faced the displeasure of the crowd that night but in the face of adversity returned to defend the following year.

Though Rita placed last, two other female competitors were in that 1989 final with her, Margaret “Miss B” Bovell-Griffith and Marcia “Marcas” Welch who placed second and fourth respectively.

## Women on the forefront

During the 1980s to 1990s, there was an increased feminisation of calypso and more women made their mark on the calypso stage, such as Lady Ann, Carolyn “Tassa” Forde, Kathy Lewis, Shernelle “Nikki V” Clarke, Roselyn “Black Beauty” Hunte, Lenette Terencia “TC” Coward, “Miss B” and Lynette “Lady Lynette” Hinds.

By the end of the 20th century, a women’s movement was visible in the calypso tents and on the Pic-O-De Crop stage. In these forums, the presence and voices of women calypsonians challenged the politics of manhood that was the very essence of calypso.

This wave of female calypsonians on the scene include “TC”, Chrystal Cummins-Beckles, “Enobong”, Donella Weekes, Samantha “Sammi Jane” Williams, Rosita, “Lady Richard”, Tara Holdipp, Dionne, Suzette “Jael” Brathwaite, Natasha “Kya” Williams, Samantha “Miss Sammy G” Greaves, Anita “Ms. A.C.” Charles who later became “Doyenne”, Tiffany “Charisma” Goddard, Aziza Clarke, Anique “Cher” Herbert and De Ann.

In spite of the consistency of female calypsonians, no other woman became a monarch until 2016 when Aziza Clarke of the All Stars Calypso achieved this title at the age of 21.

In the year of Barbados’ 50th year of independence Aziza, who rose through the ranks of the Junior Monarch competition,

captured the coveted crown with a nation building song, “One People, One Nation” which called on Barbadians to “come together to lift the country higher.” Her second song “Bring Back Respect” stressed the importance of persons giving respect where it is due.

Barbadian women have used their voices to celebrate women and womanhood and address women’s issues such as sexual harassment, motherhood, domestic violence and women’s rights.

In the 1980s “Cherie”, of the Battleground Tent, hit song Abortion, advocated for a woman’s right to choose. In the 1990s, TC’s Put a Woman in Front, highlighted women’s ability to lead the country.

Her Broken Dolls, told the story of a rape victim and likened her to a broken doll whose pieces could never be put back together again. In the 2000s, Chrystal’s Enough is Enough, focused on domestic abuse and Sammy G’s Dear Diary, highlighted the pain of “a victim of abuse and mental torture” who was written off as a troubled youth.

In spite of competing in a male dominated art form and facing gender barriers, the contribution of women to calypso has been invaluable and women have played an instrumental role in keeping this oral tradition which is part of Barbadian heritage and culture alive.

Within recent years, there has been an increase of women making the Pic-O-De Crop finals, with seven female finalists both in 2019 and 2022, and so the possibility of more female Barbadian calypsonians is on the horizon.

*\* This is an abridged version of the article entitled “WOMEN’S VOICES: FEMINISM AND CALYPSO IN BARBADOS” which appeared in Tout Moun Caribbean Journal of Cultural Studies Vol 8 No 1, Nov 2023.*



Lady Anne



Tassa



Chrystal Cummins-Beckles



Aziza



Former calypso Queen, Rita Forrester

## HOW THE TENTS CAME ABOUT

# Rocky path to tents' glory days

By John Sealy

The story of the calypso tent in Barbados is punctuated with personality clashes, money controversy, ego tripping - but also good vibes. There was a time when any iteration of calypso/banja was outlawed in the homes and among more genteel gatherings.

The early making of the calypso tent therefore evolved from a few assembled who were passionate to sing about the issues of the day. These included the likes of Mighty Viper, Sir Don and Mighty Romeo who in 1975 raised the profile of the artform.

They established Calypso Enterprises to stage tents across the island which climaxed with a calypso contest to coincide with Barbados' Independence. (Nation Newspaper Al's Grapevine Sept 7 1975).

Calypsonian Asiba - Buffalo Soldier known for his hit "still 2 much FAT on the road" also recalls that the calypso

tent competition then as "sporadic".

"There was very little in terms of prize money, but in 1979 the tent culture was consolidated though one of the challenges was finding a home base," he said.

"Crop-Over started back in 1974 and the tents opened in 1979. There was a marriage between the tents and Crop Over; a symbiotic relationship ... [the festival] benefited from that because there was an increased participation of the masses. Previous to that there was no acceptance by the masses," according to Asiba who holds a Masters in Cultural Studies and is in the process of producing a book on the evolution of the calypso tent.

He also highlights the efforts of calypsonians Liar and Black Pawn to the artform and "then you had the sort of mini revolution where Red Plastic Bag [of the Conquerors tent] came down [from St Philip] and in some people's estimation made quite a difference" to the calypso tent landscape.

Asiba notes that 1979 was a "mushroom" year for the growth of the tents: House of Soca, Warriors, Rockers Tent, Hardseeds, Conquerors, Untouchables, Southern Stars, Explorers, North Torpedoes, Soca Explosion, Sunrise, Romeo's Calypso College, Battlefield, Lion's Den and Battleground, Bacchanal Time, Stray Cats, de Big Tent, Shining Stars, Headliners, the Experience gospel, Celebrities and Junior Monarch and Soca tents emerged over the years.

Some vanquished, others survived as hybrids of other tents even to the present.

There was never a dull moment. The advent of Conquerors and then Untouchables in 1983 saw many heated "clashes" between the fans of the then popular country tents and those from town - St Michael, when Red Plastic Bag of Conquerors was crowned Calypso Monarch 1982.

Calypsonian and author George "Georgie" Straker in an

Advocate article in 2019, spoke of the “invasion” from the East of Barbados led by Red Plastic Bag (RPB), John King (formerly Johnny Ma Boy), Ras Iley, The Devil, from the Conquerors Calypso Tent, followed by the Untouchables that put their stamp on calypso and Crop Over”.

Straker said those were two powerful tents which “brought another freshness to the festival” and with RPB winning the crown, contributed to development of the tents and the festival.

Former president of the Barbados Association of Tent Managers (BATMAN) Sinclair Gittens said when the organisation was started in 1986, the tents included House of Soca, Conquerors, Untouchables, Battleground, Battlefield, Super Gladiators, Cultural Vibrations, Kaiso Palace and Pioneers.

Gittens recalls that a proposal of “a clash” between two tents saw one of the managers asking for a 50/50 split in earnings, but the other manager responding, “you can’t get half of the people that I can get, you would have to take 25 [percent]...you can’t lead me”.

In 1988 calypso lovers were shocked to read in the Weekend Nation, June 10, that Untouchables might not be coming that year.

The story reported manager and public relations officer, Mac

Fingall, as saying it was due to a considerable amount of unrest in his tent, and also because they were in the process of changing their backing band.

Fingall also said then in the article he was “fed up” with other people attacking his tent.

“I think the usual calypso spirit and camaraderie that once existed between the different calypsonians are not evident any longer.

“I would like to urge calypsonians and tent managers alike to change their mentality and start working at proving themselves, rather than concentrating on petty differences,” he added.

Gittens in a recent interview said the presidency of BATMAN changed many times prior to his tenure and he took up the office amidst a lot of tension.

“I was from a small tent [Pioneers] and I did not have any problems with the big tents,” said Gittens as he gave a detailed account of other challenges that faced the fledgling association.

He said the calypso competitions were controlled by BATMAN, but the calypsonians started to bring in individual managers who argued that the association “can’t

talk for them”.

“The way we had it set up was the calypsonians were entitled to two representatives on the executive of BATMAN so anything that you had a problem with let’s deal with it within [the association]. This caused a lot of division again.

“I remember we had a meeting at the National Cultural Foundation with the calypsonians who said BATMAN can’t talk for them. That is when the association started to go downhill.

“Most of the things we achieved were during my tenure. The prize money moved from \$7 000 first prize and when I left it was \$10 000, plus a car and everything was going up,” said Gittens, BATMAN’s president for over ten years.

Currently there is no clear body that represents the tents.

One tent manager lamented there is still a lot of division among the tents when it comes to governing.

“Everybody wants to join together, but nobody turns up. It is just a lot of hot air.”



# Journey of a junior monarch

By Aisha Butcher

I have been privileged to be involved in Junior Monarch in several capacities, all of which have brought me great satisfaction and, in some cases, fulfilled childhood dreams. From being an avid, avid follower - to competing facilitating training sessions, becoming a band member and presently a co-producer; it has been a purposeful journey that warms my heart.

When I became a competitor, it was by no means my initial encounter with the programme. As I mentioned earlier, I was an avid follower – some might even say obsessed.

Each year CBC broadcast the finals I was glued to the television in complete awe. From the years after Junior Kadooment at the National Stadium, to Dover Conference Centre then to the Gymnasium; I followed closely, very closely. Today I can still sing songs word for word like ‘Condomise’ performed by Kiah, Aziza Clarke’s then Lil Az - ‘Wake-Up Barbados’, ‘Big People Song’ done by Baby Doll, Tiffany G now Charisma, with ‘I wish’ and Grateful Co’s Future of Calypso. Stand outs acts like Gregory G, Kishee Moore, The Gittens Boys, Jana Price, and Sir Ruel are forever etched in my mind. I fell deeply in love with the sound, relatable topics, and energy associated with the delivery of the artform.

Fast forward to 2011, I was urged to enter by my then music teacher, now work colleague and co-producer – Kevin Moore (a full circle moment indeed). In short, he had song, and I had a voice. This became the start of incredible achievements, opportunities, and experiences in culture.

I distinctly remember us zooming to the



**Aisha Butcher -  
Performing name Mandisa.**

National Cultural Foundation to submit the registration form, on the day of the deadline of course, and up to that point I still had not decided on a stage name. Two minutes out, I said you know what, I’ll use my middle name – Mandisa. Little did I know my full government name would become a household name as a result of what happened after.

That year I sang a song called Apple Next To De Tree, made it to the finals as a first timer and placed second – “losing” by just one point. However, I did not feel like I lost anything at all. I won at life. For there is nothing more rewarding to me like having the opportunity to excel at something you love beyond explanation. I was proud of myself and the team who made it possible.

**Dennis Johnson**

On the point of team, he was not an internal decision maker, but he made a huge impact on mine and Kevin’s journey - Mr. Dennis Johnson. My first radio interview he facilitated, my first keyboard he provided and from 2011 ‘til his passing he advised and supported us selflessly.

The following year my focus was simple – I needed to better myself. My mindset was never “I have to beat him or her” I just wanted to master the art of calypso all while spreading positive and timely messages. In 2012, I was able to do just that and winning the crown was the cherry on top. The path to that moment was not smooth, however. I fell ill on semi-final night and was forced to rest and sit out the Lunchtime concert. These events did not distract from the goal, but instead pushed me to dig deeper.

In 2013, I was one of the ‘youngsters’ who competed in the ‘Big Yard’ and made it to the semi-finals of Pic-O-De Crop. That was a challenging and eye-opening experience.

Now to the moment where a dream came through. In 2015 I received an unexpected call from Anthony ‘Sarge’ Sergeant, he wanted to know if I would be interested in providing my service as a background vocalist. Immediately, water started to settle in my eyes, and I had to compose myself while responding “yes, of course”.

In the spirit of manifestations, I would

make a list of all the things I wanted to do in my life and becoming a background vocalist in Junior Monarch was one. I was so happy. I approached the role seriously from that moment ‘til 2019 when the festival came to halt because of Covid.

Upon the festival’s return in 2022, I was assigned as Vocal Coach. Seeing each contestant’s potential and witnessing their growth from application of advice in such a short space of time was very fulfilling. The official inclusion of all forms of soca just made sense then too.

Watching the young ones bravely own the stage clearly influenced by Lil Rick, Mikey. Walkes and others was a step in the right direction for the competition.

At present, through my post as Cultural Officer for Music Organization at the National Cultural Foundation, I am co-producer of the competition. The experiences from an audience’s perspective, then to competitor, songwriter and coach have all aided in my execution and vision for the programme. One of my main areas of focus is engaging the parents/teachers/facilitators, providing them with the knowledge and tools needed to execute as they essentially become managers of the young calypsonians by default.

With this responsibility comes many requests and it can be overwhelming if you are unfamiliar. Another point is to encourage participants to support each other before, during and after. Yes, only one person will win but there is no competition with just one. There is place for all involved.

In retrospect, this trajectory was divinely designed, and I am extremely grateful that I made the most of each phase.

# Future bright for Party Bands

By Richard Haynes Jr.

The year 1999, saw Baje International (Baje) emerging onto the Crop over scene; we were young, eager and excited to join this new cultural shift. While we were keen to join this new “party band” side of Kadooment, we always appreciated its history. So when I look back, this question we frequently got ended up as pure serendipity: “Why would a team of youngsters in their mid-20s partner with veteran Kadooment designer, Marcia Chandler, to do a kadooment band?”

The answer to this question is a journey that begins way before Baje.

The Bajan party band phenomenon was a result of several key actors:

**The Veterans** - My generation (Generation X) and younger were born into Crop Over and would have no concept of how the bands began. As far back as I can recall, the Bajan way has always been to pay one price, which gets you costumes, drinks and food free, which greatly contrasted the Trinidadian carnival model.

This all-inclusive concept was brilliant and kudos to Betty West, Cranston Browne, Marcia Chandler, the late Winston Jordan, the late Gwyneth Squires, and other key veterans for creating the foundation on which the party bands were built.

**The Music Bands** - In the late 80s, the musical band Spice & Co. produced a Kadooment band. It was a t-shirt band and catered to the younger generation. Truth be told, in those days, most youngsters were not interested in Calypso. The trending vibe and music of the time was Dancehall (in those days referred to as Dub) and Hip Hop. So when the popular local sensation, Spice hit the scene, the young people were in! In the early to mid 90s, Spice’s successful concept saw the realization for other t-shirt bands like “Signacha” (a musical band lead by John King and managed



Chetwin Stuart of Power By Four (right) one of the party bands that emerged on the scene in the 90s. Inset left, from top, Grand Matriarch of masquerade design, the late Gwyneth Squires, Betty West has been involved in masquerade for over 30 years and Marcia Chandler participated in Grand Kadooment from the 1980s.

# Party bands' bright future

by our now Prime Minister, The Honorable Mia Mottley) and "Splash Band" (a popular reggae band) which fully engaged the emerging young Generation X market.

Spice went on to create a separate festival, "Congaline".

**The Birth of the Party Bands** - During the early 90s, it was recognised that the explosion of the t-shirt bands could potentially damage the future of costume bands. The National Cultural Foundation (NCF) then enforced a rule that all bands must be costume bands and not t-shirt bands. One would think that this was the end of the youthful appeal of Kadooment bands, but by this time, the fire was ignited with the new generation. Young costume bands began emerging and quickly took the baton from the t-shirt bands. Two notable bands from this include West Coast Pirates and of course, Power x 4.

These bands rapidly grew in popularity, especially since they hosted weekly fetes which attracted thousands of people (this was very uncommon at the time).

## Costumes trending

The fetes featured younger DJs such as Peter Coppin, Bubbles & Stan and Alvin Toppin, who connected with the demographic. For the first time, costumes were now trending, in particular with the ladies who loved the costumes far more than t-shirts. This stage is where the modern party bands were born.

**The Bajan Invasion** – Parallel to this new movement of party bands, the sound of Bajan



Soca was changing. Eddy Grant had created a new sound that he called "Ring Bang". The vibe was different, youthful and it caught on like "wildfire".

Many of the young producers and artists such as Peter Coppin, Rupee, Lil Rick and Peter Ram were still very heavily influenced by dancehall and hip hop, rode on this exciting new Soca wave. The result? A new sound exploding from Barbados.

It had heavy baselines and a blatant fusion with Dancehall and Hip Hop. The sound was called Ragga Soca and it swept the Caribbean by storm. "The Bajan Invasion" as it was called, was the new sound of Soca lead by Alison Hinds and Square one, Rupee and Coalition and Edwin Yearwood and Krosfyah. This combination of world class modern music and youthful energy set the stage for the modern party bands.

**Baje International** - It is in this electric environment that Baje International entered the party band arena. We eagerly jumped in and launched our first band with 10 summer fetes. What made us different was the fact that we were fresh out of university, which brought that college-party type atmosphere to our events: free Jello and Tequila shots, Baje Girls, interactive themed events and much more that I would love to share, however, as I laugh let's keep this rated G! Another notable addition was a web site: [www.baje-intl.com](http://www.baje-intl.com).

This was the first entertainment-based website in Barbados. It didn't only show our costumes, but also had a chat platform and full photo gallery of patrons at our events and on the road. Note, this was before social media. Our website generated over one million global views every summer!

Later on, other bands like Radikal, Fantasy,

Berger Boyz and Campus Boys joined the party band arena, along-side Power x 4 and Blue Box Cart. The fire was lit for the future!

The Modern Party Bands - By the mid 2000s, the popularity of party bands had exploded and the next generation (Millennials) were fully engaged in Soca.

As a result, between 2010 and 2015, many new bands exploded on the scene including Zulu, Krave, Xhosa, Aura, Colors and many more. This reinjection of young energy has steered the party bands to where we are today.

Of course attracting celebrities such as Rihanna to our festival has also boosted the appeal and excitement for party bands.

**The Future** - Today, party bands far outnumber the traditional bands. However, the same way that the party bands of today have relied on change, I feel that we are at that stage now again.

It's been over 10 years since the explosion of new bands on the market and it is time for Generation Z to jump in and re-imagine our festival and our party bands. Their trends and way of doing things may be different, but that is just what we need and that is just what our generation did. If we are able to evolve, the future of the party bands in Barbados is solid.

The survival of our kadooment bands is critical to the survival of our festival. Simply said, the logo of our festival is represented through the beautiful people in costume and our jingle is our music. Without our jingle and our logo, we have no brand, no identity and no festival.

One thing for sure, compared to when I started, the appeal for Soca and our festival is now far more prevalent with the younger generation. There are many more young promoters, artists, DJs and producers who fully endorse Soca and our Crop Over festival.

I am confident that the young teams out there will step up and once again uplift and elevate our Bajan party band culture.

The future is in their hands and I am sure it will be bright.

# The Party Scene:

From Humble Beginnings to Iconic Celebrations

by Kimberley Cummins

Over the past five decades of the Crop Over Festival, the party scene in Barbados has undergone a remarkable transformation. With technological advancements, improved safety measures, diverse offerings and a strong focus on quality, the island continues to uphold its reputation as a premier destination for unforgettable celebrations.

From traditional Crop Over festivities hosted by the National Cultural Foundation (NCF), to small-scale community fetes and to new-age all-inclusive breakfast parties staged at a variety of scenic and charming locations across the island, the scale of parties have significantly expanded.

Around the 1980s locations such as Gertz Plaza, Barclays Sports Club and the old Seawell Airport (Cari Cargo) were home to the more favoured parties.

By 1989, De Paling, which is still based in Tweedside Road, St. Michael, launched and became the main spot for larger parties.

Organiser of De Paling and former NCF Chief Executive Officer Cranston Browne reminisced about the idea to make De Paling a party hub. He said up to that time there were several one-off events, but there were no steady weekly parties to keep locals and tourists entertained and entertainers consistently employed.

By the mid-1990s De Paling's influence grew significantly with memorable fetes. Around the same time, Eddy Grant's Ringbang City at the Old Pepperpot emerged, alongside clubs such as the After Dark and the Ship Inn both located in St. Lawrence Gap. De Place in the north of the island, and Tim's on De Highway also introduced their own distinctive events.

The Harbour Master of the 1990s also ushered in a new era of partying, expanding the festivities beyond the confines of the land. Catamaran and party cruises today have emerged as popular venues, combining the beauty of the Caribbean Sea with vibrant festivities that feature top DJs and some live performances making unforgettable memories of the Crop Over Festival.

The early aughts saw the revival and expansion of community parties which historians recorded have a long history in Barbados.

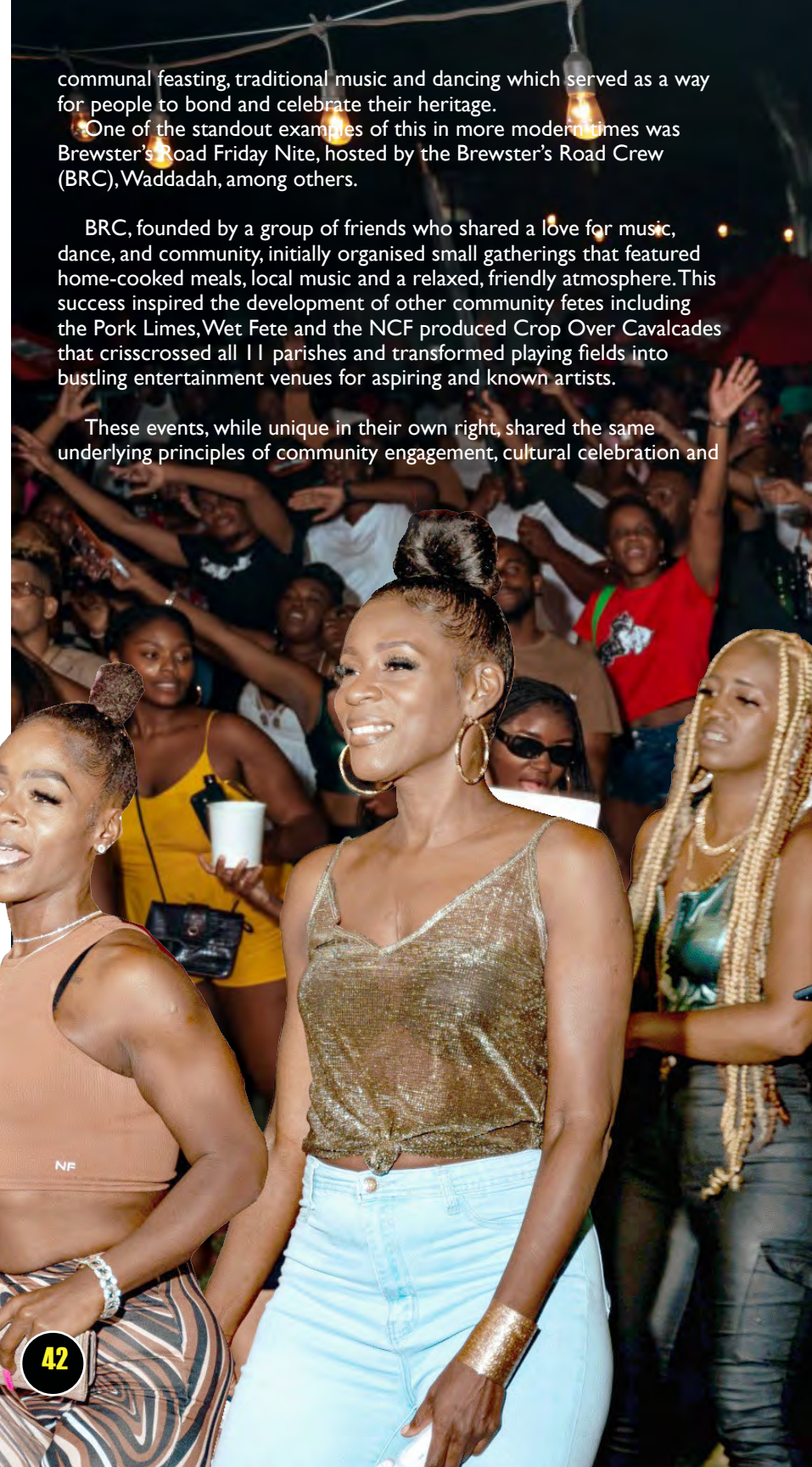
Dating back to the 19th century, villagers gathered to celebrate various milestones, from harvests to public holidays. These gatherings were characterised by

communal feasting, traditional music and dancing which served as a way for people to bond and celebrate their heritage.

One of the standout examples of this in more modern times was Brewster's Road Friday Nite, hosted by the Brewster's Road Crew (BRC), Waddadah, among others.

BRC, founded by a group of friends who shared a love for music, dance, and community, initially organised small gatherings that featured home-cooked meals, local music and a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. This success inspired the development of other community fetes including the Pork Limes, Wet Fete and the NCF produced Crop Over Cavalcades that crisscrossed all 11 parishes and transformed playing fields into bustling entertainment venues for aspiring and known artists.

These events, while unique in their own right, shared the same underlying principles of community engagement, cultural celebration and



collective enjoyment.

Several events have become iconic over the years. One such, which has been dubbed the “World’s Greatest Soca Party” is Soca on the Hill. Held at the end of July at the picturesque Farley Hill National Park in St. Peter, thousands of Barbadians from all walks of life and ages, along with scores of visitors from around the world gather for the celebration.

Soca on the Hill features performances from some of the biggest names in soca music from Barbados and beyond, creating an electrifying atmosphere that keeps attendees dancing and singing along.

Similarly, Bliss, Tipsy, Rise, Lifted are a few of the events launched as part of the growing trend of premium, up-scale, unmissable parties conceptualised to combine top-notch entertainment, a beautiful location, and in some cases an all-inclusive package that included a wide range of gourmet food options, premium drinks.

One of the more notable changes in the party scene has been the integration of multi-media and social media platforms. This does not only allow promoters to reach wider audiences, but also create buzz and anticipation through eye-catching graphics and video teasers.

Tipsy has much focus on this incorporation that the purchase of a ticket automatically binds attendees to the terms and conditions of entry, which include consent for photography, “as photos will be taken throughout the event to capture the unforgettable moments”.

All-inclusive breakfast parties such as Lush, Beach House, Brekfus, have also become staples. These events start around dawn and continue well into the mid-morning, offering a blend of high-energy music and vibrant social interactions.

One of the key reasons for the popularity of these parties is the time period which allows revelers to enjoy the cool morning breeze and the beautiful sunrise while dancing to pulsating beats in picturesque outdoor settings like beaches, gardens or hilltops.

Attendees often dress in bright, colourful outfits that reflect the festive mood and add to the visual appeal of the event. Guests usually enjoy a wide range of culinary delights, like traditional Bajan dishes complemented by a wide range of international gourmet food and libations catering to varied tastes and preferences.

The Crop Over Festival continues to distinguish itself globally as more than just a carnival, offering both locals and visitors opportunities that are “sweet fuh days”.





# De Paling

## Trendsetter of Band fetes

Cranston Browne

By Wade Gibbons

If music is considered the heart of the annual Crop Over celebrations, then the masquerade bands, the fetes, and the band houses, are among the main arteries through which the vibes and the excitement of the festival reach the Barbadian populace.

Names such as Wadadah, Brewster’s Road, Castaways, Grass Skirt Posse, and many more, have provided outlets, getaways and personalities that have contributed both to the build-up and climax of Crop Over. Arguably, however, the one entity that spawned many of these groups and provided the major spark for the three months of mid-year Crop Over excitement was the De Paling experience.

Former chief executive officer of the National Cultural Foundation, Cranston Browne, was the principal individual behind the De Paling’s existence at Tweedside Road, St. Michael. Browne, a prominent masquerade band leader, and several of his friends, feted together back in the 1980s.

In those days the Caricargo fete at the Seawell Roof Deck was one of the biggest fetes in the island.

During a night out at the roof deck, Browne heard Barbadian calypsonian Pompey’s “Vampire” party song and loved it.

He told his colleagues the vampire concept would be a great theme for their masquerade band. The year was 1985 and the concept worked and the band did exceptionally well.

“At the time our band house was in Hart’s Gap and we used to party in the backyard. But as the band grew, we had to move and we went to Collymore Rock to the roof deck of Gertz Plaza. But again, the band continued to grow and we moved to the De Paling, or what would become known as De Paling because it wasn’t called that initially.

“It was the family house where we were raised. It was just our backyard. So after moving our band house there, we started to do fetes. That was 1989, the first year we went to De Paling,” Browne recounted.

The cultural practitioner of more than four decades indicated that back then the musical band Krosfyah was new on the scene and the band’s manager Phil Phillips asked him to give them a try at De Paling which he did and the fetes there simply “took off”.

## Start of the weekly fetes

“I would say we actually started Crop Over in those days. From the first week in June, we would start the fetes. Every Saturday night, that was the first time that any band or any Crop Over group did fetes on a weekly basis.

“We would have DJ Dove, who was the house deejay, he stayed with me right through to the end. We then had Square One and all the big bands then started to come in. We brought in bands from Trinidad. The biggest fete we ever had at De Paling was the night I brought in Spice.

“We had to move back the actual paling that night to accommodate the people,” he said.

Browne explained that one of the main reasons for the success of De Paling was the comfort, safety and camaraderie felt by patrons who attended. He said people “mashing” other patrons, or bouncing them while partying, did not lead to conflicts. A family atmosphere was always maintained. He reminisced that a wide cross-section of people patronized De Paling.

“Owen Arthur when he was prime minister used to come in some Saturday nights; David Thompson was a regular in there even before he became prime minister; Mia, before she went into government, she too used to come to De Paling,” Browne recalled.

But how did that open space surrounded mainly by galvanised sheets and wood get its name?

Browne said that for a few years the fetes there were simply known as Cranston Browne’s Band Fete. There was a group of people who partied there every weekend, he said. They would eventually form Wadadah. Browne said the yard was small, the crowd was always thick, and this group would lean



The Grass Skirt Possee performed regularly at the De Paling.

up on a corner section of the paling and party from that spot.

“One night they just said, ‘look, let we call this thing De Paling’, and from there on it became De Paling. I said that if the people wanted to call it that, then that would be the name. We were the first band house to do a 10 (p.m.) to 10 (a.m.) fete. Then a midnight to midday fete. De Paling got so popular that we had to expand. The property next-door came up for sale and my family bought it and we expanded it to what it is now,” Browne stated.

He explained that when De Paling first started it could accommodate about 300 to 500 people, but with the expansion that number went to between 800 to 1000 patrons. He recalled that the night Spice performed the numbers mushroomed to almost 1500. He said De Paling’s lure was its “rustic, backyard” appeal and atmosphere where people “let their hair down” and feted until sunrise. He recalled one old lady who would come in on Sunday mornings and “shake a leg” at the fetes before proceeding to church.

Browne left the island in 1994 for about two years and when he returned, he kept De Paling going for about another two to three years before he called it quits. De Paling no longer holds fetes and is now a sports bar.

The property remains in the Browne family. He however said that for the 50th anniversary of the festival De Paling will be staging a fete on July 27. Describing De Paling as a financially viable enterprise, Browne explained the successful link between his Crop Over band and De Paling fetes.

“Without De Paling, we couldn’t do the (masquerade) band. In those days you could not charge more than \$150 - \$200 for a costume. So the fetes pushed the band where you could put out a classy costume band at a reasonable price ... because of the fetes,” he said.

Browne added that when De Paling exited the scene, groups such as Wadadah and Brewster’s Road which previously partied in De Paling, then started their own fetes.

“The Grass Skirt Possee started in De Paling. Robert Weekes did their choreography and they used to perform in De Paling regularly.”

Browne bemoaned the fact that a lot of the band house experience has dwindled. He said the importation of costumes has contributed to this. He said when designers make costumes locally, it means they spend time in the band house working, communicating with other people, have people dropping in occasionally, having fun together.

This, he said, naturally contributes to the Crop Over experience.

By Cheryl Harewood

There has always been discussion throughout the years, on whether or not Christians and those from various religious backgrounds, should participate in Crop Over activities.

This controversial topic has had its place in Crop Over celebrations from day one. Today, not much has changed. There are those who see Crop Over as an integral part of the island's religious landscape and state their opinion on the matter equivocally, leaving no room for doubt. Those opposing this view, are also not afraid to share their feelings.

The truth is, and as gospel artiste Sheldon Hope puts it, "Getting involved in Crop Over is a personal choice."

"If an individual (who is a Christian) believes that he or she should not be involved in Crop Over, I respect their right to hold that position. But I believe that the gifts and talents we have should be shared with everybody."

"I was more than happy to be involved in Crop Over over the years, and to be part of the Crop Over Gospel Concert, (which was introduced in 2011,) as the External Coordinator, in 2013, 2014, and 2015," Hope shared.

Indeed, countless other Christians and particularly Gospel artistes were "discovered" during this major event, having been provided with a platform to minister, while showcasing their talents.

According to Hope, it was during the staging of the Crop Over Gospel Concert that Barbados got to see young emerging talent in the likes of John Yarde (now pastor John Yarde), Gozzy, Neesha Woodz, and seasoned Gospel artistes, such as Sister Marshall, Tony Lowe, and others.

Many hold the view that there must be balance in Crop Over events, and that giving praise and thanks to Almighty God for bringing the island through another year of a successful sugar cane harvest, is a crucial element best served with a religious mix.

Radio personality Reverend Mark Harewood is one who opposes the involvement of Christians in some Crop Over activities. He believes the church should have its own Crop Over events, whereby Christians "come out from among them," and host their own calypso tent, a costume parade with "people in tastefully fitting costumes," and competitive activities - for the fun of it."

Over the years, we have also seen the Walk Holy Band; the Christian Tent - Experience; Roman Catholic Priest Father Paul who sang calypso- and was the first priest to do so; Father Harcourt Blackett, also from the Roman Catholic Church, who actually jumped in a Calypso band; Sister Magrita Marshall, and the now late Sons of God Apostolic Spiritual Baptist Church leader Archbishop Bishop Granville Williams, all publicly participated in and played key roles in this national festival.

# CHRISTIANS AND CROPOVER



It was Williams who established the Cou Cou Village – a major food stall at Bridgetown Market and on Kadooment Day, at the Spring Garden Highway.

Among the scores of food stalls at these two events, The Cou Cou Village has always been viewed as the No. 1 stall for mouth-watering, delightful Bajan treats.

From the resuscitation of the festival in 1974, the Spiritual Baptist Church has been an active participant.

Their position was spelt out in the church's publication, The Revelations of the Spiritual Baptists - 30th Anniversary edition, when Archbishop Williams said: "We see it (Crop Over) as a Biblical festival. For we ask God to bless the land and the crop to be fruitful in great abundance. "We are bound to give thanks."

The Spiritual Baptists would also appear in the Decorated Cart Parade from Independence Square to the Garrison, and said prayers during the delivery of the last canes event.

In 1988, the Roman Catholics decided to revel in a five-section band called All-a-We, under the theme Unity. Monsignor Vincent Harcourt Blackett, who was responsible for the band, shared views similar to The Spiritual Baptists: that, the festival originated with the church celebrating the end of the harvest.

At the time, he reasoned further that "a Kadooment band should fasten the church's relationship with the society," and was quoted in The Nation publication of July 15, 1988, as saying: "I think the church cannot afford to separate itself from society."

"There is so much cultural penetration ... and the church has spoken of this again and again. We can't just talk; we have to do something to preserve our culture."

With that, Blackett and some of his congregation disclosed plans to jump in the band.

A staple in the Crop Over activities, and the witty "calypsonian of sorts" whom many looked forward to

hearing, was yet another Roman Catholic priest, Father Clement Paul of the St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral.

Describing Crop Over as "a cultural expression and social entertainment," Paul, also expressed his own concern about the way revellers decked themselves out.

"I wish to call to your attention some attitudes that must be addressed if we are to have a celebration in which God's people enjoy themselves in a fashion that is human and yet clean and healthy.

"I go so far as to say that many Christians denounce partying and Crop-Over not because of what they are, but because of what people do at them." (The Nation, July 31, 1987).

By 2002, Christian bands were steadily making their presence felt.

Paul, in reference to the introduction of Christian bands in the 2002 Crop Over festival, stressed, "I pray and hope the band or bands will participate fully in the celebrations and not seek to make them church services.

"Church services have their time and place and Kadooment certainly is not the time for them." He stated this in the June 4, 2002, edition of a report.

Over the years, many Gospel artistes have made their appearances in the Experience 'Calypso Tent, which was birthed in 2004, and registered as a non-for-profit venture through the registered charity, 'Neighbour, Neighbour.'

Tent official, Errol Griffith, labelled the tent as "a wholesome, family tent, with a commitment to nothing but wholesome calypso, entertainment and comedy.

"This is one tent where parents attend with their children and there are no "lude or crude" lyrics or jokes directed at women," he said.

Griffith added, "The Experience" Calypso Tent came into being with a vision, "to influence positive change in Barbados, the Caribbean and the world, through the medium of calypso."

Year after year calypsonians in the Experience tent kept making their mark.

In 2004, four calypsonians were selected to be among the 18 semi-finalists in the Pic-O-De Crop competition. One of them, Lady Richard, went on to the Finals with another being the Finals' reserve. Lady Richard placed seventh.

In 2005, five of "The Experience" calypsonians were selected in the Pic-O-De-Crop Semi-Finals, and two made it to the Finals. Five Flame Gospel Awards were also presented to three members.

In 2006, two of The Experience calypsonians were among the 18 Pic-Of-De-Crop semi-finalists selected, and Sammi Jane took part in the Party Monarch competition.



**Patrons of Experience Calypso Tent. At right is gospel artiste Sheldon Hope.**

The following year, four calypsonians were invited to join in the Pic-O-de-Crop semi-finals - Enobong, Crystal, Rommel and Sammi Jane - with two, Enobong and Rommel, participating in the finals. Apache participated in the Party Monarch finals.

Undoubtedly, many Anglicans have been major supporters of Crop Over. Persons like Reverend Sonia Hinds and Reverend Errington Massiah have publicly made their feelings known.

In an article carried in a 2006 edition of The Nation, Massiah wrote, "I will be out there on Kadooment Day watching the bands and those playing mas'. But you will never see Father Massiah in a band or playing mas'.

"Some would say that Christians should not be taking part or watching the bands. I do not share that view. There are some denominations that go to the extent to make sure that they organise religious programmes on that day, in order to keep their members away from attending or watching the bands on Kadooment Day.

"I was taught about 30 years ago at theological school that any religion must be built on five pillars: reason, tradition, scripture, experience and culture."

Of interest to note, in 2011, years after his participation in Crop Over, Monsignor Vincent Harcourt Blackett was quoted as saying, "The earliest expressions of Crop Over were centred around the Christian Harvest Festival and with time it has become extremely secular with the emphasis on Kadooment Day, a day I once enjoyed. But now I do not have the stomach for it, not because of [being] a few years older, but because of what the day has become. Let me hasten to say it is not

only Kadooment Day that we witness this lewd behaviour, but at other celebratory functions as well. To all Christians participating in the celebrations, just remember that your band leader is Jesus; follow Him and do not be ashamed of letting others know where you stand."

Reverend Anthony Worrell, the then District Superintendent of the Wesleyan Holiness Church expressed his thoughts in the July 3, 2011, edition of The Nation: "The Church has to be very careful when it comes to deciding whether or when to be involved in activities such as Crop Over. We in the Wesleyan Holiness Church have no fundamental problems with the original concept of Crop Over. We clearly understand what the celebration meant for our forefathers who rejoiced at the reaping of the final canes with the recognition that months of "cutting sugar cane til ah bun me han' " were over.

"Today, that aspect of the celebration is virtually absent, while the revelry aspects of Cavalcades, calypso tents and Grand Kadooment are taking precedence. The "holiness" by which we are named and by which we live, carries at its base distinctiveness and separation.

"We in the Wesleyan Holiness Church in particular, and Christians in general, need to ask ourselves "whose standards/voice/report are we giving to obey?"

"We believe in a Supreme God who is righteous and expects and provides and encourages His followers to be like Him. Therefore, the Wesleyan Holiness Church cannot bow to the liberal, condescending, humanistic and secular thinking which is prevalent, but must remain steadfast.

Should Christians participate in Crop Over, or shouldn't they? The debate continues.



# JASMINE

the avid

# masquerader

By Andrea King

Long before she became Chairperson of the National Cultural Foundation, Dr. Jasmine Babb was an avid masquerader who not only became Queen of the Band, but also funded and made her own costumes!

In this 50th anniversary of Crop Over commemorative

publication, it is only fitting that head of the festival's executing agency be highlighted.

This Q&A highlight, however is not a corporate discourse of the role and function of the august agency. It is rather, a glimpse into the world of a committed masquerader, whose experience informs her leadership.

**CO@50:** *How long have you been participating in the Crop Over Festival as an audience member at various events, as a reveler in a costume band and then as Queen of the Band?*

**Dr. Babb:** I have been extensively involved in Crop Over from 1977 in a variety of ways, including as a designer for a band sponsored by Banks Breweries in the 70s, called “Phases of Crop Time”. This band won Best Band that year and I was a masquerader in that band in the “Smoke” section.

The other sections included “Green Sugar Cane”, “Cane Cutters”, “Brown Sugar”, “White Sugar”, “Yellow Sugar”, “Fire” and “Smoke”. The concept depicted the sugar cane process from growth to by-products.

**CO@50:** *Can you share some highlights of your masquerade experiences?*

**Dr. Babb:** I was an Individual masquerader in Cranston Browne’s band until 1998. Then I played queen for Power X Four from 1999 to 2013, in 2014 and 2015 I played queen for Zulu International, and from 2016 I have played queen for the Aura Experience, and will do so again this year.

I designed my own individual costume when I played with Cranston Browne. The costumes I wore in Power X Four were designed by “Big Mike” Antoine, a Trinidadian band leader and designer who was the designer for Power X Four.

My costumes with Zulu International and the Aura Experience were initially designed by Lauren Austin. However, for the past five years, I have designed and personally hand-made all of my costumes.

I started out as an ordinary masquerader in my early days of Crop Over, but my passion for the mas’ led to me requesting to play as an individual and that gradually evolved, as my choice of costume became more intricate and elaborate, into my playing Queen and I even have to turn down offers from other bands to be their Queen.

Noteworthy is that my costumes aren’t sponsored by the bands in which I play but in fact, I invest an insignificant amount of my own money in my costume projects, and the costumes have all been made in Barbados.

In the case of Power X Four, Big Mike made the costumes at his hotel room at Rockley Resort, while Lauren



previously made my costumes at the Aura Band houses.

However, for the last five years, my costume has been made at my home with the assistance of a wire bender, Neil Stanley.

I am totally involved, from the stage of the design concept to completion. I usually travel to New York in January to buy all the materials for my costumes: feathers, gems, fabric, and other materials.

Next, I work with the wire bender to build and shape the frame, which is then decorated. I design and make all the body pieces and boots doing all the gem work myself, in my living room, in fact.

One day, my husband, while watching a costume being worked on, started taking videos and photos while saying: “ya know, no one will believe you actually make these yourself, so I’ll document it”.

As for my favourite costumes, actually two of them come to mind: a turquoise one designed by Lauren and a white one, I designed myself.

**CO@50:** *What is your best memory of playing Queen, and your best memory of Crop Over? What is your favourite part of the festival?*

**Dr. Babb:** I have so many memories over the years that it’s hard to choose one, but without a doubt, Grand Kadooment is the day I look forward to and really relish. I love the road experience, all the sights and sounds, the vibe, the spectators - I love it all.

**CO@50:** *Why do you do it, even up to the queen of the band?*

**Dr. Babb:** I absolutely enjoy masquerading and the designing aspect. I actually studied art at Barbados Community College in my teens and have a real passion for design. I was also a model in my early days and a Kadooment costume is really wearable art that I get to personally design and also display.

But the answer to why I do it is simple, I absolutely love Crop Over time, and Kadooment is, of course, the climax of the festival. Playing queen allows me to fully immerse myself in the mass. I really enjoy it .

**CO@50:** *What are the notable changes (good or bad) you have observed over the years as a masquerader?*

**Dr. Babb:** The aspect of concern is of course some of the behavioral trends that have emerged over the years. The disruption of bands at times really spoils the experience for everyone.

**CO@50:** *As Chairman now of NCF, with your wonderful experience as a masquerader, what is your vision for the Crop Over festival?*

**Dr. Babb:** The vision I have is for a festival that sets a standard for the Caribbean in terms of a safe, enjoyable overall immersive cultural experience in all aspects, the food, the music, the warmth of our welcome to visitors, the opportunities we offer to stakeholders, artists, craftsmen, vendors, promoters to develop and expose their skills, build careers, access economic opportunities and for the festival to be a driver in building our creative economy in all aspects so that it becomes an event more significant contributor to the overall Barbados economy.



# Jumping – the inside story

By Delisle Worrell

Monica and I have enjoyed the Cropover festivities from the earliest days, in our separate lives at first and for four decades as a couple. For all of that time, we have especially looked forward to Kadooment, the thrilling climax of the festival. We are like most dedicated revellers, in that we jump with the same band every year; in the 1990s that band was Kaskaways, and for most of the last two decades it has been Ooutraje, led by Trevor Chase.

In both bands we found a community of like-minded souls who looked forward to each year's Crop-Over season, when we would meet and catch up with fellow band members, many of whom we would have hardly seen all year.

The fun and fellowship would begin at the band launch, with hugs and kisses, and reflections on all that transpired in the year that had passed.

The joyous spirit would continue at bandhouse limes, as the excitement built up to Kadooment Day. Monica always carried an Individual costume, and we looked forward every year to a visit from Trinidadian costume designers to help with the costumes for King and Queen of the band, as well as the costumes for

Individuals.

Kadooment Day always began early for us. Trevor insisted that everyone be at the assembly point at 7am, so that Ooutraje would have sufficient numbers to join the parade as early as possible, whatever the number in the parade at which the band was drawn.

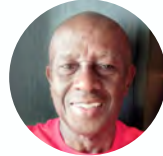
In order to get the parade off as quickly as possible, bands were dispatched in order as soon as they had assembled numbers sufficient for the size category in which they were entered. Every year, rain or shine, we chipped and sang and danced as we went down the road, greeting friends as we passed; I took pictures and video, and we had pictures and video taken of us.

We survived Spring Garden, usually, arriving at our rendezvous at Port Authority Sports Club happy, weary and utterly content.

Covid interrupted the spree; when we had the opportunity last year (2023), Trevor decided to have one last fling, and we had to be there.

*\*DeLisle Worrell is a former Governor of the Barbados Central Bank.*

# Happy 50th Anniversary



## A poem by G Leroy "Georgie" Straker

This year we celebrating (50) fifty  
Congrats to the legends of the country  
Started officially in 1974  
Windows became available to our folklore  
By veterans like Julian Marryshaw  
Fifty (50) years later the festival grow & grow  
The Bdos Tourism Authority played its part  
De Canes were harvested in donkey carts  
Remember sugar made us free  
A sweet song by RPB  
In 1981 we had carifesta going on  
Nigel Harper was in control  
These stories must be told  
The National Cultural Foundation came after  
Today its still revered for we culture  
An institution that has really blossomed  
Hip Hop Hooray for this 50th celebration  
This is the golden anniversary  
Thank God for stickability  
Many CEO's have passed through  
From Elombe to Boo  
From Dr Alison Leacock,  
To Carol Roberts Reifer now at the top  
So many calypsonians thru de years  
From De Mighty Charmer, DaCosta Allamby  
Emile Straker to Lord Radio  
Viper, Gabby, RPB and Romeo  
Lady Ann, Marcie, Madam Syncho Tempo  
Cubba, Duke Check-ed Shirt, Lord Wilson  
Sach Moore, Pitch up, Speedy  
Ouchie, Playboy and Georgie Porgie  
Margaret Bovell who sang so well  
Rita with a story to tell  
Tents like Romans, Sunrise, Soca Explosion  
Southern Stars and Conquerors on the Battlefield  
BattleGround was Untouchable  
House of Soca still standing strong  
Can you show me how many others are around  
Happy 50th anniversary celebration to the Foundation



# ROLL of HONOUR

## JUNIOR MONARCH

YEAR	AGE CATEGORY	GENRE	NAME
1986		CALYPSO	Richard 'Little Richie' Holder
1987		CALYPSO	Russell 'Russell D' Davis
1988		CALYPSO	Richard 'Little Richie' Holder
1989		CALYPSO	Kerry 'Turbo' Maxwell
1990		CALYPSO	Russell 'Russell D' Davis
1991		CALYPSO	Russell 'Russell D' Davis
1992		CALYPSO	Keisha 'Keisha' Christian
1993		CALYPSO	Keisha 'Keisha' Christian
1994		CALYPSO	Malika 'Malika' Hart
1995	8-11	CALYPSO	Shaka 'Tiny' Clarke
1995	12-18	CALYPSO	Elliott 'Soca Surfer' Barrow
1996	8-11	CALYPSO	Fabian 'Fabby' Odle
1996	12-18	CALYPSO	Malika 'Malika' Hart
1997	8-11	CALYPSO	Fabian 'Fabby' Odle
1997	12-18	CALYPSO	Tamara 'Starlight' Williams
1998	12-18	CALYPSO	Khiomal 'Khiomal' Nurse
1999	12-18	CALYPSO	Malika 'Malika' Hart
2008	13-18	CALYPSO	Chad "Sir Ruel" Bowen
2009	8-12	CALYPSO	Johari "Dazzle" Taitt
2010	8-12	CALYPSO	Miles "Miles-Z" Gittens
2010	8-12	CALYPSO	Jazz "Jazz-Z" Gittens
2010	13-18	CALYPSO	Aziza "Lil Az" Clarke
2011	8-12	CALYPSO	Carrie-Lyn "Carrie G" Grazette
2011	13-18	CALYPSO	Samantha "Sammy G" Greaves
2012	8-12	CALYPSO	Jazz "Jazz-Z" Gittens
2012	13-18	CALYPSO	Aisha "Mandisa" Butcher
2013	8-12	CALYPSO	Quinn "Quinn P" Prescott
2013	13-18	CALYPSO	Charice "Honesty" Walrond
2014	8-12	CALYPSO	Raanan "Raanan" Hackett
2014	13-18	CALYPSO	Samantha "Sammy G" Greaves
2015	8-12	CALYPSO	Asher "Dynamo" Murrell
2015	13-18	CALYPSO	Adelah "AH-DEE-LAH" Payne
2016	8-12	CALYPSO	Summa "Summa" Sargeant
2016	13-18	CALYPSO	Chad "De Mc" Montiplasir
2017	8-12	CALYPSO	Kiara Carrington
2017	13-18	CALYPSO	Teri "Sparkle-T" Williams-Niles
2018	8-12	CALYPSO	Emari "Browne Star" Browne
2018	13-18	CALYPSO	Dequon "Quon" Alleyne
2019	6-10	CALYPSO	Kenaz "The Mighty Bit Bit" Walker
2019	11-14	CALYPSO	Shontae "Shontae" Alleyne-Clarke
2019	15-18	CALYPSO	Dequon "Quon" Alleyne
2020			NO COMPETITION
2021			NO COMPETITION
2022		SOCA	Shontae "Tae" Alleyne-Clarke
2022		CALYPSO	Yahandje "Yahandje" Daniel
2023		CALYPSO	Shontae "Tae" Alleyne-Clarke
2023		SOCA	Sakarah 'Sakarah' Thomas



# ROLL of HONOUR

## TUNE OF THE CROP

YEAR GIVEN	NAME	SOBRIQUET	SONG	TENT
1979	Anthony Carter	Gabby	Burn Mr. Harding	Battleground
1980	Ewatt Green	Viper	Ting Tong	Battleground
1981	Peter Alleyne	Adonijah	Ethopia Rock	Untouchables
1982	Anthony Carter	Gabby	Jack	Battleground
1983	MacDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	Mr. T	Battleground
1984	MacDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	Stinging Bees	Battleground
1985	MacDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	More Grynner	Battleground
1986	Darcy Small	Ras Iley	Spring Garden on Fire	Untouchables
1987	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	Cyan Find Me Brudda	Untouchables
1988	MacDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	Wait for Me	Battleground
1989	MacDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	Leggo I Hand	Battleground
1990	MacDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	Get Out De way	Battleground
1991	Various	MADD	Tribute to Grynner	Battleground
1992	Neville Blackman	De Great Careq	Mad Woman Jam	Battleground
1993	Darcy Small	Ras Isley	Inez	Untouchables
1994	Elnaza Brewster	Serenader	Juck Fuh Juck	House of Soca
1995	Edwin Yearwood	Edwin Yearwood	Obadele	Bachannal Time
1996	Alison Hinds	Alison Hinds	Raggamuffin	Bachannal Time
1997	Allison Hinds	Alison Hinds		
Edwin Yearwood	Edwin Yearwood	In The Meantime		
Highway Robbery	Highway Robbery	Bachannal Time		
Bachannal Time				
1998	MacDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	Grind Dem	Conquerors
1999	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	Volcano	Untouchables
2000	Rupert Clarke	Rupee	Jump	Headliners
2001	Edwin Yearwood	Edwin Yearwood	Sac Passe	Bachannal Time
2002	Ricky Reid	Lil Rick	Hypa Dawg	Headliners
2003	Ricky Reid	Lil Rick	Mash Up & Buy Back	Headliners
2004	Michael Mercer	Mikey	Come Together	Headliners
2005	Natalie Burke	Nahtalee	Colours	Bachannal Time
2006	Barry Chandler	Barry	Flames	Bachannal Time
2007	Dale Rudder	Mr. Dale	Soca Junkie	Headiners
2008	Edwin Yearwood	Edwin Yearwood	Handle Yuh Business	Bachannal Time
2009	Edwin Yearwood	Edwin Yearwood	In De Middle of De Road	Celebration Time
2010	Anderson Armstrong	Blood	Foot on Fire	
2011	Edwin Yearwood	Edwin Yearwood	Cover De Road	Celebration Time
2012	Michael Mercer	Mikey	We Loose	Headliners
2013	Michael Mercer & Anderson Armstrong	Soca Kartel	Roll It	
2014	Oswaldo Reid & Reshawn Ince	Lead Pipe & Saddis	Ah Feeling	
2015	Peter Wiggins	Peter Ram	All Ah We	
2016	Rickey Reid	Lil Rick	Iz A Bajjan	
2017	Shane Atkinson	Stiffy	Tip & Bend Ova	
2018	Rickey Reid	Lil' Rick	Mudda Sally	
2019	Oswaldo Reid & Justin King	Leadpipe & Jus Jay	Sometime	
2022		Bruce Lee Almighty	Mauby	
2023	Jaquon Headley	Quan De Artist	Waistline	

# ROLL of HONOUR

## CALYPSO MONARCHS

### CALYPSO MONARCHS OF BARBADOS

YEAR	GIVEN NAME	SOBRIQUET	VENUE	SONG 1	SONG 2
1960	Michael Wilkinson	Michael Wilkinson	Kensington Oval	Uh Coming Up	Nil
1961	Louis Sealy	Little Baron	Kensington Oval	Bachelors Beware	Nil
1962	Maurice Ashby	Mighty Producer	Kensington Oval	King Dyal	
1963	Don Marshall	Sir Don	Kensington Oval	20th Century Husbands	Tax Dodgers
1964	Leopold Kirton	Mighty Charmer	Kensington Oval	Death of Kennedy	
1965	Don Marshall	Sir Don	Kensington Oval	Granny's Proverbs	Dear Mary Bray
1965	Sir Don	YMPC	YMPC	The Offence	Dear Mary Bray
1966	NO COMPETITION				
1967	NO COMPETITION				
1968	Anthony Carter	Mighty Gabby	YMCA	Heart Transplant	
1969	Anthony Carter	Mighty Gabby	Globe Cinema	Family Planning	
1970	NO COMPETITION				
1971	NO COMPETITION				
1972	NO COMPETITION				
1973	Charles Smith	Mighty Romeo	YMPC	A Land So Dear	Pampalam
1974	Edrick Jordan	Mighty Dragon	Pepperpot	Muhammad Ali	
1975	Don Marshall	Sir Don	Marine House	Tom Say	Make CARICOM Work
1976	Keith Christian	Mighty Destroyer	Culloden Farm	Come Together	
1976	McDonald Blenman	Mighty Grynner	Colloden Farm	Crop Over Bacchanal	
1977	NO COMPETITION				
1978	Keith Christian	Mighty Destroyer	National Stadium	I Man Bitter	Message to the People
1979	Victor Reid	Mighty Liar	National Stadium	She Want Pan	Nobody Don't Like Me
1980	Anthony Blenman	Black Pawn	National Stadium	The Right to Criticise	Politician
1981	Charles Smith	Mighty Romeo	National Stadium	Gem Gone	Brother Fuzzy
1982	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	Mr. Harding	Sugar Made Us Free
1983	RAINED OUT				
1984	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	Count the Cost	Bim
1985	Anthony Carter	Mighty Gabby	National Stadium	West Indian Politician	Culture
1986	John King	Jonny Ma Boy	National Stadium	Tribute to the Skipper	Congratulations
1987	Brian Payne	Bumba	National Stadium	They Want To Know	Lose Your Own
1988	Rita Forester	Rita	National Stadium	Woman Respect Yourself	Can't Party
1989	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	The Country Ain't Well	Pluck It

# ROLL of HONOUR

## CALYPSO MONARCHS

1990	Elenza Brewster	Serenader	National Stadium	Jogging	Tug O' War
1991	David Piggott	Kid Site	National Stadium	Mistaken Identity	No More Lies
1992	Joseph Hughes	Invader No. 3	National Stadium	Time	How Yuh Feet
1993	Elenza Brewster	Serenader	National Stadium	Steel In Dey	Breakdown
1994	John King	John King	National Stadium	I'm Back	Jump and Wave
1995	Edwin Yearwood	Edwin Yearwood	National Stadium	Obadele	Voice In My Head
1996	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	Issues of the Day	Give It To Me
1997	Anthony Carter	Gabby	National Stadium	Massa Day Done	No Sympathy
1998	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	Material	What Kind of World
1999	Anthony Carter	Gabby	National Stadium	Mock Sport	Mother Earth
2000	Anthony Carter	Gabby	National Stadium	Conversation with Mr. Barrow	Wuk Up
2001	Adrian Clarke	Adrian Clarke	National Stadium	Judgement	This Melody
2002	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	Red	Sam
2003	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	Hair	Competition
2004	David Piggott	Kid Site	National Stadium	Old Songs	Pirates
2005	David Piggott	Kid Site	National Stadium	Only Bout Hey	Hurricane Hit We
2006	David Piggott	Kid Site	National Stadium	No Shame At All	ZR Driver
2007	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	National Stadium	Bajans Can't See	Look Meh Hey
2008	Adrian Clarke	Adrian Clarke	Kensington Oval	I Am a Bajan	Put Dah In Yuh Song
2009	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	Kensington Oval	Home Drums	Something's Happening
2010	Anthony Carter	Gabby	Kensington Oval	Ole Ashe	Haiti
2011	David Hall	Popsicle	Kensington Oval	Cornwell	Pick a Fair
2012	Stedson Wiltshire	Red Plastic Bag	Kensington Oval	Thank You Calypso	Royal Visit
2013	Ian Webster	Ian Webster	Kensington Oval	Things You Do For Love	One Blood
2014	Ian Webster	Ian Webster	Kensington Oval	De Karaoke Song	Barbados Is Still My Home
2015	William Waithe	Classic	Kensington Oval	In Bed Together	Something Fishy
2016	Aziza Clarke	Aziza	Kensington Oval	Bring Back Respect	One People, One Nation
2017	Ian Webster	iWeb	Kensington Oval	Salesman	Pray For The Souls
2018	Anderson Armstrong	MR BLOOD	Kensington Oval	Stars & Stripes	Sexual Harrassment
2019	William Waithe	Classic	Kensington Oval	One Song	
2020	NO COMPETITION (COVID)				
2021	NO COMPETITION (COVID)				
2022	DEQUON ALLEYNE	QUON	Kensington Oval	Animal Farm	
2023	Ian Webster	iWeb	National Botanical Gardens	Brain	



Red Plastic Bag



The Mighty Grynner



The Hon. Anthony "Mighty Gabby" Carter;



Adrian Clarke

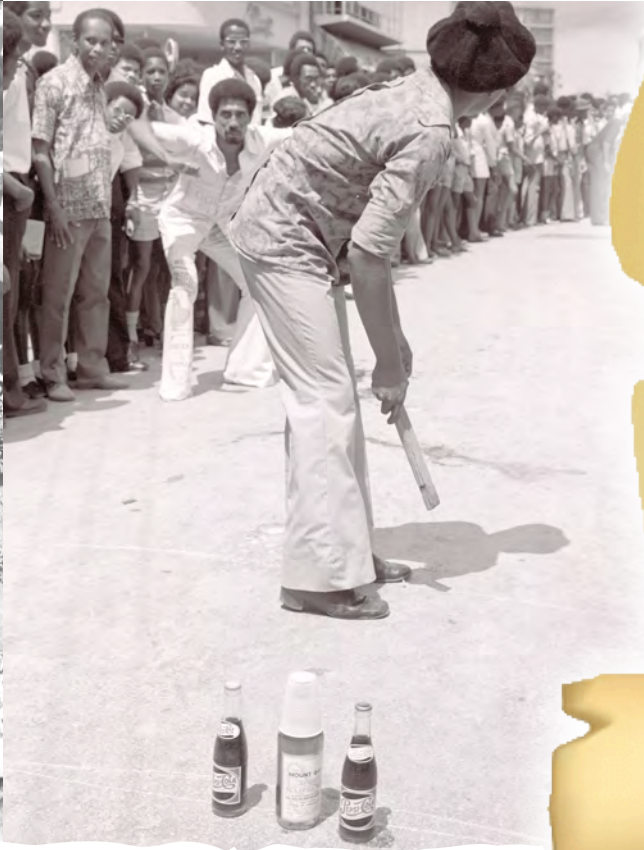


Lil Ric



Edwin

# Crop Over



- **1974 – 1980: Plantation Fairs**
- **1974: Donkey Cart Parade.** Became Decorated Cart Parade in 1975 and ran until about 1996/1997
- **1974 – late 70s: Barge Shows; Queen Shows**
- **1975-1977. Calypso Competitions** were held by private promoters Calypso Entreprises in association with the Crop Over Committee
- **1976: King and Queen of the Crop** introduced. Evolved into **Sugar Workers** in 2017
- **1977: Crop Over** comes under the Ministry of Education and Culture
- **1978:** The calypso competition resumed and **Pic-O-De-Crop** was introduced.
- **1978 (to early 80s): Baxter's Road Mall .**
- **1978: Bridgetown Market/ Broad Street.**
- **1978: Cohobblopot** was first staged.
- **1978: Grand Kadooment** introduced.
- **1978: Crop Over Queen Show.**
- **1980: Ceremonial Cutting of the Last Cane** which evolved into **Ceremonial Delivery of Last Canes**
- **1985: Del's Farley Hill Concert/Youth Concert/Youth Fest** changed from **Farley Hill concert** to **Youth focus.** Joda Productions produced **United Youth Concert.** The event was rebranded as **Youth Fest** in 1995.
- **1986: Bridgetown Market** relocated to Spring Garden.
- **1986: Plantation Feast ;** held within **Gala** in 1998
- **1986: Cohobblopot** evolves to include **Kings and Queens of the Band** competition
- **1986: Junior Kadooment** introduced.
- **1986: Junior Monarch Competition** introduced. (Moved from

# Timeline

- age based to genre based in 2022).
- 1986: Introduction of **Crop Over Visual Arts & Craft Exhibition**
  - 1986: **Pangalang/Tuk Band and Steel Band Competition.**
  - 1989: **Bajan Culture Village**; first held at King George V Park
  - 1989: **Crop Over Promenade .**
  - 1990: **Folk Concert** introduced/**Evening of Folk 2013/Folk Concert 2022/3**
  - 1995: **Junior Calypso Tent** introduced.
  - 1995: **Foreday Morning Jump Up** introduced.
  - 1995: **Party Monarch** Introduced
  - 1995: **Ceremonial Delivery of the Last Canes** merged with **Decorated Cart Parade.**
  - 1995: **Crop Over in the City** was introduced,
  - 1995: Photography was introduced as part of the **Crop Over Fine Art Exhibition.**
  - 1995: **Steel Pan Competition** was re-introduced to the Crop Over calendar
  - 2000: **Element of Picong** introduced in **Pic-O-De-Crop-Semi Finals.**
  - 2000: **Gospel Concert**
  - 2002: **Cavalcades**
  - 2003: **Pan Pun De Sand**
  - 2004: **Crop Over Read In**
  - 2008: **Pan In The City**
  - 2009: **Sweet Soca.**
  - 2010: **Soca Royale.**
  - 2011: **Pan Fusion.**
  - 2012: **Heritage Lecture & Tours**
  - 2022: **Soca Rukshun**
  - 2022: **Pandemonium**
  - 2023: **Soca 4.0**



Over the decades, we have bid farewell to many cherished members of the Crop Over family. Though death is an unwelcome guest, we take this moment to celebrate those who have left an indelible mark on our festival. On this page we seek to honour some of the stalwarts who live on in our hearts and memories.

# THE PASSING PARADE

**CHRISTOPHER ATHERLEY** – June 25th 2024  
**KEITH ELLIS** - January 22nd, 2024  
**YOUNG CASSIUS CLAY WINSTON YEARWOOD** - June 7th, 2023  
**RIDLEY GREENE** - September 8th, 2023  
**MARK WILLIAMS** - December 27th, 2023  
**GWYNETH SQUIRES** December 27th, 2023  
**KEITH “MYSTIC” SQUIRES** - October 20th, 2023  
**SHARON DARLINGTON** - March 31st, 2022  
**WALTER “BONGO” WHITNEY** - August 22, 2022  
**ANTHONY WALROND (NCF)** - October 30th, 2022  
**RICHARD BOURNE** - November 10th, 2022  
**MIGHTY LIAR VICTOR REID** - June 2021  
**OLIVER “LORD RADIO” BROME** - October 9th, 2021  
**SMOKEY BURKE** – February, 26th, 2020  
**COLIN “OBSERVER” REID** - September 2020  
**EDWARD “MIGHTY HERRING” ROWE** - August, 2019  
**ROMEO** - June 6th, 2018  
**DON “SIR DON” MARSHALL** - December 13th, 2018  
**ADRIAN “BOO” HUSBANDS** - January 19th, 2017  
**KEAN SPRINGER** – May, 2016  
**RENEE SHEPPARD –RATCLIFFE** - August 1st, 2016  
**MICHAEL “DIRECTOR” FORDE** – March 19th 2015



Adrian Boo  
Husbands



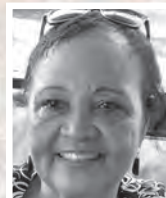
Smokey Burke



Winston Jordan



Renee Ratcliffe



Kean Springer

**REGGIE CAVE** - September 14th, 2015  
**ARCHBISHOP GRANVILLE - WILLIAMS** - April 6th, 2014  
**ROY BYER** - October 29th, 2014  
**FATMAN IRVIN WEEKES** - October 7th, 2013  
**PHYILLIS “FROGGY” COLLYMORE- ALLEYNE** - January 27th, 2011  
**MIGHTY WHITEY ALLAN TAYLOR** - September 23rd, 2012  
**CAROLYN “TASSA” FORDE** - February 10th, 2011  
**GRACE THOMPSON** – August 10th 2009  
**WINSTON JORDAN** - December 22nd, 2008  
**JANICE MILLINGTON** – May 2nd 2005  
**KING WILLIAM** - November 24th 2003  
**ROBERT WEEKES** - October 11th, 1997  
**NEVILLE “DE GREAT CAREW” BLACKMAN** – August 13th 1995  
**EDRICK “MIGHTY DRAGON” JORDAN** - October 5th, 1993

*The following persons passed away over the past 50 years, but we were unable to confirm the dates of their deaths:*

Anthony “Cubba” Austin  
 Hurricane Helen  
 Livingston “Salty” Knight.  
 Jessica (The Donkey)  
 Alfred Elias



Romeo



Gwyneth Squires



Sir Don



Bishop Granville



Anthony Waldron



The Mighty Carew.



Christopher  
Atherley



Grace  
Thompson



Janice  
Millington

A section of the Betty West Band on the road, Kadooment Day

Shaggy Bear by Arthur Atkinson

# Curtain comes down on 50th year

Crop-Over 2024 marked the golden anniversary of Barbados' most beloved Summer festival. Despite some mixed reviews, the milestone celebration received praise for its vibrant spirit and cultural richness.

As the curtain comes down, we showcase here, some of the stand out moments from this year's festival, capturing the essence of Crop Over in all its glory.

ABOVE, Foreday morning, one of the big successes. AT RIGHT, the Opening Gala. AT LEFT, 2024 Calypso Monarch Adrian "AC" Clarke. BELOW, Junior Monarch winners in soca Kymani "Mr. Showman" Devonish (left) and in calypso Shakarah "Shakarah" Thomas.

NATIONAL HERO  
Robyn "Rihanna"  
Fenty flew in for  
the festival.

The NCF's Barbados  
National Youth Steel  
Orchestra performing at  
Pandemonium.

Section of Kiddies Kadooment

Jennifer Walker as Lily and Nekoda Ellis as Aaron  
in "Full Circle", the 2024 Crop Over Folk Concert.



BATRNOFF

BRIDGETOWN MARKET

Crop Over Festival

5 YEARS CROP OVER