



Courtesy: Carnival Camera,
The Lost Tribe

March 2024

KEEPING UP WITH LORI-O



C15 team with the glorious Nailah Blackman

OUTWARD TRINIDAD/INWARD STUART

Heading up the Caribbean from Trinidad, outward bound as they say. Well I am heading to Stuart, Florida our Sunshine home, so it is also inward bound. March is over and 2024 has felt off until I got caught by the Carnival energy! I felt so disconnected in January. It continued into February and I felt demotivated with a strong desire to just read, sleep, and allow the days to roll by.

Of course, that isn't what I did as Carnival is action, Carnival is friends, Carnival is liming and wining and this year, there was no film to produce, concert to run, or music video to coordinate. So I decided I would enjoy aspects of Carnival that I never had time to do and really go with the flow. February started with a bang as C15 Studios hosted a social mixer: Carnival edition and we had a lovely evening with clients, partners, and associates in a beautiful garden, under giant Samaan trees. It set the tone for the next couple of weeks, where social activities blended with escapades into Trinidad's luxuriant rainforests.

WATERFALLS & NATURE

From the extraordinary magical portal of Covignes Gorges, in Chaguaramas, up the steep hill to Rincon, the longest waterfall in Trinidad, lounging under a palm tree at Las Cuevas beach or swimming in deep turquoise pools in the Matura National Reserve, I admit that I love being close to the trees, the rivers, birds and seas.

As my friend Maxine touched down, she is a hard-core party on her natural high. Her spirit soars when she lands in her Trinidad and she does it all. On arrival, she messaged to meet up and we started her 10 days in Trinidad by visiting the intimate and powerful exhibition on Peter Minshall's mas design "The Hummingbird" played by his sister, Sherry Ann Guy in 1974.

Displayed at the historical Stollmeyer's Castle, it was a journey down history lane with newspaper clippings and photos of Carnival 1974. Such ingenuity and research in Minshall's work



Peter Minshall's "The Humming Bird" prototype



Nature visits with Maxine

MACHEL CALYPSO MONARCH

The next day, after the invigorating hike to Covigne Gorges, and lunch at Upick, Maxine and I decided we had to be in Skinner Park for Calypso Fiesta.

Machel Montano, King of Soca and a close friend of ours, had entered the Calypso Monarch competition for the first time in over 30 years. He had decided to take time his usually very hectic Carnil season to focus on his studies. The Calypso was composed for one of his classes and his professor, none other than the famous Chalkdust, 8 time winner of Calypso Monarch, encouraged him to enter the competition. And so he did... and so he reached the semi finals where over 100 calypsonians compete for the prize of hundreds of thousands of \$ and the title of Calypso Monarch.

What a night it turned out to be, we drove down with Lisa Ghany and we arrived just in time for Machel to take the stage. The venue was packed and buzzing. Machel turned up the energy in his inimitable style, he brought Soca to Calypso and Calypso to Soca and the crowd went wild. I felt the power of his energy straight to my belly and I was ready for the Carnival. I finally felt connected.....



Had to get a photo with Machel

No surprise when it was announced that Machel had made it to the finals and would be competing on the Savannah stage Carnival Sunday night.

As I said Maxine is nonstop energy and pump, no time to waste, this is her annual ritual, her freedom party so to top off that weekend on Sunday evening we experienced the first half of the Freetown Collective concert – All Hands on Deck at Sound Forge. Maxine had never been to one of their events, and she really enjoyed it even supporting the local artisans who were selling their craft at the event (great initiative btw).

THE 3 CANAL JAMMIN'

Without missing a beat we headed to the 3 Canal Show – Powda at Queens Hall. The show had just started as we slid into our front row seats and were entertained by the Canal's and their dancers for 2 hours. Wendell acknowledged my presence as they are celebrating 30 years of Jouvert. The music label I founded back in 1995 with Jean Michel and Roses – 3canal was one of our first signings and the song Blue was one of our first releases. Many memories that evening and nostalgia and pride.



3 canal Show



Maxine & I at Freetown

HELPING ACHSAH PERPARE FOR CARNIVAL

Whilst I had decided to enjoy myself this Carnival and indulge in as many activities as possible, Achsah had her hands, head, and time full with delivering her costumes to the 100 Achsah baddies who had registered to play in her section, Oasis, in Tribe.

I helped her move all her goodie bags and costumes into the hub at Movietowne. I got an appreciation of the behind-the-scenes and how much work putting a band on the road is.

This is the ultimate in service industry, you are not only entertaining, supplying food and drink, security, music, costumes that have to please every masquerader (each one being so different in their bodies).

Playing mas on Monday and Tuesday as someone told me is offering 2 days of all inclusive partying for over 10 hours!!!!



Achsah looking amazing in her Oasis costume - Tribe Carnival

Nailah had another great season, and although I wasn't able to go to many of her shows as her schedule was just so hectic. Some nights she had 7/8 events, I did go the Kes concert IzWe in the Savannah on Tuesday evening. Backstage is always quite the social gathering of artists and industry persons, Nailah dressed in a pink tulle skirt, had a fantastic performance.

It was set up in the Savannah facing east which was an interesting change. Hung out back stage with Nailah, Anson, and the team.

Selwyn was working on the crane in the middle of the crowd, So i went outside to hang with him a bit but it was too much, and I headed back to the manageable back stage area.



Nailah in her outfit for the Kes event

That same day, Sebastien flew in from Paris, to join the family for the celebrations. It was wonderful to have the whole family together and it was Selwyn's birthday to top it off.

KAMBULE

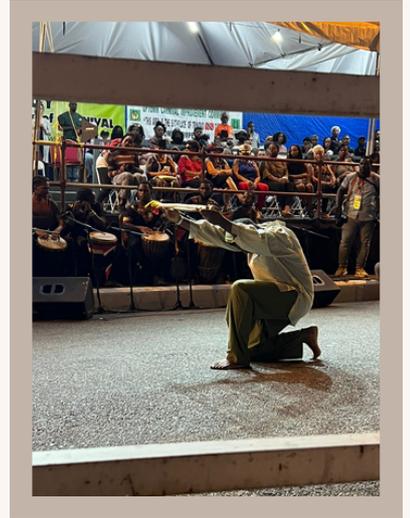
I saved my energy to go to the Kambule celebrations held at 5 am on Carnival Friday, in downtown, South Key. Bleachers are built on either side of the road and the road is the stage. It's a play depicting the birth of Carnival out of the Kamuble riots and the desire for the recently freed slaves to celebrate the way they wanted and not the way the authorities planned. There was dancing, and drumming, and stick fighting. It was a whole journey and then after the play ended, there was an amazing parade of most of the traditional Carnival characters. The fire blowers were spectacular, and the Tamboo Bamboo was a whole vibe.



Jenny, Mel & I at day break on Piccadilly



Baby doll blowing fire



PANORAMA

Saturday night was Panorama, the steel band competition, where the top steel bands in the land practice for months for the 10 minutes of glory to perform the song of their choice on the Savannah stage for the judges, the thousands of spectators, and mostly their fans, their neighborhood who they proudly represent. The atmosphere is electric, the Savannah is packed with thousands of people but there is no aggressivity and I am blown away by the magic of Trinidad, where all differences are put aside to enjoy a night of musical rivalry. And rivalry there is between big bands such as Desperadoes or BP Renegades. All Stars and Phase II. There was a controversial tie for the win this year and it had a lot of talk about who was the better BP Renegades of All Stars.

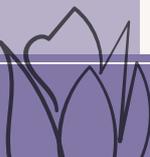


Exodus getting ready to go on stage!



Bounced into Maxine on the track.... She is Omnipresent!

Sunday is the last day before the streets turn into a massive street party, so it's the day to run any errands, get any last-minute items you may be missing, and making sure you eat well. Of course, there are lots of fetes, and Maxine was off to a couple of them. She picked me up around 7 pm as we didn't want to miss Machel's performance at Dimanche Gras and he was performing in third position. We arrived on time and headed to the media area to get the best view of Machel's performance; It didn't disappoint. Machel put on a fantastic show and the audience loved it. We didn't stay too long after his performance as we needed a little rest before meeting 3canal for Jouvay at 4 am!!!



3 Canal Jouvay



JOUVAY

3canal's Jouvay is a tradition – for the past 27 years I have only played Jouvay with 3canal. They are family, the people who are in the band are close friends and family. I feel completely safe and comfortable, happy and free. This year was their swansong, their final performance on the road for Jouvay. Had a lot of nostalgia, drama and beauty. I felt so joyful and allowed myself to flow with the music and the vibes. Machel and Renee joined us as we celebrated Machel winning Calypso Monarch 2024!!!

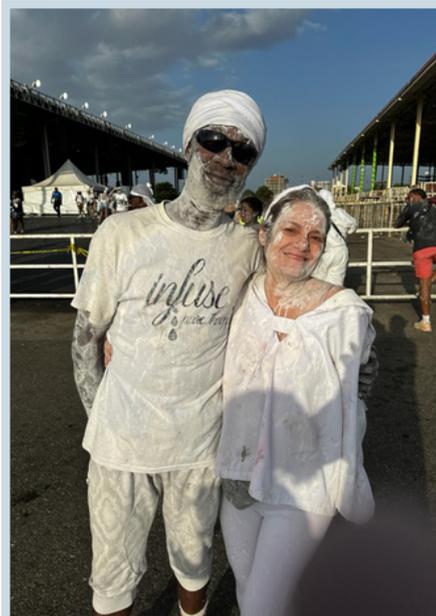
Reaching the Savannah stage at 7am and the authorities not wanting to let us cross, and then the power of the people take over and we just invade the stage dancing to 3canal's melodious and rich voices enticing us to jam, one more time. After that euphoria, Selwyn and I head home as he has to go and set up the broadcast at the Socadrome.



Start of the Jouvay



Machel Montano and his wife Renee



End of Jouvay

3canal as it was in the beginning so it shall end...
2004- 2024



PLAY MAS - TIME FOR CARNIVAL

Carnival is part of our life, there is a sort of habit that sets in when you repeat something for so many years. I haven't played mas very often in the past 20 years so after a great time in 2023 with Lost Tribe, I joined them again for their 2024 presentation - FLY! And so we flew.... Monday we were to dress in fluorescent green and all the different styles were extraordinary. It was fun, free, and joyful. Met lots of friends and left early.



Love bellies...

Tuesday was the real deal - I was dressed as a Coquette, a beautiful Madras skirt and head tie that shone in the bright sun. I joined the band very early at the start, as they meandered and gathered downtown Port of Spain, amidst the tall buildings of steel, glass, and concrete. It felt incongruous and yet mind-blowing as here we were hundreds of persons gathering in costume to spend the day parading on the streets of the city. The vibe was sweet from the start and I soon met up with Giselle and Heathcliff, my mas partners from last year, and we were off for a full day of dancing and meeting friends, taking photos, and more dancing! The sun was blazing with barely any clouds to protect - so we looked for shade while we waited to cross the Savannah stage. While hiding under a tent, I met the Cocoa Devils crew and that was a sweet moment. Crossing the stage was the height it always is, with so much joyful energy, with all those people dancing and smiling and parading their costumes.

This year it was a toss-up between a relative newcomer Mical Teja's patriotic "Come Home" and veteran Bunji Garlin's "Carnival Contract". "Come Home" won the prestigious Road March title.

But the song that really did it for me this Carnival was Mical Teja's "Runaway" where he is telling the story of a young lady named Lorraine who doesn't catch feelings, she catches flights and comes home to Trinidad for Carnival. She is all over the road, watch she wine and rolling!

To top off the week, Ash Wednesday was Valentine's Day, and Selwyn and I took in the Bob and Rita Marley love story "One Love" which took me down a whole set of nostalgia. I was 15 when Exodus was released, living in the South of France and I remember how I bought the vinyl and played it over and over.

February was sweet too bad and Carnival in Trinidad is just the best feeling ever. **The year now starts!**



With Road March King - Mical Teja



Selwyn & I celebrating Valentine's Day

CARNIVAL PHOTOS

