

The Magazine

CALLALOO



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Gayle hits India for six with new collaboration

You can't keep a good man down, especially if he's a renowned batsman who has ventured into music and has chosen to go by the moniker, Universe Boss. As Chris Gayle, he is used to hitting big runs on the cricket pitch and, without missing a stride, his sojourn into music as a recording artiste has seen him smoothly hitting – not sixes – but number one on music charts.

The up-and-coming recording artiste, who can boast of having a song with 53 million views on YouTube, took over charts in Asia with Jamaica To India, a collaboration with Indian rap artiste Emiway Bantai. It was number one in India for more than a week and made dents in various charts across Asia. The Universe Boss was recently added to the Asian edition of the big-name, Billboard-hitting Tropical House Cruises to Jamaica series.

Executive producer of the project, Sean 'Contractor' Edwards, explained that the last project targeted Africa, and this time around, Asia is their focus, as well as the traditional reggae markets of Canada, England and America.

"We are targetting India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. We have Malaysian reggae star Sassi the Don and we have Chris Gayle, who, because of cricket, is a giant in all those countries. We have Jah Cure, Morgan Heritage, Capleton, Gentleman, as well as the big American rapper named Red Man, King Tiger and Alistar, and Jason Derulo, the big R&B star from America," Edwards shared.

Gaylesaid that it is "a great feeling" and he is excited to be on an album alongside those big names. The song, titled Gimme Your Love, is a collaboration with newcomer Shav-A.

"When you look at the names associated with this project ... and then you see Universe Boss added to this project, it's a big win for me, especially for someone



Shiv-A, left, and Chris Gayle: collaboration for an Asian audience

just crossing over into music as well. I cannot complain; all I can do is give thanks, and I am happy that I am associated with the Tropical House project. Yes! I am looking forward to it. This is a big step in my music career," he said.

Gimme Your Love was produced by radio disc jockey Gary G, who reached out to the artiste and he immediately responded.

"I didn't hesitate one bit. I rounded up the Triple Century Records team – Camar Flava, Brisco and Lyrical – and then we put our lyrics together and we vibe it in the studio and record it. We sent it over and

Gary G liked it, and the rest was history. It is a really good love song ... give me your love, but when you get the love, I hope yuh can manage it?" asked Gayle, who admitted that he hasn't met his collaborator, Shav-A, in person as yet.

Gayle had strong words of encouragement for her. "It's a good look for both of us; two new up-and-coming artistes collaborating on something fantastic. I am sure it is a song that everybody will catch on to. Shav-A, big up yourself. We will connect one of the time. Keep doing what you are doing. Don't stop pressing gas, Shav-A," Gayle urged.

Ask 'Di': My parents are always arguing....

Disclaimer: The content of the Ask Di column is for information only, and the author is not responsible for any actions performed by the reader. Information is gathered and shared from reputable sources and Di is not responsible for errors or omissions in reporting or explanation. No individuals, including those under their medical care, should use any of the information to self-diagnosis or self-treat any health-related condition. No assurance or warranty regarding the accuracy, timeliness or applicability or the content is given.

.Q: Dear Di, I was raised in a very respectful and traditional family. My expectations and values are very average to high. My best guy friend is always hitting on my girlfriend and she likes the attention and I am just tired of it but I love her. What is a man to do for I am considering asking her to marry me? – P.K.

A: Dearest P.K., I can hear and feel your pain in your question and there is no simple answer for this because there are several people involved. I do have a few questions for you and here goes:

1. Do you and your girlfriend have an open exclusive relationship and you both have discussed and agreed on this?

2. Are you both ready to take it to the next step?

3. Is it your insecurity or are you 100% sure that this is a real situation and not your monkey mind talking?

4. Have you ever confronted her and told her that it makes you uncomfortable when she reacts in this manner?

Now about your boy, let us chat about him. Firstly, if he was your best buddy and loved and respected you then he would respect your girl as well. Whether it is fun or not he must have respect for both of you. Please do keep in mind as we say, it takes two hands to clap. We should never play the blame game; we should however take 100% responsibility for every action which takes place around us.

Secondly, if your buddy is a player, then you may want to cut him loose for the next step for you is marriage then you

may want to change a few things including the people you hang around. The other option is to call him and confront him and tell him how you feel and if his reaction is sincere and he apologizes then you can move forward. However, if he is like still singing to his tune then cut the rope buddy, and move on.

In life, people will come and go just like tomorrow will always be a new day.

Walk forward always. All the best and please do send us an update. Cheers!

Q: Dear Di, my parents are always fighting and arguing. I am an only child and I always get caught up in the middle. I am tired of it for it has been like this since I was a child. I am massively depressed and I just literally stay in my room. I do not believe that the therapy and meds are working, any suggestions? – J.E.

Dearest J.E., I am so sorry and I just wanted to let you know that I applaud you for your bravery in opening up. Sometimes an opening up is part of our healing in itself and also just to let you know that you are not broken to be fixed period! As a disclaimer, please know that if you are on medication you still need to take preventative measures and not just remove yourself from any prescribed medication based on my response. Low self-esteem also can play a major role for sometimes as a single child one becomes smothered by one or both parents. Several questions arise in regards to your parents; Are they in love, is there love in the family, have they been hurt before, and do they believe that they are protecting you however in reality they are hurting you without realizing it? There are more questions of course.

I know several individuals in this situation and the issue arises when no one is listening to the other. Parents are parents as I too am one, and our children all have minds and influences of their own. What I

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know and believe is that no one knows what goes on in our heads and they never will. No one can tell your story for you or mine for me.

Your story or mine may go like this; "My name is Dianne and I am here. I am not invisible and I have a voice. A voice I would like you to take a moment and listen to my pain, hurt, cry for help. I am a good person. I am not here to fill your void as parents but to become the successful individual I was bought here to become and to love and be happy. I am not here to hurt you, or disrespect you however I also need to be respected as an adult and live my life. Your support is what I need and not the constant barking back and forth. You made your choices in life and I have to make mine with your 100% love and support. I may be 30 years old however the now is not like yesterday and will never be like tomorrow and I want my tomorrow to be a bright day. I love you and I want you to hear my cry for help." It may go something along these lines and you say what is in from your heart for parents were also someone's children who possibly never got the attention and love they needed. Smothering another is not the answer. Forgive them and work with them for this is the best you can probably do for yourself and your family. Be brave and strong.

All the best to you and remember you are not broken to be fixed, just maybe tweaked a little. Take care of yourself and if you would like to chat more then please do contact me directly. Cheers!

Kate Moss: Johnny didn't push me, I fell down stairs in JA holiday

Kate Moss has denied a rumour that her ex Johnny Depp once pushed her down the stairs.

The 48-year-old model – who dated the Pirates of the Caribbean star between 1994 and 1997 – appeared in court via video link from Gloucestershire, south west England, on Wednesday to give evidence in Depp and his ex-wife Amber Heard's US\$100 million defamation trial.

Heard, 36, previously referenced the model during the ongoing court case, when she discussed an alleged altercation between Depp and her sister, Whitney Henriquez, saying:

"[Whitney's] back was to the staircase, and Johnny swings at her. I don't hesitate, I don't wait – I just, in my head, instantly think of Kate Moss and stairs."

When asked in court by Benjamin Chew, a member of Depp's legal team, if the 58-year-old Hollywood actor had ever pushed her down the stairs while they were dating, Moss replied, "No, he never pushed me, kicked me or pushed me down any stairs."

She told the court how during a holiday in Jamaica with Depp he had picked her up and "got [her] medical attention" after she had fallen down some



Kate Moss: Depp helped me after I fell down some stairs

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stairs.

Moss explained: "We were leaving the room and Johnny left the room before I did. There had been a rainstorm and as I left the room I slid down the stairs. I hurt my back. And I screamed because I didn't know what had happened to me and I was in pain. He came running back to help me, carried me to my room and got me medical attention."

Kate, who gave evidence in less than five minutes, was not cross-examined by Heard's team.

Heard first made the allegation during her testimony in the

UK in 2020.

She said at the time: "I remembered information I had heard [that] he pushed a former girlfriend – I believe it was Kate Moss – down the stairs. I had heard this rumour from two people and it was fresh in my mind."

But Depp's legal team were seen pumping their fists when she first mentioned Moss' name during the ongoing defamation case in Fairfax, Virginia.

The reference gave them the opportunity to call the model as an impeachment witness to disprove the allegation.

Indonesian reggae artiste straddling music and food

There is no doubt about the positive impact of reggae on people from all over the world. Its hypnotic and pulsating tempo are easily recognised, and it has secured a pride of place right beside many mainstream and indigenous varieties. Indonesia is a case in point.

This Southeast Asian nation is the world's largest archipelago, consisting of approximately 13,677 islands. Java, on which the capital, Jakarta, is located, is one of the bigger islands. In West Java, there is a place named Bandung, where, in a little village called Kampung Mokla, Samuel Walukouw was born and bred.

Though there was dangdut folk music, the dancehall of Indonesia, reggae, which his mother loves, was also popular. The sounds of Toots and the Maytals, and Bob Marley, were everywhere when he was growing up. There was also Seventh-day Adventist Church music, though he was not a Christian in the true sense of the concept. Nor did he regard himself a Muslim.

In a country that is 85 per cent Muslim, there is always tension between Christianity and Islam. He grew up in a small Adventist community which had its own college, in a place where the principles of Islam were deeply entrenched. He dreamed of being a chef from he was "little". And though music was everywhere, and his family musically inclined, Walukouw did not harbour the thought of pursuing music professionally.

Migrating with his mother to Canton in upstate New York, 11 years ago, seems to have changed his life, however. Influenced by musicians with whom he was associated, he applied to the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, but did not get in. He eventually pursued a business administration degree right there in Canton. Yet, music and Boston were still on his mind. So he relocated to Boston, where he es-



Samuel Walukouw is also a chef

established a band, started getting gigs, and in no time became a "musician by association".

While Walukouw regards himself as a reggae singer, he is also a jazz percussionist, having been introduced to jazz by his friend, a saxophonist in his band, Java Jukebox. "But, when I write music, I specifically approached it from a jazzy perspective, progressing, melodies, harmonies," he explained. Yet, he does not sing jazz.

And, though he is influenced by Bunny Wailer, Dennis Brown and other old-school reggae artistes, he said his brand of reggae is not mainstream; he is still trying to figure out what it is. Yet, it is impacted by the reggae of the US east coast, where he is associated with many reggae artistes. "I tried to approach it in an imagined way in terms of the sound and the quality of the recorded sound," he ex-

plained.

It was not enough for him to stay on the east coast with his own blend of reggae, so he has come to the birthplace of reggae twice. "It (the first time) felt like home to me because it is very similar to the environment where I grew up, really. It opened up my mind as to what Jamaica was all about," he shared. "When you learn the history of Jamaica, you understand what reggae is." It was a cultural revelation, expose, and that was why he had decided to return.

This time around it was to do some recording, before visiting Indonesia to collaborate with Indonesia artistes with the music recorded here. He also soaked up more of the Jamaican culture, and shared some of his by way of facilitating Indonesian food workshops. Pursuing music did not replace his love for cooking, and he now regards himself as the 'singing chef', a professional one who focuses on Indonesian cuisine. He does events and pop-up dinners, and is hired for private, special occasions.

And, in his own way he seems to have evolved into a reggae/Jamaican cultural ambassador in Indonesia, to which he still has very close ties. Though the genre is quite popular there, he said, not many Indonesians understand what reggae is all about, "the messages", and they associate Jamaica with the "weed", an easy-going lifestyle, the beach, and dreadlocks.

Walukouw said, "I like to uplift people in Indonesia, to show them that reggae is not just about smoking ganja, living on the beach with dreadlocks. That's the mainstream idea we have in Indonesia. It's all about the mainstream commercialised reggae that they know So, if I can bring people from Indonesia to Jamaica to learn something that they would never learn, I would like to do that, too. I am trying to incorporate the music, food and culture into this one thing."

JA writer wins regional Commonwealth Short Story Prize

Jamaican writer Diana McCaulay has won the 2022 Commonwealth Short Story Prize (Caribbean). She beat off strong competition from 2019 winner Alexia Tolas from the Bahamas and fellow Jamaican Sharma Taylor. She will go through to the final round of judging and the overall winner will be announced on June 21, a media release said.

McCaulay's winning story, *Bridge over the Yallahs River* is a story about the impacts of short-term construction work by overseas crews on community life in Jamaica, illustrated by the wrenching choices a father must make between his ability to earn and his daughter's health.

In a double hit for the Caribbean, a former maths teacher who moved to the UK from St Vincent and the Grenadines as a teenager, Cecil Browne, has won the 2022 Commonwealth Short Story Prize (Canada and Europe) for his story *A Hat for Lemer*, set in 19th-century St Vincent. The story revolves around a woman faced with a dilemma after Emancipation. Browne is the first author from St Vincent and the Grenadines to win a regional prize, the release said.

The judge representing the Caribbean region, Trinidadian novelist Kevin Jared Hosein, says in the release, "*Bridge over the Yallahs River* is the story of a storm-struck bridge and the various people tasked to re-build it. It transports the reader to the small riverside village of Back To. Modern political powers have kept it in a sort of post-colonial Sisyphean stasis. The new bridge seems to be the catalyst for something hopeful. Long-needed repair. As the bridge progresses, the residents and the Chinese construction workers form an unconventional symbiotic bond – only for their actions at the end to announce that more than a physical bridge had been broken. A tale of simultaneous triumph and botchery;



Diana McCaulay

loss and reclamation; comedy and tragedy."

Chair of the judges, Guyanese writer Fred D'Aguiar, said, "This year's regional winners offer a cornucopia of riches for readers globally from sources located around the world. These stories testify to the varied tones of fiction, from the oblique to the direct reference, with moments of character illumination to those associated with an imperiled planet. If a reader harboured any doubt about whether fiction is relevant to today's world these stories answer with a riposte that resonates beyond a resounding 'yes.' These stories fulfil a higher function as exemplars of the short story form: vibrant, memorable and indispensable."

Speaking of the background to the story, McCaulay says, "I have been an environmental activist for the past 30 years and did some work on the impacts of quarrying on communities near the Yal-

lahs River in Jamaica."

Describing her win as "an absolute thrill," she adds, "I wanted to write about the conflict I saw so frequently during my environmental life – the heavy costs of what we call 'development,' who pays those costs, the painful choices people must make between their livelihoods and their lives and the many ways in which they fight back."

The story was selected from a shortlist of 26 by an international judging panel chaired by Guyanese writer Fred D'Aguiar.

The other panellists are:

Rwandan publisher Louise Umutoni-Bower (Africa)

Indian short story writer and novelist Jahnvi Barua (Asia)

Cypriot writer and academic Stephanos Stephanides (Canada and Europe)

Australian Wiradjuri writer, poet and academic Jeanine Leane (Pacific).

The Commonwealth Short Story Prize, which is administered by the Commonwealth Foundation, is awarded annually for the best piece of unpublished short fiction from any of the Commonwealth's 54 member states. It is the most accessible and international of all writing competitions: in addition to English, entries can be submitted in Bengali, Chinese, Creole, French, Greek, Malay, Portuguese, Samoan, Swahili, Tamil, and Turkish.

Full list of regional winners:

Africa: *and the earth drank deep* by Ntsika Kota (Eswatini)

Asia: *The Last Diver on Earth* by Sofia Mariah Ma (Singapore)

Canada and Europe: *A Hat for Lemer* by Cecil Browne (United Kingdom/St Vincent and the Grenadines)

Caribbean: *Bridge over the Yallahs River* by Diana McCaulay (Jamaica)

Pacific: *The Nightwatch* by Mary Rokonadravu (Fiji)



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Swiss singer takes aim at EUK Soca Monarch crown

Following the release of her up-tempo soca track Proper, Trinidad-born Swiss soca artiste Natalyah has earned a place in the finals of 2022 Europe United Kingdom Soca Monarch (EUKSM) competition. The event takes place June 5 during the Big Platinum Festival in England in celebration of Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee.

Proper has also been embraced by several DJs and radio outlets across the Caribbean diaspora and Europe as well as generated many TikTok videos, a media release said.

Her fan base helped voted Natalyah to the finals at which she will showcase Trinidad and Tobago's culture as she battles three other contestants for the EUKSM title.

Natalyah, who is from San Fernando but lives in Switzerland, has always held close to her roots and has always represented TT and the entire Caribbean throughout her career, the release said.

"I am very honoured to be in the top four and I'm extremely grateful to all the people who voted for me. I think this competition will bring a lot of new opportunities. I am also looking forward in meeting everybody in person and making new friends," Natalyah said in the release.

Natalyah has produced pure soca material but she consistently delivers distinctive soca-infused contemporary pop songs to the masses and has also dabbled in chutney music, the reggae/dancehall genre and even house music.

For Natalyah, the goal always remains the same, to utilise platforms and perform on stages where lovers of Caribbean music, rhythms and culture can access and embrace the one-of-a-kind indigenous art forms from the region.

She believes the presence of the upcoming competition as part of the Big Plat-



Swiss soca artiste Natalyah: in the finals for European Soca Monarch

inum Festival is a major step in promoting soca music to the world.

Natalyah plans to bring forth a dynamic presentation at the finals of the

EUKSM.

Her current single Proper, which is distributed through VPAL Music, is available now on all major streaming platforms.

WATINA!

Calypso Rose, Santana single pays homage to Garifuna

The video opens with a young boy asleep in the arms of a young girl, sitting in a boat, rocking gently on the open sea. Its imagery is distinctly Caribbean and the language: Garifuna.

In her latest single, *Watina*, featuring the famed guitarist Carlos Santana and Belizean band, The Garifuna Collective, Calypso Rose pays tribute to the Garifuna people and shows her love for Belize.

The single was released on May 19, and you read about it in last month's *Callaloo Magazine*.

In a media release Santana said Calypso Rose was a goddess of Caribbean music, a person who offers her heart and changes people's lives and destinies.

The release added, "With *Watina*, she pays homage to the Garifuna, a Caribbean people scarred by slavery, excluded from memory, and part of whose population now lives not only in the US, but also on the coasts of four Central American countries: Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Belize."

The song is full of devastating history contrasted by cheerfulness and celebration, it added.

Watina was a hit for the Belizean band.

"Ivan Duran, Rose's Belizean-born, long-time producer was also the sound architect for the late Andy Palacio, who co-founded and led the Belizean-based band The Garifuna Collective until his untimely death in 2008," the release said.

Palacio was a Belizean Punta musician and an activist for the Garifuna people. *Watina* was the name of Palacio's final album and a single on it.

In the release Duran said Calypso Rose was the only person who could recapture the frenzy and the impact of the song while respecting Palacio's legacy.

"By recording and reimagining the song with the same musicians, she reaffirms her Belizean ties and once again



The Garifuna Collective with Calypso Rose

exploits the contrast between the festive spirit and the social dimension of the music," it said.

Machel Montano, world music legend Manu Chao, Jamaican dancehall icon Mr Vegas, Toulouse-based rapper Oli, and electro duo Synapson also join her on the 14-track album. The album will be released on August 26. *Feel Like Dancing*, *Young Boy* featuring Machel Montano, *One by One* featuring Kobo Town and Mr Vegas, *Rock the Boat*, *Gramma Martha* and *Outside Man* are some of the songs on the album.

"Throughout the new album, Rose presents original material with a distinctly modern approach, and revisits some of her greatest classics, giving us an album that speaks to everyone and transcends all ages," it said.

Calypso Rose's career has been booming internationally since her 2015 release of *Far From Home* featuring multiple collaborations with Manu Chao and she has

since performed at approximately 200 concerts in four years including *Les Vieilles Charrues*, *We Love Green*, *World of Music*, *Arts and Dance festivals* and *Olympia Hall* in Paris, France, the release said.

She also performed at the annual *Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival* in 2019, becoming the oldest artiste to do so.

"With her music, Calypso Rose carries an optimism that shines through her music: a delicate balance between tradition, modernity and universality.

"The Calypso Queen combines all of that and her universal messages and views on societies with the world on her new album. She also brings up as many hedonistic subjects like partying or the energy of youth as she does the battles waged throughout her career: feminism, equality between peoples and individuals, her unwavering hope for a better tomorrow," it said.



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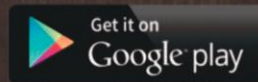
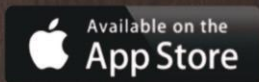


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See me, not my skin

Akenna Kublal advocates for vitiligo awareness

When Akenna Kublal gets on stage in Minnesota in the US to co-host women's night at the World Vitiligo Day conference on June 24, she will hardly be out of her comfort zone. The 33-year-old trained public speaker and personal development and image consultant has been living with vitiligo since 2015 and is an advocate and spokesperson for vitiligo awareness.

The skin condition develops when the cells that produce pigment die or stop producing melanin and causes patches of skin to become lighter. The autoimmune condition affects about two per cent of the global population and may be hereditary or triggered by stress and skin trauma.

Kublal said between 2015 and now it has spread to approximately 75 per cent of her body.

"The spread was quite rapid. It's on my face, legs, ear, scalp, almost on every part of my body," she said.

And although it took her some time to accept and appreciate that her beauty is more than skin deep, she reflects on the people and circumstances that brought her to a place where she has made it her life's mission to help people, especially women, to see and understand the value of what lies beneath their skin.

Kublal is the founder of a women's empowerment group called Labour of Love and has written her first book, *Labour of Love: a woman's journey from pain to purpose*. The book was published earlier this year and documents her journey over the years – childhood trauma, teenage pregnancy, multiple abortions, attempted suicide, escaping domestic abuse, starting over and finding her purpose.

"There are so many parts that make up Akenna. So many different parts to the whole story. When I started getting vitiligo, I was employed as a flight attendant and I thought that was the worst thing that could happen to me at that time because I was in a job where image was so important."

She said even though she was already on the way out of flying because of an injury she had sustained on the job, the onset of the condition was a huge blow to her ego.

"I was beautiful and my makeup and



Akenna Kubal: voice for beauty

my hair always looked great. To me, that was beauty."

She said when she first got vitiligo, the "your skin looks like a cow" comments really bothered her. But now, after working to get where she's at now, she is no longer self-conscious about her looks.

"If I have to attend an event I'll use a little makeup, but I always make sure and tell the makeup artist I don't want to hide the area of the vitiligo. I do this intentionally because I have two daughters and I think it's important for me to show them that you don't have to cover up what people might think is imperfection. Confidence starts with you."

So what does she believe was her trigger for the development of vitiligo?

"The doctor told me that my immune system had been broken down because of the level of stress that I was under over a period of time, and now, my skin was basically attacking itself and destroying healthy melanin cells and seeing it as foreign," Kublal wrote in her book.

She said a number of things would have contributed to that level of stress – foremost among them, her abusive rela-

tionship. As a Christian wife and mother she stayed in it for years because she felt it was the right thing to do.

"One time the police came to my home after a dispute and said, 'Oh gosh, allyuh is a nice couple, patch that up nah,' because we were the perfect family on the outside. I never told anybody he was always cheating on me and when I tried to leave he was beating me up because it was embarrassing."

Eventually, though, she had had enough and despite the uncertainty, found the courage to leave with her children.

"My enough was motivated by my daughters getting older and being more vocal about what they didn't like...Thankfully, who my children's father is now is not who he was then, but we can never get back together because that trauma is always there. There are certain things that happen when there is physical abuse...It shows that abusers can be rehabilitated, but that is not the victim's burden to bear. Some abusers change, others don't and in some cases the victim ends up dead. What helped me was getting trusted people involved."

She said her parents were separated when she was a child and she vowed that when she had a family of her own she would do whatever it took to keep the family together. But by leaving she believes she has taught her daughters a valuable lesson.

"It's ironic now that the very thing I didn't want is what I use to help others... Even though I went through so much with domestic violence, I won't allow it to be my identity. I want women to understand that not because you've been a victim means you have to remain a victim. How you live your life after the abuse really determines if you're a survivor or not."

Kublal said during the pandemic, after she had stopped flying, she was offered several jobs, in and out the airline industry, but she had to turn them down because her daughters were home from school.

"It was a crazy, hectic time and I saw how much they needed me so I had to make certain sacrifices to be home. I think then, too, was how the vitiligo progressed so much over those two years. The more you're stressed, the more it will progress."



Tobago as an eco destination

Island designated a UNESCO Biosphere Region

What'sn it for me? Is this indeed the response of most Tobagonians when they are told that northeast Tobago has been designated by Unesco a Man and the Biosphere (MAB) region, a learning site in nature where research and science and innovation might result in nature the best tool currently available for economic development. There are many international organisations looking at northeast Tobago. I am very excited for the next steps which include management plans, all aspects of training including governance, financing and integrating community actions. We have a three-four year window and if we can progress at speed, we can build to last for a long time."

Faraaz Abdool, birder and environmentalist, moved to Tobago because he believes in Tobago's potential as a model of sustainability.

"The designation is a most fitting honour not only for Tobago, but for the entire country. The wild north eastern end of Tobago is a place of jaw-dropping beauty. Man and the Biosphere increases the visibility of our country as an eco-tourism destination," Abdool said.

It's hard to imagine an island more idyllic, more health-giving, a place to be within nature in the sea or the rainforest. Tobago was granted the MAB designation



Yachts at anchor in Pirates Bay, Tobago

in October 2020 based on the area that includes and surrounds the Main Ridge Forest Reserve, which has been protected since 1776 to secure the tree cover that guarantees rainfall over Tobago. The region covers 83,488 hectares on land, 68,384 hectares of ocean; countless species of flora and fauna, including many on the endangered list and some only found on Tobago. Critical and necessary to the conservation and development of the area are the 10,000 residents in villages encircling the site from Moriah to Belle Garden. What's in it

for them?

The health of the Biosphere's support systems directly affects the health of the population; it must be managed, maintained, kept pristine by those who live here, conscious, caring, knowledgeable people. Not all are construction projects. They include basics like clean water, electricity from renewable sources, and extend to relevant education and access to funds, in the immediate context of climate change and conservation.

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Rihanna 'over the moon' after birth of her baby boy

Rihanna is settling into motherhood.

The "Diamonds" singer, 34, and boyfriend A\$AP Rocky, who recently welcomed their first baby together, are "doing great" as they take on their new roles as parents, a source close to the couple has said.

"Being a new parent is of course an adjustment, but they are doing great. Their baby boy is healthy and Rihanna is just in awe of him," says the insider. "She really was so excited to be pregnant. She loved it. Meeting her son was of course extremely special too."

"Rihanna barely leaves his side. She is a fantastic mom," the source adds. "She wanted to give birth in L.A. since she has a big house with a yard. She enjoys sitting outside with her baby."

The insider notes that Rihanna "doesn't seem rushed to get back to work" and "very much enjoys spending quiet time with her baby."

Last week, a source said that the couple was at home in Los Angeles with the newborn. "Rihanna is doing well. They are very excited to be parents. Rihanna is already a wonderful mom," said the source.

The Grammy winner first revealed in



Rihanna: over the moon with the birth of her new baby boy

January that she was expecting her first child with Rocky, 33. After she was photographed debuting her baby bump in New York City, a source said that Rihanna was "excited to be a mom" and "couldn't be happier."

Sean Paul shouts out Shenseea, Stefani 'chune'

It's Sean Paul season.

The dancehall legend has no music coming with Shenseea and Pop Queen Gwen Stefani. On Friday, Sean Paul teased the upcoming tune, which featured what appears to be the chorus sung by him and a verse by Stefani.

"Big chune. @shenseea @gwenstefani #LightMyFire", he said as he also shared that the song's name is "Light My Fire."

"No it ain't about smoking," Sean Paul joked but added, "but it's a smoking track. Dope Dope track, we're shooting the video soon and we're just trying to get everybody's schedule together soon," he said in a recent interview.

The song is reportedly from his upcoming album 'Scorcher' and is described as a Reggae-rock track. Paul's upcoming album will feature several women collaborators, including Sia on a track named "Dynamite," as well as dancehall artist Jada

Kingdom, Swedish singer Tove Lo and other artists like Ty Dolla Sign on "Only Fanz." The "Get Busy" artist seems to be keeping true to his word about working harder on his next album.

After failing to win the Best Reggae Album category for his album Live N Livin, the Grammy-winning artist had said that he had wanted a Jamaican to win the category after Virginia reggae band Soja were announced as winners. He also said that he would be coming harder for the title next time.

"My look on it bro is who God bless no man curse so even if they got the blessing through some crazy means, that's the blessing for them and we just got to come harder," Sean Paul said. "It would have been nice if a Jamaican to me, if Jesse won I feel like I won because I work closely with him, he's on this album... If I won he woulda win, if Spice win, me would feel like I was involved in that process."



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Call 'im Dr Shaggy

Brown U confers honorary Doctorate on singer

Grammy-award-winning dancehall legend, Shaggy, is set to receive an honorary doctorate in recognition of his immeasurable contribution to dancehall so far. The accolade will be bestowed by the well-distinguished Ivy League research institution Brown University.

The “It Wasn’t Me” singer will receive a Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the university at their Providence, Rhode Island on May 27. He will join nine other illustrious candidates to receive the special honor and recognition.

It is a major achievement for the veteran who got his start in music over four decades ago. It also shows how his tenacity and endurance have paid off, considering that he got his start on the streets of Jamaica in 1987 while singing in the streets with friends.

Shaggy, whose real name is Orville Richard Burrell, has been nominated for seven Grammy Awards and has won twice

for Best Reggae Album with Boombastic in 1996 and 44/876 with Sting in 2019. He also won the Brit Award for International Male Solo Artist in 2002.

The “Mad Mad World” singer eventually took his talents to New York City, where he gained recognition as a lyrical deejay. His journey is unique in that he diverted from his career path and joined the US Marines, where he served for four years. In those four years, he served two tours of duty in the Middle East as part of Operation Desert Storm. Following that, he was able to secure his first record deal, where he cemented his place in the dancehall game when “Oh Carolina” dominated the airwaves.

Shaggy is the only diamond-selling dancehall artist in music history. For some perspective on his phenomenal ability to sell records, the international dancehall star has sold more than 40 million album units to date. He also has eight singles on the Billboard Hot 100 and seven albums on the Billboard 200, which include four in the

top 40. His appeal continues to grow even with the younger generation of dancehall lovers, which is reflected by his position as one of the top three streamed reggae artists on Spotify.

Shaggy is also well known for sticking to his Jamaican roots and often dishes out advice for younger artists who are trying to penetrate the global market as well as various philanthropic efforts.

The Shaggy Make a Difference Foundation was launched in 2009 and has become famous for the many Shaggy and Friends benefit concerts, which usually donate millions in profits to the Bustamante Hospital for Children in Kingston.

The “Church Heathen” deejay joins some esteemed company with his honorary degree, as according to a Brown University release, a Commencement oration is expected to be delivered by Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi as well as a Baccalaureate address by public health leader Dr. Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi.

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Hezron tops the South Florida charts with Tik Tok

Singer Hezron takes control of the South Florida Reggae chart with the steamy love ballad Tik Tok (I'm Coming). The song removed You Make Me Feel Brand New by Marcia Griffiths and Leroy Sibbles from the top spot on the weekend.

Hezron, who is from Montego Bay in St James, is known for a handful of heartfelt songs, including Forever and Always, So in Love, Taxi Driver, and Take Your Clothes Off.

Self-produced by Hezron, Tik Tok (I'm Coming) is the first single from his forthcoming album, Man on a Mission, which will be distributed by Tads Records.

On the New York Reggae chart, Cornerstone by The Marley Brothers is the new number one title.

On the sales- and streaming-driven Billboard Reggae Albums chart Legend: The Best of Bob Marley and the Wailers is still number one for a 122nd week.

Best of Shaggy: The Boombastic Collection by Shaggy moves back into familiar territory at number two, while Greatest Hits by UB40 reaches a new peak at number three.

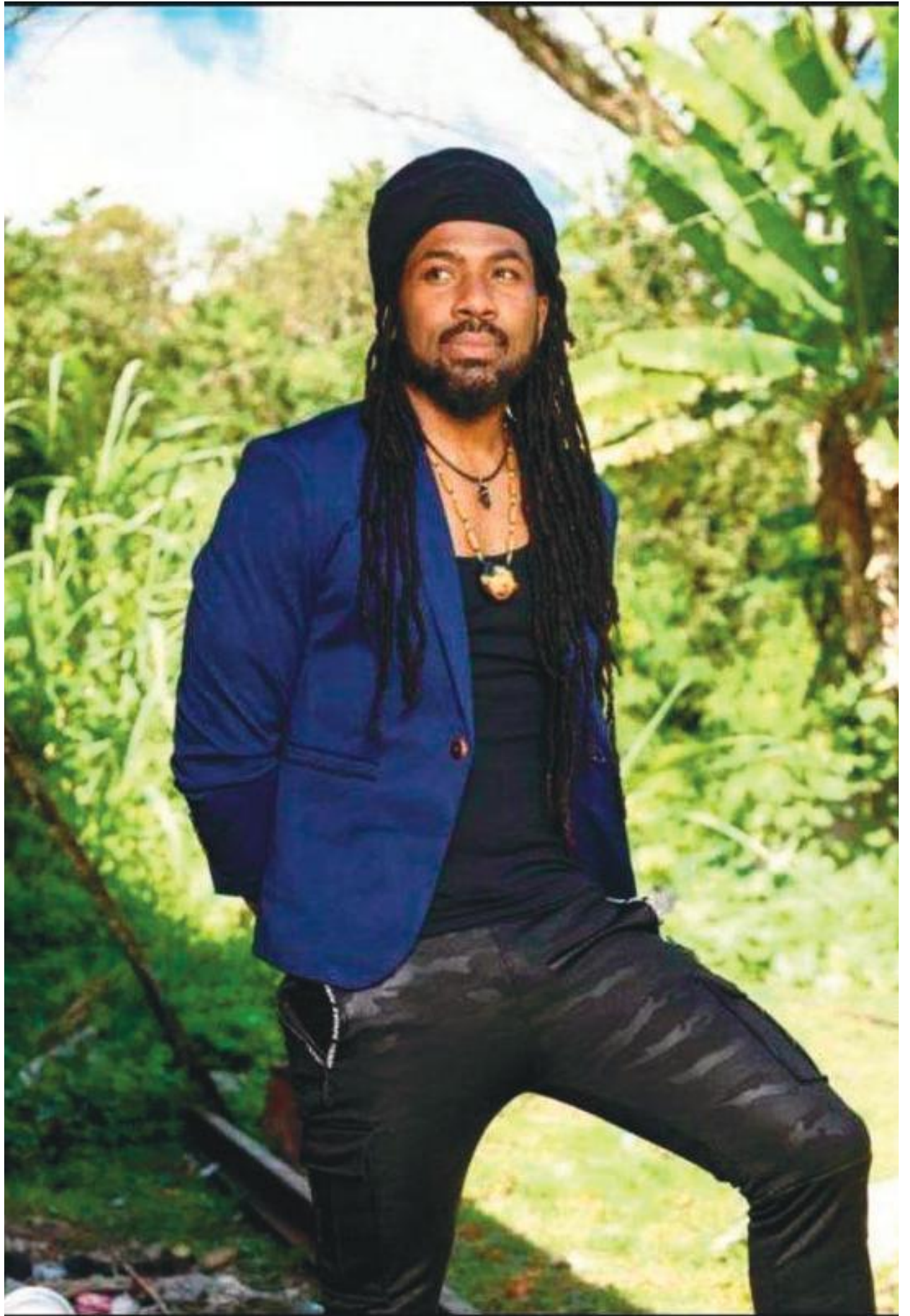
Stick Figure's World on Fire is four, Dutty Classics Collection by Sean Paul re-enters at five, while Set in Stone by Stick Figure is steady at six.

Gifted by Koffee holds at seven, while Sean Paul inches up to eight with the Grammy-winning, multi-platinum selling Dutty Rock.

Shenseea's Alpha gets a new lease on life as it re-enters at number nine, while Sean Paul's Mad Love: The Prequel hops back onto the chart at 10.

Twenty-four years ago this week (chart dated May 9, 1998) Beenie Man had the number one album on the Billboard Reggae Albums chart with Many Moods of Moses. That was the first number one of six number one albums for the self-styled 'King of the Dancehall'.

Beenie Man's first entry on the chart was 1996's Blessed for Island Jamaica which peaked at 12 and spent 18 weeks on the



Hezron — originally from Montego Bay in Jamaica

chart. His last charting entry was 2016's Unstoppable which topped out at number seven. Other well known albums on the Billboard Reggae album chart 24 years ago included Inna Heights by Buju Banton

(number two), Strictly the Best 19 by various artistes (number five), The Best of Bob Marley the Wailers (number six), Reggae Gold 1997 (number seven) and Midnight Lover by Shaggy (number 10).



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Braveboy meets world in 'Trapso' collaboration

Trapso act Marcus Braveboy is making global music moves—all from his couch in West Ridge Villas, Diego Martin.

Braveboy collaborates with artistes/producers from five continents on his new album project, aptly titled Braveboy Meets World. Released on Monday under his self-published Bravehouse Music Group label, the 13-track offering features music-makers from North America, South America, Africa, Europe and Asia.

The album lead single, “Pa Atra”, is produced by Venezuelan Joelmy and features Venezuelan rapper Flyo and Dominican Republic act Yonas Flow. Argentinian singer Moreno La Reja appears on “Start It” and Brazil-born, German-based DJ Crell sings on “Shake That Boom Boom”. American rapper Ma-Less features on “Pronto”, while Russian dancehall act Miss Baas adds her vocals to the Sneaky Ollie UK-produced “Sauna”.

Nigerian Dellfire appears on both “Afribean Gyal” and “Choke”, while Serbian production duo Marko Ristic and Alex Petrov touch the tracks “Bad Intentions” and “Mekhi Cypher”. Italian music producer Hysterism and German producer Tripton are also featured, while Taiwanese rapper GK and producer HuangFu complete the global project on “Saucing”.

“It’s a lot of moving parts, but I must admit it’s also pretty exciting,” Braveboy said, with his famous perpetually wide smile.

The “Iz a Trini” hitmaker admitted to having to rely on Google Translate to have conversations in Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin, as well as organising payments in cryptocurrency during his virtual globe-trotting to complete the project.

“This was such an interesting process, especially since I had to deal with the language barrier at times while communicating with some of the artistes and



Trapso act Marcus Braveboy

producers. I also learnt the skill of global project management. I would record my vocals in Trinidad, and send to producers in other parts of the world, and then we would send the files to mix and master to engineers in another country,” he revealed.

Braveboy, formerly known as Mark Hardy, is well known for making bold international moves and connections with his music. The rapper/music producer has had in-person studio sessions with music producers and song writers in Los Angeles and Florida in the United States, as well as the United Kingdom. His 2021 single, “Clout Chaser”, was recently featured on season four of the Fast & Furious Spy Racers animated series on Netflix.

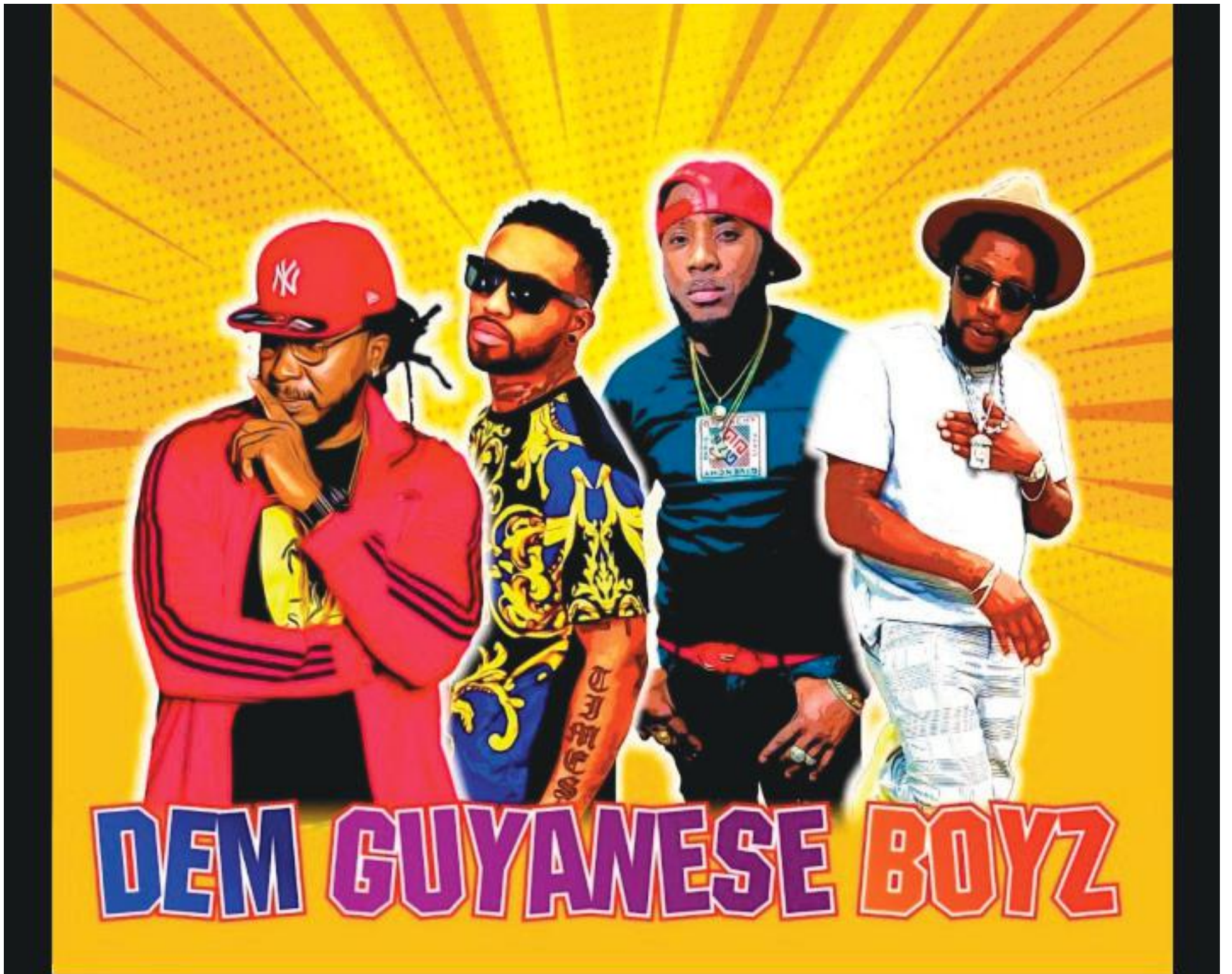
“I’ve casually been doing international collaborations, especially in the world of EDM (electronic dance music), but the pandemic really gave me the flexibility to focus more on other markets like Latin (America), Africa and Asia, and to experiment with genres like reggaeton, dembow, Afrobeats

and baile funk. It also gave me the opportunity to start writing and singing in other languages like Spanish and Portuguese,” he related.

Recording vocals, mixing and mastering music around the world virtually is already an impressive management of resources and talents. Braveboy, however, takes the project a step further with the music video for the album’s lead single, “Pa Atra”, which was shot in Trinidad, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic.

The restrictions of the pandemic, he said, have forced music creatives the world over to think outside the box with the international collaborations. He has also worked with internationally acclaimed Trini-born filmmaker Michael Moolledhar on video projects for the singles “Pronto”, “Afribean Gyal” and “Saucing”.

Despite the efficiency and convenience of remote work, Braveboy says “nothing can beat the vibe of creating with others in a studio”.



Bend to the right rhythm

Several overseas-based Guyanese singers have teamed up to record another musical masterpiece, which is expected to create a stir on both local and international airwaves.

The song, called 'BEND', has been done by Adrian Dutchin; Jumo Proctor (Kapashanti); Ryan Lynton, also called Gucci Boss; and Gaddiel Henry, called 'Gaddie G'; and was released a few days ago. It has been receiving excellent reviews.

This is the first time, that

four Guyanese artistes have come together to record this unique blend of music, which created the right rhythm, described as a Caribbean fusion.

The song was done on the 'Tassa Drum Rhythm' and was produced by Negus, another Guyanese who resides in Canada.

The objective of the song is to demonstrate that Guyanese artistes can come together and record good, clean music that is pleasing to the ears.

It took several days to be completed, but it is indeed a

masterpiece, having brought together friends to execute a project which had been in the making for quite some time.

The experience leading up to and during the recording was overwhelming, and will not be forgotten.

The four Guyanese, each a singing sensation, have thanked God for good health and strength; and moreso, they have thanked their families and fans for supporting them throughout the project.

In a brief comment, Adrian Dutchin, the former X2 singer,

expressed how elated he is at the release of the new song, while adding that there will be more collaborations in the future.

He is encouraging fans to share the song, which can be downloaded from iamadrian-dutchin on instagram, Adrian-dutchin27 on ticktock, Gaddie g on fb, IG, twitter; iamgucciboss on Instagram, DLJEntertainment Gucci boaa x pablo youtube; Ryan Lynton on FB, Gucciboss rgb on ticktock, and Kapashanti on instagram and Facebook.

Johnny's gone Coconuts

Young entrepreneur creates must-have cocktails

In just four and a half years Aaron Johnathan Nerahoo has grown his customised coconut cocktails business, Johnny's Young Coconuts, to the point where foreign clients come to T&T to seek him out.

It's because he is a problem solver and a hard worker, Nerahoo who is fondly called "Johnny", insisted during a recent interview.

Of course, the key ingredients of his specialty product, coconuts, do play a starring role.

In 2017 after he was re-trenched from his job as a machine operator with an automotive battery manufacturer, Nerahoo filled two needs with one plan—he provided a valuable product to consumers and found a way to earn a livelihood.

An observation he made while heading to Maracas beach the same weekend he lost his job set Nerahoo's life on an upward course. He saw a woman picking up a two-litre bottle in a grocery store and complaining: "Every week I buying this and it ain't tasting nothing like coconut water." He came up with the idea of making coconut water in its natural form easily available to customers.

Nerahoo approached several supermarkets with a pitch to sell them young coconuts with shaved-down sides exposing the husk, trimmed at the top and packaged in clear plastic with his name on the product. This was similar to how they were sold in the United States, but Nerahoo left some of the attractive green or yellow skin on the nut. His pitch was a hit and his product was soon in the beverage chillers at large supermarket chains, including Massy, Tru-Valu and JTA.

Initially, the young entrepreneur tried to source the ma-



Johnny offers coconuts with brand names and with alcohol

chine to shave down the sides of the coconuts in England, but he ended up buying a more accurate one from China. By the second year of his business, he was making recommendations to the Chinese manufacturers about adjustments to make the peeling process smoother.

"I used to travel a lot and I saw something of its sort in England. It could peel the sides, but you still had to do plenty manual work, so I reached out to people in China," Nerahoo explained.

"They sent me the one they had. I tweaked it because it still had plenty to be done. And the one that I'm using now is what I help create."

He now has patents to shave the coconuts in different ways.

Apart from selling his product to supermarkets, Nerahoo did pop-up stands at Maracas beach. People started contacting him to supply his shaved-down, ready-to-drink coconuts complete with fancy straws at their events.

"So I started doing events, home by people doing little weddings and thing and they started asking for alcohol to mix in because they wanted to keep the coconut longer in their hands," he said.

In order to allow alcohol to

be slowly mixed into his popular handy coconuts, Nerahoo experimented with syringes, then funnels. Not satisfied with those time-consuming and cumbersome methods, he decided to try overturning mini bottles of alcohol directly into a cut hole at the top of the coconuts. He also customised an opener with the help of a local fabricator to punch an opening off the top of the coconut to match the size of certain mini alcohol bottle tops.

At his first major event, Nerahoo supplied 14 different brands of alcohol minis along with his specially-shaved coconuts. Fascinated by the novelty product, people "rushed it", he said. He sold out even before the event officially started.

He recalled: "And that's when I knew this was going to work."

Nerahoo then decided that with Carnival coming he could reach out to alcohol companies knowing they usually sponsored big fetes and events. He did exactly that, telling them he would brand the shaved coconuts with their logos.

Hennessy was the first to take up his offer. He launched engraved cocktail coconuts at a Beach House Entertainment fete.

"I have no words to de-

scribe that . . . all kinda 500-600 people in a line. I remember the second Beach House I did, we had to stop the lines because we couldn't cater for everybody. I used to just walk down and tell people it didn't have any more because people didn't used to want to leave nah boy," Nerahoo said.

His specialty coconuts are enjoyed by people who like the novelty of having the logoed coconut husk with coconut water supplied in its natural form, infused with either alcohol or non-alcoholic drinks.

Nerahoo has created more than 300 alcoholic cocktails and over 40 that are non-alcoholic. His Feel Good cocktail with citrus is a non-alcoholic best seller, while his Tequila Rose and Hennessy is a number one seller for alcohol drinkers. The Island Feel is available in alcoholic or non-alcoholic versions with watermelon, mango, pom-erac, pineapple or whatever is in season is also popular. He also uses peaches and strawberries, but prefers to work with fresh fruits.

He has worked with numerous brands for corporate events, Carnival bands, and events in Grenada, Antigua and Barbados.

"I have stories where people plan in Germany, Canada, wherever, and come to Trinidad to keep their wedding just to have the coconuts. We had people from Scotland, Canada . . . the UK is a big one. I had one couple from Australia," he revealed.

The Sangre Grande resident wants to take coconuts—something he enjoyed seeing on the Manzanilla Stretch as a child on his way to and from school in Mayaro—to the top 25 events in the world, starting with the SXSW Conference and Festival and Coachella Music and Arts Fest, both in the US.



Revellers take part in a carnival parade in Mexico, organised by top players in Trinidad Carnival

Mas in Mexico

Machel, Tribe stage Mele Destinations event in Cancun

Two years after the last local Carnival, scores of Trinidad and Tobago's entertainers, mas producers and party lovers held five days of celebrations in Cancun, Mexico in early May for what has been labelled Mele Destinations.

The event was Machel Montano's return to the Carnival arena for the first time since 2020, when he ended his Machel Monday series of concerts with The Wedding.

Events ceased soon after with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and although some artistes found opportunities abroad, Montano has kept public appearances to the very bare minimal, the most notable being his performance of a few

songs at the 2022 MahaShivaratri celebrations in India in March.

He staged two big performances with his team, The Monk Band, at the Cancun events. Destra Garcia, Patrice Roberts, Kerwin Dubois, Farmer Nappy, Skinny Fabulous, Lyrikal, Voice, Viking Ding Dong, Problem Child and Beenie Man were also among the line-up of entertainers for the Carnival events in Mexico.

The events were held at the Moon Palace Resort from April 28 to May 2. They showcased an A-list of local and regional DJs, including Travis World, Lurbz, Lord Hype, Private Ryan and Aaron Fingal.

Mele was initially designed to be a cruise as part of a collaboration between TRIBE and Montano, but the cruise was

postponed and changed into the current event.

The venue is an all-inclusive resort in Mexico offering signature amenities, luxurious accommodations, 24-hour room service, gourmet dining, and top-shelf drinks among numerous other attractions.

According to Montano, though the cruise industry is taking the necessary steps to navigate a way forward for the future, cruising "will be ready for all the mele we intend to cause on the high seas at a later time".

After months of consideration, the Mele team made the decision to move "from ship to shore," with Moon Palace Resort, Cancun, as their home for five days and four nights.

Queen of Anime

Soca star Terri Lyons up for top int'l award for music video

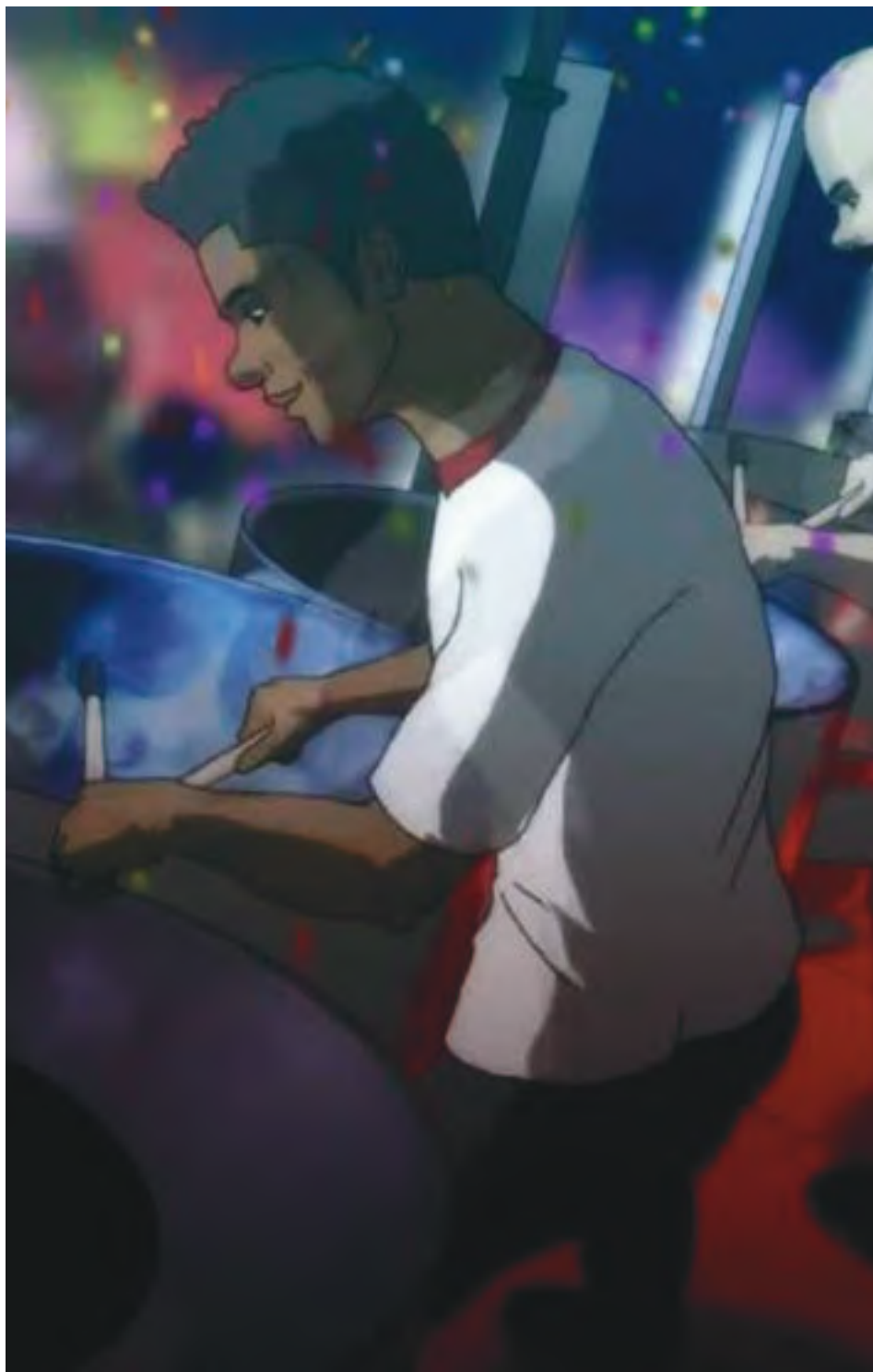
Trinidad and Tobago's very own anime video is up for international awards. The A Better Tomorrow music video features vocals by calypsonian Terri Lyons. The song was written by Mark Loquan and the video was written and produced by Gerelle Forbes. Dixie Ann Archer-McBain and Everard J McBain of GemGfx are responsible for the animation.

The video has been selected for consideration for over four international awards including the Munich Music Video Awards and the Euro Music Video Song Awards where it made it to the final stages but did not win. Considerations still in progress are the International Music Video Awards and International Sound Video Awards.

The video takes influence from Japanese-styled animation featuring Lyons as an animated superhero engaged in battle.

Lyons said, "The video is about most of the times in life where we are our own worst enemies and we have to fight our own inner demons first before we could attack anything else.

"For a better tomorrow you have to work on yourself. A lot of us would point fingers and say 'this person needs to stop doing this' and 'that person needs to stop that' in order for certain things to happen. But we within ourselves have things to work on in order for everything to fall into place."



Terri Lyons's anime video up for international awards

The video's battle takes place during Carnival and features the Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain, the Temple in the Sea in Waterloo and the National Academy for Performing Arts (NAPA), Port of Spain.

The main character features Lyons with an afro which she said was of particular importance to her as that is her preferred hairstyle especially during the Carnival season.

On the concept of the video Lyons said, "We used animation because we are trying to bring the younger crowd back to calypso, so I stay away from political topics."

Forbes said, "The Better Tomorrow video was based on nation building and some sense of patriotism; and more importantly, now because we are in a pandemic, a sense of hope."

Forbes explained the journey to where the video is now was a lengthy one.

She said Loquan brought the song to her in 2020 following the George Floyd incident in the US and the killing of three men by police in Second Caledonia, Morvant.

"When the protest happened, within those weeks it made his writing and the song carry a whole weight."

She said originally there were plans for a normal music video with a dark theme.

"It was too dark and didn't compliment the music well so I made some adjustments and it still wasn't working. Then the plan was to have Terri in a vehicle going down to Mayaro following the road and have that as a metaphor of people's journey in life. That's when the Prime Minister said 'Lockdown.' So we couldn't shoot that anymore and of course everyone's safety was the priority."

Forbes said they decided to stick with the same concept using a green screen but that too did not feel right.

"The animator ended up losing his roof to heavy rains which resulted in his computer and the footage being destroyed. "When we re-grouped we discussed what was happening with everyone right now because we wrote stories based on what was happening six months prior and now everybody is in a different place.

"Everybody is now at a place of evaluating themselves."

She was tallawah

Now athology celebrates Jamaica's Miss Lou

One of the new books launched at the 2022 Bocas Lit Fest is the anthology *100+ Voices for Miss Lou*. The book brings together dozens of Jamaican and Caribbean writers and performers in tribute to the legendary Louise Bennett-Coverley (1919–2006).

Writer, cultural activist and gender specialist Opal Palmer Adisa, who edited the collection, said Bennett-Coverley, or Miss Lou as she is called, was a cultural icon, poet, performer, pantomime and extraordinary. She said reading and listening to Bennett-Coverley gave her permission to write in the Jamaican nation language.

"I say 'Jamaican nation language' rather than 'patois,' which is what a lot of people call it erroneously, but I believe what Kamau Braithwaite said, that it is our nation language, it is our mother tongue.

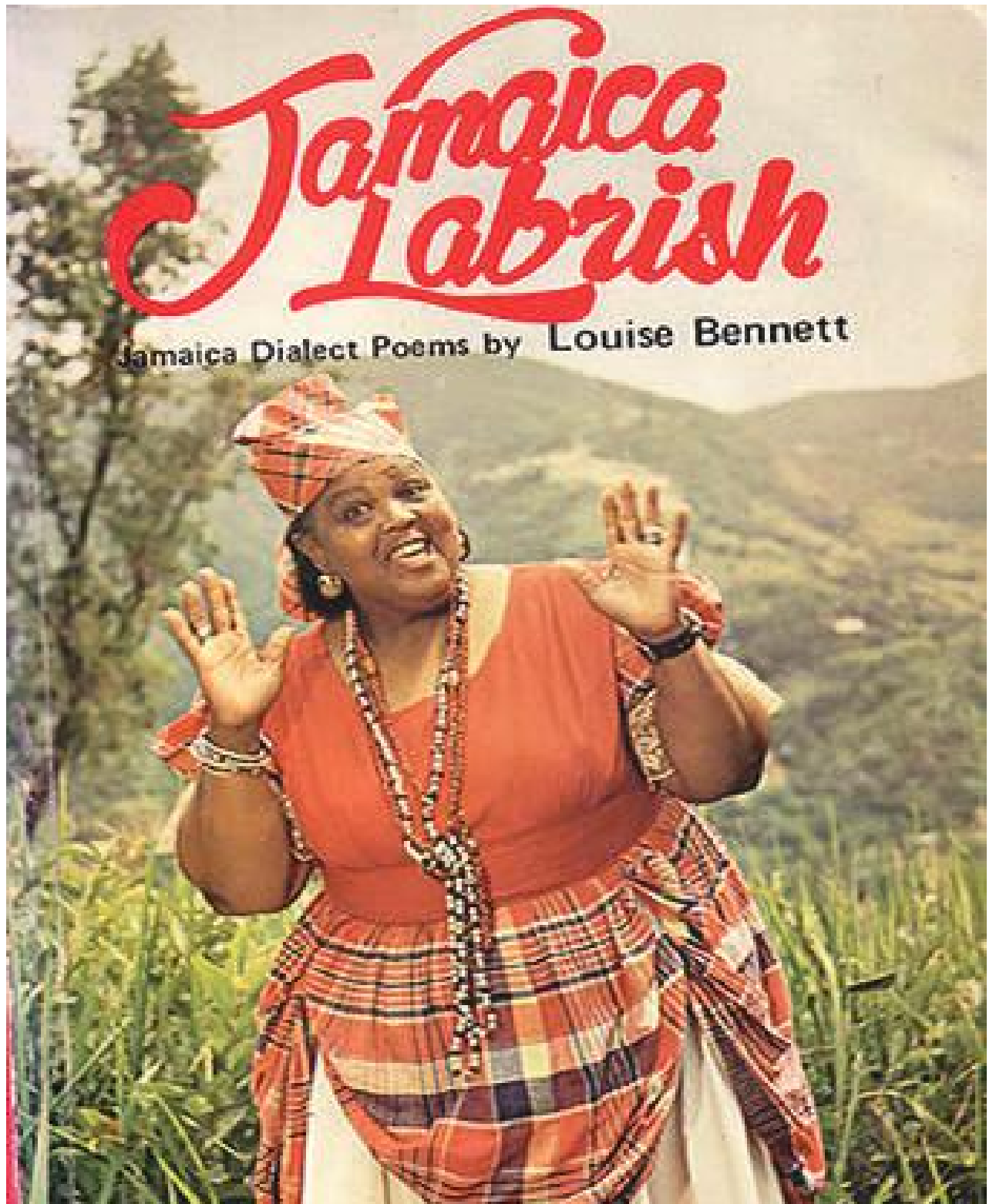
"When I was in school, we were not allowed to speak Jamaican nation language and could get detention for doing so. So it was reading Miss Lou and seeing the joy and the breadth of her knowledge in writing poems and performing the Jamaican nation language that gave me permission, so that all of my poems and stories insert the nation language."

Palmer Adisa said her favourite Miss Lou poem is *Jamaican Woman*, which shows Bennett-Coverley's understanding of Jamaican femininity.

"She said Jamaican women are tallawah, a word often attributed to our national heroine, Nanny of the Maroons. It's a word that means 'small but mighty and strong' and in that poem she chronicles how women have to...in a sense (use) subterfuge to show and be as strong as we are."

Palmer Adisa said Bennett-Coverley's words, pantomime and poetry are relevant today not just for Jamaica but for the entire Caribbean. She said Miss Lou was familiar to many as she was part of the curriculum and would continue to be taught. She also inspired dub poetry through her use of language.

"Miss Lou was a cultural icon and a



cultural activist and her poems really document what was happening in Jamaica specifically, but which reverberated throughout the Caribbean. So her relevance in validating who we are, our culture, how we think and how we move throughout the world is so important. She is really a voice for Jamaica, a voice for the Caribbean, a voice for the world, for people who should take pride in their culture, in their language, and big up themselves as we would say in Jamaica."

The anthology comprises essays, poems, tributes, and interviews about, for

and in honour of Miss Lou, including work by Palmer Adisa, Jamaica's poet laureate Lorna Goodison, and former prime minister PJ Patterson.

Palmer Adisa said about the book, "In cultural preservation, in the culture of Jamaica and the Caribbean, this provides a document, and it's a tribute to Louise Bennett, who fought for us to ensure that nation language is heard, recognised, and celebrated, and that who we are in our most ordinariness is a gift, is of value, is of fruit, and is of celebration."



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