

INSIDE



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Trinidadian model makes waves on top fashion stages

IN an interview with *Vogue* back in 2017, top model Naomi Chin Wing said she hoped for longevity in the fashion industry. Longevity may be a tall order for anyone working in an industry as fast-paced and fickle as fashion, yet Naomi's modellesque features and her undeniable work ethic has made her a favourite among the "who's who" of high fashion.

Since she began her modelling career in 2015, after signing a contract with Elite Latin America, Naomi has risen from obscurity as the shy girl from La Puerta, Diego Martin, to top model status. Her debut for Yves St Laurent in 2017 signalled the beginning of a whirlwind modelling career which has taken her to all the fashion capitals of the world and to the doorsteps of the most prolific fashion houses the likes of Roberto Cavalli, Elie Saab, Valentino, YSL, Marc Jacobs, Moncler, Versace, Dior and Alexander McQueen. Her hectic schedule which revolves around travelling, castings, fittings and rehearsals, photo shoots and fashion shows guarantees that the striking 5'11" model will not be slowing down anytime soon.

When Naomi first took part in the Coco Velvet International Fashion Workshop back in 2015, she never imagined that it would set her on the path to an international modelling career. Her mother, Natalie Bentham, had hoped that the workshop would help her daughter who was shy and once bullied for her looks back in school, to break out of her shell and develop more self-confidence. Not only did Naomi break out of her awkward phase, she became a breakout star and eventually won the Top Model of Trinidad and Tobago contest.

Fast forward seven years later, Naomi's current state of mind is one of gratitude. The very things that made her a target of bullies; her name, her height and lips have helped make her a roaring success in the modelling world.

"As I've gained more experience, I've become more comfortable in my own skin," she says. "I'm truly grateful for my unique path and every success it entails."

Modelling, Naomi explains, can be quite sporadic so it can be very easy to over-think and feel anxious at times.

"I've learned that it's best to go with the flow



Naomi Chin Wing: worked with most of the world's iconic brands

and take each day as it comes. What's for you will always find you, and every challenge is a lesson learned," she says.

Despite the leaps and bounds she's made over the years, Naomi is still on a learning curve—after all, she's only 22. Her career has helped reshape the way she perceives criticism which is very common in the modelling world. She takes constructive criticism on board with the hope that it will help her expand her skill set and improve as a model.

"I think taking criticism in this industry isn't necessarily a bad thing. I may have a way of doing something and if someone can show me a better way of doing it then it only serves to benefit me," she says. "There are so many things to learn in this world and you just have to be open to change and improvement for the betterment of yourself and your career. Even if you don't like the person or what they have to say, you have nothing to lose by at least giving it a try. If they're wrong, it affirms your belief in yourself and if they're right, you're a better person for it. Either

way, you win."

Naomi has worked with most of the world's iconic brands but there's one fashion brand that has a special place in her heart.

The first time Kitcharee sat down with the top model in 2018, Naomi had stars in her eyes after having the unforgettable experience of walking the runway for YSL in Paris with the Eiffel tower as the backdrop. The glow is still there but the years in the industry have helped refine her personality. Indeed, modelling has had the most impact on Naomi's personal life. It introduced her to character-building opportunities like travelling, meeting new people and adjusting to new and different circumstances—often at a moment's notice.

"I truly believe modelling has brought out my personality a lot more. I am a very bubbly and bright person and through modelling, I've gained the confidence to be my authentic self. I was such a shy person before and struggled to express my fiery personality. It shines through in my work and I'm so proud of that," she says.

I have 5 kids and all my husband wants is sex all the time!

Disclaimer: The content of the Ask Di column is for information purposes only, and the author is not responsible for the actions taken or performed by the reader. No individuals, including those under medical care, should use any of the information provided here to self-diagnose or self-treat any health-related condition. No assurance or warranty regarding the accuracy, timeliness or applicability of the content is given.

Q: Dear Di, I have a question for you and I am hoping that it will shed some light on why being a middle child is so difficult. My parents are constantly nagging at me to get a job and I am not ready to get a job. I want to chill out for a bit and find myself. Help me get my parents off my back. – K.A.

A: Dear KA, so you want to find yourself and my question is now, how long have you been searching? What have you achieved so far in your quest? When you become independent you position yourself to become someone you can be proud of. If you want more time to better educate yourself then you have to make that decision however you should pay for it yourself on your own. Eventually, you will meet someone and want to get married however no one wants a broke lazy partner. It may differ slightly if you are a male or female.

Now in regards to your parents, they have the right to make this suggestion to you for I will say this as a parent and an adult, that life is not a free ride. The model of car that you will drive will all depend on you and your choices in life. Also who really wants to live with their parents all their life, seriously? They are looking for an empty nest egg to now live their lives. So in conclusion, I will say that you have the smarts already to decide what you want vs what you need for your future. Make the wise choice and show yourself and your parents what you can become and be proud.

Q: Dear Di, I am a mother in my mid-30s of five children and only my spouse works, as the ages of my children range from 10 years to 12 months and my husband is obsessed with sex. I do not work and I am afraid of getting pregnant yet again. I am tired and my body cannot handle going through another pregnancy and

financially it is not working yet he will not listen to me. I do not know what to do. Any suggestions? Thank you – L.R

A: My Dear LR, first of all, I will say to you congratulations to you and your husband. You have to have a conversation with your family and OBGYN. These conversations are long overdue and there are solutions for both of you. I am not a fan of Tubal Ligation which is also known as having your tubes tied, or tubal sterilization which is a permanent type of birth control for this involves yet another surgery. Now, in regards to your husband, he can have a quick snip aka a Vasectomy which is a form of male birth control and stops the supply of sperm. It is a simple procedure and in most cases reversible however it does not affect their “manhood” as they claim it does. In my opinion, you do a lot for your family and now it is time for him to be responsible and do his part and then you both can enjoy intimacy the way it should be without any fear to you. Enjoy your love life and family!

Q: Dear Di, I am a newly married bride of 12 months and I just discovered that my husband drinks and hangs out with his friends and party all the time at home and outside the home until he gets drunk each and every time. I am simply tired of it and my parents being parents says to me that I have to stick it out and his parents just defend him all the time. I am simply sick of it and I am torn for I do love him however where do you draw the line? Thank you. – S.R.

A: Dear SR, first of all, congratulations on not being married but simply the fact that you survived the past 12 months. In the golden age, it was acceptable and or tolerated however in modern times that is not the case. You have several choices here and I will say first to not get your parents involved for that is not helping you. I have said this many times over and over that no one will know what you are going through and no one wants to walk in your shoes. Oh yes, they have opinions and will put their two cents worth



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Deanne Oyar

of nothing and possibly judge you. I can guarantee you that people regardless of how close they are to you will share with others and talk behind your back. The simple pleasure of life at someone else's expense. Stop talking to friends and family about your personal life if they cannot help you.

You have to confront him and lay the cards down so as to smarten up or he may wake up one day and you will not be there. Marriage sometimes gives the other the idea that they are entitled and they can now take the other for granted. That is not the case at all. Get help for him for deep down inside you do not know the triggers and reasoning for this behaviour and he himself may not know.

For example, and I am not saying that this is the reasoning however girls and boys who are now men and women who were sexually abused can show similar characteristics and more. They have this deep down-rooted secret that has haunted them all their life and they do not know how to talk about it. Another can be that they were told many harsh hurtful things in their life and the list goes on.

So I will say to you that you ask him if he wants help and if he is willing to change and get him the help he needs, you can also contact me for help, and if he refuses then the question I will ask you is, “What are you willing to do to stop the PAIN?” You are not a trophy, you are not someone's property because they put a ring on it, you are YOU and you love yourself to know what you want for your future. Be strong!

Share your questions and responses by sending an email to info@TheExperientialCoach.com All the best!

Fake Drake cashing in on his celebrity looks

Fake Drake thought he had a good proposal for Drake when he challenged the rapper to a boxing celebrity boxing match with the prize being \$1 million.

As expected, Drake has better things to do and won't be joining any boxing match, but the Canadian rapper wouldn't have passed up the opportunity to slap Fake Drake for free if possible.

Drake's Doppelganger, also known as Izzy Drake, became famous after being spotted in Miami nightclubs impersonating Drake. What appeared to be a comedy skit is now a full-on business as the Florida native is not only doing interviews but is also saying he has "management."

The man whose real name is Izzy but goes by the coined moniker 'Fake Drake' and Drake from Wish as some social media users refer to him,

According to Izzy, Drake made it clear that he was only interested in slapping Fake Drake for free. The look-a-like says he had a chance to catch up with Drake's team to ask him about his proposal.

"I pulled up to Drake's hotel with my management. Let's just say it wasn't very inviting," Izzy Drake said while laughing. "They just tried coming at us, so I ended up texting him, telling him about the fight and he said he's gonna pull up and slap me for free."

Fake Drake has been steadily earning money from his "career" as a pseudo-Drake. He first



Real vs Fake: Drake, left, and Izzy

shared that he was charging \$5,000 to appear at parties and later said that his new booking rate is \$10,000.

In June, he attempted to draw in Drake in another money-getting scheme after signing a Celebrity Boxing deal for a fight with Drake.

"If I win, you gotta sign me to OVO or you gotta give me \$1 million," Izzy said in a clip addressed at Drake. "If you win, I'll change my name."

In the meantime, Izzy is now fighting YouTuber M2Thak on Oct. 15.

Jay-Z awarded \$6.78 M in 'perfume wars'

Jay-Z is adding to his vast fortune as a Manhattan court gave judgment in favor of the rapper against a perfume company that initially sued the rapper for millions in damages.

Jay-Z partnered with Parlux Fragrances in 2013 for his "Gold Jay-Z" cologne. The relationship with the parties, however, deteriorated, with Parlux suing the rapper a few years later in 2016.

Parlux had brought a \$68 million lawsuit in October 2021 for damages. The company claimed that the New York rapper failed to promote the cologne in violation of their agreement, and as a result, the company suffered losses.

On Thursday, Jay-Z was awarded millions for unpaid royalties plus interest for the cologne Gold Jay-Z. The rapper appeared during the trial

this week which culminated on Thursday with him being awarded the judgment.

The matter was presided over by Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Andrew Borrok, who found that Parlux owed the rapper \$6.78 million in unpaid royalties, including interest.

"We've been awarded and will be receiving the money as we should," Jay-Z's lawyer Alex Spiro said.

Parlux had been sued by Jay-Z in a counterclaim after bringing the initial lawsuit worth \$68 million, which the jury declined to award.

Jay-Z had countersued for \$4.5 million in royalties. The case took three weeks before the jury found neither side should be liable for damages.

Parlux previously lost its appeals case in February and was found to be liable to pay the rape for royalty payments due and owing going back to 2015. The amount of royalties was in dispute leading to Judge Borrok determining the amount owed.

According to a NY Post report, Parlux has filed an appeal on justice Borrok's ruling.

Meanwhile, as he is as leaving the courtroom, a smartly dressed Jay-Z was asked by the press if he had comments on the matter. One person could be heard asking the rapper if he had "98 problems now," to which he laughed.

"98, I like that," he said as he cracked a smile while walking away with his lawyers.

Vybz Kartel from prison: I'm in love

Vybz Kartel says he is in love as he continues to share photos of his girlfriend following a recent prison visit.

The dancehall worl'boss is ensuring that no one has doubts about his new relationship after fans raised questions about a photo he shared where he is seen hugging a new woman. Vybz Kartel debuted his new girlfriend last month. He is seen hugging on to the Caucasian woman against a backdrop that is usually where prisoners take photographs with family members.

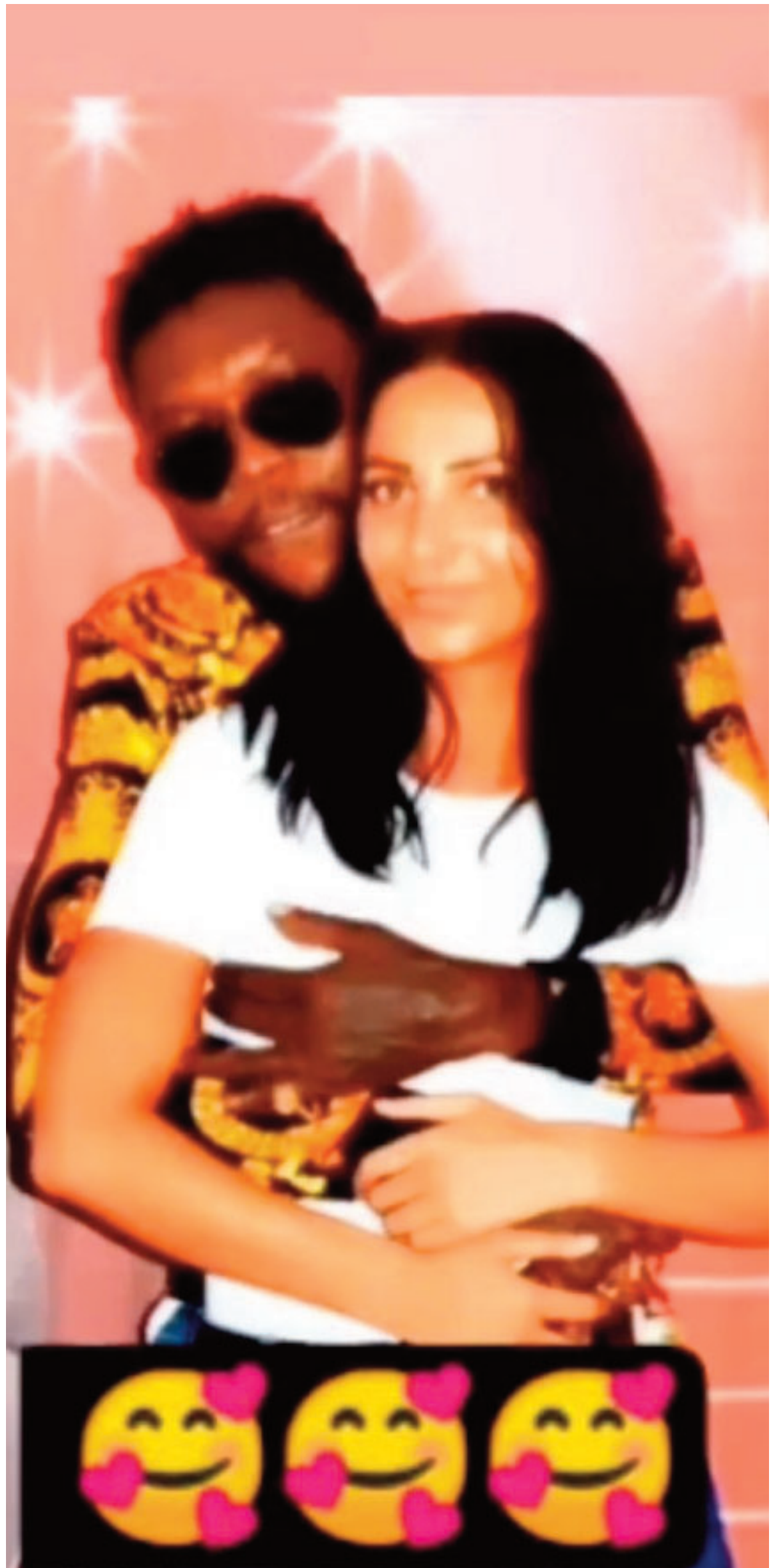
The artist has finally shared the woman's Instagram name and handles and more photos of her proving that she is not a fiction or photoshopping woman but that she exists in real life.

On Thursday night, Vybz Kartel shared a photo of the slender woman who smiled as she took a photo outside of the Horizon Adult Remand Centre where Kartel is presently held as he serves a 35-year to life sentence for the murder of an associate.

The photo is accompanied by a soundtrack that the artist recently released, which seems to be direct lyrics aimed at her.

"God sent you for me, I know God sent you for me, that's my true religion, am I forgiven, when mi lay down..." he sings in the short Instagram Reel.

The woman also leaves a response for Kartel as she echoes his words in the song.



Another reggae icon falls

Another pillar of reggae music has transitioned. Cecil “Skelly” Spence, one of the founding members of Israel Vibration, known for songs like “Rudeboy Shufflin’” and “There Is No End,” has passed away. The news was confirmed via the group’s Instagram page.

It was revealed that he had been struggling with arthritis and was seeking therapy to remedy his situation.

“In the last few months he was doing therapy on his right hand and shoulder due to arthritis. Last week he was not feeling well and went to the hospital in New York where he just discovered he had an aggressive cancer with no possibility of treatment,” part of the post read.

It was also revealed that his last words were to send love to all his fans, and he also asked that they continue to pray for him.

Several well-known reggae artists like Gramps Morgan and Rohan Marley paid their respects in the comment section of the post.

Israel Vibration has a rather unique story that started with them meeting each other at a rehabilitation centre. The trio included Lascelle “Wiss” Bulgin, Albert “Apple Gabriel” Craig, and Cecil Skelly Spence, and they all suffered from childhood polio. Some twenty years after they met at the Mona Rehabilitation Clinic, they formed the group.

They became a well-known name in reggae in the 1970s at a time when Rastafarianism was starting to take hold in Jamaica. Spence and Craig were the ones that got together in Kingston and sought out Bulgin. At the time, he was working as a tailor.

They originally named themselves Israel Vibration Israel Vibrates but eventually became known as Israel Vibration. Their success as a band was not immediate either, as in the early years of their career, they mostly survived by panhandling.

The group would eventually get the opportunity to start recording via a grant from the Twelve Tribes of Israel branch of Rastafari. The opportunity came after Hugh



Israel Vibration’s founding member Cecil “Skelly” Spence

Booth, a member of the Twelve Tribes, heard them singing and was impressed.

Israel Vibration was ready for the chance, and in 1976, their debut release was the single “Why Worry,” which did well and earned them a call-up to share the stage with the greats of the time, including Dennis Brown, Inner Circle, and Bob Marley. The track was released on the Twelve Tribes label late that same year.

In 1978 they released their first album, *The Same Song*, which earned them international recognition. They were able to penetrate that market because of the input of their producer at the time, Tommy Cowan.

Following some controversial moments in trying to put out their third album, the trio moved to New York in 1982 to get better health care. Eventually, they split up and tried to launch solo careers.

They would get back together in 1987 and make their fourth album, *Strength of my Life*. In the end, the group came down to just two, Skelly and Wiss, as Apple once again left to pursue a solo career. On March 7, 2020, Apple died after suffering a stroke. Lascelle “Wiss” Bulgin is the last remaining member of the trio.

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Georgetown Film Festival in the works for 2023

Rae Wiltshire, a Guyanese filmmaker, aims to help develop Guyana's film industry, not just one film at a time, but by working with other local creatives to create the Georgetown film festival next year.

Wiltshire has been making short films for a few years now but in 2020, he participated in the Commonwealth Shorts, Caribbean Voices film workshops. Soon after, he was the only Guyanese filmmaker and one of nine Caribbean filmmakers to receive a grant that would fund the creation of a short film.

The film he has been producing is known as 'Eating papaw on the seashore', a story of queer love in Guyana. And the film, Wiltshire said, has already attracted international interest.

But the local filmmaker says that his intention is not only to create films. He wants to do that while also helping other Guyanese filmmakers or aspiring filmmakers create their own films.

As such, Wiltshire recently hosted a film workshop, through support from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport's Cultural and Creative Industries grant, that allowed 18 participants to immerse themselves in the intricacies of filmmaking, be it screenwriting, directing, cinematography or alike.

And from that workshop, Wiltshire and the group will be creating 18 short films that will be used to initiate the Georgetown film festival next year.

"There's not a lot of Caribbean films and there's not a lot of Guyanese films and even if they do have Guyanese films, they don't live up to a particular quality and this project would like to change that.

"And I feel it's really important that Guyanese people see themselves on screen because it helps to see our culture," Wiltshire said during a recent interview.

The films that will be produced vary from drama to fantasy, and the intention is to take the upcoming festival to all of Guyana's regions. Wiltshire also believes that there are regional and international markets for Guyanese films.

Though marketing the films and the festival at large is key, Wiltshire emphasised that his



Guyanese filmmaker Rae Wiltshire: film festival coming next year

overarching goal is to help build the local film industry.

"Filmmaking is a collaborative process. You need to collaborate with multiple people and gel together.

"... I want to build that community and I want people to feel like they have a voice," he said.

Already, Wiltshire and the filmmakers have started the process of creating the films. The first film that will be produced, he teased, focuses on dementia- but "not like a typical drama."

With this process started, however, the filmmaker said that much support is needed.

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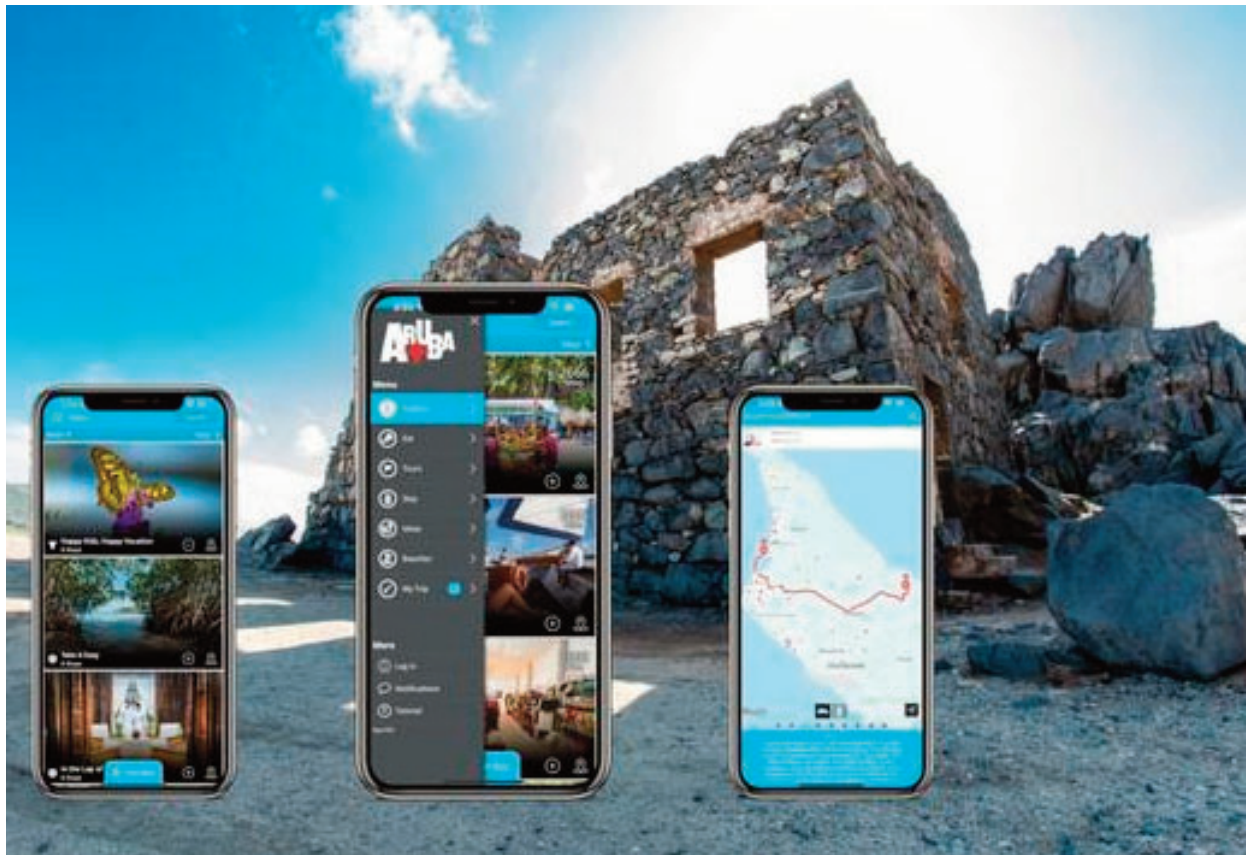
The island of Aruba has launched its own travel planning and itinerary app, myAruba, which is available for download now via Google Play or the App Store.

Travelers can begin planning their trip to Aruba with myAruba by saving places they'd like to visit, experiences to try and even find places to eat. Categories include car tours, arts and culture, health and wellness, water activities, spas, beaches and much more, all allowing travelers to find local gems, save their trip itinerary and get help navigating to attractions while on-island on foot or by car, all with one app.

The app also features locally sourced itineraries to peruse, which focus on family friendly activities, Aruba's natural wonders, solo trip adventures and much more.

Once an itinerary is created, travelers don't need to connect to Wi-Fi or data in order to access their planned itinerary through the app, making it simple and efficient to use while exploring the island, wherever a traveler ends up!

Aruba has been open for travelers without any pandemic-related entry requirements or restrictions since March, 2022. All travelers are required to complete Aruba's Embarkation/Disembarkation Card prior to arrival.



My Auba App will help visitors create an online itinerary

\$500M Marriott Resort planned for Tobago

Trinidadian company, Superior Hotels Limited, has signed on to construct a \$500 million 200-room Marriott-branded hotel in Rocky Point, Tobago.

When completed, the project is expected to comprise a 200 room hotel, 28 duplex residences, 11 single-family luxury villas, 12 town houses and a full-scale of luxury amenities.

The resort will be built on lands known as Rocky Point consisting of two parcels of land: one being 13 acres and the other being 15 acres. A public beach borders the southern part of the land.

The country's Trade and Industry Minister Paula Gopee-Scoon said seven expressions of interest were submitted for the project and an evaluation committee, with members from eTeck, the Finance Ministry, the Trade and Industry Ministry, the Tourism Ministry and the THA- selected Superior Hotels to head up the project.

She said the project will bring both short and long-term benefits to the island, with the creation of 750 jobs during the construction phase and 220 jobs once the hotel opens.

Superior has also committed to using local produce, labour and materials as far as possible, Gopee-Scoon said.

"The company has committed to conduct-



Architect's drawings of the proposed \$500M Marriott Resort in Tobago

ing training programmes in conjunction with the THA at the Secondary School level in Tobago to prepare potential candidates for careers in the hospitality and tourism sector," she added.

Gopee-Scoon said the resort will also create a farmers programme where the hotel

will work with farmers in Tobago to improve production and service.

She said the project will provide a "catalytic stimulus" for Tobago's tourism sector and a platform for sustainable economic and social development.

Pan in the Metaverse

Virtual PanoGrama aimed at marketing pannists

Technology is the foundation upon which the history-making PanoGrama was grounded in 2020 and remains the vehicle that drives it forward today.

PanoGrama has taken it one step further by working with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in TT to engage youth in the metaverse, at this year's Cheer Fair.

A media release said the IDB hosted Cheer Fair 2022 in hybrid format with two weeks of online learning and fun at the IDB virtual campus on the VR park virtual reality platform, which began on August 15 and ended on August 26. The target audience for this year's Cheer Fair was children and young people under 18, along with their parents and members of the public.

"Cheer Fair is always about hosting fun and engaging activities for the whole family," said Carina Cockburn, the IDB's country representative in TT. "As we emerge from the dark days of the pandemic, we are particularly glad to include the metaverse in our activities this year and focus on a part of the population that is already active in this space. Indeed, engagement with younger generations is critical as we move toward the digital future of TT."

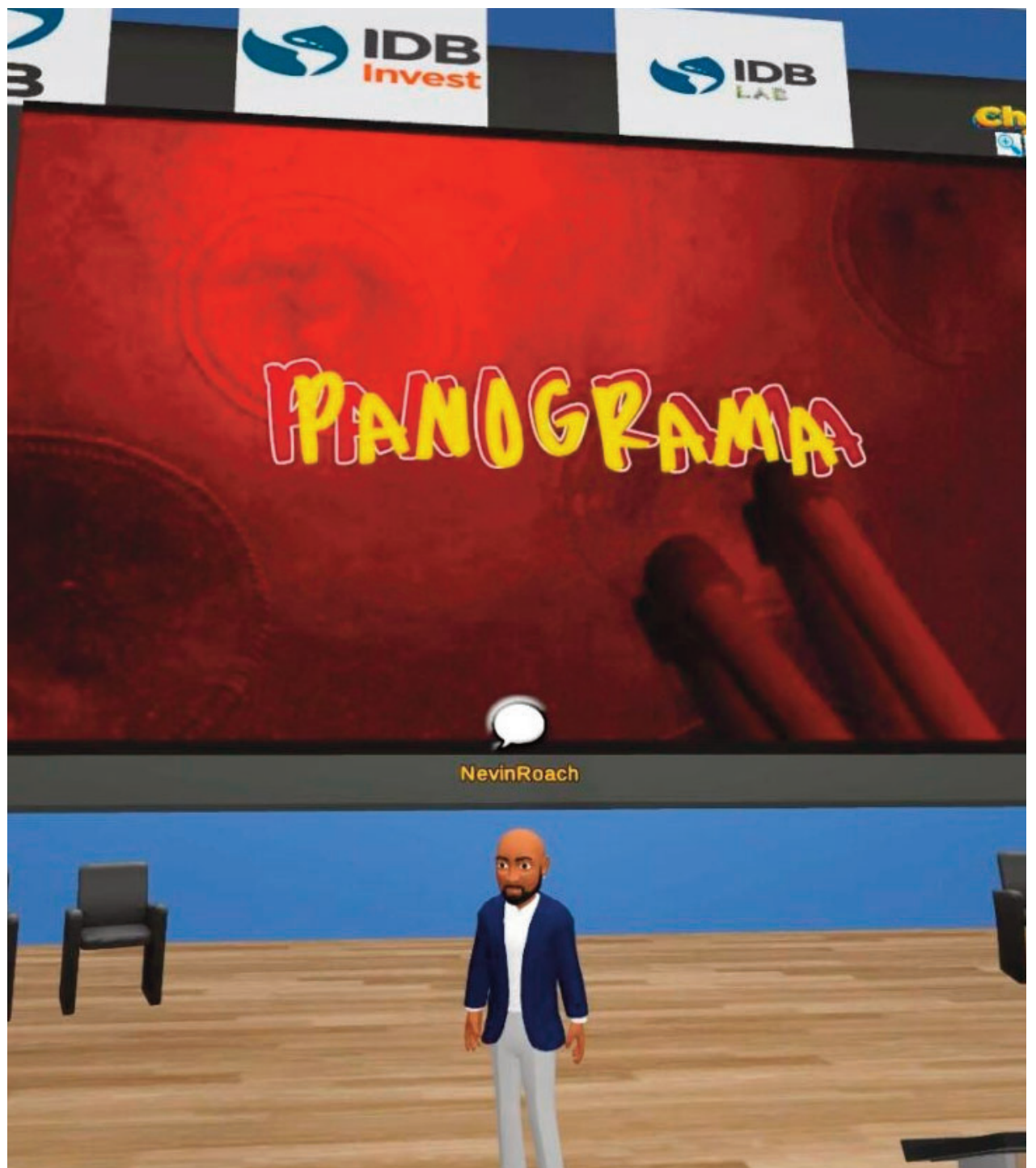
CEO and founder of PanoGrama Nevin Roach said it was an honour to be part of the IDB activities and lauded the initiative.

"Advancements in technology shape lives and we must keep updated to remain competitive as a people. The IDB has embarked on an important journey, and I am happy to be part of it. I envision a future TT where there are virtual and augmented experiences that immerse visitors into the events leading to the creation of the steelpan, or the past operation of the Trinidad Government Railway, making them feel as if they were there in person.

"There is so much history and culture that can be packaged digitally for tourism and other sectors."

Roach presented topics such as marketing, perseverance, personal and professional development to youth at the IDB's virtual campus on August 23. He also highlighted PanoGrama as an avenue through which upcoming pannists can obtain knowledge, improve their craft and market themselves potentially to millions via television.

His presentation ended with performances from 2021 PanoGrama winner Keishaun



Nevin Roach presents at the IDB's virtual campus

Julien, and 2022 finalist Shaquille "Flogo" Forbes. Julien also shared some of his experiences.

IDB welcomed the partnership in the virtual and physical parts of this year's programming. The organisation has a country strategy for 2021-2025 that focuses on digital transformation. As a result, IDB sees the work that PanoGrama is doing as part of digitalising local cultural expressions, including pan, the release

said.

The Cheer Fair will culminate at Saith Park, Chaguanas, on August 27 and will see nine youth music and culture groups, along with PanoGrama, which will offer pan, drumming and percussion performances during online activities and in a cultural show in Chaguanas. The event takes place from 1-5pm.

25 years of Orange Sky

Legendary Trinidadian rockers release new album, return to the stage

Trinidadian rock band Orange Sky will mark their return to a live stage with a full concert performance on September 3 in Port of Spain.

Aptly titled “Last Blast”, the band said it was signalling the end of the “Summer 2022” by reuniting with their fanbase and digging deep into their extensive 27-year music catalogue.

Orange Sky lead singer Nigel Rojas said the showcase will represent a “continuation of the band’s two-decade saga of musical prowess”.

Rojas started Orange Sky with his brother Nicholas nearly three decades ago. The Port of Spain-based band celebrated 25 years of music-making with a series of virtual exchanges in 2020 during the height of the global pandemic.

“This is what we were dreaming about and talking about since Nicholas was six years old, and I was ten years old. Everything that has happened with Orange Sky and in our lives for the past 27 years literally were dreams that came true, and the saga continues. We feel as if we’re now starting. We feel like we are now beginning a new chapter, after 25 years,” Rojas said.

The rock pioneers will also debut music from their new 11-track album *Strang Days* including the already popular singles: “Crazy”, “Wheels” and “Temporary”. The September 3 appearance will be their first in front a live crowd in over three years, Rojas said.

“We’re calling it the ‘Last Blast’ because it’s the last Saturday before the end of summer. We just want the whole of Trinidad to come on down, we are really looking forward to connecting again with local fans,” Rojas said.

Rojas said after two years without a major rock show on the islands, fans of the genre can



Orange Sky: marking 25 years of rock n roll

expect an intense explosion of pent-up energy from his band performing their hits: “Real Love”, “Vitamin G”, “Alone” and “Beautiful Day” among others.

“We’re going to come with all the energy of the last three years of being repressed and not being able to do what we do best, which is to play live and connect and share our music live. That’s a big part of the Orange Sky vibe.

“The energy that we’re going to bring is a depraved, desperate energy—it’s going to be unbelievable. We can’t wait to share with our fans the new music and our original hits,” he said.

Rising rockers, The Narrows, which features Sabastien Camacho, son of Orange Sky drummer Dion Camacho, will open Saturday’s show. Veteran bands Sidekick Envy, Bangaseed and Incert Coin will also perform.

Ozzy Osborne/Black Sabbath tribute band, Mr Crowley will also be flying into Trinidad to share the stage with Orange Sky, Rojas added. The British cover band set the Guinness World Record for the Largest Air Guitar ensemble during KCAL’s Rock N Roll Bingo Event at San Manuel Casino, California, USA.

“We’re looking forward to a magical night. The feedback has been unbelievable and ticket

sales are fantastic so far. Fingers crossed we’re going to have a good night. Thanks to all our sponsors for still believing in us, keeping rock and roll alive. We want everybody to come out and have a great time.”



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Sean Paul and Gwen Stefani: collaborated on Shenseea's "Light My Fire"

The Voice: Gwen Stefani Taps Sean Paul As Her Celebrity Advisor

Gwen Stefani is returning to *The Voice*, and she's bringing Sean Paul as her celebrity advisor for the show, which is now in its 12th season.

Gwen Stefani, who first joined *The Voice* in 2014 and has appeared as a voice coach for several seasons, announced on Wednesday that the Jamaican Grammy-winning artist will be her celebrity advisor on Season 22.

Sean Paul and Gwen Stefani recently collaborated on the Shenseea featured track "Light My Fire" from his latest album, *Scorcha*, so their working dynamic is not new, especially as they were acquainted long before they even made music together.

Along with Stefani and Sean Paul, a star-studded list of coach-advisor duos is returning for season 22, with Blake Shelton bringing on

Country singer Jimmie Allen joining for the Battle Rounds, John Legend bringing on Grammy-winning artist Jazmine Sullivan and Camila Cabello bringing Charlie Puth as her advisor.

According to *Entertainment Tonight*, Stefani said she is happy to compete against her husband, Blake Shelton. The pair got married a year ago in Oklahoma. Stefani also brings a formidable challenge as she is a previous *Voice* coach winner with Carter Rubin in season 19.

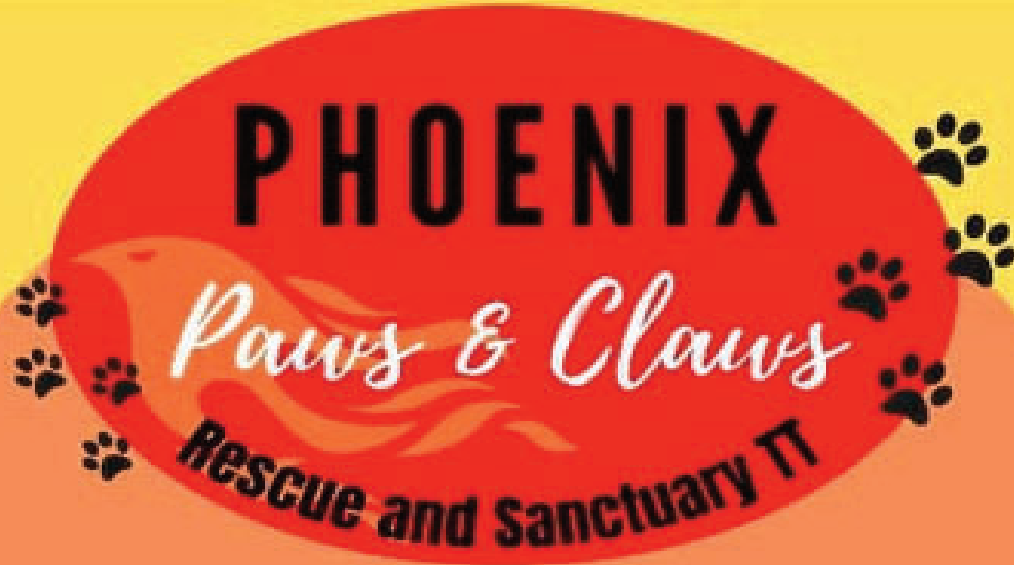
Stefani says that deciding to pick Sean Paul wasn't a hard decision.

"We had hooked up with this song, and I was like, 'Gosh, you know, I should get him to do [*The Voice*] — that would be perfect,'" Gwen said about her asking Sean Paul to join the team. "I just asked."

As for working together, the artists recently gushed about how seamlessly they work together after releasing "Light Your Fire."


"[I've] definitely felt her vibes, her voice and all of that from No Doubt days all the way through 'Bananas' days... straight up to now," Sean agreed. "She's awesome... when she said yes, I did a little dance."

Stefani also shared her love for ska music and also working with Sean Paul after so many years. "I grew up loving ska music, which was, at the time, like, super underground," she noted. "[There were] a lot of English groups like Madness, The Specials, and The Selecter, which led me into reggae music... And then, it's just crazy to think that all these years later, I'm standing with a legend."



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Raheem Sterling Unveils New JA Heritage Inspired Clarks Shoes

Chelsea footballer Raheem Sterling has released his heritage-inspired footwear Clarks shoe collection that pays homage to Jamaica.

The collection dropped in mid-August as the recently appointed global ambassador for Clarks brings his signature love for the Clarks brand to his fans. The new shoes, which come in several hues, bring together the signature Wallabee Boot and Desert Trek into one new and innovative design and is the first collection by Sterling with the beloved shoe brand.

Sterling is known for his love for the iconic brand, which has a huge presence in Jamaican culture as music fans especially love the iconic Clarks shoes. Sterling as well has shared his love for the shoes, which have been featured in reggae and dancehall music lyrics over the last 40 years.

This is not the first collaboration between Clarks and Sterling they have collaborated before. The famous footballer is Jamaican and moved to Wembley, England as a child.

He previously shared his love for the Wallabees, which increased his athletic abilities as a child on the playground.

According to Clarks, the new collaboration pays homage to Sterling's birthplace, Jamaica.

Photos of the Clarks were shared on Wednesday, with Top Boy's Kadeem Ramsay posing as the male model and DJ Becca Dudley as the female model. The photos also feature Sterling and the shoes with an embossed motif '1692' that references the famous 1692 Port Royal earthquake event that sunk the city, which served as Jamaica's capital. The event is nowadays associated with what remains of Port Royal, the home of Sterling.

Jamaica's national motto, 'Out of Many – One People,' is also inscribed inside the shoe.

The colors of the shoe range from neutral tones of navy blues, clean whites and ecru. There are also darker shades of grey, black, and khaki, all paying homage to the natural beauty of Jamaica.

Sterling spoke about his love for Clarks shoes since he was a boy at the launch of the collection recently.

"In school, I wanted to keep up with the kids wearing fresh kicks so I was selling frozen slush after class to make money to buy my first pair of Wallabees," he said.

"Fast forward and now to be the first Jamaican with my own Clarks collection is an honour.



Raheem Sterling sports his new Clarks which are a tribute to Jamaica

When I heard I could build this line I was buzzing, it's a brand I've loved from a young age so to have this opportunity is really special," he added.

"As a nod to the special connection between Clarks and Jamaica I wanted to do something that was for the island, for Jamaica itself. On the

heel you see my brand 1692 which is the year Kingston was founded and hidden inside the shoe is the motto of Jamaica, out of many one people," he added.

The collection is only available online in the UK and EU and exclusively through Clarks UK website.

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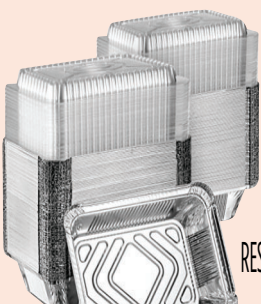
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Sex with his God-daughter

Girl testifies R. Kelly had sex with her ‘hundreds of times’

One of the victims in R. Kelly’s Chicago child pornography trial testified that she is the ex-god-daughter of the R&B sensation and that he had sex with her “hundreds of times” between the ages of 15-18.

The woman who is identified as Jane Doe is now 37 years old woman and says that her aunt encouraged her to approach the singer to convince him to be her “Godfather.” At the time, she was in a girl group, and the singer had agreed.

However, weeks had barely passed when R. Kelly would tell her lewd sexual things on the phone, including questions like what kind of underwear she had on, and by the time she was 14 years old, he had started feeling her breasts and vagina while they were at a Chicago recording studio.

Shortly after that, when she was around 15, prosecutor U.S. Assistant Attorney Jason Julien said Kelly, who was 30 years old at the time, began having intercourse with her at his house in Northside Chicago, the woman testified.

R. Kelly, who was recently sentenced to 30 years in prison for a separate sex trafficking case, is now on trial for conspiracy to obstruct justice. Prosecutors allege that Kelly used money to induce Jane Doe and threats to her and her family to deter her from testifying against him in 2008. The singer was successfully acquitted in that case.

The singer is also alleged to have produced child porn videos, some of which were played in court, and also enticing minors to perform sex acts with him and others at his direction.

Jane Doe is the first witness in the child porn case, and there are two additional victims set to testify, while three sex tapes showing the singer having sex with the minors will be played for the jury.

Jane Doe recalled for the jury the first time she met Kelly after her girl group had a performance. Kelly was brought by her aunt.

“It made me feel happy that such a successful person was saying I was gifted, so I was excited,” Jane said, according the Chicago Tribune. She added that it was her aunt’s idea for her to ask the singer to be her godfather as she encouraged her to “should sit on his lap and rub his head and ask him to play that role in my life.”

The woman said that in one of the telephone conversations with Kelly, he told her he was masturbating while having a phone conversation about her underwear.

The artist also introduced her to alcohol at the age of 14.

“It would help me loosen up, kind of take me away from the moment,” she said as she added that he took her virginity and the two had sex



R. Kelly gave her alcohol to help her loosen up, witness says at his newest trial

“Uncountable times...hundreds.”

The woman who was previously a witness in Kelly’s child pornography case in 2008 had changed her testimony in that case where she denied being the minor who was in a porn video with Kelly. However, on Thursday, she changed her testimony as she admitted that she was the one in the video shot in a log cabin decorated room at his North Side Chicago home between 1998 and 2000.

Prosecutors argued that Kelly was directly responsible for Jane Doe’s false testimony in

2008. They claim that the singer forked out large sums of money to pay for her and her family to leave Chicago and go to the Bahamas and Cancun.

Her family later denied to police investigators that she was in the video. However, they now say that before the 2008 trial, Jane Doe’s aunt had shown them a sex tape of Kelly and the minor, but when asked about it, the artist threatened them telling them, “You’re with me or against me,” prosecutors say.



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Ne-Yo on Kartel hit: Wasn't me

Ne-Yo says that problems encountered by Vybz Kartel and Spice for the sample of his song “Miss Independent” on their biggest hit, “Romping Shop,” had nothing to do with him.

In an interview on Drink Champs, Ne-Yo says that he was not the one who refused to clear the song as he claims that he was not aware the song was sampled, and he didn't have an issue with it anyways.

Thirteen years ago, Vybz Kartel and Spice dropped what is now one of the biggest songs in dancehall, “Romping Shop.” The song sampled “Miss Independent” but caused major controversy for all of the artists involved.

Miss Independent was a widely successful track for Ne-Yo as it became his first No. 1 hit on the Billboard Hot 100, topping the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. The song spent almost a dozen weeks on various charts and is now a platinum-selling record.

However, after “Romping Shop” was released, Vybz Kartel received a cease-and-desist letter threatening legal action from EMI Music Publishing. A letter from EMI was widely publicized, signaling that the era of dancehall artists sampling hip hop and R&B tracks without permission was over due to the incorporation of technology.

The letter demanded that “Romping Shop” could not be released and that the artist was to destroy all of the recordings of the infringing track and that the song will be removed from all internet sites.

This led to Vybz Kartel changing the riddim on the song and re-releasing it as he did not seek permission to sample the track in the first place. More than a decade later, “Romping Shop” is as successful as “Miss Independent,” which has 424 million views on YouTube.

In his interview with Drink Champs, Ne-Yo says that he had nothing to do with the Jamaican artists being told to change the riddim on the track. The artist said he was ready to approve the clearance as he knew about Vybz Kartel's popularity back then.

“I didn't not clear it...the streets cleared it right away which made it virtually impossible to not clear it, even if I was thinking about not clearing it which by the way I was never thinking about not clearing it,” he said to N.O.R.E.

Ne-Yo added that before seeing the popularity of “Romping Shop” rise as it debuted on the Billboard Hot 100, he was told about Vybz Kartel, and the knowledge that he had sampled “Miss Independent” without permission had come by sur-



Ne-Yo says he didn't challenge Kartel and Spice's sample on Romping Shop

prise to him.

“Before the song was presented to me, the concept of Vybz Kartel and who he was was presented to me. Like, this is ‘that dude’ oh, and by the way, he did this with your song. It was presented to me like that. So I'm like, so, what are we talking about right now? Of course, it's fine. Why would I have a problem with this?” he told the hosts.

Ne-Yo added that “Romping Shop” inevitably helped to raise the profile of his own track.

“To this day, I can't be over there and perform Miss Independent without giving props to what the f**k he did. You created a whole other vibe and that's just off of the sh*t that I was tryna do. I gotta give you love for that,” he said.

The artist added that, in his opinion, sampling is essential to teach the younger generation

to make better music or experience an era they could otherwise not grow up in.

“You gotta realise, it's generations coming behind you ...and if you decide to not let nobody f**k with what you did because it's what you did and you gon' have this pride about it, then them generations don't get it. Them generations don't get to experience it, they don't get to enjoy it.”

“Romping Shop” is by far one of the most controversial and sexually explicit tracks by Vybz Kartel. The artist became known for his raunchy music, which also saw pushback from society concerning the lyrics of the music.

The song was banned by the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica from radio and TV as it violated the rules for publishing music. This led to the artist creating a “clean” version of the song.

Nigeria goes Bazodee

Machel film gets six nominations at Realtime Film Festival

Machel Montano's 2015 film, *Bazodee*, has received six nominations at the Nigerian-based Realtime Film Festival (RTF).

A media release said the film has been recognised in the following six major categories: best lead actor, best lead actress, best supporting actor, best supporting actress, best screenplay and best lighting design.

Lorraine O'Connor, one of the film's producers said, "the *Bazodee* nominations are really heart-warming, as this film brings a lot of joy and promotes love which is something most needed in the world today: and the Caribbean is all about joy and love. It also shows that the film has a far reach, and this being its African premiere, I am excited that the film was nominated in those categories, and is now being appreciated by another audience and another market."

O'Connor also holds the position as general manager of C15 Studios Limited, a company which has invested in *Bazodee*, and has assiduously been working toward improving the financial prospects for creatives across the Caribbean region, the release said.

In light of the news O'Connor and the C15 team are exploring potential opportunities for creative partnerships between Nigeria and the Caribbean.

O'Connor will be in the contingent representing TT in Nigeria for festival.

"We are very excited about the possibilities that can be generated from our participation in the Realtime Film Festival, opening the door to collaborations/co-productions between Nollywood and the Caribbean," said O'Connor.

Echoing O'Connor's views on the vast benefits of forging a cinematic bridge between the Caribbean and Nigeria, is Sean Valley, one of the founders of Lanniup Consulting. Valley has been instrumental in connecting the TT contingent with Nollywood. He recently explained the origins of his initiative on TTT's Now Morning Show.

Valley said that he and his Trinidadian-based Nigerian friend, Dr Oritsetimeyin (Oti) Esimaje, were discussing a few years ago the fact that Nigeria had surpassed South Africa as the largest economy on the African continent. Launching from that, Valley and Esimaje decided to explore the establishment of a trade corridor between West Africa and the English-speaking Caribbean.

"We decided that Nigeria's creative sector –



Machel Montano, left, and Natalie Perera in a scene from the film *Bazodee*

their media and entertainment space – also referred to as Nollywood, was where we wanted to plant our flag."

According to the United Nations, "the Nigerian film industry produces about 50 movies per week, second only to India's Bollywood – more than Hollywood in the United States. Although its revenues are not on par with Bollywood's and Hollywood's, Nollywood still generates an impressive \$590 million annually."

From a financial and creative standpoint, O'Connor said, "as general manager of C15 Studios, my mission is to take Caribbean creative talent to the world by helping to develop a profitable Caribbean economy. This type of collaboration is exactly in line with my mission of building meaningful economic bridges between the Caribbean and Africa, which can only lead to success."

O'Connor will be discussing this and more on her monthly online programme: The C15 Show with Lorraine O'Connor. Creatives across

the Caribbean are encouraged to register for The C15 Show - episode eight, as O'Connor's guest will be Stanlee Ohikhuare, founder of the RTF, who will shed his insights on Nollywood's rise to global success; and Freetown Collective's Muhammad Muwakil and Lou Lyons, who would speak on strategically planning one's creative regional and global climb, without ever losing sight of one's history and culture.

The online programme will be streamed live from Nigeria, online (Zoom and Facebook), on August 24 at 6 pm (TT time).

Bazodee was screened at the RTF on August 26. The results will be announced on at the closing ceremony of the festival.

The general manager of FilmTT Leslie-Ann Wills-Caton, and head of programming of TTT Diane Robertson, will accompany O'Connor and Valley at the festival the release said.

The Realtime Film Festival ran from August 19-27 in Lagos, Nigeria.



Kes on Da Reggae

Soca band to headline Coney Island concert

After a successful performance at the Essence Music Festival in New Orleans (alongside Wyclef, Machel Montano, Nas and Nicki Minaj), Kes The band has been selected to headline Hot 97's On Da Reggae and Soca Tip event scheduled for September 2 at the Coney Island Amphitheatre. Other performers include Tarrus Riley, Romain Virgo, Ding Dong Ravers and Patrice Roberts.

A media release said since claiming the Soca Monarch and Road March titles in 2020, the band of brothers known as Kes has been working

assiduously and steadfastly to showcase, promote and ease soca music into the mainstream music markets of the world.

Masters of the groovy soca sound, Kes has also become expert at sharing TT's electric and engaging Carnival energy through live performances. Thus the band continues to package, present and open doors for the music and culture of TT and by extension the Caribbean region and the soca genre, the release said.

In 2022, Kes released the singles Jolene (which has garnered scores of streams, plays,

downloads and over 1.4 million views of the video on YouTube) and Liki Tiki featuring Michael Bruin and JPerry from Haiti, which is becoming a bona fide smash with over two million views on YouTube.

In July the band performed for a sold-out audience in Toronto, Canada for their first IzWe Toronto concert event and announced dates for an American bi-coastal tour over the next three months.

For further info visit social media accounts @kesthebandofficial.

Second Imij Returns

Like riding a bicycle.

That's how easy it will be for former members of soca band Second Imij to click into full gear and come together for a special reunion tour at Carnival 2023, says frontman Ghetto Flex (Hilton Dalzell).

The soca and Carnival fraternity was abuzz this week when bandleader guitarist Joey Ng Wai confirmed reports that the 90s pop soca hit-makers, known for the classics "Jump", "Golo", "Na Na" and "Poison", were in fact getting the band back together.

Second Imij will perform at a special reunion concert at Anchorage, Chaguaramas, on January 28. The band is also booked to appear on the road on Carnival Monday and Tuesday with Peter Samuel's Kinetic Mas.

Quizzed on the difficulty of finding their famous musical groove after more than two decades apart, Ghetto Flex said: "it's going to be an instant click".

Second Imij's last performance was at Anchorage in 1998. Since then, the band evolved into Imij & Co and took on a new life with acts like Kees Dieffenthaler, Michelle Xavier and Kevon Carter, among other frontliners.

"It's like riding a bicycle; you never forget. That was our life so it will be very easy to just pick up where we left off. I think it will just be a matter of going back in the band room, picking up the instruments and just falling back into place," Ghetto Flex said from his St Vincent home.

Ng Wai said all three original frontline singers have signed up for the reunion including Ghetto Flex, San Francisco, USA-based crooner Russell Cadogan and Florida, USA-based vocalist Tricia Lee Kelshall.

Original musicians, New York, USA-based bassist Julius "Ooze" Cooper, drummer Selwyn Buckmire and keyboardist/music producer Richard "Char Su" Ahong are also on board. DJ Kamau (Ade Skerritt) is the new face on the tour. Veteran band manager and promoter Cliff Harris also resumes duties as the band liaison. Harris guided Second Imij with Al Smith and the late George Ng Wai during the 90s.

"I am overjoyed to be part of bringing Second Imij back to the game and meeting up with a team of people I shared a lot of time with and had many incredible stories together. There are no nerves at all, we will be ready," a bubbly Ng Wai said.

Ng Wai said the band will play special dedications to fallen members, his late father George and music producer/artiste manager Johnny Gonsalves.

"There will definitely be not one, but two very special dedications to Dad and Johnny Gonsalves.



Tricia Lee Kelshall will return as singer

Johnny and I started Second Imij in 1989 and quickly added "Uncle George" to lead us," Ng Wai recalled.

Russell Cadogan described the call for the Second Imij reunion as "a weight lifted", when he spoke to the Express on Wednesday from his San Francisco base.

"It felt like a weight has been lifted, because music and performing is my life. When you've

grown accustomed to something that has been a part of your life or you've been a part of it for so long, it becomes a part of you. Getting the call was not much of a surprise but more of a relief, because I knew it was going to come, it was just a matter of when."

Cadogan has spent the past 22 years building movie sets in California. In his spare time, he performs at wineries in California's famous Napa Valley and has done gigs at social media tech firms Google, Facebook and Instagram, which all have their headquarters in California.

Returning to a soca stage, however, will be an entirely different proposition, he reckons.

"I am excited, anxious and a bit doubtful all rolled up in one, because let's keep it real, it's been a minute since I've done any type of high-energy performances conducive to what Second Imij was known for back in the day. After all I'm the oldest in the band," Cadogan chuckled.

"But it's nothing that a few weeks of rigid rehearsals won't fix. As for the organic type of rapport we have as a unit, that's always going to be there. No rehearsals required for that. We're close friends first, band mates second."

Band bassist Julius "Ooze" Cooper embraced Cadogan's nervous excitement about their anticipated return.

"I believe there will be a period of grooving back together; it's been over 25 years since I've played with the band, but I honestly feel it's gonna click really quickly. And we will be back to day one. Man, we are of course older now, so I love the challenge to see if we can sustain our energy for two full days (on the road), but I'm excited for the challenge."

Kelshall, meanwhile, said she was overcome with pride to see the positive response from the band's fanbase following news of their reunion.

"You know we were kids and we went on that stage and had fun and brought everybody along with us. That feel-good emotion is still attached to the band. The world needs a lil feel-good right now and we are happy to bring it," Kelshall said.

Kelshall, whose single "Mindcircus" topped the UK Dance Charts in 2001, counted Second Imij's appearance at the Water Festival in Stockholm, Sweden in 1993 and being judged best new act at the Apollo Theater in New York, among her most prized memories. Returning home, together, will be added to those moments, she said.

"Even though we spread out all over the world, the friendships are there and we know what each person brings. Of course we have all grown. Coming back together with all of us in the same space will be exciting. We are going to have a great time with the audience,

"T&T Carnival 2023, Imij is back, baby," Cadogan said.

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