

KAISO & STEEL

An international project exploring the rich cultural heritage of Trinidad & Tobago

UK Tour March 19 - 28, 2010

Creative Team

Drew Gonsalves. A Canadian/Trinidadian is the leader Kobo Town in Toronto. Kobo Town strives to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of their music by engaging the pressing political and social concerns of our time. Their debut album, *Independence*, came out in 2007. Drew's knowledge of the history of calypso is expansive and he is a great admirer of the kaiso tradition, something which will be obvious in tonight's performance. He has performed with numerous 'maestros' from the calypso world including David Rudder, Lord Superior and others and his next album will be released in June 2010.

Norman Stewart has been playing pan for over three decades. Norman was a key member, and later, leader of the famous Midlands band Maestros Steel Band, and was the first to introduce Steel Pan to Ukraine. Since seeing Desperadoes in Birmingham in 1981, Norman became a pan convert and since 1986 has been playing pan in Trinidad's carnival with Desperadoes, Trinidad All Stars and others. Norman still plays pan and manufactures pan 'to order'.

Silbert Morris is a drummer/percussionist and began his performance career with the Kokuma Dance Company in 1982. 'Bertie' as he is affectionately known, has been teaching in schools and colleges for many years and has taught with The British Council in Zimbabwe with other dance colleagues.

Aaron Mapp - Tour Manager/Stage Manager

Aaron has been involved in theatrical productions in the UK for several decades now. Skilled in both sound and lighting, he has toured extensively nationally and internationally with music, dance and theatre companies. Aaron is a member of the technical team at The Drum and also still freelances with national and international companies.

Bob Ramdhanie - Producer (Centre for Music and Arts Technology (CMAT) Ltd)

CMAT is a member of the Black Routes Network and is touring *Kaiso & Steel* nationally. CMAT, an organic development of the Birmingham a cappella quintet Black Voices, acquired the Grosvenor Studio Complex in 2002 and converted it into a Social Enterprise Arts Centre, focusing on music and technology programmes.

Background Information

In many senses, **calypso** was a forerunner to today's social networking and twitter. Essentially, its purpose is about social commentary, oftentimes laced with humorous satire on current events. Calypso was and remains the voice of social conscience, although not all calypsos are socially conscious calypsos and it has its risqué side too.

1914. The first calypso recording was made.

1920s gave birth to the first calypso tents.

In the 1930s, calypsonians such as Attila the Hun, Lord Invader and the Roaring Lion were making an indelible impression on the calypso music world.

In 1940 Lord Kitchener rose to prominence and dominated the calypso scene until the late 1970s. Lord Kitchener had memorable hits until his death in 2001.

In 1944, the Andrews Sisters (an American trio) did a cover version of Lord Invader's hit *Rum and Coca Cola*.

In 1956, Harry Belafonte recorded his *Calypso* album containing the famous *Banana Boat Song ("Day-O")*. His *Calypso* album also [became the first album ever to sell over one million copies](#).

1956 - The year the Mighty Sparrow 'burst onto the scene' and took the calypso world by storm with his legendary hit *Jean and Dinah*, which celebrated the departure of US troops from Trinidad and ushered in a new era of politically charged calypso. This politicized form of calypso facilitated Trinidad's independence from Britain in 1962. Socially and politically conscious calypso has had a major influence on many of Trinidad's most important social and political movements.

Up to the late 1970s Lord Kitchener and the Mighty Sparrow dominated the calypso scene.

Most of the top calypsonians from the golden age have been male - The Growling Tiger, Lord Executor and Lord Pretender, just to name a few. However, the 1960s saw the rise of Calypso Rose, the undisputed "Queen of Calypso." Her 1996 hit *Fire In Me Wire* has become a calypso anthem. Calypso Rose has managed to excel in this otherwise male dominated genre.

The Steel Pan

1930s - The pan first emerged, in an organised form in the twin island state of Trinidad and Tobago. When the British colonial authorities banned African drumming, the people made music from bamboos which they thumped on the ground and they created "Tamboo Bamboo Bands".

Between the 1930s and 1945, biscuit tins, hubcaps and empty oil drums became a new sort of drum - steel, with distinct notes hammered into the surface. The steel banders call the music Pan and the oil drums on which it is played were called "pans".

The music that came out of the pan was the music of the poor and was not considered respectable in the early years. There was a history of violent behavior that went along with the music. Rivalry developed between the steel bands and battles between the groups were not unusual.

In time, the steel drum gained in respect and today the groups range from small groups to huge symphonic orchestras of 100 players. They perform anything from western classics through jazz to calypso and original compositions.

By the 1950s there were over 80 steelbands in Trinidad, which produced some of the greatest pannists and tuners.

In 1951 Edric Connor arranged for the Trinidad All Stars Percussion Orchestra (TAPSO) (first steelband) to travel to Britain to participate in the Festival of Britain at the newly opened South Bank Complex. Conducted by Lieutenant Joseph Griffith, the band made its debut on 26 July 1951.

Since 1951, steelpan music started to grow in the UK and that process has been nurtured and supported by the British Association of Steelbands.

Special thanks to all Directors and staff at CMAT.

Video clips used in *Kaiso & Steel* from Calypso Dreams, directed by Geoffrey Dunn and Michael Horne.

