Musical Orality and Literacy in the Transmission of Knowledge and Praxis

Trinidad and Tobago

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Some decades ago, I was invited to hold a singing workshop over one holiday week for children perceived as at risk of running amok without something to do. Daily I sang with these children – all from the Black population of south London. They were already stupendously powerful singers, most with plenty of experience from their church-singing backgrounds. So my job seemed to be to take them some places in the musical universe they may not have experienced before – a Zulu lullaby from Africa, supremely agile scat singing in Take 5, getting inside wonderful 7/4 rhythms in folk songs from the Balkans, and an electrifying Kyrie from Benjamin Britten's Missa Brevis like you never heard it. Complex and simple pieces, all learned orally, through call and response, and with extraordinarily swiftness and a musical understanding and a sheer joy that I will never forget.

After our final concert, I was approached by the man in charge. Very good he said, yes. Now then, the next thing will be for you to teach these children to read music.

No matter that he had just witnessed for himself a phenomenon of oral learning; no, we must bring these Afro-Caribbean-derived children into the fold as soon as possible. He simply couldn't move out of that paradigm which – in my view at least on this occasion – would have straitjacketed these children at that moment, in that setting. The children all turned up again for a second workshop next school break, and were as brilliantly musical as before; but when the requirement to stop the singing, silence the room and teach them to read was repeated, I left that particular field, but continued with the children in other ways.

Felicity Laurence

This chapter offers a sketch of musical orality and musical literacy in the modes of transmission of musical traditions, knowledge, and skills within the double island nation Trinidad and Tobago. Against the general prevalence of

A former British colony, the nation gained independence in 1962, becoming a republic in the Commonwealth of Nations in 1976.

musical orality across the Caribbean – where implicit in 'oral' is also the 'aural' learning by the recipient of what is being transmitted orally – we look at the historical foundations and role of oral transmission within and beyond formal educational settings in Trinidad and Tobago, and at how this orality 'sits' together with any practice of and demand for musical literacy. In this, we take insights from contemporary challenges to the persistent precedence in Western educational models (if not actual practice . . .) of written over oral systems. The two modes of transmission may be construed on the one hand as distinctive yet connected ways of learning, and on the other, as, respectively, expressions of colonial legacy and, in the centrality of orally/aurally based musical learning, resistance to that legacy. We also call upon the work of music philosopher Christopher Small, whose combined opus offers to our discussion some uniquely pertinent perspectives on musical transmission and practice in our specific site of enquiry.

The study of the education of music is complicated, precisely because it reflects – arguably in unique fashion because of music's specific emotional 'pull' and related association with identity – the changing religious, social, political, cultural, and economic forces of a nation. This idea is captured directly in the title of Small's initial and paradigm-shifting volume, *Music, Society, Education* (Small 1977/1996), and his explication of these inherent and fluid interconnections indeed constitutes its central thesis. Musical tradition and practice encapsulate all the interwoven intricacies of a nation arising not only from where it has been but also where it is heading – or hopes to be heading – in the future. The complex colonial and post-colonial histories of the Caribbean add a further layer of complexity.

We begin with a brief outline of some wider music educational tendencies, which can in turn provide a lens through which to view music educational policy and practice in Trinidad and Tobago. This is followed by a discussion of some of the central music-making practices found there, their historical foundations, current performance, and respective accompanying manifestations of musical orality and musical literacy in their transmission.

Music Educational Practices and Their Colonial Underpinning: A Quick View

Across the colonial world, Western classical music was held by the colonisers as the pinnacle of musical achievement. This resilient and still powerful doctrine continues alive and well, unambiguously exemplified when

Daniel Barenboim, that 'high priest' of Western classical music (Haak-Schulenburg & Laurence 2021, 337), simultaneously claims that 'it is rubbish to say that classical music is colonialist' (Hewett 2020), while declaring his intention to 'explore all those places where music hasn't been brought to', as cited by Lucy Cheung (2016). As Cheung wryly comments: 'Barenboim claims to speak in the name of music, but what I see is a glimpse into the mind of a colonialist' (Cheung 2016).²

This view of music privileges musical literacy and gives pivotal significance to reading and writing music in the music educational process. In this enduring paradigm, oral traditions and oral/aural transmission are implicitly inferior; learning to read written music is considered as a core structural element of a 'formal' music education, whereas orally communicated music is labelled 'informal' – that very term connoting unmistakeable nuances of 'not as good'.

We can see this in stark form in the vignette that started this chapter: a denial of the children's manifestly real musical proficiency with which in fact they had in this instance leapfrogged over any requirement to read the notes, and its subjugation to a perceived ideal of what musical ability really looks like. Indeed, anyone working in the music community educational field knows to be true that most common utterance: 'I'm not musical because I can't read music'.

The story encapsulates a conundrum that has stalked music education across the English-speaking music educational world;³ that the Western classical canon of musical 'works', and its accompanying fetishising of notation and the ability to read the notes, has in fact alienated the huge majority of children, for whom it does not reflect their own musical experience or affinities beyond the school gates. In recent decades, the binarism of written versus oral has been challenged within music educational discourse, including the re-visioning of the place and modes of learning of vernacular music, and, indeed, a profound questioning of the roles of orality and literacy in music educational practice. Small's *Music, Society, Education*, first appearing in the late 1970s, constituted the first

² Cheung's piercing critique, focussing upon the resulting impact upon music performance and education in China, is spiced with many such instances of this unapologetic view of the uncontested supremacy of Western classical music over all other musics. For example: '[Barenboim] advocated that all the great European orchestras go to areas that do not get music (Cheung 2016). See also Haak-Schulenburg and Laurence (2021) for a discussion of the implications for respect and therefore resources for any other than Western classical music education in Palestine, where Barenboim's luxurious music centre in Ramallah embodies and indeed performs his vision of Western music's superiority.

³ In particular Britain, United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, although the work of Small, and also Green has spread well beyond the Anglophone countries.

salvo; he was the original interrogator of the pedestal occupied by Western music, its insistence upon musical literacy, its hegemony and the narrative touting it as a civilising force (the extraordinarily resilient mantra that 'music makes you a better person' (Laurence 2010, 246)).

Several decades on from the initial appearance of Small's heretical questioning, Lucy Green's examination of pop musicians' generally oral/aurally based musical learning habits (Green 2001) concluded that classical musicians might well consider broadening their own approach to include this orality in their learning: furthermore, this initial research led to her later treatise of an entirely new pedagogy based around oral transmission (Green 2008). Again, this was a ground-shifting challenge to orthodoxy, and has subsequently gained some traction precisely because music education struggles so interminably to argue its relevance in the school curriculum in many countries, and, in the United Kingdom, is indeed losing the argument, little by little.

Already in his earliest writings, Small hinted at his later rethinking of musical meaning, in which his now-famous neologism 'musicking' (Small 1998b) removes from centre stage the notion of music as object, and the ensuing attention upon the musical 'work' so central to the Western classical tradition. He reconceptualises music as activity – something we do – encompassing both performers and everyone else present in whatever capacity. His suggestion, that in the act of musicking we create 'a set of relationships [wherein] the meaning of the act lies' (13) inasmuch as these relationships are 'explored, affirmed, and celebrated' through the musicking (183), carries an immediate acknowledgement of its social functions as well as allowing musicking to take an infinite variety of forms, values, and modes of transmission – and, crucially, removing entirely any justification for the supremacy of the Western classical canon.

This takes us right away from the Western linear model of musical progression – both within the music object, and in human development – which has dominated established institution-based music educational practice, including in many former colonial countries. It also relegates the requirement for musical literacy so that this is no longer a necessary criterion of musical skill or understanding.⁵ Indeed, Small pointed out that across the world

One can perceive, however, an underlying teleological line – the sense of using 'their' music to guide them to 'ours' – which lurks more or less covertly within this pedagogy, occasionally popping into view.

We also find a direct repudiation of this focus upon notation from a further prominent music educational voice – in Janet Mills' 2005 discussion of school music. '[Music] is about sound, not symbol. Learning to read music, including staff notation or chord symbols, is simply that... Much of the music of the world takes place without anything being written down' (Mills 2005, 13).

virtually all musicking takes place notation-free: he highlights this in his paean to African-American music, *Music of the Common Tongue* (Small 1987/1998a) – which indeed has a particular resonance for any foray into Caribbean music – writing of the Afro-American tradition that it is 'a music that does not in the main rely on written or printed notes . . . it also does not reveal itself in that linear manner which is characteristic of the notation-dependent tradition of European classical music' (Small 1998a, 5).⁶

The colonist's view of his own, superior music as a civilising project to be imposed upon the 'Other' and – as phrased in our opening story – to bring that Other 'into the fold', underpins not only music education across former colonial countries, including Trinidad and Tobago, but also within the 'mother' country's own educational system – for its own, largely ignorant and musically illiterate children who litter its classrooms – at least as perceived and publicly lamented by Barenboim and those (many) of his persuasion. Indeed, these conundrums constitute a main focus of the unambiguously named *Debates in Music Teaching* (Philpott & Spruce 2012).⁷

Curricular Trends in Formal Music Educational Settings in Trinidad and Tobago

We look now at how the influences just sketched out play into music transmission practices, and the implicit or explicit roles of orality and

- ⁶ A 'back story' for this linearity appears in Vanessa Agnew's study of an early collision between Europeans and the music of the 'other' – in this case, located in the eighteenth-century Pacific (Agnew 2008). The observations from European travellers, upon hearing Polynesian music, that it was 'unexpectedly complex and affective' did not sit at all with the prevailing certainty of simple-to-complex development in all aspects of all societies; and what did not fit with this model was quite simply, but determinedly, removed from scrutiny.
 - Perhaps naively we expect such observations to have elevated European views on Polynesian culture [but the evidence was withheld of] the most significant observation Maori part singing so as to preserve the logic of a sequential, universal progress in music (Agnew 2008, 113).
- ⁷ This excerpt from *Debates* encapsulates the tensions under discussion. 'One of the oft-expressed intentions of bringing into the curriculum music from a broad range of traditions and cultures, is as a means of addressing the alienation of children from the music curriculum in schools; the assumption being that the presence of such music will, by definition ensure a more inclusive curriculum. However, despite the inclusion of such music, the ideology of high status music knowledge as manifest through western art music continues to be promoted through the way in which these musics are presented and taught in the classroom. In other words, the presence of a culturally diverse musical repertoire in classrooms has not significantly challenged the musical and cultural values that previously were explicitly articulated through the dominant presence of classical music in the curriculum. The relationship between the knower and what there is to be known remains the same and the *ideological values of western art music of autonomy, objectification, abstraction, and decontextualisation remain unchanged*' (Spruce & Matthews, in Philpott & Spruce 2012, 121, our italics).

literacy within formal music education in this twin-island nation in the post-colonial Caribbean, beginning with a glimpse at secondary school music.

Secondary School Music: A Recent View

Britain and the United States are the two main nations of formal music educational influence across the English Caribbean: Britain in terms of the lingering colonial structures permeating educational discourse and structure in general, and both as common sites of advanced academic study – for example, at Masters and doctoral level, of people from Caribbean countries who then return to positions of authority. One such person is Eldon Blackman, whose doctoral thesis (2015, from Temple University, Pennsylvania) investigated approaches to music in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago, via the perceptions of their principals, of whom he was one. Blackman is clear about the colonial influences upon Caribbean education (Blackman 2015, 11), and, on the issues of music education, he confirms the impact of the tussles described earlier, citing Tucker:

Hard-hitting criticisms of music in British schools resonated across the seas to Caribbean countries, causing those of us who work in systems of education initially modelled on the British system to examine our practices (Tucker 2003, 157, cited in Blackman 2015, 44).

He notes that the same kinds of issues also 'plague' formal music education in the Caribbean (Blackman 2015, 130).

Music education has become more cemented into the regular curriculum of Caribbean secondary schools but questions concerning the value of music education still prevail. Given that music is central to the fabric of several Caribbean islands, music learning, whether by learning to play an instrument or by singing, is a widespread activity. In several cases, musicians do most of their performing in the numerous cultural events that occur during the calendar year. The phenomenon of music learning, however, has not translated into the large scale offering of music education in schools (Blackman 2015, 127).

Blackman's account offers a clear and comprehensive portrayal of the history and current status of music education, and its associated practice and policy in Trinidad and Tobago.

Blackman cites the Caribbean Examinations Council's 2014 description of its syllabus:

The syllabus is rooted in Caribbean musical expressions, as well as in the musical expressions of other cultures. Further, the syllabus enables regional peoples to participate in the continuing development of Caribbean musical culture and to contribute to, and draw from, the pool of knowledge that constitutes world music (Blackman 2015, 34).

Note the lack of any mention of Western classical music and the implication that it simply joins the 'pool of knowledge' that might inform the central plank here – that is, the 'Caribbean musical expressions'. To this hint of putting musical literacy in its arguably proper place, we can add Blackman's finding that, among the secondary school principals whom he surveyed, musical literacy ranked below musical performance and music listening in his subjects' ranking of current music learning outcomes. This is perhaps unsurprising, but a further demotion of musical literacy – certainly as something to achieve for its own sake – is revealed in their collective ranking of standards desired under 'ideal' conditions (i.e., strong eternal support for music educational work in schools, sufficient resources in training, staff, equipment), where reading and writing music was placed lower still, now placed after the outcome 'Relate to History and Culture' (Blackman 2015, 103).

The 2014 'Secondary School Teachers' Guide in Music', for Trinidad and Tobago, includes a rationale for music in the curriculum, descriptions of some of the main European-based pedagogies (Dalcroze, Kodaly, Orff, Suzuki) and lesson plans; as in the primary curriculum, as explained in the next section, all immediately familiar in the underlying language and atomisation of all its elements. Music notation appears in Form 1 – but the term 'classical' music appears only once, in a mention of Indian classical music. The word 'Western' occurs only in the sections describing Western pedagogies and notational definitions.

The Primary Music Classroom

A glimpse of the 2013 primary music school music curriculum for the twinisland nation shows plans mandating a progression from one prescribed target of musical achievement and understanding to the next. The musical concepts delineated therein, the breaking down into tiny, prescribed units of content and understanding, and the very language in which curricular content and intention are couched, echo both the music educational mores derived from external sources and the linear paradigm of musical development mentioned earlier.

Thus, Infants 1 are required to 'recognise that different types of music evoke different types of responses', demonstrated by being able to 'sing simple folk songs lustily and enthusiastically' (Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education 2013, 35). Progressing to Infants 2, children are to learn to 'understand the concept of texture' and 'the importance of pitch accuracy and pleasing tone when singing' (45). In Standard 2, concepts of contour, style and structure enter the picture (64); in the next step, Standard 3, there is further development of pitch, rhythm, structure, dynamics, and texture (71).

However, the *content* of the curriculum goes directly to the 'real' musical world and certainly implies an oral/aural approach throughout. This in turn reflects the overall agenda of the primary curriculum, which from 2014 has embraced a thematic, integrated approach. Thus every subject at Infant stage serves the overarching topic 'Me and My World': likewise, in Standard 2, 'My Country: The People and Culture of Trinidad and Tobago', and in Standard 3, 'Our Region the Caribbean'. In Standard 5, the focus moves out: 'Putting it all: Projects and Subject Learning Becoming a Global Citizen' (John 2015, 173).

The youngest children develop the desired progress via the nursery songs they presumably already know; later, they are to be made aware of local musical genres and to be able to differentiate and locate these musical elements and structures in calypso, *parang*, East Indian music, and *chutney*. In Standard 3, there is an emphasis on 'traditional and nation building songs', and also on Trinidad and Tobago's secular and sacred festivals, including one unit designated: 'Display Tolerance When Viewing or Participating in Unfamiliar Festivals' (Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education 2013, 69). At this stage, children are to apply their understanding of musical concepts to compose songs, raps, and jingles 'on selected topics' and to 'research the music of some popular Caribbean artistes' (71).

Only in Standard 5 does non-local music feature, and then it is designated simply as 'foreign music' – this sitting tightly next to 'local'; thus 'musical concepts and elements to listen critically to a variety of local or foreign music' (87). The phrase 'Western classical' is entirely absent, while the three mentions of 'notation' appear always in the context of 'invented notation', notwithstanding the mention in the preamble of the children's learning to 'read symbols and notations'. Overall, an accompanying orality in pedagogy is implicit – and indeed, a nicely unsilent classroom.

^{9 &#}x27;Students [will] develop literacies in music as they listen and respond, sing, play instruments, create and improvise, read symbols and notations, record sound and music works, and analyse and

Professional Music Training and Tertiary Music Education

It is at tertiary level that we can see musical literacy being given a far more prominent role than in the preceding educational levels in Trinidad and Tobago, with a combination of oral and written systems underpinning current professional music training across the islands. The University of the West Indies at St Augustine, Trinidad, established in the mid-1980s, has been pivotal in training the islands' educators, administrators, and policy-makers in music. Today, students at the university can attain a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in the musical arts, or a certificate in music focussed upon the steelband, wherein students study arranging and composing for steelband and receive lessons on calypso, pan, parang and, more generally, ethnomusicology. Recently, the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT), a multi-campus college in Trinidad and Tobago, has adopted courses at certificate and degree level in music and music education. The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), also multicampus, has announced plans for a four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in music, which includes a first-year core module in music education and allows for specialisms in Caribbean music. Since 2010, the UTT also initiated a special institute, the National Youth Music, a combined programme of oral and written approaches. Nonetheless, a picture emerges that echoes the glimpses of primary and secondary school musicking set out in this chapter: the transmission of an orally based musical culture, fortified where appropriate (and this will of course include much instrumental tuition) by recourse to written notation, but apparently not subservient to this.

Thus, against the wider background of colonial and post-colonial pressures and heritage, which, as we have seen, affect music educational practice within the classroom across the Anglophone world, including in the 'mother' country, we find clear curricular prominence in formal education for the musical traditions that constitute the diverse and intertwined musicking in Trinidad and Tobago. It is of pivotal importance to see this musical landscape in the wider Caribbean context of similarly vibrant musical traditions, which express a particular urgency in their role in

appreciate music. This enables them to develop aural skills and to value and understand the expressive qualities of music' (Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education 2013, 22–3). (Note: this mention of 'literacies' holds a different connotation to our themes here of musical literacy and orality.)

underpinning and indeed preserving identity in places that are and remain subject to powerful external challenges to that identity. 10

We proceed now to a closer picture of these musicking practices in Trinidad and Tobago – *parang*, calypso, and *chutney* – as glimpsed in the view of institutional music education set out earlier. Moving beyond the classroom, we now look in more detail at these and other musical traditions, and the ways in which these have developed and are transmitted in the wider community. Tracing some historical trajectories, we explore some implications of lingering colonial influences that may tend to pit musical literacy against orality – in both institutional music education and in the broader extracurricular field.

Trinidad and Tobago's Musical Traditions: The Place of Orality

Orality is a defining feature of Caribbean. In the field of music, it refers to musics that are shared from person to person, community to community, through means of teaching either in person or through other non-written means, like radio and recordings. Argues musicologist Peter Jeffrey, in an echo of Small's overarching thesis, orality is the world's most common mode of learning music; it is the standard method, not the anomaly.

Oral transmission is not a particular feature of some music at certain times, but rather a universal characteristic of almost all music at almost all times. What we call 'oral transmission' is what most human beings throughout history have known simply as 'music' – something to play or hear rather than something to write or read. We modern Westerners are the ones who do things differently, and our preference for writing is our handicap (Jeffrey 1992, 124).

When music learning takes place within the context of orality it becomes intricately tied to social learning and daily life interactions, where observation and imitation are repositioned as part of wider cultural systems. Thus, understanding the social functions of music, including how it has been taught and learned in the past, becomes integral to appreciating how music

Danielle Sirek's forensic examination of music and identity in Grenada lays this bare: her thesis is revealed in its very title: *Musicking and Identity in Grenada: Stories of Transmission, Remembering, and Loss* (Sirek 2013). Sirek thickly documents the pervasive understanding there of the real purpose of musical transmission: her informants' refrain that 'teaching "our" music "our" way is a means of educating children about Grenadian values and ideals' (Sirek 2013, 235). In her concluding comments, Sirek describes the constant 'renegotiating of identity' she found people pursuing through their musicking, and their questions of 'not only who we *are* (or want to become), but also who we *are not*' (Sirek 2013, 260).

is realised and valued today. Toward that end, the upcoming section affords a glimpse of Trinidad and Tobago's complicated histories of colonialism, slavery and inequality, which are told through the music.

The place of orality in the narrative of Trinidad and Tobago's musical past is significant, particularly with respect to the methods by which some of the islands' earliest musical traditions were learned and shared. Rehearsals and the performances themselves served as the learning ground, where musicians, through observation and imitation, honed their skills, and where audiences, by watching and attending, gained appreciation for and understanding of those musical traditions. Unofficial apprenticeships developed as a form of pedagogical interaction, where younger musicians were taken under the wing of older, more experienced players.

Aguinaldo and Parang

Sometimes those apprenticeships were headed by family members, with the music tradition passed from parent to child. This was the case with the aguinaldo, a Christmas song tradition about the birth of Christ sung with traditional instruments, including guitar, cuatro, and chac-chac. The arrival of aguinaldo is associated with Spain, which occupied the islands from the sixteeth until the late eighteenth centuries. As colonies of Spain, Trinidad, and Tobago attracted the emigration not just of Spanish coming from mainland Europe but also the Creole Spanish who lived in Venezuela - including those from the rural regions of Cumaná and Carúpano provinces as well as the urban centres of Caracas and Angostura. The Creole Spanish from Venezuela are specifically credited with bringing to the islands the aguinaldo. Their tradition of serenading friends and families in their homes gained quick popularity on both Trinidad and Tobago, with the genre eventually assuming the new title of parang (from the Spanish word for 'parar' meaning 'to stop') (Ingram 2008; Moodie 1983).

Parang is participatory; it is about musicians and audiences coming together in song and dance. Its instrumentation includes the cuatro and chac-chac (maintained from the aguinaldo) as well as an added violin and one-string box bass. Parang bands usually rely on musicians who come from the same family and, as a result, these bands are closely tied to kin groups, with the skills required to learn parang (including its instruments, melodies, song lyrics, and so forth) acquired through these ties, (i.e., passed

down within families). *Parang* today continues to be sung in Spanish. Although it may depict the Nativity, so few people in Trinidad and Tobago speak or understand Spanish that its Christian content has become overshadowed by the sense of community it affords. The contemporary *parang* is enjoyed by Christian as well as non-Christian audiences, and by persons from across ethnic groups. A national *parang* festival, also, is celebrated annually across both Trinidad and Tobago, the season officially opening at the end of September with performances and private parties and continuing through to early January. The *parang* festival represents a new direction of orality: a different way for learning and sharing *parang*, and for acquiring the necessary traditional knowledge otherwise saved for family members (Liverpool 2017, 80–1; Allard 2008).

Carnival

While the parang is characterised as an oral-based celebration that travels to one's home, carnival is an oral-based celebration that demands people travel to attend. Like parang, the history of carnival in Trinidad and Tobago also lies with the Spanish. In the effort to strengthen its control over Trinidad, Spain issued the Cedula of Population of 1783, which offered incentives for allies practising Roman Catholicism to relocate to Trinidad. Most who took up this offer were either French settlers, who came to the islands with their own enslaved Africans; or were 'free Coloureds' (those of both European and African patronage who had the status of 'free') from the neighbouring French islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Dominica (Sofo 2014). They arrived on Trinidad with their religious-inspired festival carnival, organised to take place directly before Lent. In France, carnival had developed into an act of defiance, with revellers rebelling against the elite class by parodying unequal structures of power with masks of goats and horses (Liverpool 2017, 81). Carnival had been banned in France, but in Trinidad and Tobago, it thrived, first among the French immigrants, who held their own festivals called Mas, and later, following emancipation in 1834, among the islands' Blacks, who had been previously banned from participating. The Blacks developed their own version of Mas, which included the burning of the sugar cane, an integral part of the harvest festival. Called Canboulay, 11 it became part of the celebrations following emancipation and is now considered a precursor to modern carnival (for more information, see Cowley 1998).

¹¹ The term is taken from the French cannes brulées, meaning 'burnt cane'.

Calypso

Calypso – now known across and beyond the diaspora – is a music often associated with modern carnival. Its roots lay with *kalenda*, a singing tradition associated with the stickfighting traditions of colonial Trinidad and Tobago. Colonialists began restricting *kalenda*, stickfighting, and African-based drumming in an effort to maintain control over the formerly enslaved population after emancipation. These bans did not eliminate the activities, but rather forced them underground, where they continued to be taught and performed, evidencing again the strength of orality. Performed secretly in backyard tents, *kalenda* and African drumming transformed into even more powerful expressions of identity and oppression. Thus, *kalenda* developed into the calypso, with words replacing sticks as the preferred weapon of assault. The lead singer of *kalenda*, called the *chantwell*, took centre stage, introducing lyrics that bitingly shifted toward themes of societal inequality and subjugation. The new genre took the name calypso, and the *chantwell*, the title of *calypsonian* (Gerstin 2004).

'Writing' Calypso, Western Classical Influences, and Appropriation

The 1950s marked a significant change in the development of calypso, with prominent calypsonians, in an attempt to emulate the popular recordings of American big bands, seeking local musicians to arrange calypsos for large-scale instrumental ensembles. One of the first such arrangers was self-taught Trinidadian Rupert Nurse (1910–2001), who acquired his arranging skills from mail-order Glenn Miller catalogues (Wilmer 2001) and wrote jazz-influenced arrangements for his own big band, Monderneers, and later for

From the turn of the twentieth century, the calypsonian had moved from performing in secret backyard locations to privately owned calypso tents constructed of bamboo and palm or coconut branches. The instrumental accompaniment, too, changed, with flutes and drums replaced by strings and brass instruments; and song texts were extended from eight-lines to sixteen.

This stickfighting involved men duelling with *bois* (sticks) in the centre of rings (or *gayelles*). Urged on by the accompanying songs from audiences and the fierce rhythms of the attending drummers, the fighters' moves demonstrate agility and fighting skills. Stickfighting was adopted by Blacks in their earliest *Mas*: on Carnival day, the stickfighters would follow bands of revellers parading through the streets, taking moments to battle, always to the accompaniment of *kalenda*, as led by the *chantwell*, the lead singer. Both the stickfights and accompanying *kalenda* songs had a rebellious appeal in *Mas*, with revellers chanting *kalenda* in a warlike manner, the lyrics boasting about the strength of the fighters and the resiliency of their communities.

calypsonian Lord Kitchener. This trend towards big band arrangements of calypsos continued into the 1960s and 1970s, with arrangers often relying on Western classical music as reference: Sel Duncan (1924–83), for example, is famously recognised for his calypso-inspired arrangements of Brahms' 'Hungarian Dance Number Five' and Beethoven's 'Moonlight Sonata'; and Clive (Zanda) Alexander (b. 1939), influenced by JS Bach, arranged his calypsos around complex contrapuntal patterns. While Duncan is noted to have communicated his arrangements through playing the saxophone as well as through Western notation when needed, Zanda, unable to read Western notation, created his own method for reading his arrangement (Rouet 2019), a shift that did not restrict the calypso as an oral performance practice, but rather secured notation's role as supportive rather than competitive.

In contrast stands the controversy surrounding the calypso song 'Rum and Coca-Cola'. During the 1940s, calypsonian Lord Invader performed the song 'Rum and Coca-Cola' at calypso tents around Port of Spain, a booklet containing its lyrics usually distributed as accompaniment. An increased number of American soldiers were stationed in Trinidad just prior to and during the Second World War. Their arrival ignited a demand for local sex workers, as Lord Invader documented in the lyrics of 'Rum and Coca-Cola' (Alleyne 2009, 80–2):

Since the Yankees came to Trinidad They have the young girls going mad The young girls say they treat them nice And they give them a better price

(Cowley 1993, 22)

US comedian Morey Amsterdam, in Trinidad performing for US soldiers as part of a ten-week USO tour, attended an Invader performance and, returning to the United States with a quick, hand-written musical transcription of 'Rum and Coca-Cola', registered the song with the US Copyright Office, changing the lyrics slightly to accommodate an American sensibility:

Since the Yankee came to Trinidad They have the young girls going mad The young girls say they treat 'em nice Make Trinidad like paradise

(Cowley 1993, 22)

Amsterdam published the calypso as sheet music with publisher Leo Feist. Soon after it was recorded by the Andrew Sisters, where it became a global hit, especially among Second World War soldiers who referred to it as 'national anthem of the GI camps' (Sforza 2000, 91).

Amsterdam's appropriation of the calypso did not go unnoticed. 'Morey Amsterdam had the nerve to say that he composed that song [in the USA]', Lord Invader complained in a 1946 interview (quoted in Hymson 2011, 3), later addressing the Andrew Sisters' rendition with his choice of lyrics in his 1950 recording of 'Rum and Coca-Cola':

We haven't got no bad speaking Trinidadian We never said 'Cocahhhhh-Cola' Neither did we say 'Yankee dollahhhhhhhhh'

(Winer 1986, 132)

While Western notation may have been peddled as a symbol of civilisation, 'Rum and Coca-Cola' reminds us that notation is not necessarily innocent; that it can represent yet another agent of control, not only of the music but also of the people. With notation, Amsterdam had the authority of voice and representation – two basic tactics of colonialism. Amsterdam's choice in lyrics and the Andrew Sisters' presumed use of a Trinidadian accent also operate in the process of Othering, exoticising, and racialising difference.

Steel Pan

Just as the banning of *kalenda* gave rise to a new genre, the restrictions imposed on the drums brought about the eventual development of the steelpan, to which the *tambu-bambu* (bamboo sticks) is a precursor. When cut into various lengths, these sticks could be pounded against the ground or struck with a stick, creating different pitched, rhythmic sounds. ¹⁴ As gradually happened, *Mas* carnival revellers began adding makeshift instruments from around their homes (like biscuit tins, kerosene cans, and car hubcaps) in the attempt to give these bamboo bands more percussive support when played in the *Mas* parades. When hit, the surfaces of the tins or cans eventually developed a concave, which in turn supported the playing of particular tones. Using this technique, oil barrels were ultimately tuned to play a variety of notes. When these oil barrels were cut into various

¹⁴ Tambu-bambu relied on a tuning system of the bass (called Boom), Foule or Fullers (the tenor), Chandlers (the alto) and Cutters (the soprano), which later was applied to the steel pan (Liverpool 2017, 86–7).

sizes, each tuned to enable specific musical ranges, the steel pan orchestra was born. 15

Ellie Mannette (from the Invaders Steelband) is often credited for tuning the first oil pan (in 1946). He is also recognised for establishing a steelpan education programme in the United States, first in New York City and later in Washington, DC. Mannette was a fan of Western classical music, claiming, 'This is the type of music I prefer for the instrument. ... Classical music is what I always wanted, and I'll pursue [it] until I die' (quoted in Tiffe 2015, 1). To that end, Mannette changed his tuning techniques so that the pan could accommodate a Western harmonic system (A-440), which became standard in the pan bands that soon developed across the United States and the United Kingdom. The emphasis in American and British pan education, however, was *playing* the instrument, thereby side-lining pan's socio-political and -cultural roots – a separation that never would have occurred in a Trinidad pan education (43–7). ¹⁶

While calypso and steelpan may have first emerged within the islands' Black communities, both have since gained popularity across all ethnic groups. Responsible for propelling calypso and steelpan into the mainstream was the Best Village Trophy Competition, launched in 1963 by Prime Minister Eric Williams to 'create the atmosphere for the promotion and crystallisation of a national culture, by fusing the diversities of separate cultures' (National Cultural Council, *Best Village Competition 1975 Souvenir Brochure*, as quoted in Tsuji 2008, 1160). With Trinidadian-born, US-educated anthropologist JD Elder presiding, the Best Village competition in its earliest years emphasised Afro-Trinidadian musics. By the 1970s, however, Indo-Trinidadian music was made a mandatory category in the competition, ¹⁷ A growing acceptance of Indian music ensued on the islands as a result of this change in the Better Village award, and helped lead to the development of *chutney* and the island-wide popularity of *Hosay. Chutney*,

The instrumentation of steel pan orchestra included: (1) tenor pan or melody pan, comprising some twenty-eight to thirty pitches; (2) double tenor (sometimes referred to as the 'second pan'), involving two pans that played harmony and counterpoint in the alto voice range; (3) double seconds, again involving a set of two drums, which played in the higher register; (4) guitar pan, which played 'rhythmic chords in the lower register'; (5) cello pan, comprising three drums tuned to cover some twenty-one pitches in the tenor range; (6) tenor bass, encompassing four drums, responsible for playing the rhythm; and (7) bass pan, 'made from a full-size oil drum', played in sets of six to nine (Liverpool 2017, 91).

¹⁶ Interestingly, just as the instructors in Trinidad's school system may not be trained to teach musical notation, the instructors of pan in the United States and United Kingdom are not necessarily trained to teach pan's socio-cultural relevance.

Most popularly performed at the competitions were the Northern Indian traditional songs, including *sohar* (celebrating childbirth), *khajri* (agriculture), and *chowtal* (spring).

translated as 'hot and spicy', mixes Indian Bhojpuri-styled classical music with local island genres, including calypso, and, more recently, soca. The annual Muslim *Hosay* (*Hosein*) festival celebrates the martyrdom of the grandsons of Prophet Mohammed. In India and Pakistan, the festival was a sombre commemoration. On Trinidad and Tobago, however, it was transformed into a celebratory, almost carnivalesque event, attracting all islanders – Black, White, and Indian. Revellers carried bamboo-framed and ornamentally-decorated *tadjahs* (mosque-shaped tombs) through the streets, accompanied by the beating of *tassa*¹⁸ drums and cymbals (see Korom 2012).

Along with the Better Village competition, Williams also supported the building of community centres, where village councils, agricultural societies, and other organisations could meet and, in his words, make the 'most distinctive contribution . . . to the theory and practice of modern education on Trinidad' (Williams 1950, 26). A variety of community-led music organisations emerged in response, each promoting their preferred genre through public competitions, festivals, concerts, as well as through seminars, workshops, and classes, offered both to members as well as to the public.¹⁹ Among the most popular of competitions to emerge was Panorama, a steelpan contest held annually around carnival. In addition to the competition, which required bands to play a calypso and Western classical piece of their choice along with an assigned piece, Panorama held public workshops on pan playing and pan tuning, which gave audiences opportunities for learning pan and its history. While many steelbands may prepare their music for Panorama at neighbourhood steelband yards (learned via musical scores or ear/rote), from the late 1990s, the Minister of Education initiated 'Pan in the Classroom Project', which not only brought pan lessons and music education into the schools, it also secured music as a subject on CXC²⁰ examinations (Liverpool 2017, 91).

Nanette de Jong recalls attending Trinidad carnival in the late 1990s, where she met an older gentleman who proudly marched on the opening day

¹⁸ Large goat-skin kettle drums.

The list of organisations to emerge include: The Parang Association of Trinidad and Tobago (1971); The National Council of Indian Culture (1964); The Tassa Association of Trinidad and Tobago (1984); The Trinidad and Tobago Unified Calypsonians' Association (1993); The National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago (1980); The Pan Trinbago (1986); The National Carnival Bandleaders Association (1958); and, more recently, The Jazz Alliance of Trinidad and Tobago (2007).

²⁰ Caribbean Examination Council – the body that initiates and supervises secondary school exams regionally.

of carnival as part of his neighbourhood calvpso brass band, holding a trumpet that, although at times placed against his lips in pantomimed performance, was never actually played during the event. When questioned, the man admitted that his father was a great trumpeter, but that he never learned to even make a sound. It was not the actual music playing that enabled him the opportunity for musical participation in carnival, but rather his engagement with the music allowed inclusion. De Jong also remembers the numerous steelpan bands where members marched alongside panplaying colleagues by banging on empty coffee tins they held or hubcaps they had strung around their necks. Distinctions between makeshift instruments and carefully tuned pans collapsed, recalling De Jong and Mieves' reflection that during the course of Trinidad carnival - one special day to which a whole year is devoted in preparation – 'hierarchies do not disappear, but rather finer gradations within them are created and sustained' (De Jong and Mieves 2016, 22), 'traditional hierarchies of meaning and value invert[ing] ... with categories of difference assuming the weight of those contradictions' (5). The sense of community, meaning, and empowerment afforded by carnival is offered to the person doing the musicking, creating what Small calls ideal relationships . . . 'as relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world, and even perhaps the supernatural world' (Small 1998b, 13, our italics). 21 Here, this might be conceived as an ideal of a re-ordering of societal structures, a reimagining of how to be together . . . in its allowing of universal participation, even of those who do not play or sing (as described, he regards as a musicker everyone who is present), but who are nevertheless, in Small's vision, 'musicking' simply by being at that performance.

A Final Reflection

In switching from noun (music) to verb (musicking) and placing relationships as paramount in his explanation of the meanings of musicking, Small,

Small's concept of 'ideal' has often been misunderstood: there is no connotation here of any Platonic notion of 'the ideal', or of musicking as inherently virtuous, but instead, of an ideal relationship as conceived by the persons doing the musicking. This might vary from one person to the next in any musicking; and it certainly will differ between colonial musicking in Trinidad and Tobago, which would have been affirming relationships of superiority over those they were colonising, and the musicking described in the carnival, which is celebrating, if only for that day, an ideal relationship based upon community-related values.

as we have seen, was mounting a profound challenge to the assumption of Western classical music's superiority that permeates Western musical education. In our post-colonial Caribbean context, this narrative becomes subject to a scrutiny, which reflects the challenges to it described in this chapter, and a re-allocation of the limelight. That scrutiny takes on an extra edge in a place where the sheer strength of the other musicking that has developed and prevailed - as Small himself described, as a very means of existential survival – is manifest. 22 As our somewhat kaleidoscopic (though necessarily selective) portrayal reveals, there is a dazzlingly 'thick' weave of musicking in Trinidad and Tobago, as so vividly expressed in the carnival soundscape conjured in this chapter. This diversity of musics, including European, Indian, African, Creolised, and Indigenous is in turn derived from the islands' historical struggles and conflicts, their many ethnic voices and their numerous, varied customs. Transmission and learning of these musics occur in all kinds of musical settings: as part of formal music education at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, and, with evident ubiquity and fervour, in musical institutions and associations, both public and private, and through the festivals celebrated across the islands and the thousands of recordings available worldwide.

Orality is the engine of this vibrant soundscape, the very concept of passing musical ideas from one to the next by aural and oral modes reflecting its own concept of those 'ideal relationships' whose creation and affirmation Small tells us is the real meaning of musical performance. And this positioning of orality gives a fundamentally different role, and indeed level of power, to musical literacy. It becomes something that may be useful, and may not; it can help to learn, remember, or pass on a musical expression, but does not supersede the orality of transmission whose historical path is so intertwined with survival and maintaining and then re-imaging identity. Notation becomes here servant, not master: enabler, not constrainer: and loses entirely its potency as definer of a person's musicality.

Accordingly, reading and writing music is taught and used where it is useful and where it does not impede the overarching musical narrative and its expression of that 'multiplicity of identity'²³ evident right across the

Small's subtitle for Music of the Common Tongue (1998a) – 'Survival and Celebration in African American Music' encapsulates his underpinning narrative throughout this volume, of musicking as the central and vital means of survival for those people taken as slaves to the Americas.

²³ In a recent radio programme entitled Classical Commonwealth on BBC Radio 3 on 21 February 2021, (www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000sht9), Gina Scott, director and founder of the Belize School of Music refers to this 'multiplicity of identity' reflected daily in the hybridity

Caribbean. Thus, what began as an accompaniment to colonial oppression and an expression of its superiority now becomes absorbed into the extensive, intricate, fluid, complex, and unique musical lattice that is created by the musicking – in which all musical identities are honoured and constantly renewed.

Trinidad and Tobago can thus be seen collectively as a place where colonial musical legacies within and beyond the school gate are nicely but firmly being incorporated – becoming part of, but not dominating the overall musical mesh. Complex, fluid interactions of musical traditions are accompanied by an explicit articulation of the need for tolerance for others' musical traditions. An inherent and powerful musical confidence is implicit, and may be seen as underpinning the hybridity of musicking in Trinidad and Tobago and the resilience within that musicking of the orality that ensures its flourishing.

As the birthplace of calypso and steel pan, Trinidad and Tobago also have a huge musical legacy far beyond their own islands. The diasporic power of Caribbean music overall is a phenomenon in itself which calls for further serious study; in view of its influence in seeding so many more forms of musicking practices beyond its birthplace – these incorporating in turn their defining orality – we could indeed posit its direct influence upon the trends outlined in this chapter in music educational discourse across the Western post-colonial world, and the upheavals therein, in which orality in musical transmission is being – albeit tentatively – re-affirmed.

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of the musicking across the Caribbean, in which she posits Western classical music as an integral element, as pivotal to that identity as all of the other musical styles.

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