



Anthony N. Sabga Awards E-News

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The 2014 Awards Ceremony



Our 2014 Awards ceremony came off smoothly and stylishly on May 10, at the Trinidad & Tobago's National Academy of the Performing Arts (NAPA).

Our laureates presented an especially diverse mix to art, science and civic contributions in the persons of Prof Liam Teague, a Trinidad & Tobago steelpan virtuoso, Karen de Souza a women's and children's activist from Guyana and Dr Richard Robertson, a Vincentian earth scientist, employed at the UWI's Seismic Research Centre.

Our founder, Dr Anthony N Sabga, was regrettably unable to attend, and honours were

done by our EPP chairman, Mr Michael Mansoor, and ANSA McAL Group Chairman, Mr A Norman Sabga.

This brings to 23 the number of Laureates named and inducted by the Caribbean Awards for Excellence in its nine-year life.

Next year's Awards will be special in two respects: they would mark our tenth anniversary, and would see the addition of a new award category.

We invite you to visit our Facebook page, where we have posted photo-albums, and to look at our YouTube channel in the near future for laureate and ceremony videos.

Karen de Souza Public & Civic Contributions, Guyana



RED THREAD was born 28 years ago in 1986, in the aftermath of the crisis of the left in the Caribbean and the onset of neoliberal development in our region. Our political purpose, mission and vision have been shaped through our engagement with the marginalized women and the communities in which they live in the coastal and interior areas of Guyana. So, since the crises we currently face do not only affect women, you may ask: why a women's organization?

The explanation lies in our understanding of the role of women as producers and reproducers of labour. It is women who keep our families and communities intact and functioning. This means that the better informed, organized and supported women are, the healthier our children, youth, men and communities will be. Our work has made it clear - if you address the needs of women, you address the needs of communities.

Red Thread has survived the disdain, scepticism and hostility of successive governments in Guyana, whether PNC or PPP, largely because of our commitment to our *vision* as opposed to *funding*, and because of the ever-present need to work with those without a voice — the working poor, the victimised and marginalised — to challenge the structural inequalities in our society, which have given rise to an epidemic of economic, social and physical violence, not only in Guyana and the Caribbean but throughout the global south.

In Guyana, despite the so-called recent success story of economic development and the celebration of macroeconomic growth, we live with an ever widening gap between the wealthy and the poor.

The presence of mansions in gated communities (in which a number of our politicians live) lying cheek by jowl with the shacks in squatter communities gives voice to the artificiality of the current MDG indicators of development. One of the women in Red Thread recently called on the government to include her household economy in their calculations since her macroeconomic fundamentals were lagging far behind those the government boasts about.

Indeed, in all our territories we can see evidence of tremendous wealth and also the most abject poverty. We can talk about those who routinely fly to Miami for their weekend shopping and those who are challenged to find the next meal for their children.

It is in placing the latter at the heart of our concerns that Red Thread stands apart from other civil

Karen de Souza Public & Civic Contributions, Guyana

society organisations that have arisen from the neoliberal agenda. The so-called NGO-isation of development has allowed NGOs to mushroom up but also, to all-too-quickly disappear when the funding dries up.

Red Thread's vision of social justice and transformed relations between our peoples is a denial of the view that development can come from such NGOs engaging in paid project after paid project. As a region, I would suggest we must examine critically the economic and political policies and programmes that contribute to the growing numbers of the voiceless and marginalised.

It is madness to continue to implement programmes whose design is to further impoverish the poor and expect that the occasional alleviation measure will correct the imbalance. The trickle-down theories do not work – we have seen this since the first structural adjustment programmes in this region back in the 1980s.

But with all my concerns and criticisms, we can still celebrate the determination and commitment of many, many unnamed groups and individuals in our region. I must name two of my unsung heroines — Cora Belle, of Red Thread and Clotil Walcott the founder of the National Union of Domestic Workers of T&T — after whom we named the labour rights drop-in service at our women's centre.

We can also celebrate the vision of the founder of the Anthony N Sabga Awards, an

award which I believe exemplifies a view of forward-thinking corporate responsibility, which, in the midst of despair and cynicism, celebrates a belief in the human potential of this region.

I would like to thank the Guyana Committee for their support of my nomination. I must also especially thank the Guyana researcher, Roxana, for her dogged determination to complete her assignment. Thank you Linda for your unwavering support of my work.

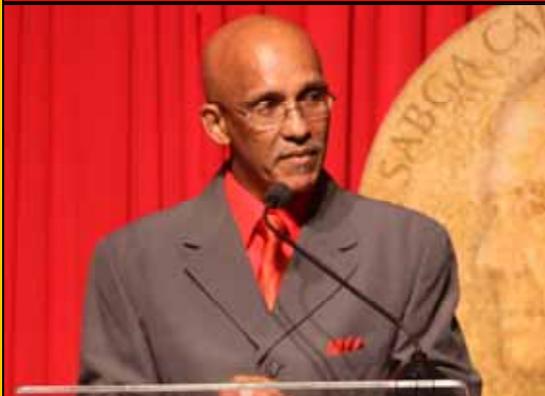
I am particularly appreciative of this award because the ANSA McAL Foundation, in recognizing my work, is validating the mission of the committed women of Red Thread and signaling to the region that one does not have to accept the status quo, that having a vision of a truly democratic future is vital, that the work of organizing and advocacy are critical to that vision, and that the increasing violence against women and children is not to be tolerated.

There is much truth in the words of the song:

*Until the philosophy
that holds one man superior and another
inferior
is finally and permanently discredited and
abandoned,
everywhere is war.....*

We can end the wars — all of them.

Dr Richard Robertson Science & Technology, St Vincent & The Grenadines



I would like to start by expressing my sincere thanks to the ANSA McAL Foundation and to Dr Anthony Sabga for their vision in conceiving of and continuing to promote this Awards Programme. Despite the challenges we face in this region, I have a strong belief in the Caribbean, and consider that recognition of our own exemplars is extremely important in building a Caribbean civilization.

Although my path to this podium tonight was ignited by the impact of an erupting volcano on a teenage mind, still largely undecided on his direction in life, it was helped in no small measure by some fantastic people along the way. In accepting this award tonight, I therefore pay tribute to my family, to my friends and to my colleagues, especially those at the place where I have spent most of my professional life, the University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre. I am indebted to all of you.

I consider myself fortunate to have been guided, supported and influenced in my development, by three strong women: my mother whose unwavering belief in and support of her children provided a firm bedrock upon which to build our lives; my sister

whose own accomplishments and determination to find her chosen path was both an inspiration and a driving force for me to find my own, and my wife, my partner in life, whose friendship, love and support has enabled me to stay rooted, confident and resolute in my endeavours.

I am also thankful for the sterling examples of scientific prowess provided by such Vincentians as Dr I. Earle Kirby, Profs Julian Duncan and Leonard O'Garro, an ANSA Caribbean Awards laureate in his own right. I am glad for the guidance provided by such persons as Dr Dexter and Mrs Freida Shim, Prof Steve and Mrs Ann Sparks and Prof Trevor Jackson. To my friends and colleagues I am especially grateful.

I stand before you tonight as a Geologist by training, a Volcanologist through experience; in sum an Earth Scientist who has had the good fortune of working with a great team of people, in a region where the natural processes that have engaged our scientific interest, happen often enough, to provide sufficient data to keep us all fully engaged in solving scientific problems.

I have always been driven by challenges and by a desire to find solutions to mitigating natural hazards. In this regard there has been no better place to do this than at the University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre, the regional agency with the mandate to monitor geological hazards and to provide professional advice on these to the Eastern Caribbean region. This is an agency that has managed to survive for over 60 years in a region with limited resources, and despite having responsibility for hazardous events, that often occur in time scales that pose serious challenges to maintaining society's interest.

It is wonderful to receive this award in the 61st year of existence of this institution. No organization survives for 60 years simply on the strength of

Dr Richard Robertson
Science & Technology, St Vincent & The Grenadines

one individual and I consider that this award tonight is as much recognition of my own efforts as it is of the entire team at the SRC.

This Centre has an excellent record of providing guidance to disaster management officials, governments, businesses, civil society and the public on all types of geologic hazards. It is engaged in a multi-faceted education and outreach programme that focuses on young people and on the preparation of specialised outreach products for various types of audiences.

The Caribbean is a multi-hazard landscape in which human settlement has placed increasing pressures on the environment, resulting in increased vulnerability to natural hazards. One would be hard-pressed to live anywhere in these islands that is not susceptible to the impact of at least one type of hazard, whether natural or man-made. We live in a region where efforts at sustainable development can be severely set back by an earthquake, an erupting volcano or by a tsunami. The work of the SRC in disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean is therefore critical, and needs to be provided with greater support.

So while I am honoured and humbled to be recognized for my work, I believe that this Award provides an opportunity: an opportunity to focus attention on the work of the Centre and on the need for greater efforts to be made towards building resilience to natural hazards in our region.

We need help to support applied research that is relevant, and can have significant impact on our national and regional development agenda and ultimately, on the lives of the people in our communities. We would like to move away from simply moni-

toring, data collection and research to the creation of useful tools that policy makers and planners can apply to guarantee that development is sustained in these islands. With these products we would be ensuring that knowledge of hazards is not just kept amongst the scientific community but has been packaged in a manner that is applicable and useful to a wide range of stakeholders.

In closing I wish once again to commend the ANSA McAL Foundation for its foresight in promoting these awards, and to congratulate my fellow laureates. Like the others who have gone before me it is my intention to use the opportunities provided through this award to further my work in this region.

Many gaps exist in our knowledge of natural hazards and there is much still to be done. I leave you with words borrowed from one of our first laureates Professor Terrence Forrester who in accepting his award noted that, "Scientific research now and in the proximate future is of vital importance to the development of our Caribbean people". This is a statement with which I am in complete agreement.

I thank you.

Prof Liam Teague Arts & Letters, Trinidad & Tobago



It has been my life's work to consistently highlight the steelpan's profundity, versatility and beauty, and I am sincerely grateful to the ANSA McAL Foundation for recognizing my humble efforts. This evening, I'd like to pay homage to a number of people who have played integral roles in my life.

My mother, Pearl Teague, and my late father, Russell Teague. I have often wondered why my parents never tried to dissuade me from following a life in music; which, truth be told, does not always offer the type of security that other disciplines may. I read recently that the late John Lennon, of the Beatles, when asked by his high school teacher what he wanted to be when he grew up, simply responded: Happy. To my mother and late father, I am so appreciative of all the sacrifices that you have made and I thank you for allowing me to follow my passion and be happy.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that *the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others*. The people that I am about to recognize, inspired, supported and helped to shape my early life as a musician.

Mrs Shirley James made it possible for me to have violin lessons from an early age, and also invited me to be a part of the then National Youth Orchestra of Trinidad and Tobago. The experience playing in that ensemble proved to be an invaluable asset in my musical development. Mrs. James has been instrumental in assisting so many young people, and

because of her caring and generous nature, the importance of serving others was embedded into my consciousness from a very early age.

Ms Joy Caesar. When I was accepted to read for a Bachelor's Degree in Music at Northern Illinois University, the university offered me a partial scholarship. Not having the means to personally fund the rest my education, I contacted several individuals and businesses for assistance, but to no avail. Luckily, God sent an angel in the form of Ms Joy Caesar, who was then Vice-President of CitiBank, and also the director of the Southernaires choir. Ms Caesar made it possible for me to complete my freshman year at NIU. She also took a genuine interest in the well-being of my family. Ms. Caesar, were it not for your intervention, I probably would not have been able to realize many of my dreams. I remain eternally grateful to you.

Mr Robert Foster. Before leaving these shores to further my education, I was approached by Robert Foster to do a recording. The work that resulted was the CD *Hands Like Lightning*. Because of the popularity of the CD and video to the title track, which was played on the television with amazing frequency, I received a great deal of recognition and, particularly in the steelband world, my work garnered a significant amount of attention. Mr Foster eventually assumed the role of my manager and our collaborative efforts resulted in several other recordings.

While I have been always thankful for Mr Foster's support and guidance career-wise, it is the life lessons that he taught me — particularly the importance of respecting and honoring one's parents and preparing for the future — that I have cherished even more. Mr Foster, you have been a father figure and I will never forget what you have done for me.

Al O'Connor. I give thanks to Al O'Connor, former Associate Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and former Head of

Prof Liam Teague Arts & Letters, Trinidad & Tobago

Steelband Studies at NIU. O'Connor made it possible for me to receive a partial scholarship to NIU; and, during my time as a student, he cemented many opportunities around the USA for me to highlight my talent. He also, in no small measure, helped me develop a proper career as a steelpan musician. I continue to hold him, both as a teacher and mentor, in high regard.

Cliff Alexis is one of the greatest figures in the steelband world, and I am blessed to co-direct the NIU Steelband with him. He has served as a mentor and confidant and is the definition of a true friend. It has been an honor to learn from this great man and to consistently collaborate with him in breaking down musical barriers and taking the steelpan to new audiences.

Les Trilla. The former CEO of the Trilla Drum Corporation in Chicago. This amazing human being has been the main benefactor of the NIU Steelpan program since the early 1990s and, from my sophomore year at NIU, funded my entire education. Since that time he has gone on to found the Les Trilla Scholarship, which primarily supports graduate steelpan students from the Caribbean to study at NIU. His generosity has profoundly impacted my life and numerous students who have graduated from NIU – many of whom have gone on to share their knowledge at institutions such as the University of the West Indies and University of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ms. Cynthia Stiehl. Yet another angel that was very generous in her support of my studies and also my passion to commission new pieces for the steelpan. I am very grateful.

Lorena, Jaden and Jeida. To my wife, Lorena Nunez, and children, Jaden and Jeida Teague-Nunez, thank you for everything. Lorena — we could write volumes about the trials and tribulations that we have encountered and the sacrifices that we have

had to make to actually be together. Thank you for being such an amazing wife and mother and for putting up with the not-so-conventional life that is part of being married to a musician. To my children, Jaden and Jeida — you are my everything!

The Pioneers of the Steelpan. During the embryonic stages of the steelpan, its practitioners were often treated with utter disrespect and indifference and were ostracized by Trinidadian society. To amplify this point, allow me to read you a commentary that was sent to the editor of the *Trinidad Guardian* on June 6, 1946:

Pan beating is pan beating in any language and in any form. It does nobody any good, and when it is indulged in all day all night, day in and day out, it is abominable. Why is there no legislation to control it? If it must continue and if by virtue of its alleged inherent beauty and charm it will someday bring popularity and fame to the island and fortune to the beaters, then by all means let it go on- but in the forests and other desolate places.

Having to face such attitudes on a daily basis, it is nothing short of miraculous that pan's pioneers could maintain the vision, belief and fortitude which would prove influential in the realization of the steelpan as a legitimate musical instrument. In addition, whether directly or indirectly, their "audacity and boldfacedness", as Dr. Kim Johnson, so accurately puts it, has allowed people like myself, through the medium of the pan, to captivate the hearts, souls and imaginations of people across the globe.

While there is no doubt that the steelpan has made astronomical strides, I remain convinced that we have just begun to scratch the surface of the instrument's potential. Whether as a performer, educator, composer and / or arranger, I am committed to taking the steelpan to heights unknown, and will remain a humble servant of Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of Caribbean region. Once again, I thank the ANSA McAL Foundation for this tremendous honor.

The Laureates



(Above) (left) EPP Chair, Michael Mansoor, Prof Liam Teague, Karen de Souza, Dr Richard Robertson, Mr A Norman Sabga (ANSA McAL Group Chairman) and Senator Larry Howai, Minister of Finance.

(Below) Mrs Maria Superville Neilson (PD), & EPP: Prof Compton Bourne, General Joe Singh, Sr Paul D'Ornellas, Prof Liam Teague, Justice Rolston Nelson, Karen de Souza, Michael Mansoor, Dr Richard Robertson, Christopher Bovell, Mrs Judy Chang, Justice Christopher Blackman, Sir Shridath Ramphal.



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