MAY THE BEAUTY OF THE DIWALI SEASON FILL YOUR HOMES WITH HAPPINESS

IT IS THROUGH THE LIGHT THAT THE BEAUTY OF THIS WORLD IS REVEALED OR EXPERIENCED

Photo: Amanda Richards
“Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha Diamond and Oceanview Diwali Motorcades”
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The October issue of our online magazine is a metaphor for the triumph over mischief. It is fitting then that Diwali forms the backdrop against which we, the members and friends of Guyana Cultural Association, acknowledge the return of Claire Ann Goring to full health after two hospitalizations within five weeks, starting in September. She is the layout editor for this magazine, and previous issues, and its production is all due to her immense efforts.

Thank you, Claire.

Notice of the last public event of the GCA 2014 Season is given in these pages. The focus of this second in a series of symposia dealing with the complexity of the Guyanese identity is an exchange of practical strategies related to arts education in New York and Georgetown, Guyana. The symposium takes place on November 1 through 7. The 2014 dialogue, subtitled Practica, begins with a simulcast on November 1 between New York and Guyana and continues in Guyana for the remaining days under the guidance of Dr. Vibert Cambridge, President of GCA and Dr. James Rose.

In this edition, we note also the lives well lived in the essays about the late Rafiq Khan, the brilliant correspondent, and the late Geoffrey Holder, the inimitable communicator. We consider the words of Dr. Lear Mathews who records for us the interlocking lives of those “away” and those “at home.” We celebrate the successes of our youth, such as, Elisa Hamilton, in their regional examinations. We learn from the wisdom of experience of Dr. Randolph Estwick whose concrete advice on long and short term care has been published.

The consistent efforts over a quarter of a century to aid Guyana by our much admired Monsignor Paul Jervis lead this year to the renovation of the priest’s residence in Santa Rosa Moruca. Edgar Henry, GCA Board Member, places before us a report on the recent presentation of the extraordinary journey of the widely known and appreciated musician, Dr. Keith Proctor.

A tale by Peter Halder complements darkness and the emergence in to light. Read it and enjoy!

Surely this issue is a reminder of the light that pierces through the darkness and enlightens us. First, read Vidur Dinadayal’s explication on Diwali. This is our culture; this is our identity. Then, after you have read all the articles, read the essay on Diwali again.

Joy comes in the morning.

Respectfully,

Juliet Emanuel
Editor, October 2014
A CELEBRATION OF LIGHT OVER DARKNESS, KNOWLEDGE OVER IGNORANCE, AND THE TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER EVIL

Diwali Greetings

Photo: Amanda Richards

“Diamond & Oceanview Diwali Motorcades”
I learnt about Diwali from my late father Pandit Petamber Dindayal of Rosignol, Berbice, Guyana. He believed in living a life of warmth, love and seeking knowledge. He believed that knowledge brings light, joy, harmony and goodness to our life and surroundings wherever we are.

Vidur Dindayal
Photo: Vibert Cambridge “Diwali in Charlestown”

Diwali
a time for special thanksgiving prayers, for the family get together, for exchanging good wishes with all, with friends and relatives, near and dear ones.
Diwali lights are our prayer, as in this Sanskrit verse in the Upanishad:

‘Oṃ Asato Mām Sad-Gamaya;
Tamoṣo Mām Jyotir-Gamaya;
Mrītyor-Mām Amrtam Gamaya.’

‘Lead us O Lord from Falsehood to Truth;
From the Darkness of Ignorance to the Light of Knowledge; From Death to Immortality.’

Vidur Dindayal

Diwali for us children over 70 years ago in the then British Guiana was a time for fun and play. We bathed and changed into clean clothes. Our parents brought us plenty of sweets. They prepared the diya – lots of flickering lights each on a cotton wick sitting in oil or ghee in a tiny bowl made of clay or dough.

The best part of Diwali night was helping our parents with the diya. They were placed in every room, every doorway, on every table, on the steps, porch and pathway outside. We enjoyed looking at the diya as they flicker. Other lights would be put out. The whole house would glow dream like, with the warm and soft dancing lights of the diya, just like candlelight. You felt warm and really happy inside. It is now even more exciting with fireworks and colourful fairy lights lighting up whole buildings and streets.

Diwali celebrates Light over Darkness, Knowledge over Ignorance, and the triumph of Good over Evil. Diwali or Deepawali means ‘Cluster of Lights’. Diwali is celebrated on the last day of the dark half of the lunar month of Kartik in the Hindu calendar.

Diwali, like Christmas is a time for special thanksgiving prayers, for the family get together, for exchanging good wishes with all, with friends and relatives, near and dear ones.

Diwali marks the beginning of a new year. It is a time to start afresh pitting aside ill will, a time for generosity, for renewing our pledges for the new year. Business people open new accounts, placing a coin in their new account books.

Divine Mother Lakshmi is worshipped at Diwali. The holy Vedas states: ‘God is not only Father but Mother also.' Mother Lakshmi, born out of the ocean of milk, is the Goddess of beauty, light, knowledge, purity, wealth and good fortune. Mother Lakshmi is celebrated in our daughter, sister, niece, wife, aunt and mother.

Diwali also celebrates many great events for Hindus: the marriage of Divine Mother Lakshmi to Lord Vishnu; the death of wicked king Narasura at the hands of Lord Krishna; Lord Vishnu’s humbling of arrogant Balli; the day Great King Vikram Aditya ascended his throne; the visit of generous King Mahaballi; the return of Princess Deepa, and prosperity to her kingdom. Goddess Kali is worshipped at Diwali, to banish all evil from the world.

It is the day when jealous and selfish Queen Kaikeyi accepted defeat and repented for her wrongs. She had thrown the kingdom of Ayodhya into darkness, when she secured the banishment of Lord Rama the heir to the throne, so that her son Bharat would be crowned king. Diwali celebrates the end of Lord Rama’s 14 years in exile, his victory over demon king Rawan and his triumphant return to assume his rightful place as king. Millions of lights showed the way to Holy City Ayodhya, itself aglow with lights on Diwali night. On Diwali night, Pitrus, departed souls, flickering as lights, ascend to the heavens.

Goddess Sarawati and Lord Ganesh, in the company of Mother Lakshmi are worshipped at Diwali. We pray to Sarawati, goddess of learning, temporal and spiritual, and goddess of music and the arts. We pray to Lord Ganesh, the all powerful elephant headed god of wisdom and good fortune, the remover of obstacles, for his blessings for success to attend all our undertakings.

Goddess Lakshmi visits every home on Diwali night, and lives in that home which is beautiful and clean, where peace, harmony, knowledge and goodness dwell, and where beautiful lights brighten the home to welcome everyone.

Goddess Lakshmi comes out of a lotus flower, holds lotus flowers in her hands, the lotus flowers representing purity. Her other hands are giving. As Goddess of wealth Mother Lakshmi shares her wealth. At Diwali time every door is decorated with rangoli patterns, made with coloured rice or powders, welcoming visitors, especially Mother Lakshmi, who will bless us with wealth, happiness and prosperity.

At Diwali we celebrate the blessing of the Light of Knowledge - Knowledge which makes us humble, knowing that young or old great or small we are all equal as children of the universe; knowledge to dwell in the presence of the Divine, through good action, words and music that uplift the spirit, the softness and beauty of nature; knowledge which frees us from the bondage of material chains, from conflict, discord and unhappiness, to live in harmony, peace and contentment, the key to personal bliss.
Ram! The light of lights, the self-luminous inner light of the Self is ever shining steadily in the chamber of your heart. Sit quietly. Close your eyes. Withdraw the senses. Fix the mind on this supreme light and enjoy the real Deepavali, by attaining illumination of the soul.
Buxton celebrates Diwali

Photo: Deodat Persaud

Let Us Keep Diwali
Holding It Close to Our Hearts
for Its Meaning Never Ends
and Its Spirit Is the Warmth
and Joy of Remembering Friends.
Diwali brings together people of all religions. The acts of sharing strengthen bonds with neighbours, friends and relatives.

Photo: Deodat Persaud
Better Hope celebrates Diwali

"May you all attain full inner illumination! May the supreme light of lights enlighten your understanding! May you all attain the inexhaustible spiritual wealth of the Self! May you all prosper gloriously on the material as well as spiritual planes!"
It Is Time To Feel Good,
Time for Reunion,
Time to Share Happiness,
Time To Feel Being Loved,
Time to Show our Love,
Time to Live For Others
And Time To Wish For Peace.

HAPPY DIWALI!

Photo: Michael Jackson
Success celebrates Diwali

Photo: Michael Jackson
This book is a must read for Caribbean Immigrants and those interested in expanding their knowledge about the Caribbean Diaspora. It highlights a diverse range of issues relating to the transnational experiences of English Speaking Caribbean Immigrants in the United States.

At the core of these presentations is the exploration of the lived experiences of Caribbean immigrants and the institutions through which they bridge nation states while maintaining a transnational life style.

**LEAR MATTHEWS, DSW**, is Professor in the Department of Community and Human Services, State University of New York, Empire State College. A former lecturer at the University of Guyana, Faculty of Social Science, he is a member of the Editorial Board of the Caribbean Journal of Social Work. He is a certified clinical social worker and Chair of the Advisory Board of the Caribbean-American Social Workers Association. He served as Clinic Director of the Bedford Stuyvesant Community Mental Health Center in Brooklyn, New York for over ten years. A Guyanese by birth, he has written extensively on the adaptation of immigrants in North America, cultural retentions and coping with the trauma of natural disasters. His published research is included in college curricula across the United States and the Caribbean and used in the training of human services practitioners working with immigrants.

For more information contact the Caribbean Research Center (CRC)

**PHONE 718-370-6218**

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. on-line Magazine
YOUTH IN ACTION: A MOMENT OF PRIDE

Guyanese girl tops CSEC – QC wins school of the year award

A student from Queen’s College in Guyana is once again the Most Outstanding Candidate in the region in the May/June Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations. Elisa Hamilton leads a trio of Queen’s College top performers as the 2014 Most Outstanding Candidate Overall in the region. Elisa wins the award with acceptable grades in 20 subjects; She achieved Grade I in 19 subjects: Agricultural Science (DA), Biology, Chemistry, English A, English B, Food and Nutrition, French, Geography, Home Economics Management, Information Technology, Integrated Science, Mathematics, Physics, Principles of Business, Social Studies, Spanish, Electronic Document Preparation and Management, Physical Education and Sport, Human and Social Biology, and Electrical and Electronic Technology, and Grade II in Religious Education.


Kishan Crichlow of New Amsterdam Multilateral School also in Guyana receives the award for the Most Outstanding Candidate in Technical Vocational subjects. Kishan achieved Grade I in seven subjects, Grade II in three subjects and Grade III in two subjects. He achieved Grade I in Chemistry, Information Technology, Mathematics, Technical Drawing, Building Technology (Construction), Electrical and Electronic Technology and Mechanical Engineering Technology; Grade II in English B, Physics and Social Studies; and Grade III in Chemistry and Geography.


Three students from Trinidad and Tobago are the winners of the Best Short Story and Best 2-Dimensional and 3-Dimensional Work in Visual Arts respectively. Kristan Mohammed of Tunapuna Secondary School wins the Best Short Story award. Kristan’s story was based on a photograph depicting an abandoned building in a wooded area.

Shivana Sookdeo of Naparima Girls’ High School gets the 2-Dimensional Visual Arts award with a piece entitled “The Enchanted River” from the Graphic Communication Design Expressive Form; and Nneka Toni Jones of Bishop Anstey High School is the recipient of the award for the Best 3-Dimensional Visual Arts. Toni’s work is from the Sculpture and Ceramics Expressive Form and is entitled “The Vendor”.

The awardees will be presented with their prizes on Thursday 4 December at an awards ceremony slated for Jamaica. The CSEC awardees will receive an offer of a full scholarship from The University of the West Indies, monitory prizes, plaques and books as part of the prize package.

Queen’s College, Guyana will receive the CSEC School of the Year award for producing the Most Outstanding Candidate in the 2014 examination.

Stabroek News
The Diaspora Reconsidered:
A Guyanese Perspective

Lear Matthews

Reacting to this writer’s views about the need to strengthen Caribbean Diaspora Associations, an esteemed reader/commentator advanced the notion that “We should not bank too heavily on an unending outreach to the land of our birth. The Diaspora is a slow diminution”. (H. Williams, Guyanese-On-Line 9/14).

However, contrary to that dismal prognosis, I argue that the Caribbean Diaspora is unlikely to diminish, rather it will expand. It is not a time-phased, amorphous process that faces extinction, but will increase exponentially with continuous immigration flows. The term Diaspora describes the dispersion of a defined group of people of similar ethnicity, nationality or cultural background. They tend to strive for a common identity, group consciousness and often collaborate on causes of interest to themselves and those they believe they represent. Contemporary social analysts have asserted that Diasporas have a significant function of sustaining strong social, economic, cultural, political and emotional bonds to their country of origin.

Because the term is often applied to immigrant groups worldwide, it would be helpful to understand its origin from the Greek words dia, meaning “through” or “across space” and speirein meaning “to sow or scatter”. Webster’s Online Dictionary (2009) defines Diasporas as “the movement, migration or scattering of people away from their ancestral homeland”. Although concentrated in North America, indeed Guyanese are dispersed throughout the world including other Caribbean countries, Africa, Europe and Australia. Diasporas emerge because of various social and economic reasons, but are characterized by geographic dispersion and cultural connectedness, with the Internet now enhancing the latter.

One of the most rapidly growing instrumental facilitating mechanisms of the Caribbean Diaspora is the Hometown Association. A preliminary survey by this writer revealed that among Guyanese immigrants in North America, there are more than three hundred (300) such associations. There is a false perception that these organizations are exclusively involved in “charity work”. Such a characterization may have had some merit twenty-five years ago. However, an examination of their broad functions reveals the extent to which they are located at the epicenter of development efforts, heritage connections and cultural identity. The multidimensional projects of Guyanese immigrant Hometown Associations beyond “charity work” presents a fascinating picture and a strong case for their continuity. Espousing a commitment to some aspect of development in the home country, they focus on various sectors of homeland infrastructure sustenance and reform – cultural, religious, educational, political, shared institutions, medical, and regional – in many ways epitomizing the essence of Diasporic unity.

Projects undertaken include: medical outreach; computers for schools; scholarships and new curricula programs; funding community development self-help projects; sponsoring forums on social justice, civic and political issues as they unfold in Guyana; and training human service workers - some of these in partnership with local organizations. A promising sign is an apparent increase in the number of organizations in the home country that collaborate with HTAs. With support, working in sync and reciprocal links with the Diaspora, they could effectively realize sustainable goals of local projects.
COMMENTARY:
The Diaspora Reconsidered: 
A Guyanese Perspective

Lear Matthews

There should be no illusions about the risk of absolving the local government of its civic/welfare responsibilities or creating dependency on immigrant generated remittances. Conditioned by a historically persuasive (at times divisive) political culture, which focuses primarily on the relationship between the two major ethnic groups, an aspect of the Guyanese Diaspora that is often overlooked is its ethnic plurality. Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, Amerindians, Chinese, Portuguese, and Mixed ethnics are all part of the Diaspora. On certain selected occasions they are mentioned as the collective representation of the “Land of Six Peoples”, reflecting “One People, One Nation, One Destiny” as an expression of symbolic harmony, national pride and uniqueness. It is important to note the sustained enclave division and relatively minimum interaction between the two main ethnic groups in the Guyanese Diaspora.

However, recognition of the country’s multi-ethnic heritage, including all of its bearers and their contribution (as promoted by the Guyana Cultural Association) should be continuously demonstrated, if indeed the process of BRIDGIN is to be realized. This will ensure a Diaspora capable of forging the bonds to effect meaningful change. It will not diminish, as predicted by our astute commentator. Like other observers, he sounded the alarm regarding the lack of interest in the home country and HTAs, shown by the second generation, 1.5 (migrated as children), and third generation (born in the US) immigrants. An assertion not fully supported by research.
WE BRIDGIN’

GCA 2014 SYMPOSIUM
IN GUYANA

NOVEMBER 1 - 7, 2014

Vibert C. Cambridge

The Guyana Cultural Association of New York, Inc. and Guyana’s Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sport will continue their partnership to preserve Guyana’s cultural heritage and promote Guyanese creativity. GCA’s secretary, Dr. Juliet Emanuel describes the 2014 season as a season of action—Practica.

Under the “We bridgin” banner, the 2014 season launches a work program aimed at supporting the development and delivery of the curricula of the Institute of Creative Arts (ICA), advancing the rehabilitation of the masquerade heritage, and confirming a program of activities for Guyana’s 50th anniversary of independence, in 2016.

November 1, 2014

Between 9:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. on November 1, 2014, members of the Guyanese creative arts community in New York will join with counterparts in Guyana via Skype to explore the state of creative arts education in Guyana and develop specific projects to enrich the curriculum of the ICA. The anticipated projects will be related to folk research, the visual arts, the performing arts, literary arts, film and video. The results of these projects will be part of a program of activities to celebrate Guyana’s 50th anniversary of independence in 2016.

GCA’s 2014 symposium season will also continue the work started during the 2012 “Masquerade Lives” symposium season in Guyana. To this end, the GCA/MCYS partnership has organized two specialized workshops. One focuses on costume design and the other on music preservation.

Costume Design Workshop

The workshop on costume design will be held at the E.R. Burrowes School of Art from November 3 to November 6, 2014. Among the objectives of the workshop are improving skills in designing and fabricating costumes reflecting the designs of Guyana’s masquerade heritage. Stanley Greaves has already contributed designs for the workshop. Among the expected outcomes will be costumes for an entire masquerade band (4 x flat foot flouncers, two stilt men, Long Lady, Bam Bam Sally, Bhoon drummer, Kittle drummer, Flute man, and Triangle man). The costumes created during this four-day workshop will become part of “Masquerade Lives” installation located at the National Cultural Center.

Design courtesy of Stanley Greaves
The focus of this workshop is to support the preservation and promotion of masquerade flute music. This workshop will be held at Guyana’s National School of Music from November 3 to November 6, 2014. Among the objectives is to showcase the virtuosity of Rudolph “Putagee” Vivierios,—one of the last of Guyana’s master masquerade flute men. Among other objectives are introducing students of the National School of Music to the music of Guyana masquerade tradition, introducing participants to the penny whistle, introducing students to the arts and science of recording music, and providing an opportunity to encourage innovation in masquerade music. The music recorded during this workshop will provide the “soundtrack” for the “Masquerade Lives” installation.

“We bridgin.”

Photograph courtesy of Vibert Cambridge.
Simulcast Georgetown, Guyana and Brooklyn, New York, USA

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2014 IN NEW YORK
The Gallery, 6th Floor, Empire State College/SUNY
177 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201
And Georgetown Guyana, South America

The Second in a Series of Dialogues and Practical Applications
The First Dialogue is reflected in the White Paper, a product of the GCA Annual Symposium 2013.

November 1 (in New York and Guyana) through November 7 (in Guyana), 2014

Pre-program events
Registration: 9:00 to end of event
Pre-symposium breakfast: 9:00 – 9:55 a.m.

Program
10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

10:00 a.m. Welcome from New York
(Representatives from GCA; Metropolitan Center/ Empire State College/SUNY)
Welcome from The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Guyana

10:15 a.m. Movements of the Masquerade Dance, A Steelband Development Series, a video production supported by UNESCO and The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, Guyana, South America

11:15 a.m. Discussion and commentary on the presentation:
Members of video production team and demonstration participants in Guyana in conversation with representatives of cultural performance in New York

12 noon: Lunch break

1:00 p.m. Practica
Examining workshop strategies
Notetakers in New York and Georgetown will record remarks

The practicalities and realities
1. Finding space
2. Finding participants
3. Creating curricula
4. Maintaining voice and validity
5. Implications for the future – recording and disseminating experience

The art of
a. Dance   b. Music   c. Art   d. Writing

2:10 p.m. Reflections

2:15 p.m. Final remarks from Georgetown, Guyana.

2:30 p.m. The Symposium ends

Juliet Emanuel
BOOKS, FILMS & MUSIC:

"The Health Care Dilemma"

By Randolph R. Estwick, MSc., MD., FACP

Randolph R. Estwick, M.Sc., M.D., FACP, a graduate of the University of Ottawa, has medical qualifications from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Edinburgh, Scotland. He was the medical director and chief-of-service for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at major hospitals in New Jersey, also served as a consultant and on the medical executive committee. For his humanitarian work through the United Nations development Program as a “TOKTEN” consultant in Guyana, South America, he was awarded the degree, Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa). His prior publications appear in the American Journal of Physiology, Cancer, Geriatric and his book, “A Successful Journey, Not Without Pain.” The Health Care Dilemma, An Inside View had been an insightful adventure.

"I have given an inside view of my perception of the health care dilemma. I was motivated by my daily experience with my wife who has suffered from the sudden onset of a stroke. This experience has brought me face-to-face with occurrences and situations which were alien to me as a physician and consultant in physical medicine and rehabilitation. Many events included here were previously disclosed by the press or published by government or private agencies. Some of this information may have escaped the attention of readers. Interpretation and presentation of events, however, are based on experience gained by years of practice in the field of medicine; this is in contrast to the experience of a layman whose spouse has suffered a major medical event. I found myself in a very unique position of being “two persons in one,” the experienced physician on one side of the coin and the spouse of the victim of a major medical event—a stroke—on the other side. My task as an author is to present perspectives which I could not envisage as a physician. I have concluded that it was easier as a physician. Many of the events encountered were unthinkable and unknown to the author.

I have now brought into focus two sides of the same coin. The view from inside has revealed that there are many players in the field of health care delivery, all of whom exert some influence in its delivery. What is disconcerting is the fact that none of the players has taken any responsibility for its unbridled and escalating cost; they all believe that it is the responsibility of the other player. Therefore, nothing is done to reduce the cost of health care and the unconscionable burden on Middle America. I have mentioned important players in the field who may be contributors to this dilemma and have cited some of their contributions. The intent here is to be more informative. Ideas presented are not intended as gospel but merely another point of view. Readers may expand their thoughts by reading original manuscripts and reports available for public scrutiny.

Senior care, skilled nursing facilities, independent living facilities, and the role of physical medicine and rehabilitation are all discussed at some length. Issues and concerns obliquely related to health care were also discussed; these include long-term insurance coverage, the immigrants’ contributions to health care, and the most precious years of our lives, “the golden years.” Finally, an overview of the dilemma in health care was given in the context of a physician."
CONGRATULATIONS

PROFESSOR KEITH PROCTOR CELEBRATED

“Music is the predominant factor in my life and I now have the opportunity to assist young people in their desire to attain a musical career.”

Keith Proctor

Dr. Proctor has organized concerts and has appeared with Evangelist Shirley Caesar, C.C. Winans, Albertina Walker and others; he has also collaborated with musicians and bands, including Otis Redding, Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, Ben E. King, Chuck Jackson and others, and demonstrated his musical virtuosity before former President William Clinton.

Celebrating Keith Proctor:
Saturday October 25, 2014 was certainly not the same following a very special event at the Bridge Street Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Church at 277 Stuyvesant Avenue Brooklyn, New York. This was indeed a glorious celebration of excellence as the Helping Hands Ministry recognized in true gospel musical and special acknowledgement format, the distinguished contribution of the works of the maestro Professor Keith Proctor. His honorary Doctorate in Music from the Seventh Day Adventist College was truly deserved. The purpose of the Helping Hands Ministry is to bring people of similar talented Christian beliefs together in fellowship in an atmosphere of love and harmony to serve the church community, as well as those who are less fortunate. This program surely exemplified and brought to fore a stunning and touching musical experience honoring all the good works of this esteemed gentleman, Keith Proctor who was elated to be alongside his loving sister Ingrid Knights and daughter Sadah Proctor.

The highlight of the musical concert was the surprise of his own Bridge Street AWME choir performance led by Jamel Henderson. Moses Josiah on his famous musical saw, Tyra Frazier, Nakia Cunningham’s testimony in song, young dancer Sariya Bullock form Christian Cultural Center, Omari Bennett, Con Edison’s solo, Stepping Into Our Destiny Dance Ministry from Philadelphia, PA, Young organist Quincy Dover from St. Gabriel’s Church among many other special guest artistes. To crown it all, the Guyanese contingent made his day in tributes and music from Sandra Harte, Teddy Jones, William (Billy) Braithwaite, Monty Luke, Hilton Hemmerding, GCA Board members Pat Jordan Langford, Maurice Blenman and yours truly. The award was presented by the mistress of ceremonies Rev. Dr. Denise A. Graves, and Reverends’ David and Valerie Cousin.

This popular, celebrated Guyanese musician really mastered his craft, which was attained at a very early age. I remember vividly our first encounter. It was in the early 1950’s when I registered for my first music pianoforte examination – Grade 1. There were three youngsters that excelled with distinction for Guyana that year, namely Wendell Bunyan, Keith Proctor and yours truly. Of the three, the one that earned the highest marks had an opportunity to perform at the grand finale in Bishops High school auditorium where we received our awards. Needless to say Keith was selected and he played magnificently – wearing short pants - the same year Ray Luck attained his LRSM Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music- London.

Keith embarked on a brilliant career that has spanned the globe, from musical festivals in Guyana, String Bands, to the concert halls of the Caribbean, South America and North America. This Guyana Cultural Association of New York awardee did not rely on the classical direction in music; he ventured to become an outstanding organist and accompanist for singers, as well as choir master for various religious organizations. At times he would proudly state “Music is the predominant factor in my life and I now have the opportunity to assist young people in their desire to attain a musical career.” I could attest to his solemn pledge and what impresses me most is his unhesitating commitment to our youth. As Music Master at the GCA Summer Workshop Series I would on occasion call on Keith for assistance. He normally takes his vacation in the month of August, and his response is always the same. “Gar I am on vacation, I would assist, not because of our long friendship, only because of the children.” Those words are precious and should not go unnoticed.

It is with a deep feeling of pride to express gratitude to Annette K Smith, the Bridge Street AWME church, Helping Hands Ministry and all the organizers who made that afternoon one that will be surely remembered for a long time. To my distinguished friend Keith, may God Bless you abundantly as you continue to worship him with that great talent, technique creativity and artistry he bestowed upon you.
DILAPIDATED PRIEST HOUSE AT SANTA ROSA, MORUCA TO BE RENOVATED WITH FUNDS FROM 25TH ANNUAL GUYANESE NEW YORK MASS

Francis Quamina Farrier
Francis Quamina Farrier

The Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception in Jamaica, Queens, New York, was the venue of the 25th Annual Guyanese New York Mass. This historic event, which was held on Sunday October 12, 2014, attracted Catholics and their friends, not only from New York, but also from far-flung States such as Florida, Texas and California. Also in the congregation were those who came from Canada and even from England. There were also those who travelled the long distance from Guyana.

A tradition of the New York Guyanese Mass Committee is to invite a Guyana-based priest to be the chief celebrant. This special year, the chief celebrant was The Most Reverend Bishop Francis Alleyne, OSB, Bishop of Georgetown. Also travelling from Guyana to New York for the Mass were twenty-one members of the well-known Marigold Choir, from the Brickdam Cathedral in Georgetown. The Marigold Choir was founded by Guyanese-born, Carmelite nun, the late Sister Rose Magdelene, former Folk Research Officer at the Department of Culture. The Marigold Choir is comprised of pre- and early teens, mainly from the Brickdam Cathedral parish. They previously travelled to Toronto, Canada, some years ago, and performed there.

The idea of the Guyana Mass in New York was that of Reverend Monsignor Paul Jervis. This New York-based Guyanese-born priest hails from La Penitence in Georgetown and came to America as a youngster, when his family migrated to the USA. After becoming a priest, Paul Jervis decided to organize an annual Mass for Guyanese so that Guyanese could pray for their country and send financial offerings back to Guyana for specific projects. One of the projects is the ongoing Soup Kitchen at the Brickdam Presbytery, which food service caters for the needy of all faiths. The recent rebuilding of the St. Anthony’s Church at Bartica, received financial assistance from the Guyana Mass Offerings. And this year, the dilapidated Priest house at Santa Rosa, Moruca, will be renovated with the funds sent from New York.

The principal organizer of the Mass, Monsignor Paul Jervis, is also the author of a very interesting book entitled, "The Quintessential Priest - Fr Bernard Quinn," which relates the true story of an Irish-American Priest, Monsignor Bernard Quinn, who worked tirelessly for the upliftment of African-Caribbean people, including Guyanese, during the mid-20th Century, in the Brooklyn Borough of New York City. Msgr. Paul Jervis, who has been a priest for over 30 years, visits Guyana on a regular basis.

A tradition of the Guyanese New York Mass Committee is accountability. Every dollar collected at the Mass, as well as those garnered from other Fund-Raising events, is accounted for. Another tradition is the honoring of those who have made supportive contributions to the successes of the Mass over the years. This year, the Music Director, Percy Caldeira, who has served in that capacity for the 25 years, was honored. The music at the Mass always includes compositions by Guyanese. This year one of the items was the composition, "In God’s House," composed by Georgetown-born, Benedictine monk, Bro. Paschal Jordan, OSB.
Rafiq Khan

“He was a consummate broadcaster. Possessed of a mellifluous voice, he knew that excellence in broadcasting required preparation and diligence.”

Sir Ronald Sanders
IN MEMORY

Tribute to Rafiq Khan, 82, Broadcaster in Guyana

Sir Ronald Sanders

I learnt of Rafiq Khan’s passing with a profound sense of sadness. He and I were rivals when we managed radio stations that competed for audiences and advertising revenue in the 1970s in an era where television did not exist and radio was the only form of electronic communication. But, we were also friends. We both recognised that added value was brought to broadcasting in Guyana by the spirited efforts we made to have our stations outperform themselves in high quality programming.

Rafiq Khan

But amidst our exciting rivalry, we also enjoyed engaging co-operation. Together, we started the Guyana Publishing and Broadcasting Association to set and self-regulate high standards for the media and to draw up a Code for advertising.

Beyond that, we found easy ground on which to agree that joint coverage by the radio stations of important events better served the interests of the Guyana public.

Our friendship endured after our Guyana sojourn when he was a Communications Consultant for UNESCO and I served as an elected member of its Executive Board. Rafiq took to his communications role in the Caribbean, the same passion, vision, intellect, and managerial skill that was so plainly obvious in Guyana.

In more recent years, Rafiq lived in Jamaica where I called on him whenever I visited. In every visit our conversations resumed as if time had not passed in between, except when he lost his wife — his childhood sweetheart and life-long friend. He was never quite the same after that. But, he never lost his interest in broadcasting — and particularly in Guyana — once asking me, by email which I still have, if I thought the authorities in Guyana would accept an offer from him, Hugh Cholmondeley and me to conduct training programmes.

He was a consummate broadcaster. Possessed of a mellifluous voice, he knew that excellence in broadcasting required preparation and diligence. He was a voracious reader and his attention to detail even in what appeared to be a simple broadcast distinguished him from many others and made his broadcasts renowned. One such broadcast was the joint coverage by Radio Demerara and the Guyana Broadcasting Service of the funeral of Guyana’s Governor-General, Sir David Rose. Rafiq was the final commentator in a relay of broadcasters, including Vic Insanally and me, who described the funeral procession through the streets of Georgetown to the Place of the Seven Ponds in the Botanical Gardens.

I cite now the words that Rafiq spoke as Sir David was laid to rest. They are taken from Shakespeare’s Hamlet, and are Horatio’s farewell to his dying friend Hamlet. They are wholly applicable to Rafiq Khan.

“Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince; And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest”.

Guyana Cultural Association of New York Inc. on-line Magazine
Remembering Actor, Dancer, Painter, Director, Tony Award Winner

Geoffrey Holder

He was best known as gentle giant Punjab in the 1982 film version of ‘Annie’ and the villainous if dapper Baron Samedi in 1973 James Bond movie ‘Live and Let Die.’ In those same years he became a familiar television face as the on-camera spokesman for 7Up’s ‘Uncola’ commercials.

New York Times
Geoffrey Holder, a dancer, painter, director and actor who was equally comfortable saving Orphan Annie or menacing James Bond, died in New York. He was 84.

He was suffering from complications of pneumonia.

A self-described “free spirit,” Holder had a voice that could boom or lilt. His feet could stomp or dance. On the screen, he could be your best friend or your worst nightmare.

He was best known as the gentle giant Punjab in the 1982 film version of “Annie” and the villainous if dapper Baron Samedi in 1973 Bond movie “Live and Let Die,” which was also Roger Moore’s first Bond role.

In those same years he became a familiar television face as the on-camera spokesman for 7Up’s “Uncola” commercials.

Few cultural figures of the last half of the 20th century were as multifaceted as Mr. Holder, and few had a public presence as unmistakable as his, with his gleaming pate atop a 6-foot-6 frame, full-bodied laugh and bas-soon of a voice laced with the lilting cadences of the Caribbean.

Mr. Holder directed a dance troupe from his native Trinidad and Tobago, danced on Broadway and at the Metropolitan Opera and won Tony Awards in 1975 for direction of a musical and costume design for “The Wiz,” a rollicking, all-black version of “The Wizard of Oz.” His choreography was in the repertory of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the Dance Theater of Harlem. He acted onstage and in films and was an accomplished painter, photographer and sculptor whose works have been shown in galleries and museums. He published a cookbook.

Mr. Holder acknowledged that he achieved his widest celebrity as the jolly, white-suited television pitchman for 7Up in the 1970s and ‘80s, when in a run of commercials, always in tropical settings, he happily endorsed the soft drink as an “absolutely maaarvelous” alternative to Coca-Cola — or “the Uncola,” as the ads put it.
Long afterward, white suit or no, he would stop pedestrian traffic and draw stares at restaurants. He even good-naturedly alluded to the TV spots in accepting his Tony for directing, using their signature line “Just try making something like that out of a cola nut.”

Geoffrey Lamont Holder was born into a middle-class family on Aug. 1, 1930, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, the youngest of five children of Louise de Frense and Arthur Holder, who had immigrated from Barbados. Geoffrey attended Queen’s Royal College, an elite secondary school in Trinidad. There he struggled with a stammer that plagued him into early adulthood.

“At school, when I got up to read, the teacher would say, ‘Next,’ because the boys would laugh,” he said in an oral history interview.

Growing up, Mr. Holder came under the wing of his talented older brother, Arthur Aldwyn Holder, known to everyone by his childhood nickname, Boscoe. Boscoe Holder taught Geoffrey painting and dancing and recruited him to join a small, folkloric dance troupe he had formed, the Holder Dancing Company. Boscoe was 16; Geoffrey, 7.

Geoffrey Holder’s career mirrored that of his brother in many ways. Boscoe Holder, too, went on to become a celebrated dancer, choreographer, musician, painter and designer, and he, too, left Trinidad, in the late 1940s, for England, where he performed on television and onstage.

His brother’s departure put Geoffrey Holder in charge of the dance company, as its director and lead performer, and he took it to New York City in 1954, invited by the choreographer Agnes de Mille, who had seen the troupe perform two years before in St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands. She arranged an audition for the impresario Sol Hurok. To pay for the troupe’s passage, Mr. Holder, already an established young painter, sold 20 of his paintings.

After dropping his bags at an uncle’s apartment in Brooklyn, he fell in love with the city.

“It was a period when all the girls looked like Janet Leigh and Elizabeth Taylor, with crinoline petticoats and starched hair,” he told The New York Times in 1985. “The songs of that period were the themes from ‘The Moulin Rouge’ and ‘Limelight,’ and it was so marvelous to hear the music in the streets and see the stylish ladies tripping down Fifth Avenue. Gorgeous black women, Irish women — all of them lovely and all of them going somewhere.”

Mr. Holder had the good fortune to arrive in New York at a time of relative popularity for all-black Broadway productions as well as black dance, both modern and folk. Calypso music was also gaining a foothold, thanks largely to Harry Belafonte.
Thus did Mr. Holder make his Broadway debut on Dec. 30, 1954, as a featured dancer in “House of Flowers,” a haunting, perfumed evocation of West Indian bordello life, with music by Harold Arlen and a book by Truman Capote, based on his novella of the same name.

Directed by Peter Brook at the Alvin Theater, it starred Diahann Carroll and Pearl Bailey, and among its dancers was a ravishingly pretty young woman named Carmen de Lavallade. She and Mr. Holder married in 1955, had a son, Léo, and sometimes shared the stage. Both wife and son survive him. Boscoe Holder died in 2007.

One character Mr. Holder played in the musical was the top-hatted Baron Samedi, the guardian of the cemetery and the spirit of death, sex and resurrection in Haitian Voodoo culture. Mr. Holder relished Samedi: he played him again in the 1973 James Bond film, “Live and Let Die” (the first of the Bond franchise to star Roger Moore), and featured him in his choreography — in his “Banda” dance from the musical “House of Flowers,” and in “Banda,” a further exploration of folk themes that had its premiere in 1982.

His Voodoo villain in “Live and Let Die” was of a piece with much of his sporadic film career: with his striking looks and West Indian-inflected voice, producers tended to cast Mr. Holder in roles deemed exotic. In “Doctor Dolittle” (1967), he was a giant native who ruled a floating island as William Shakespeare (the 10th). In Woody Allen’s “Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex * but Were Afraid to Ask” (1972), he played a sorcerer. In “Annie” (1982), he was the Indian servant Punjab. (An exception was the 1992 romantic comedy “Boomerang,” in which he played a randy director of commercials working for Eddie Murphy’s playboy advertising executive.)

Mr. Holder was multitasking before the term gained currency. In 1957, he landed a notable acting role playing the hapless servant Lucky in an all-black Broadway revival of Samuel Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot,” directed by Herbert Berghof. The show, just seven months after the play’s original Broadway production, closed after only six performances because of a union dispute, but the role, with its rambling, signature 700-word monologue, lifted Mr. Holder’s acting career.

Painting was a constant for him. Whether life was hectic or jobs were scarce, he could usually be found in the SoHo loft he shared with Ms. de Lavallade, absorbed in work that drew on folk tales and often delivered biting social commentary. On canvases throughout the studio, sensuous nudes jostled for space with elegantly dressed women, ghostly swimmers nestled beside black Virgin Marys, bulky strippers seemed to burst out of their skins, and mysterious figures peered out of tropical forests.

His work was shown at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington and at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. And then there was his photography, and his sculpture.

His visual creativity extended to costume designs, “The Wiz” being just one showcase. Another was John Taras’s 1982 production of “The Firebird” for the Dance Theater of Harlem, in which the Russian fairy tale was relocated to a tropical forest. Mr. Holder designed both the sets and the costumes, one of which was a blend of 30 or 40 colors. He earned another Tony nomination for best costume design for the 1978 Broadway musical “Timbuktu!,” an all-black show based on the musical “Kismet.” He also directed and choreographed “Timbuktu!”

Mr. Holder’s dance designs were equally bold. Reviewing a 1999 revival of “Banda” by the Dance Theater of Harlem, Anna Kisselgoff wrote in The Times, “Mr. Holder is a terrific showman, and his mix of Afro-Caribbean rituals, modern dance and even ballet’s pirouettes is potent and dazzling.”

Other Holder dance classics were “Prodigal Prince” (1971), a dreamlike re-creation of the life and work of Hector Hyppolite, the Haitian folk painter, for which he also composed the musical score; and “Dougla” (1974), an evocation of a mixed-race Caribbean wedding. (Dougla refers to people who are of African and Indian descent.)

In 1959, he published a book on Caribbean folklore, “Black Gods, Green Islands,” written with Tom Harshman and illustrated by Mr. Holder; in 1973, he produced “Geoffrey Holder’s Caribbean Cookbook.” He himself was the subject of books and documentaries, including “Carmen & Geoffrey” (2009), by Linda Atkinson and Nick Doob.
“I am the Banshee Demon of the woods and I shall eat you both for my Halloween dinner and delight. You will be my treat with no tricks.”
Simone and Tiara were cousins and next door neighbors. It was October 31 and the two young girls were at a loss as to what to do that Halloween evening. Their parents could not afford costumes so they were not keen on going trick or treating.

“Well, life is full of let downs but we can still find something to do. So you have any ideas?” asked Simone.

“Aha. I’m glad you asked. I did have an idea. What if we walk around the neighborhood and admire some of the costumes worn by kids for the night. Who knows, maybe something weird may happen which will make our Halloween stroll a night to remember.”

“Good idea Tiara. I sure our parents will have no objections if we walked around together holding hands. Maybe we can even take that small wooden Holy Cross you have on your bedroom wall with us just in case we run into a demon.”

It was unusually dark and cloudy when the cousins left home. The dreary black surroundings were ominous. It was also chilly. Little did they know what the night and its omens had in store for them? Holding hands, they walked down their street and turned at the corner onto a long winding street that ran past a wooded area of oak trees.

They stopped to admire the many costumes kids wore. Some wore costumes depicting angels, witches, devils, cartoon characters and many more.

The sidewalk next to the woods was deserted.

“Should we cross the road to the other wide and avoid the woods?” asked Simone.

“Naw, let us walk past it. I have a strange feeling that on this night some kind of demon may be lurking in it,” replied Tiara.

“Aw come on Tiara. Demons are only in fairy tales. And besides you have the Holy Cross with you.”

The Demon Strikes

The girls had just reached the edge of the woods when the darkness grew thick and chillier. They looked up. Dark clouds were everywhere in the sky. They glanced in the woods and had the shock of their lives. A red ball of fire appeared within it and rose over the top of the trees. There it hovered.

And then, slowly and slowly it moved to where they were standing. They were stunned. Their feet could not move. The ball of fire came nearer and nearer. The light from it shone above their heads.

Hands still held, their bodies began to quiver and then shake. Tiara dropped her precious Cross. She could not bend down to pick it up. Her body felt like it was in a straight jacket. Simone was in the same situation. She tried to squeeze Tiara’s hand but her hand was frozen. Their knees were shaking more than their bodies. Their mouths were shut tight; they could not speak to each other, shout for help or scream. All they could do was to stand like concrete pillars staring at the ball of fire.

The ball of fire suddenly broke into two pieces. Their shape changed into two fiery red eyes. The eyes descended slowly until they reached a few feet away from them and stopped. A piece of dark cloud flew from the forest and joined the two red eyes. It covered the eyes and a body was taking shape. Very slowly, ever so slowly.

While the body was assuming a shape, a cold blast of wind rushed from the woods and headed straight for the girls. Their bodies no long trembled or shook. They were frozen. The hair on their heads stood upright. The deadly wind rushed back to the woods.
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