

A Gala Tribute To New York Steel Band Pioneers

Honoring

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

MILTON GABRIEL

LENNOX LEVEROCK

ROY SANGSTER

RUDY KING (Posthumously)

CALDERA CARABALLO

EDWARD GEORGE

ALFONSO MARSHALL

KIM WONG

CONRAD MAUGE (Posthumously)

*Sunday, May 20 2012
Tropical Paradise Ballroom, Brooklyn*



Steel Band on Broadway, 1954

*Presented By
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO FOLK ARTS INSTITUTE*

ALL HAIL THESE TRUE AMBASSADORS FOR PAN

One of the really gratifying aspects of the occasion that brings us together in this historic celebration is that it so perfectly embodies what has been the Folk Arts Institute's mission. In that it was our desire to examine the evolution of the pan culture in New York, with some of these very elder statesmen of the art form's New York roots, that inspired the idea for this evening's formal salute.

The 1950s saw pan come alive in New York, including a number of important breakthroughs that helped to project the intriguing new musical sound onto America's consciousness. Certainly among the foremost of these significant milestones was the 1954 appearance of a three-piece band in the Broadway musical *House of Flowers*. But there were also appearances in clubs in trendy Greenwich Village as well as elsewhere in Manhattan, a series of weekly Carnegie Hall gigs, steel band's debut at the Apollo and the then highly popular Harry Belafonte's incorporating the steel pan into his touring revue.

How blessed we are that the two surviving members from that *House of Flowers* unit, Michael Alexander and Alfonso Marshall, are included in this Tribute to New York Steel Band Pioneers. How fortunate indeed that we can personally give due acknowledgment and recognition to the other honorees in whose cause we have assembled: Caldera Caraballo, Milton Gabriel, Edward George, Lennox Leverock, Roy Sangster and Kim Wong. And of course to the two cited luminaries no longer with us, Rudolph King and Conrad Mauge, nuff respect.

The Folk Arts Institute considers itself privileged to be leading this hymn of praise to a lineup of extraordinary ambassadors for what truly must be the most awesome of Trinidad and Tobago's surfeit of artistic treasures. And we have been buoyed and are extremely grateful for the wonderful response to our call to have special attention directed to those we have chosen to honor. We feel strongly that any such manifestation of pride in one of the great symbols of our Trinidadian cultural heritage ennobles us beyond measure. It is no small coincidence, too, that affirmations of solidarity with and respect for pan perhaps have added poignancy at this time, when concerns have been raised about attempts, veiled though they may be, to scale back the pan's nonpareil cultural significance back in its birthplace. It goes without saying that the Folk Arts Institute stands uncompromisingly opposed to any misguided or mischievous moves in that direction.

By contrast, our adulation for the hardy veterans to whom we here pay tribute knows no bounds. And we thank all who join us in this much deserved outpouring of gratitude.

Les Slater
Chairman

KEVIN S. PARKER
SENATOR, 21ST DISTRICT

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May 1, 2012

Mr. Les Slater
Chairman
Trinidad and Tobago Folk Arts institute
3522 Farragut Road
Brooklyn, NY 11210

Dear Mr. Slater:

On behalf of the 21st Senatorial District, I am pleased to send greetings to the Trinidad and Tobago Folk Arts Institute as you celebrate your Tribute to New York Steelband Pioneers: A Gala Awards Celebration at Tropical Paradise Ballroom in Brooklyn, New York.

The steelpan or pan, as it is affectionately called, is the only new acoustic instrument invented in the 20th century. Pan has a positive presence in the Caribbean community particularly with our youth. It is fitting that we recognize the veterans who laid the foundation for this movement that endures today.

It is my pleasure to join you for this important occasion and extend due acclaim to the distinguished individuals you honor today. Congratulations to today's honorees – Michael Alexander, Caldera Caraballo, Milton Gabriel, Edward George, Lennox, Leverock, Roy Sangster, Alfonso Marshall, Kimloy Wong, and Posthumous Awards to Rudolph King, and Conrad Mauge. I am delighted to recognize these individuals who are performing exemplary service on behalf of their communities, for contributing to the diversity, cultural richness and well-being of the great state of New York.

Once again congratulations on your richly deserved Gala Awards Celebration. Your victory is a clear reflection of your hard work and service on behalf of our community.

We have much to celebrate on this wonderful occasion and many reasons to be proud. Please accept my best wishes for a wonderful and successful event and continued success in all your endeavors.

Yours in Partnership,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Parker".

KEVIN PARKER