

ENTERTAINMENT

Rhythm, Reason and Rhyme Twenty Years of Caribbean Nite



Marc Landry photo

Anna van Loon and company performing a medley of West Indian dances

First of all, let it known that I make no pretenses that this is an unbiased review. I live with several members of the Caribbean Circle, including a couple of the performers. First of all, they insisted that I WAS coming...and of course they were thrilled that I was doing the review. However, weeks before the blessed event, they started asking me what kind of review I was going to write. Nothing like a little pressure. Dark hints that I had better rave their performances started being tossed around, with ominous hints that if the review was not favorable, "the media would not be havin' a place to live." So anyway, with that said, they are marvelous darlings, but must be treated with impartiality and I must act with journalistic integrity.

Last weeks celebration marked the twentieth Caribbean Nite, the grand finale of the active student society's events for the year. Accordingly, the society took the opportunity to recognize and thank those members of the community who had supported the society over its more than twenty year history. Professors Anthony Boxill, Dexter Noel, Russell McNeilly and Daizal Samed, as well as Mrs. Joyce Williams were presented with plaques honoring their contributions.

The evening also featured guest speaker Dr. Joy Mighty, a native of Guyana, who recently joined the university's business administration faculty. Dr. Mighty's speech (which is featured in this week's news section) reflected upon the diversity of Caribbean culture and the

experience of Caribbean expatriates of Caribbean nations. Dr. Mighty was a self-confident and informative speaker, and with that rare talent of dinner speakers, managed a couple of funnies while describing her reluctance to take on the assignments and her inviters' coercion (is this a pattern?!) as they explained that it was her duty as the "new kid on the block."

Dinner- better than you would expect from a mass-produced meal- and a major accomplishment for a student volunteer corps cooking for over 500 people. The menu was diverse, offered a vegetarian option and was spicy (but not burn your face off hot).

The entertainment-diverse and reflecting the cultural influences of the region. Although in places it

was a tad unprofessional- with a few cueing mishaps and the mystery of the missing music- but this wasn't a professional production, so a lot can be forgiven. The show did display the marks of a lot of hard work- heard nightly in the ball room for two weeks.

Musical numbers included a medley of West Indian song, performed by most of the cast (which opened the evening, but felt like one of those "let's close the evening off" kind of numbers like they have at the Grammys where Stevie Wonder usually takes over), as well as Reggae and Calypso selections. Local musician Ewart Williams backed up the singers on keyboards, along with Caribbean Circle members: Gordon Porter, Geordie Haley, Aurelius Gordon and Mike Dogherty. Michael "Jahba" Andrew, performing a duet with Iola Davis "Mr. Telephone Man" and

"Black Man Feeling to Party" and Joslyn Smith, performing the spiritual "Let the Power Fall on I" got particularly enthusiastic audience responses.

Gordon Porter and Mark Ireland gave poetry readings: Porter giving a performance of Louise Bennett's "tramcar" an early example of poetry using dialect, and Ireland reading one of his own compositions with original music from Aurelius Gordon. Ireland's delivery was soft-spoken and with competition (from the loiterers near the bar) was nearly inaudible.

Also featured were three dance numbers, each influenced by cultural traditions including East Indian, African and Chinese, as well as a uniquely Caribbean tradition. Most obvious though, in highlighting the individual national origins of Caribbean culture was the fashion show, in which French, Spanish African and Chinese influences were emphasized.

Also featured was a hilarious skit (with shades of Martin Guerre influences...) depicting life, death and marriage in Dominica in the 1950's.

Overall, the night was well worth checking out. Only one complaint- no J.Wray and Nephew Appleton Rum in the fruit punch- but then again, my housemates would only blame me, for not importing enough from Toronto to go around.

GOOD TIMES!



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