

Caribbean Nite



The Caribbean is one of the least understood of those regions foreign to but influenced by North America. Geographical proximity allows for ease of association and quickness of judgment; cultural complexity, historical differences and economic inequality create and maintain a divide that is not easily bridged. Often, North American and European judgment of the Caribbean rests upon the two-week tour; this superficial estimation by the tourist—however well-meaning—leads only to misinterpretation and resentment. Academic voyeurism is no different, and the judgment is underscored often by condescension, arrogance and a dreadful oversimplification. In fact, North American and European academics

dictate to us who we are, what we are and when we came into being. Guyana is separated from Jamaica, say because of cartographic simplicity; linguistic, historic, cultural, social and political ties are ignored blissfully. In historical over-views of the region, the genocide of the Arawakan and Caribbean peoples are glossed over or ignored. Writers and scholars that stress our cultural and historical ties to Africa, India and China are categorized as substandard, misguided radicals who, in betraying the Empire, betray themselves. Thus, writers who stress the heterogeneity of the region are marginalized; or they are measured and condemned by inadequate conventional yardsticks; worse, they are ignored. Caribbeans are seen as care-free, rum-drinking, ganja-

smoking, dark-skinned bodies that gracefully run along sandy white beaches, sweating poetically. Or we are seen as hopelessly poor, hopelessly divided—the economic and cultural ghetto that attaches itself to the First World socio-economic and cultural infrastructure: the Caribbean is to Canada and the United States as Harlem is to New York. The idolatry of absolutes.

Over the last fifteen years or so at the University of New Brunswick, these impressions have been challenged by professors from the Caribbean. Professor Emeritus Louis Scheult has been one of the pillars of UNB's Forestry Department. Dr. Russell McNeilly has taught in the Faculty of Education since 1966, and has contributed to the multi-cultural society of Fredericton. Dr. Joseph McKenzie has taught Biology since 1967. Dr. Anthony Boxill has taught English since 1966 and has supervised many thesis on Commonwealth Literature. Several students from the Caribbean and Africa have been attracted to UNB because of Dr. Boxill's presence. Similarly, Professor Dexter Noel has taught Spanish at UNB since 1969. He is one of the founder members of the Caribbean Circle, and remains an active participant in Caribbean events. Most recently, Dr. Joy Mighty has joined the ranks; she has been teaching Business Administration since 1992. At St. Thomas University, there are two professors who hail from the Caribbean. Dr. Daizal Samad has been teaching English since 1986. He is the founder member of the Board of International Students and a former President of the Caribbean Circle. Dr. Maurice Holder has taught in the French Department since 1989.

The presence of these scholars on these campuses has wide-ranging implications for the two academic communities. Not only do they share their various areas of academic expertise, but also lend new perspectives on traditional themes and texts. They participate in and enrich the social life of these campuses. It is imperative that their contributions be maximized

for the good of the students, especially. Since 1972, the Caribbean Circle of UNB and STU has done much to advance an understanding of the Caribbean and its people. The Circle draws its membership primarily from Caribbean students attending the two Universities. However, faculty members and Caribbean people from the wider society have contributed also to the Circle. Over the past two decades, the organization has sponsored seminars, workshops, lectures and various social events that have sought to provide the STU, UNB and Fredericton communities with a more penetrative look into Caribbean life and letters. Over the years, Fredericton has been treated to the song, dance and food of the region during Caribbean Night.

These events together show that the Caribbean is a place of easy laughter that is not without thick political tension. We live in a region wrought from the hurt of history, but we are people who celebrate our survival. We have inherited and have produced those who would confound our hopes and futures, but we have labored forth poets that sing our dreams into being.

We are intimate with the facts of catastrophe as we are with the rhythms of Reggae and Calypso, songs of struggle and tri-

umph. We Caribbeans are children of the deracinated, transplanted and enslaved who share with others the miraculous roots of community beyond fixed or static boundaries.

We invite you to celebrate with us on March 20, 1993 the 20th Caribbean Night at UNB and STU.

Contributed by the Caribbean Circle

Caribbean Nite 73-93

20 Years of
Rhythm, Reason & Rhyme
Dinner • Show • Dance
Presented By The Caribbean Circle

Tickets Available from:

1. SUB Help Center tel. 453-4955
2. International Students Advisors Office Alumni Memorial Building tel. 453-4860
3. Members of the Caribbean Circle

Date: March 20, 1993
Venue: SUB Cafeteria
Time: 7:00 P.M. - 1:00 A.M.
Tickets: \$10.00-adults
\$5.00-children under age 12



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