

Dolace McLean

PREFACE

A Tribute To Grenada



If Calabash is to be described with a phrase, I would borrow one from the island of Jamaica that says “it likkle but it tallawah!” Calabash Journal is indeed “little but it is stalwart,” marked by a strength of spirit that matches the people for whom it purports to speak. In 2004, the founding editor invited me to be a guest editor for three issues of Calabash Journal. At first I hesitated because such a position with a small but reputable publication is fraught with challenges, yet, instinctively, I knew that I would accept simply because Calabash is a publication in which I deeply believe. Despite the many demands of getting Calabash to print, the Journal refuses to die, or more properly speaking, it entices us to share in the magical splendor of Caribbean arts and literature that it has yet to reveal to its many loyal readers around the globe.

The summer of 2005 has been a crucial time of transition for our hardy little Calabash. With ambitious plans for a splashy July publication in homage to the equally hardy island of Grenada, our hopes were dashed when we were forced to find replacement personnel within a limited time span. As a Journal dedicated to a resilient people however, we decided that we would conquer disappointment with a renewed commitment to the excellence of our publication.

Knowing that what we do is of value to the Caribbean community both within the region and without, we redoubled our efforts to make this issue a strong one.

Grenada, the spice isle is our feature attraction for this issue. Grenada was one of the islands hardest hit by Hurricane Ivan in 2004, and battered for a second time less than a year later by Hurricane Frances. Given such cataclysmic events, Calabash was determined to present this issue as a tribute to the people of the spice isle and their varied and interesting lives on the trio of islands that include Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

Merle Collins sat with Jacqueline Bishop and me, Dolace McLean, one weekend in May to try to address the events of 1983 and the political trauma that preceded the American invasion. Suelin Low Chew Tung and Susan Mains offered articles about the thriving art scene. Jacob Ross and Maureen Roberts, both resident in England, shared with us the beauty of their poetry and prose. Donald Hill, an African-American scholar who specializes in the music and culture of Grenada, presented some of the cultural forms that inform the lives of ordinary Carriacouans. Eric Johnn, Grenadian and resident New York artist, gave an overview of three wonderful Grenadian artists including the world-famous Canute Calliste. The Historical Society of Carriacou operated by Clemencia Alexander, the daughter of Canute Calliste, generously gave permission for us to use some of the images of the great artist. To Clemencia and the Historical Society, Calabash is truly thankful.

Despite the strength of the journal and my faith in its intrinsic value to the Caribbean community, however, there are people without whom this issue could never have come into being. I am grateful to the dedicated members of the editorial staff who embody the spirit of tenacity. I am deeply indebted to Trevor Peters who has proved to be an energetic and indefatigable managing editor, getting things done, sometimes only by sheer force of will. Sassy Ross, like her name, brings a vivacious commitment to the success of the Journal as our new marketing editor and all-around copywriter and proofreader. Min Weng is the newest member of our team who brings all his strong Internet publishing skills to the Journal at a time when we

really need someone committed to help. Through their dedication and loyalty Calabash is still alive, all the while becoming a better and more dynamic publication.

I also have to thank Jacqueline Bishop, Gerard Aching, and Michela Calderaro for sharing their institutional knowledge and generously giving advice about how to make this issue as fabulous as all the others before it. And finally, Calabash is nothing without the many people who feel so strongly about the Journal that they remember to check for the next issue and send their congratulations and expressions of support. I am highly appreciative to work with a Journal that has such a glorious past and I take comfort in the fact that Calabash has a strong foundation and strong relationships with its dedicated readers and artists.

Until next time,

Dolace McLean