



Once Panorama was over, we began to realise that our trip to Trinidad was nearly complete. Most people were ready to go home and see their friends and families, whereas I on the other hand did not miss home at all and was not looking forward to returning to the cold weather – after having spent 3 weeks in 30 Degree temperature's, besides, we still had the Carnival days to look forward to, which take place the Monday and Tuesday after the Panorama finals competition. The Notting Hill Carnival which we have here in the UK, is based around the themes derived from Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago.



However, Carnival is a national event attended by people from all over the world. Carnival day begins with what's called J'ouvert on the Monday morning. J'ouvert is a French term, combining jour ouvert which directly translates as day opening – referring to morning. This is because the event begins at 4:00 am and ends around midday. Like the rest of Carnival, this part of it can be described as a street celebration for soca and calypso music. The only difference is that it's morning time, and elaborate costumes are not worn during this aspect of Carnival Monday. Instead mud and paint are used and everyone goes around covering themselves and I mean EVERYONE around them in mud or paint! Out of all the people I was with, I was the only one who managed not to get any paint on me. Thinking back, I do not know how I managed that as some people were covered head to toe in paint.

After J'ouvert, Carnival Monday afternoon and Carnival Tuesday are when the elaborate 'pretty' costumes and masks come out and there are enormous processions through the streets of people dancing and showing off their carefully designed costumes. It's hard to believe they are all made by hand. When Carnival came to an end, we all knew it was time to say our final goodbyes as we would be going home the next day! We were all very sad to be leaving our new friends and still miss not seeing them every day, even now!

I can honestly say that playing pan in the country of its origin in front of all those thousands of people was one of the best experiences I have ever had. For me, the trip could not have been any better because even when I was hungry and tired during those long days and nights at the panyard – I was doing something I love and I had friends around me, both old and new, who kept me smiling through the most stressful of times. **Because of this, my first trip to Trinidad in 2010 will be something I will never forget and Panorama an event I hope I can participate in for many years to come!**