



Arddin Herbert: Young Arranger of Class

In 2009, Arddin Herbert joined an elite club of pan arrangers who arranged for all three big Carnivals in one year, Trinidad, New York, and London. Only the master “Boogsie” Sharpe is remembered as having done that on a regular basis in the past and no one else does it now. Arddin arranged for the first time for Croydon Steel Orchestra, but he has been arranging for CASYM in New York since 1990 and for the last five years for the Caribbean Airlines Invaders. Indeed, he had grown up in the Invaders panyard, gone on to get a music degree in the United States and had well over a decade of experience arranging for one of the leading steelbands in New York City.

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It seemed inevitable that he would return to arrange for Invaders. Herbert is remembered by Invader elders as someone who was so small (affectionately called “Small Man” for many years) when he started in the panyard he had to stand on a box, sometimes empty beer boxes. Growing up in Carenage and having to play on empty milk tins and pans creating a musical raucous in the house, he had gone with his father with Invaders for J’ouvert by age ten and it wasn’t long before he asked if he could start playing in the band. With a supportive father, himself a long time Invaders supporter, taking him for practices, young Arddin’s first year playing in the band was Panorama 1980.

Arddin took to the instrument with such a facility that he can be considered a prodigy. He attended Trinity College in Moka, Maraval in Trinidad and Tobago and got his formal musical training under Geraldine Connor and Dawn Batson. His soloist abilities were evident to everyone as shined at the “Pan is Beautiful” National Steelband Festivals, taking third in 1984, second in 1986, and won in 1988, making history by being the first person to win the soloist category playing his original composition “The Seagull”. In the Schools Steelband Music Festival, he continued his progressive dominance taking fifth in 1983, second in 1985 and capturing first place in 1987.

For autumn 1991, he got a scholarship to Brooklyn College of the City University of New York from CASYM. CASYM, the acronym for the Caribbean American Sports and Cultural Youth Movement Inc., was formed in 1983 to be a non-profit community organization with a motto of “Education is a Must” and focused on a multi-faceted program of mentoring, tutoring, homework assistance and college prep. They are justly proud that they have also provided college scholarship assistance to every high school graduate in their program since 1990. A central part of the CASYM is their music department. The steelband program is the beacon and most visible and successful aspect of CASYM’s cultural arts programs. CASYM’s youth steelband is the pride of Brooklyn, a major community music organization that has been an active competitor for the New York Panorama title as well as doing concerts all over New York and usually a summer tour through the five Boroughs of New York City, sponsored by the *New York Daily News*.

Arddin Herbert was given a scholarship to recognize his achievements, accomplishments, and talents and to utilize his skills, qualifications and experience as the Musical Director of CASYM’s steel orchestra as part of the scholarship. Arddin went on to get a music degree from Brooklyn College in 1996 and won the Brooklyn College ISAM Composer Award for a pan composition, “Coersion”, a title that resulted from combining “coerce” and “fusion”. He went on to get a Masters Degree in Business Administration, with a concentration on Organizational Development, from the University of Phoenix in 2004.

Since then, he has continued to be CASYM’s Musical Director and primary arranger doing the arrangement for their annual Panorama tunes as well as a majority of the other songs that the band performs at various concerts. Indeed, he has served as the vice president for many years and, in 2009, became the Executive Director of this very accomplished non-profit, community-based organization.

His Trinidad Panorama arranging debut was at the tender age of 17. In 1987, as part of a deal with the school steelband, he arranged for Players Symphony from Belmont, Port of Spain in the large band category. When he was asked to return

