



JAMAL 'PACMAN' GLYNN

Jamal was born in the early 1970's and his initial musical experience began with an array of soulful music and bright colours it being the kaleidoscope era. Both his parents had a great love for music, his mother would sing hymns whilst preparing their family meals and dad sang popular tunes by Nat King Cole, Louis Armstrong and Frank Sinatra; he was also known for his high quality whistling.



Jamal remembers their house being filled with music every Saturday by the current hits of the period being played on their record player whilst his mother danced with him and his Christmas gifts always included a musical toy from his father.

He recalls assisting his uncle in vanishing acoustic guitars, which he repaired. As the electricity supply was not very reliable around that time, blackouts were regular and his uncle, Wainwright, would play his guitar joined by the rest of the family in singing until

the electricity returned or they fell asleep. Jamal found singing difficult whilst his sisters, Debra, Susan and Kath-Ann made the task look simple, singing songs played on the radio with great ease. **His other uncles played the steel pan and as he could not sing Jamal thought he could play the tunes on tin pans. So he took some used juice tins (a variation of tins was used at the time) and tried to imitate the steel pan as was the norm with the young people of that era. His action enabled him to develop good wrist work needed to play the steel pan adequately. Jamal is left handed and at times finds that it proves helpful.**

At the age of twelve, he played for a

mother's day concert at his secondary school, Curepe Junior Secondary. He played the steel pan accompanied by his music teacher, Earl Cannovan on piano. Jamal joined the school steel band and as his hunger grew, by 1984, he found himself in a senior band at the age of thirteen, his mother found the environment of drugs, gambling and late nights too dangerous for a young boy. The joyous music of the adults enthralled him. Jamal received lots of licks while developing his passion for steel for traveling to the senior band, "Curepe Scherzando", as he lived in Morvant. He quickly decided to join "Solo Harmonites" who were nearer and at the time more advanced, having won four national panorama titles. Panorama being an integral aspect of

the carnival celebration with over 200 steel bands in Trinidad and Tobago has created some of the best steel pan musicians in the world. (Liam Teague, Ray Holman, Earl Rodney and Len, "Boogsie", Sharpe, who is presently referred to as the Mozart of Pan). Jamal stated, "the steel pan is the only family of instruments that an ensemble can play a song in less than 30 minutes."

He became section leader in every band he went to as a result of his great love for teaching all aspects of the instrument whilst assisting others to develop highlighting patience as a key factor. Jamal went on to the St. Augustine Senior Secondary and joined their steelband who defeated the South East Port of Spain Secondary school steelband in the junior panorama competition (they previously won six times). St Augustine did recordings and also went on to win the junior festival and toured Europe. Players included the Layne Twins, Justin Thomas, Sherwin Bernard, Salman Cupid, Andre Busby, Terence Sealy and Brian Villafana.

At the end of his secondary education at St, Augustine Senior Secondary Jamal traveled to London and joined the Ebony Steel Band Trust in 1991. He tutored at Ebony, Yardley Primary in Streatham and Ashburton High in East Croydon. In addition Jamal had performances for the Royal Family at Buckingham Palace and for disabled, geriatric and pediatric patients at hospitals throughout London. He is currently based in Trinidad and continues to enjoy a connection with Ebony being their contact for steel pan accessories, and guide/security for new players coming there for the annual National Panorama competition.

In 2000, he enrolled at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus where he began to read for a Certificate in Music with pan being the main instrument. He completed this course in 2002 obtaining a B+ average and started reading for a BA, in Musical Arts that same year. Several

other great opportunities presented themselves in the likes of being student representative of the music department for two years and co-arranging with his friend and colleague, Damyon Alexander for St James Government Secondary steelband for junior panorama and achieving 7th place in 2004.

His skills have greatly improved through the reading opportunity at the UWI festival steel ensemble where he was inducted from 2003 with annual auditions performed and the Festival Arts Chorale, where he has been a member since 2000; sitting on the cabinet as librarian for two years and public relation officer for one. He has toured and performed with the UWI festival steel ensemble, to the USA, Martinique and done premier performances with Ray Luck, a Guyanese pianist, and recordings of original compositions by Ray Holman.

Jamal is currently tutoring pupils between the ages of six to sixteen at the Birdsong Academy. Birdsong was the first steel band on the UWI campus, St, Augustine. He is also a member of the Trinidad and Tobago National Steel Symphony Orchestra, being a cabinet member in charge of equipment. This group uses the new family of steel pan named the 'G' pans.

Jamal joined Phase 11 Pan Groove steel orchestra in 1998 and has been section leader of the quadrasonic section. Phase 11 are National Panorama Champions for 1987, 1988, 2005, (2006 where Jamal was the drill master), 2008. In July 2008, Jamal was appointed vice captain of Phase 11 Pan Groove by Len Boogsie Sharpe. He sees Boogsie as his mentor and inspiration. This has proven to be a notable transition coming from a humble home and persevering at the art of pan playing traveling through the different eras of pan is for bad Johns with no future in it to being a holder of a BA in Musical Arts, vice captain of a globally recognized steelband and a member of the Trinidad and Tobago

National Steel Symphony Orchestra. He is also a mentor to many young players and contemporaries.

Jamal's reason for doing music therapy is to share the dream he has to ease pain and sickness. There is no music therapy treatment being administered to patients in Trinidad. Playing in hospitals in England he experienced the smiles and joy the music brought to the patients.

Jamal professes to be a good listener who allows colleagues to 'blossom' from their personal involvement. His high quality on technical approach has been noted by his lecturers. He has traveled extensively with different steel bands to global destinations including Japan, Germany, France and London. Great coordination skills have paid off as Jamal was put in charge of rehearsals, organizing uniforms and performances. Having been a security officer for three years afforded him the opportunity to interact with music lovers rather than music makers as well as visit grand houses, top hotels, banks and Piarco International air port where he obtained an aviation certificate. The need to become a musician instead of a player by rote directed him to the University of the West Indies. There his performances on the steel pans have improved tremendously. he stated, "I can now say with confidence that I hold a BA in Musical arts. I see the steel pan as being the healing musical instrument of the world and wants to be a practitioner of music therapy using the steel pan as the preferred instrument.