

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES CAVE HILL CAMPUS

Inaugural Conductors Symposium

October 13, 2017

Protocol: good morning and welcome! I want to thank all of you for making the time to be at The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus this morning for this historic event. You are used to seeing and hearing from the UWI in this creative cultural space as it relates to theatre arts, film and dance. From today be prepared to listen to us as it relates to music. The Cave Hill Campus is moving into closer harmonic integration with wider local and regional communities in a new field, the field of music and musicology. And for that I really want to thank a determined and disciplined musician and member of the Royal Barbados Police Band, Mr Abraham Millington. It was Mr Millington who approached me in April this year, with the idea that the Cave Hill Campus should consider working with York University to deliver this conducting symposium. I needed no convincing. As a higher education institution, the Cave Hill campus remains attuned to the region's

developmental challenges. For over a year we have been quietly exploring the need to develop a Bachelor of Music programme to complement the current suite of programmes in the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination. We recognize the talent in Barbados and the region, and we are constantly seeking to create solutions to towards building stronger, more cohesive and sustainable societies by enhancing our human capital.

We know that the syntheses of African, European, Indian and Indigenous influences have given rise to multiple Caribbean musical genres including, but not limited to calypso, ska, reggae, zouk, merengue, salsa, chutney, compas, punta and soca—our region’s indigenous, infectious fusion of soul and calypso. We also know that music is an integral part of our way of life. No one can deny the significant contribution which music has played in the development of Caribbean societies. Music has helped to strengthen national identity and regional solidarity, provided many with viable careers, and helped to foster economic growth and cultural dynamism, just think of the reggae, calypso and steel pan industries. Yet, musicians have not always enjoyed the integrative

benefits of collaboration at the highest academic level. With today's conductors' symposium, The UWI, Cave Hill is engaging with music practitioners, musicology and signaling our profound respect for and intent to advance the national and regional music industry.

Music should be an important part of our educational curriculum. Music heightens creativity, sensitivity, discipline, memory, team work, time management, acceptance of others, commitment, purpose and self-expression, all characteristics we want to impart to our students. The time has come for every school to have a qualified music teacher in the same way that they have qualified teachers for disciplines ranging from mathematics to physical education. It is time to take the study and teaching of music seriously and to reap the full benefits that this offers our societies.

Several public schools provide opportunities to expose students to varying levels of music. In Barbados, in the past, the majority of music teaching took place in the older secondary schools. Recently, there has been a greater effort to include music in the primary curriculum. As a result, programs such as The Primary School

Strings and Winds Program have ensured that music is accessible to children of all ages and social and economic backgrounds.

School bands which, were once found only at the secondary schools are now becoming a prominent feature in primary schools.

Therefore, it has now become necessary to train all music teachers in the art of conducting, so as to ensure proper training of young students in performance, as well as performance etiquette. This conducting' symposium marks the beginning of an ongoing UWI initiative to ensure that opportunities are provided for the training of music directors. Musical groups are beneficial to young students, who are not only taught about musicianship and self-expression, but who often cultivate tolerance and acceptance of others, embrace team work, discipline, and many other life skills.

I am aware of efforts by the director of the Barbados National Youth Symphony Orchestra - Mrs Joy Knight-Lynch - to develop a Primary School Orchestra, a Barbados National Youth Orchestra and a Barbados National (Adult) Orchestra.

The aims are multiple, commendable and fully supported. I have to share some:

- a) to develop co-ordinated training programmes for youth interested in instrumental music and orchestral performance;
- b) to source and co-ordinate seminars, workshops and attachments both locally and overseas for members;
- c) to bring music teachers and other interested persons together on a voluntary basis with a view to facilitating the development of music in Barbados;
- d) To motivate young people to continue playing and developing their musical skills, and to consider music as a profession;
- e) To develop links with other orchestras and educational institutions in the region and internationally;
- f) to develop average into excellence

Ladies and gentlemen, some of you may be familiar with El Sistema Venezuela – and those who are not may wish to do so! That programme has altered the life trajectory of thousands of that nation’s neediest children. It has produced the world renowned conductor Gustavo Dudamel and numerous great musicians. I see no reason why that Venezuelan model cannot be replicated right here in Barbados and the Caribbean.

I am aware that our Royal Barbados Police Force Band is a world-class ensemble whose performances excel with any melody. However, many young aspiring musicians outside of the constabulary, face numerous challenges including inadequate facilities for rehearsal. Such facilities are sorely needed to accommodate continued training of students in order to develop orchestras and bands in Barbados that - like our police band – can place them on the world stage.

Only recently, I was made painfully aware that our national orchestra - the Barbados National Youth Symphony Orchestra - is

in need of a home. I am informed that rehearsals have been a challenge due to the lack of an adequate rehearsal space. Sending young, aspiring musicians under trees in sun or rain is unacceptable if we are serious about converting average into excellence, and the talent we have right here.

It is time for the National Youth Orchestra to have a home. To signal this university's enduring investment and commitment to youth, and our desire to assist with the development of music in Barbados, I wish to declare our willingness to develop a partnership with the BNYSO and actively explore providing them with a home.

The UWI at Cave Hill is very willing to become the home of the BNYSO, thus providing them with a safe place for rehearsals. I

have asked our Director of Institution Planning, Mrs Gale Hall to ask Mrs Joy Knight-Lynch to submit a proposal to the Campus in that regard. I am inviting members of the corporate community to partner with the Cave Hill Campus, to locate the Barbados National Youth Symphony Orchestra at Cave Hill. Let us take them from under the trees and prepare them for the regional and world stage.

Ladies and gentlemen, in order for this critical work to be continued at all levels of music, training for music teachers must take place on an ongoing basis so that we can continue to make a difference in the lives of our young citizens.

Hence, as a university, we are willing to go even further than housing the BNYSO. The UWI intends to establish, in collaboration with the Barbados Community College, the necessary articulations that will allow students who have obtained an Associates' Degree at that institution, to complete their studies at Cave Hill campus for a full Bachelor's degree.

Yes, the Cave Hill Campus is looking forward to deepening our collaboration with York University beyond today's symposium. We intend to create institutional synergies that will benefit our coming undergraduate music programme. We anticipate that this collaboration will allow us to also establish a Master's degree in Music and to facilitate student and faculty exchanges between York U and UWI in the fine arts and creative arts. I have already replied to Dean of the School of Arts, Media, Performance, and Design of

York University, Professor Fisher-Stitt, indicating our appreciation of their willingness to work with us to create a programme in music. Programmes in the creative and fine arts will remain an integral component of our offerings in the Humanities at Cave Hill.

Even though there is universal emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (the so-called STEM disciplines), and we fully support that, at the Cave Hill Campus the study of the Humanities will never be in danger of being marginalized. Even as rapid advances in artificial intelligence change the way we work and experience life, studies of the changes AI introduce, simultaneously indicates there will be greater and greater demand for the values and qualities that makes us more human. We will have a greater need for our poets, painters, writers and musicians, the artists who enhance and enrich our way of life and who contribute so much to the advance of civilisation. So at Cave Hill we remain dedicated to ensuring the study of humanities and the development of the arts. So even as we recognize the importance of STEM, our integrative curriculum continues to pick up STEAM - and you should know what the "A" in STEAM represents.

Ladies and gentlemen, our contribution to the Caribbean's musical development will extend beyond the classroom and formal teaching and will be reflected, like so many of our activities, in our continued involvement with the wider community. You will receive further evidence of this early next year when The UWI offers tangible support to the commemoration of a Barbadian music icon.

As part of CARIFESTA XIII, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Cave Hill Campus hosted in August a symposium. This included a seminar paying tribute to Jackie Opel, the creator of spouge. Plans are advanced to further celebrate and explore the Opel legacy next April through a variety of presentations, including musical performances. Our Faculty of Humanities and Education, including this Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination, are at the vanguard of this project.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have demonstrated to you, Cave Hill's commitment to both performance training and musicology is without question. We are not yet able to contribute to this

workshop's musical score, but preparing a brighter future for aspiring musicians is one harmonious arrangement that we intend to undertake. I thank you.

Professor V. Eudine Barriteau

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