

Art Music by Caribbean Composers: Grenada

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INTRODUCTION

Grenada is among the southernmost of the Windward Islands and its two dependencies, Carriacou and Petit Martinique (“the Grenadines”), lie between it and the even more southern island, St. Vincent (McDaniel, 1998).

Columbus landed on Grenada in 1498 and encountered a large population of Carib natives who had long resisted colonization. Europeans were not able to successfully colonize the island until the 17th century. Control of the island was passed back and forth between France and Great Britain during subsequent centuries (“Grenada,” 2001). In a final change of colonial hands, authority was eventually ceded to Great Britain. French and British influences affect Grenadian cultural traditions, as do Trinidadian influences, owing to Grenada’s proximity to and close ties with Trinidad (Bugros-McLean, 2005).

European colonists established plantations, first growing sugar, and later, nutmeg and cocoa (Kaufman, 2005). The cultivation of these latter crops earned Grenada the nickname the Spice Island (Bugros-McLean, 2005). Large numbers of African slaves helped maintain the plantation economy and, as in

most Caribbean nations, the descendants of these slaves make up a large percentage of the modern population. Grenada achieved independence from Great Britain in 1974 (Kaufman, 2005).

Calypso is “the dominant popular music genre in the country” (Bugros-McLean, 2005, para. 6). At the annual Carnival, bands parade in a festive display of dance, costume, and music – steelpan in particular.

“European dances lost in Europe survive in Carriacou” (McDaniel, 1998, p. 868). The music and movements of the quadrille on Carriacou have adapted “indigenous meaning and stylistic reinterpretation” (p. 871). The island of Carriacou also continues to enjoy the traditional “string band music that had been an integral part of the local culture during the Christmas season” (Bugros-McLean, 2005, para. 10). The Parang Festival, which began in 1977, affords an annual venue for string band music in competition. The Mount Royal Progressive Youth Movement, organizers of the Parang Festival, “has become a major social and cultural institution in Carriacou” (Bugros-McLean, 2005, para. 11).

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Other music festivals, such as the Big Drum in Carriacou and the Grenada Spice Jazz Festival, help preserve national cultural identity and feed the tourism industry. The Big Drum,

derived from African slave traditions from the early 18th century, survives on Carriacou in spite of suppression efforts by the British colonists (Bugros-McLean, 2005).

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COMPOSERS

Richardo Keens-Douglas

Louis Arnold Masanto (1938-)

Bertha Pitt-Bonaparte (1936-)

COMPOSITIONS, by composer

Masanto

Hail Grenada (1974, national anthem)

Pitt-Bonaparte

Ecce sacerdos magnus (2001)

Missa consolata (2005, revised 2012) (mass)²
Amen

Sanctus

Lamb of God

Lord guide my feet -- meditation (motet)

Memorial acclamations

Save us saviour of the world

When we eat this bread

RECORDINGS

National anthems of the world, vol. 3: Denmark - Grenada [CD]. (2006). Hong Kong: Marco Polo. Catalogue no. 8.225321
Track 49. *Hail Grenada* (1:31)

SOUND FILES

Hail Grenada. http://www.gov.gd/our_nation/national_anthem.html

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² Written as a consolation following the ravages of Hurricane Ivan on Grenada.