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# Tisick over TIZZY

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# GOOD BUNNY

## Six Grammy nominations for controversial Super Bowl Reggaeton star Bad Bunny

The Puerto Rican superstar Bad Bunny has redefined what it means to be a global giant — and he may once again make history at the 2026 Grammy Awards.

The artist born Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio is up for six awards at the Feb. 1 show, becoming the first Spanish-language artist to be nominated for album, song and record of the year simultaneously. His critically acclaimed album, “Debí Tirar Más Fotos,” is only the second Spanish-language record to be nominated for album of the year. The first? Well, that also belonged to Bad Bunny, 2022’s “Un Verano Sin Ti.”

Win or lose, experts say Bad Bunny’s Grammy nominations mark a symbolic moment for Latinos. Just a week later, after all, he’ll headline the Super Bowl halftime show.

Vanessa Díaz, associate professor of Chicano and Latino studies at Loyola Marymount University and co-author of “P FKN R: How Bad Bunny Became the Global Voice of Puerto Rican Resistance,” says Bad Bunny’s nods extend beyond his own art and serve as a “very welcome recognition of Latin music that is growing.”

“Music from the Spanish-speaking Caribbean has been shaping global music tastes since the 19th century,” adds Albert Laguna, associate professor of ethnicity, race and migration and American studies at Yale. “Bad Bunny is another link in a much longer chain of the popularity of Caribbean music on a global stage.”

Much of this music — particularly Latin trap and reggaetón, the genres Bad Bunny got his start in and continues to use in his new work — has been historically criminalized in Puerto



**Bad Bunny**

Rico, not unlike hip-hop in the United States. Reggaetón in particular, Díaz points out, “comes from the most marginalized communities in Puerto Rico. And so, the fact that Bad Bunny is receiving nominations in three main categories, and this is an artist who came up with trap ... is the most groundbreaking thing about the entire situation.”

Petra Rivera-Rideau, associate professor of American studies at Wellesley College and co-author of “P FKN R,” says that element is par-

ticularly noteworthy because institutions often ignore marginalized genres — including at the Latin Grammys, a sister award show to the Grammys.

A victory in the major categories could have “profound, symbolic meaning,” she says. But with a caveat: “I’m interested to see if this is going to open doors for other people.” After all, Bad Bunny himself isn’t immune to the Recording Academy’s institutional biases: He already has three career Grammys, but all have been in *música urbana* categories — despite the fact that he is the most streamed artist on the planet.

Across “Debí Tirar Más Fotos,” Bad Bunny and his producers weave traditional Puerto Rican folkloric styles into a hyper-contemporary context. Latin trap and reggaetón aren’t abandoned but fused with *música jíbara*, salsa, bomba, plena and even aguinaldo, a kind of Christmas music, in “Pitorro de Coco.” While Bad Bunny’s previous albums also fused different genres — including bossa nova, mambo, rock, merengue and more — this album’s mélange was more homegrown.

Laguna sees “Debí Tirar Más Fotos” as a direct challenge to the prevailing “formula for global pop stardom,” which he describes as an artist making it locally, gaining traction and then “watering down” their sound into something commercial and palatable for a global audience.

“Bad Bunny went in the opposite direction. It’s his most Puerto Rican album ever,” says Laguna. He hopes it will communicate to other artists that they, too, can look to their ancestry and history for artmaking.

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# START THE NEW YEAR WITH

## Clear Intentions

Before we go anywhere, before we talk about goals or plans or what comes next, I want you to slow down with me for a moment. Just long enough to arrive here fully. You do not need to fix anything right now. You do not need to rush into action. You do not need to prove anything to anyone. This is a moment to breathe and to recognize that you are standing at the beginning of something new.

A new year is not about starting over. It is about starting from experience. You are not the same person you were a year ago. You have lived, learned, adjusted, and grown. You have shed some things and strengthened others. You have discovered what matters and what no longer does. That matters more than any calendar date ever could.

This year is not asking you to chase. It is asking you to choose.

That is where intention comes in.

An intention is different from a resolution. A resolution can feel rigid and heavy. An intention feels grounded and alive. It is not about forcing yourself into a version of who you think you should be. It is about declaring how you want to show up in your life, in your body, in your work, and in your relationships.

I want you to imagine that we are sitting together, across from one another, with no distractions. I would look at you and ask a very simple question. How do you want to feel as you move through this year?

Not what do you want to achieve. Not what do you want to prove. How do you want to feel.

Calm. Confident. Supported.

Focused. Grounded. Energized. Seen. At peace.

Those feelings are clues. They are pointing you toward your intentions.

Clear intentions act like an internal compass. They guide your decisions quietly. They influence how you respond instead of react. They help you pause before saying yes to things that drain you and give you permission to choose what aligns with you.

When you live with clear intention, your life begins to feel less scattered. You stop moving in ten directions at once. You stop carrying what does not belong to you. You begin to trust yourself more.

Let me share something personal with you. I did not get to where I am by accident. I did not get here by avoiding discomfort or staying quiet when something mattered. I got here by deciding, again and again, how I wanted to show up. Even when it felt uncomfortable. Even when it required me to be seen. Even when it meant letting go of old ways of operating.

That is the power of intention. It keeps you anchored when everything else feels noisy.

Now I want you to try something with me. Do not overthink it. Just listen inward.

If you were to declare one clear intention for yourself right now, what would it be?

Here is an example you can mirror or adapt. Read it slowly.

"I choose to move through this year with clarity, self trust, and calm confidence. I release the need to rush or prove myself. I allow my decisions to come from alignment, not pressure."

Notice how that feels in your body. Does it soften something. Does it create space. Does it feel true or close to true.

Your intention does not need to be poetic. It needs to be honest.

"I choose to protect my energy and focus on what truly matters."

"I choose to trust myself and follow through."

"I choose to speak up and be seen in a grounded way."

"I choose consistency over perfection."

An intention becomes powerful when you revisit it often. When you let it guide small choices.

When you return to it on days that feel unclear.

This is not about getting it right. This is about being present.

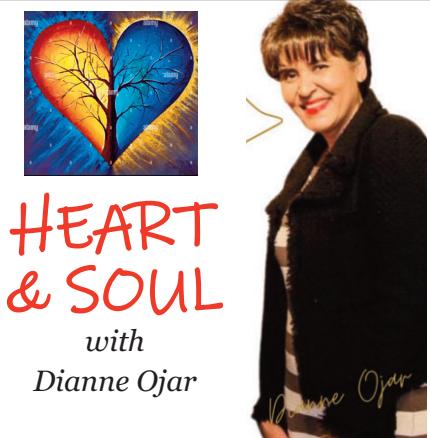
As this year begins, you will be tempted to rush ahead. To fill your calendar. To say yes automatically. To push before listening. This is your reminder to pause and ask, does this align with my intention.

That single question can change everything.

You will notice that when your intentions are clear, your boundaries become clearer too. You stop explaining yourself as much. You stop second guessing every choice. You begin to move with more ease and confidence, even when the path is unfamiliar.

And here is something important. Intentions are not fixed. They evolve as you do. You are allowed to refine them. You are allowed to adjust. Growth is not linear. It is responsive.

This year is inviting you into a deeper relationship with yourself. One built on awareness instead of pressure. One rooted in clarity in-



stead of chaos.

You do not need to have the entire year mapped out. You only need to know how you want to stand in it.

If you feel called, write your intention down. Place it somewhere you will see it. Read it in the morning. Come back to it when you feel pulled off course. Let it remind you of who you are choosing to be.

This is how meaningful change begins. Not loudly. Not forcefully. But intentionally.

You are not behind. You are not late. You are exactly where you need to be to choose differently.

And I want you to know this. If you ever feel uncertain, overwhelmed, or unsure how to anchor yourself back into clarity, you do not have to navigate that alone. Sometimes all it takes is a conversation that brings you back to yourself.

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# DEPORT SHE!

## Petition for the deportation of Nicki Minaj gets over 60,000 signatures

A controversial petition circulating on Change.org is calling for the deportation of Trinidad-Born Rapper Nicki Minaj, born Onika Tanya Maraj.

The petition has sparked debate online, drawing more than 60,000 signatures as of press time today. The petition, created by an individual identified only as "Pedonika Minaj," urges U.S. authorities to deport the artist back to her homeland, citing what the petitioner characterizes as ongoing online harassment, controversial public behavior and concerns related to Minaj's personal associations.

While the petition makes sweeping claims about Minaj's conduct and mental state, no medical or legal authority has substantiated those assertions. Immigration experts note that U.S. deportation proceedings are governed by federal law and require clear statutory grounds – such as criminal convictions or immigration violations – not online petitions or public opinion.

Still, the campaign's rapid growth highlights the increasingly blurred line between celebrity culture, social media disputes and immigration rhetoric.

The petition alleges that Minaj's social media activity has targeted other public figures and private individuals, framing the issue as one of public safety and accountability. Minaj, who was born in Saint James, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and who became a U.S. citizen years ago, has not publicly responded to the petition.

Legal analysts point out that U.S. citizens cannot be deported, regardless of public controversy, and that calls for deportation – particularly when directed at immigrants or naturalized citizens – often reflect broader societal tensions rather than enforceable legal pathways.

"This kind of petition says more about online outrage culture than immigration law," one immigration attorney told News Americas Now, noting that deportation is frequently misused as a rhetorical threat in digital disputes.

The petition also reignites discussion about



**Nicki Minaj — petition calls for her deportation from the USA**

how immigrant and diaspora figures are disproportionately targeted in calls for removal or exile during public controversies – especially when race, nationality, or accent become part of the narrative.

Advocates warn that normalizing deportation as a response to objectionable speech or behavior risks reinforcing harmful stereotypes and undermining due process.

Despite its growing number of signatures, the petition carries no legal authority. Change.org petitions are designed to signal public sentiment, not to initiate government action.

For now, the campaign stands as another example of how social media conflicts can escalate into broader political and cultural flashpoints—particularly when immigration status,

celebrity influence, and public accountability collide.

The backlash against Minaj, who is married to comes as the rapper appeared at Turning Point USA's four-day AmericaFest 2026 summit.

On the final day of the conservative conference, the rapper, 43, joined Charlie Kirk's widow, Erika Kirk, to speak about her newfound admiration for President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance.

Her remarks led to significant fan backlash, and as of Wednesday last week, her Instagram account now reads: "Sorry, this page isn't available." A number of followers, however, pointed out that the "Beez in the Trap" artist had previously quit Instagram, doing so in October. Minaj's X account remains active.



# JAIL FOR A FUGEE

## Pras Michel gets 14 years on money laundering charges

Haitian-American rapper Pras Michel, a founding member of the legendary hip-hop group the Fugees, was sentenced on Nov. 20th to 14 years in federal prison following his 2023 conviction on multiple charges including conspiracy, money laundering, and illegal foreign lobbying.

Michel, whose full name is Prakazrel Samuel Michel, received the sentence from Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly in a Washington, D.C. federal courtroom, according to Billboard. After completing his prison term, he will also serve three years of supervised release. Federal prosecutors had pushed for a much longer sentence spanning several decades, while Michel's attorneys urged the court to impose no more than three years.

Michel is expected to surrender on January 27th, and his legal team plans to appeal both the conviction and the sentence.

"Throughout his career, Pras has broken

barriers," said spokesperson Erica Dumas. "This is not the end of his story. He appreciates the outpouring of support as he approaches the next chapter."

Michel was first indicted in 2019 on charges of funneling illegal foreign donations into Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. In 2021, prosecutors expanded the indictment to include additional counts of bank fraud, witness tampering, concealing material facts, violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), and acting as an unregistered agent for China.

The case centered on Michel's ties to Malaysian financier Low Taek Jho, the fugitive at the center of the massive 1MDB corruption scandal involving the theft of \$4.5 billion. Prosecutors said Michel helped route money connected to the scheme and participated in a covert lobbying effort aimed at getting the Trump administration to drop investigations into Low and to facilitate the deportation of a Chinese dissident.

After his conviction, Michel sought a retrial, arguing his former attorney used an AI-generated closing argument, which he claimed amounted to ineffective counsel – a request the court ultimately rejected.

Amid the legal turmoil, Michel briefly reunited with Lauryn Hill and Wyclef Jean for Fugees performances in 2023 but later distanced himself from additional reunion plans.

Pras was born in Brooklyn to Haitian parents. He was raised in Irvington, New Jersey and attended Columbia High School in Maplewood, New Jersey.

When he was 15, he met Hill in school. In 1988, Pras introduced Hill to Wyclef Jean. Pras, Jean, and Hill began to rehearse under the guidance of Kool and the Gang's producer, Ronald Khalis Bell, and subsequently they formed a musical group called The Rap Translators in 1989 (also known as Tranzlator Crew).

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# FOLDING MEMORY

**Trini-Canadian artist makes her mark with a unique medium**

ALLISHA Ali never explicitly set out to become an artist. She didn't study or teach fine art, and until recently, hadn't sold a single piece she made.

But in quiet hours between managing software engineering teams and raising two daughters in Toronto, the Trinidad-born Ali has been building something deeply personal – a body of work that combines memory, emotion and Caribbean heritage in vibrant compositions constructed of paper.

Ali migrated to Canada at ten with her mother and sister, and has now lived overseas for more than three decades.

Yet TT and the wider Caribbean remain central to her identity and much of her art. She tries to visit often – much of her immediate family is still based in TT.

Her medium is unconventional. She doesn't use a brush or pencil. Instead, she

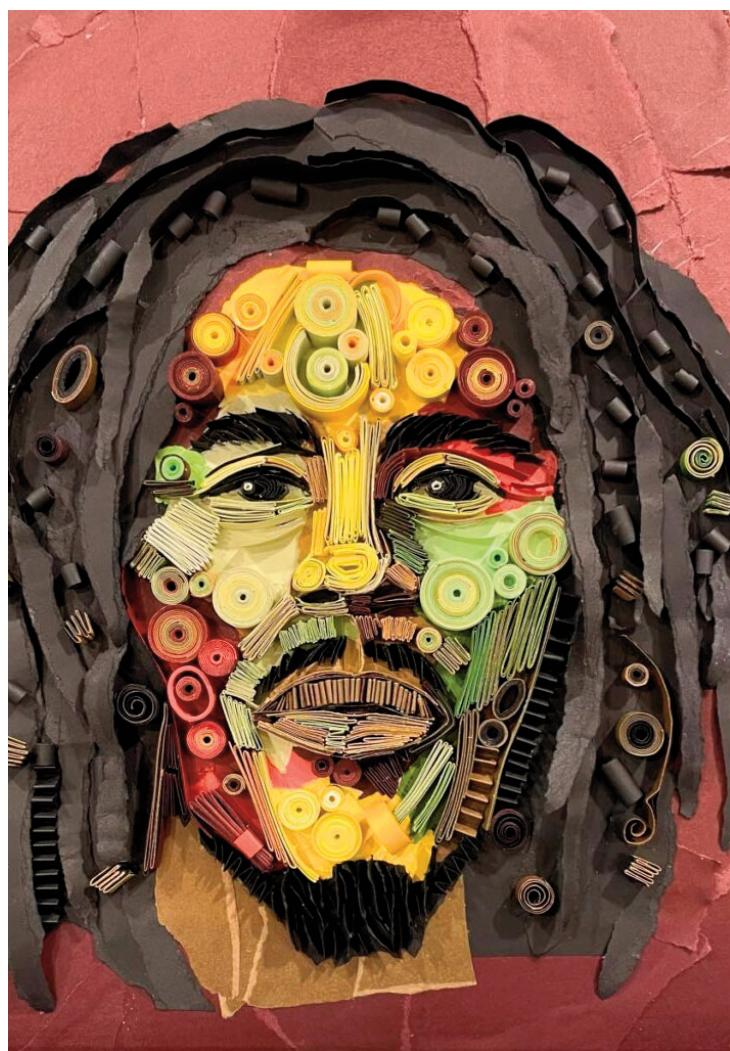
"paints with paper," using paper-quilling techniques to build images from strips of coloured paper layered and blended to resemble brushstrokes.

"There's no paint at all," she explained. "Just glue and paper. I have stacks of different colours and I blend them. It's very tactile, very therapeutic."

Ali explored paper artistry in 2023 as a form of art therapy, but her engineering career – she's spent more than 15 years in the tech industry – has also shaped her approach.

Ali doesn't frame her work as nostalgic, but as a deliberate effort to make space for Caribbean stories in Canadian galleries – folding memory, lineage and lived experience into the present, one strip of paper at a time.

*Picture: Ali's rendition of Bob Marley*



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# BEETING THE FIELD

## Trini author wins 'Oscar' of food and drink with her book on beets

Earlier in 2025, when the book *Beets by Kim* earned two nominations at the Gourmand International World Cookbook Awards, it put Kimberly Forrester on a global culinary stage.

Yet for the Trinidad author and Wellness Kitchen founder, travelling to Riyadh and standing among food writers from around the world proved far more meaningful than the accolades.

Forrester went to Saudi Arabia in November for the 31st staging of the awards, founded in 1995 by Edouard Cointreau and regarded as the "Oscars" of food and drink. The Gourmand Awards are open to all food writers, big or small, print or digital, for sale or for free, commercially or self-published, private or public, in any language.

Forrester arrived not knowing the outcome, only aware that her debut cookbook had reached the final six in two categories. The awards company asked her to submit a copy of the book after she was told she was being considered for the competition..

"I didn't know I was a winner before I went," she said. "I knew I was nominated in two categories, and that alone felt like an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

At the awards ceremony, *Beets by Kim – 100 Beetroot Recipes* won first place in the Single Subject Cookbook category and second place in Caribbean Cuisine, making Forrester the first Trinidadian to win in multiple categories at the global event.

Launched in 2024, Forrester's cookbook features over 100 recipes that include hearty soups and vibrant salads, smoothies, desserts and traditional Caribbean staples reimagined with beets. Nearly 40 per cent of the recipes are vegan, and the vast majority are vegetarian, a reflection of both Forrester's clientele and her approach to sustainable, "plant-forward" eating.

Held from November 27-30, the Gourmand Awards brought together hundreds of writers from around the world, many of whom have spent decades documenting food culture and heritage. Forrester described the experience as both "overwhelming and affirming."

"It felt like a space I belonged in," she said. "At home, it often feels like a struggle to gain recognition, but there everyone was working equally hard and believed in the same thing – preserving



**Kimberly Forrester and Edouard Cointreau at the event in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**  
food culture."

She was the only person representing the English-speaking Caribbean at the three-day event, surrounded by writers from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Despite the language barriers, the sense of community stood out.

"What surprised me most was their sense of connection. People who had met years ago at previous awards greeted each other like family. That kind of support stays with you."

Forrester's cookbook – centred entirely on beetroot – was the first of its kind the awards committee had encountered. She deliberately kept it rooted in Caribbean familiarity rather than international trends.

"The book was never about writing what people expect globally," she explained. "It was about what we grew up with – our flavours, our food, our stories." She self-published the book which is available locally through [www.wkby](http://www.wkby)

kim.com.

"Beets are so much more than just boiled slices on the side of your plate. Additionally, there are so many ways to cook it and so many ways to make it taste good – whether you want it masked with other flavours or you want it to shine through and so many people need the nutrition it offers." Beets are nutrient rich and are packed with antioxidants, folate, vitamins, potassium and more. They can be grown in TT.

The fact that she had lived in Jamaica for a decade also shaped the cookbook, which features Caribbean recipes that include Jamaican influences, all reimagined through a wellness lens. Nothing in it is foreign to the Caribbean palate.

"I've never had borscht (an Eastern European beetroot soup), so why would I put it in the book?" Forrester said. "The book was about what's ours."



Group Major Lazer has Goat single with Bunji Garlin

# GOAT

## Major Lazer, Bunji Garlin and America Foster team up for new single

American EDM and DJ group Major Lazer has joined with soca superstar Bunji Garlin for a single called Goat.

It is a part of the nine-track album, Gyalgebra released on November 21. Reports said this was the band's first full project in five years.

The single features, what a release said, was Major Lazer's new first lady, America Foster.

That release said the single was bouyon-flavoured.

It added that bouyon, a high-octane fusion of folk sounds and digitised beats born on Dominica, has become one of the hottest music genres across the region. It added that artistes including Mac-hel Montano, Skillibeng and Mr Killa had embraced the trend through their own bouyon releases.

Global music brand Billboard had highlighted the genre's growing popularity and influence in a June feature, it said.

The release said Major Lazer's Goat (Bouyon Mixes) EP was out now on bandmember, Diplo's Mad Decent label and there were also bouyon remixes from TT-born, Kacey Phillips-led Precision Productions and Dominican music producer, Dadamanufaktur. The original track also appeared on Major Lazer's mixtape album released

in November, it said.

The release said of the single, "Blending the lightning-quick tempo of power soca, the zig-zagging drum rolls of bouyon, and the synth bombs of big-room EDM with a chorus that will have every one in the party feeling like the greatest of all time, Goat is an anthem sure to mash up every fete and bacchanal come carnival season."

It said the Precision and Dadamanufaktur remixes brought the bouyon influence further to the forefront, tapping into syncopated, high-octane sound that rose out of the windward islands to become one of the hottest genres regionally.

Barbadian Deejay Puffy previewed the remixes on his livestream and it prompted massive demand from other DJs, the release said.

"Goat is the latest single to emerge from Major Lazer's wildly eclectic Gyalgebra, a project which showcases both America Foster's arrival on the scene as as well as the panoply of emerging sounds coming out of the Caribbean right now including bouyon, zess music from Trinidad (What Is The Time featuring Lady Lava) and shatta dancehall from Martinique (Gangsta featuring Busy Signal and Kybba)," the release said.



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# TISICK OVER TIZZY

**Antiguan soca artist sets sight on the mecca of mas, T&T Carnival**

Antiguan soca artiste Tanzania “Tizzy” Sebastian cemented herself in soca’s history halls with her 2007 hit, Expose. She is making her return to TT’s 2026 Carnival with Fire Marshall and Freak in De Fete.

Emerge Media wrote her 2026 single, Fire Marshall and the other single Freak in De Fete, which was written by Barbados’ Jus D. These songs are true expressions of Tizzy’s untamed energy, a media release said.

“I’m looking forward to a great carnival 2026 and beyond,” she said, highlighting that 2025 was very good to her, following the love she received during Antigua and Barbuda’s carnival.

“I released three songs that were all well received in Antigua. Big Ben, Charge Up and When Last, which featured TT’s Viking Ding Dong, got a lot of love throughout the season. I couldn’t have hoped for better. I think it was the launch for greater things,” Tizzy said.

She built a strong relationship over the years with TT bands and artistes like Destra and Atlantik and D’ All Starz, Tizzy said she feels at home.

As the season progresses, Tizzy plans to release two power soca tracks.

The Antiguan and Barbudan singer never wavered in her commitment to the regional genre and that she was seeking to re-establish herself in TT ahead of next year’s Carnival.

It said she planned to “hit the ground running” in the coming weeks. It added that her return to the TT spotlight came after a lot of personal reflection, decisions about her brand and who she wanted to be moving forward.

“My motivation in this business is life.

“Singing soca music - performing, is something I’m very passionate about and I want to positively encourage those looking on at my

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**Tizzy’s hit single is called Fire Marshall**

story, and my journey. I want them to see that even through the highs and the lows, I have been resilient and I keep pushing,” she said.

In recent times, Tizzy has been working, dedicatedly, on her sophomore album, Jus Ah Come – something she is proud to have branded solely as her accomplishment.

“All of the songs that I released before this album were under ElAkru Music. These new songs are all available on all streaming platforms and I must thank my ElAkru Music family for their support and of course my husband Rohan Hector, who is both my manager and producer,” she said.

The ElAkru Music team remains a consistent part of Tizzy’s musical journey. “As a team

we’ve gone through the highs and lows of the business but we’ve never stopped believing. Once you find something that you love and you know who you are, then you will keep doing it and you won’t find it worrisome. It won’t be work alone; it’ll also be fun,” she added.

She said she was eager to interact with other regional artistes and is eager to meet soca lovers during the festival.

“Soca is a powerful, energetic genre. It’s an expression of what it means to be a Caribbean person. We work 365 days of the year and we look forward to this music, these vibrant songs to release our inhibitions, at least once every year,” Tizzy said.

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# FIGHTING BACK

## Wife of reggae icon Lt Stitchie gives update on his health

Sophia Laing, wife of Jamaican gospel-dancehall icon Lt. Stitchie, delivered an emotional update on his health by phone recently, as supporters gathered in London during a “Lt. Stitchie Road to Recovery” fundraising event. The event formed part of a three-city UK benefit tour aimed at assisting the veteran DJ with his long and costly rehabilitation.

In 2024, the “Wear Your Size” deejay suffered a major stroke that left him unable to speak or walk. He was initially hospitalised before being transferred to a rehabilitation facility.

Addressing supporters in London by phone, Laing thanked attendees for their solidarity, noting that her family has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of love across the United Kingdom.

“Stitchie is fighting, and for that I give God thanks,” Laing reiterated.

Laing said that while Lt. Stitchie remains unable to speak fully, there are encouraging signs of improvement.

“When you speak, he will respond by making sounds,” she explained, adding that he continues daily therapy and has shown progress so far.

“He’s able to balance a whole lot more when he’s placed in a wheelchair. If he realises that he’s slipping to either side, he’ll use his elbow to raise himself up,” Laing said. “And to God we offer glory for that.”

Laing confirmed the DJ was taken to the hospital a day earlier over concerns about a persistent cough. Despite the setbacks, she emphasised his survival as a testament to faith.

“He is still here with us, still in the land of the living,” she shared, describing his recovery journey as “a testament of God’s grace and favour upon his life.”

Laing spoke candidly about the financial pressure facing her family, revealing that monthly expenses exceed half a million dollars, excluding emergency ambulance trips and specialist consultations.

“It is truly a lot — a hard and tough and rough journey,” she said. “We appreciate any help. Whatever you give, we appreciate it from the depths of our hearts.”

Her voice broke slightly as she stressed the



**Lt Stitchie – suffered a major stroke in 2024**

need: “We need every cent, every donation, no matter how small.”

Laing praised the Jamaica-born organiser leading the fundraising efforts abroad.

“A number of respects to Gracie... she’s the person leading the charge for his speedy recovery,” Laing said.

She also thanked the DJ’s team for ongoing assistance:

“We appreciate his management team for supplies on a monthly basis... for his residency... for the ambulance to the hospital.”

The tour organiser confirmed that community backing has been strong and continues to grow.

“We’ve gone through three cities... and we’ve got more to go,” the organiser told attendees, adding that “London is totally behind him.”

The crowd erupted into applause, with supporters urging: “Tell Stitchie we love him.”

As the UK benefit tour progresses, organisers say their mission is far from over, as the reggae and gospel community rallies behind the DJ.

The fundraiser, presented by Unique Touch Entertainment Promotions and Sunshine Horizon Promotions, continues as fans keep hope—and donations—flowing for one of the region’s most beloved voices.

# BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

## Chronixx warns fans to be wary of people who claim to have access

Reggae artist Chronixx is urging fans and members of the Jamaican music community to stay vigilant as scammers continue to falsely claim they have direct access to him. The singer took to Instagram this week to address what he says has become a persistent problem, making it clear that no outsider is authorized to speak, negotiate, or broker deals on his behalf.

In a firm message shared to his Instagram Story, Chronixx stressed that his professional relationships are strictly formal and transparent. “Blessings to the Jamaican Music Community all over the world. Just reminding everyone that there is no such thing as ‘I have a link to Chronixx.’ It doesn’t exist. All my relationships are contractual and open. I’m more indie than you can imagine. Everything is signed and approved by Le Chron! No one negotiates on my behalf.”

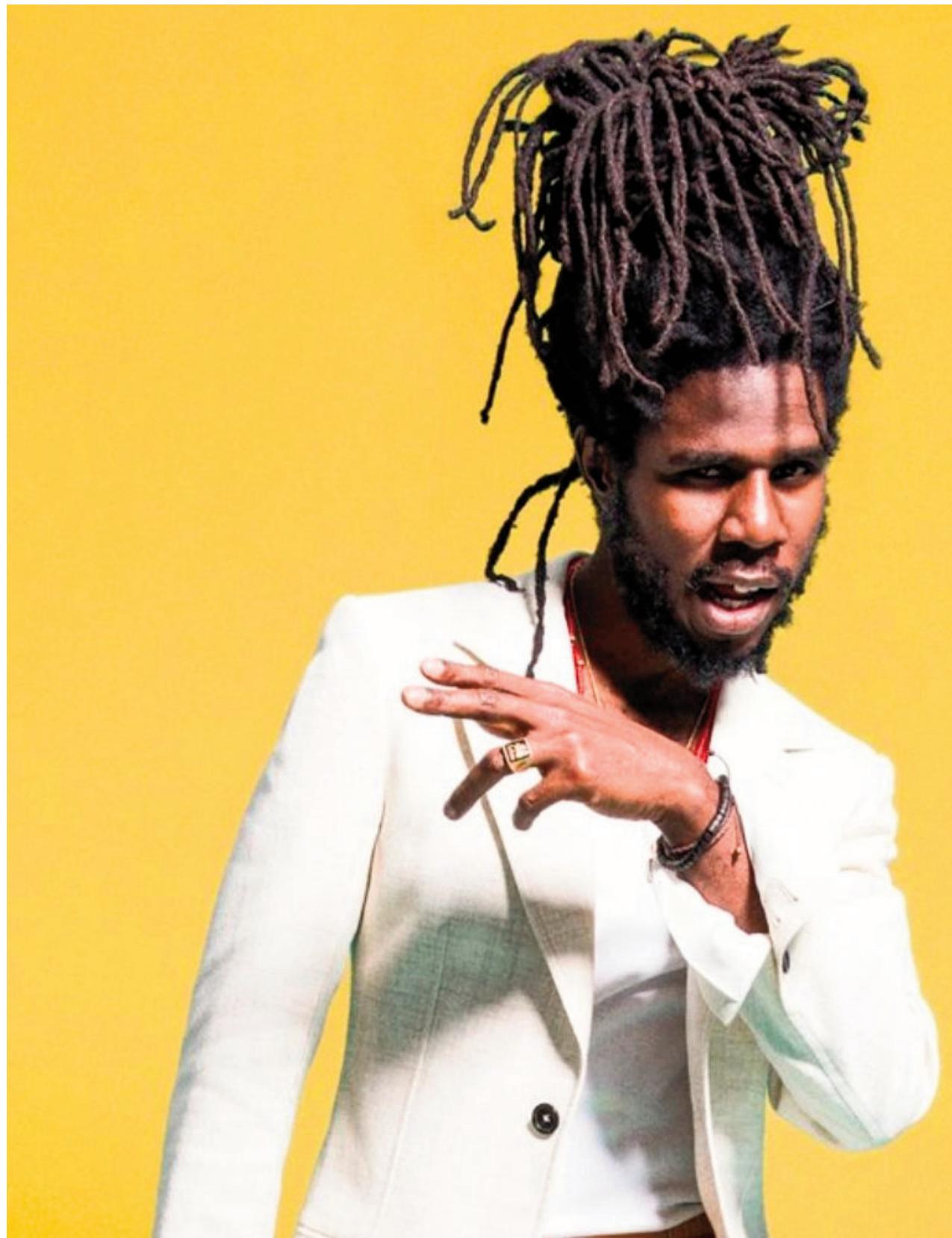
Chronixx also revealed that Jamaicans in particular have been the primary target group for these fraudulent claims. He emphasized that Chronixx.com is the only legitimate platform for contacting him, warning fans that “If you’re not talking to Chronixx.com, you’re getting chopped.”

While Chronixx tends to keep a low profile on social media, his public warning comes at a time when his name is circulating widely again, partly due to the somewhat recent release of his album *Exile*.

A track from the album, “Hurricane,” has seen a sharp rise in streams following Hurricane Melissa, which hit Jamaica just days after “Exile” debuted. Fans have widely shared the song during relief efforts, and its title and tone have given it unexpected symbolic weight.

Although the album itself is not the focus of his public message, *Exile* continues to trend across reggae playlists, drawing new listeners and renewing global interest in the artist.

*Exile*, released on October 10, 2025, debuted at No. 1 on the U.S. Reggae iTunes Chart just hours after its drop. The 17-track project, released under the Forever Living Originals label, notably arrived without a lead single or major pre-release campaign. Beyond the U.S., *Exile* charted strongly on Apple Music Worldwide.



### Chronixx: go only to my legitimate platform

On iTunes, *Exile* was No. 1 in Trinidad & Tobago, No. 2 in both Cayman Islands and Poland, No. 18 in Belgium, No. 23 in the United Kingdom, No. 31 in Germany, No. 34 in Japan, and No. 72 in the United States.

Despite the increased attention surrounding his new music, Chronixx remains focused on protecting fans from exploitation. His message

is unequivocal: anyone claiming to have a personal “link” to him is attempting to deceive the public.

He continues to encourage fans, promoters, and members of the music industry to avoid intermediaries altogether and rely exclusively on his official website for any legitimate communication.

# FAITH IN MANKIND

## Jamaican singer Shandiva leans into faith and purpose on new single

Jamaican-born reggae and dancehall songwriter and artist Shandiva is making a bold spiritual statement with her latest single, "Mankind," a reflective track rooted in faith, resilience, and personal growth.

Driven by the hook — "Mankind heart wicked and dirty... Inna me heart of hearts and me mind of minds me haffi hold on firm fi nuh lose it" — the song confronts emotional scars and the realities of human nature, while ultimately affirming divine guidance and purpose.

"For me, Mankind came from a place of honesty," Shandiva says. "I was looking at what people go through, what I've been through, and realizing that sometimes healing needs more than just surface fixes. You really have to lean on God and trust His direction."

Faith is central to the song's message. A firm believer in God, Shandiva uses music as a form of testimony, declaring spiritual confidence in the line: "Father God him tell me me chosen. That's why me move to the top of the mountain."

"My relationship with God keeps me grounded," she explains. "When things feel heavy or confusing, that's what reminds me that my journey has purpose, even when I don't understand everything in the moment."

Born and raised in Mandeville, Manchester, Shandiva — born Shaunna-Kay Campbell — grew up surrounded by music, singing in school and church before later migrating to Canada in 2014. While now based overseas, she travels regularly to Jamaica and continues to maintain strong ties to the local music scene, performing both in Jamaica and across Canada.

"I'll always be connected to Jamaica," she says. "That's where my foundation is, and performing at home means everything to me."



**Shandiva — confronting emotional scars**

Over the years, Shandiva has collaborated with producers and creatives across Canada and Jamaica, allowing her to balance Caribbean roots with diasporic perspectives.

"Working in different spaces has helped me grow," she says. "You hear different sounds, different stories, but the core of who I am as an artist stays the same."

Having been recording for several years, she says her music has evolved alongside her life experiences.

"When I started, it was more about proving myself," Shandiva reflects. "Now it's about meaning. I'm more intentional with my lyrics and the message I'm putting out into the

world."

Like many independent artists, the journey has not been without challenges.

"Being independent means you have to wear a lot of hats," she says. "There are moments when it gets discouraging, but I remind myself why I started and who I'm doing this for."

That sense of purpose is what keeps her motivated, even when the industry feels overwhelming.

"I pray, I stay focused, and I trust God's timing," she adds. "Music is my calling, and as long as I'm being true to that, I know I'm on the right path."

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Jamaican tourism officials and management of Flair Airlines at the unveiling of the new Toronto-Montego Bay service

## JAMAICA WITH FLAIR

### Canadian carrier launches non-stop service from Toronto – Montego Bay

Flair Airlines has launched nonstop service between Toronto and Montego Bay, strengthening air connectivity between Canada and Jamaica just as the peak winter travel season begins.

The airline's inaugural flight to Montego Bay departed on December 18, expanding Flair's Caribbean footprint and marking its second destination in Jamaica. The new route links Toronto Pearson International Airport with Montego Bay, one of the island's most popular tourism hubs.

"Adding Montego Bay (MBJ) to our network is a proud moment for Flair and a clear reflection of what Flair FWD is all about: making travel more reliable, more delightful, and more affordable," said Maciej Wilk, CEO of Flair Airlines. "Flair has long-standing ties to Jamaica, and strengthening connections between Canada and Jamaica is an honour. We are excited to continue

investing in this beautiful country."

The airline said the Montego Bay launch builds on the strong performance of its Kingston service and reinforces its commitment to affordable fares and reliability for Canadian travellers.

Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Edmund Bartlett, welcomed the new route, noting its timing as the island enters the busy winter season.

"We are pleased to welcome Flair Airlines' new service from Toronto to Montego Bay as we enter the peak winter season. This added connectivity is especially important as Jamaica continues to rebound from the recent hurricane, reinforcing our resilience and ensuring seamless access for travellers eager to experience our island," Bartlett said. He added, "Strengthening our airlift at this time supports our recovery efforts, bolsters our tourism sector, and reaffirms the strong demand for Jamaica's culture, hospitality, and natural beauty. We look forward to

welcoming even more visitors to our shores."

Flights will operate up to twice weekly in each direction, with service beginning December 18. Introductory fares start at CAD\$191 from Toronto to Montego Bay and CAD\$196 on the return leg, according to the airline. Fares and schedules are subject to change.

Shane Munroe, CEO of MBJ Airports Limited, said the new service enhances accessibility to western Jamaica.

"Montego Bay offers a getaway to white-sand beaches, lush Caribbean landscapes, vibrant culture, warm hospitality, and unlimited opportunities for relaxation and adventure," Munroe said.

"With direct, affordable flights with Flair Airlines, the connections between Canada and Montego Bay continue to grow stronger and more accessible."

# PHOENIX

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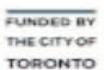
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# Hot Gyal

## Guyanese singer starts the new year with a Ride

Nesta Nelson, aka “Hot Gyal” Nesta, the talented singer from Guyana, kicked off 2026 with a new chapter in her musical journey, releasing her first official dancehall single, ‘Ride’, on New Year’s Day, January 1.

“The track was produced by the talented Jamaican producer Damion Hewitt, aka Jkeez of Jkeez Recording Studio,” Nesta said.

The single marks a stylistic shift for the rising Guyanese artist, who has previously made her mark as a soca performer. Nesta says the move to dancehall feels like a natural progression given her musical background.

“Dancehall has always been part of my musical upbringing,” Nesta shared confidently. “Growing up in Guyana, we are heavily influenced by Caribbean sounds, especially Jamaican music. I wanted to step outside my comfort zone and pay homage to a genre that is bold, confident, and expressive.”

She credits her close creative circle for helping bring that vision to life, noting that the lyrics were penned by fellow artist Kapa Shanti.

“My talented friend Kapa Shanti wrote the lyrics so I could exude that confidence,” she explained.

Early reactions to the track have been overwhelmingly positive. A sneak preview racked up more than 100,000 views on Instagram, while the official music video on YouTube garnered over 6,000 views in less than 24 hours.

“People love the energy, the confidence, and the vibe of the song. Many listeners weren’t expecting this side of me, but they’re loving the growth and versatility,” Nesta said.

The accompanying video, shot in Guyana by producer Esan Benn, adds a strong local visual element to the project.

“The support has been amazing,” she said proudly. “Guyanese people are proud to see one of their own exploring dancehall and representing internationally. They see it as Caribbean unity rather than competition.”

Asked about riding the uptempo dancehall riddim, the Georgetown-born singer said, “Yes. I



**Nesta Nelson, aka Hot Gyal**

feel comfortable since I’m a versatile singer. Dancehall allows me to be fearless, and I embraced that fully. Honestly, once I let go of over-thinking, it became about confidence, self-expression, and owning my femininity without apology. It hasn’t been easy, but it’s all about discipline and support.”

Speaking on juggling school, music, and family life, she added, “My family understands my passion, and I’ve learned to manage my time better so nothing feels neglected.”

Nesta plans to enter her new single in the upcoming Dancehall Monarch Guyana, established two years ago.

“The contest is a big opportunity to showcase the song on a competitive platform. I am confident in the track and my performance. Winning would be amazing, but for me, just making an impact and standing out is already a win,” she said.

Looking ahead, she has a trip to Jamaica on her 2026 bucket list.

“Yes, Jamaica is definitely on my radar. I’m hoping to visit soon to network, collaborate with more artists and producers, and really soak in the culture that inspired the track,” she explained.

Earlier this year, Nesta earned two nominations at the Demerara Music and Entertainment Awards (DEMROC) for Best Female Soca Artist and Best Collaboration for the song “Chocolate Boy,” recorded with Nigy Boy. Though she didn’t win, the nominations marked an important milestone.

Beyond dancehall, she is working on a new EP promising a more personal, genre-blending sound. “I see myself growing internationally, performing more, and releasing music that speaks to even more people,” she said.

Closing out the interview, Nesta had a message for her fans:

“Thank you for the love and support. It doesn’t go unnoticed. Keep streaming, sharing, and believing in me. This is just the beginning, and I’m bringing you much more fire soon.”



# PULSING IN MIRAMAR

## Legendary reggae artists to headline Afro Carib Festival in Florida in February

The 5th Annual Afro-Carib Festival, presented by the City of Miramar, is set for Saturday, February 28, 2026, bringing together the spirit of Black History Month and Reggae Month in a celebration that reflects the cultural heartbeat of the city.

Held at the Miramar Regional Park Amphitheater, the festival highlights the shared African roots that connect Caribbean cultures and the global Black diaspora. Those ties have shaped generations through music, food, language, and collective resilience—elements that will be on full display throughout the day.

This year's headline act is iconic British-Ja-

maican reggae band Steel Pulse, whose socially conscious lyrics and decades-long legacy have made them one of reggae's most influential voices worldwide. Their presence adds special significance to the festival, underscoring reggae's role not just as entertainment, but as a cultural and political force closely tied to Black history and identity.

For Miramar, the Afro-Carib Festival holds particular meaning. The city is home to one of the largest Caribbean communities in South Florida, with a strong Jamaican presence and a predominantly Black population. Events like this serve as both celebration and affirmation—hon-

ouring heritage while educating younger generations about the cultural movements that shaped their communities, from reggae's global impact to the broader Black freedom struggle.

Festival-goers can expect a full cultural experience, with live performances spanning reggae, afrobeats, konpa, reggaeton and more, alongside food, community pride, and family-friendly vibes. Additional artists will be announced in the coming weeks.

When: Saturday, February 28, 2026

Where: Miramar Regional Park Amphitheater, Miramar, FL



# Top Sportsperson of 2025

## Hamilton, Ontario native Shai Gilgeous-Alexander nabs coveted SI title

Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, who is the reigning NBA Most Valuable Player and led the franchise to its first NBA championship, was named the 2025 Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year.

Gilgeous-Alexander, who is from Hamilton, Ontario, is the first NBA player to win the award since Warriors guard Stephen Curry in 2022, when he led Golden State to their fourth championship in eight years. He is also the first Canadian to win the award outright since 1982, when

Wayne Gretzky took home the honors.

The 27-year-old Gilgeous-Alexander capped off a remarkable year by becoming the third Thunder player to win the regular-season MVP.

Led by Gilgeous-Alexander, the Thunder won 68 regular-season games. He also won his first scoring title, averaging 32.1 points per game, along with five rebounds and a career-high 6.4 assists, helping Oklahoma City finish first in defensive rating and third in offensive rating.

Gilgeous-Alexander, a three-time All-NBA

First Team selection, then took the Thunder to the mountaintop with a seven-game NBA Finals victory over the Indiana Pacers. He averaged 30.3 points a game in the series and was named the Finals MVP.

The team rewarded that faith by giving him a four-year, \$285 million supermax contract extension, keeping him with Oklahoma City through the 2030-31 season.

SGA told the magazine he realizes how lucky he is to win a title.

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# PERSON OF THE YEAR

## Soca's Machel Montano gets the nod from Everybody Magazine

The Brooklyn-based Everybody's magazine has selected Trinidad and Tobago Soca superstar and calypsonian Machel Montano as its Person of the Year 2025, highlighting his influence and exceptional impact.

Herman Hall, the Grenadian-born publisher of Everybody's magazine, told Caribbean Life on Monday, Dec. 29, that other nominees received many votes. These included Zohran Mamdani, New York City Mayor-elect; Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley (Everybody's Person of the Year 2021); Trinidad & Tobago Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar; Hurricane Melissa, which devastated Western Jamaica and parts of Haiti and Cuba; Aisha Braveboy, Prince George's County Executive, MD; and Winsome Earle-Sears, Virginia's Lieutenant Governor.

"This recognition celebrates Montano's significant contributions to promoting Caribbean culture, his role in integrating the Caribbean, and his continued pursuit of higher education, which serves as an inspiration for the younger generation," Hall said.

He said that, over the decades, Montano has been frequently nominated by the magazine's readers residing across many countries and most US states.

"While most nominees are not household names, they were suggested for providing exceptional services in their respective communities, from feeding the needy to helping youth secure an education," Hall said. "For many years, Machel has consistently received a respectable number of votes from Everybody's magazine readers. This year, he was among the top five finalists."

"As customary, we presented the five names to approximately 15 persons across London, Toronto, Jamaica and cities here in the US. The vast majority favored Machel."

On a personal note, Hall said he was at Madison Square Garden in Manhattan in 1984, when 9-year-old Montano "mesmerized everyone."

"Shadow, whom I represented as his booking agent, often said to me, 'Machel will be an international star if he has his own band.'

"To me, that's the cardinal reason why Machel has become an icon because, with his own band, he gives stellar concerts," Hall added.



**Machel Montano**

"Moreover, he excels as a composer and truly understands the business of show business."

"Based on early feedback from our subscribers in several states, from California to New Jersey, it seems that Machel as PoY (Person of the Year) is clearly a wise choice," he continued. "I thank our readers for suggesting a PoY."

Hall disclosed that December 2026 will be Everybody's final PoY and Global Caribbean edition since the magazine will cease publishing after 50 years.

He said Everybody's photographs and documents will be in the depository of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem and Yale University African Collection.

Hall said the magazine commenced its Person of the Year Award in 1978 (then Man and Woman of the Year) to celebrate the magazine's first anniversary.

That year, Trinidadian Janelle Commissiong – who, in 1977, became the first woman of color to be crowned Miss Universe – received the accolades, Hall said.

He said Commissiong shared the honor with Calypso Rose.

Hall said late St. Lucian economist and Nobel Peace Prize Winner Sir Arthur Lewis and his wife attended the magazine's 1980 dinner in his honor, celebrating his 1979 Nobel Prize. Sir Arthur was the first Black person to win the Nobel Prize for economics.

Recent Everybody's Person of the Year includes actress Sheryl Lee Ralph, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, Grenada's Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell, New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, Jamaican Olympian Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, and Eastern Caribbean Olympic medalists.

Soca King Montano demonstrated his versatile talent by winning the 2024 Trinidad and Tobago Calypso Monarch for "Soul of Calypso," further cementing his status as a musical leader.

Performing at position no. 3, Montano, then 49, eclipsed defending monarch Duane Ta'Zayah O'Connor and 10 other contenders on his way to snatching the coveted crown.

He became the first artist to win the Young Kings, Road March, Soca Monarch, and Calypso Monarch titles at the Trinidad and Tobago Carnival.

Montano, the six-time Soca Monarch, is also a 10-time Road March King in Trinidad and Tobago.

Before performing at the Diva Calypso Cabaret on Jan. 25, 2024, at the Little Carib Theater in Port-of-Spain, Montano noted on social media that calypso is where he started. "I felt real joy composing and creating this one ('Soul of Calypso'), as I thought about the roots of Soca and all of the evolving forms of our music that flow from the kaiso fountain," he said.

"Calypso started with Kalinda and Cariso back in the Barrack yards and has evolved to be known around the globe," he said. "I'm excited to keep exploring and trying my hand at penning more kaisos like this. Stay tuned."

Montano, born on Nov. 24, 1974 in Port-of-Spain, describes his journey in his biography, "The Making of Monk Monté," stating he was "destined to be great."

Through his ever-evolving musical offerings, Machel works to deposit Soca into mainstream music. His career began in 1982 at 11. At the age of 9, he formed his band, Pranasonic Express.



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