

THE SUNSHINE AWARDS

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News Release

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For Immediate Release

Bonaparte, Ferreira, Swallow and Skipper Nominated for SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame

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Port of Spain, Trinidad, **October 9, 2008** ----- Today, the SUNSHINE Awards organization announced the nominees for the 20th Annual SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame scheduled for Saturday, October 25 at the AXA Equitable Center, 787 Seventh Avenue at 51<sup>st</sup> Street in New York City. In making the announcement, the co-founder of the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame, **Dr. Hollis “Chalkdust” Liverpool** said, “*Once more, on behalf of the SUNSHINE Awards organization and on my own behalf, I am extremely proud to lead the lovers of our Caribbean art forms into focusing on and paying tribute to those cherished pioneers of our music. We do this with a sense of duty, knowing that those whom we nominate to the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame are men and women who paved the way for many of us. We take extra pleasure from the fact that many of our past bards initiated into the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame are only remembered by the rest of the society because they are honored by SUNSHINE Awards. So, this year let us celebrate the work of four stalwarts of pan and calypso music: Ernest Ferreira, Belgrave Bonaparte, Rupert Philo (King Swallow) and Robert Stafford (the Mighty Skipper).*”

***Belgrave Bonaparte*** of Trinidad and Tobago was born in La Brea in 1932 and, because of his early links with the Orisha religion, formed a small panside with his brothers there. That small panside became the Southern Symphony and was one of the best bands in Trinidad and

Tobago. It was Bonaparte who first introduced the idea of playing chords in a steel band using the background pans, and he demonstrated this to Ellie Mannette and the northern-based steel bands of the territory. Because of his skills in tuning and playing, Bonaparte was selected as a member of TASPO, the national orchestra that toured Britain in 1951 and mesmerized the British with their pan-playing skills. In 1961, Bonaparte and his brothers formed a musical brass and wind orchestra, which accompanied many calypsonians on tour, including the Mighty Sparrow. From 1971 until his death, Bonaparte and his band played in several hotels and night spots in Nassau, Bahamas. For his contribution to the steel band movement, the SUNSHINE Awards organization is pleased to induct Belgrave Bonaparte into the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame.

***John Ernesto Ferreira*** of Trinidad and Tobago is regarded as a pioneer, inventor, organizer, arranger, pan-tuner and promoter. He joined the steel band movement as a teenager in 1947. In 1948, he founded the “*Boys from Iwojima*” steel orchestra with approximately ten (10) of his close friends in Cobo Town, Lower Laventille in Port of Spain, Trinidad. In 1949, he founded the “Melody Makers” steel orchestra. In 1950, he founded the “Dixieland Steel Orchestra” which was comprised of members from both “Boys of Iwojima” and the “Melody Makers.” The “Dixieland Steel Orchestra” was the first steel orchestra to bring some respect to the steel band movement because the members reflected the white community. In 1952, Ferreira observed a member of the TASPO steel orchestra (the first steel band orchestra to leave Trinidad to tour Europe) playing the “double second” pan with the pan on his lap. He realized then that the panist was very restricted as he played. This inspired him, in 1952, to invent “double seconds” and “double tenor” pans that would be less restrictive. The SUNSHINE Awards organization is proud to induct John Ernesto Ferreira into the 2008 SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame.

***Rupert Philo (King Swallow)*** from Antigua came on the calypso scene in 1973 singing two gems "Freedom March" and "Push Here," which won him both the Calypso Monarch and Road March titles. That year he also dethroned the great Short Shirt who, at that time, was riding high. King Swallow proved himself to be an excellent calypsonian. Calypso lovers in London, New York and in the Caribbean especially, love his racy style, even bounce and beautiful chip dance as he reminds them in song of their attributes and customs. With show promoter Rawlston Charles behind him, Swallow has given the calypso world hits such as "Subway Jam," "Town Mash Down," "Party in Space," "Fire in the Back Seat" and many others too numerous to mention. He is dubbed "The Hit man of Calypso." Because of his music, he has placed his beloved Antigua firmly on the world map. With his style of lyrically-strong soca songs, he has made such a mark on calypso that no show featuring calypsonians in Antigua or abroad can be considered complete without the appearance of King Swallow. The Sunshine Awards organization is pleased to induct him into the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame.

***Robert Stafford (The Mighty Skipper)*** entered the world of calypso in the 1940s, and performed with other stalwarts such as Pharoah, Dictator, Pretender, Viper and Attila, to name a few. As early as 1950, he earned a spot in the Calypso King Finals, in a competition held at the Mucurapo Stadium, with his hit "*An Argument between a Barbadian, Vincentian and a Grenadian.*" In 1954, he paid tribute to the Mighty Killer, (shortly after Killer passed away) by singing a cavalcade of Killer's songs. Other songs of note by Skipper include "*The Chinese are getting Creolized*" in 1948 and "*Bermuda Shorts*" in 1956. At a special Calypso King contest, produced by Vivian Comma in 1954, Skipper placed second behind Lord Blakie who sang "*Steel band Clash.*" Skipper's outstanding contribution to the calypso art form was not merely the many wonderful hits he gave to the calypso world, but the fight that he and others of his ilk staged in the 1950s to get the authorities to recognize, with respect, the calypso "Kings" and the importance of calypso music by giving worthy prizes to winners of calypso competitions. The struggle for this recognition included the boycotting of the official National Calypso King Competition. Skipper and other fellow calypsonians were eventually successful in forcing the authorities to give male calypsonians the same respect and treatment given to the elitist carnival queens of the day. The SUNSHINE Awards organization welcomes Robert Stafford to the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual SUNSHINE Awards will be staged on Saturday, October 25 at the AXA Equitable Center, 787 Seventh Avenue at 51<sup>st</sup> Street in New York City. The program will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a cocktail reception followed by the presentation of awards and live show ant 8:00 p.m. Tickets can be obtained by calling 201-836-0799 or by sending a fax to (201) 836-4440 or an email to [info@sunshineawards.com](mailto:info@sunshineawards.com)

*The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual SUNSHINE Awards is sponsored in part by Caribbean Airlines, “the official airline of the SUNSHINE Awards,” Tobago House of Assembly, Moet Hennessy USA and the New York Carib News.*