

# *The SUNSHINE Awards*

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## **Press Release**

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## **For Immediate Release**

### **SUNSHINE Awards Organization Announces 27<sup>th</sup> Annual SUNSHINE Awards Nominees**

**New Jersey, September 25, 2015.** The SUNSHINE Awards Organization today announced in New Jersey the nominees/recipients for the 27th Annual SUNSHINE Awards scheduled for Saturday October 3, at the AXA Equitable Center 787 Seventh Avenue at 51st Street in New York City. A special reception is also planned in Trinidad and Tobago to accommodate those nominees/recipients who could not make it to New York City.

The SUNSHINE Awards was founded 27 years ago to recognize excellence in the performing arts, education, science, humanity and sports of the various Caribbean countries. Over the years, the program has expanded in depth and breadth with a global view including countries from Africa, South America, Central America, Europe and India.

Gil Figaro, Sr. Chairman and Founder of the SUNSHINE Awards said, *“Congratulations to all the nominees. Being a nominee and soon to be the recipient of the SUNSHINE Award reflects their hard work, dedication and commitment with the desire to excel. They have made significant contribution to societies and I am very proud of all of them. I also commend Dr. Liverpool for his leadership of the nomination process.”*

Dr. Hollis Chalkdust” Liverpool, Co-founder of the SUNSHINE Awards Hall of Fame and Chairman of the Nomination and Network Committee said, *“the work of the Nominations Committee for the 2015 cohort has now ended; the task of giving them the recognition they so richly deserves now falls on the shoulders of all with whom they associate, and that means you. “*

Dr. Harold Robertson, former Trinidad and Tobago Consul General and Diplomat, Director of Diplomatic and Public Services for the SUNSHINE Awards Organization commented, *"This year's nominees represent an eclectic group of artistes and performers who have enriched the lives of millions through their genius, industry, and outstanding performances over several years. They all deserve their accolades. Warmest congratulations to all." The nominees/recipients for the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual SUNSHINE Awards are:*

### ***THE NOMINEES / INDUCTEES FOR THE SUNSHINE AWARDS Hall of Fame***

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#### ***Frankie McIntosh – St. Vincent & the Grenadines***

Musician, Arranger, Producer and Teacher

McIntosh, a national of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was introduced to music at the age of 3 by his father, saxophonist, Arthur McIntosh who founded the popular Melo Tones Orchestra Band in the 1950s in St. Vincent. By age 14, Frankie founded the Frankie McIntosh Orchestra which included some of his school mates. In 1968, Frankie migrated to the United States to pursue a degree in music at Brooklyn College in Brooklyn, New York. He also completed a Master’s Degree at New York University in 1978. Research has revealed that since 1968, Frankie has produced and arranged over 2,500 songs. Frankie describes his music as the vehicle to sustain his continued growth in the various disciplines of life. He is forever studying the relationship between speech rhythms and melodic rhythms.

#### ***Rudy “Two Left” Smith – Europe / Trinidad & Tobago***

Performing Artist – Steelpan

Smith Played his first pan at age six and was influenced by many great panists including Forsythe, Alfred "Sack" Mayers and Alrick "Chick" Springer. By the time he was a teenager he was playing in major competitions and festivals. Through the years he perfected his unique style by studying jazz luminaries: Milt Jackson, Bobby Hutcherson, Oscar Peterson and John Coltrane. Rudy left Trinidad in 1962 and toured Germany, Sweden and Norway where with other Trinidadians that he met in Europe, he formed a band playing Jazz on the

steelpans. Today he is regarded as an expert in the world of Jazz and travels the world performing for audiences of various cultural backgrounds.

## **Leon “Smooth” Edwards** – Trinidad & Tobago

Arranger and Producer

Arranger for eight-time Panorama Champion Massy Trinidad All Stars. Smooth started his musical journey playing the pan at age 9. At 16, while still at high school, he joined Trinidad All Stars. Through the years, he developed his talent and skills to become a major force in steel band competitions throughout the Caribbean. He toured Nigeria with Trinidad All Stars in 1977. His greatness as a “smooth” arranger, par excellence, will be forever admired by all music lovers. Today, besides being a pan player and steel band captain, he lectures to undergrads at the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

## **Winsford “Joker” deVines** – Trinidad & Tobago

Songwriter

Winsford ‘Joker’ deVines is undoubtedly one of the greatest, calypso songwriters of our time. His compositions span from political and social commentaries to sex and humor. Over the past 50 years, his compositions have been performed by many calypsonians including the Calypso King of the World, the Mighty Sparrow, Crazy, Baron and Machel Montano. Many of his compositions have become classics of the calypso art form and are now regarded as national treasures of Trinidad and Tobago and by extension the Caribbean.

## **Russ Henderson (Posthumously)** – Europe / Trinidad & Tobago

Performing Artist – Piano and Steel band

Russell Audley Ferdinand "Russ" Henderson MBE was a jazz musician on the piano and the steelpan. He is most widely recognized as one of the founding figures of the Notting Hill Carnival in London, United Kingdom. In 2006 Henderson was appointed a member of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for Services to Music. On Friday, 24 August 2012, just prior to the Notting Hill Carnival weekend, he was honored with the unveiling of a blue plaque in Notting Hill at the junction of Tavistock Road known as "Carnival Square", to honour his contributions to the development of Carnival. Russ led the first carnival parade in 1965. He is also credited with helping to transform the Notting Hill Carnival into a high, revenue-producing, International event. Russ departed for Heaven at age 91, on August 18, 2015.

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**THE NOMINEES / RECIPIENTS FOR THE 2015 SUNSHINE AWARDS**

***Erna Letemps - Haiti***

Performing Artist, Teacher, Public Servant

Erna Letemps is a singer, actor, playwright and producer. In January 2004 Erna was honored to celebrate her county's bicentennial of the Haitian revolution. In fact, she also performed a duet with the Calypso King of the World on the CD titled "Happy Birthday Haiti." This CD also featured, Susan Sarandon, Danny Glover, Gil Figaro and the late Ossie Davis. Her recent projects include the writing and production of two successful plays – "A Different Kind of Christmas" and "Guilty or Not Guilty."

***Youssouf Koumbassa – Guinea, West Africa***

African Dancer

Born and raised in Guinea, West Africa, Youssouf Koumbassa began dancing at the age of six by studying and emulating the members of the National Ballet and the leading dancers of the many local and regional dance companies in Guinea. For thirteen years, he traveled extensively throughout West Africa, Japan, Bangladesh, India, Holland, Hungary, Russia, Korea, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the United States with the Ballet National. He is now globally known and sought after as the African dance teacher from Guinea.

***David and Chandrakantha Courtney – India/Houston***

Performing Artists

David and Chandrakantha have been performing on the tabla since 1972 after spending a number of years learning the instrument in India. They perform extensively on stage, TV, CDs, and radio, in India, Europe and the United States. In 2009, they were designated as "Cultural Jewels of India" by the Indian Cultural Centre of Houston.

***Sharlene Flores – Trinidad & Tobago***

Performing Artist

Sharlene Flores joined the famed Parang Group, San Jose Serenaders in 1975 (40 years ago). In 1978 she became the lead singer of the group. In 1982 the band "Flores De San Jose" was formed and with Sharlene as lead singer they immediately became a major force of Latin Parang Music. Parang is a popular folk music brought to Trinidad by Venezuelan migrants who were primarily of Amerindian, Spanish, and African heritage, something which is strongly reflected in the music itself. Parang is widely performed during the Christmas season.

## **Rawle Gibbons - Trinidad & Tobago**

University Professor, Researcher, Writer and Dramatist

Rawle Gibbons is a writer and dramatist. His Calypso Trilogy of plays was a landmark in the exploration of calypso, history and politics on stage. He was the first head of the Centre for Creative and Festival Arts at the University of the West Indies - St. Augustine, a post he held for 20 years. Though recently retired, he continues to research Calypso, Orisha and the festival arts in the Caribbean with an eye for their dramatic components. His abiding passion is education through drama and the folk and popular art forms. He recently produced a dramatic piece “The March to Caroni” which documents the events of the 1970 Black Power Revolution in Trinidad.

Credit: <http://www.pancaribbean.com/banyan/i2i.htm>.

## **Godfrey Augustine – Grenada**

Show Promoter and DJ

For the past twenty years, every Grenadian knows of Godfrey Augustine owing to the love and respect he has shown for the calypso art form. He is the disc jockey who brings the calypso over the radio air waves to them daily, explaining at the same time the meaning of the lyrics and the relevance of the song to music in general and to world themes in particular. Besides playing calypso daily, he searches his historical, lyrical bank to find calypsos to educate the youth and other academics who are searching for knowledge. In addition, every year, Grenadians look forward to his super calypso concert production whereby is featured the leading calypsonians of the Caribbean.

## **Pelham Goddard - Trinidad & Tobago**

Musician, Producer, Arranger, Songwriter

Playing piano from the age of nine, Pelham learned to read music via a correspondence course from the Berkley College of Music in Boston. He launched his professional career in 1967, as organist for the Peter De Vlught Orchestra. For over three decades he has made a lasting impact as a songwriter, arranger and producer. He arranged and produced many hits for many calypso and soca artists including David Rudder, Christopher “Tambu” Herbert, Super Blue and Calypso Rose. He has also arranged and produced many radio and television jingles. **(By Craig Harris)**

***Peter Blood*** - Trinidad & Tobago

Journalist

For the past forty years, Trinidadians have grown accustomed to the name Peter Blood; it is a name linked to every aspect of entertainment in the twin-island state. Peter has covered calypso, steel band, parang, jazz and gospel music in all the leading newspapers and journals since Independence 1962, writing in a style that makes readers become participants in the event itself. His description of ethno-musicological events allows readers to feel that, having read “Bloodline,” they can narrate to anyone what took place at the event itself. Besides being a journalist of the Arts, many artists in Trinidad and Tobago rely on Peter’s evaluations to improve their offerings on stage, especially that of carnival.

**The Dom Basil Matthews SUNSHINE Award Nominees/Recipients**

***Dr. Allister Francis (Posthumously)*** – Antigua & Barbuda

If today the independent state of Antigua can boast about education, it is because of the interest, commitment and work of one man in the main: Dr. Allister Francis. He is the one who having been educated at Howard University in the United States, returned to Antigua and single-handedly revolutionized education in the state. Starting with primary education, Francis organized various departments on the island to form the Antigua State College in 1977 and expose Antiguan to secondary education. He furthered his educational thrust by adding the training of nurses to the Institution as well as opening up the College to Advanced level GCE in 1978, thereby moving from 150 students to over 1000 souls in the first decade. Today the Antigua State College, because of Dr. Francis, introduces students to first year courses as part of their degree programs of the University of the West Indies.

***Professor Dr. Gordon Rohlehr*** – Guyana / Trinidad & Tobago

Professor Gordon Rohlehr has spent over forty years in the Department of English at the University of the West Indies at St Augustine, Trinidad. He is internationally recognized for his ground-breaking work on Caribbean literature, calypso and culture. In fact, he is often described as the world’s leading authority on calypso, tracing its development over the last two hundred years from its West African origins and studying the vast amount of recorded material produced by generations of West Indians, particularly in Trinidad and Tobago. He wrote more than 100 essays on West Indian literature, oral poetry, calypso and the popular culture of the Caribbean. He has been the recipient of the University of the West Indies’ Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in the combined fields of Teaching, Research, Administration and Public Service (1995).

<http://www.theintegrationistcaribbean.org/distinguished-researchers/gordon-rohlehr/>.

The SUNSHINE Awards Organization’s mission is to recognize excellence in the performing arts, education, science and sports. **The 27th Annual SUNSHINE Awards Program is sponsored in part by United Airlines, “the preferred airline of the SUNSHINE Awards Program,” Alizé, National Staffing Associates, All Star Motors and Essex County Towing, and Trini Breakfast Shed.** The black tie event will begin with a cocktail reception at 5:00pm followed by the presentation of awards and a live show. Tickets can be obtained on the SUNSHINE Awards website at [www.sunshineawards.com](http://www.sunshineawards.com) or by calling **201-836-0799**. The SUNSHINE Awards Program is hosted by Errol Fabien and Nikki Crosby.

