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For Immediate Release

SUNSHINE AWARDS™ SAYS FAREWELL TO ANDRE TANKER

Teaneck, New Jersey, USA 14 March 2003..... The SUNSHINE Awards™ organization has released the following statement on the death of Trinidad & Tobago's Andre Tanker.

With the passing of Andre Tanker, Trinidad & Tobago and the Caribbean have lost one of their supreme musical talents. "World music" has lost a unique voice from the Caribbean - delivered through guitar, flute, vibraphone and blues harp. All of us who have listened to Andre's music, all of us who have enjoyed his unique musical talent have lost a special part of our musical psyche. We have lost a musician who was one of us, but who spoke to us and for us in his own unique musical style.

The SUNSHINE Awards organization extends deepest sympathy to Andre's wife and family at this time of grief. The organization joins the Government and people of Trinidad & Tobago in mourning the loss of this special individual and very talented musician and performer. While none of us can share the depth of their loss, we do share the sorrow at Andre's unexpected passing.

In 1992, the SUNSHINE Awards paid tribute to Andre's artistry, to his multi-faceted talents as a musician, composer and performer. This was a tribute well deserved. Andre was not a graduate of any prestigious music academy. But his achievements rivaled that of those who were. His musical talents came from that inner realm of music, which we tend to classify as being "self-taught." Andre was a musician whose connection with that inner music manifested itself as musical genius. He was a respected composer, an accomplished musician, a prolific recording artist and a formidable and exciting performer.

His film credits for musical scores include Turn of the Tide, Bim, and the film documentary, Trinidad & Tobago in the 80's. He has an equally impressive résumé of theatre credits, which includes, The Nativity, Ti Jean and Mariquite, The Dragon can't Dance, Monster March, Anansi Story and his own folk ballet, Anansi and the Crab.

What was it that made Andre Tanker's music so appealing, so unique? Perhaps it was the fact that his music represented the sum of several parts. He drew on the musical traditions of modern Caribbean music - calypso and reggae, he drew on the traditions of jazz, blues and soul, on the drums and chants of Africa and on the tabla and sitar of India. He was the Caribbean voice of "World Music."

Andre belonged to us in the Caribbean but his music belongs to the world. As a recording artist, he provided us with great entertainment with classics such as Forward Home, Sayamanda/River Come Down, Hosana/Basement Party, and his tribute to the pan man, Wild Indian Band. He was also well known as a formidable arranger for the steelband - the Ebonites Steel Band, The Invaders and Phase II Pan Groove.

Andre's résumé is extensive and rich in the quality and creativity of his work. Among his musical compositions was the score written for a New York production of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure. He also worked with sitarist, Mungal Patasar, to create a fusion of Creole and classical Indian music.

He leaves behind an impressive legacy, an extensive list of accomplishments that speaks to his wonderful talent and musical genius. He has influenced many musicians and performers and will undoubtedly continue to be a standard, which future generations will aspire to achieve.

Andre Tanker's vision was that of a world-view. It was a vision that enriched his music, a vision that encompassed the world. Yet it was distinctly Caribbean. It was distinctly Andre's music, and it was his gift to all of us.

With his passing, we have truly lost a remarkable musician, one who has had a tremendous impact on Caribbean music and culture. He has left us a rich legacy, one that will continue to be a source of inspiration for future generations of Caribbean artistes.

The SUNSHINE Awards organization joins his family, friends and all lovers of music in saying farewell to this special man, this wonderful musical genius.