

ABSTRACT**THE EVOLUTION OF PARANG (MUSIC AND TEXT)
IN TRINIDAD FROM 1900-1997****Francisca Carol Allard**

The tenacity of an evolving parang art-form, with its widening embrace of contemporary Latin melodies, novel reinterpretations and indigenous creations, within Trinidad's multicultural environment, is presented in this thesis.

Initially, parang is placed within the Hispanic/Latin American world and is viewed contextually as an offspring from Spain, manifesting the inherited characteristics of the indigenous musical forms of the Americas and the Spanish Caribbean. More specifically, later on, the parang art-form is strongly identified with that of neighbouring Venezuela (Oriente), from where it was directly transported.

The subject of the purists' disapproval of the public's acceptance of non-traditional Latin melodies, reinterpreted songs and indigenous compositions, as belonging to the parang genre, is also addressed. It is not, however, the author's intention to discuss the rights or wrongs of this issue but to simply investigate and record the actual changes within the parang scenario; changes which comprise the burgeoning commercial interest shared by audience and performers, the

increasing public response to and recognition of the art-form, the growing number of parang groups, both traditional and modern, and the inclusion of modern musical instruments.

The final implications drawn from this investigation are: that parang is characterized by a blurring of musical genres; that parang is now the forum for all the melodies brought by the cocoa-panyols,¹ because of the non-persistence of other social activities to which some of these songs were formerly attached; that parang is approaching the twenty first century as a vibrant musical organism in which the past and the present have met on equal terms,² with tradition still being a thriving force, and contemporaneity, a dynamic and compelling entity; that parang is not at all in danger of becoming extinct since it is like a river that has flowed underground for a certain distance and has ultimately reappeared with all its strength and vitality undiminished.³

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