

UWI Guitars Signal Hope

WESLEY GIBBINGS

There are creative lights under the bureaucratic UWI bushel that signal hope every now and then. Much of it emerges out of the music factory, also known as the Music Unit of the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA), under the watch of people such as department head, Jessel Murray, music co-ordinator Satanand Sharma and senior lecturer Dr Jeannine Remy.

At the height of an otherwise hectic musical season, the DCFA student recitals offered a creative respite from other more heavily-promoted commercial fare throughout the country.

Cantique de Noel marked the turn of the UWI Arts Chorale and UWI Arts Steel at an event hosted by the Lady of Fatima RC Church

in Curepe on November 26.

The Indian Classical Ensemble occupied the DCFA's modest facility at Cheesman Avenue in St Augustine the following evening as did the Jazz Ensemble with Semester 72 and the Guitar Ensemble on November 30 under the energetic direction of tutor Anthony Williams who has led the team since 2010.

The Guitar Ensemble's truncated performance of seven made-for-string pieces opening with Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi's playful medley Melody Road and closing, contrary to the programme, with Welshman Karl Jenkin's challenging Alegretto 1st Movement.

On show was the ensemble's faithful renditions of composition that actually spans seasons, in defiance of an All I Want for



Department of Creative and Festival Arts tutor Anthony Williams conducts his young charges. PICTURE WESLEY GIBBINGS

Christmas is... theme for the evening.

Hisaishi's haunting melody, Merry Go Round, could have been all the programme offered—played multiple times under the stick of student conductor, Callina Morrison.

Clarinetist, Dario Neptune, played solo on Dimitri Shostakovich's Lyric Waltz—a composition better known as a test piano piece. Then Andrew Samlal took the baton for Xmas standard, Carol of the Bells, arranged by Williams and composed by Mykola Leontovych.

Vocalist Christopher Sookhoo's rendition of Wade in the Water was soulful and Neptune returned for Forever in Love, featuring Jeriel Johnson on the drums.

A performance on its own was Williams' poetically scripted introductions to the six-piece set. The DCFA drama folks would have been impressed.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the DCFA and Murray paid tribute to Williams' marshalling of musical forces for what

the department head describes as "a unique entity within Trinidad and Tobago" in the face of "a dearth of original compositions (for guitar)."

The Guitar Ensemble, Murray surmises, "is part of the exponential growth of instrumental and vocal opportunities in the music unit of this department."

Student conductors for the evening were Kemi Ible, Callina

genie

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Morrison and Andrew Samlal. Guest performers were Jeulious Frederick, Jeriel Johnson, Dario Neptune and Christopher Sookhoo.

Among the guitarists was accomplished pan player, Natasha Joseph. She was part of the ensemble that also included Pam Carimbocas-Snaggs, Royce Clement, Trinity Cockburn, Phelix John together with Ible and Morrison.

A brief but delightful musical encounter, was followed by The Most Wonderful Time of the Year—the UWI Arts Wind Ensemble in Concert at the Bethel World Outreach Ministries in Arima on December 2.