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ABSTRACT

This thesis highlights and discusses how Mr Jessel Murray has significantly impacted the chorale music industry in Trinidad and Tobago. The historical and cultural aspects of the evolution of chorale music in the Caribbean are briefly discussed, as well as a thorough biography of Mr Murray that also focuses on his career as a professional musician and educator. The UWI Arts Chorale, the UWI Arts Steel, and The Must Come See Productions are topics of interest that drive this research forward, each discussing the different roles that Mr Murray holds in each group and how he shapes the musical aspects of said establishments. Furthermore, the notion of student engagement in both ensembles (the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel) concerning chorale music is also explored and emphasised throughout this thesis. Ultimately, this research seeks to promote a deeper understanding of chorale music in addition to and integrating chorale music through various facets of life.

Keywords: Jessel Murray, UWI Arts Chorale, UWI Arts Steel, chorale music, Trinidad and Tobago.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	iii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
CHAPTER ONE	5
CHAPTER TWO	16
CHAPTER THREE	21
CONCLUSION.....	26
WORKS CITED	28
APPENDIX A.....	a
APPENDIX B.....	A

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	11
Figure 2	14
Figure 3	18
Figure 4	24

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Interview with Mr Murray: One.....a

APPENDIX B: Interview with Mr Murray: Two.....A

INTRODUCTION

The history of Western choral music was created in Germany. Its history stemmed from the Lutheran church in the 16th century. Chorales were associated with the Protestant Reformation movement led by Martin Luther in 1517, with its members being a part of the Lutheran faith. According to Robert Garretson, music educator and author of "Conducting Choral Music", choral singing gained popularity in our society during World War I (Garretson 2).

Chorale music is often referred to as being of a polyphonic nature, where the work will consist of two or more autonomous vocal lines. A contributing factor to this was most likely the total number of singers available and the number of more experienced singers who sang polyphony, which contributed to the shift of plainsong to polyphonic music in the church (Wienandt). , Garretson has stated that school and college choirs or chorales have increased subsequently in the twenty-first century (Garretson 1, 4).

In the Caribbean, choral music is prominent and has a deep-rooted history, which one may say stemmed from the trans-Atlantic slave trade and as a result of the trade, French settlers brought enslaved Africans with them during the late 1700s ("Trinidad, 1498-1962"). These enslaved people brought their ethnic and cultural identity and musical traditions. They saw music as a spiritual escape from slavery and a way to express themselves freely. Additionally, they would often sing negro-spirituals and chants in groups. Some of these songs were often sung as acapella and accompanied by drumming in call-and-response formats. Classical choral music in Trinidad, however, was formalised during the British colonisation period of 1797-1962 (Wilson).

Furthermore, these songs usually included simple harmonic parts shared between male and female voices.

In Trinidad and Tobago, there are various chorale organisations, each with its style and identity, which are reflections of the country's vast multicultural heritage and history. Whilst most well-known chorales are located in Trinidad, the Signal Hill Alumni Choir is one of the prominent groups in Tobago. Some of the chorales located in Trinidad include The Marionettes Chorale, The Lydians and The University of the West Indies (UWI) Arts Chorale. The UWI Arts Chorale is directed by Mr Jessel Murray, who is a full-time senior lecturer and the head of The Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA), UWI. The development of the UWI Arts Chorale, its different approaches to choral accompaniment and his involvement in the Must Come See Productions are ways in which Mr Jessel Murray has contributed to chorale music in Trinidad and Tobago.

I chose to undertake this research to document the significant impact that Mr Jessel Murray has made in the chorale industry in Trinidad, in addition to expanding on the impact of integrating the UWI Arts Steel into chorale music. Lastly, another factor that contributed to my interest in this topic, was the academic void in the subject area that needed to be filled. I also aim to be the first to document the contributions that Mr Jessel Murray made to the musical theatre aspect of chorale music, as seen through the Must Come See Productions.

This research is centred around the musical contributions and impact of Mr Jessel Murray on chorale music in Trinidad. It will also explore the history and formation of the UWI Arts

Chorale, the UWI Arts Steel, as well as the local musical theatre production company Must Come See Productions. Additionally, the UWI Arts Steel and its collaboration with the UWI Arts Chorale as an instrumental accompaniment for performances at the end of each semester, is another factor of interest in this research. My research will mainly focus on Trinidad compared to other Caribbean countries where Mr Murray has worked. A contributing factor to this decision was that he is the head musical director and conductor of the UWI Arts Steel and Chorale, resides in Trinidad and has an active role in Must Come See Productions which also resides in Trinidad.

One challenge in completing this research paper was the time constraint. The time needed to thoroughly delve into the topic of all the productions and show that Mr Murray has participated in them exceeded the time needed to complete this paper. Another limitation I faced was the lack of primary sources to aid my research. This is because my research focuses on a topic that has yet to be covered. I will have to rely heavily on gathering data from interviews and past musical programmes.

The primary goal of this research is to contribute to my field of study (Musical Arts) and highlight the work and achievements of Mr Jessel Murray as a music director, conductor and chairman. The objectives of this study are to:

- Outline and examine how Mr Jessel Murray has contributed to chorale music in Trinidad through his involvement with and leadership of the above-mentioned groups.
- Examine the significance of the UWI Arts Steel in relation to musical accompaniment for a choir.

- Discuss the repertoire choices of the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel.
- Feature the impact of performances undergone by the UWI Arts Chorale.
- Highlight the contributions of Must Come See Productions to the chorale community in Trinidad and Tobago.

For this project, the primary documentary source includes an analysis of scholarly journal articles surrounding the stigmatism of the usage of creole in a choral setting. The archival research has gathered relevant information about Mr Jessel Murray to help align my research with my objectives. Additionally, newspaper articles, past Facebook lives, and interviews with the members of the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel have been conducted to help guide my research into the completion of this project.

This study consists of three chapters. Chapter One, History: Mr Jessel Murray and the UWI Arts Chorale, will cover an in-depth description of Mr Jessel Murray and the UWI Arts Chorale. Chapter Two covers the integration of the UWI Arts Steel into the UWI Arts Chorale. It will discuss the steel ensemble's role in the UWI Arts Chorale as more than just a musical accompaniment. Additionally, the process in which Mr Jessel Murray curates the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel regarding performance preparations will be discussed. Lastly, Chapter Three, Must Come See Productions, will delve into the more musical theatre aspect of chorale music that Mr Murray has had experience directing over the past couple of years.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several resources relate to the importance of chorale music and its impact on society. These resources include journal articles and books obtained through internet archives. The works that were focused on were Robert Garretson's "Conducting Choral Music", Cain Noble's "Choral Conducting and its Practice", and Guyanne Wilson's "Conflicting Language Ideologies in Choral Singing in Trinidad."

According to the work of Guyanne Wilson, choral music is a popular art form in Trinidad and Tobago. Choral music was performed in religious school choirs such as St Joseph's Convent Port-of-Spain, Bishops and the Biennial Music Festivals. Wilson states that community choirs often expose young children to singing in schools and beyond the educational system. Wilson then discusses how a community can harbour the ability to start a choir. She mentions The Marionettes Chorale, Trinidad and Tobago's oldest community chorus, and how it was created by secondary school music teachers who then selected their singers mainly from a pool of former students.

In contrast, the UWI Arts Chorale was created by former students of the UWI community. Wilson further discusses the stigmatism of using Creole in choral music compared to using "British English" and "Standard English". One of the most significant things a choir can do to preserve its country's history and culture is to perform songs in traditional/folk pieces. "As a choral practising musician, I deal with the lyric, I deal with text, and therefore whatever is appropriate" (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: Two*). The UWI Arts Chorale, under the direction of Mr Murray, sometimes incorporates folk or Creole music into their repertoire for

end-of-semester performances. This helps establish an overall theme and contributes to preserving the culture of Trinidad and Tobago and neighbouring islands.

In other readings, Garretson speaks on choral music through the musical director or conductor's point of view. The book focuses on research obtained through surveying various choral conductors to gauge the general issues and concerns they encounter during rehearsals.

Additionally, this book speaks about the importance of being a part of a chorale and the many positive contributing factors that follow with this. He says that being a part of a chorale society has become generalised through school, church and even community choirs. "Individuals are quite naturally drawn to activities that they enjoy" (Garretson 2). He states that school administrators have recognised the importance of music participation and have pushed for it to be integrated more into the school's curriculum rather than just being an "extracurricular activity".

The importance of repertoire selection for a chorale was an underlying notion in Robert Garretson's and Cain Nobel's books. "The selection of music for the choir should depend on the program that has been planned" (Nobel 66). Additionally, he states that choosing the right music for a performance depends on who will be the audience. "Aside from individual musical tastes, the nature of the event quite often determines the group's receptivity to various types of music." (Garretson 149-150). When considering this information, it makes sense for chorales situated in the Caribbean to sing traditional folk songs and use Creole when necessary.

The UWI Arts Chorale embodies Garretson's words. Although it is a collegiate choir, the UWI Arts Chorale is open to the public and alums from different faculties. It focuses on educating and bestowing its members with the necessary tools to become professional musicians outside of The

UWI Arts Chorale. Being a part of a chorale helps individuals house a sense of belonging in an environment where self-expression and musical talent are prioritised. Garretson further talks about how being a part of a chorale contributes to the needs of students and how it impacts society. He summarises this into four categories: aesthetic needs, physical and mental health needs, social needs, and avocational and vocational needs.

Aesthetic Needs.

"All youth need to develop a sensitivity to beauty," Garretson says. Music has a role or function in religion, official government ceremonies, family, and school and is unavoidable through radio, television, and film media. He says that involvement in music activities can serve as a means of improving individual musical discrimination and tastes. Students can learn to distinguish between "musically trite" and diverse and complex music (Garretson 3).

Physical Needs and Mental Health Needs.

Garretson speaks on the physical aspect of being a part of a chorale and its contribution to mental good health. Correct sitting and standing posture is emphasised. In his book, Garretson failed to mention that maintaining proper posture and breathing positively affects musicians outside the chorale setting. Garretson also believes that being a part of a chorale organisation helps individuals to express themselves emotionally in a healthy manner (Garretson 3).

Social Needs

As previously stated, Garretson expresses that individuals are often drawn to choirs "to belong" and to be accepted by their members. It is human nature to want to belong to an organisation where common interests are shared and where they can work towards common goals.

Avocational and Vocational Needs.

Garrettson states that joining a choir can be done for leisure or education (Garrettson 4).

The works of Robert Garretson and Cain Noble shared many similarities. One topic I should have seen mentioned was the importance of the accompanist in rehearsal and performances. The accompaniment is a tool to help singers understand their vocal parts in rehearsal. A good accompanist will work alongside the director to provide pitches and melodic lines for the singers. In more complex pieces, the accompanist can highlight complicated parts to ensure that the singers understand their parts well, hence giving them confidence. This is something that The UWI Arts Chorale does well. Additionally, having an accompanist for rehearsal helps the chorale grasp the overall musicality of the piece. It helps understand musical phrases, dynamics and expressions, resulting in a cohesive performance.

Furthermore, the use of accompaniment for performances holds similar values. The UWI Arts Chorale and The UWI Arts Steel have performed together for several years. This unique collaboration is one of the very few that uses an orchestra mainly consisting of steelpans and percussion to accompany extensive choral works by John Rutter, J.S. Bach, Handel, and Haydn.

The rich timbre of the steel orchestra can give choral works a different feel while keeping the intended musicality of the original composers.

CHAPTER ONE

(History: Mr Jessel Murray and The UWI Arts Chorale)

Mr Jessel Murray is one of Trinidad and Tobago's most prominent figures in the classical music industry in Trinidad and Tobago. He is one of the best-known choral and orchestral conductors in the country. Mr Murray is the senior lecturer and head of the Department of Creative and Festival Arts (DCFA). Mr Murray grew up in Mt Lambert, Trinidad and Tobago, where he attended Mt Lambert RC, St Xavier's Private School, and then St Mary's College (Khan "Jessel Murray the Conductor in Command"). After completing his A-Levels, he returned to St Mary's College, where he taught sciences for two years. Eventually, Mr Murray attained his bachelor's degree in music education summa cum laude in 1987 and a master's in choral conducting and advanced studies in piano accompaniment in 1989 at Temple University in Philadelphia. While there, he was a Temple University Concert Choir member and a temporary conductor of the University Singers (Jessel Murray). Some awards acclaimed by Mr Murray during this time were the Presser Award, the David Stone Scholarship, and the Millard Gladfelter Award (Jessel Murray). From 1989 to 1993, he was a lecturer in Music at Smith College, where he toured with the choir to Philadelphia and Maryland for various performances. He also conducted the Smith College Orchestra and was featured as their guest pianist accompanist and conductor during their tour to Trinidad and Tobago in 2004 (Jessel Murray).

Mr Murray first became involved with the steelpan in 1982. Desmond Waithe, educator, musician and steelband arranger, introduced Mr Murray to classical steelband arranging. They worked together to arrange a classical piece for the Trin-Toc Sun Valley steel competition in

Point Fortin (Khan “Jessel Murray the Conductor in Command”) In 1999, he started a steelband at Amherst Regional High School, Massachusetts, with the head of the music department. In an interview conducted by Nasser Khan for The Trinidad and Tobago Guardian, Mr Murray explained that for him to be able to start the band, he needed to fly to Trinidad to undertake a ten-day intensive workshop with Major Edouard Wade. Afterwards, he returned to the US and started the ensemble, which is still performing.

From 2004 to 2011, Mr Murray started conducting for the National Sinfonia Orchestra (NSO) (Jessel Murray). The National Sinfonia Orchestra is a community chamber orchestra known for its diverse repertoire. Some of the works that Mr Murray has been a part of are Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3, Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Schubert Symphony No. 5, and Grieg Piano Concerto.



Figure 1

Image of Mr Jessel Murray conducting National Sinfonia Orchestra.

Source; Trinidad and Tobago Guardian

Additionally, Mr Murray has been the artistic director and conductor of the National Steel Symphony Orchestra of Trinidad and Tobago (NSSO) for eight years. He became involved with the National Steel Symphony Orchestra via the G-Pans (Genesis) debut in 2007. After a highly acclaimed performance, he was appointed the artistic director of the NSSO. The NSSO uses the Genesis ("G") pan exclusively and performs a wide variety of music: original compositions, Classical music transcriptions, Calypso and Soca, Reggae, Latin, and other types of world music (Khan). Apart from their rich and diverse repertoire, the NSSO is also known for their performances from local composers such as Ray, Holman, Len "Boogsie" Sharpe, and Jit Samaroo (Khan).

One of the most significant ways Mr Murray has contributed to the development of chorale music in Trinidad and Tobago was by taking up the role of conductor and director of The UWI Arts Chorale. The UWI Arts Chorale was established in 1999 "on paper" (Murray, Interview with Mr Murray: Two). "There was nothing official. Only in September 2000, when I joined the university and took it off the paper, made it a reality, and then created a full-fledged chorale" (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: Two*).

The UWI Arts Chorale was formed in the Department of Creative and Festival Arts by past students, students from other UWI faculties, and community members. The UWI Arts Chorale was initially set up as a one-year, six-credit course and was set up as a university chorale where voice students came together to sing for selected types of performances. Afterwards, the late Dr Anne Marion Osborne, the coordinator of the music programmes at the Department of Creative

and Festival Arts, selected Mr Murray to direct the chorale ("20 Years, One Voice: The Legacy of the UWI Arts Chorale").

The UWI Arts Chorale prides itself on its diverse repertoire, including major choral works and local and international music. Mr Murray's job in the chorale consists of running rehearsals, doing score analysis, and conducting and preparing for both the UWI Arts Steel and the UWI Arts Chorale concerts. Some of the major works that the UWI Arts Chorale performed over the years were Handel "Messiah" – Part I (2015), Schubert's "Mass in G" (2016), Mozart "Requiem" (2016), Rutter's "Gloria" (2022), and most recently Haydn "Missa" (2023). They started travelling throughout Trinidad for performances before having their first out-of-country performance in Tobago, then an international performance in 2008 in Massachusetts ("20 Years, One Voice: The Legacy of the UWI Arts Chorale"). These performances brought the music of The UWI Arts Chorale beyond the University of the West Indies and towards new audiences, hence acting as a tool for self-promotion of not only The Chorale but of the university and Trinidad and Tobago.

When conducting research for this thesis, one of the main considerations was what distinguishes the UWI Arts Chorale from other chorales in Trinidad and Tobago. One of the key factors was the integration of steel into a chorale setting. However, numerous other elements contribute to this distinction, such as the significant number of members who are musically trained or have a musical background. The presence of musically trained members elevates the chorale's musicianship and technical proficiency, a direct result of their training in music theory and aural skills. In contrast, a choir composed of untrained members may have a more limited range of

musical abilities and could require assistance with more complex musical arrangements. Additionally, a musically trained chorale can execute a challenging and diverse repertoire that includes complex harmonies, rhythms, and a more comprehensive range of musical styles. A choir consisting of inexperienced members may need to opt for more straightforward arrangements and melodies to suit their abilities.



Figure 2

Image taken from the concert 'MISSA'.

Source; Facebook, Ultimate Media TT

Furthermore, incorporating student engagement into the UWI Arts Chorale is a significant factor in how Mr Murry impacted the chorale music industry in Trinidad and created the UWI Arts Chorale. Participation in the UWI Arts Chorale fosters a safe environment where artistic development and teamwork are encouraged. In the UWI Art Chorale, students can take on management roles at the start of every academic year. These roles vary from president, secretary, librarian, public relations officer, and the eliminator of confusion. Additionally, The UWI Arts

Chorale members are often allowed to work behind the scenes with Mr Murray and The Chorale to choreograph dances for some musical theatre or folk pieces.

A member of the UWI Arts Chorale, Stephanie Carrington, was allowed to choreograph for the chorale. "He came to me knowing that I have a background in dance and asked me to come up with some movements for the chorale, for the Les Misérables medley" (Carrington). Stephanie shared that her job in the UWI Arts Chorale has been a great learning experience. However, her biggest obstacle was gaining the trust of her colleagues. Since many of the chorale members had not previously experienced the type of choreography being taught, it was challenging for her to earn their trust. She also briefly mentioned one of the main challenges she faced during this process, "I would say there was one negative thing that I learned from, or that I would have taken away from the experience, which was there's always going to be someone who thinks they know more than you and can do your job better than you; like suggestions and trying to give their input, especially in the wrong times. Because if it were Mr Murray in front of us, you wouldn't do that, right?" (Carrington). Furthermore, Stephanie ends by expressing her gratitude to Mr Murray for allowing her the experience and saying she will lend her expertise to the UWI Arts Chorale in the future.

In this regard, being a part of the UWI Arts Chorale helps students gain experience and the skills required to exercise leadership outside of the classroom setting and contribute as distinctive musicians to Trinidad and Tobago.

CHAPTER TWO

(The Integration of The UWI Arts Steel into The UWI Arts Chorale)

The UWI Arts Steel was formed by the Department of Creative and Festival Arts undergraduate students at The University of the West Indies to compete at the World Steelband Festival under the small ensemble category in November 2002. It was co-directed by Mr Jessel Murray and Mr Nervin Saunders and subsequently won first place in its category. After winning, the group became the UWI Festival Steelhouse Sound, which eventually became what we now know as the UWI Arts Steel (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: One*). As a result, the Department of Creative and Festival Arts adopted the ensemble into the music program in 2003, which is currently co-directed by Mr Khion De Las and led by Mr Jessel Murray.

The UWI Arts Steel is essential in supporting the UWI Arts Chorale during their performances. Whether vocal or instrumental, accompaniment complements and supports other musical parts during a performance. Accompaniments can be used in various ensemble settings, ranging from a duet (two musicians) to an octet (eight musicians) or even larger groups such as a string orchestra (sixty musicians). The use of accompaniment in secular and folk music stemmed from the medieval period. It would often consist of "unison or octave duplications of the melody", in addition to slight variations in creating heterophony (the simultaneous performance of various melodic lines in music), drones (sustained notes or note) (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia).

The UWI Arts Steel accompaniment style emulates the original masterworks, such as John Rutter's Fauré 'Requiem'. However, the music is tailored to suit the steelpan's range, the number of players available, and their capabilities. This adaptation results in a timbre that resembles a full-string orchestra. Furthermore, these live performances highlight the versatility of our national instrument in a choral musical setting, a departure from the distinctive panorama music commonly heard and known throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr Murray has brilliantly conceptualised and successfully executed the idea of incorporating Trinidad and Tobago's national instrument, the steelpan, into a chorale setting, has not only distinguishing the UWI Arts Chorale from other chorales. While the Lydian and The Marionettes Chorale have also embraced the steelpan in their performances, the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel have pushed the boundaries. The Marionettes Chorale, accompanied by Pan Am North Stars, has claimed to be the first chorale in Trinidad and Tobago to perform with a steelband in 1966 and 1968 (The Marionettes).

The UWI Arts Steel uses a variety of percussive instruments, as well as pitched and non-pitched instruments such as the timpani, bells, chimes, shakers, scratchers and auxiliary instruments. Adding these instruments to the ensemble adds texture and sets an emphatic atmosphere by accenting or highlighting crucial parts of a piece. While the use of the steelpan in choral music is not exclusive to the UWI Arts Chorale, their distinct approach truly sets them apart in Trinidad and Tobago's vibrant music scene.

After establishing the UWI Arts Steel and the UWI Arts Chorale, they did not begin performing together immediately. As previously stated, the UWI Arts Chorale was established in 2000, a year before Mr Murray came to the UWI (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: Two*). When asked about combining both ensembles for performances, Mr Murray stated that the decision "came out of happenstance", and it took four more years for any form of steel accompaniment to come together (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: One*). Although the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel is not the first to pair chorale music and steel orchestral music, Mr Murray states that the groups differ from others in terms of the independent work that is done coupled with the complexity of the work, hence making the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel distinctive university ensembles in Trinidad and Tobago.



Figure 3

Image taken from the concert 'Révérence'.

Source; Facebook, Ultimate Media TT

In the UWI Arts Steel, members can sometimes arrange and adapt pieces for the group to perform together or with the UWI Arts Chorale. Similar to the previous point made in Chapter

One, the UWI Arts Steel allows students to showcase their composing, arranging, or adapting skills under the guidance and direction of Mr Murray and Mr Khion De Las. "Students are always encouraged to bring anything, whether chorally, which we have done, instrumentally, or in this case, both" (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: Two*). When asked about having a student's piece performed at concerts, Mr Murray stated that it is a rigorous process, and students will often have to learn to cope with disappointment. "Once a piece has been chosen for performance, it can receive amendments and be perfected" (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: Two*).

In December 2023, two members from the UWI Arts Steel were given the opportunity to have their pieces performed. Khai Alcantara made an arrangement of 'Sleigh Ride' by Leroy Anderson that the UWI Arts Steel performed, whilst on the other hand, another student, Jamaal Pierre-Roberts, adapted 'Deliver Us from Prince of Egypt' by Hans Zimmer that was performed with the UWI Arts Steel and Chorale, in conjunction to the use of other percussive and auxiliary instruments. "Arranging for The UWI Arts Steel helped me realise that you will not be able to do it the way you want to do it all the time. So, you will have to find creative ways to express your style of music or your interpretation of the particular song you will be arranging. You know how to find creative ways to still have elements of yourself in it, but it also needs to be playable by the band. And then it must also make sufficient use of their instruments at its disposal" (Alcantara). When asked about his experience adapting for the UWI Arts Steel and the UWI Arts Chorale, Jamaal Pierre-Roberts expressed that one of the primary takeaways of his experience was learning how to arrange for proper voices in a chorale setting as well as improving his time

management skills. They both expressed their interest in working with Mr Murray and Mr De Las.

All in all, the ability to arrange, adapt, or compose for both within a choral and orchestral setting can not only be fulfilling for the members of the UWI Arts Steel and the UWI Arts Chorale but also add to the extensive and diverse repertoire of the two ensembles.

Throughout the years, the UWI Arts Steel and the UWI Arts Chorale have performed numerous times together. In 2008, the groups toured together to Massachusetts, New York (2010), Barbados (2012), and Belize and Mexico (2017) (When You Believe). Together, they have performed works such as J.S. Bach 'Magnificat' (2014), a five-voice Baroque piece set on the biblical canticle Magnificat ("Magnificat – Bach"), Handel 'Messiah Part I' (2015), a three-part oratorio composed in 1741, with Part I being the most significant section of this masterwork. Additionally, it focuses on the prophecy and birth of Jesus Christ (James) and Rutter Gloria (2022), a three-movement vocal and orchestral piece composed by John Rutter typically used for the Christmas season (When You Believe).

CHAPTER THREE

(Must Come See Productions)

Must Come See Productions is a registered non-profit production organisation founded in October 2005. It emerged from The UWI Arts Chorale as it approached its fifth anniversary with the idea of wanting to branch out and try "something different" under the name The UWI Arts Festival Chorale before it became what it is known now as Must Come See Productions (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: Two*).

Its mission is to showcase, promote and support the various talents throughout Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, Must Come See Productions aims to entertain and educate while demonstrating the integration of visual and performing arts in local theatre. Must Come See Productions focuses on education and entertainment with a dedication to professionalism and excellence. The group was formed with the help of alums and current members of the UWI Arts Chorale to expand chorale music by providing diverse, entertaining and professional performances for all. The general intent behind the creation of Must Come See Productions is to provide an open environment in which individuals interested in the creative and performing arts can have the opportunity to work professionally and to become involved ("Must Come See Productions").

Mr Murray has been a part of Must Come See Productions from the very start. His role is split into three primary positions: chairman, music director and conductor. "I wear three hats: one was

administrative, one for rehearsal, and the other for the actual performance" (Murray, *Interview with Mr Murray: Two*).

As chairman, Mr Murray worked alongside the company's late president, Ms Evette Graham, to facilitate and plan board meetings and to liaise with other board members to ensure the company's success and future performances. Additionally, his role as the musical director and conductor was to conduct musical ensembles for the music during the different plays. He is also responsible for choosing the songs the musicians performed, giving musical instruction, and offering criticism to help guide the musicians to convey each piece's original message in conjunction with what the original playwright and musical directors may have intended for the play.

Some of the musicals that Mr Murray was a part of were:

"Fiddler on the Roof" (2006)

This was about a Jewish milkman named Tevye who tried to find suitable husbands for his five daughters while also dealing with the growing anti-Semitic attitudes of his community.

A year later, Mr Murray worked on "Oliver!" (2007)

This musical is based on the Charles Dickens book "Oliver Twist." The narrative follows Oliver, an orphan, as he makes his way through the harsh realities of 19th-century London. Oliver encounters hardship, makes unanticipated friends, and eventually looks for a feeling of family and belonging along the journey (Lohnes).

"The Sound of Music" (2008)

This musical focuses on the story of Maria, an aspiring nun who works as a nanny for the von Trapp family in Austria. The play tackles themes of love, family, and the ability of music to overcome hardship against the backdrop of the Nazis' impending menace.

"Disney's Beauty and the Beast" (2009)

This musical centres on Belle, an avid reader who discovers herself in an enchanted castle. There, she meets the cursed prince known as the Beast, and their tense connection blossoms into a special kinship as they come to see each other's inner beauty. Amidst a background of mystical enchantment, the play delves into themes of love, acceptance, and the transformational power of compassion.

"Elton John and Tim Rice's AIDA" (2010)

The show's three central protagonists were Amneris, the Egyptian heir apparent; Radames, an Egyptian soldier; and Aida, a Nubian princess abducted from her homeland. A love triangle develops in the show because Aida and Amneris are both in love with Radames. The play explores Aida's struggles as the leader of her people and the attraction that develops as her bond with Radames, her fiancé, deepens. The musical has dancing routines that astound the audience, powerful choral lines, and soaring music (Becker). "AIDA" was the first production in Trinidad to debut the use of light fixture backdrops ("Must Come See Productions").



Figure 4

Image taken from AIDA

Source; Must Come See Productions

Over four years, Must Come See Productions received fourteen awards from the National Drama Association of Trinidad and Tobago and Most Outstanding Production in 2007. Must Come See Productions strongly focuses on education and gravitates towards performing musicals with relevant social impact ("Must Come See Productions").

It is important to note that there are various musical productions in Trinidad and Tobago, each with different levels of cultural significance and communal expectations. Must Come See Productions is just one of these musicals that showcase Trinidadian culture and talent. What sets them apart is their collaborative spirit. For one of their productions, "Peter Pan," Must Come See Productions joined forces with Flying and Foy, a stage flying-effect company from Nevada, USA. This collaboration added a unique dimension to the production, enabling actors to fly and creating a truly unforgettable experience for the audience ("Peter Pan to Fly in Queen's Hall! – Broadway Returns to Trinidad.").

Must Come See Productions is not just about entertainment; it's about preserving and celebrating Trinidad and Tobago's cultural identity. Their shows often adapt historical events, aiming to connect with viewers on a deeper level. These productions are a testament to the region's rich performing arts scene, showcasing its ingenuity and talent.

Must Come See Productions is an avenue for students from The UWI Arts Chorale to have the opportunity to branch out and get involved in the world of chorale music and the other performing arts. Being a part of this experience can help students develop skills in a chorale setting, whether as a lead singer or an accompaniment. Even students who may not have a formal music education can benefit from participating in a musical production such as the Must Come See Productions. They can harbour other skills that can help them build their stage presence, develop skills in communication, empathy, and self-expression, and help build their confidence. On the other hand, as a musician, being a part of Must Come See Productions can create potential opportunities for future careers in the arts. Additionally, exposure to the arts can promote critical thinking, creativity, and cultural understanding, which produces well-rounded musicians.

CONCLUSION

Participating in a chorale has numerous advantages crucial to a person's musical ability and mental well-being, as research from Robert Garretson and Cain Nobel supports. These activities help musicians improve their skills in a creative and collaborative environment, which is evident throughout this research.

Mr Jessel Murray's professional career as a conductor and musical director has positively impacted the way chorale music is perceived, especially with the combination of the steel orchestra in choral works. Additionally, the common notion of student involvement is seen throughout this work and how it also positively impacts not only the student's musicality but musicianship. By taking on roles of choreographer, arranger, or adapter for both the UWI Arts Chorale and the UWI Arts Steel, students gain valuable experience in a professional environment that can help prepare them for successful careers in the performance industry.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that this study is subject to certain limitations. Specifically, the programming information for the musicals Must Come See Productions produced was restricted. Limited access to programming information regarding the musicals is a limitation of this study, as it would have provided valuable insight into the context and production of these musicals. In addition, access to this information would have provided valuable context surrounding the musicals, accompanying music and a glimpse into the production process.

After considering the work that he has done, it is evident that Mr Jessel Murray has played a meaningful role in developing the chorale music scene in Trinidad and Tobago. He has shown a

solid dedication to promoting various musical genres and supporting student engagement in the performing arts through his involvement with multiple orchestras and choirs, such as the National Sinfonia Orchestra, National Steel Symphony Orchestra, the UWI Arts Steel and the UWI Arts Chorale. Mr Murray's leadership and guidance have remarkably impacted Trinidad and Tobago's multicultural musical landscape.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Interview with Mr Murray: One

1. What significant factors set The UWI Arts Chorale apart from other chorales in Trinidad?
2. Is The UWI Arts Chorale the only chorale group in Trinidad that performs live with a steel orchestra?
3. History of The UWI Arts Steel.
4. What was the decision behind combining the UWI Arts Chorale and UWI Arts Steel in performances?
5. Guyanne Wilson's "Conflicting Language Ideologies in Choral Singing in Trinidad" —She believes that there is stigmatism surrounding the use of creole in chorale music in comparison to "Standard English" and "British English", do you agree?
6. The reasons behind the repertoire: Messiah Part I, Mozart "Requiem", Rutter "Gloria", Haydn "Missa".
7. Chichester Psalms (Charles Ives).

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Interview with Mr Murray: Two

1. What is the history of The UWI Arts Chorale?
2. Are students always encouraged to arrange for The UWI Arts Chorale and Steel?
3. What is the history of the Must Come See Productions
4. What was your role?