

KEN'S CHOICE #12 – 29th May 2006

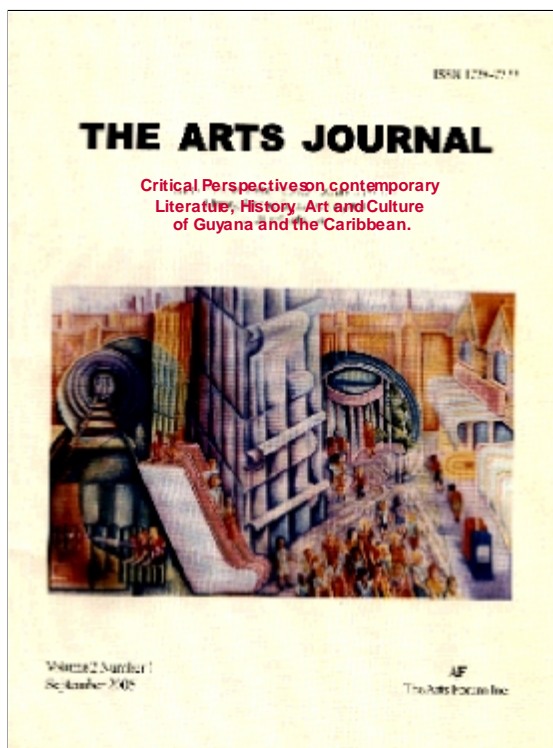
A website/journal of Guyanese & Caribbean literature.
and

A West Indian? Caribbean? Cricket? ANTHEM !!!!!



First to the sublime –

At last a website and journal that centre on comment and publication of literature of/from Guyana and the Caribbean. The mention of “Guyana and the Caribbean” is arrived from two points – it is edited and published out of Guyana and more importantly, to the outsiders’ perception, the mention of “Caribbean” does not always include Guyana.



Already a mother of three grown sons, Ameena Gafoor got her degree in literature from the University of the West Indian in Barbados. She almost disappeared from the academic scene for more than a decade while she was working on a study of the novels of Roy Heath at the St. Augustine campus of the UWI in Trinidad. Two years ago Ameena suddenly re-appeared but without much fanfare (as is the usual response of the Caribbean media and cultural systems, including Caricom) with THE ARTS JOURNAL and its accompanying website www.theartsjournal.org.gy

“The Arts Journal is devoted to the critical and scholarly study of the written literatures, the oral traditions, the visual culture and cultural expressions of Guyana, the wider Caribbean and their Diaspora. It is a peer-reviewed critical journal published twice a year.”

“It is hoped that the Journal will contribute towards deepening our understanding of ourselves as products or inheritors of rich and diverse civilization who share a complex history and a common humanity.”

And we need all that now perhaps more than ever.

The Editorial Board and advisors are wonderful examples of the depth of diversity, complexity and common humanity which is reinforced by a glance at some of the “scholarly studies” in the Sept. 2005 issue, where novels, poems and anthropologies are explained by the best of our thinkers and scholars from across the worldwide diaspora.

If you’re serious about discovering more about you and us, then take a look at the Journal’s website www.theartsjournal.org.gy and become a subscriber. You can’t go wrong with that.

Before going to page 2 and the bizarre..

KEN'S CHOICE is a sometimes newsletter type kind of thing that I send out to about 100 of my friends and associates (and one or two media). They make every effort to report on what I think are interesting arts/cultural people and events that get little or no media or official coverage. They are not meant to stir pots or create discussion, but if they do then that's OK too. Ideally, if you like any of them, please pass on to your own personal email list. In that way we “go out into the world and multiply”... and to NOT get further Choices, just reply with a NO CHOICE as the subject. No problem. E-mail me for a list of back CHOICES – all are available.

And now for the ridiculous, the bizarre, and as Trini's would say "*Is de same ol' khaki pants*"

A CARICOM/CARIBBEAN/WESTINDIAN/CRICKET ANTHEM !!

I sell the following as I buy it. I hope you can keep with it to the end of the page. I've used a smaller font size and done some heavy editing in order to fit in as many comments as possible. A couple weeks ago there mini-erupted a story about the creation and approval by Caricom of a West Indian Anthem. This juicy tid-bit immediately created its own ripples throughout the diaspora. Taking an idea from the world news television channel, I offer the following with "*no commentary*". ...

THE STORY – Report from *A new West Indian anthem was played for the first time on Wednesday night at the Hasely Crawford Stadium in Port of Spain at the start of the pre-World Cup friendly between the Trinidad and Tobago Soca Warriors and Peru. Composer Ernie Ross, a Trinidad-based, Guyana-born advertising executive, says it comes out of a need to establish a West Indian identity beyond cricket.. He is also Trinidad and Tobago's Honorary Consul to Guyana. One of the requirements is that the music be played on the steel-pan, regarded as the common Caribbean instrument".*

THE RIPPLES – "This looks, unfortunately, like a piece of crude self-aggrandisement. Awful lyrics anyway. Let's have no more of this egotistic, amateur 'artistic' private enterprise, especially from our country's diplomatic representatives abroad"

"This is too important to be arbitrarily decided by someone with absolutely no input from people in the region who will be singing it. A consensus could be taken as to what tunes are most popular in the Caribbean, preferably folksongs. In this way it would not be infringing on some one's authorship"

"It falls down however at the first hurdle and that is the complete absence of consultation. The artistic community in particular must let its views known".

"Am I to understand that the westIndies national anthem is to the tune of one of the movements of Beethoven's Ninth symphony ? ..unbelievable"

"Help..I wouldn't put it past the mimic persons. If dat is true, all i can do is laugh cause after pathos is bathos."

"Friends, this sort of arrogance is what sensible people around the region have been trying to get rid of for a long time. It is not worth my time. The lyrics read rather putrid

"Is the anthem going to be tasked with helping to bring about this elusive unity? The cart pulling the donkey? It might be useful to think of an anthem as emerging out of the unity process itself. As it is that process is almost exclusively in the hands of a bureaucratic class/caste whose primary and understandable concern is to ensure that "the process" continues forever - without ever arriving – ensuring careers for them and future generations - much as it has done for the past thirty years."

"Redemption Song" seems the most fitting anthem at the time. If ever there was need for redemption"

Ken's interjection - *At this point, I'm a bit confused. Is there a confirmed set in stone WI Cricket Anthem? And is there a proposed or a set in stone West Indian or Caribbean or Caricom "national" anthem? Read on my friends... As the world turns.. all my children.. ER.. Law and Order.. CSI..*

"This would be unbelievable. What "West Indies" are we talking about here?"

"Played only on steel-pan? Please tell me they joking, right?"

"What is on offer now is merely bland but if the option is a token appearance by calypso, zouk, reggae, chutney etc I shudder at the possible results. There is good, moving, uplifting cross-over or fusion music but it is not easily achieved and Andre Tanker is dead. As always, more questions than answers."

"I'm now told that CARICOM *has no knowledge of any other proposal for an anthem*. The whole affair gets curiouser and curiouser."