

Composition - Rhythm Run Tings

by Seion Gomez

Rhythm Run Tings was composed to directly pay homage to the men and women who make-up the section of the steelband known as the “engine room”. After having a very fruitful discussion about panorama and the elements surrounding its success, Mark Loquan and I decided to pay tribute, in song, to one of the most important but extremely neglected sections of all steel orchestras, the rhythm section, as it is here the vibe and steady pulse for excitement in the music is built.

In order to refine and define the melody of this composition, several popular individuals who greatly contributed to the steelband and the steelpan fraternity through their superiority on their percussion instrument had to be identified. The melody presents syncopated lines and passages, a true representation of how any percussion instrument is played. ‘Rhythm Run Tings’ was the third composition with Mark Loquan, as we saw the need to be consistent in developing a lot more music for the steelpan and the various festivals associated with the instrument. The lyrics were written by Gregory “GB” Ballantyne and performed/sung by Kernal Roberts, son of the late Aldwyn “Lord Kitchener” Roberts, the grand master of calypso.

‘Rhythm Run Tings’ was conceptualized and brought to fruition in 2016, right here in Trinidad and Tobago. Ironically, in August of 2016, Pan Trinbago honoured and awarded several steelband percussionists. This definitely gave us the motivation and confidence to continue working on our composition of that year. The tune was masterfully produced by Junior ‘Ibo’ Joseph and released to the public in early November, 2016, just in time for the start of rehearsals for the 2017 panorama season. My arrangement, performed by the NLCB Buccooneers of Tobago, placed third at the 2017 National Steelband Panorama competition, in the medium category. The final round of this competition was held at the Queens Park Savannah, Port of Spain.

As mentioned before, the melody of this composition was totally inspired by some of the leading percussionists who played in the steelbands of Trinidad and Tobago. Some of these percussionists include drummers such as Sonalal “*Killer*” Samaroo, Leason Jacobs, Leon Foster Thomas, Andrew “*Soca*” Brumant and Gregory “*Animal*” Pegus, just to name a few and percussionists such as Kenneth Clarke and Vance Romain. The arrangement of ‘Rhythm Run Tings’, created for the NLCB Buccooneers, followed the concept of having a percussion

ensemble playing odd time signature rhythms fused with melodic lines. At first, this approach seemed to be disastrous, as the band was accustomed to melodic variations. This continued for a while during the rehearsals until the band understood how the rhythms fit between the beats and became comfortable doing it. Eventually, the arrangement turned out to be dynamic, exciting and fiery, with the spectators enjoying every beat of the song, just as much as the players enjoyed performing it. The band placed third in the finals of the 2017 panorama competition, in the medium category.

See also:

https://trinidadexpress.com/news/local/men-of-iron-being-honoured/article_1b88f8de-d87c-51dl-al4d-7253c8f684e7.html

See also: <http://www.panonthenet.com/news/2010/sep/drummers-9-28-10.htm>

