



# *South Calypso Tent*

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## **HISTORY OF THE SOUTH CALYPSO TENT**

The **South Calypso Tent** was established and became an affiliate of the **St. Lucia Calypso Association** on **13<sup>th</sup> October, 1997**. The tent launched its first calypso season in **1998**.

### **MANAGEMENT**

The **South Calypso Tent** was organized by the collaborative skills and efforts of **Mr. Tony Wilkinson** and the late **Mr. Vivian Imbert** both from the southern town of Vieux – Fort. The co - founders, **Mr. Tony Wilkinson**, a **Musician / Producer / Song Writer / Arranger** and at that time a member of the **Royal St. Lucia Police Band** assumed the position as **Director / Tent Leader** and **Mr. Vivian Imbert**, who is now deceased was an **Entertainment Promoter** and part time **Radio DJ** assumed the position as **Director / Tent Manager**. **South Calypso Tent** is presently owned by **Tony Wilkinson** who manages the operations of the tent along with the assistance of his non performing members.

### **OBJECTIVE**

The tent was formed with the aim of providing opportunity for Calypsonians in Vieux – Fort and its environs to participate in national calypso and to help foster the process of decentralizing St. Lucia's calypso art form. Its objective is to promote the good and expose the ills of society through the genre of calypso. The motto of the tent is **To Educate, Uplift and Promote**.

### **FROM 1998 TO NOW**

In 1998, the tent was launched with much thrill and enthusiasm, having within its ranks, some experienced Calypsonians of the past Vieux – Fort Calypso Association in addition to a few new and inexperienced Calypsonians from the south. The tent's first **Grande Launching** was held at the **Vieux – Fort Infant School** which in the past was well known for the hosting of events of that nature. This launching was well attended and received great reviews for its organization and immense future potential.

In that same year, the tent achieved the **National Soca Monarch** crown and **1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up** in the persons of **Andrew “Yardie” Haines (Fèyè)** and **Herman “Fabulous Fonty” Fontinelle** respectively. **Cynthia “Singing Cinty” Collymore**, one of the first female St. Lucian

Calypsonians, became the only qualifier for the national **Calypso Monarch Semi – Finals**. The songs she performed at that competition were two well placed social commentaries called “**Back To De Arena**” and “**Spoilt All Because Of You**”.

Over the years, the **South Calypso Tent** has evolved and produced a balance of young, experienced and promising Calypsonians and is well known for having the best voices in St. Lucia’s calypso art form.

In **South Calypso Tent**’s initial stages, the **Windward & Leeward Brewery** through its **Piton Beer** brand was a consistent major sponsor of the tent and this relationship contributed significantly to the growth and development of the tent. There are many other corporate citizens and business houses who have and are still contributing through sponsorship and the **South Calypso Tent** is very pleased for their support and always ensures that we are worthy of their support.

**South Calypso Tent** hosted its first calypso workshop in 1999 when Saint Lucian and renown calypso composer **Trevor “Jah T” Anthony** of **New Wave/JAHRANTEE MUSIC PRODUCTIONS** approached its management and decided to offer his services in sponsoring a workshop to help improve its Calypsonians and other interested Calypsonians in the south. This workshop was held under the theme “**Calypso Education for Better Production**”. Subsequently, the tent has held other workshops in 2001 and 2005, using the same theme and has extended invitations to all interested Calypsonians and individuals nationally.

In the year 2000, **South Calypso Tent** ventured into the recording of its first compilation CD called **South Calypso Tent Live “Y2K Kaiso Exposé”**. This CD consisted of 11 tracks recorded live during the 2000 calypso season. This CD was co sponsored by Piton Beer and manufactured in Trinidad and Tobago.

The **South Calypso Tent** took a bold and innovative step, in 2003, when it hired the services of three (03) musicians from **Trinidad and Tobago** to complete the brass section of its back up band, the **South All Stars**. This process was successful and was continued for a period of years. We believe that this collaboration contributed to the unique, special sound that the tent achieved. During this period, the band leader was the late Trinidadian, **Mr. Keith “D’Jango” Mc Burnie** who was an accomplished musician, arranger and band leader.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

The **South Calypso Tent** has had tremendous achievements over the years including -:

- **Six (06) Calypso Monarch Crowns**
- **Four (04) Groovy Monarch Crowns**
- **Two (02) Soca Monarch Crowns**

Within these achievements, it is important to note the following:

**South Calypso Tent** achieved its first Soca Monarch crown in 1998 which was the same year of its first launching. This was won by **Andrew “Yardie” Haynes** with the song “**Feye**”.

The year 2007, marked the **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the South Calypso Tent which coincided with its first **Calypso Monarch Crown** won by female Calypsonian, **Menell** and she has continued winning and is presently a four time Calypso Monarch and the only female Calypsonian in Saint Lucia and probably the world to have achieved such success.

**South Calypso Tent** had the Groovy Soca artist who has created history in achieving the most consecutive Groovy Monarch crowns in Saint Lucia in the person of **Arthur Allain**. He has moved on to greener pastures and is now a six time Groovy Monarch of Saint Lucia.

**South Calypso Tent** created history in 2006 by introducing the first Calypsonian with a twist of Gospel (**Gospelypso**) into the art form in the person of **Nintus**. As the years gone by, it would be noticed that he made some changes to that approach and he later went on to win the **Calypso Monarch Crown in 2012**.

**South Calypso** has a reputation of having consistent qualifiers in the various competitions in Saint Lucia's Calypso art form.

**Most notably, the South Calypso Tent demonstrated its strength and competence by achieving the 2023 Calypso Monarch Crown through its Calypsonian, Deshawn "Tii Blacks" Augustin.**

## **REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

The tent has been graced with the presence of several regional artists performing at its shows, such as the late **Lord Zandoli, Lord Have Mercy, Mighty Bomber, Mighty Gabby, Brown Boy, Kinté and Funny**.

The tent has also had the assistance of **Mr. Andy Williams – Deputy Director of the Royal Barbados Police Band** and **Barbadian Calypsonian and Cultural Ambassador Mr. Anthony "Gabby" Carter** to facilitate its calypso workshops..

In 2000, two (02) of the tent's Calypsonians, namely **Mahandra** and **Dycer Fontelio** participated in the **Labour Day** activities in New York, as members of a touring group of Saint Lucian Calypsonians selected by the now defunct **Saint Lucia Calypsonians' Association**.

The **South Calypso Tent** was fortunate to participate in a cultural exchange with the **Kaiso Showkase Tent of Trinidad and Tobago** for the period **14<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2002 to 19<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2002**. Calypsonians **Mahandra**, and **Duval** from the **South Calypso Tent** performed in Trinidad and **Kinté** formerly known as "**Tender Spot**" from **Kaiso Showkase** performed in Saint Lucia.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

The **South Calypso Tent** continues to grow and develop and whilst it emphasizes on the quality of its product, it is utmost concerned of the state and sustainability of the Calypso art form in Saint Lucia. It continues to show its dedication to the art form by educating and promoting the

awareness and importance of this special Caribbean art form, Calypso. In that respect, the South Calypso Tent adopted the theme “**Long Live Kaiso**” and continues to use it annually as its theme for the season.

**“LONG LIVE KAISO”!!!!**

**Prepared By: Tony Wilkinson**  
**Director / Tent Leader**  
**South Calypso Tent**