

The superhero of sound

Kimoy Leon Sing

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NAVID LANCASTER comes across as your 'average Joe' but behind his mild-mannered exterior, breathes a superhero of sound.

Sound is life for this Diego Martin native, who now resides in East Trinidad, so much so, that even while during a recent interview with the *Express*, Lancaster wanted to ensure that the sound levels were ideal during the recording.

As a musician and sound engineer, Lancaster could not help himself when it comes to finding the perfect pitch since it is not just his livelihood but it is in his blood. With over 20 years' experience in both fields, Lancaster says his goal is to become the biggest music producer that combines music and technology. His love for music started at the tender age of five and blossomed into adulthood. Despite having the passion and raw talent, Lancaster could not afford to purchase the instruments he loved so much to play. These hardships did not deter Lancaster from pursuing his dreams.

As a member of the Bahá'í Faith, Lancaster said, "There is a scripture according to the Bahá'í Faith which states, the best of men are they that earn a livelihood by their calling and spend



LIFE OF SOUND: Musician and sound engineer, Navid Lancaster.

upon themselves and upon their kindred for the love of God, the Lord of all worlds."

This solidify for Lancaster to pursue his passion for music and sound engineering with fervour. He got his first shot in music production and sound engineering with music producer, Kenny Phillips. Lancaster says the experience was no bed

of roses, but it was the best way for him to learn.

Lancaster stayed with Phillips for a short time and went on to work at Proden, a small recording studio in St James, then moved on to Spektakula Promotions as a sound engineer for six years.

He noted that music has always been a refuge for him and assisted him in getting his feelings across.

He said, "I went on to work at NAPA as a media archive producer and audio engineering officer for approximately four years. During that time, I was getting my BTEC HND in Media and Communications and also got First Class Honours in Media and Communication from the University of Greenwich, and then my Masters in New Media and Society from the University of Leicester. While all of that was going on, I became interested in film and somewhat fell into it by accident. I saw a guy doing a live show holding a camera, and being the maccocious guy that I am, I introduced myself."

The chance meeting, provided Lancaster with the stepping stone he needed to further his career. Lancaster composed the soundtrack for the film *Back - The Man Spirit* which won the People's Choice Award for Best

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Short Film at the Trinidad and Tobago

Film Festival 2012. The following year, he composed the soundtrack and trailer music for the film, *fab In The*

Dark which copped the People's Choice Award for Best Short Film. In 2015, he was the sound mixer/music

editor for the full length documentary *Re-Percussions - Pan: Our African Odyssey* which copped Best documentary at the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival that year.

He said, "This year, I was one of the composers that worked on the soundtrack for

Tomb, the first sci-fi feature length movie shot entirely in Trinidad and Tobago. I often tell people if you want your film to win an award, it has to pass through my hands because I have the track record to back it up."

Confidence is key

but being able to work with others is priceless, Lancaster says.

"Someone could be very talented but if you have a bad attitude, no one will want to work with you," he added. Lancaster has also worked on many animation projects

which includes, The Old Higne, a collaboration with the Guyana Animation Network (GAN) and the Suriname Animation Network (SAN). He's also worked on a series of mobile applications with Trinidadian developer Anthony Phillips, including 30 Stories, 30 Days, and Designing for the Home Run King, about world record baseball player Barry Bonds.

He said, "When people think of film, animation, video games and soundtracks, they should think of me first."

Lancaster also teaches Music Production and Digital Etiquette at School of Business and Computer Science Children's camp for pupils ages 9 to 11 and 11 to 15. He is at present in discussions with professional drum technician Clifford Wesley, who has worked with a wide variety of recording artists including John Legend, Kanye West, Snoop Dogg, Chaka Khan, Madonna, Vince Neil and Bret Michaels to name few to expand on this project.

Fondly called "The Sound Guy", Lancaster says he plans to release two albums (mainly instrumental) for 2017.

Though some people might see his job as glamorous, Lancaster said, "It is hard work. Unless you love this job and love long hours, where you enter a studio and will be inside there for three days don't enter into this field. It is hard work like everything else. The pay-offs are great but how hard are you willing to push to get to where you want to go."

Lancaster credits JB Eckl, Roger Ryan, Anthony Phillis and others for putting him on the path to success.

He said, "It is important to network. Find Trinis outside that are doing well and connect with them. It's a good ice-breaker and it helps since we are operating on a certain cultural language. The second reason, Trinis on the outside feel a need to give back, and if they see you pushing, chances are they will give you a break."

Lancaster has his own company, LANCAST Limited which specialises in films, video games, mobile apps and animation.

For more information, visit the website www.lancasttd.com.

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