



PAUL KEENS- DOUGLAS

“Tim Tim”

Arts Department Organise

Recital of Caribbean Dialect Poetry
2-3 pm, 21 October 1980
Jehangir Room

Rum Punch on Sale

Paul Keens-Douglas was born in Trinidad but has spent his early childhood in Grenada.

He holds diplomas in Commercial Broadcasting and Radio and Television production. He attended Sir George Williams University (Concordia), Canada, where he obtained an Honours Degree in Sociology, and has done two years post-graduate work at the University of the West Indies, Jamaica. Active in drama from an early age, he has worked with some of the Caribbean's leading producers and directors, and has a wide and varied background in Theatre and the Creative Arts.

Since his return to Trinidad in 1974 he has done a tremendous amount of work in his chosen area of cultural concern—written and spoken dialect. He has published three volumes of his work (When Moon Shine, Tim Tim, and Tell Me Again), three L/P albums (Tim Tim, Savannah Ghost, One to One). He has produced a dialect series for Radio and Television in Trinidad, and produces the annual Tim Tim Show at the Little Carib Theatre in Port-of-Spain. All this while working as a Creative Director with a leading advertising Agency in Trinidad. His work has also been published in several magazines and has been featured on the BBC and on Canadian Radio and TV.

Writer, Poet, Dramatist, Entertainer all rolled into one, Paul is fast becoming one of the Caribbean's leading exponents of the oral tradition. His narrative poetry records the fast-changing Caribbean life-styles, weaving together popular folk-lore and beliefs, preserving many of those old traditions that are slowly being lost.

The remarkable thing about Paul's work is its wide appeal, an appeal that covers all classes and age groups. His distinctive styling and keen sense of audience response combine to reach out and touch that pulse which is the common heartbeat of Caribbean society.

That he is successful is an understatement. The tremendous popularity of his work throughout the Caribbean and the warm response he gets wherever he performs is proof enough.

A full-time artiste now, Paul makes regular tours of the Caribbean Territories and has represented Trinidad at Carifesta in Jamaica. He has done special performances in Toronto, Montreal, New York and London appearing with top performers such as the King of Calypso Mighty Sparrow, Jazz Saxophonist Oliver Lake, and the Jamaican Queen of Dialect, Louise Bennett.

A total professional in control of his management, talent and properties, Paul is a one-man touring whirlwind, an all-round media master, at home equally on television, stage, radio, record, in print or lecturing to kids and teachers.

There is no need to say much more, for Paul's writing and performance speak volumes more than can ever be written. We are fortunate indeed that in Paul Keen-Douglas we have an artiste who can so eloquently express his own work.

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*... like Shakespeare in his day, Mr. Keens-Douglas talks to (and with) the people. Hence the immediacy, that I venture to say, will be just as real and effective in 2078, because it is theatre of a calibre that mirrors our peoples' moods, manners and mirth in a way that is both reflective and vivid.

PELICAN, Barbados. Desmond Bourne.

*Keens-Douglas's profound respect for his Trinidadian dialect restores it to the excellence of coherent and articulate second language in its own right; some may well say Trinidad's *first* language, and they wouldn't be wrong.

BBC Caribbean Service Review. Andrew Salkey.

*During Keens-Douglas's readings, or rather performances, it was interesting to see him move from the oral to the performing arts. It became blatantly apparent that what was most needed in the Caribbean was a means of involving all our people in our art and culture. Some of us meet some of the people some of the time and others none of the time. Somehow Keens-Douglas managed to involve them all at the literary level.

TRINIDAD GUARDIAN—Pearl Connor—Mogotsi.

*Part of the reason (for his success) is surely his skill as performer, as a raconteur—every word is clear, well spaced, controlled. But there is also an obvious attraction in the insistent nationalism of his themes, if one can take the Caribbean for once as a nation; they hammer away at the process of self-recognition, self-acceptance, identity. Sometimes he is led by sheer enthusiasm into exaggeration; caricature, sentimentality, but at their best, at their most finely controlled, the pieces achieve a sort of bitter-sweet tranquility in which the callousness and cruelty, the brittleness and vulnerability, the beauty and tenderness of a whole culture are comprehended and celebrated.

TRINIDAD EXPRESS—Jeremy Taylor.

*Paul Keens-Douglas translates regional situations into incisive and earthy vignettes, and it is very evident that one of the main ingredients in his work is his ability to identify with all strata of the society..... in the midst of his sparkling wit, (he) seems to have unerringly put his finger on a truth which could very well unlock doors shut fast for too long.

GUYANA "CITIZEN"—Raschid Osman.

*The young went to hear strange yet familiar narratives, the old to reminisce and recall long-forgotten tale and songs, the Canadians to test their knowledge of Caribbean dialect. They were not disappointed. West Indians saw their dialect elevated to a respectable entertaining art form. The effect on those who saw it should at least be less 'putting down' of their native dialect, if not more open use of it.

CONTRAST, Toronto.

*... an unusual gentleman who vividly revived the art of story-telling, evoking Caribbean nights of ghost stories round the camp-fire...

Tim Tim was illuminating—what we could construe as ham is actually acting out the stories like a one-man theatre, and Tim Tim's an expert.

MELODY MAKER, London, Vivien Goldman.

