



The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
NGC Sanfest Launch 2016
September 18, 2016

The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited is proud to once again be partnering as title sponsor with the San Fernando Arts Council as they launch this year's NGC Sanfest.

Like the Council, we at NGC recognise that the Arts are critical to national development and, as a result, the Company has long played a supporting role in its promotion. In keeping with our Corporate Social Responsibility programme, we have sponsored groups such as The Lydians, NGC Couva Joylanders, NGC La Brea Nightingales and NGC Steel Xplosion and supported national festivals such as The NGC Bocas Lit Fest and, of course, NGC Sanfest.

The role Arts & Culture plays in Civic Life is revealed in the theme for the festival "Sanfest - A Divine Alternative to..."

The Arts are an essential component of a comprehensive and holistic education. In a very real way, the Arts create an alternative to a syllabus that focuses only on traditional subjects to the disadvantage of a student's development. Countless studies have demonstrated that involvement in the Arts can improve a student's math and reading skills, critical thinking, self-confidence, concentration and even motivation. Further, the Arts give students a medium for self-expression and for developing their creative talents. NGC Sanfest is a forum for students to showcase these talents, but also for them to improve through feedback and observing the work of others.

The Arts also serve as an alternative to fractured communities. NGC has long recognized that participation in activities at a community level creates a spirit of togetherness and community pride. Strong communities make strong nations and competitions like NGC Sanfest give communities a forum in which to celebrate the accomplishments of their members. Schools and towns can take pride, not only in those students who win, but in all those who participate and show their extraordinary talents.

Finally, the Arts can serve as a divine alternative to losing ourselves in the foreign cultures we are exposed to daily. Through the Arts we can preserve our national identity and get the youth excited about our local history and culture. At NGC Sanfest, the audience can be serenaded by steel bands, young Calypsonians or paranderos. They can hear the stories of

Anansi or witness local Folk dancing. They can feel the rhythms of Afro-Caribbean drumming or of Tassa.

With all these benefits, we must commend the San Fernando Arts Council for the vision to implement this competition so long ago. Even more commendable is the way it has been sustained and expanded over time. In the past 46 years, Sanfest has grown into a nationwide competition that runs for two months each year. It includes the visual, performing and literary arts and is the only festival of this scope in the entire country.

We believe in the value of Sanfest and, in recent years, the competition has seen an increase in school and student participation, as well as a growing media presence. Moving ahead, we wish to see the San Fernando Arts Council capitalize on this truly valuable product by increasing revenue generation and moving further on the road to self-sustainability.

Once again, we say thank you to the Council and all those who helped make this festival possible, particularly the students and schools who continue to impress.