



The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

**NGC Sanfest Command Performance 2016 -
Primary Schools**

November 22, 2016

Throughout NGC Sanfest 2016, we've said a great deal about why NGC sponsors the festival and the Arts. We've spoken about the incredible value of the Arts - how they can develop individuals, strengthen communities and preserve our national heritage. Today's performances, and all those that graced NGC Sanfest 2016, are a testament to this.

I'm sure most parents here have struggled with the following issue. Your children beg to take piano lessons, or join a dance class or choir, but after just a few months, beg to quit. So often, we take it for granted that if you are talented or skilled at something, it should come easily to you. However, that couldn't be further from the truth. Talents need to be nurtured and skills need to be honed.

The incredible performances that you are about to witness did not come without work. Many of these students have developed their talents through constant hard work and continuous improvement. Even over the course of NGC Sanfest, their performances would have been fine-tuned based on the feedback of the adjudicators. This kind of discipline is one of the many benefits of participation in the Arts and it's a quality which enhances all other aspects of their lives. Perhaps this is why it is so often noted that students involved in the Arts are more confident, dynamic and outgoing - and of course, tend to be the top performers academically.

Another benefit of NGC Sanfest is the school and community spirit it can create. It's heartening to see students come out to cheer on their classmates or to hear schools announcing their students' results during morning assembly. Communities also experience

excitement when seeing one of their own highlighted by the media. Papers suddenly become collector's items and parents are inundated with calls from friends, family and neighbours who see the story run. Articles like these uplift communities and here I really must thank the media for the increased coverage it has been giving NGC Sanfest this year.

The third benefit of NGC Sanfest is its role in preserving our national heritage. At NGC Sanfest, the audience can be serenaded by steel bands, young Calypsonians or paranderos. They can hear the stories of Anansi or witness a variety of folk dances. They can feel the rhythms of Afro-Caribbean drumming or of Tassa. So much of what makes Trinidad & Tobago a unique and vibrant nation is captured in the categories and topics explored in NGC Sanfest. Getting the youth excited about our history and culture is great news for the future of our nation.

It is because of these benefits - individual development, community spirit and national heritage preservation - that NGC sponsors Sanfest. Finally, we must give thanks to those who have kept NGC Sanfest running for the past 46 years - to the San Fernando Arts Council, NGC Sanfest Committee, staff and volunteers for their vision and dedication; to the schools and very specifically the teachers who prepare their young students for the performances and sometimes work assiduously to ensure their schools' participation; and the parents who recognise the value of the festival and encourage their young ones to be involved, and, of course, Mr. James Lee Wah to whom this year's festival is dedicated, for his role in the establishment of the Creative Arts Centre and the festival. Most of all, to all you wonderful students, we thank you and we hope that you will continue to nurture your incredible talents.