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thecornerstone



Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, Edna Ferber, thought that Christmas was more of a feeling than a season – and she’s probably right. Christmas conjures up an inner joy and sense of compassion that’s impossible to match the rest of the year.

Yet, we did manage to match the feeling in mid-October, when we rallied together during some of the worst flooding our country has ever seen. That, to us, is a fine example of carrying the spirit of Christmas in your heart the whole year through.

The Christmas season encourages us to open up our homes to friends and family, and to make space in our hearts for the less fortunate. This type of reflection is important, but our external environment also influences our outlook – which is why we’re offering some of the most desirable corporate office space on the market. See what’s available and decide whether new surroundings might be just what your business needs to start 2019 off on the right foot!

Every year, the Christmas issue of “The Cornerstone” tries to bring some yuletide cheer – this time, we take a look at some of the most enduring local songs that add that Trini flavour to the season. From ballads to soca parang, we think you’ll agree that “Trini Christmas is the best!” We’re also making our annual donations to our favourite charities on your behalf; check out the details in our “Christmas Corner”.

RGM would like to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and all the very best for the New Year!

What Came Out of **The Floods**

ON THE WEEKEND OF OCTOBER 19, 2018, THE RAINS MAY HAVE STARTED GENTLY, BUT – THANKS TO BAD WEATHER FROM THE INTERTROPICAL CONVERGENCE ZONE (ITCZ) – THEY SOON BECAME HEAVIER AND MORE PERSISTENT. IN SHORT ORDER, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO HAD A NATIONAL DISASTER ON ITS HANDS.

Roadways were submerged and mostly impassable. Many families were forced to abandon their homes, the floodwaters were so high. Social media channels were full of alerts, official warnings and shelter information, as well as videos of citizen rescues and other types of Good Samaritan deeds – and these, more than anything else, demonstrated our mettle.

In a crisis, Trinbagonians band together. We are there for one another; we show up to help in whatever way we can. Our



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country's Chambers of Commerce, for instance, were some of the first organisations to offer help, donating supplies of water, food and clothing to flood victims. Various religious organisations, sports clubs, schools, neighbourhoods and individuals soon replicated their efforts.

We were extremely fortunate, in the face of the Caroni River breaking its banks, that there were no reported fatalities. The floods also afforded us the opportunity, as a nation, to reconsider how we treat the environment through practices like littering (especially with plastics and other non-biodegradables), slash and burn agriculture, and poor development practices.

While saddened at the distress and losses that many people had to endure as a result of the flooding, RGM, as an ecologically responsible developer, is heartened that some good has come out of the situation.

Against the backdrop of a tough social climate, we have shown that we haven't lost our humanity, and we can endeavour to do better the next time around by adopting more ecologically aware habits. The choice is ours.



Sing We Noel!

A TRINI CHRISTMAS IS LIKE NO OTHER: THE FESTIVITIES ARE A MAGICAL MIX OF FAMILY, FRIENDS, FOOD AND FUN, ALL BROUGHT TOGETHER BY ONE KEY INGREDIENT – MUSIC! FORGET JINGLE BELLS AND SANTA CLAUS COMING TO TOWN; LOCAL YULETIDE FAVOURITES, FROM TRADITIONAL BALLADS TO SOCA PARANG, ARE FULL OF TROPICAL FLAVOUR.

Here are our picks (in no particular order) for the most seminal seasonal tunes...without them, well...it just wouldn't be a Trini Christmas!

1. Drink a Rum – Lord Kitchener

This is perhaps the most iconic Trinbagonian Christmas song ever. From the time the grand master of calypso belts out "Mooma, mooma..." we all feel like joining her "sonny" in the mother country, harsh winter be damned! Kitch, widely considered to be the greatest calypsonian of the post-war era, perfectly captures the alienation that the Windrush generation must have experienced – especially at Christmas – and deftly allows them to overcome it by holding fast to cherished cultural traditions: "Drink a rum and a punch a crema, drink a

rum... no time for shivering!" Even against the backdrop Kitch paints of a cold, grey, London Christmas, this song will warm your heart.

2. Oh How I Wish I Were a Child Again – Kelwyn Hutcheon

Trinidad's very own version of Frank Sinatra, Hutcheon's melodic crooning brings to mind everything that is unique about celebrating Christmas in our part of the world: between red poinsettias and pitch oil tins, the song is sweetly nostalgic for old-time Trinidad, and captures the magic of the holiday as seen through the eyes of a child. It's a wonderfully romantic staple that will have you swaying as you start your Christmas preparations.



Christmas Corner

Our favourite part of Christmas is the opportunity we have to do good for others. **On behalf of our tenants, we will donate a total of TT \$24,000 to three of the country's most deserving charities: The Cyril Ross Nursery and The Hibiscus Foundation**, which take care of both the medical and emotional needs of HIV+ children, and **The Lady Hochoy Home**, where differently abled youth are nurtured to be the best they can be, and to contribute their unique talents and abilities for the betterment of Trinidad and Tobago.

3. La Gaita – Lara Brothers

This colourful group is to parang music what Led Zeppelin was to rock n' roll. The song's Spanish title means "bagpipes" – but this is not the sound of the Scottish Great Highland. Instead, the lively string instruments (cuatro and guitar) draw the listener in, while the claves (known as the "toc toc") and the indigenous box bass that define parang, steadily hold the folksy beat of this Amerindian, Latin American and African hybrid. Even if you can't understand a word of Spanish, the brilliance of the instrumentation will captivate you.

4. Hurray, Hurrah – Singing Francine

The distinctive guitar riff that introduces this song will put even the Grinch in a happy mood. Francine gets right down to the reason for the season: "Hurray, hurray, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah they say, our Saviour is born today." Quite apart from Francine's saccharine voice, the genius of this tune is that its religious message is put to a beat that beckons you to dance, making it quintessentially Trinbagonian.

5. Hooray, Hoorah – Daisy Voisin

Not to be confused with Singing Francine's offering, this is the Queen of Parang at her best. Voisin's syrupy yet commanding voice takes control and steers the song exactly where it needs to go. Her Spanish is flawless, her joy palpable. When she chimes in with her signature "Ohhhhhhhhhh...", a penetrating note that lingers over the steady percussion and vocal hoots in the background, you wonder how there was ever Christmas without the exuberance of parang music.

6. Around My Christmas Tree – Lennox Grey

Whether it's the haunting minor chords and chiming church bells that introduce this song, the richness of Grey's voice or the imagery of a Caribbean Christmas, this is undoubtedly a favourite. It's a tune in which Christ's message shines through everyday yuletide routines – laughing children tugging at "Mr. Santa", the smells emanating from the kitchen, presents and presence – making the song one of the most requested for the season.

7. Ah Want a Piece ah Pork – Scrunter

The anticipation many Trinis feel about Christmas is what fuels this bouncy refrain from Scrunter, a calypsonian who happens to be really great at the soca/parang crossbreed. What does he want for Christmas? "A piece ah pork", plain and simple. No manicou, no callaloo, just give the man his ham. Interestingly, though this song deals with specifics, it's really about the sense of camaraderie, sharing and goodwill that happens at Christmas time.

8. Christmas on Sesame Street – Relator

This quirky, groovy little number immediately hooks the kids – and the adults get some giggles too. Told from the point of view of Oscar the Grouch, he's fighting the Christmas spirit tooth and nail: "There's no jolly good ol' Santa, you can take this tip from Oscar, there's no Christmas on Sesame Street." By the end of the song, though, Oscar has come around and is looking forward to December 25 just as much as the rest of us. It's a fun song that makes you want to sing along!

9. It's Christmas – Baron

"The sweet soca man", as Baron is known, perfectly melds soca and parang in this beloved ditty. From hailing out his neighbour and getting the "lime" together (complete with babash, Carib and Fernandes), to the joyous refrain of "Oy yo yo, ay yay yay", it's impossible not to get caught up in the Christmas spirit. After all, "it's Christmas...Merry Christmas!"

10. Christmas on the Hill – Johnny Gonsalves and Friends, featuring Nigel Ferreira

This song is Trinidad's answer to the "white Christmas" image that's permeated popular culture. The message is that love and family, heart and home are more important than the outer trappings of the holiday. An ode to the memories of Gonsalves' childhood, it's full of hope, joy and gratitude...and isn't that what Christmas is really all about?



Get Inspired!

Some meaningful musings on Christmas...

“Christmas, my child, is love in action.”
– Dale Evans

“A good conscience is a continual Christmas.” – Benjamin Franklin

“We are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmastime.” – Laura Ingalls Wilder

“Peace on earth will come to stay when we live Christmas every day.”
– Helen Steiner Rice

We've Got Space!

CHRISTMAS: SPACE IN OUR HEARTS, SPACE IN OUR HOMES – AND RGM EVEN HAS ROOM FOR YOUR BUSINESS! TAKE A LOOK AT OUR RANGE OF “CLASS A” CORPORATE OFFICE SPACE ON OFFER...

SAVANNAH EAST



This is business at its best: modern, energy-efficient, LEED-certified, Savannah East offers long-term cost benefits while doing wonders for employees' wellness and productivity. Being in a green building like ours means significantly reduced utility bills, while natural light, integrated green spaces, entertainment and fitness amenities (not to mention the view!) heighten productivity. All flooring is raised to allow for hassle-free data configuration, and you can rest assured that safety and security are top priorities. Another plus? The location is easy to get to, and borders all the main business districts.

- **Many options available with space on four different levels – two complete floor plates as well as smaller office space, including two subdivided spaces of 5,595 and 3,915 sq. ft.**
- **Available immediately**
- **Parking ratio: +1:500, visitor parking**

PRINCES COURT



This building has remained one of our most requested lease properties. With 64,000 square feet distributed over six storeys, Princes Court's distinctive mix of the traditional and modern is attractive, as are the building's top class facilities and panoramic views of the capital. As with all RGM buildings, HSSE is well managed.

- **Ground Floor – 5,985 square feet**
- **5th Floor – 11,318 sq. ft.**
- **Available February 1, 2019**
- **Parking ratio: 1:500, visitor parking**

NEWTOWN CENTRE



A great, hassle-free location for your company, especially if you need to be within close range of various business districts, support services and restaurants.

- **4th Floor – 2,648 square feet**
- **Available immediately**
- **Parking ratio: 1:500, visitor parking**
- **Ground Floor – 7,379 square feet**
- **Available April 1, 2019**
- **Parking ratio: 1:500, visitor parking**

All lease space is centrally located, with underground parking.

For further information, please contact:

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