



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**THE 34TH MUSIC FESTIVAL 2022 CLOSING GALA AND AWARDS  
CEREMONY**

**Message By**

**Dr. the Honourable Nyan Gadsby-Dolly**

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2022**

**4:00 p.m.**

## **SALUTATIONS: (Outstanding)**

- Mr. Jessel Murray, National Chairman, Trinidad and Tobago Music Festival
- Representatives of
- Officers of the Trinidad and Tobago Music Festival
- Awardees
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of the media

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

It feels so good to be back here with you, at a physical venue, to celebrate the closing gala and awards ceremony of the TTMFA's 34<sup>th</sup> Music Festival. When I addressed you during the closing ceremony for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Festival, I remember telling you that I was committed to fostering every avenue that is afforded to our citizens to share their creativity and talent.

I am no longer the Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts but as your Minister of Education, I am passionate about the role culture, and more specifically music, plays in education. In fact, the International Society for Music Education was created at a conference convened by UNESCO in 1953 because music was identified as an integral part of general education.

Allow me to point out that what the TTMFA was able to accomplish between February and April of this year, staging a fully digital music festival, was so much more than giving participants the opportunity to compete and win prizes. What you have actually done was offer your competitors the opportunity to establish themselves in the cultural industry and create consistent streams of income.

However, the value added by this Festival did not stop there. Other less obvious benefits are those that result from the production of

goods to supply the music industry and the creation of employment, driving innovation and creating growth in the overall economy. Indeed, the arts and cultural industries represent opportunities for growth and transformation throughout society.

I thank the Trinidad and Tobago Music Festival Association for providing the citizens of this nation with a platform to showcase their art, as a result of them understanding the role that music plays in the wholistic development of both musicians and consumers alike. Congratulations to all the Festival awardees and the winners of the Championships in the Junior and Open classes.

We are living in a time period filled with so much uncertainty. COVID-19 appeared suddenly and spread over the globe like wildfire, leaving a trail of destruction in its path- loss of life, devastation of families, unemployment, loss of learning, crippling of economies. Having said that, I think we can all agree that there are always opportunities for growth, even in our darkest hour.

It is human to hope, to try, to survive, to seek out ways to thrive. Out of our perpetual desire to overcome, we innovate. We find new ways to keep contributing positively to each other's lives, to our communities, to our nation, to the world we must all share. This year the TTMFA found ways to do all this by successfully hosting this

virtual festival and those who had the pleasure of experiencing it are appreciative, I am certain.

Now that we know so much more about COVID-19 than we did two years ago, our musicians are no doubt grateful for the opportunity to perform again in a safe space. By the time plans for the 35<sup>th</sup> edition of this festival are finalized, it should be back in its physical format, where the chosen venue can be filled with the sounds of sweet music, like it is today.

It would be remiss of me not to pay homage to the artistes that we have lost to the pandemic. We cannot in good conscious forget those who are no longer here to entertain us, teach us, inspire us and comfort us with their God-given talent. The musical fraternity is not immune to the scourge of COVID-19 but we remember fondly those who have left us with the music they created and we are grateful for that. Their music is the gift that they left us and we must use this gift to bring joy to others. Do not be afraid at any time to share this gift, however you can.

Finally, I wish all the recipients of awards and all of the participants success in all that they do in the future. I look forward to hearing many more success stories arising out of the staging of this event. May God continue to bless you all.