

GuyFolkFest.org

Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage

Monica Chopperfield

[Home Page](#)
[Search](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Home Page](#)
[About Us](#)
[Art By Guyanese](#)
[Awards 2011](#)
[Awards Nominations](#)
[Come to My KweKwe](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Family Fun Day 2011](#)
[Film Festival 2011](#)
[Performing Arts Festival](#)
[GCA Newsletter](#)
[Guyana Folk Magazine](#)
[GCA Supports Artistes](#)
[Heritage Summer Camp](#)
[Literary Hang 2011](#)
[Merchandise](#)
[Mother's Day 2011](#)
[Past Events](#)
[Press Releases](#)
[Sponsors](#)
[Storytelling Night](#)
[Symposium 2011](#)

CELEBRATING OUR CREATIVE PERSONALITIES

Monica Chopperfield: *From Baby Monica to Lady Guymine - via Lady Monica and Lady Guybau*

By Dr Vibert Cambridge

Monica Chopperfield was born on July 31, 1932, in Berbice and has lived in Georgetown, Linden, and New York. Her performing career started in a show produced by Zelda Martindale at the roofless Olympic Cinema on Lombard street. For that show she was billed as "Baby Monica". In the audience was her mother Mary Skeete, a singer of classical music whose contemporaries included Madame Fraser-Denny and Iris Grimes.

Chopperfield would go on to sing across Guyana, in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Suriname, French Guiana, Brazil, and the United States. She would perform in many musical genres, meet some of the world's leading performers and leave an indelible mark on music in Guyana.

Monica Chopperfield recalls travelling with shows produced by Zelda Martindale and performing in cinemas, halls, and rice mills. For the shows in the rice mills, the audience sat on bags of rice, and the empty rice bags were used to create dressing rooms.

After Martindale resigned from show business in British Guiana, Chopperfield joined the Sam Chase and Jack Mellow company and established herself as a ballad singer. After a period she joined the Syncopaters Band as the principal female balladeer. Her contemporary was Annie Haynes, and these two women became the innovative jazz and swing vocalists.

Monica Chopperfield ventured into calypso in 1966, when she participated in the Mashramani celebrations in McKenzie as Lady Guybau. The rest is history. Her prowess was noticed by the Mighty Sparrow, and for two years she toured with him and performed in his calypso tent in Trinidad and Tobago.

Over the years, Chopperfield's stage name reflected changes in the bauxite industry - from Guybau to Guymine. Lady Guymine has been recognized as one of the important Caribbean 20th century calypsonians. She was ranked Number 4 during the 1985 World Calypso Competition. She has a loyal following and is popular with Caribbean audiences in North America. She is a fixture at the Mothers Day shows in New York.

Lady Guymine considers herself fortunate to have worked with some of Guyana's most versatile calypsonians - '32', Lord Canary, and Lord Inventor. They composed some of her most popular calypsos. Lady Guymine has a special fondness for the creative space in Georgetown that includes Bourda, Regent street, Charlotte street, Wellington Street and Robb street. It was the location of cinemas, record stores, dance halls, and show promoters. Musicians could meet one another and observe various aspects of



Tributes

Upcoming Events

Vendors

Guyana's social, cultural, and political life. Lady Guymine has experimented with many Guyanese musical flavours and is particularly proud of the masquerade flounce in her rendition of 32's The Donkey Story. She regrets that Guyana did not give Tom Charles' Bhoom the respect that it deserved.

Lady Guymine is a true Guyanese cultural hero. She has received a national award from the people of Guyana and is a 2003 Wordsworth McAndrew Awardee. Lady Guymine is a grandmother with more than 65 years of outstanding performance history - Granny fit!

Sources: *Interview with Monica Chopperfield, July 19, 2003*
First published by Stabroek News, August 31, 2003

GUYANA FOLK FEST

GUYANA CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF NEW
YORK

1368 E. 89 STREET SUITE 2, BROOKLYN
NEW YORK 11236, U.S.A.

TEL: 718.209.5207 FAX: 718.209.6157

WEBSITE: www.guyfolkfest.org

E-MAIL: info@guyfolkfest.org



© Guyana Folk Fest 2003-2011
All rights reserved.