

Carnival Vocabulary

Mas (masquerade) Masked costume parade.

Sound system The large, black speaker boxes at the sides of the stage.

Jonkonoo A street parade with music. It has West African origins, as the costumes and conduct of the masqueraders bear similarities with the Yoruba Egungun festivals.

Calypso A style of African Caribbean music that originates in Trinidad and Tobago during the early to mid 20th century. It lays its roots in the West African Kaiso and the migration of French planters and their slaves from Dominica and Martinique. The lyrical and satirical music plays an important role in political expression.

Troupe A dance group.

Pan Steel drum percussion instrument. Steel pans are said to have been invented in Trinidad by Winston 'Spree' Simon in the 1940s.

Pan Yard Place where steel pans are made, tuned and practised.

Jumbee, jumbie or mendo A type of mythological spirit or demon in the folklore of some Caribbean countries.

Canboulay Enslaved Africans extinguishing fires on the cane plantations carried torches, sang and marched to the fields in what became known as the burning of the cane or Cannes Brulées.

Jonkonnu An all-male entourage in Jamaica of masked and costumed dancers, performing mining and a dance routine to music.

Fetes In Trinidad, fete describes a party with music, dance and food; from the French word fête, literally meaning festival.

Liming A Trinidadian word which describes a social gathering involving food and drink.

Moco Jumbie The Caribbean name for a stilt dancer. The character and the name are derived from various African sources.

Ole Mas A type of Trinidadian masquerade where performers wear cragged costumes and perform socially and politically satire (taking the micky!).

Obeah Widespread medicinal system in the Caribbean based on traditional therapeutic practices in West Africa.

Roti A creole food originating in Trinidad with East Indian migrants; a thin delicate, large and round crepe-like pastry filled with curried vegetables and meats and then folded into many layers, eaten like a sandwich.

Soca Trinidadian soul-calypso music or rhythm.