

# Online Calypso Rose seminar set for October 22

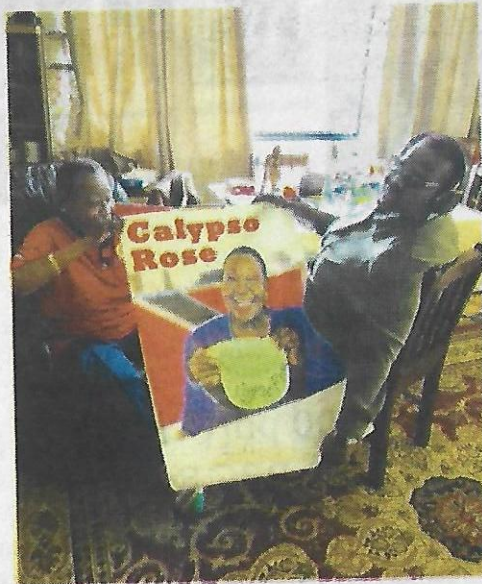
RAY FUNK

The University of Toronto is holding a special webinar, *A Rose Among Thorns: Calypso Rose's Life, Music and Impact*, as part of Calypso History Month celebrations, on October 22.

It's scheduled to last three hours, with three singers each doing two classic Rose songs, and four short academic talks.

The event has been organised by actor, playwright and comedian Rhoma Spencer, who has been a stalwart in the Toronto Caribbean community for many years (though she returns to Trinidad to launch her first comedy album and headline an event to showcase at Kafe Blue, Port of Spain on October 19).

Spencer was recently made an artist in residence at the Queer and Trans Research Lab at the university, and plans to create a musical on the life of Calypso Rose, to be given a staged reading next June. Last October she also organised a Calypso History Month online conference and when she approached the university about doing one to start her artist-in-residency



Calypso Rose and Rhoma Spencer

term, it was very supportive.

The programme will begin with three experienced female calypsonians performing Rose classics. Two are based in Canada – Macomere Fifi, who is the six-time Canadian calypso monarch, and Susan Grogan, a singer from Barbados who

is the leader of Neu Jenarashun, a soca band in Toronto.

The third is Stacey Sobers, the TT Calypso Queen in 2018, who will be the young Rose in Spencer's forthcoming musical next June.

She also is the lead in the concert at the Central Bank Auditorium, *We Love Kaiso Since We Small* on October 29. This is the fifth in the series of annual kaiso concerts that she calls Crackers and Cheese. She was featured at the 2022 Taste of Carnival performing GB's *Legacy Lives*, a tribute to Singing Sandra that Sobers commissioned GB to write.

Presenters of academic papers will include Dr Hope Munro who will look at the changing musical textures in Rose's music. Munro's book *What She Go Do: Women in Afro-Trinidadian Music* (2016) is a detailed study of women in calypso.

Andil Gosine, a York University professor and artist/curator, will discuss the new role that Rose has taken on in France over the last decade, with many live shows and working with her record label there, *Because Music*, with a new album scheduled to come out soon. Gosine has been in Trinidad for the

launch of his new book, *Nature's Wild*, at Medulla Gallery, and the first display of artist collaborations that grew out of it. Gosine also recently curated an exhibition at the Ford Foundation gallery in New York City which the New York Times praised as a "lush introduction to an international and multigenerational group of female artists of Asian-Caribbean origin."

Dr Alison McLetchie, who teaches at South Carolina State, and has been writing about calypso for years, says her talk will focus on "the complexity that is the life of Caribbean women and a female performer".

The moderator for the event is writer Dr Ramabai Espinet.

Spencer had hoped to have Rose herself participate, but she is recovering from a recent knee operation. This event is a way to celebrate her long career and hope for her speedy recovery.

*The webinar takes place on Zoom on October 22 from 2pm EDT/ TT time.*

*Registration is free and further details and the link to register are at:*

*<https://3ds.utoronto.ca/events/a-rose-among-thorns-calypso-rose-life-music-and-impact/>*