

Counting down to Seven

Dancers from *Metamorphosis* wait backstage before opening *The Lost Tribe* presentation of its band for 2018, *Seven*.



PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORY BY MARK LYNDERSAY

In the hours before *The Lost Tribe* revealed its 2018 band designs at the triple band launch at St Mary's Grounds alongside sister bands *Tribe* and *Bliss*, it seemed that Valmiki Maharaj, design chief of the band, was everywhere.

From the moment he arrived at the band's Woodbrook headquarters, converted into a series of make-up stations and change rooms, his eyes were on the details.

Just minutes after arriving, he surveyed the room, paused and declared, "This is a social media active zone people, so post, post post."

The muscular, half-naked men are no surprise in this environment,

where chiselled pectorals are an integral part of the decor for a Carnival band's presentation, but the women who look like ingenues awaiting their turn to become band models, are a surprise.

They are slim, lithe and surprisingly young, most seem barely out of their teens.

They are also all dancers who study at the Caribbean School of Dancing or perform with *Metamorphosis*, its graduate dance company.

The dance school and company worked with *The Lost Tribe* on its Carnival Tuesday stage presentation in 2017 and choreographer Brigitte Wilson created the opening dance sequence for the band launch.

According to Maharaj, the idea of using dancers to inform the design and present the costumes came early in the process. But, what will Maharaj say when people accuse him of riding the success of *The Dying Swan*?

"People will always talk," he responds with a bashful smile, "and if that's who they compare me to, well I'm flattered."

From the logo to the moment, the girls appear onstage wearing the costumes portraying seven sisters, the band makes a point of being en pointe.

For now the girls sit, polite and contemplative as they experience an adoration of their faces well beyond anything that would have been part of their experience as dancers.



Dancers prepare backstage for their performance at the launch of *Seven*.



Valmiki Maharaj opens his sketchbook to his earliest doodles of the imagery for the band's concept.



Valmiki Maharaj with the wall of concepts and photographs he assembled while guiding the band's design direction.

• Continues on Page B2

Finessing the faces

Romero Jennings finishes face detail and blending on dancer Mercedes Prevatt.



A makeup artist attaches the handmade eyelashes designed for the band's stage debut of the look created by Romero Jennings.



Professional colours and makeup guides from MAC were used by makeup artists for the launch event.

• From Page B1

The makeup design for the band's presentation is an elaborate and involved process.

It was created exclusively for The Lost Tribe by Romero Jennings, Director of Makeup Artistry for MAC cosmetics.

Jennings was born in Jamaica, and left the island at the age of six. He returns regularly to Jamaica and the wider Caribbean region and claims, quite proudly of Carnival in T&T, "I totally get it here."

Jennings created three looks for women across a range of complexions and one for male masqueraders based on early costume designs and colour palettes and discussions with the band's creative director, Valmiki Maharaj.

The makeup teams preparing the models for the band launch referenced the looks, each printed on a card roughly six by ten inches in size, which includes extensive notes and instructions for recreating it.

"Now that I'm here and I'm seeing the models, I can tweak the looks," Jennings said.

The makeup designer encourages masqueraders to use the designs as a guide and to consider their own skin tone as well as the specific colours in their costumes.

One feature of the event's makeup plan were glittering, handmade eyelashes.

"Val asked me what's the difference between this band launch and a fashion show in Europe and there's none," Jennings said.

"Those eyelashes are to give the models, under the lights, and facing cameras an extra pop. If wrapping their heads in tissue paper would achieve that, I'd do it."

Masqueraders will receive copies of the makeup look cards in their goodie bags, but they won't be getting the event specific eyelashes.

What will be available are MAC professional products,

which are brighter, more colourful and longer lasting, which the company will be bringing to local outlets in time for Carnival.

"We've never done that before," Jennings said, "not anywhere."

There's a sly smile on his face. Clearly he wants to see what happens when MAC's best and brightest meets Carnival 2018.



Valmiki Maharaj discusses movement and posing with Mercedes Prevatt as part of final preparations before the costumes are introduced at the launch event.



Romero Jennings records makeup on four male models at the start of makeup at the band's Woodbrook camp.



Mercedes Prevatt performs the costume Aurora at the band's launch.