



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LYNDERSAY



HOLDING COURT IN THE HEART OF MAS

ANRA BOBB, Carnival Queen and leader of a children's Carnival band organises the costumes for her 2007 presentation.



ABOVE LEFT: In front of dozens of trophies earned over more than two decades, Bobb reminisces.

ABOVE RIGHT: At Guaracara Park the band leader oversees the final fitting of a costume. Derek designs Bobb's children's band.

FAR RIGHT: Bobb admires Stephen Derek's sketch for her 2007 costume while the band leader and designer (right) shapes the costume from metal tubing and fibreglass.

BELOW: During the day, Bobb, takes a meeting at her job in the public service.



AT WORK IN FIELDS OF GLITTER

FOR AS long as I've been photographing Carnival, Anra Bobb has been there, on the other side of the lens, smiling serenely at the crowds in the Savannah, a massive feathered costume sprouting all around her.

This year, Anra wasn't in the Savannah at all, but as she stepped carefully through the muddy trails backstage at the Jean Pierre Complex to see her costume being assembled, there was no fuss and frenzy about the mess and the late arrival of the bits and pieces that would become Ohina, Lady of D'Morning.

The costume was strewn on the asphalt with desperate minutes to go before the preliminaries began, but from Bobb, sitting and sipping an energy drink, there was only the quiet serenity that has taken her to the national throne of the Queen of Carnival four times since she began playing mas in San Fernando in 1983.

Only the massive display of trophies in her home hints at just how long and how successfully she has been a part of Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival, amassing a shining wall of mementoes of a life spent in mas, 18 of them with her late husband Leslie.

At Guaracara Park, her band "It's Festival Time" is preparing for the competition and Bobb flits back and forth, gathering costume parts, escorting individuals past the competition ropes and generally being maternal to a grow-

ing crowd of excited children and their frazzled parents.

It's a scenario that plays itself out again backstage at the Complex, but this time, Bobb is at the centre of a busy flurry of workmen as they assemble her costume.

Other competitors have already crossed the stage, and crucial pieces of Ohina are still being strapped together or sprayed into place with adhesive glue.

Designer and band leader Stephen Derek steps in close and the crowd working on the costume parts before him. Derek grips the shoulder harness and looks at Bobb, then hollers for foam, which she wads into her spandex suit.

Finally, the costume rolls slowly toward the stage, Derek at his Queen's side.

Over the humming roar of the music he yells, "This is the only Queen I've never had to tell what to do! I do my work, she does hers!"

One by one, the workers fall away. The designer releases the costume.

Anra Bobb tests the costume's weight, gives a little wriggle and then gently sways to the beat of the music.

As the announcer introduces the costume, she bends herself into the shoulder harness and with a triumphant smile, goes to work.



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'I do my work, she does hers'

Stephen Derek



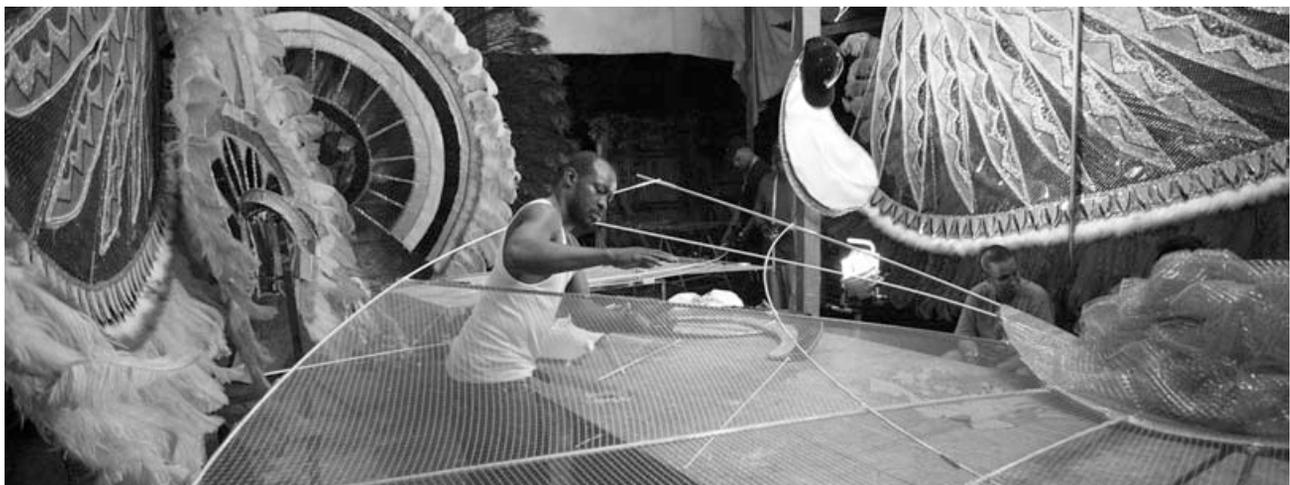
FAR LEFT, TOP: As **RODNEY DUNCAN** begins "papering" the costume's frame, Bobb looks on. She will see the costume's progress in big jumps over the weeks leading up to Carnival.



FAR LEFT, BOTTOM: **CAMILLA SANDY**, right is helped by a visitor to the camp. Sandy's nickname is "10" after her mother's sobriquet, "20."

LEFT: **JOYCE RICHARDS** glues fibreglass rods on "Ohina."

BELOW: **RODNEY DUNCAN**, surrounded by the crescents of the two kings and queens that Derek is preparing for competition, glues netting into place on "Ohina."



TOP: Less than an hour before the preliminaries of the National Carnival King and Queen competition begins, Bobb's costume is off loaded.

BELOW, LEFT: While Derek's costumes are

being assembled, Bobb's makeup artist applies finishing touches.

BELOW, RIGHT: **STEPHEN DEREK** fits the head piece to Bobb's head in the wings of the stage.



In seconds, **ANRA BOBB** will take to the stage, transformed by yards of mylar, feathers, glittering trim, fibreglass, and aluminium poles into designer Derek's vision of Ohina, Lady of D'Morning.