

HERITAGE CALYPSO MONARCH

CONTESTANT RULES AND REGULATIONS



- BOARD OF DIRECTORS -

Mr. Ken Jones - Chairman, Mr. Darius Burris - Deputy Chairman, Ms. Afesha Lincoln - Director, Mrs. Coryse Sobers-Roberts - Director, Ms. Hyacinth Leander - Director, Ms. Rheanne Moore - Director, Mrs. Salisha James - Director, Ms. Sherry-ann Byron - Director, Mr. Steve Jack - Director, Ms. Terrenca Parks - Director, Dr. Charleston Thomas - Ex-Officio Member

Registration

- Auditions are scheduled for Saturday, 4th July 2026, from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm and will be conducted as an open call.
- On the day, participants are required to fill out a registration form with the following information:
 - Legal Name
 - Sobriquet (stage name)
 - Address
 - Contact Information (Phone# and Email)
 - Song Title of Original Composition
 - Composer information
- Participants must complete the registration process between 10:00 am and 5:00 pm to be eligible for audition.
- Adjudication ends at 5:30 pm
- The organising team reserves the right to refuse late registration.

Audition Performance Requirements

- Each participant must perform two verses and one chorus from their original composition.
- The audition song must be an Original Composition aligned to the 2026 Tobago Heritage Festival theme, “Leh We Tell De Whole Story”.
- Songs previously entered into any local, national or regional competition will not be eligible for entry into the Tobago Heritage Calypso Monarch.
- At the Auditions **only**, participants may perform to instrumental tracks.
- The song performed at the audition **must be** the same Original Composition performed at the Grand Finals if the participant is selected as a finalist.
- Participants must present themselves on time and be ready to perform when called.
- Failure to appear when called may result in forfeiture of the audition opportunity.

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Finalist Selection

- A judging panel will assess all audition performances.
- Nine contestants will be selected from the audition process to advance to the Grand Finals.
- The nine selected finalists will join the reigning Monarch.
- The Grand Finals will therefore feature ten contestants.
- The decision of the audition judges shall be final.
- The organising committee reserves the right to verify eligibility and compliance before confirming any finalist.
- Finalists will be officially notified by the Tobago Festivals Commission Limited via phone call and email.

Contestant Orientation and Song & Number Draw

- All finalists must attend a **mandatory** contestant orientation meeting.
- In the case of an unavoidable absence, a contestant may send an authorised representative in his or her place. The representative's name must be communicated in writing at least three (3) hours before the meeting.
- The orientation meeting will be used to:
 - Review the competition rules.
 - Explain the judging criteria.
 - Confirm rehearsal requirements.
 - Confirm technical submission requirements.
 - Clarify show-night expectations.
 - Conduct the official draw for the order of appearance.
 - Conduct the official song draw for **The Old Brigade: Lord Nelson Tribute**.
- The order drawn at the contestant orientation will determine the performance order for the Grand Finals, unless otherwise amended by the organising committee for production reasons.
- The song drawn for **The Old Brigade** segment will determine the Lord Nelson selection to be performed by the contestant at the Grand Finals.
- A contestant who fails to attend the contestant orientation, or fails to send an authorised representative, will have his or her order of appearance and **Old Brigade** song selected in his or her absence.
- A contestant who fails to attend the contestant orientation, or fails to send an authorised representative, shall be deemed to have accepted any decisions, adjustments, selections, or changes made in his or her absence.

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The Old Brigade: Lord Nelson Tribute

- Each finalist must perform one song in **The Old Brigade** segment.
- **The Old Brigade** segment will pay tribute to the work and legacy of **Lord Nelson**.
- The Tobago Festivals Commission Limited will provide an approved list of songs from Lord Nelson's catalogue for this segment.
- Each finalist will draw one song from the approved list.
- The song draw will take place at the contestant orientation meeting, at the same time as the official draw for order of appearance.
- Contestants must perform the Lord Nelson song selected through the official draw.
- Contestants may interpret the selected song creatively; however, the performance must preserve the spirit, integrity, and cultural significance of the original work.
- Any request to change a song selected through the official draw must be submitted to the organising team **before the first band rehearsal** and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- No contestant may independently select or substitute a song for **The Old Brigade** segment without the written approval of the organising team.

Band Rehearsals

- All finalists **must** perform with the official competition band.
- Tobago Festivals Commission Limited will provide background vocalist however contestants are welcome to use their own, at no cost to TFCL.
- Each finalist will be allotted **two band rehearsals**.
- Band rehearsals will be scheduled by the hired band in consultation with the Tobago Festivals Commission Limited.
- Contestants must attend rehearsals at their scheduled time.
- Contestants must come prepared with:
 - Song lyrics
 - Key information
 - Tempo guidance
 - Arrangement notes
 - Any special musical instructions
- Failure to attend scheduled rehearsals may adversely affect the quality of the contestant's performance on competition night. Contestants who fail to attend rehearsals acknowledge and accept all risks and consequences arising from their absence, including any impact on musical preparation, stage readiness, and overall performance quality.

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- The TFCL will not be responsible for performance issues caused by a contestant's failure to attend or properly participate in rehearsals.

Technical Rehearsal

- Each finalist must attend one mandatory technical rehearsal.
- The technical rehearsal will take place either the day before or the day of the Grand Finals, as determined by the organising team.
- The technical rehearsal will address:
 - Stage entry and exit
 - Microphone use
 - Stage positioning
 - Lighting cues
 - Screen content
 - Audio cues
 - Performance timing
 - Band and performer coordination
- Contestants must submit all approved audio files, screen content, and cueing requirements by the deadline issued by the production team.
- All screen and supporting audio files must be submitted on a flash drive or through another approved submission method.
- Where applicable, a member of the contestant's creative team must be available to call any required audio or visual cues on show night.

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Media, Recording, and Archive Consent

- By participating in the competition, contestants acknowledge that their performances may be photographed, filmed, recorded, livestreamed, broadcast, archived, or used for promotional, reporting, educational, cultural, and historical documentation purposes.
- Contestants agree that the Tobago Festivals Commission Limited may use approved images, video, audio, names, stage names, song titles, and performance excerpts for:
 - Event promotion
 - Festival documentation
 - Post-event reporting
 - Media coverage
 - Social media content
 - Archive development
 - Cultural and educational purposes
- Contestants must provide accurate song, composer, writer, and performance information for documentation and archive records.
- Any special media or rights concerns must be raised in writing before the Grand Finals.

Audience Engagement and Community Board

- The 2026 edition may include audience engagement through a Live WhatsApp Community, live polls, audience comments, patron photos, and Community Board features.
- Contestants acknowledge that audience feedback, comments, and reactions may form part of the live event atmosphere.
- Only moderated and approved content will be displayed publicly on the Community Board.
- Audience engagement features will not form part of the official adjudication unless otherwise stated by the organising committee.
- Contestants must not attempt to manipulate, misuse, or interfere with any official audience engagement system.

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Disqualification

A contestant may be disqualified for any of the following:

- Providing false registration information.
- Failing to meet eligibility requirements.
- Refusing to perform with the official competition band.
- Performing a different original composition from the song presented at the audition.
- Using offensive, defamatory, obscene, threatening, or discriminatory material.
- Engaging in disorderly conduct or threatening behaviour.
- Attempting to influence or interfere with judges.
- Failing to comply with any instruction issued by authorised event officials.

Changes to Rules or Programme

- The Tobago Festivals Commission Limited reserves the right to amend the rules, schedule, rehearsal arrangements, venue requirements, or programme flow where necessary.
- Any changes will be communicated to contestants through the official communication channels.
- Contestants are responsible for remaining accessible and responsive to official communication from the organising team.

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Judging Criteria

The competition will be judged according to the approved judging criteria.

Original Calypso

Total: 100 marks

Criteria	Description	Marks
Lyrics	Assesses the quality and effectiveness of the written composition. Consider clarity of message, storytelling, theme interpretation, use of language, rhyme, structure, imagery, wit, and cultural or social relevance.	30
Rendition	Assesses how well the contestant delivers and communicates the song. Consider diction, phrasing, timing, vocal expression, confidence, clarity, and connection to the audience.	25
Originality	Assesses the creativity and freshness of the composition. Consider whether the song presents a clear point of view, a unique treatment of the theme, and original lyrical, musical, or performance ideas.	20
Music	Assesses the musical strength of the composition. Consider melody, rhythm, tempo, structure, arrangement, calypso feel, and how well the music supports the lyrics and overall message of the song.	15
Presentation	Assesses the overall stage performance. Consider stage presence, confidence, costume, movement, use of space, audience engagement, and coordination with the official competition band.	10
Total		100

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The Old Brigade: Tribute To Lord Nelson

Total: 80 marks

Criteria	Description	Marks
Vocal Delivery & Clarity	Assesses the contestant's vocal performance of the selected song. Consider diction, pronunciation, timing, phrasing, breath control, rhythm, lyrical clarity, and the ability to deliver the song confidently and audibly.	25
Musical Accuracy & Band Coordination	Assesses how well the contestant performs with the official competition band. Consider tempo, entry points, melodic accuracy, rhythmic consistency, cueing, phrasing, and overall coordination with the arrangement.	15
Interpretation	Assesses how well the contestant honours the character and style of Lord Nelson's work. Consider calypso phrasing, humour, storytelling, performance energy, and respect for the original composition while allowing room for personal interpretation.	20
Stage Presentation	Assesses the visual and performance quality of the tribute. Consider stage presence, confidence, costume, movement, facial expression, use of space, and audience engagement. The presentation should support the song and not distract from it.	20
Total		80

Overall Total

180 marks

The contestant with the highest overall score will be declared the **Tobago Heritage Festival Calypso Monarch 2026**.

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Important Dates

Activity	Date / Timeline
Open Audition	Saturday, 4th July 2026
Finalist Announcement	Wednesday, 8th July 2026
Contestant Orientation, Song & Number Draw	Friday, 10th July 2026
Deadline for notice of use open flames	Tuesday, 14th July 2026
Band Rehearsal 1	To be scheduled by the official band
Band Rehearsal 2	To be scheduled by the official band
Technical Rehearsal	Friday 24th or Saturday 25th July 2026
Grand Finals	Saturday, 25th July 2026

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