

Wayne Ricardo Gibson was born in Barbados where his main musical influences originated. He is mostly a self taught musician. Wayne started playing the bass and guitar with a friend in his local youth group. They all took turns on every instrument in the band- i.e. drums, guitar bass, and keyboard as they did not have enough musicians to play every instrument at their practice sessions. In his early days, Wayne found that Barbados was a good place to start a musical career as there were always gigs and it was possible to play every night if you wanted.

➔ Wayne's neighbour, Tyrone Clarke, had a steel band and Wayne would often find himself in the pan yard after school trying his hands on the drums before going to football practice. Tyrone was also responsible for giving him his first steel pan gig.

There was never a music book in sight; it was all done aurally, so Wayne's theory and sight reading was done by trial and error. Having bought the Royal School of Music theory book, Wayne started reading from page one until he understood although he confirmed that he would not recommend it as the way to learn but always reminiscence on his experience with a high level of fondness.

Over the years Wayne has developed a technique of playing the steel pan with four sticks – a method used by very few pannists. He has performed at various locations including cruise ships plying the routes from Miami and Puerto Rico to Curacao visiting the Caribbean islands along the way. Wayne confirmed, 'it was a great way to see the Caribbean'.

Wayne's first trip to

England was with the Desmond Haynes's Calvary, where he provided the after matches entertainment. Since then he has been traveling to and from the UK. He stated, *'having a base in the UK was a good way to see Europe and many other places I never expected to see as I was able to get a gig where ever I wanted to visit'*.

Wayne played a double tenor with the seven piece jazz band, Street Level, in Bournemouth for ten years. This was a real oddity at the time. He was also a session player in the south of England with many other jazz bands. For six years he played and managed his own band, SocaFire, performing the roles of singer and pannist. Lately he has performed with small combos made up of drums, sax, bass, guitar and steel pans. He feels as though he has been playing for a lifetime without a break.

His musical interests range far and wide. The musical genres of the Caribbean soca, calypso, salsa and reggae still top his repertoire. Although he thoroughly enjoyed his musical endeavors as a pannist playing Jazz and the



mellow Latin Bosa Nova. Pop, Classical and even Indian music, they all have some 'colour' for him and he has played them all using the steel pan instrument.

Some of Wayne's recent projects include: Teaching, arranging and performing in a musical concert for HMS Prison at Bullingdon in association with the Trading Face Theatre Group. It was challenging, rewarding and memorable. Musical arrangement and/or tutoring at Mudeford Junior school steel band, DEED in Dorset, TAPS - Traditional Arts Project & One World band and Southern Arts. He currently lives in Switzerland where he continues to promote the steel pan culture.

Wayne fondly remembers his friends whom he has played with over the years including S W Storm & Island Fury, Street Level (Jazz band), Mike Sealy, (Jazz guitarist), Lloyd Denny, Iqbal Khan Pathan (Taps), Rainbow Steel Band and too many pan musicians to mention. He stated, 'They all had a hand in making my playing most memorable and enjoyable. Keep music live as the musician union says, and so I plan to be playing for a long time to come!'

For more information then visit Wayne's website - www.socafire.com or listen to 4 of his original tracks at myspace.com/waynerg

Photos by Wayne Gibson

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