Creating *Nini at Carnival*

I was born and grew up in Jamaica – where at the time there was no Carnival – and came to England in my late teens to study law. It seemed unlikely then that I would later write and illustrate a best-selling book about Carnival.

In the mid-1970s the Notting Hill Carnival was just beginning to be established. I was immediately captivated by its spectacle and joyousness. The costumes, the music and the atmosphere of happiness inspired me to create a children's book that would reflect this celebration. I conceived of a simplified Carnival; a potpourri of costumes and musical instruments, and a complete absence of buildings, spectators or signs that would pin it down to a particular time or place.

My overwhelming memory of creating the book is one of domestic happiness, as I had taken to playing endless recordings of 'jump up' Trinidadian steel pan and soca music as I worked on the illustrations in my front room. I worked with pen and ink and acrylic paint on watercolour paper, but added texture by using a mixture of sand, crushed coloured glass and even white sugar to convey glitter and excitement.

Errol Lloyd

