

Machel cops 11th Road March title

■ Stories by Sherlan Ramsubhag

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Soca superstar Machel Montano keeps on changing Carnival record books.

Winning the Road March 2025 for the 11th time yesterday tied him with the late Lord Kitchener (Aldwyn Roberts).

It added to Montano's overall titles, bringing that number to 21 in all competitions over his career, and eclipsing the number of titles by greats like Kitchener and SuperBlue (Austin Lyons).

In addition to his 11 Road March wins, Montano has five Power Soca wins, two Groovy Soca wins, one Young King title, one Calypso Monarch win and one Soca Chutney victory.

SuperBlue has 17 titlesten Road March victories and seven Soca Monarch wins; while Kitchener had 11 Road March titles and one Calypso Monarch.

Montano secured the 2025 Road March title with his song 'Pardy', which was played 267 times at the judging points across the country, including at the Queen's Park Savannah, downtown Port of Spain, East Trinidad and San Fernando on Carnival Monday and Carnival Tuesday.

He will take home a cash prize of \$250,000 and a bmobile handset with an unlimited plan free of charge for one year.

Shortly after he was announced the Road March winner by Trinidad and Tobago Unified Calysonians' Organisation president Ainsley King during a news conference at the Queen's Park Savannah, Montano took to his social media pages to express his gratitude.

He wrote: 'To share this honour with Aldwyn 'Lord Kitchener' Roberts is a dream come true and quite a surreal feeling!'

He added: 'I am grateful to the entire team that worked hard on this project and the fans who brought life to this song! To the masqueraders I say thank you.'

Montano also encouraged his fans.

'I want this to be a message to all the hard people out there...once you put in the work you deserve a Pardy. Never let anyone say you're too young, too old, too good or not deserving of your blessings. Everyone deserves a Pardy!'

In an interview with the *Express* on Carnival Tuesday, he compared the Road March competition to a game of football.

He said: 'This is a sport, it's like the game of football. We on the field we already prep our team which is our song, we have to go out there and score goals. Have fun but score goals and the person with the most goals win. When we come off the field, we shake each other hands and laugh.'

He spoke about the other Road March contender.

'We have a competitor who is like a master, Bunji Garlin. He has a nice song and I like it, too. I just feel like my song is better equipped because you can sing along and it's not just singing about Trinidad and Tobago, it's singing about a worldwide topic and Carnival is global and that feeling that can corral all our souls together to jump and dance as one,' opined Montano.

Bunji Garlin (Ian Alvarez) copped both second and third places in the battle for Road March, with 'Carry It' being played 253 times and 'Thousands' with 22 plays.

-additional reporting by Essiba Small