

A documentary about music, politics  
and belonging in Trinidad & Tobago

# SWEET TASSA

MUSIC OF THE INDIAN CARIBBEAN DIASPORA

Directed by Chris Ballengee



## ABOUT THE FILM

BROUGHT TO TRINIDAD BY INDENTURED LABORERS FROM INDIA who first arrived in 1845, tassa drumming has become an important marker of Indian Trinidadian cultural identity. The film explores both musical and political elements of tassa performance, focusing on the life and family of noted drummer Lenny Kumar. As the story unfolds, tassa emerges as a metaphor for Indian Caribbean culture, rooted in India while also thoroughly Caribbean.



**CHRISTOPHER L. BALLENGEE** is an ethnomusicologist and Associate Professor of Music at Anne Arundel Community College (Maryland, USA). He has researched Indian music in Trinidad and the Caribbean community in Florida since 2007. He was the inaugural Diego Carpitella Visual Ethnomusicology fellow at the Intercultural Institute of Comparative Music Studies (Venice, Italy) in 2018-2019, which supported the production of *Sweet Tassa: Music of the Indian Caribbean Diaspora*.