

Regiment Band goes foreign at FCB awards

Mc 100

By TERRY JOSEPH

BAND manager Major Darnley Wyke later said blame should not be levelled at his musicians, but several guests at Friday night's Maestro Extraordinaire Awards were quite upset at the repertoire performed by the Regiment Band.

Dazzling in white dress uniform, the Regiment Band confined itself to foreign music, proudly playing standards like "The Shadow of Your Smile" at a function designed to celebrate long-standing performers of calypso, parang and qwesh (three indigenous forms) and Indian classical music.

The black-tie affair, held in the grand ballroom of Hilton Trinidad, was mounted by First Citizens Bank (FCB) in tribute to ten local veteran vocalists. The Regiment Band played two sets, one during dinner and later for dancing.

The orchestra impressed with its ability to interpret big band music, but given the moment, guests began to murmur about the inappropriateness of its repertoire.

When came time for a solo performance, the

selected musician went for his soprano saxophone and moved into the spotlight to give us his imitation of Kenny G, an American performer often pilloried by serious jazz musicians for his syrupy interpretations.

One astonished guest predicted that during the night, the only local composition we were likely to get from the band was the already performed national anthem.

Reports indicate that during the dance that followed formalities, the band then dipped into its pop, soul and rhythm and blues bag, performing works by the likes of R Kelly and Ricky Martin.

Interestingly, former bandmaster Edouard Wade is credited with radical breakaway from tradition of introducing calypso music for the march off at the annual Independence Day military parade.

Asked what inspired the band to choose Friday night's selections, Major Wyke on Saturday said he was equally surprised on seeing the playlist and actually queried the repertoire, but was told by the bandmaster that that type of music had been requested by the client—FCB.