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Sanch Electronix Limited Celebrates a decade of Pan-Yard recordings

1997 marks my tenth year of recording Panorama compositions in the panyards. It has been my practice to record the major steel orchestras during their final rehearsal before competing for the coveted title of "Panorama Champions." Although there are many reasons why I choose to work in the panyards and not at live performances, the most important ones are as follows:

There is no tension of competition and several "takes" can be made, especially at slower speeds where the beauty and intricacy of the arrangements can be appreciated and analysed for their content:

- it is generally possible to re-arrange players and instruments in the panyards to obtain the type of tonal balance necessary for recordings of reasonable quality.
- the stomping of feet, roaring of patrons as well as uncontrollable factors such as wind, make the production of quality recordings virtually impossible at the finals of the Panorama

only arranger in the history of the Panorama competition to achieve a hat trick (while simultaneously being on a hat trick of hat tricks). I dedicate this album to him and hope that I am around when he makes an attempt at the "beaver of beavers."

The decade in retrospect

1987 - I walked into Amoco Renegades' Panyard with my portable recording system. "Where is your mixing board and your multi-track recorder?" was the question. When I could provide no satisfactory answer, a significant number of bass players promptly abandoned their instruments during the midst of the recording of *Pan In 'A' Minor*. "What am I doing here?" I cried in anguish. "Getting your feet wet!" said a friend, Peter Beckles. In spite of that trauma, Sanch released its first compact disc on the Delos label later that year.

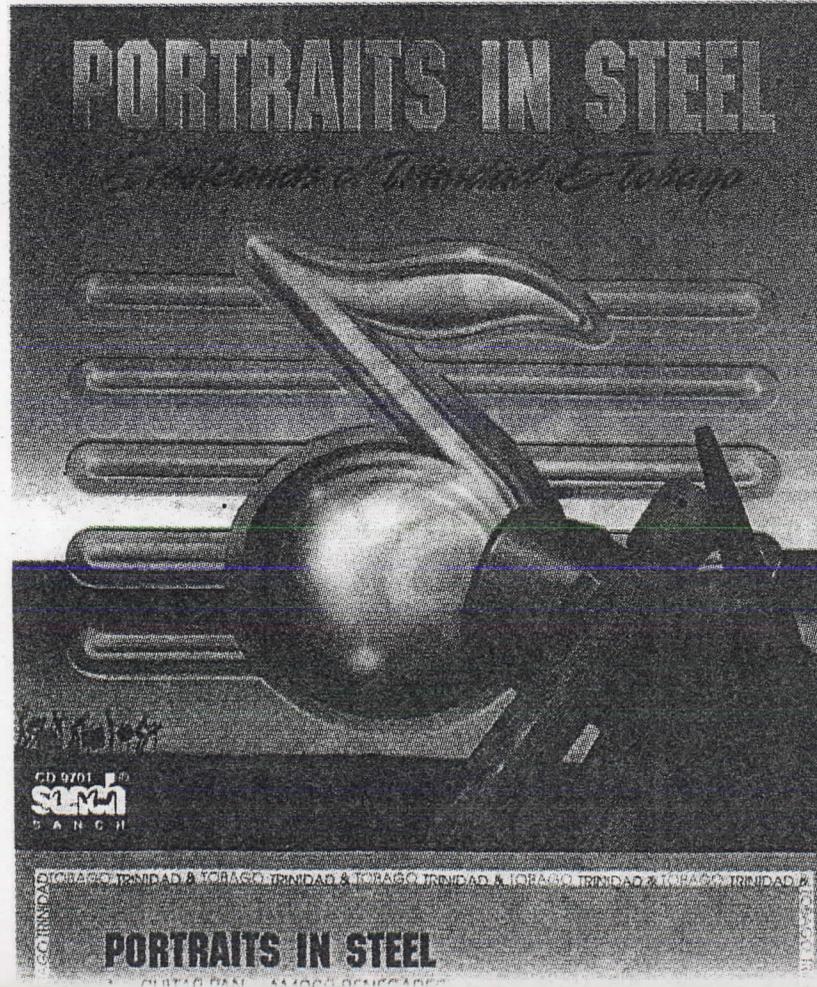
1988 - Keith Matthews of Trinidad All Stars quipped "Somebody will win this Panorama!" It was the year that as many as

loudness and power.

1992 - "If you win this Panorama I will kill a pig" I said to Amin Mohammed, I was made to eat my words and my pig at Exodus' Panyard a few weeks later. They had won the competition with a blistering performance of Pelham Goddard's *Savannah Party*. When members of The Desperadoes fraternity turned up at our celebration. I knew that the time had come when panmen were at war only in the musical sense.

1993 - Jit Samaroo returned with a vengeance to record his sixth victory in the Panorama competition with a formidable performance of *Mystery Band* composed by Kitchener. I have always marvelled at the chemistry that exists between Kitch and Jit. In summary, Jit says "Kitchener's unique chord progressions and rhythmic patterns are best suited to my style of arranging."

1994 - This year was highlighted by Ray Holman's arrangement of *Panic* for Phase II Pan Group in the absence of



~ Does our Music Industry have a future? ~

Trinidad and Tobago, who are we? Many times when confronted with this question we take the opportunity to boast about our rich cultural heritage. The land of Steelband and Calypso, among other things. However, it is ironic to know that outside of the short Carnival period and the Panorama hype, for nine (9) to ten (10) months of the year, one can only tune in to hear the sweet sounds of our national instrument if one is awake for the graveyard shift.

The question can therefore be asked: "What is the future of our local music industry?" As one of the main payers and the principal producer of digital steelband recordings, my response is that the industry faces uncertain future unless positive action is taken at the national level. Such action should ensure that local music is given adequate exposure and promotion.

Developed countries have done so for posterity and for the economic well being of the industry. For example, in Canada and France, government stipulations exist where radio stations must incorporate a minimum 40% indigenous music in their programming. Needless to say in these countries local music is a booming industry and contributing significantly to Gross National Product. The average songwriter in England earns 4,000 pound (TT\$40,000) annually, his counterpart in Trinidad and Tobago earns a mere TT\$300. There is a great deal of talk about promoting our culture on the international

all the popular Caribbean rhythms is being actively promoted in Europe. Unfortunately, this project seems destined to failure in Trinidad and Tobago because these soundtracks are not being aired by our very own radio stations. This in spite of the fact that they have been adequately supplied with promotional copies. How does one face a foreign investor with such a predicament?

I think the worst culprit of all is the entity which is funded by taxpayers and which gives only token support to the promotion of local culture. Instead of setting the pace and standard, this network broadcasts a fare that is as foreign as it is unpalatable. The buck must stop here! Certainly, all our radio stations should feel morally obliged to increase the amount of indigenous music broadcast.

The benefits of doing this extend beyond the pride and self worth of the composers, performers, musicians, technicians and engineers all contributing to the National Income. Every Trinidadian and Tobagonian will also have the opportunity, far from the madding crowd, to really savour the richness of current and past calypso gems which were not on the party scene, in addition to the nuances of Panorama arrangements played at a relaxed tempo. Perhaps the greatest benefit of all is the establishment of a viable industry capable of delivering world class products. In England the music industry is second only to the steel industry in its

