

Fonclare scores big with first jazz concert

By YVONNE WEBB

ONCE AGAIN, pan aficionados in the south missed out on a great show last Friday at the Naparima Bowl. The occasion was Fonclare Steel Orchestra's first annual jazz concert featuring Andre Tanker and One World Contraband, Carlton Zanda, Ken "Professor" Philmore and friends together with host, Fonclare.

The concert, according to Chairman, Frederick Bowen, is the initial thrust of their community outreach programme. The concept was the brainchild of Vice Captain, Wayne Harewood, who, looking at the crossroads the band has reached, decided they needed to do something radical to project the band.

The initial intention was to stage the jazz show on the San Fernando Hill, but this failed to materialise for financial and infrastructural reasons.

The objectives of the community programme are, Bowen explained: to erect a community centre next to the panyard on Dottin Street; to facilitate two members the opportunity to pursue a course in music at UWI; to launch an annual signal event in the City of San Fernando; to attract both local and foreign patronage; and to honour outstanding contributions by individuals in the development of Fonclare and the steelband movement in Trinidad and Tobago.

Before a small crowd at the Bowl on Friday, the curtains came up to showcase the talent of Darrin Sheppard and Anthony Pierre from the Canadian band Calabash. The duo wowed the audience with their jazz fusion. They were later joined by host Fonclare to deliver several renditions from jazz, to rhythm and blues and calypso, which were well received by the appreciative audience.

Following this satisfying fare, there was a break to pay tribute and honour persons who have made ster-

ling contributions to the development of Fonclare.

Among those honoured were: Nicholas "Nicky" Iniss, former CEO of Fernandes Vat 19 Company Limited, Fonclare's sponsor for over 15 years; founder and present manager of the band, Milton 'Wire' Austin; Rudin Austin, former arranger; Ken "Professor" Philmore, another former arranger, and several other outstanding members of the band and of the community.

With the formalities over, Master of Ceremonies, Frederick Bowen, introduced Carlton Alexander, pioneer of the Pan/Jazz/Calypso fusion, along with the Calabash duo of Sheppard and Pierre. Together, the three weaved their spell-binding magic on the audience, captivating them with six scintillating pieces that left one wanting for more.

When it was over, the trio were introduced individually to the audience which responded with a standing ovation and sustained applause. That took them through intermission with a renewed desire for the second half.

The intention was not to disappoint, and the curtains went up to reveal the man who has earned the right to be called "Professor" of his craft, Ken Philmore.

For forty minutes he thrilled his fans and at the end they were still not satiated. Coming after such an invigorating performance, was a test the next artiste, renowned musician Andre Tanker and his band, passed with flying colours. Performing some of their old and new hits, Tanker and Contraband took their followers to a higher level, culminating with Andre on his mouth organ in a pan shoot out with "Professor" and the Calabash duo.

In the end, patrons were begging for a repeat. Something which Fonclare's committee is considering