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Striking up a conversation in pan

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AMOCO Renegades star tenor pannist Brian "Tiki" Brumant is currently in Japan conducting a two month pan workshop in Japan. The 29-year-old musician and aspiring arranger is expected to do at least 20 weekend workshops, each lasting almost three hours.

Conversation, a promotional outfit in Japan that explores ethnic cultures, is the organisation responsible for Tiki's visit to the Land of the Rising Sun. The company has had previous experience with pan. In 1992, Conversation initiated a working relationship with Renegades. Pleased with this trial, the relationship was further developed the following year. Last year, furthering its knowledge of pan, Conversation collaborated the Samaroo Jets Steel Orchestra.

Members of both Renegades and Samaroo Jets conducted workshops in Japan thus paving the way for this year's exercise.

When the management of Conversation realised the benefits to be derived from understanding pan in its many facets, officials first approached Jit Samaroo to conduct the workshops. Jit turned down the offer primarily because of the onerous task of keeping Renegades vast repertoire constantly updated. Jit also felt he should afford the musicians of Rene-

gades the opportunity to express and develop the talent, knowledge and skills they developed over the years. This unselfishness provided the break for Tiki to travel to Japan before the band and teach the Japanese a thing or two about our national instrument.

With that repertoire almost fine tuned, Renegades is scheduled to embark on yet another Japanese tour on August 16, this time consisting of a 21-member team.

Tiki made his debut to the Big Yard while still a student, in 1983, attending Belmont Junior Secondary School, a band assisted by Renegades in the Pan Minors Panorama. He started playing with Renegades at the age of 14, has been a member of the band for the past 15 years. Being one of the band's ambitious, zealous members, he worked very closely alongside Jit, who has taken the Charlotte Street band to seven National Panorama titles in the shortest period ever in the history of pan.

Fondly referred to as Brian "Tiki" in the panyard, Tiki has studied music, up to Grade 8 in the Royal School of Music syllabus of examination.

Tiki's virtuoso on pan has also landed him into the recording studio, accompanying calypsonians. For Commentor's 1990 tribute to Renegades, entitled "Renegades, Band of the '90s," Tiki was joined by his brother Andrew

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"Soca" Brumant and current Renegades vice-captain Selwyn "Snail" John. Tiki did four solos on that single. He has also worked with Kitchener, Crazy and Scrunter.

Commenting on the success of his band, as well as Tiki's Japanese visit, Renegades chairman Steve Grant said: "I hope this brings about a greater awareness of the need for music and musicianship in pan in Renegades."

Grant described Tiki's teaching stint as one of pioneering dimension, adding that, beside groups inviting our popular pannists to perform, it's usually tuners and technical pan personel who are invited to teach. Grant said: "Not too long ago, we had a Nigerian team come to Trinidad to partake in a major pan-tuning apprenticeship programme, hosted by Pan Trinbago and the Ministry of Culture at UWI.

Former Renegades manager/PRO Michael Marcano said: "Brian has been given a lucky break to use his ability to do something for his self esteem. Also comprehensiveness would prevail. He hope that Brian's success will in turn bring about such, or even greater avenues for the young people in Renegades with musical background."

Among other young Renegades members who are making strides in the pan world are 21-year-old Edsil Mario Joseph, and 28-year-old Andy Neils,

with both developing themselves as tuners/pan-makers.

Tiki hopes to have his students music-ready after 15 classes. He said the first thing he intends teaching them is the National Anthem of Japan. So confi-

dent his he in his teaching ability and the enthusiasm of his students, Tiki has promised that his class will be able to perform "something" for the members of Renegades when the band arrives in Japan in August.

The workshops will be

held at a community-based cultural centre. He said that the prime objective of his course would be to develop a greater awareness of the theoretical and practical aspect of our national instrument among the young people of Japan.