

Soca Monarch set for fantastic finale

Shal Marshall and Screws' Police sent the Arima crowd into an uproar even before they sang the first note. The occasion was the bmobile Blackberry Soca Monarch & the Play Whe Groovy Soca Monarch semi-final round, held at the Arima Velodrome on Sunday evening. The duo will certainly be a strong contender for the Road March title, as they made it look easy to move the massive audience. **SEE PAGE B3**

Trevor's got the edge on J'Ouvert >>

The place was "ram" when Trevor's Edge launched its J'Ouvert band, The Issues Live, on Saturday night. It's the second J'Ouvert presentation from the Eastern "culture capital," home to live calypso and numerous entertainment events. Last year's debut presentation attracted many fun-loving patrons of the eight-year-old bar and restaurant, which prides itself on its family vibe. **SEE PAGE B12**



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HATHAWAY TO ANNOUNCE OSCAR NOMINATIONS —PAGE B21



Silver Stars |

COMING EVENTS

Digicel Lyric & Song Caravan rolls into Couva

Excitement and anticipation filled the packed hall at Holy Faith Convent, Couva, last week Thursday, when students gathered to hear songs and motivational tips from Alison Hinds and Jaydee, as the Digicel Lyric & Song Caravan rolled out to schools across the country. The event was also carried live on radio.

The annual event is an opportunity for role models in the music industry to deliver inspirational messages and knowledge to their young fans and to give the students a chance to get up close with their stars.

First to appear was gospel artiste Jaydee, who urged the girls to stay positive and protect their dignity. He was followed by Hinds, who reinforced in the girls that they are intelligent, beautiful, educated and strong. Hinds encouraged them to always keep on the right path and challenged them to always keep in mind that although tough situations may arise, they do have the inner strength needed to cope.

In addition, two students, as a prize from a recent school competition, were each given the opportunity to perform a song. The girls were critiqued by Jaydee and Hinds, who impressed upon them that they had to work for what they wanted to achieve and that they should aim to deliver their best at every turn.

Students were also given tips from Officer Percell of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service on

proactive safety measures for the Carnival season.

Digicel communications manager, Penny Gomez, who expressed satisfaction with the positive messages that students received from the star performers, said: "Digicel is interested in the all-round development of the youth and Digicel Lyric & Song continues to be an important instrument for instilling positive attitudes in our young people."

Digicel Lyric & Song Caravan will continue for the next three weeks at educational institutions throughout the country.

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Savannah Party on Sunday... It's all about the Track

By D ANTHONY BLACKMAN

As they approach the top turn, town say Smooth is it. The gurus say his move may be a bit late, causing him to swing wide when outrunning Desperadoes, who has been showing ten Commandments form, with the recycled duo Solo Harmonites and odds-on favourite Silver Stars all bunched in the lead pack.

In the corner of your screen, though, the Army of pan music gets on the rails with a tight rein and a strong gallop, poised to steal a march as they enter the home stretch.

For those who may be too young or out of touch with your history, the Savannah and the Grand Stand were once the home of local horse racing. The Carnival/Panorama big stage was in the vicinity of the winning pole.

The top turn and nine furlong shoot were located just where most bands turn and face west when heading towards the stage. And, the

area around the tree, close to the Jerningham Avenue entrance, where Despers usually settles, was the start of the one-mile and 130 yards races.

From time immemorial, all the theatre and drama of mas and steelband unfolded in this exact space, hence the reason why so many of us love Panorama on the "Track."

Pan baby Destra

Hot soca diva Destra Garcia, in a recent interview with When Steel Talks, makes some interesting allusions to Steel Pan and the sweetness of the Track, and takes us through her pan experience as a child, and as an acclaimed performer thus far. She's from Laventille.

Her uncles, who played in Despers, introduced her to playing pan and Panorama. She did pan songs while at school, her first pan recording being with Andre Tanker. She sang about the melodies and the symphonies, and how it makes you move.

As a ritual, Destra wore a Despers T-shirt to school every

Carnival Friday and was very present when the band came down from the hills and overwhelmed the Savannah with its massive support.

She distinctly relished the differing compositions and arrangements of the songs and, as she explained it, she understood the emotion that is pan and the thrill of going to Panorama.

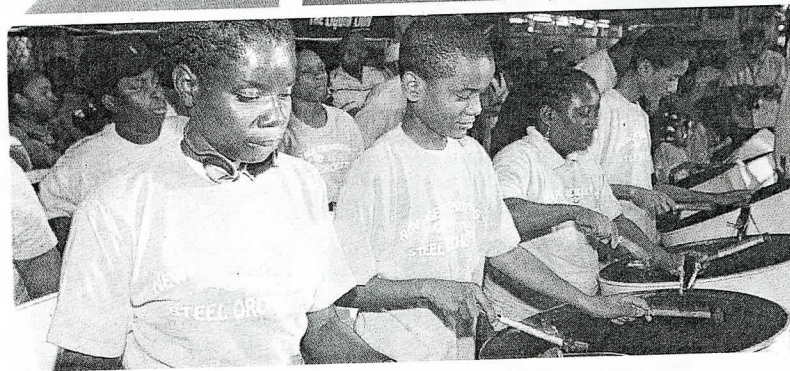
Rewind and surrender

Destra was still with child at this interview, and she was very much in touch with what's happening in steelpan and Panorama, as reflected in her sell of her 2010 pan songs, Surrender and Rewind.

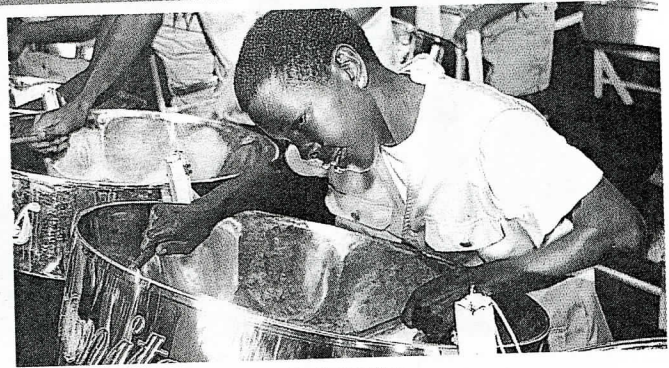
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Destra Garcia



New Age Trendsetters



Solo Harmonites

'Pan till I die'

■ From Page B1

She says to surrender is all about letting go and letting pan music take control—to get the feeling of the pan taking you where you want to go, where you can release everything—about loving pan music more than the party songs and the big trucks, and taking the music back to the top, right where it used to be.

She wants the people who prefer to jump and wave to feel the elements of pan and make it move them. She sees pan as a woman scorned, wanting to go back to the way things used to be—a woman without love, who feels sadness, who feels dead, replaced by something or someone new.

Destra says in Rewind, where she supports Boogsie's "pan is dead" lament, she aims to get back the sentiments of old, like the times when she went to Panorama with her uncles. She also confesses that her main area of music is seen as one of the things that is killing pan.

She appeals to her younger fans, and youth in general, who, figuratively speaking, "doh like pan," saying, "young people need to experience that. To me that means they need to second the emotion that is pan, and come Panorama to wine and jam."

Property tax on the Track?

The ideal setting for the staging and performance of that level of drama is nowhere else but on the Track. But, there are some doubts that at the end of this fairy tale we shall live happily ever after, because there is word that apart from charging patrons a fee to enjoy the it, they intend to make life more difficult, by curtailing one's movements to and from the track.

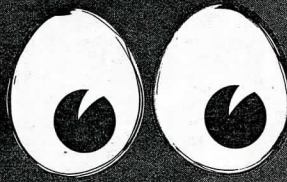
It may be a bit late, but it is advisable that the governing body properly market this—I believe—second attempt to earn revenue from the street theatre on the Track.

Be transparent; tell the public what, how and why you are going this way. Learn from your mistakes, for example, the fiasco when you attempted the entrance from the Victoria Avenue end, with bands exiting on the Track, and the two finals in San Fernando, where the absence of a track atmosphere bore most of the blame for the poor attendance. Those Panoramas were all declared dead.

"Pan till I die" folks love to chip, push pan, and pass through the bands and maco, as Destra puts it, hearing the different compositions and arrangements of the songs.

If the new administration's plan to alter the Track culture, and raise plenty money by casting the financial net over the track, is not carefully done, a significant chapter for these agents of change will get the thumbs down.

The idea seems all good, but it has to be packaged and pre-sold to the Diaspora, otherwise the delivery will be hampered by the usual lack of vision and the poor strategic and management skills.



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being prepared is key...



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