

The 'Hell Yard' story

From the moment we came off stage, we knew we had won — secretary

By VALENTINO SINGH

THE criticism were harsh, and they came fast. Catelli Trinidad All Stars was desperately lacking in form, and something of a miracle would have to be provided if they were to win the 1986 National Panorama title.

When they completed the preliminaries of this year's competition, not even their most ardent supporters were prepared to put money on the band from Hell Yard on Duke Street.

Certainly their rendition of David Rudders 'Hammer' in the North competition was better, but the consensus was that a straight fight was in the making between Len 'Boogie' Sharpe's 'Pan Rising' which Phase II Pan Groove was playing and Jit Samaroo's arrangement of 'Pan Here To Stay' with which Amoco Renegades had already indicated their 'form' in the prelims.

Indeed, only the members of Catelli felt that they would win the bit title on Carnival Saturday night.

The practice sessions continued...going later and later into the wee hours of the morning. This was one band bent on maintaining a reputation in this the 1980s. That they have won the 1986 title is a tribute to their dedication.

Since 1980, Catelli have never failed to be amongst the big three in the National competition.

They won the title that year with Scruter's 'Woman On The Bass' and followed up with Blueboy's 'Unknown Band' which had the Queen's Park Savannah in a trance.

They provided 'Heat' in the Savannah in '82 but it was not fiery enough to stop Renegades who won the title. In '83 their 'Rebecca' was good enough to win the North title but only secured them third spot in the National final which was won by WITCO Desperados.

And the last two years have both seen them beaten in close finishes. 'Doh Back Back' and 'Soucouyant' being their tunes.

That they wanted desperately to win the title last year is without a doubt. The band celebrated its 50th anniversary then and staged its Classical Jewels 5 concert to commemorate the achievement.

The records will show that Catelli is much more than a carnival steelband, bent on showing its strength only at one time of the year.

"Far from that" says the band's secretary Barbara Crichtlow "we are not into this thing for carnival only."

"We are a properly organised group bent on giving steelband the all year respect it deserves."

Catelli has, over the years, been regarded as the best classical steelband in the country and of course the world, winning the Steelband music festival in four of the five years in which it participated.

The band also promotes a concert of its own — Classical Jewels — an

exciting exhibition of pan music, which is under the directorship of Jerry "Uncle Jem" Jemmot.

Very Dedicated

Says Miss Crichtlow "The members of Catelli are all very dedicated. They are all interested in the long term welfare of the band."

"We have a committee who do the necessary organising and take the disciplinary aspects into hand but that is an area in which we don't have very much work." Catelli All Stars has a registered membership of just over 150 players.

"Of course everyone would like to play, but that is impossible. Whenever someone comes to the band and asks to join we listen to them play and we screen that person first and if he is up to mark we accept him."

But the band is not confined only to males. There are several women in



Gerry "Uncle Jem" Jemmot conducts All Stars at a recent show.

the band making their contribution. Miss Crichtlow says "But the band's arranger, Leon Smith Edwards, 'I consider him much more than the arranger of the band and I think this is the opinion of everyone. He is a unique person, he is not just the band's arranger, he sweats and works like any other member."

"He laughs when we do and when we cry, he is also there crying with us." She explained that the members were not 'very disturbed' with the comments after the preliminaries.

"Most people were saying that something was missing. They described it as the Catelli 'Thing.' We felt then that we had not done all we were supposed to do with the tune."

"Basically what we played in the finals was the same as in the prelims except that we added a few items to 'pep' up the tempo."

But from the moment we came off the stage in the finals we knew we

Pan jewel to be proud of

tain is John 'Poison' Douglas who in the time he has done the job is an inspiration to the players."

Probably the highlight of Catelli's life was in 1982 when the band received the Humming Bird Medal (gold) for its contribution to culture. Its contribution has continued in various forms.

Quite apart from its Classical concerts, the band also holds a 'Pan Jam' every year on the Sunday before panorama preliminaries.

"It's an opportunity for pan people to come together, to fraternise with each other, a chance to show that the panman is not the same as he

was some years ago and we all have a good time." Catelli also involve themselves in a 'lap' competition on Carnival Tuesday which is co-sponsored by BWIA.

"We are all very happy with the response from these activities." Today the band will join David Rudder and Charlie's Roots down at Chaguaramas in an all afternoon fete to celebrate their respective victories.

It should be a fun-filled afternoon for both parties — both of whom defied the odds and came away with the winning colours from Carnival 1986.

WORLD PAN FESTIVAL HERE SOON?

A STEELBAND festival involving all the top steelbands in the world is likely to be staged in Trinidad in May 1988.

This announcement was made last week by chairman of the Carnival Development Committee, Al Roberts.

Mr. Roberts told the media that a proposal will be made to Government within the next 14 days with a view of getting them to underwrite the cost of staging the festival.

All Champions

According to the CDC boss, the project was a most ambitious one and therefore a two year period of planning was necessary for it to be successful. "The festival will feature performances by all champions in the area of steelband music, with the net result of establishing world supremacy. "It will also demonstrate an attempt to ensure worldwide appreciation that steelband music is cultural heritage" said Mr. Roberts.

He explained that although the project was still in embryonic stages, bands from China, the United Kingdom

and the Caribbean would all be invited.

Arnim Smith, Pan-Trinidad president said that he had already held informal talks with the Prime Minister who expressed his interest in the effort.

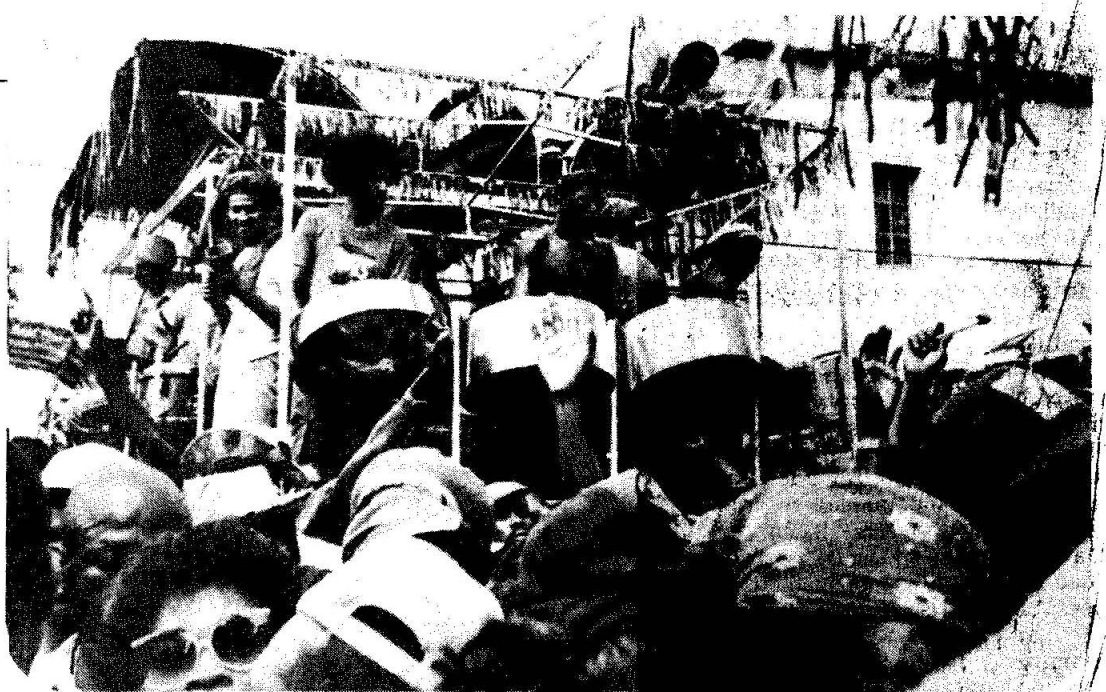
Organisations like the Tourist Board, BWIA International, the Hoteliers Association along with other Government Ministries including National Security, External Affairs and Industry and Commerce would be asked to get involved.

Mr. Roberts said that the private sector would also be called upon to make their contribution to the project.

"We have two years to plan and we are hoping that we get support from all areas with this venture" he ended.

Catelli's record

is one that is the envy of many of the top bands in TT



All Stars-from 1968 to 1986

CATELLI FROM 1968 — 1986

1968 Music Festival winners — 'The Unfinished Symphony'

1970 Bomb winners.

1972 Music Festival winners — 'New World Symphony, 4th Movement' Bomb winners.

1973 Panorama Champ — 'Kumukuma' Bomb winners

1974 Classical Jewels 1.

1978 Classical Jewels 2.

1980 Music Festival winners 'Morning, Noon and Night in Vienna' Panorama champs 'Woman on the Bass'

1981 Panorama champs North champs — 'Unknown Band' Bomb winners. Classical Jewels 3.

1982 Humming Bird medal (Gold) for contribution to culture placed 2nd in Panorama 'Heat' North champs

1983 North champs 3rd in Panorama 'Rebecca' Bomb winners. Classical Jewels 4.

1984 Music Festival winners. 2nd in Panorama 'Doh Back back' Bomb winners.

1985 Classical Jewels 5. 2nd Panorama 'Suck neh Soucouyant.'

1986 Panorama champs — 'Hammer.'