

The Sunjets introduced the sax tone

ONLY six months after the West Side Symphony Orchestra was formed it won the first ever steelband festival in July 1964 with its brilliant face of critics who had not reckoned with, or heard rendition of "Roses From the South." This, in the the echophone, introduced for the first time in steelband music. The saxophone tone was in.

Eight months later, this St. James band received the sponsorship of British West Indian Airways, the national carrier, with the

consequential changing of the name to BWIA Sunjets Steelband.

In May of 1965, began the first of what was to become many overseas trips to different parts of the world. First it was at New York's famous Radio City Music Hall for an extended run of eight weeks. So far, no other steelband has played there.

August of the same year found them playing at Jamaica's independence celebrations and two months later at the Surinam trade fair. So impressed was the Prime Minister of that country over the band's performance that he asked them to stay on three days longer, which they did.

Then in May 1966 BWIA Sunjets played at Guyana independence celebrations and early the next year were in Venezuela performing at the opening of the Ciudad Bolivar bridge and later at a cultural tour of Venezuela, arranged by the Industrial Development Corporation.

Their return

The band again returned to Guyana in October 1966 for the opening of the Graphic and Literary Newspapers' Press.

On their return trip to the United States of America and Canada, BWIA Sunjets spent four days in New York City giving concerts at the Betsy Head Park, Brownsville, Baisley Park, Queens, Long Island, Bowling Green Park, Wall Street, Brooklyn, Carl Schurz Park (famous for "Music in the Mayor's backyard"), the Bronx, Harlem. There was also a performance at the Co-operative Auditorium, New York, for West Indians and diplomats.

They were in Toronto at the Caribana from July 29 to August 7, last year, then off to Montreal for two weeks at the "Man and his World" exposition, a sort of repeat of Expo '67. Then it was back to New York for two nights. On this occasion, the band was away for about one month.

On the eve

Back in Trinidad, BWIA Sunjets took part in a presentation by the Kiwanis Club on the eve of independence.

The band was off again to New York on November 8, 1968, where it took part in the inaugural ceremony making the flight contract with Trans World Airways at the John F. Kennedy Airport. TWA now handles all BWIA's flight out of New York.

On November 22, last year, the band went to El Salvador to take part in the third international exhibition at a booth put up by the IDC and in which the Julie Edwards Dance troupe also took part.

Skipper Leslie Jordan has said that the success and triumph of the Sunjets has come through dedication and fine efforts of the members. In three short years the band has paved the way to reach great heights, not only in the performance of steelband music, but also as goodwill ambassadors of Trinidad and Tobago.

Arranger is Franklin Armstrong.

