

PAN ATTACK!



Madame Petticoat

YOU MUST have learnt that fears and worries should be thrown out of the window, without a second thought.

That is because the power of positive thinking, or faith, supersedes everything.

But, in the scheme of things, fears and worries must be noted.

Sometimes, they disguise warnings that we fail to see and heed, and so we often pay a high price for our ignorance.

Let up to the Almighty, the steelband movement will further blossom into something too wondrous to be ignored by the world.

The music has "forwarded" by leaps and bounds from the day it was first born out of rough instruments like the bamboo-bamboo bands.

However, at the end of each Music Festival, or Panorama competition, I still hang my head low with doubt.

That is because the powers that be often fail to do more than pay lip service to the hard work and dedication of the pan players.

The respect they deserve is often riddled with pettiness coming straight from the bowels of steelband administrators.

In the first instance, Madame must give praises that the governing body is

allowed to be independent, by nature, and is not supposed to be controlled by any one force.

Knowing the individuals within the Pan Trinbago organisation, there is doubt that this independence is secure.

For, Pan Trinbago has not shown itself (I say this annually) to be efficient, caring, without political taint, and creative (or dynamic) in its approach to the administration of pan.

The steelband is unique, new and challenging, hence the managers must have these very characteristics in their approach to the administration aspect of it.

But, a researcher or student, seeking information about the steelband movement, from Pan Trinbago, is sure to be referred to some other source.

Those officers who are paid fulltime, can surely conduct the affairs of the culture more respectfully, as the music is already light years ahead of those trying to administrate over it.

MORE INTIMATE

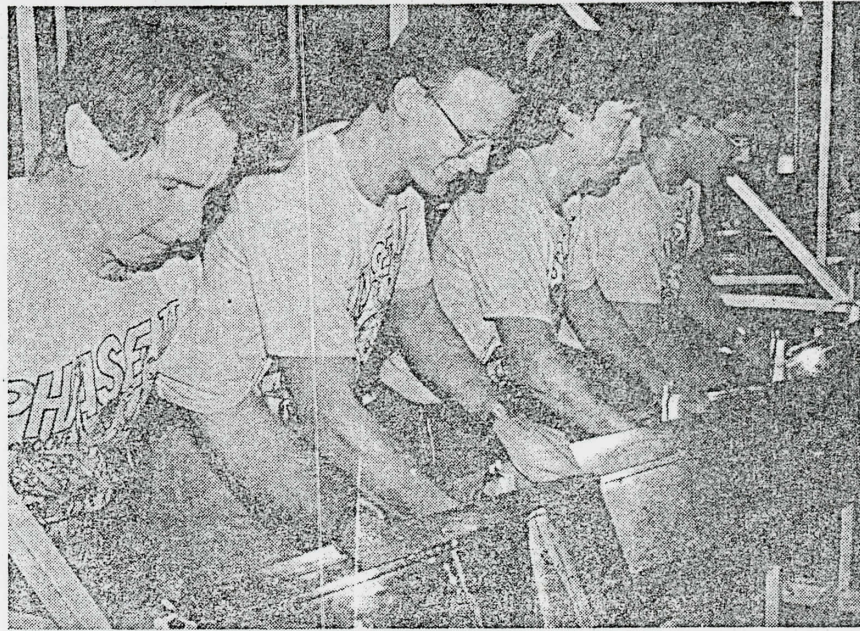
Carnival '89 showed a greater number of foreigners playing pan, and getting more intimate with the instrument through feel and touch.

In one shot, Phase 11 boasted of four foreigners.

In recent times, also, an increasing number of people have been getting exposed to and involved in the culture.

That is evident by the growing number of tourists for Carnival.

All it may take is for them to love the pan enough to want to market it and take it over as their own.



FLASHBACK: Four foreigners beating pan with Phase 11

Then, the American and European Youth will be playing instruments, and getting acclaim, while thousands of veteran pan beaters in Trinidad will stay working hard for the Panorama competition year after year.

That will be worse if Pan Trinbago is not ready to move forward, and its officers prefer to sit and let everything happen.

God alone knows what price we may have to pay for the ignorance of the officials now.

Many nationals already know that our pannists have been stirring hearts in jazz concerts and clubs throughout the world?

And this will happen without help from Pan Trinbago or the government, past and present.

In fact, Andy Narrell played on a tenor pan for years, and actually made recordings before he experienced the feel of a real steel orchestra.

Rudy "Two Left" Smith, who recently returned home for a concert, has been



ROBERT GREENIDGE



CLIVE BRADLEY

spreading the gospel of 'pan-jazz,' successfully in

described the steelband as "Valid, powerful, profound," after his first live experience in Trinidad.

So what's holding back Pan-Trinbago from bringing to Trinidad officials of Jazz festivals abroad, to experience what a full orchestra can do at our Panorama festival?

That, however, is only one of the many options open to Pan Trinbago.

Will Clive Bradley's distinctive sweet jazz sounds go to waste... or must he and other arrangers work hard to be

Europe.

Othello Mollin-eau, one of the sweeter soloists around, has teamed with Jamaican pianist Monty Alexander, for at least one album.

Together, they have performed in jazz clubs up and down North America.

Robbie Greenidge, the WITCO Desperadoes captain, has composed the theme for a television programme abroad, and has worked with famous jazz musicians.

Ace Jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis has even

acclaimed as genius only when they're dead?

Is Klitchener's music to be lost because Pan Trinbago is not marketing the steelband?

Madame firmly believes that while the calypso is yet to reach its international acclaim, the steelband will do a much better job at bringing it out.

While the lyrics of some calypsoes aren't 'internationally sound', the music, surely is.

The steelband, playing calypso, can give credit where it's due.

Both can be novelty music, fighting together on the frontline of international shark-infested waters of the music industry.

The steelband movement needs a strong head if it is not to be conquered and colonised by international forces.

We must take no chances in reversing the fortunes of the panman through one sleight of hand.

Too many people appear to be more interested in our music than the people at the top here in TnT.

The political pettiness has not escaped the culture and is simply bringing with it negative vibes. Aren't these blatant warnings that we must heed?