

Road to success

NOW in its twelfth year, T & TEC Power Boys (formerly Blue Stars), is little known outside its own domain at Cocorite.

It has had little success at competitions. But over the past decade, Power Boys' morale has remained invincible.

The band, and its leaders Cedric Lewis, Desmond Phillip, and Theodore Sampson, look at competitions, not so much as a race to win prizes, but a barometer to measure the musical standard of the band.

That that was not as high as other bands in the past was not reason for lament, but for greater perseverance.

It called for added dedication, and application, in a bid to bring out the best in the pan and the panman.

Power Boys was born out of the desire of a handful of players who felt the time had come when Western Main Road should have a steelband of its own, to stop the exodus of its residents to other bands.

This year the band will be stepping out for the first time with a sponsor behind it. This, according to Lewis, had given the band an extra drive, a drive which may well prove to be the turning point in the band's life.

While Power Boys persevere, it does so with the knowledge that the road to success is no easy road, and as the wheel of fortune go spinning around, this would one day find them in winner's row.

Would it be this year? Power Boys is going all out to make this possible.

Monday mas': Rebels of the Casa Grande. Tuesday: Splendour of the Animals.



REV. FR. JOHN SEWELL chats with "his boys" members of Ezzo Tripoli Steelband at a party he gave in their honour.

"WE'VE postponed a world tour in order to win at Panorama."

Man behind those fighting words is Hugh Borde, aged 34, captain of Ezzo Tripoli, of Expo '67 fame.

Formed about 25 years ago, Tripoli's original name was "Grow More Foods." This was changed in the 1940's after the war movie "Shores of Tripoli."

Borde has been leader for the past 14 years.

Always a top band, Tripoli really began to make strides forward in 1965.

That was the year the band obtained a fairy god-father when Ezzo Standard Oil became its sponsor.

That year each member of the band was made to take a three-months music course organised by Arthur Carol, during which the band learnt to read and write music. From that point, there was no turning back.

A quick glance at the records. In 1964: runner-up in the steelband music festival. In 1965: Independence music festival winner ("Mid-

night in Moscow"). In 1967: winner of Panorama bomb competition.

Ezzo Tripoli has in its ranks a formidable lineup: Harold Headley is the 1966 ping-pong solo champion; his brother, Kenrick, beats a mean tenor pan. Allan Gervais, rated the No. 1 tuner in Trinidad today, is responsible for the band's new sound.

The popular and musically-talented Anglican priest, Father John Sewell, of the Anglican Cathedral, is the classical arranger,

They gave up a world tour to win a trophy

who has contributed to a great extent to the band's progress.

Ezzo Tripoli recently returned from the biggest overseas tour a steelband has ever been on, thanks to its sponsor. Before its departure the band was given a civic reception by the City Fathers.

His Worship, the Mayor, presented Borde with medals for presentation to the Mayor of each city in which the band played in the Caribbean, United States, and Canada.

Space does not permit a detailed review of the tour, but it suffices that the band broke all sorts of records and was a great sensation whenever it played—le it Rockefeller Plaza, Central Park, Lincoln Centre Mall, in New York, or Expo '67, Canada.

Ezzo Tripoli firmly entrenched itself into the hearts of millions.

And greater things are in store yet for Ezzo Tripoli. The band plans to leave shortly after the Carnival for a world tour planned by the world famous pianist, Liberace, who was among those who stood in the rain at Expo '67 to listen to the pans' enchanting music.

"It is common knowledge," Borde said, "that we postponed our tour to win Panorama. We have the best players, the best tuned instruments, and the best arrangers. What else does it take to win?"

Mr. Borde named Mr. Fred Lam, Marketing Manager of Ezzo, as being among those mainly responsible for the band reaching the top. Tuesday mas': Sailors Ashore at Expo '67.

'You gotta come good'

"A NY steelband which wants to beat Despers this year will have to come real good — both in pan and in mas' — for we are coming better than ever."

That was George Yeates, general manager of the West Indian Tobacco Company Gay Desperados, talking. And he was dead serious about what he said.

Despers, the popular band from Laventille hilltops, is out for no monkey business this year. The band is coming to claim what it believes rightly belongs to it — and so maintain its present supremacy in the steelband world.

The story of Despers' phenomenal rise to fame is probably the most exciting chapter in the history of the steelband movement.

Despers, more than any other band, has come a long way from the day when its members were regarded as the "dead end" kids.

The name Despers still continues to strike fear into its rivals, but of a different type. It is the fear of defeat on the pan-talent for talent.

Despers has moved so rapidly within recent time that it stands today as the band with the most formidable record in the North.

Its record over the last three years alone is worth a separate story. Some wins at random:

1964: second at Panorama; 1965 first in the better village festival; 1966, winner of Panorama, and the Bomb; 1967 — the champion of champions, and second at Panorama. Other wins are too numerous to mention.

From Port-of-Spain to Canada, to Dakar and back, the name Despers means one thing: sweet pan music.

"If ever a calypso was played with soul, this was it," said Professor Allan Tongue, when he heard the band's rendition of Sparrow's "Mr. Prospect," last year.

And this year the band is better yet!

Despers, which is led by George Saul, captain, and Rudolph Charles, manager, had its humble beginning in the early 60's. Yeates attributes the band's acceptance and success to a large measure to the interest and tangible support of its sponsor, the West Indian Tobacco Company.

"We couldn't have been treated better," he said.

Its tunes today are Emmanuel "Coke Jack" Riley (the old and only), Wallace Rennie, and James Jackman.

"We will definitely be back to beat — in pan or mas', Yeates emphasised.