

SAGA OF THE PANS

Granado outlines development of Trinidad's culture

MONTREAL, Sun. THE steelband which had its origins in Trinidad is "a twentieth century marvel", a group of university students were recently told. The speaker was His Excellency Donald Granado, Trinidad's High Commissioner to Canada who was invited to deliver an address by students at the University of Ottawa on "Cultural Development in the West Indies with particular reference to the Music of Trinidad and Tobago".

Mr. Granado asserted that the calypso, the steelband, the limbo and the bongo — forms of music and dance which are the pride and joy of Trinidadians — give us "a sense of identity which seemed to have been completely lost up to the earlier part of the twentieth century."

Mr. Granado informed his student audience that there was still very much to be done by way of an expose of the historical and sociological

background of Caribbean art forms and suggested that he would eagerly look forward to any effort in this area.

He referred to existing works in this field and illustrated his address with quotations from Melville Robin and W. A. Simmonds on the steelband, Andrew Carr on the calypso, Errol Hill on the theatre and M. P. Alladin on art and design.

Embryonic stage

"The patterns of cultural development," Mr. Granado stated, "are largely still in the embryonic stage and are as varied and as heterogeneous and the melange of racial stocks and religious groupings that make up the population of the area."

Starting with the discovery of the islands by Columbus, the High Commissioner sketched the historic rivalries and disputes among the metropolitan countries in the "general land-grab that was characteristic of the era" following the discovery of the various territories.

Mr. Granado next dealt with the reasons behind the appearance of the East Indian and African on the West Indian scene, adding that if the West Indian of African descent continues to be unsure of himself it is because of divided loyalties arising out of slavery.

"When slavery was abolished the Africans had lost almost completely all that they once had of the traditions, culture, language and relationship of their motherland. They

were a divided group with divided loyalties.

"They were forced to adopt foreign art forms, foreign languages, foreign religion, and foreign patterns of behaviour. No wonder that even today the average West Indian of African descent continues to be somewhat unsure of himself.

"With the introduction of indentured immigrants, the settlement of traders from other countries in the West Indies, and the historical and sociological facts already mentioned, the West Indian had no distinguishing cultural pattern.

Exhaust valve

"He was made into pseudo-Englishman with the complexes of an Africa so that his was a state of constant warfare with himself, rebellion against his ancestors and disillusionment with his former 'masters.' An exhaust valve was necessary."

Describing the steelband as "a twentieth century marvel," Mr. Granado declared that the main contributors to its development were the East Indian and Africans, and in lesser measure, the Chinese and Venezuelans.



MR. GRANADO

Meanwhile in Montreal a West Indian play, "Strictly Matrimony," put on by the Negro Theatre Arts Club received favourable reviews from both English dailies in this city.

The "Gazette" Drama Critic wrote: "Strictly Matrimony was strictly charming... it was the unspiced folk-tale atmosphere of the whole little story which quite carried the public away."

"There were not only shouts of laughter and approval but a feeling of participation that carries one away to an older time and place."

T.G. 6 Feb. 1967 p. 11