

Sanch sets the pace for pan lovers

NOW, Sanch Electronix has released two new steelband recordings for pan lovers—*Panyard Rhapsody* and *Showcase: Steelbands of Trinidad and Tobago*.

"A lot of Panorama music is lost because of the speed it's played," says Simeon Sandiford,

the 47-year-old owner and recording engineer of Sanch Electronix. "I've never been party to that madness; even the players themselves prefer to hear the tunes played slowly."

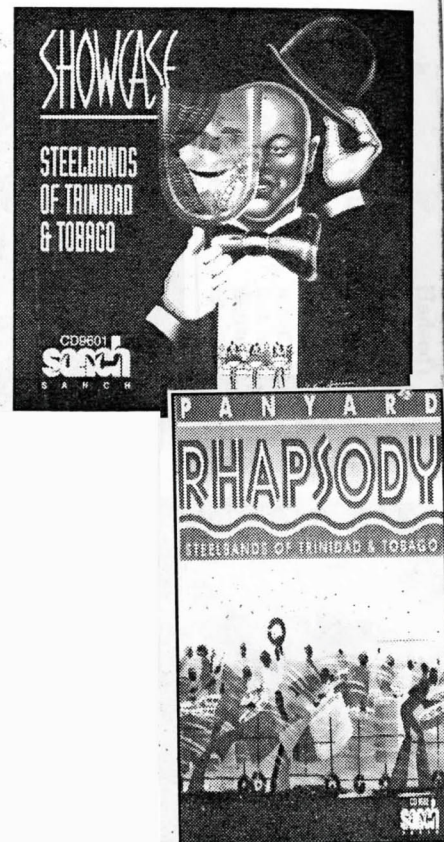
So last year he recorded *Pan Odyssey* in the panyards and now for 1996 there's *Panyard Rhapsody* which once again presents Panorama arrangements as

they are played in the panyards of the leading bands.

The CD has Renegades' "Pan in a Rage", Phase II's "Mind Yuh Business", Exodus's "Case of the Disappearing Panyards" and Trinidad All Stars "Power of Pan"—the first, second, third and fifth 1996 Panorama finalists. And to prove his point Sandiford has also included a faster version

of Renegades' tune and Anise Hadeed's earlier arrangement of Phase II's "Mind Yuh Business".

But fast or slow, here's the energy and excitement of steelband music at its most powerful and recorded with the latest technology. "The mikes are the same but now we're using the latest digital encoding systems," explains Sandiford. "The early



digital conversion systems weren't accurate, you got a lot of distortion, but it's come a long way."

Showcase:

Steelbands of Trinidad and Tobago was also recorded under the stars in the panyards but only one piece is a Panorama arrangement: Phase II's 13-minute "Fire Down Below". The CD's other 50 minutes comprises eight pop tunes and one Festival test piece: Trinidad All Stars' "Dance of the Pannist".

"The aim was to show the kinds of music a steelband can play so there's ramajay, there's pop music—stuff that people know—and the slow Panorama piece," says Sandiford. "We have endless stuff sitting here—12 years of pan recordings."

Sandiford has produced 21 CDs so far: 14 on the Delos label, two on the Blue Rhythm label and five for Sanch. Not all are pan recordings: he has recordings of drummer Jah Jah, of the Gasparillo Folk performers and he's working on an Indian-fusion recording with Sat Balkaransingh. In October Sanch will release a religious CD performed by Felix Roach (piano), Anslem Walters (violin), Gerald Charles (bass) and Patrick Goveia (guitar), and recorded in a church.

"I focus on music that has longevity," says Sandiford. "The soca is seasonal but the pan and the folk music lasts longer."

But he's made his name in pan. Recently he was commissioned to record a series of Italian film scores on pan, which he plans to record with the Samaros, so there's no one better suited to showcase the national instrument.