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Panazz wins third crown

By REY DAVIS

PANAZZ PLAYERS, convinced that it had the right formula for musical frolic on the steelpan, beat off the challenge of nine other steelband ensembles to win an historic third successive Pan Ramajay championship final.

In a show of vintage pan musicianship Saturday night at the National Flour Mills Complex, the Panazz Players polled an adjudicators' high of 552 points for stirring renditions of Delanoé, Becaud and Sigman's blues ballad *What now my love* and late calypsonian Sniper's *Portrait of Trinidad*, lyricised by Penman.

Only a combination of swirling winds and driving rain shortly after the 7.45 pm start and later intermittent rainfall troubled the finale to the sixth annual panfest, an innovation of the Exodus Steel Orchestra, co-hosted by Fernandes Distillers (1973) Limited, National Flour Mills and TSTT. Such was the inclement weather that the show was at one time announced as postponed to yesterday.

Panazz's 12-player ensemble, including single woman pannist Natasha Joseph and co-captained

by Yohan Popwell and Barry Bartholomew, won by 16 points from Lincoln Enterprises (536) and a further 24 from one-time tiliist Tropical Angel Harps (528).

Woodbrook-based ensemble Lincoln Enterprises played exciting versions of Clive Zanda's *Chip Down* and Kitchener's *Fever* while Angel Harps of Enterprise Village, Chaguanas, charmed the audience with groovy turns of Gershwin's *Summertime* and Earl Rodney's *Friends and countrymen*.

Outscored but not outdone for audience appreciation were fourth-placed Laventille's Stryke Stars (526 points), Ramajay debutant Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (fifth — 521), Phase II Pan Groove (sixth — 518), Starlift (seventh — 515), youthful Petrotrin Invaders (eighth — 509), San Juan All Stars (ninth — 507.5) and all-woman ensemble In Focus (tenth — 490).

"Hard work must pay off," an elated Popwell acclaimed after receipt of the championship trophy and \$20,000 prize from Minister of Culture Joan Yuille-Williams.

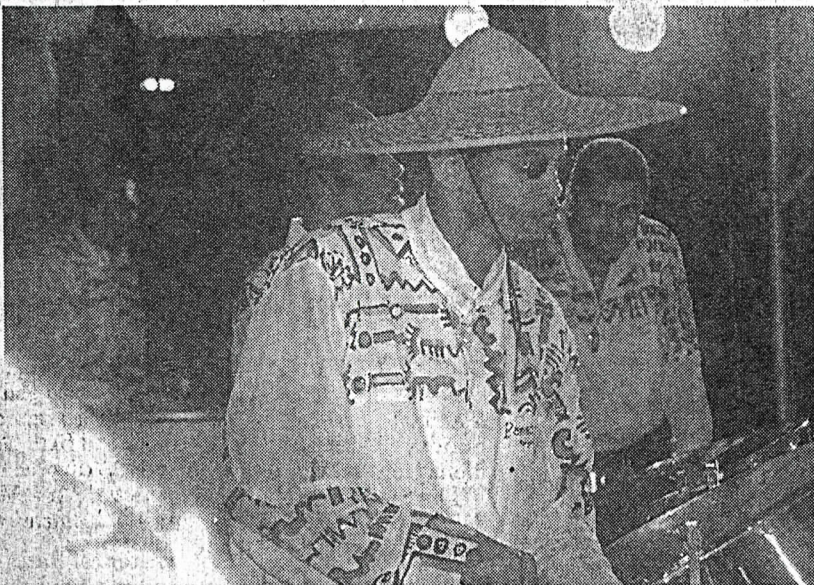
Popwell complimented the other ensembles for their show but suggested that they still had a lot

of ground to cover to reach the highest standard. "Play back our music and see what you can gather about chord progression and so on in this Ramajay business," Popwell said.

Panazz, whose play of "Portrait" combined chutney, Chinese, Latin and African rhythms, were all the way leaders from the 22-band preliminary and 16-band semifinal. It won the award for best portraying the "spirit of the ramajay."

Commitment also underlined the success of 19-year-old Tobago tenor soloist Duvone Stewart in the five-player final that preceded the band championship.

Stewart, first in the 13-player preliminary and second to Hayden Ifill in the ten-competitor semifinal, ranged ahead again with 272 points for Baron's *Sweet Soca Man*. Ifill (Baron's *This Melody Sweet*) held second with 269. Third was defending champion Anthony Guppy (Kitchener's *Pan In Harmony* — 262). Natasha Joseph with Robbie Greenidge/Superble's *Fire Coming Down* was 254 points in fourth and Aldon Moore tallied 240 for fifth place soloing Prince Unique's *Janice*.



HATS OFF TO PANAZZ: Tenor pannist Dane Gulston of Pan Ramajay champion band Panazz Players donned this Chinese-type hat during his ensemble's performance of the calypso *Portrait of Trinidad*. (See story). **Photo by LESTER FORDE.**