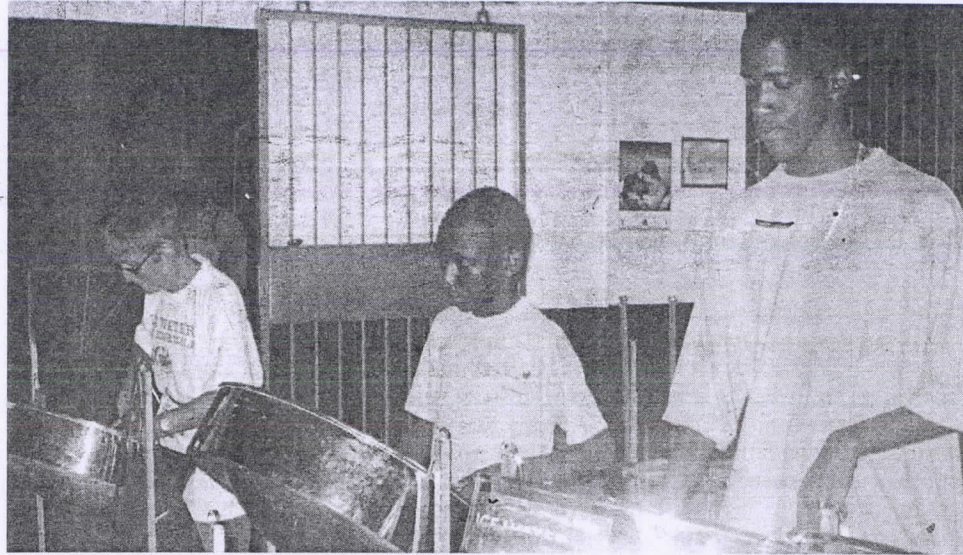


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# CARNIVAL *ML 1040*



**LADIES ROW:** These girls practice at the Merrytones Pan Complex on Monday night.



**DEEP CONCENTRATION:** THESE THREE steelband members were concentrating on hitting the right notes in their band practice on Monday night at the Merrytones Pan Complex.

# Merrytones looking for 4th straight win

By MALISSA LARA

MERRYTONES have been ringing out tunes in Diego Martin for more than 40 years,

beginning on Mason Street and continuing at the corner of Bagatelle Road. To many community members, the Merrytones steelband is a great

source of hope that sheds light on the many talented youths of the area.

In 1986, the Merrytones pan-nists built the complex on the cor-

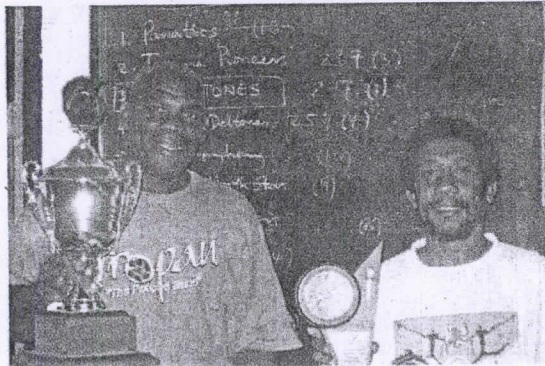
ner of Bagatelle Road by themselves, and it has remained there ever since.

Various fund raisers are held

● MERRYTONES continues on Page 6B



ML 1040 Feb 8, 2007  
pg 6 (B)  
(NEWSDAY)



FROM LEFT: Robert Ryan, captain of the Merrytones steel band and vice captain Jeffery Tyrell hold up two of their trophy's that they have won in past competitions.

## DIEGO PAN IN SOUTH

● MERRYTONES from Page 4B

throughout the year and the complex's hall is rented out to help keep the band afloat.

On Monday, *Newsday* met the band's captain, Robert Ryan, calmly tuning a very small pan, which he sells as souvenirs. Ryan said he has been a member of the band since he was ten years old and became the captain four years ago. For the fifth time in its history, the steelband has made it to the Panorama semi-final, playing the song "Not Enough" by Eunice Peters. Ryan said the band won the Panorama final in the small band category in 1995 and in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Merrytones has also been a source of beautiful pan music in the Diego Martin area and has provided an opportunity for many young people to learn to play the national instrument. When band members are not practicing for Panorama, one of the members gives pan lessons and the band keeps practicing "to keep the band together," Ryan said.



Ryan said the steelband is important because "it makes the community feel good." It also helps to get the young "fellas" get off the street. Though they entered the semi-final with 55 members, the steelband has an average of 90 members who have been practicing from 7 pm to the early hours in the morning since last November.

The captain said "competition is stiff" this year, but they can win if they work hard. With a big smile he added that, "We comin' dangerous this year."

*Newsday* found out that the band has members from Sweden, France and the United States who have performed with the band for many years. A Swedish woman was practicing in the hall, but *Newsday* could not get comments from her because she does not speak English.

Ryan is looking forward to the Panorama final in South Trinidad, and he is convinced that Merrytones has "top of the line" players who can win.