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Memories of pan

TWO MEMORIES of Pan is Beautiful III must remain: The flowering of the genius of Jit Samaroo and the dramatic ouster of the TTT broadcast crew from the Jean Pierre Complex, the venue of the festival of melodious steelbands.

Both events show the different sides of panmen: The genius of art and the existence of stubborn immaturity.

The association of panmen, Pan Trinbago, has apparently found ability to organise the festival for itself now.

There must be hope that in time the association will master the marketing, the organisational and the development techniques required to convert the steelband movement from its discardable status (largely limited to playing only at Carnival time and mostly in Panorama once yearly).

The proposal that the movement establish a proper auditorium for steelbands is a most praiseworthy one and we believe every national is eager to see the day when that project can be undertaken.

Pan Trinbago has probably now learned the virtue of having specific contracts drawn up for even the smallest phase of any venture in which it may be involved.

THE LESSON

This is the lesson that the hassle between Mr. Arnim Smith, the President of the association, and the TTT crew must teach Pan Trinbago.

We refer to the fact that he had to resort to barring from the Complex the TTT team because TTT had decided to air the finals on Channels 9 and 14 instead of on 2 and 13 as Pan Trinbago had hoped.

The desired channels aired the Best Village show carded for the same viewing time live.

Since the two new channels (9 and 14) do not have anything like that for 2 and 13, Pan Trinbago's Mr. Smith became incensed when told that the steelband show would be aired on the less popular channels.

Here we may be seeing the best possible case being made for the introduction of private enterprise television here as competition to the State-run monopoly.

The Best Village competition is the annual version of the old Roman ploy of bread and the circus.

Between pleasing a few hundred steelbandmen, therefore, and giving many times the number of voters a surfeit of free viewing of country belles and village beaux, therefore, TTT instinctively awarded premier programming to Best Village — and Mr. Smith should know by now that until he obtains a seat on TTT's Board that he just cannot assume the rank of a Minister and pull that on the TTT management.

If he were in a position in the steelband movement similar to that maintained by TTT in the national scheme of things, how would he like it if a steelbandman were to try to force him to conform to some dictate of his?

The sour note thus struck by Mr. Smith we must hope has long ceased to echo anywhere in this land, and let us hope that when people recall this Festival, they will be far more likely to remark upon the achievement of Jit Samaroo than upon the pique of Mr. Smith.

After all, Jit comes closer to the ideal steelbandman than does Mr. Smith, and we are not here seeking to denigrate Mr. Smith's key role in the development of the movement.

INSPIRING ASSOCIATION

Mr. Samaroo has had a most inspiring association with the steelband as an art form. Very early in his life he formed a steelband among his brothers and sisters.

He became an arranger for their ever-widening repertoire of choices from the entire vast world of music and coach to lead them on international tours, bringing to foreign ears delicious strains of their own music.

The band's reputation has prospered and today the band is the resident one in a leading hotel in this country.

The reputation of Mr. Samaroo himself as an arranger grew mightily. Now in the annual Panorama tourney "Arrangement by Jit Samaroo" is one credit line sure to be heard several times as the big bands joust.

At the Pan Is Beautiful III extravaganza Renegades, runner-up by only three points to the winners, played an arrangement by Jit Samaroo, who, of course, was the arranger for the triumphant fourth place finisher, the family Jets (a mere seven players compared with the dozens of other bands).

That has left him at home only the concert podium to conquer. Who is to say that we shall never see him ascend it and lead a fortunate big band to undreamed-of heights.

The saga of the Samaroos is something of which an imaginative TTT or a good movie producer seeking sound family fare can make a classic.

If TTT were to attempt this, that would be a good way of patching up relations between Mr. Smith and the TTT moguls, we think.