

By DEBORAH JOHN

# THE KILLING OF LAS' LAP

CLUB fetes <sup>street</sup> lee-jay corner sessions have taken <sup>over</sup> from the brass and steelbands <sup>for</sup> las' lap. But the bands could not care less.

Las' lap is the glorious finale of carnival. It is that time on Carnival Tuesday night when, traditionally, masqueraders and musicians, after a short period of rest from the day's activities, go back on the road to chip until midnight.

It is a part of the celebrations that is as significant and hallowed as J'Ouvert. But, sadly, it is a part that is rapidly dying out. The past five years las' lap has found the brass bands in some club or hotel winding up the national fete, not for love but for money, and one or two steelbands languidly doing a short turn around the block and heading back to their panyards long before twelve.

Mas lovers have expressed concern, outrage, sadness about the rapid decline of this aspect of carnival. One veteran mas man summed up the general feeling:

"Long-time brass bands got a little bit of money and played right through Monday and Tuesday because they enjoyed mas for mas sake. Now they charge exorbitant fees and they chinksin. Even during the day some of the bands refuse to exert themselves for the masqueraders who are paying them. In fact they are tired before J'Ouvert because they have been playing for all those pre-carnival fetes."

The bandleaders I talked to last week admitted that they are no longer prepared to come out on the road for las' lap.

Charlie's Roots, who are playing for Peter Minshall's band, said that they are contracted to play for one hour only, but Mano Marcellin and Carl Henderson reflected the attitude of the majority.

MARCELLIN:

"We don't come out for las' lap. We will be playing during the day for Home Team and afterwards we will play in a fete. Those who want las' lap with us will have to come to the fete."

HENDERSON:

"Maybe what is needed now is for people to start paying the bands to come out for las' lap. Carnival is commercial now and you can't expect musicians to work for nothing."

The steelbands too are not interested in "taking on" las' lap. But not so much for commercial reasons. Many steelbandmen seem to resent the fact that masqueraders spend their money with the big costume bands and look down on less pretentious steelband presentations. "Let those big bands provide them with las' lap" is their attitude.

The only exceptions to this rule are Trintoc Invaders and Catelli All Stars. Invaders said: "Woodbrook residents were very good to us when we were threatened with eviction last year. We would like to show our gratitude for their support. On Carnival Tuesday we will get back home early after the competitions and be on the road for las' lap right up until midnight." Other reactions were:

CATELLI: "We

usually come out for las' lap. We do this mainly for our supporters, because after playing in fetes, Panorama and on the road, everyone is tired.

"What we do is try to employ a shift system. We have about 120 players, and we make sure that everyone gets a rest so that whoever plays for las' lap is fresh.

"We don't mind big band masqueraders coming with their spears and costumes to take a last jump, because it is a give and take thing really."

BLUE DIAMONDS: "Las' lap? What is that? Las' lap is dead. The dee jays have taken over that now. Long time las' lap was sweet, when you hugged up your chick and everyone was jumping. Now when we come back from the Savannah we look for a band but we can't find any. We don't come out for las' lap."

PHASE II: "We are not interested. Over the years people have supported the big bands, and the brass bands during the day, but as soon as it gets

dark and the big bands go in they come running to us for las' lap. We are not coming out."

STARLIFT: "We have not come out for las' lap for the past four years because the band comes home too late from town.

"We are not on spirit of Carnival again. Long time when a steelband brought out mas everyone used to be in it, now they run to the big bands who can't give them a decent las' lap, but they come by us for freeness. Let them go and ask Hart and Lee Heung for las' lap."

POWER STARS: "We usually get back down here far too late for a traditional las' lap.

After spending all day downtown we get back here to the Western Main Road at about half past ten, and a crowd usually follows us back to our yard. The men are just too tired to come back

Brass and steel bands  
not coming out  
for final jump