



It started with Alexander's Ragtime band...

PANORAMA is one of the most eagerly-looked-forward-to events in pan land. It offers the steelbands an opportunity to test their musical standards against one another, and to earn themselves handsome prizes in the process.

The country's steelbands are today hard at practice as they prepare once again to do battle for top honours.

The will to win is the driving force which take some of their sessions into the wee small hours of the morning.

Between 40 and 50 bands will enter Panorama this year. Of these, 12 will be selected at the preliminaries beginning on February 18. This number will be reduced to seven after the semi-finals on February 23.

The BIG NIGHT — the night of the Finals — is February 25, at Dimanche Gras. Panorama is being run this year by the Carnival Development Committee, in conjunction with the Steelband Association, headed by George Goddard.

The winning steelband will get a cash prize of \$1,000. The second prize is \$750; third \$500; fourth \$350; fifth \$250; sixth and seventh \$200 each. In addition, each band gets an appearance fee of \$600.

The birth and growth of the steelband movement make fascinating reading. It is generally held that the first steelband "Alexander Ragtime Band"—with crude tin pans, biscuit drums, scrap iron and any other instrument which made "noise" — was formed in 1936-37.

Though historians quibble over the authenticity of this point, it suffices that the steelband had the humblest of beginnings.

Within 30 years it has attained unprecedented heights. No longer are its players outcasts. Its music

BESIDES being a contest to measure the musical standards of the steelbands, Panorama also affords an opportunity for one to determine, with some degree of accuracy, what the road march will be.

A preliminary survey this year, reveals that the fight so far is a straight one between Kitchener's "Miss Tourist," and Sparrow's "Mr. Walker" and "Wood in the Fire".

Other calypsoes which will be heard on the road this year will be Calypso Rose's "Fire In Yuh Wire," Composer's "Viking," and Kitchener's "No Hurricane," and "Mazman."

It should be emphasised, however, that at the time of the early survey, many of the bands were undecided what would be their main tunes for the road. Their decisions can make a difference in the eventual outcome.

transcends all barriers. The tin pans, biscuit drums and scrap iron are all gone, replaced by oil drums, fashioned and polished, and which talk a universal language.

The steelband movement owes much to these men; Ellis Manette, the greatest tuner it has ever produced, his brother "Birdie" and fellow tuners Bertie Marshall, Anthony Williams, Emmanuel "Coco Jack" Riley, Allan Gervais, Wallace Austin, Otto Fausten, and Aldwyn Jordan.

Easo Tripoli, deserves special mention, not only for his talent, but for his efforts to have the steelband firmly established in the church. His efforts towards this end foretell what is in store for the movement.

It is significant to note that since Panorama began in 1952, only three bands have won: Cavaliers won twice, North Stars twice, and Despers once.

This year, both North Stars and Cavaliers are out of Panorama.

Can Despers level up with North Stars and Cavaliers by winning this one? Or, will so many innovations in the pans, will it go under?

It would be wise to recall the words of Professor John Russell, in the last steelband festival: "It is not necessarily the best band that wins, but the band which plays best at the particular place and time." Still, it would be appropriate to say: May The Best Band Win!

Then there are the tuners, also setting new heights: Lennox "Bobby" Mohammed, and his brother Selwyn, Junior Pouchette, Bertie Marshall, Anthony Williams, Curtis Pierre, Martin Albino, Edward Corbie, Paul Campbell, Anthony Lynch, and "Lex" Marciano.

Father John Sewell, who is classical arranger for