

Steelband, yes, but where was the calypso?

By **DEBORAH BOODRAM**

AN ADVERTISEMENT in the *New York Daily News* of August 27 announced that Phase II Pan Groove, "1996 Trinidad and Tobago World Champions", were presently on tour in New York. This would be overwhelming news for any born and bred "Trini" who was homesick. I was already six weeks away from home, so it should be no surprise that I was elated by the news.

I attended one of their concerts, which was held on August 28 at Cunningham Park,

Sharpe, officially opened their performance with a wonderful rendition of Nigel Lewis' "Movin'".

My happiness, however, was short-lived as these promoters of our culture proceeded, over the next two hours, to play songs such as "La Bamba" and other music alien to our land. The foreigners enjoyed it, but I, along with all the other Trinbagonians, wondered where was the Calypso. It was so upsetting that eventually people (no

doubt Trinidadians) were asking, "Where de one from Kitch?" and "Whey de Kaiso?"

Three Calypsoes were played, "Movin' Birthday Party" by Superblue, and "Mind Yuh Business". If three calypsoes, in a show that lasted more than two hours, is promoting our culture, then please inform me of the success of this method.

If three calypsoes is the best that can be done in two hours to promote T&T, then the work of Sparrow

and Kitchener, along with that of all other calypsonians has gone in vain!

I am but a mere 20-year-old and I certainly feel deep rooted in my culture.

It is sad to think that these adults who are much older than I cannot devote more of their talent to our culture. Yes, steelpan is our culture, but please pay some tribute to the music in which it found its origin.



LEN 'BOOGSIE' SHARPE

Queens, New York. As I approached the site, I heard the low but definitely sweet sound of pan. A large crowd of clearly enthusiastic spectators were gathering. The crowd comprised both Trinbagonians and foreigners.

Unfortunately, we were all doomed to disappointment, more so the Trinbagonians.

The first small incident occurred just after the pan-blending was over and the crowd was still growing. The disc jockey, whose job I thought was to make people aware of the culture being promoted, began playing Reggae. Please do not misunderstand. I have all due respect for Bob Marley and all his fellow artistes; however, Trinidad and Tobago is the land of calypso, steelpan and limbo.

But I excused this since the man behind the music was a foreigner. Little did I know that I was about to find out why this man did not know Calypso was T & T's music.

As the show commenced, featured artiste Anne Fridal made her way to the stage to pay respect to both the US and Trinidad and Tobago by singing their respective anthems. Again I felt the blade of disappointment sink into my heart as Ms Fridal sang an opera-like version to our anthem. Sadly, without the beautiful steel orchestra's music accompanying Ms Fridal, even a Trinidadian could not recognise our national anthem.

Phase II Pan Groove, featuring Len "Boogsie"