

Eye on culture

Young pannists becoming musically literate

THE ON-GOING drive to make pannists musically literate is receiving a major boost through the scholarship programme offered by Republic Bank. Students will be selected from bands placing in the three top positions at this year's Pan Minors National Junior Panorama Competition.

During the August

vacation, thirty students (10 from each school) will attend a course titled "Musical Literacy, An Introduction," at the Creative Arts Centre at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine.

Developed under the guidance of UWI's Dr Anne Osbourne, the programme is aimed at giving the young pannists

the framework through which a true appreciation of the steelpan can be achieved.

Its content will include rudiments of music theory, aural perception and music dictation, and reading at sight on pan. Each student will be awarded a certificate from UWI upon completion of the programme. Lecturers are Dr

Anne Osbourne and Satanand Sharma.

Managing director of Republic Bank, John Jardim, said as sponsors of the Pan Minors competition for the past seven years, the bank saw the need to move beyond the actual competition and give something more to the young pannists.

"It is our hope that the

programme is used as the impetus upon which further studies in the musical arena can be undertaken, leading to the further development of student and steelpan," he said.

Jardim's wish is already a reality, as some senior steel orchestras, as well as individuals, have been vigorously training pan players to read music.

Only last week, under the guidance of talented young pannist and arranger, Ben Jackson, the Courts Laventille Sound Specialists Steel Orchestra began tutoring its members in music literacy, at its pan theatre on the Eastern Main Road, Laventille.

Over in the sister isle, retired Army Major, Eddie Wade, has been pursuing the same goal with members of TTEC East Side Steel Orchestra, while musicologist, Merle Albino De Coteau, for years has been placing special emphasis on the steelpan at her Music Makers Institute in Laventille.

There are others, such as Parry's Pan School in Arouca, and Curtis Pierre's Dixieland Pan Academy, which have been doing their bit to support propagation of the national musical instrument.

"The voice and hope of a people are their culture, and the voice of the culture are you — our nation's youth," quoted Republic



DAVID CUFFY

and ensure that the pan, an integral part of our cultural identity, is not lost."

Government, which had promised to introduce teaching of pan music in schools, came under fire for its lethargy in implementing the project, and was challenged to regularise the status of the programme. Making the call was Ashton Whitman, a sixth form student and member of the winning band from St Augustine Senior Comprehensive School.

A joint effort between Pan Trinbago and the Ministries of Education, Community Development and Culture, the "Pan In Schools" programme was launched in 1994 with a pilot project at the Carapichaima RC School.

Since then, very little, if anything at all, has been heard of the programme. In July, 1995, thirty school teachers underwent training at the Valsayn Teachers College, geared towards "full-scale introduction of

World Hindi Conference to be held in Trinidad and Tobago from April 4 to 8, will stage a performance of "Nautanki" at Shaw Park, Tobago, on Wednesday, March 27 from 7 pm.

The conference and cultural activities are supported by both the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Government of India. It is organised by the Hindi Foundation of TT, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and General Studies of the University of the West Indies.

ST CHARLES High School and Friends will stage an evening of music, song, and dance, titled "Our Saviour," at Spektakula Forum, Henry Street, Port-of-Spain, on Sunday, March 31, from 6 pm.

Artistes appearing on the programme include Earl Rodney, Richard Pierre, People of Praise, Robert Munroe and Friends, UWI Prayer Group, Magnum, and St Charles High School Choir accompanied by Fortunia Ruiz and Frenz Too.

Tickets, priced at \$20 advance and \$25 at the door, are available at the school which is situated at Back Street, Trinidad.

"THE HISTORY of the Big Drum Ceremony in Grenada" is the title of a public lecture to be delivered by Dr J D Elder at Lifestyle Pub, Bonaire

members in music literacy, at its pan theatre on the Eastern Main Road, Laventille.

Over in the sister isle, retired Army Major, Eddie Wade, has been pursuing the same goal with members of TTEC East Side Steel Orchestra, while musicologist, Merle Albino De Coteau, for years has been placing special emphasis on the steelpan at her Music Makers Institute in Laventille.

There are others, such as Parry's Pan School in Arouca, and Curtis Pierre's Dixieland Pan Academy, which have been doing their bit to support propagation of the national musical instrument.

"The voice and hope of a people are their culture, and the voice of the culture are you — our nation's youth," quoted Republic Bank's executive director, Ronald Harford, from the poem *The Missing Link*, while speaking to students and guests at last Tuesday's awards ceremony.

"If we do not educate our youth and protect our culture, the future of our national instrument may soon become a part of this missing link," he said. "In order to ensure that the steelpan achieves the recognition that we know it deserves, our nation's youth must be equipped with more than just the knowledge of the chords of this year's tune of choice. They must become literate in music. Only at this time will we truly bridge the gap

promised to introduce teaching of pan music in schools, came under fire for its lethargy in implementing the project, and was challenged to regularise the status of the programme. Making the call was Ashton Whitman, a sixth form student and member of the winning band from St Augustine Senior Comprehensive School.

A joint effort between Pan Trinbago and the Ministries of Education, Community Development and Culture, the "Pan In Schools" programme was launched in 1994 with a pilot project at the Carapichaima RC School.

Since then, very little, if anything at all, has been heard of the programme. In July, 1995, thirty school teachers underwent training at the Valsayn Teachers College, geared towards "full-scale introduction of the project in the new school year."

The young student called on the powers that be to put the necessary structures in place to ensure that every student interested in playing pan would be able to do so. He proposed that a meeting be convened of all schools to discuss the future of the "Pan In Schools" project.

Efforts to contact Merle Albino De Coteau and Dr Anne Osbourne, members of the "Pan In Schools" committee, for an update on the state of the project, proved unsuccessful.

A CULTURAL troupe travelling with the Fifth

ST CHARLES High School and Friends will stage an evening of music, song, and dance, titled "Our Saviour," at Spektakula Forum, Henry Street, Port-of-Spain, on Sunday, March 31, from 6 pm.

Artistes appearing on the programme include Earl Rodney, Richard Pierre, People of Praise, Robert Munroe and Friends, UWI Prayer Group, Magnum, and St Charles High School Choir accompanied by Fortunaria Ruiz and Frenz Too.

Tickets, priced at \$20 advance and \$25 at the door, are available at the school which is situated at Back Street, Trinidad.

"THE HISTORY of the Big Drum Ceremony in Grenada" is the title of a public lecture to be delivered by Dr J D Elder at Lifestyle Pub, Bengal Street, St James, on Tuesday (March 19) at 7.30 pm.

Presented by the St James Intersocial Cultural Organisation, the lecture is the third in the 1996 series

presented by the group. Its aim is to educate the public on the historical events which helped to create the modern Caribbean, and to engender the climate for a better future.

The series continues on Tuesday March 26, at the same venue, with Dr Abraham G Springer of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church discussing "The Ancient Civilisation of CUSH."