

Steelband research by a US journalist

“ASK a Trinidad youngster what he hopes to be when he grows up. The answer is almost always: “A Pan man or a pan tuner!”

All right, there's no need to get apoplectic about that statement. It's only the impression American journalist Charles Hillinger got during his visit to Trinidad earlier this year.

In an article which first appeared in the “Los Angeles Times” and subsequently in the “Long Island Press”, Mr Hillinger attempts to describe the steelband and trace its history.

Clearly, a great deal of research went into the peice. Nevertheless some of Mr Hillinger's “facts” will undoubtedly be “news” to Pan Trinbago. For instance:

“There are nearly 200 steelbands on the island... Steelbands provide the accompaniment for the ballet, give classic concerts playing the music of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms... Some of the best tuners in Trinidad earn as much as \$ 1,500 (TT) a month. There are upwards of 500 Trinidad pan tuners.”