

EXPRESS

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*Features Section**Pan-recording goes digital*

ENTHUSIASTIC pan festival fans may not know it yet but new horizons have been reached in the recording of pan.

With a lot of careful research and the latest in electronic equipment, Simeon Sandiford claims he has demythified that notion that pan is difficult to record.

Since 1984 Sandiford has been experimenting with the use of digital electronics in the recording of pan. "Digital recording has inherent advantages: better dynamics, less noise, better fidelity," says Sandiford.

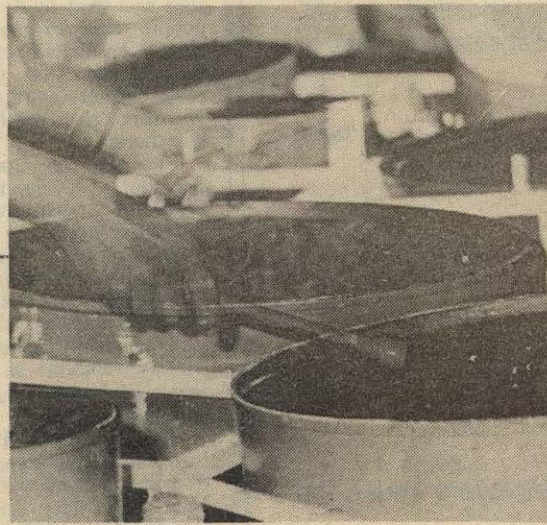
Last Thursday in a tape called *Pan Rising*, he made public the result of all his work.

The tape features Phase II and includes two solo pieces done by Len "Boogsie" Sharpe. Phase II was chosen as the first project because Sandiford was looking for music totally local in origin.

"I was looking for something that would become a collector's item," he says.

While Boogsie's solos were recorded in Sandiford's store at 16 Riverside Road in Curepe, the Phase II steelband in its entirety was recorded in their pan yard in St James. The music is amazingly clear — recorded as it was with the use of high intensity studio microphones which pick up a signal and take it into a digital processor.

That information is stored on video cassette and converted from analog to digital signals. The master tape, which is virtually nothing more than numbers, can be played back transferring the digital signals back

*Remember the name Simeon Sandiford*

to analog signals. The electronic signal is reconstructed and amplified and the end result is sweet, clear music.

Sandiford says his tapes are duplicated on real-time speed as opposed to high speed duplication, the common process used by those who make tapes. "High speed duplication decreases the quality of the music," says Sandiford.

Perhaps the most amazing feature of Sandiford's project is that it

was done without any expense to the Phase II steelband.

"Most of the time a musician goes into a studio to record and by the time he pays his costs and presses his records, he ends up spending \$15,000 to \$20,000 without knowing if he will be able to make back that money. To date Phase II hasn't spent a cent. This is a low budget but it's high quality production we're talking about," says Sandiford.

Delos International of California, manufacturers of compact disks is interested in the Sandiford project. Delos which is involved in international distribution, is a manufacturer of digital records which are now taking over the record industry now. These digital records, played with a laser beam, may render records in their current form obsolete within the next 10-15 years.

With the help of Delos, Sandiford estimates that Trinidad and Tobago's music stands a good chance of international distribution within the next six months.