

Steelband Music Festival

Locals compositions

a good sign for

the future of pan

that of the steelband.

If there was a fraction of the furore raised in support of the artistes who complain because the radio station's pay most royalties to foreign artistes, while "pirates" skim off even more from the residuals of their investment of talent and money, something beneficial would have been done long ago.

The teenagers who are learning music as it relates to pan may be ac-

quiring some formal training at school, but are more likely to be doing so through a private tutor, or the benevolence of some knowledgeable person in the panyard.

Either way they are yet to have the assurance that British youngsters do, having steelband or any form of music identified as relevant by the people who have replaced Britain's General Certificate of Education

with the CXC exams.

The arts, and most of all those that relate to performance, are still being identified by the public and policy makers of Trinidad and Tobago as a leisure time occupation.

Yet, in this "guava season" when everyone is looking for tourism to

replace the previous economic contributors, the role of the performer is still overlooked, and the performer is subjected to more unwarranted criticism than support.

Foreign critics might not as yet be prepared to review a steelband's rendition of a "European classic" in the same

manner as they would a traditional symphony orchestra, but they would undoubtedly identify the people who make this music as serious and dedicated musicians.

The problem of the pannists is not found in the panyard, but in the fellow nationals who — perhaps subconsciously

— reflect the attitude which *Sunday Express* London correspondent Hugh Lynch attributed to a former head of a BBC Department.

This man was reputed to have said that Dunbar, the first internationally acclaimed West Indian conductor "...was a negro who aspired to

be a great musician..."

It is this nation's own critics who persist in believing that our own people can only perform as mimics and imitators and not with the sensitivity, intelligence and understanding of the music which they perform as pannists.



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