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PHOTO: DEXTER PHILIP



Members of Phase 11 Pan Groove, defending Panorama champions, during a practice session at the pan yard recently.

Panorama in Sando: more \$\$

Kristy Ramnarine

STEELBANDS from the North are complaining that they will have to pay exorbitant prices to go to Skinner Park, San Fernando this year for Panorama.

The *Sunday Express* interviewed Errol Skerrit, manager of four-time Panorama champs, Phase II Pan Groove who said it would cost approximately \$175,000 for the band to move to San Fernando.

Skerrit said he has no idea where the steel orchestra is going to get the money.

"Whether we have it (money) or not we have to find a way to be there. If they having the panorama on the moon, you just show me the space shuttle and we going."

Skerrit said when the San Fernando venue was announced there were talks that the bands would be assisted.

"We were told that the San Fernando bands were never assisted to come into Port of Spain so it would be unfair for us to be assisted," he said.

The manager said at the end of the pan season the group has between 180-200 players. Although 120 players perform on the stage, additional players practice until the final players are chosen. The practice sessions takes place every night before the finals.

"The San Fernando hotel structure does not have rooms to sustain an event of this magnitude," said Skerrit.

"What we would have to do is move the players back and forth, from Port of Spain to San Fernando. We may have to rent rooms for the main people."

Apart from the cost of moving players, there is the cost of helpers who assist in loading and off-loading the pans, the cost of security officers and there is the cost of moving the pans, which will require trailer trucks. Skerrit said most of the owners of trailer trucks live in the southern area of Trinidad.

"They will have to leave their base in San Fernando, pick us up, take us down then bring us back up," he said.

"If it used to cost a south band around \$50,000 for transportation, for a north band it will cost double."

Jeremy du Barry, public relations officer of Petrotrin Hatters Steel



Carnival

Khichree

A Hindi word for a one-pot multi-ingredient dish.

Orchestra, which hails from San Fernando said it normally costs the band approximately \$40,000 to move from south to north.

"Transportation of the pans and racks alone cost \$30,000 while transportation of players cost another \$5,000," he said.

"Meals for the players can cost anywhere from \$2,000 to 3,000."

He said for the last 40 years bands from south have been going to the Queen's Park Savannah for the Panorama competition.

"Let them find out what it takes, to come South," he said.

"The more of us that make it to the finals, will cause less of them who want to 'stick', to worry about transport..." is becoming a familiar pan yard comment from the region."

Other large bands from south participating in the competition are NLCB Fonclaire, Tropical Angel Harps and TCL Groups Skiffle Bunch.

Pan Trinbago President, Patrick Arnold said for the past 40 years bands from south and Tobago have been going to the Queen's Park Savannah.

Arnold said the term 'big bands' came about because of these southern bands, which have been transporting their pans to Port of Spain over the years.

"Guinness Cavaliers from San Fernando came into PoS and had so many bases that they could not fit on the stage," he said.

"At that time there was no restriction on the size of the band and because of the size of the south band we have to set a limit."

Arnold said the North bands should not have any problem because they are the ones with the major sponsors.

"North bands are no way special. All bands should be treated the same."