

Time's ripe for pan development foundation

THE EDITOR: It is obvious that the sponsorship systems is outdated and nonbeneficial to this national music of Trinidad and Tobago.

In fact, the time has come for everyone, citizens and government, to review the situation and to start "putting money where dey mout is" for a change!

This should be done by the immediate establishment of a "Steelband Development Foundation" planned along the lines of the "Foundations" which allow creative and other gifted persons in the U.S. and other "developed" countries to invent, create and produce for their nation's benefit and glory.

Funding for this foundation should be generated through the National Commercial Bank by having each citizen who has a taxable income contribute a minimum of \$1 from each week's pay, with business firms and wealthy individuals pledging more substantial sums for which they can claim tax exemption.

All steelbandmen admit that sponsorship of individual steelbands has not helped the movement in general.

Everyone knows that sponsorship did not motivate "Spree" Simon, "Fisheye" Oliver and other early pioneers to create the first steelbands on which tunes could be played.

Every media person who has interviewed Bertie Marshall and Anthony Williams realises soon enough that it is their own money that funded the development of the "Bertfone" and "Spiderweb" pans.

No pantuner in any part of this nation has been helped by a "grant" which allowed him to experiment and create individual techniques, yet everyone at all levels of society feels free to boast about being from the land where the steelband was invented.

An impressive number of museums, art galleries, and other cultural and educational centres of America were established by funds donated by the wealthy, and are maintained by public interest and support.

There is no reason why a similar system cannot be adopted immediately here in what is the richest of all the Caribbean countries.

It is unthinkable that in a country where \$1m is spent on the racetrack in one day, that the steelband movement has remained in literally the same financial position it was when panmen knocked dustbins and the steel pan was written down in the lawbooks as "a noisy instrument."

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