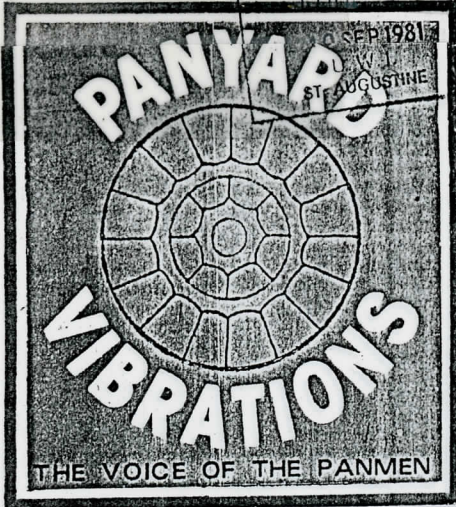




**FORWARD
IN A NEW
DAWN.**

FIND OUR OWN SOLUTION

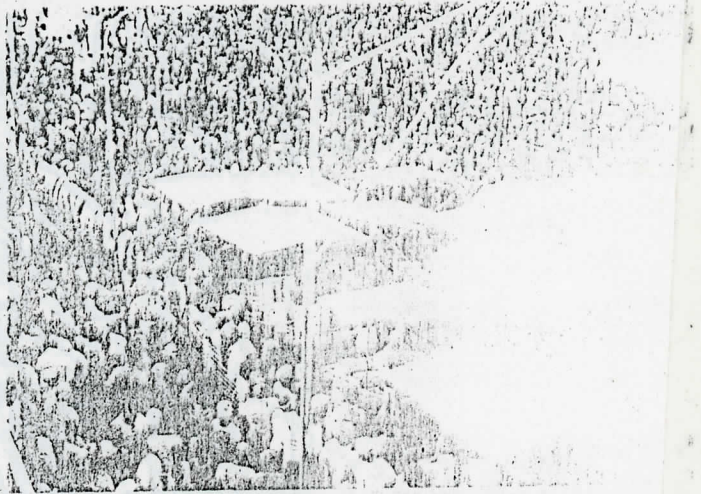
ARE STEELBANDS on the road becoming a thing of the past? Are we witnessing the gradual death of what has always been a main part of the carnival celebrations? If steelbandmen do not come up with answers and solutions to these problems during 1981, the future for "pan on the road" looks very dim indeed.

In the 1960's on a jourvert morning bands like Hylanders could attract thousands of revellers with their classical renditions for the Bomb Competition. Remember "Let Every Valley be Exalted" or "Gypsy Rondo"? In 1963 a steelband, Silver Stars won the band of the year competition with their portrayal of "Gulliver's Travels." In 1981 very few bands were able to muster more than 200 masqueraders. In fact 40 to 50 masquerades is much closer to the modern day norm.

Various reasons have been put forward as to why this sad state of affairs has developed, and now is the time for panmen and women to take a critical look at these reasons.

THE CARNIVAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The carnival celebrations are administered



THOUSANDS HAVE PARTICIPATED AT THE PANORAMA

nowadays by the Carnival Development Committee. The main emphasis of the C.D.C.'s projections for Carnival Monday and Tuesday has been and still is, the parade of the bands through the Savannah. Over the years the parade of the bands has become the parade of the big name mas bands, the Minshalls and the Le Heungs and the Mac Williams etc. Within this framework the steelband has become incidental. Their main importance to the C.D.C.'s parade of bands is that they give the tourist the opport-

unity to hear some steelband music.

The whole situation has become so ridiculous, that nowadays a steelband with perhaps fifty to sixty masqueraders would line up to the entrance to the Savannah from about 11.00 a.m. and would probably pass across the Savannah stage between 4 to 5 p.m. The steelband would have spent nearly six hours merely to act as a "filler" whilst the Savannah patrons await the arrival of the big name mas bands. Every steelbandman who has been through such an experi-

ence, has to ask himself "What am I doing here?"

PAN ON THE ROAD

Some say that mas was never meant for a savannah stage and the rightful place for a steelband and its masqueraders is on the road. But to the average steelbandman or steelbands women struggling to pull their racks through some narrow street with cars parked on either side making the street even narrower the question still is: What am I doing here? The position

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FIND OUR OWN SOLUTION

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is a little worse when we leave the boroughs and cities and go to the smaller suburban towns. In such situations steelbands have to compete with normal traffic on the roads. These steelbandmen must ask themselves, "On Carnival Monday and Tuesday, does a steelband have a right on the road? Is the steelband a part of carnival or is it not?"

THE D.J.'S

The role of the D.J. within Carnival is another area to which some attention must be paid. The roots of Carnival has always been closely linked with indigenous musical expressions. At the time of the Camboulay Riots it was the African Drum, this gave way to the Tamboo Bamboo and then to the Biscuit Drum, and then to the Steelpan.

In fact it was the stickmen and the Camboulay revellers who 100 years ago fought for and won the right to parade through the streets. If it was not for their struggles 100 years ago Carnival as we know it today would never have existed.

History is saying that steelbands have a right to be on the road, because the steelband is an art form developed out of the whole Camboulay Experience. If this is so then the steelband should not have to compete with the D.J.'s for the right to participate in carnival. For the steelband has already fought for and won that right.

PANORAMA?

Another area that we have to examine is the growth of the annual Panorama Competitions. A week before panorama and most steelband "yards" are full of activity, and as soon as results are announced many of these same yards become ghost towns. Carnival Monday and Tuesday holds no big attraction for so

many modern day pan players. But, it was not always so; before the advent of the modern day Panorama Competitions, Carnival Monday and Tuesday was the time when the steelbands man, cast aside and unrecognised during the year, made society sit up and recognise his genius and his creativity. On these two days the panman was king and he allowed no one else to share his throne.

THE STEELBAND MASQUERADERS

And what about the steelband masquerader? The thousands that were accustomed to play mas with their community steelbands: where have they gone? It seems that many steelbands have lost their close links with their communities.

The glamour of playing with a big name brass band holds more sway with the modern day masquerader, as compared to the influence of strong community ties.

LET US FIND OUR OWN SOLUTIONS!

Fellow panmen and panwomen the solution to all those problems lie with us. The C.D.C. cannot and will not help us, neither will any other outside grouping. It is as panmen and panwomen together as a movement, we must solve our own problems.

To start with, we as a collective, as Pan Trinbago, must say to the C.D.C. that "we have no desire to act as 'fillers' as your parade of bands". We believe that as a movement that we have struggled too hard and far too long to be given such a lowly status". What we will do is to organise our own parade of the bands. For example in Port of Spain we need to have a fairly long, straight road, such as T r a g a r e t e Road, and Pan Trinbago can or-



THE MASQUERADERS HAVE DESERTED

ganise various competitions on Carnival Monday and Tuesday to cater for steelbands and steelband mas. In order, to ensure a free and comfortable flow of bands and music, "The stretch" must be completely free from all obstructions whatsoever, be it parked cars or vendors. In addition on this particular stretch the steelbands should not have to compete with the D.J.'S, they can be accommodated elsewhere.

We can offer incentives to steelbands which could revive the magic of the jourvert morning 'Bomb' competition, on a Monday evening we could perhaps have a competition, where steelbands must play a long time calypso. Just imagine Rainorama, and Drunk and Disorderly or Melda coming down the line, band after band, time after time, in one flow on a Monday evening.

Carnival Tuesday could be the day for the steelband masquerader. Pan Trinbago could organise our own steelband mas competitions with our own categories. Steelbands would have to mobilise their own communities; behind Tokyo must be the John John community, behind Desperadoes would be Laven-tille, and behind Humming Bird would be the Cocorite community. Give steelbands a free flow and they will provide a flow of music and the revellers from the various communities will

prove that carnival is not really a stage "thing", it is truly a spontaneous reaction.

In all the towns, steelbands must be given a stretch of road, so that they can participate in the festival that they have helped to create. To deny a steelband the right to play freely on the road, is to attempt to deny and disregard a part of our history - the history of carnival; and to deny the crucial part that the panman has played in that whole historical development.

Pan Trinbago believes that it is only within such a progressive type of framework, that the steelbandman and steelbands women would be encouraged not to hang up their sticks after panorama. For "Pan on the Road" to survive steelbands must not be made to feel like unwelcome and unwanted guests in somebody else's show. The fact is that carnival is our show and we must demand the right and freedom to express ourselves in our own forms.

As a steelband organisation Pan Trinbago is qualified and talented enough to organise on behalf of steelbandmen.

We say the time for dependence on outside groups is long past!

Self Reliance for 1981!

We want back we carnival!

Pan on the road is our right!