

Pan has risen in the US, What about us?--Goddard

"WHILE WE HERE in Trinidad and Tobago are saying 'pan rising', pan has already risen in the United States and shining as brightly as the mid-day sun," says former steelband boss, George Goddard, who recently returned from a brief visit to the U.S.

Goddard, currently involved in a research project on pan, usually tries to keep abreast of developments in the U.S. He returned from his recent trip to report that the steelband has been sweeping across the campuses of the various universities in the United States.

"The development is ahead of ours," said Goddard because the people involved in playing the instrument, most of them are qualified percussionists, who read and understand music.

As a result, Goddard strongly supported the view that panmen and pan women learn music.

"While we here place importance on Panorama and Music Festival, the steelband is at a more advanced stage today," said the former president of the steelbands' body.

"We have to readjust our thinking if we have to

keep up with what is taking place in the United States and the United Kingdom.

"While it may be good to have our panmen and women on the international scene, we would need performers with the highest amount of intelligence and some knowledge of music to hold discussions with their counterparts on the outside," he added.

Percussionists

He cited Professor Allan O'Connor (pictured above) from the University of Northern Illinois, who plays all the pans in the university's steelband. All the members of the band are trained percussionists. Prof. O'Connor is also arranger and player.

At that university, Goddard reported, one big classroom has been converted into an area for tuning of the pans; there is



GEORGE GODDARD
former Pan Trinbago head

another big room that is used as a store-room for drums. The university's symphony orchestra has its own separate area; so too there is another classroom for the steelband which comprises of 20 players.

Trinidadian, Clifford Alexis, a former member of the now defunct Stereophonics Steelband, who left Trinidad some years ago, is a member of the university's staff as pan tuner and one of the arrangers in the band.

Then there is a Professor Rossing, who has his Phd. degree in Physics. He picks out the best drums based on the material. Pieces of material from the various notes are closely examined under microscopic lens.

Another Trinidadian panman, one Lennard Moses, formerly of Desperadoes, Goddard learned, was also a teacher at another university - Central State University in Northern Detroit. Moses has a Master of Arts degree in Music.

Strong Views

He also spoke of the internationally known pan/jazz wizard, Trinidadian Othello Mollineaux, who holds strong views about steelbands in competition like Panorama or Music Festivals.

According to Goddard, Mollineaux is of the view that all steelbandsmen and women ought to realise that they are musicians. And what competi-



PROFESSOR ALLAN O'CONNOR
arranger and player with the university band

tion does, is build one band at the expense of another. That's bad, he said.

Mollineaux, said Goddard, left Miami recently to appear at the Berlin Jazz Festival, where he is expected to meet his Trinidadian colleague, Len Boogsie Sharpe and other Caribbean jazz players.

Just before he left for Berlin, Mollineaux performed at an Afro arts jazz fest in Miami. Staff writer, Bob Brink, writing in the Palm Beach Post,

wrote of Mollineaux: "The highlight of the evening in musical terms was Othello. International steelband player Othello Mollineaux returned to the meaningful jazz of which he had shown himself eminently capable years earlier before he strayed into a highly amplified fusion of diverse popular styles to appeal to mass tastes.

"Throughout the performance Mollineaux's prodigious ability on the steel drum stood out."