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SOUTH PANORAMA FINALS TONIGHT

THE South/Central Panorama final takes place tonight, and while the competition was stiff, the real battle appears to be between Fernandes Vat 19 Fonclaire and Siparia Deltones, who gave a mind blowing performance of Gypsy's *Sing Ram Bam* at the zonal preliminary.

The other bands in the competition are not to be written off and these are Hatters, Silver Harps, Trintoc Sun Valley, Antillean All Stars, Tropical Angel Harps and Hillside Symphony.

While the South/Central Zone preliminary was perhaps the smoothest in years, it was relatively tame with a good variety of pieces and while some arrangers have out-done themselves, some appear stilted due to limitations with inexperienced players and pans which look and sound outdated. This was the case with bands like Cadenza of Mayaro, who although they are growing in their numbers, seem unable to test the power of arranger Rochester George, who has made it to the final of many south zone finals in the past.

Moosians Pan Soca struggled with *Pan in 'A' Minor* and did not brave playing their "own" tune as in past years; while Claytones, led by Jim Phillip, showed some progress in terms of their sound, yet not quite there. The biggest disappointment of the day came from Dunlop Tornados, a band which has shrunk considerably over the last year and has a new arranger in Joy Archibald. Panonic Connection and Couva Joylanders both appeared competent yet required a great deal of work to make it the big time.

I favoured T&TEC Motown to make it to the final for its rendition of Natasha Wilson's *De Mas In We*. The arrangement was not a simple one and my heart went out to a cast of young players, who were mostly teenagers, but, who gave a spirited performance. Kalamo Kings and Mt Moriah Pan Movement both

Deltones, Fonclaire in 'shootout'

By SHANE BICKRAM

seemed not to make much of an impression, yet we saw some forward strides in the case of the latter orchestra.

But, for tonight's finals. Is it really clearly a two-way battle between Siparia Deltones and Fonclaire? These two bands were separated by three points, with third-placed Hatters 11 points in their trail. This is the best Hatters has sounded in years, having had a spate of arrangers in the '80s including Ken "Professor" Philmore, and Earl Brooks over the past few years. But, can Hatters catch up with the two frontrunners? I guess that we'll all know the answer to that question by tomorrow morning.

Silver Harps seem to have some problems with the correct tempo, a problem, if sorted out, with its exciting arrangement added, could create new havoc in the competition. Trintoc Sun Valley looked the best in years, even though they have been in the national final in 1982, they have had better years especially in 1985 when they worked Kitchener's

Break Dance into a piece of pan-kaiso. Last year, this band's performance of Sparrow's *Jammet* really shone.

Antillean All Stars are in the limelight once again, but traditionally never seem to have enough spark to ignite their performance into championship material. All Stars is however, one of those bands one should not miss on a J'Ouvert morning if only for its beautiful pieces in the South Bomb competition.

Finally, the other two finalists, Hillside Symphony, who returned to an old-style arrangement, and Tropical Angel Harps, with its version of Denyse Plummer-Bocock's *This Feelin' Nice*, are also in with a chance.

Whoever emerges as South/Central Zone champion poses the big question: will the band be a serious contender for the national title. Deltones has never sounded better and Boogie, anticipating a better year than 1986, is hungry for all titles. But, on the other hand, the "Professor" is also watching with eagle's eyes for his first lien on a national Panorama championship.