

# The different' band

"Highlanders" are different.

And this is, perhaps, what makes "Forsyth Highlanders" the exciting steelband they are today.

"Forsyth" (sometimes the members simply drop the "Highlanders part) have become something of an institution in Laventille.

Take a drive along the Old St. Joseph Road and you'll see what we mean.

A huge crowd spills out of the yard and into the road and taxis playing this route have to make their way - gingerly.

For even they have come to accept that around Carnival time that area around the pan yard becomes "public property."

And by "public" we don't mean simply the residents of Laventille - for people come from far and wide. Simply to hear.

To hear what?

What Bertie Marshall has come up with next, of course.

For if we wanted to use a "highbrow" word to describe the band's captain the word will certainly be "progressive."

Speak of "Bertie" and you speak of change. Few can claim to have revolutionised the "pan" scene as much as he has done in recent years. And in so doing added excitement to "sweetness."

His supporters very fancifully call him the "Prince of Pan."

We call him Mr. Experiment, believing that it is this single quality - this urge to strike out and establish rather than follow and conform - that has kept "Bertie's" band among the "big guns" today.

Forsyth Highlanders is a "sprint ahead" steelband - innovating - standing alone - until, almost imperceptibly the other bands begin to follow suit.

First come the "double tenor"

Then Bertie raised the very pitch of the band - and other bands followed.

More recently the bands surprised the city by having their pans protected by cloth canopies.

Its very "practicality" sold it to the other steelbands - and we predict the time is not too

distant when steelbands moving through the road will look like so much covered wagons.

Three years ago Bertie made an even more revolutionary step. He amplified the pans.

The purists shuddered. The veterans howled. The judges thought differently. For in the last three Carnivals, "Forsyth Highlanders" have won the "Bomb" trophy twice (1965 and 1967) and have been runners up in the Panorama competition (1966).

Today, steelbandmen are accepting the "amplifier." Some have come to regard it even as a necessity.

It was no co-incidence that Highlanders were brought forcibly into the public eye the year after they gained "Forsyth's" sponsorship.

The Company has been doing all in its power to promote the band, confident that their confidence is well placed.

Their concern, however, is with organisation.

The music they leave to Bertie and his band. Even his most radical - sounding proposals are endorsed. Both Company and steelband realizing that to meet the demands of competition - revolutionary changes are sometimes necessary.

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"Forsyth Highlanders the Different band." Daily Express 18 Feb. 1968, p.25.

