

# \$50,000 UNESCO grant to document steelband

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PAN TRINBAGO and Banyan Productions has received a second allocation of TT \$50,000 from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Communication Organisation (UNESCO), towards their joint steelband project titled "Pan Beat Of The Steelband".

At a handing over ceremony at the United Nations Commission in Port-of-Spain, Sandra Gift, secretary-general of UNESCO Trinidad, presented the cheque to Christopher Laird, of Banyan Productions.

Laird said that four years ago Pan Trinbago approached the production company towards making a film about the steelband which the company accepted.

"We did a lot of research at home and abroad on the subject of the history of the steelband in terms of marketing and how they could

recover the cost of producing such a feature.

"To raise investment for such a film one has to be able to guarantee returns to prospective investors," he said.

"Once you are doing something good, people will take cognisance, to contribute to an evolving musical artform."

He said in consultation with the European film and television industry about a documentary on the steelband, the response was negative.

"They feel that there has been enough documentaries on the steelpan.

"We therefore took the initiative to do a feature film, since that was their area of interest to them; which would have a strong human story about the people and their community, as well as the history of the steelband as its background."

The contribution from UNESCO will go towards

developing a script for the film as well as a 15-20 minutes pilot video.

"It is our hope that the success of this pilot project will help to sell the film. The title of this film is called "Walk Like A Dragon", which focuses on an old steelbandsman, and his relationship with the younger generation of pianists, which is expected for completion by year's end.

Asked if this project will help erase the myths about the true origination of the steelpan, Laird said: "If this project gets to where we want it to, the film will make it absolutely clear that no other country was responsible for the development of steelpan but Trinidad and Tobago."

Gift said there was a concern among the national community about the preservation of our historical and national heritage.