

A pan piper pilgrim

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Bishop Anstey High School, **MARSHA PEARCE** talks to Louise McIntosh, a true woman of worth.

*'NO goblin nor foul fiend
can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
shall life inherit
Then, fancies fly away;
he'll not fear what men say;
He'll labour night and day,
to be a pilgrim.'*

verse from school hymn

Once upon a time, there was a leader. She was possessed with the Anstey spirit, she commanded with the power of music. And, with this talent she led the people of tomorrow to a sacred place - a nation where music reigned. The children followed this fearless, Hilarian pilgrim as she served with a ping the tenor pan and running notes of the piano. Louise McIntosh, a Bishop 'ole girl' is not the story book Pied Piper of old but the honoured pan piper of today.

It was a meeting of two sorority sisters, one Hilarian to another (January 13, Founder's Day/St Hilary's Day) and that most defining spirit was hovering over us: "The Anstey spirit is doing the best that you can do at whatever you are doing," says McIntosh (Associate of the Royal College of Music, London), music teacher, founder and principal of Pan Pipers Music School.

The idea of godliness and good learning, themes pinpointed in the school's Founder's prayer, are evident in this Born-Again Christian's explanation of the importance of music: "It is simple. God said that we should praise Him with music. It is a gift. Nobody can live without it." It is up to us to develop this God-given talent. Though some schools present music in a "sensible way," for McIntosh, there is still little proof that it has become a great part of the curriculum.

She is upset by the lack of creativity and style coming across our airwaves and the use of children as "show pieces" at Junior Panorama Competitions: "Many of these children cannot read music. It is such a waste. It is usually

the conductor and the school on show." McIntosh describes Panorama as a "sad" event - where steelbands of yesterday accompanied rev-

Undoubtedly, the labour and resilience of its founder is proven in its successes: "I don't have much of a social life. My school is my life," declares

participate in one of the choirs are among its many options. This real-life pied piper of sorts has led many brilliant musicians such as Harold Headley,

School Steelband Festival and Chantal Esdelle, joint winner with Liam Teague in 1993. The school represented TT in a festival in New Delhi, India in 1985 and was deemed in the most recent Music Festival, the most outstanding instrumental group. *'Non Nobis Domine, Not unto us, O Lord, The praise and glory be of any deed or word.'*

With commendable adherence to the school song, Non Nobis Domine (Not unto us, O Lord) McIntosh dismisses these achievements as service. She has become a "profitable member of our country" in answer to the Founder's prayer: "I am not a musician. I'm a teacher," she states with a light laugh and a look of genuine humility. McIntosh finds herself unconsciously giving back to her students what Bishop Anstey High School has given to her: a sense of tradition. She feels blessed to be so intensely involved in her three loves: teaching, people and music.

Louise McIntosh, our nation's pan piper, will lead those who choose to follow the song of the future into the realisation of her vision: "...that students would learn to love music and have it as a part of their lives forever."



LOUISE MCINTOSH and one of her pupils. Photo by MARSHA PEARCE.

ellers, now they are outmoded by DJs and brass bands, and are merely primed for a ten-minute dingolay - the preparation of one tune.

Having attended Tranquillity, an intermediate (primary) school at the time which offered the thrills of music on the intercom, McIntosh could not escape her melodic calling. The pull became stronger when she attended the Bishop Anstey High School in 1950, the only institution, in her opinion, that treated music as a serious discipline. Yet, she could not help but recognise the lack of opportunities in the field of music. While the piano was being taught, she was sure that the pan could still give children that "orchestral feel."

Thus, the Pan Pipers school of music, located in St Augustine, came into being in 1974, making this year its twenty second one. With true initiative, the school had to be the first to teach the steelpan formally as a classroom subject. Pan Pipers also introduced the pan to the Music Festival in 1978.

a woman who seems to have really inherited life.

While the school, which caters for students from five years, teaches pan, its main instrument is the piano. The recorder, guitar and a chance to par-

winner of the first Pan is Beautiful, solo category (1980); Maureen Clement, first woman to compete in Pan is Beautiful, Satanand Sharma, music Educator and composer of the 1994 Test piece for the