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# Exodus in cyber battle for Pan Ramajay name

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CREATORS and producers of indigenous artistic and cultural products are being warned to secure their identifiers in cyberspace, in order to avoid theft by foreigners.

The warning is coming from the Exodus Steel Orchestra, creators and still producers of the annual Pan Ramajay concerts, now that the organisation has found itself locked in an argument with an American over the use of the Pan Ramajay name for a website.

The American, Tom Miller, has registered all possible configurations of the Pan Ramajay name as domains set up by him and bluntly refuses to make any concessions to Exodus or even discuss selling the title back to the very people who invented it. Nor is the problem limited to Exodus and Pan Ramajay. Miller, who first came to Trinidad in 1987 and played with Exodus for Panorama, discovered Pan Ramajay and fell in love with the name and concept of the competition which, at that time, required steelpan ensembles to play jazz versions of tunes.

He has also played with other bands over the years and continues to come to Trinidad for Carnival and other pan events. Miller was even able to quote in a recent e-mail correspondence that he played Ray Holman's "Pan Woman" for the 1987 National Panorama competition.

But now that Exodus is ready to put up a website and applied for the domain name, band officials learned that Miller had already registered Pan Ramajay.com and Ramajay.com under his name. He is now unwilling to part with either version.

In a demonstration of sheer magnanimity, Miller has offered Exodus the facility of posting links on his

website to whatever the band chooses to call its Pan Ramajay site; making clear that it should not infringe on "his" registered name. Although recognising the legal implications and the principle of first to register, Exodus manager Ainsworth Mohammed is livid over what he calls "the absolutely unwavering and pompous approach" taken by Miller in discussing the Pan Ramajay issue.

"Exodus has always accommodated foreigners, because we believe in spreading the pan music," Mohammed said. "We do not have a problem with insecurity in those matters. We are of the view that no one can take away from Trinidad and Tobago the right to say we invented the instrument and our players are way above all competition.

"But this stealing of our registered name and now having the facility of making money out of it, should send some kind of signal to locals who volunteer to show every thing we have for free," Mohammed said. "Now, as it turns out, we are being asked to pay plenty money to be able to call our website Pan Ramajay, a term that meant nothing to anyone until we invented it and fleshed out the concept.

"I mean Mr Miller never even responded for the first few times we wrote to him," Mohammed said. "It is only after pursuing him for weeks, he replied to our e-mail and telephone calls, saying 'I understand your position and I am very familiar with the pan sentiment in Trinidad,' but that is it. We don't mind people coming in and learning the instrument or any of the skills associated with pan, but if that is how they are going to treat us, because they had first grasp at the technology, it sends a different kind of signal to the host," Mohammed said.