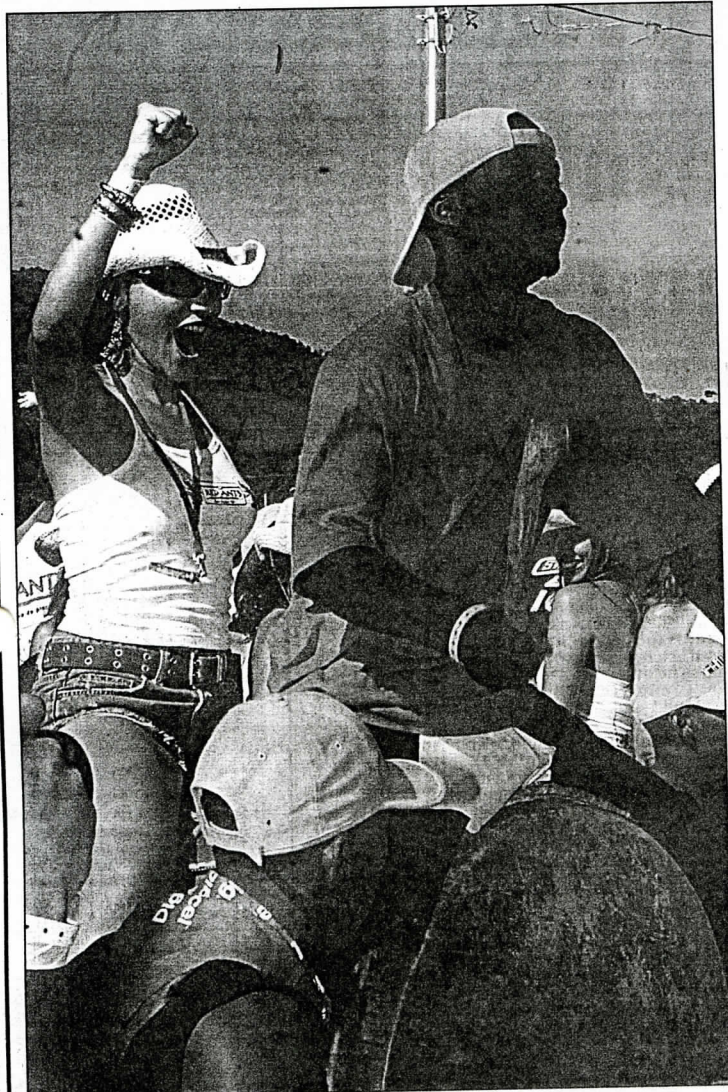


ML 1040

PHOTO: ROBERT TAYLOR



By the look of things, the absence of the North Stand failed to faze these pan lovers as they enjoyed activities during Panorama semi-finals yesterday at the Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain.

Small band finalists

Here are the finalists in the small band category based on yesterday's Panorama semi-finals: First five:

Steel Bands	Tune of Choice	Points
1. Merrytones	"Can't get Enough"	277
2. Pan Elders	"Pan Lamentation"	273
3. Tamana Pioneers	"Rebecca"	263
4. Petrotrin Siparia Deltones	"What I want"	259
5. Crescendoes Musical	"Sharing licks"	256

There was a three-way tie among Tunapuna All Stars with "Lying Excuses", Casablanca with "Doh Back Back" and the Southern Marines Steelband Foundation, which played "Oh Trinidad"—all making 253 points and taking up positions 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

Last-minute paving at Panorama

Ministry to the rescue

Rohandra John

rojoh@trinidadexpress

THE Ministry of Works and Transport came to the rescue of the National Carnival Commission when at the last minute, it was called in to help finish the runway exit stage at the Queen's Park Savannah, Port of Spain, where the Panorama semi-finals was hosted for the first time yesterday.

The competition was scheduled to begin at 9 a.m., but up to that time backhoe operators were busy paving the runway, where the bands were expected to make their exit. The operation contributed to the more than one hour late start of the competition.

Works and Transport Minister Colm Imbert looked on as workmen put the finishing touches to the runway.

He told reporters that an old water main which was underneath the now demolished Paddock building had created a "soft spot out there in that location where the bands (were to) exit. And yesterday (Saturday) the NCC asked the Ministry to assist, because it was a bit complicated and a little more than they can handle. I brought in the crew last night and they finished the job this morning."

He however said that "this did not significantly affect the Panorama. The small bands are going on first and there was more than enough room for the small bands to exit without any difficulties."

PanTrinbago President Patrick Arnold, although concluding that yesterday's Panorama was a success, said it was "unfortunate that they were still paving this morning". He said that the original paving

job was apparently not up to mark.

Arnold also said that another "minor" problem was that there was not enough seating accommodation for patrons. "I thought they should have had more coverage for the patrons and at the paddock area they were to install more bleachers."

The NCC was in charge of preparing the venue for the competition, it was learned.

But despite these setbacks Arnold said he was satisfied with "how things worked out". I think we have a good stage without the North Stand".

Thousands of pan lovers turned out at the Savannah for the semis braving the sweltering heat.

Panatics, was the first band to take the stage in the small band category playing "Pan Woman". They were followed by Tamana Pioneers, playing "Rebecca", and Merrytones, which followed in the third position with "Can't Get Enough".

A few bleachers were set up at the North Greens, which some now refer to as the "North Stand", to provide shade for patrons. Others walked with their umbrellas. Patrons also danced and pranced to the beat of the rhythm section which was on hand to provide additional entertainment.

There were mixed reaction from patrons concerning the change in venue: some welcomed it, while others remained skeptical.

"I preferred how it use to be before at the other end of the Savannah," one female patron who did not wish to be identified told the Express, "but I am still enjoying myself."

The big bands started coming onstage late in the afternoon.

PHOTO: DEXTER PHILIP



Minister of Works and Transport Colm Imbert looks on as a backhoe operator carries out paving works on the western end of the Savannah where the bands were to exit.