

T.G.

June 6, 1987 p. 4

'Ping Pong Rondo' was first classic

1967
Queens Hall
Carols and Classics
concerts

THE EDITOR: At page 8 of the issue of the *Trinidad Guardian* of Wednesday May 20, 1987 there was published a letter to your by Mrs Dorothy Campbell-Smith under the caption "Fr Sewell, our most versatile musician."

Fr. Sewell
musician conductor

In it, among the "accomplishments over the years" she attributed to Fr Sewell was that he —

"Used his influence to get the late Dr Vernon Evans to compose the first classical work scored specifically for pan and which Tripoli performed at Queen's Hall for one of the first "Carols and Classics on Steel" concerts:

First classical piece scored?
composed?
for pan

Her letter then went on to state —
"Although no one could remember the name of the composition it was recalled that it was a set of variations and that Fr Sewell conducted it a second time at that concert for the performance to it of a classical ballet specifically choreographed by Helen Dun and danced by her pupils.

Dr. Vernon Evans
Composer of
Dengae Themes

Dengae
Themes

piece was
choreographed
by Helen Dun

programmatic element

The name of Dr Evans's composition which was played by the Esso Tripoli was "Dengae Themes," Dengue Street in St James (Port of Spain) being the location where the Esso Tripoli used to have their pan-yard.

Dengue Street is in
St. James. It is
← where Esso Tripoli
used to have their
panyard.

However, the main purpose of my letter is not to remind Mrs Campbell-Smith of the name "Dengae Themes," but to deny, once again that this was "the first classical work scored specifically for pan".

National Pride ^{T.G.}_{6.6.87 p}

"Once again" because in an earlier letter from me to one of your predecessors in office, Mr Editor, published at page 10 of the issue of the *Trinidad Guardian* of Wednesday December 27, 1967, I had occasion to state (and I quote from that letter) —

Lennox
Pierre
responds →

"I think I owe it to a deceased friend not less than to a sense of national pride as a West Indian to deny, if only for the purpose of the historical record, the claim of your commentator Brian Dockray in your issue of the 21st instant that Mr Vernon Evans's "Dengae Themes" played by the Esso Tripoli Steel Orchestra on the occasion of the fourth annual presentation of "Carols and Classics on Steel" at Queen's Hall on Tuesday the 19th of December, 1967 is "the first piece of music in extended classical form to have been composed specifically for steelband".

disbute 1955
overture

"The first piece of music in extended classical form to have been composed specifically for steelband was an Overture entitled "Ping Pong Rondo" which was written, rehearsed, produced and conducted by the late Lieutenant N. Joseph Griffith and played by Steel Orchestra which became known as TASPO 2 at the Roxy Cinema on May 5, 1955 as part of a presentation called "Ping Pong Fiesta" which also included Errol Hill's well-known One-Act play "Ping Pong".

Ping Pong
Rondo
Lt. Griffith

I hope that this reminder will be of interest to the new generations of pan-players, pan lovers and pan historians who have since come on stage.
LENNOX O. PIERRE, Attorney-at-law,
Port-of-Spain.

Pr the hist.