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The truth about Pamberi

By **DOUBLE TENOR**

PAMBERI is a Portuguese word meaning "forward" and in the five years it has existed the San Juan steelband, so named, has lived up to its name completely. Here, under the spreading samaan tree, you can see how. The practice was being conducted by a member of the band, not the captain, not the arranger, not the conductor. But you wouldn't have thought so if you did not know, and had only his language and his approach by which to judge.

The truth about Pamberi is that it has a depth of leadership that has given its young membership a degree of discipline, surprising in a band so young. Andre Moses was detailing the band's solid successes in Panorama and the Steelband Music Festival and at the same time noting what he called some of the "contradictions" in the steelband movement —the fact of the Festival, for example and the uncertainty of tenure that steelbands had to endure. Pamberi was in a nice place. If you had that steelband sense of atmosphere: the panyard was in the same yard as an abandoned reservoir, Pamberi's pans on one side, the other very deep and locked up.

In the finals of three out of four Panoramas, in the '84 steelband finals with an unforgettable run with

Copeland's "Billy the Kid", and, under the baton of Dawn Bastien, impressive already in this festival

with Tchaikovsky's "Rites of Spring". And you wonder that this band has already done what it has taken steelbands years to do.

Pamberi, to put it simply, is the most successful young band in Trinidad and Tobago today and it is no use explaining it by saying that it is really the old "Findland" because this is a band with a different spirit with the achievements to prove.

"Pamberi," said Bastien, who is conducting for the first time, "is a disciplined band to work with and its leadership is progressive."

Their calypso of choice is Ray Holman's "Musical Showdown" and during the 10 days it will be hoping that, this along with the tune-of-choice and test piece will be able to do the trick.

One of the fascinating aspects of this, the fourth in the "Pan Is Beautiful" series, is whether "Pamberi" will continue its good run. From the steps of the La Petite Insitute, a private secondary school on the premises, the talk drifts to "Desperadoes":

"...back with a bang after 19 years.

"...all the bands thought so until Cordettes."

