

SIR: Now that the public has digested the spoon-fed results of Panorama and concocted its own strange brew - the People's Choice - I wish to make my own humble observations.

Although I had not considered Angostura Starlift a winner, I agree with the decision of the judges.

I was torn between my own assessment of the steelbands performances and what I thought the judges would do.

In any case, Starlift's performances at the preliminary and in the semi-final would not have been enough to make the band a winner.

But on the night of the final, Starlift's performance was one that bristled with rhythm and sound arrangement.

# The Panorama results -- a message to steelbands

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Guinness Cavaliers, however, did nothing to earn second place.

Cavaliers' performance was just a string of gimmicks to get the applause of the crowd.

Perhaps, the quick switches from piano to forte - from soft playing to loud - is a technique which is worth copying.

## MELODIC

The rest of the performance, however, was a linking up of several short, syncopated arrangements that did not resemble the calypso the band was playing.

Indeed these several little sequences of pleasing notes coming together often disrupted the real melodic

line of the calypso.

The worst criticism I heard of Solo Harmonites was that the tune had no arrangement.

Stupid. When somebody decides how many tenors will play what, where tenors should roll or what type of instruments should be used in the rhythm section, this is arrangement, regardless of how closely the pan arrangement resembles the calypso in its original form.

What the judges failed to appreciate, and the public failed to recognise, is that Solo Harmonites' arrangement of Sparrow's Bongo did full justice to the original calypso.

The melody was a swaying one, conveying the very spirit of a Bongo chant.

And to control 280 pans so remarkably was no small achievement either.

Solo Harmonites and Angostura Starlift were the two best bands that night.

Then the judges decision, either way, could have been excused as a preference for style, and technique, among other things.

## CAREFUL

Shell Invaders, with some of the most beautifully played chords I've ever heard on guitar pans, should have been third.

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Placing Guinness Cavaliers is a message to other steelbands which says: Jamming pan is better than careful, imaginative arrangement or precise playing.

West Indian Tobacco Gay Desperadoes arrangement was mostly a sequence of stupid little exercises on the scale, departing as far as possible from the chord progression, and the best run they had in the tune could be heard on a number of very old Pan Am North Stars records.

# ATTRACTIVE

One attractive base movement can also be heard in early recordings by Guinness Cavaliers.

Hatters played more music than Despers and Cavaliers, but its a pity Cavaliers influence on South Trinidad steelbands was so clearly pronounced in their arrangement.

Catelli All Stars would have placed much higher if their performance on the final night was as good as that in the semi-final.

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