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'Despers' goes on tour of U.S. city

DEFENDING National Steelband Festival champion WITCO Desperadoes Steel Orchestra will break its preparation for *Pan is Beautiful V — A World Steelband* for a tour to Philadelphia, USA, next month. The popular Laventille band will leave on May 5.

Speaking with the *Express*, Desperadoes captain Anthony McQuilkin disclosed that the tour is being hosted by the Freedom Theatre of Philadelphia. The touring party will comprise 58 members, including tuners and technical staff. Musical director/conductor Pat Bishop, and California-based soloist Robert Greenidge, will also be in the touring party.

Desperadoes will perform on May 7, at the annual Mother's Day Parade in Philadelphia, billed as *Parade of the African/Americas Festival*. On Mother's Day, May 8, the orchestra will be in concert at the Philadelphia Academy of Music. The first half of the this programme will feature American pianist Leon Bates, performing the masterpieces of Gershwin. The 60-minute second half will be made exclusive to Desperadoes, and the band will do its entire classical repertoire.

On May 8, the members of Desperadoes will be guests of honour at reception, which will be co-hosted by Trinidad and Tobago COUNSUL General to the United Nations Babooram Rambissoon, Ambassador to Washington Reginald Dumas, Philadelphia Mayor W Wilson Goode and Pennsylvania Governor Robert P Casey.

Desperadoes returns home on May 9.