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Despers a big hit at Carnegie Hall



NEW YORK, Saturday, (CANA) — The large Caribbean community in New York has become an important part of the city's economic, cultural and social life. That's according to New York's Mayor, Edward Koch, who told between 12,000 and 15,000 people on the steps of City Hall in Downtown Manhattan that West Indians had assumed responsible positions in both the public and private sectors of New York and should therefore be commended.

Welcoming Trinidad and Tobago's champion steelband, Desperadoes, and its conductor, Pat Bishop, to the city, the mayor said Caribbean immigrants had "enriched" the "cultural diversity" of New York. That cultural mix, he went on, had received a decided boost by the excellent and thrilling performance of the Desperadoes at Carnegie Hall on Wednesday evening.

"Unfortunately, I could not attend, but I heard

about the fantastic performance by the Despers," he told the crowd assembled to hear a noon performance by the steel band orchestra.

The mayor then took to a steelband instrument and played along with the band as it gave a rendition of Scott Joplin's *The Entertainer*.

The Desperadoes, who appeared last night at the Appollo Theatre in Harlem, was given two standing ovations at Carnegie Hall on Wednesday evening when the band appeared on a programme that included Liza Minnelli and the New York Pops led by founder and music director, Skitch Henderson.

Mayor Koch, echoing a theme of unity among the city's ethnic communities, in observance of "Unity week", said that the presence of the Desperadoes in the city and the warmth of the welcome, not to mention the enthusiasm with which they had been received, reinforced the belief that New York was really a melting pot.

But the city's top executive was not the only person to praise the steelband and West Indians.

John Campi, a vice president of the *New York Daily News*, described the appearance of the Trinidad and Tobago band in the US as a unique and historic event, the likes of which no one in the US had ever experienced before, both in terms of quality and presentation of music.

"It is no mean feat for an orchestra to receive two standing ovations at Carnegie Hall, but that happened when the band played on Wednesday evening," said the newspaper executive.

He later presented Ms. Bishop with a *Daily News* front page award, and praised her for her leadership of the band and for musical ability as a director of note.

David Dinkins, the top black elected official in the city's local government, said that he was present at the Carnegie performance and if anyone had closed his or her eyes during the performance and listened to the quality of music that person would have heard the full range of instruments of a large orchestra. The band concludes its tour with a performance this evening at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.