

The free breakthrough Digital Pan software app is demonstrated at the offices of technology consultants Digital Business Ltd. From left are Keisha Codrington, Quinten Questel, managing director, Digital Business; pan soloist Adrian Jaikaran; Christian Lalla; and Cary Codrington. Inset is Danielle Jones, communications manager, bpTT.



## Steelpan app gives instrument new platform

**Steelpan enthusiasts throughout the world now have the opportunity to learn and play pan music, literally at their fingertips, as a result of a breakthrough development in computer software created by an innovative Curepe-based technology company.**

Appropriately named Digital Pan, the app was developed by Digital Business Ltd, a leading Caribbean management and technology con-

sulting company.

The versatile software allows users to play any of the major pan instruments, such as tenors, guitars, cellos and bass. People can play your favourite tune and even try composing and recording pan music. In addition, users can get together and form a "digital steel band", simulating an entire band with the genuine tonal quality of traditional pans.

The app, which can be used on smartphones or tablets on the following platforms: IOS (iPad, iPhone), Android and Phone7, are accessed for free, by anyone in any part of the world.

As the world governing body for the steelpan, Pan Trinbago has fully endorsed this innovation and collaborated with Digital Business in taking the national instrument into the digital age.

"We consider this development to be a major breakthrough in marketing our national instrument worldwide. Anybody who is interested in playing the pan or composing pan music now has the opportunity to do so," explained Quinten Questel, founder and managing director of Digital Business.

"Although we launched the app in November, last year, we wanted to make it free of charge to everyone. It is our contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's 50th Anniversary of Independence and our gift to the world."

Questel's wish to offer the app free of cost to users took the first step to reality when energy company BpTT came on board as the first sponsor for the breakthrough project.

"BpTT was the first company we approached to partner with us on this project because of their investment in the steelband fraternity over the years. They were enthusiastic. We are grateful that they hit the first note, as it were," said Questel.

Danielle Jones, communications manager, bpTT, said yesterday that the company seized the opportunity to collaborate with Digital Business "on a project that enhances the worldwide appeal of the steel pan as a musical instrument."

"We are happy to be associated with the digital pan application, which brings out the creative and innovative force of the national instrument. At bpTT we see this partnership as an extension of our long-standing support of the steel band industry," Jones added.

BpTT has sponsored three of the pans used in the application, the High C tenor, the Low C tenor and the Junior Steelpan. Communications company TSTT's bmobile has sponsored six other pans.

Giving full endorsement to digital pan is Cary Codrington, founder of the popular pan ensemble, the Codrington Pan Family.

"The first time I heard the instrument on an iPad I was blown away by it. You can't tell the difference between the application and playing a traditional pan. This technology takes the steel pan to a new level," said the acclaimed pannist.

A close collaborator and digital Pan Ambassador on the project is Adrian Jaikaran, a pan soloist who has performed extensively abroad in countries such as England, the United States, Curacao, Barbados and St Lucia.

"This application actually enhances my performance as a soloist. The notes are clean and genuine. There is no deterioration in tonal quality. You can switch or rotate the pans. Of course, it is also easier and cheaper to transport, you just hold it in your hand," said Jaikaran.

The concept for Digital Pan is the brainchild of Christian Lalla, a member of Digital Business, who won an internal competition which challenged employees to come up with an idea which dealt with app development.

"I was listening to my nephew and niece playing their videos after practicing on the steelpan and it struck me that I could develop the pan as a mobile app. That's how the idea came to me, really," Lalla recalled.