

FRANKLYN CAMERON
(left) with drummer Greg
James, of the band Rasa.



Enter Cari-pop

Rasa's singer-pannist cleaning up the world

By ESSIBA SMALL

WHEN Franklyn Cameron left his Longdenville home for Philadelphia in 1986, he had no idea that he would be eventually calling the US state home.

"I wanted to pursue my music. I wanted the people out there to hear the pan and to know the versatility of it. That was my reason for going out there."

Ten years later, and Cameron is a pannist, singer and vice president of JAW (Just Another Way) Audio and Video recording studio.

For him, life couldn't be better.

More than that, the 46-year-old Cameron is set to take over the world of music with Cari-pop.

What?!

A new genre, Cameron claims he created, which fuses Caribbean music with pop. Samples of it can be found on his current album (which features his band Rasa) *Cleaning Up This World*.

Born in San Juan, Cameron became inquisitive about music from a very early age. The pan, however, entered his life at age ten.

He's been having a love affair with the instrument ever since.

Cameron, who started singing in his 20s, only decided to combine his two talents (singing and playing the pan) after watching Marvin Gaye.

He explains: "I saw Marvin playing the piano and singing. I said 'I could do that but I will use the pan instead'."

Now, Cameron says, it's this combination which has been "keeping the gigs coming in" for his five-member band Rasa (Sanskrit for pleasure)—a name the artiste "picked up in Yoga class."

Rasa, largely made up of Philadelphian musicians, is an exponent of Cameron's Cari-pop, a style which can be compared to the music of the R&B group Frankie Beverly and Maze.

Incidentally, Cameron said, one of Rasa's members jammed with Beverly before.

Currently, Cameron is busy promoting *Cleaning Up This World*. Five tracks full, the effort features songs from Cameron's pen.

The title of the album, he says, came from his awareness of the environment since he is a member of the Greenpeace organisation.

Of the five songs, "Steelband Soca Jam" and "Dopey Dancing" are his favourites.

"I made 'Dopey Dancing' for the kids because I really like working with children."

"I wrote 'Steelband Soca Jam' for the people out here. I want them to connect the steelband with the soca."

Now that *Cleaning up the World* has been released, Cameron says he intends to be in the country often.

"This is my first time home in ten years," he said with a chuckle. "I want to keep coming back whenever I have the time."

And when Cameron is not performing with his band or seeing about production matters at JAW, the lanky musician can be found in the kitchen cooking mouth-watering vegetarian dishes.

"I am also a chef at the Govinda's vegetarian restaurant which is on South Street in Philadelphia," he said proudly.