

By PAUL HILL

NOW that the euphoria of the splendid Catelli Trinidad All Stars Steel Orchestra concerts, is over, and the orchestra has played in other parts of Trinidad and Tobago, we can perhaps look at the reasons for the success of the Classical Jewels concerts and consider the future of All Stars and that of other steel orchestras who may follow in their footsteps and stage fullscale serious concerts.

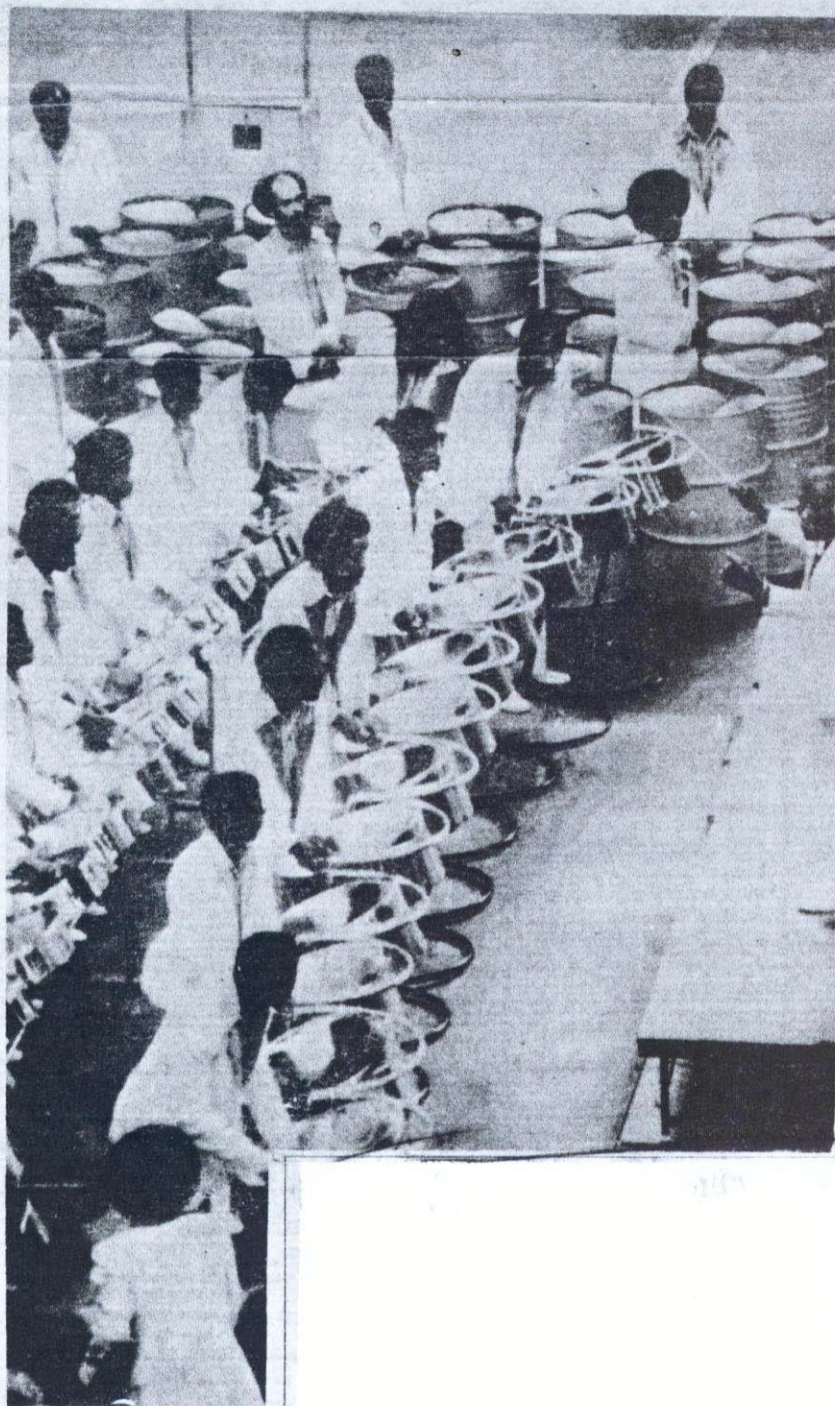
However, the standard has been set by All Stars over these last nine years with their four concerts so lets analyse the reasons for their success.

First and foremost one needs an outstanding director, conductor and arranger of the calibre of a Gemmy Jemmott, Anthony Prospect and Jit Samaroo; these are fine musicians in their own right. In Gerry Jemmott we have a dedicated and hard working musician who was and is a fine and experienced flautist who learnt his trade in the police band under splendid bandmasters like Rupert Dennison and the late Pat Taylor who alas died recently in the U.K. Mr Jemmott and Mr Prospect are therefore professional musicians and strict disciplinarians and in Gerry's case this is being passed on to All Stars.

Musicianship and discipline are vital ingredients with special attention to programme planning a very important consideration. The last three All Stars concerts in which I have been associated have been most sensibly planned with light classical music interspersed with a variety of pieces and the occasional challenging and heavy one. Wisely, too, has been the use of some of Trinidad's most accomplished soloists such as Ken Oxley, Pat Flores, Roy Edwards etc., and recently the introduction of new talent like the promising if inexperienced Richard Pierre. Added to these the featuring in recent concerts of Joslyne Sealey, surely one of Trinidad's finest singers over the last two decades and a true professional whose coloratura would grace any concept platform and, in the current Jewels 4, Lindyann Bodden-Ritch accepting nobly and splendidly the challenge of a most difficult concerto, then you have excellent programme planning. This, perhaps, is what Gerry Jemmott and the All Stars have to offer, for after nine years they are always improving because they were willing to accept the challenge of Mozart piano concerto in the early days, the accompaniments to operatic arias, the brilliance of a Berlioz overture and now, most difficult of all technically, the last movement of a full scale Tchaikovsky symphony.

It is no good "playing it safe" otherwise one never advances. The show stoppers like "1812" or "Morning, Noon and Night" overtures are fine and necessary in their way but one must develop the full resources of the pans whatever that may be.

Thanks to the generous backing of the



sponsors, Catelli and Hand Arnold and the vital and wise know how in administration and publicity of Osmond Hale these concerts have now become an integral part of

# What's next for the steel jewels?

Trinidad's music life.

But where now? I asked this question in 1978 and again two years ago. The pan, one of the great original instruments of this century has developed now into an instrument which should be considered seriously and judged as such. But where do All Stars and the other orchestras go from here? First, I think, all the players need to learn how to read music. These two hour concerts are for the most part learnt by memory patiently taught by the conductor and his assistants in a special way and practised over months

of hard work and then forgotten. To build a library with a repertory of works that can be called upon at short notice, practised and played within a few days, the musicians all need to read music and this I know Gerry Jemmott is working on.

## ● Catelli Trinidad All Stars

Also composers, who can write for the pans are needed; not calypsoes but original serious full length compositions, perhaps, in the classical vein. Adapting the classics is all very well and fine, though some may frown on it, and Jemmott, Prospect, Samaroo and the others do a wonderful job but surely original composition exploiting the full range of this most unique of instruments is the next step.

### CHALLENGES

Finally I would humbly suggest the gradual introduction of an instrument from the classical symphony orchestra, like a flute,

oboe, clarinet, trumpet or horn into the occasional piece to give tone colouring to the steel orchestra. This might work wonders and one must experiment all the time and evolve and as All Stars know better than most new challenges must be accepted.

The next step for this fine orchestra should be to attempt to conquer Europe; the great concert halls of

Britain (where there are so many West Indians too) should be the first stage. Concerts at the Edinburgh Festival, the Albert Hall Proms or Festival Hall are the logical steps. Success in Trinidad does not necessarily mean acceptance in Europe. There

is no question of competing with symphony orchestras, this must be on the Pans own terms but judiciously advertised, carefully programmed and well sponsored with an as-

sault on those dyed-in-the-wool critics who have no idea of what a Pan can do and who knows where the steel orchestra can go these coming years. To appreciate them fully they must of course be seen live, for television, radio or record can never capture their real sound.

I have one last thought; if you listen carefully to the wonderful technical playing of "Cokey" Telemaque and "Shortie" Guerra in a Telemann sonata, you must surely like

me, wonder if that over worn saying "the sky's the limit" could not indeed be fairly applied here and to the future of the steel orchestra.