

'Haffers': My job is completed

By GAIL ALEXANDER

HE SAYS he can think better with those sunglasses of his on, (you'll hardly find him without them) and he'll hesitate if asked to shed them. But Annise "Haffers" Hadeed didn't hesitate last month when he received the SOS in London from Phase II Pan Groove.

London-based since 1981, he'd already made commitments for work in the UK, but some quick rescheduling and he was able to wing out to Trinidad after the band's call for help to make it to the Big Yard for Panorama preliminaries last weekend — and consequently, with his arrangement of *Mind Yuh Business*, to today's semifinals. (See Boogsie story.) "It was a bit of a situation," Hadeed said during a break last week, "Had I not come at the time I did, Phase II would not have been in Panorama for 1996. We had to do some real work, but they all handled it well. I'm quite satisfied... my job is completed."

Arranging for Phase II was hardly a chore. Hadeed handled Panorama arrangements for the South-based Kalomo Kings for four years running since

1988 and also arranged for Solo Harmonites in 1992. Then he took a break.

But winging down a couple thousand miles to help out this year was no problem for "Haffers" (the name given to him by an old Chinese man when he was a youngster) who probably regards Phase II as his alma mater.

Pan has been lifelong subject for Hadeed, 37 who's had the sound resounding in his head *a la Bassman* since he was a tot living on Park Street, Port-of-Spain. Green Corner was nearby and so too the home of the Starland Steelband.

He recalls: "From age five, six, I would go and try to play with the sticks panmen used to beat pan. I was so taken with it, that often at home I'd pull out the chairs and arrange them around me like how you would the pans in a band. And I'd pretend I was playing."

He gets very humble when he describes his talent as a gift: "But it doesn't stop at this point; the music speaks to me, it's a language. No, I don't read music, but as a lot of people say the music came first and the theory and paper (came) after," he says, adding that he goes by feel-

ings, instinct and sensitivity.

When the family moved to Woodbrook in 1968, Hadeed found himself in the heartland of pan, living between Starlift and Invaders panyards. Inevitably, he graduated from playing on chairs at home to the real thing — practising with bands — from age 11 and had memorable days playing with Invaders between 1971 to '73.

By the time he became a QRC student, he realised that books were furthest from his mind. In 1973, Hadeed had found his way to Phase II (he played drums also), then in its very early days and had already made up his mind about his life path: "I told my parents early on that I was interested in music and playing pan. Naturally, it wasn't received too well since in those days, playing pan wasn't seen as a way of earning a livelihood. But they've come around since," he says also describing himself as "...Nothing but a Trini; I was born here, my mother was born here..."

Young, but shrewd enough to realise that if he wanted to make pan-playing a full time (profitable) profession, he had to go

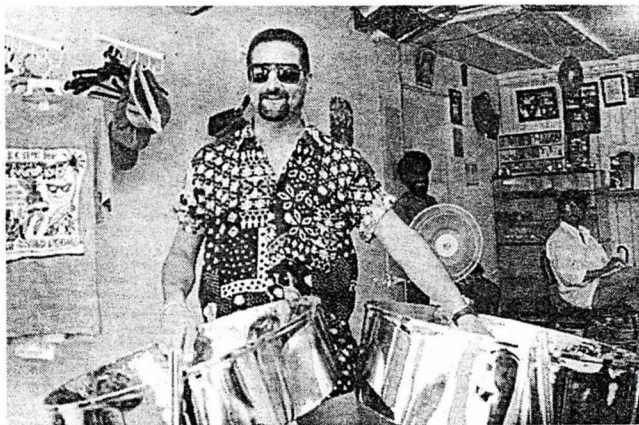
overseas, he was on his way by 1979. First to the US and a year later to London where he hooked up with drummer Richard Bailey and his ensemble.

The overseas years found him on the usual road a musician travels (literally) — working pub gigs, touring, recording. Along the way were stints with Billy Ocean, Luther Franco and the West Indies jazz band, African saxophonist Frank Williams, and D'Joa.

He also found time to compose (unreleased work to date) and did the soundtrack score of the movie "Playing Away" directed by TT born/London based Horace Ove and starring Stephan Calipha (of "Jungle Book" fame) and Norman Beaton ("Desmond's").

Hadeed shies away from describing his music as jazz fusion, but admits to a Caribbean flavour. But there were also days in grey chilly London (or NY) he recalls when he could be found playing nothing but "Island in the Sun" and similar music identified with the Caribbean in order to pay the bills.

He's had his share of hard times along the way, he readily admits: "...Hav-



HAFFERS TO THE RESCUE: Pan maestro Annise Hadeed (and his shades) last week after taking Phase II to Panorama prelims. **Photo by NOEL SALDENHA**

ing to crash on friends' sofas because you didn't have your own apartment, of being down to your last 35 cents, knowing how to make a tin of soup last for days (add lots of water) — it wasn't easy."

One London day, he received the surge of inspiration which helped him to pursue his goal. Hadeed was on his way to a friend's apartment to get some rest (in a sleeping bag on the floor).

He had to kill some time first, so he chilled out — literally — on a park bench: "It was cold and I was really sleepy; when I looked around, you could see fellas like vagrants on benches around and I asked myself 'What in hell am I doing'."

"Then along comes this guy in a wheelchair, no legs, yet he hails me out with such a hearty 'Good Morning!' that I couldn't

help but think — if a man in a wheelchair with no legs could have such a positive attitude, then who is me (and I have two legs)?"

To make up for the pits, talent and luck also won him his share of high points — not necessarily including ovations. Hadeed who counts the respect of his peers first among his kudos, also lights up when he recalls being described in certain UK reviews as a musician who "turned the pan from a novelty into a full-fledged musical instrument."

Today Haffers will be in the savannah checking out all the bands, he says. Trips back home usually find him echoing the panman's age-old cry: for support of the instrument outside of the Big Yard and Panorama:

"We must ensure that history records the fact

that TT contributed a musical instrument to the world," he says, "And there are lotsa fellas out there learning pan in the UK, Denmark, the US. I see it, I know. Their whole approach is serious, they treat pan as a musical instrument — we should learn from that."

After Carnival he wings back out to Paris for recording and other '96 projects including a CD. Haffers balks at describing his future as being so bright (that he doesn't need shades) but the days of making soup stretch are definitely over, he grins.

While he's not saying just how much, he does admit to making a comfortable living: "I just want to be able to play my music and not have to worry about when the next bill is due — I wouldn't be the same person if my life wasn't music..."