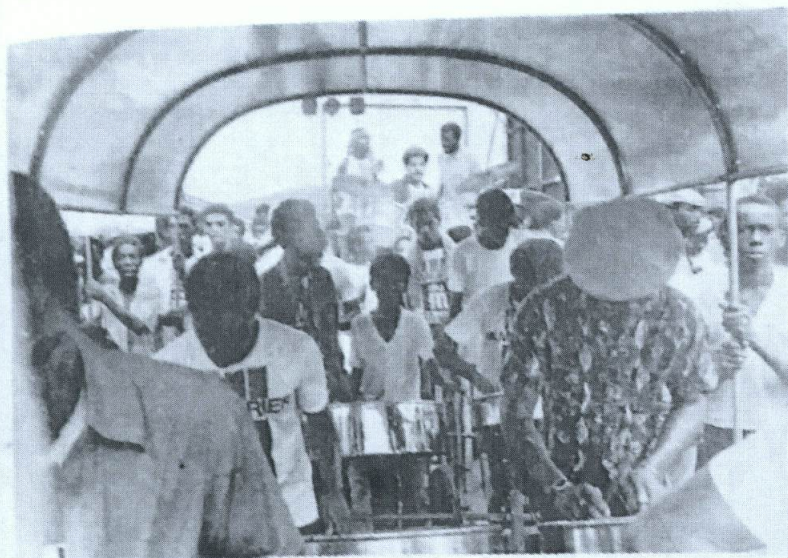


GAY DESPERADOES — A THREE-TIME WINNER



THE WITCO GAY DESPERADOES AT THE PANORAMA PRELIMINARIES LAST YEAR. THEY WENT ON TO WIN.

"WE REMAIN in Trinidad only to accept challenges in steelband competitions" says Rudolph Charles, captain of the WITCO Gay Desperadoes.

His band has won the Panorama competition three times in the past. But he doesn't reminisce in past victories.

Explains Rudolph "The pan has to take its place among other instruments.

"It has to be developed. Right now the pan is taking its own form and so every year, when we (Desperadoes) appear for competitions we are actually experimenting in one form or another."

This year's experiment will feature a n acoustic chamber which is expected to improve the quality of tone.

STYLE

And all this research is done mainly by Despers' tuner Wallace Austin who is highly regarded by Captain Rudolph for his keen interest in developing the steeldrum.

Hard work
has
brought
the band a
long way

As Rudolph suggests—"There ought to be a competition for tuners — Wallace is definitely the best.

"Like all our p a n players, he wants to discover, to invent and not to copy. The other steelbands are way behind — in tuning, in arrangement and the works."

Rudolph believes that the Desperadoes have set the pace for other bands.

"Most bands" he says, pattern our style. This is true although no o n e could really give claim to the origin of style."

CHAMPIONS

Desperadoes, in existence for almost 30 years now, will emerge for Carnival this year with a total of 150 pans. They have been champions of the Steelband Panorama in 1962, 1966, and 1970.

Paradoxically, t h e same "Despers" is reputed with both international experience and local gangsterism.

VALUABLE

But Rudolph explains that the panmen were never really of violent character.

"In the early days the panmen were merely the victims of gangsterism."

But the Despers have come a long way since then.

And how did they manage?

Simple; just hard work in trying to develop their most valuable possession at the time — the pan.