

Solo 'wrecked' rest of them

SOLO HARMONITES cantered away with this year's Panorama first prize.

When, on Sunday night, the Panorama judges announced that Solo Harmonites had won, they were merely voicing the opinion of the thousands of pan enthusiasts present.

"Solo" won from the beginning of their rendition.

The steelband played Lord Kitchener's "dark horse" tune — the "Wrecker," relieving the monotony of band after band playing the same tune.

RENDITION

In the true Panorama style it was throbbing, exhilarating rendition that had the audience tapping in its seat.

Few steelbands succeeded in doing that on Panorama night.

For "Solo" it was the first Panorama success after a series of near misses.

But on Sunday night it was certainly Solo was deserving winners.

The finals of this competition was in keeping with the preliminary phrases — upset after upset.

Out of the big three were consistent competition winners, West Indian Tobacco Gay Desperadoes,

pre-match favourite Forsyth Highlanders, and the reigning "king of the West of the west" — Esso Tripoli.

Trailing behind "Solo" Harmonites were Angostura Starlift entering winners' row after some lean years and the "surprise" in the race — Texaco Dixieland.

The fact that the top two steelbands did not play the commonly accepted road march prospects might be significant.

THROBBING

Starlift played the Mighty Sparrow's "Jane" — a tune whose potential steelbandsmen discovered too late.

Dixieland, however, were more conventional, playing a delightfully mellow rendition of Kitch's "Miss Tourist."

All in all it was a disappointing "Panorama." Apart from the winner, no steelband had the throbbing drive that is the hallmark of any well played calypso.

Too many steelbands are taken up with complex, "classical" arrangements rather than simply going out there and "pulsating out" the tune.

RHYTHM

Worse, steelbands are beginning to place too much emphasis on the rhythm section of the bands

And herein lies the reason for "Solo's" victory. They curbed their tendency in past years to "thunder out" rhythm — arranged the tune simply — and then went on stage and beat as if it were Jour Ouvert morning.

No surprise Harmonites won, says band manager

IT WAS no surprise to band manager, VINCENT YIP YOUNG, that his Solo Harmonites orchestra won the Panorama Festival finals on Sunday night.

Said he yesterday: "After listening to the six other steelbands in the finals, I was confident we would win".

He added: "Most of my

Sponsor is very proud

"I FEEL very proud of the boys".

Man talking is Mr. Vernon Charles, managing director of Joseph Charles Bottling Works, sponsors of the country's number one steelband, Solo Harmonites.

A beaming Mr. Charles recalled how Solo took a band completely unknown, and brought it to the high standard it enjoyed at present.

"I always knew they would do it one day. "They are a bunch of good boys".

Lots of things are in store for Solo Harmonites this year. A champagne party has been organised by Mr. Charles next Sunday to pay tribute to the boys.

They are also due to visit Tobago to team up

band members had the same confidence.

Young said he was very thankful to the band players for their support.

Sunday night's performance at the Queen's Park Savannah has collected a total of \$1,600. in prizes and fees for Solo Harmonites.

The band was formed five years ago by Young and several other people. It started off as "Wonderland", but after one year of great difficulties, members were forced to seek a sponsor and changed the name.

Mr Young said he and other executive members approached Mr Vernon Charles, Managing Director of Joseph Charles Bottling Works Ltd for help and he immediately gave his word to sponsor the band.

BEATERS

"We are grateful to Mr Charles for the help he has been giving us during the past four years," he added.

Solo Harmonites is made up of 125 pan beaters, one of the largest in the nation while Young is one of the youngest steelband managers.

Young said "The Wrecker" composed and sung by Lord Kitchner was selected by arranger Earl Rodney six weeks ago for playing in the finals.

"We all agreed that it

turned out none of the six other bands played it," he said.

At two previous Panorama festivals, Solo Harmonites reached the semi-finals.

Last year, the band was awarded a special 10-day prize trip to Surinam by Paramount Films for beating the theme from "Is Paris Burning?"

RECORDINGS

Yesterday, the band failed to make it before 9 am. to take part in the bomb competition at Independence Square.

Young said his band had practised the first movements of Bethoven Symphony Number Four in "B" Flat as its bomb.

He announced arrangements would soon be made for recordings of their Panorama tunes as well as a tour of the Caribbean.

The man who keeps the boys beating

THE SUCCESS story of champion steelband, Solo Harmonites could never be complete without the mention of that indefatigable flagbearer, George Phillip, aged 44.

He is really the man behind the scenes who is



ing the way for the success of the band.

Gorgie, who has been waving flag for the past nine years, disclosed yesterday that his unique and competent flagwaving serves as an inspiration to Solo Harmonites, helping members to beat out that

extra something that is needed to put them in winners' row.

"When you wave a flag, you should get a kick out of doing so.. "You must be able to encourage the panbeaters, and this is what I do."

He styles himself as the number one flagwaver in the land. And his performance of Sunday night

"They can't touch me at all." Man when I wave, I get carried away, I forget everything else in the world," said the mas' playing father of nine.

Gorgie has one big hope. "I want to see a flagwaving competition organised as part of Carnival. "I am fit and ready for