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Grenadian comes here on a pan tuning scholarship

THE first ever scholarship to study steelband tuning in Trinidad has been offered by the Grenada Government.

And the man who will be helping break new ground for "pan music" and giving it added dignity is a 36-year-old former customs clerk.

He is Wilfred Harris of La Mode, St. George's, Grenada who got the schol.

Arrangements for the pan tuning course were made earlier this year through the Ministry of Education and Culture of both the Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada governments.

Harris arrived in Trinidad five weeks ago and has already started the course which will last three months.

He is being taught by one of the nation's top pan tuners, Bertie Marshall, leader of Hilanders Steelband of Laventille.

Training sessions are taking place at the band's headquarters at the corner of Old St. Joseph Road and Erica Street.

Yesterday Harris spoke of his scholarship and how it came about.

He said up to last year he worked as a customs man but when Grenada's Premier Eric Gairy, had serious thoughts about developing the steelband he was transferred to the Grenada Steelband Improvement Committee because of his experience as a tuner.

Then arrangements got underway for the Trinidad trip.

Tourism

He said that at the end of the course he will return home and pass on the art of pan tuning to other steelbandmen. In Grenada steelbands will be one of the top attractions in the island's "big tourist drive."

Commenting on Grenada steelbands, Harris, a married man, said: "Our standard is nearly the same as Trinidad's but up to now we have had to depend on one or two tuners, coming over on private trips, to tune our pans."

He added that the long range plan was to standardise the steelband notes in Grenada. All expenses for the course and for a tutor are being borne by the Grenada Government.

Proud

Standardisation of Grenada "pans" was hailed by Marshall as a step up on Trinidad. He said: "This is something we should have had long ago but our tuners just can't seem to agree on this. As it is if we don't watch

it we could very well lose out as being the land of the steelbands.

As to his role as tutor Marshall said: "I am proud to do it. I don't have anything to hide. I will teach him all I know. If CARIFTA is to be meaningful we have to help each other."

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