

There seems to be some built-in "balk mechanism" which simply will not allow the average Trinidadian to appreciate the pan's right to equal co-existence with horns, synthesisers and the rest

Separating 'music' from 'steelband'

that would tell all and sundry that we are the source of this ingenious medium of sound? In other words, think not recreational, but industrial about the pan idiom? Perish the thought!

Fortunately, we didn't cater for the rest of the world being not as lame as we have chosen to be. There are indeed forces in the rest of the world which don't hold that pans, horns, *et al* make strange bedfellows — forces which recognise that the creation of pan was an artistic development of epochal proportions.

Their mind-set, by contrast, betrays veneration, deference, dignity — always dignity — toward the same run-of-the-mill, can't-get-respect pan that resides at our place.

Witness the scholarly focus that has been brought to bear on the art form at scores of academic centres internationally, the ever-growing number of post-graduate theses and papers for which pan, as subject area, has prompted serious, hard-nosed research.

Witness the scores of steelband groups that have been organised on college and university campuses and in high schools just in North America alone. Witness the steady stream of recordings in the pop, jazz and rhythm-and-blues genres utilising the pan sound, the stellar music industry names like Alpert, Jagger, Ellington, Hancock, who've been among those voting "aye."

Check Switzerland with its 30-odd steelbands.

By LES SLATER

Check London with the study of pan ingrained as a school curriculum item.

Check Oakland, California and the pan-art learning centre established there by the late Dennis Kaufman. Etc. etc. Does anyone get the impression that away from Trinidad and Tobago there's any tendency to make light of pan?

If there is, it could only be found within the Trinidad and Tobago syndrome as it manifests itself abroad — those hardy carriers of the "flame" even in the midst of an avalanche of enlightenment.

(Why, for example, there was felt among some Trinidadian pan players in New York the need to organise a New York outpost of Pan Trinitago — a scenario that will hopefully be one day explained in a manner befitting Homo Sapiens. Word to the wise: don't hold your breath.)

Unsettling Dynamic

So the Panorama-as-panacea philosophy, not surprisingly, has some subscribers outside of territorial Trinidad and Tobago.

Not a big deal, really. They easily get lost in the shuffle of exciting things that continue to unfold at a tremendous clip in pan's new world.

But charity, it is said, begins at home. We cannot help but project our thoughts there, for it is within Trinidad and Tobago that Panorama-as-panacea has to be recognised as an altogether unsettling dynamic.

Recreational pan cannot be all there is to this saga. The end of the decade of the 80s is time enough for pan's birthplace to not only opt for enlightenment, but to do so in big and bold enough strides to get into the pied piper's role it should have assumed by right all along.

In the concluding installment: LET'S GET CRITICAL

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CRO CRO
Wey Pan Reach?