

ML 1040

NEW HOME FOR PANORAMA

By TERRY JOSEPH

ALL steelband Panorama competitions may be held at the once contentious Expo site at Trincity from as early as next year, if Pan Trinbago is able to secure a long-term lease for the sprawling premises.

Pan Trinbago president, Patrick Arnold, speaking to the *Express* on Saturday night, during a break in the East Zone Final of the current Panorama competition, said his organisation would begin work on the project from as early as Ash Wednesday.

Arnim Smith, a former president of Pan Trinbago, is credited with having identified the site's potential for staging pan events and other types of entertainment. Smith said it struck him on walking into the site for the first time, during the exposition put on there last year by the Export Development Corporation (EDC), which holds a lease for the site.

"From the first time I laid eyes on the place, I knew it was perfect for pan, as it is an easy site to work with," Smith said.

However, it proved to be anything but easy, to even get the

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first event off the ground. Last month, a double-barreled contention arose, when Pan Trinbago announced publicly that the east-zone competition would be staged at the site.

During a discussion on the TV6 *Morning Edition* programme, EDC chairman, Oscar Alonzo, called the station to say that Pan Trinbago had not obtained permission to hold

Panorama there and indicated that it might be awkward to sublet the premises to them for that purpose.

Meanwhile, a groundswell of public opinion panned the site as being "out of the way" and described the move there as "killing Panorama".

Permission to use the site never came from the EDC, since their own tenure was under scrutiny by the lessor, Home Construction Limited (HCL).

"We dealt directly with the owners," Smith said. "When we started to check into why we were being subjected to so many delays, we discovered that the EDC was in arrears for rent and that electrical power and water supply to the site had both been cut. It was then we approached the owners directly and were able to get approval just last Saturday and get to work on making the site fit for use tonight."

Even the worst critics of the site were loud in praise for the potential of the venue for pan and other entertainment events.

Former pan president, Owen Serrette, who was among the loudest objectors to moving the east-zone playoffs to that venue, said on Saturday night: "I don't mind going on the record as saying that this is a beautiful place. It needs a lot of work but, starting from level ground, pan people can do something specially tailored to the needs

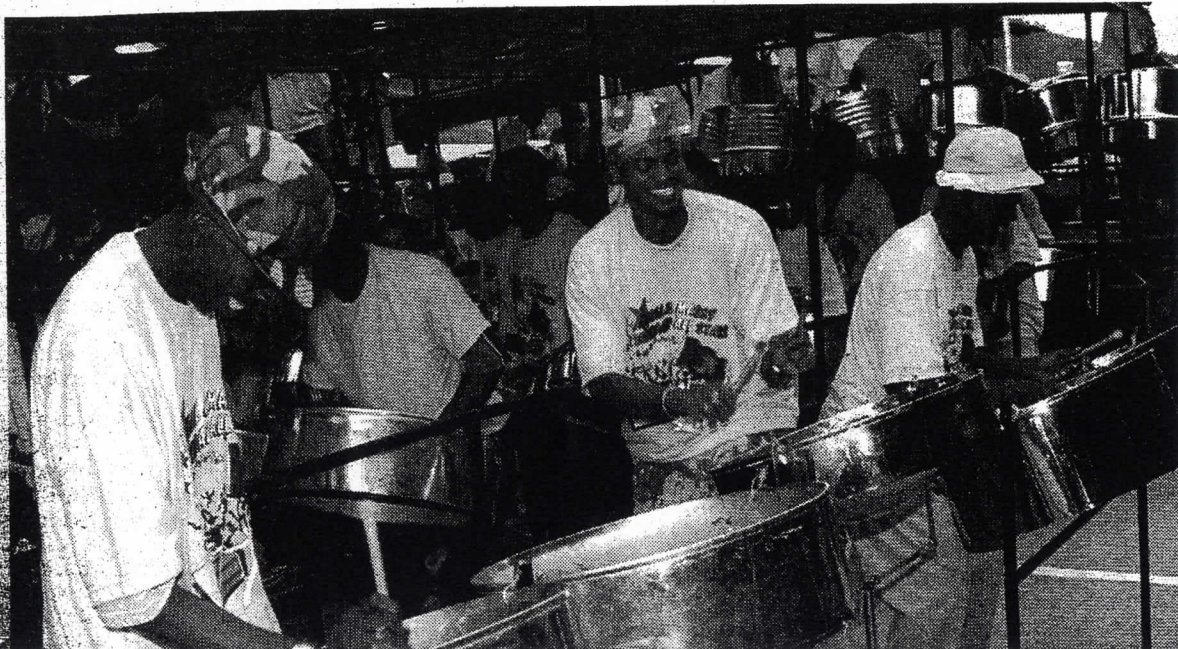
of the instrument and the music."

Arnold has been a campaigner against holding pan events at the Queen's Park Savannah, where the infrastructure was designed to facilitate horse-racing. "It is always difficult to collect revenue at the savannah venue," Arnold said.

"Now that Pan Trinbago is required to be self-sufficient, gate-receipts forms part of whatever pay comes to the pannist, so it is our responsibility to look out for the welfare of the player and one way we can do it is to tighten up on gate-control. That is simply not possible at the savannah venue," he said.

While patrons were busy pointing out the flaws of structures that were built in three days, many among them on Saturday night were high in praise of the ambience and the space, which far exceeds that of the portion of the Queen's Park Savannah available to Carnival events.

"With any luck," Smith said, "we should be able to not only have all pan events here in the near future, but make the place available to other promoters who want to stage shows on this site. That way, the revenue from rental of the venue should go a long way toward keeping the organisation afloat. We are setting our sights on turning this place into the real mecca for pan," he said.



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All Stars players have a ball performing "Sweet and Sexy" at the Panorama North Zone Finals, yesterday.

Photo: KENROY AMBRIS

Stampede in North Stand

A review by FULTON WILSON

UP to just after 6 p.m. yesterday eight bands had played in the North Zone preliminaries of the National Panorama finals and Woodbrook-based Petrotrin Phase II Pan Groove was by far the best-playing band.

Playing Len "Boogsie" Sharpe's arrangement of "Sweet and Sexy", the band evoked the most response from the massive crowd at the Queen's Park Savannah.

Phase II, however, will have to find a way to control their supporters who insist on parading on stage while the band attempts to set up their instruments. All the bands before Phase II took a minimal amount of time to set up their instruments.

Breaking with tradition, the North bands had the savannah stage all to themselves since bands participating in the East and South zones played at the Expo site and Skinner Park, respectively.

Yesterday's competition was due to start at 2 p.m. The national anthem was played at 2.10 p.m. but the first band, Blue Diamonds, did not begin to play until 2.50 p.m. because the band arrived late for the competition.

T&TEC Powers Stars playing Brian "Bean" Griffith's arrangement of "Trini Know How", Neal and Massy Trinidad All Stars playing Leon Edwards' arrangement of Angello Scott's "We Having A Ball", and Courts Laventille Sound Specialists playing Len "Boogsie" Sharpe's arrangement of "Sweet

and Sexy" were also impressive.

From as early as 10.30 a.m. patrons began to file into the North Stand and by 2 p.m. the stand was almost filled to capacity. The authorities decided not to allow any more patrons into the stand at 5 p.m. for safety reasons but by 5 p.m. the gates to the back of the North Stand were broken down and there was a stampede by those who sought entry.

The big guns, including Witco Desperadoes and Amoco Renegades, were scheduled to play at positions 13 and 15 respectively, and many of the pan lovers were expected to stay in the savannah late last night to hear them.

Next Sunday some of the bands that performed yesterday will return to the same venue to participate in the national semi-finals which is expected to be one of the most keenly contested in the history of the competition.

KFC prospectus

LOOK OUT for the prospectus on the share offer in Prestige Holdings Limited which will be provided free in tomorrow's Express exclusively.

The prospectus will cover the public offer by Victor E Mouttet Limited for the sale of 15,000,000 common shares in Prestige Holdings, operators of KFC and Pizza Hut, at the offer price of \$2.60 each.

