

World Steelband Music Festival October 10-21

European bands coming with own compositions

SEVERAL of the bands participating in next weekend's European qualifier of the World Steelband Music Festival, will be playing songs that we have simply never heard before.

While the band from Finland, Steel Pan Lovers, will be doing Kitchener's

"Pan in A Minor" for their calypso selection, Denmark's All Stars will offer in the same category "Magical Thing—A Tribute to Pan" and France's Calypsociation steelband will play "Pan Y Problem" (a calypso by Mathieu Borgne) and Germany's Pan Kultur Steel

Orchestra will face the same judges with "Pan in di Heart", by Juergen Leader.

The majority of the bands from Britain are playing calypsoes known to us all, but the European bands have not limited themselves to popular soca, as is the habit of

local orchestras, when called upon to perform a calypso of choice in this kind of setting.

The European playoffs, which take place at the Parc de la Villette in Paris next Friday and Saturday, will see 14 bands from the UK/Europe circuit, playing before the judges, which

include Trinidad's Dr Ann Marion Osbourne.

In all, some 700 musicians from eight European countries, will be vying for the three places afforded that zone at next October's final round of the festival.

The 12 day period over which the final round will be held at the Jean Pierre Complex and the Queen's Park Savannah, will feature presentations by 24 conventional bands.

Apart from the three coming from the UK/Europe circuit and three from the US/Canada zone, 12 top local steelbands and other orchestras from the Caribbean region will come together in a bid to establish once and for all, just who produces the best steel orchestras in the world.

Competition will be held in five cate-

gories: Soloists, Duets, Quartets, Ensembles and Orchestras. Test pieces for all categories have been written by Rudy Wells and the titles suggest an equally global approach.

There is "Dawn of the Millennium" for orchestras, the ensembles will play "Mein Freund", "Shado' Beni" is the piece for quartets and for duets, the test is "Mi Diese".

A three man team, headed by festival chairman, Alvin Daniell and including committee member and former president of Pan Trinidad, Arnim Smith, leaves on Thursday, to witness the European leg qualifying round, which organisers in Paris confidently expect to attract an audience of more than 50,000 over the two nights.

—Terry Joseph

Which one has the best repertoire

THE steel orchestra with the most varied and appropriate musical repertoire stands to win a major money prize next August.

Pan Trinbago is currently finalising a contest to determine the band with the best mix of songs and most marketable presentation of their work, the winners of which will appear at selected locations during a new-styled Pan Month.

The annual celebration of the national musical instrument begins on August 6 and runs for the month, ending with the traditional street parade that takes revelers up to the fireworks display at the Queen's Park Savannah on Independence night.

Pan Trinbago president, Patrick Arnold said that the repertoire competition is only one of the many events scheduled for Pan Month, but it is the one in which he has taken a hands-on interest.

"One important activity taking place is the making of music videos and photography of the bands, so that they can develop or update their bios," said Arnold. "We have found that several of the bands do not have a portfolio, which reduces their chances of impressing foreign promoters.

"We will have video and regular cameras, plus sound recording engineers on the rounds, to catch the bands in action and prepare the packages. At the end of the exercise, they should have video, cassette, glossy 8x10's and support material," Arnold said.

The contest will not feature full steelbands, but stage groups, who will play for judges selected by each region for its playoffs. From each region, three bands will move forward to the finals, where one set of judges, selected by the central authority, will hear their work.

There is a plan to encourage the grouping of bands, to perform in the panyards that offer larger spaces, although bands may prefer to stay in their yards, because of a prize being offered for the best kept environment.

For the contest, each group will play for one hour. (TJ)