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Steelband confusion at Pan Dance

By TERRY JOSEPH

A PROPHECY made more than a month ago by Ainsworth Mohammed, manager of reigning Panorama champions Exodus, came to pass shortly after 3 a.m. on Sunday.

Mohammed pulled Exodus from the original slate of 15

orchestras, listed to perform at Saturday night's In de Pan Dance, which was held at The Paddock, Queen's Park Savannah, saying with so many bands on the playbill and limited time there was bound to be confusion.

And it came to pass that there was a little bacchannal. Members of the St James Tripolians single-

pan band became quite irate and vociferously objected to violation of their set by another orchestra. Apart from that confrontation, which came shortly after 3 a.m., the hundreds who went to hear and dance to live steelband music exclusively, enjoyed an incident-free party.

Among bands appearing were the Witco Desperadoes, BWIA Invaders, PCS Starlift, Carib Tokyo, Neal and Massy Trinidad All Stars, BP Renegades, Merrytones, Petrotrin Phase II Pan Groove, St James Tripolians, Scrunters Pan Groove, Laventille Sereaders, Scorpion Pan Groove and Pantasy.

Each band was allotted 30 minutes for performance, although during the earlier part of the dance some orchestras were excessive, throwing the schedule into chaos. Originally listed to play around 11.30 p.m., Tripolians agreed to a request from fete officials to exchange playing positions with the Witco Desperadoes, as the latter

band had an evening engagement on Sunday.

This pushed Tripolians into the penultimate slot, their segment only just beginning at 3 a.m. Playing without the benefit of amplification, the band went into its vintage bag for "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White", then played "My Cherie Amour" and were freshly into Sparrow's "Lizard", when another band, Pantasy, came booming through the loudspeakers.

Tripolians members told the *Express* it was the last straw.

They had assembled at the band's Fort George panyard since 1 p.m. on the day previous, the agreed time for organised transport to pick up their instruments. The truck eventually showed up some four hours later.

They therefore had to rush back home from setting up the band at the Paddock to change into uniform to be at the venue no later than 8 p.m., at which time they were

approached to change time slots with Desperadoes.

According to Tripolians manager and musical director Keith Simpson, the band had rehearsed nightly for some three weeks, honing its repertoire to fit the 30-minute playing time.

"Now, imagine after all this, our members were abruptly told to stop playing after less than 15 minutes, to allow Pantasy to perform; all because organisers had let the schedule slip and were probably worried that police would move in to close down the fete," Simpson said.

Simpson also described as a "blooper" the organisers' decision to give all bands a bottle of rum at the end of their set, in addition to the appearance fees.

"With all the concern about teenagers consuming alcohol, no one made any attempt to supply soft drinks and everyone knows the amount of schoolchildren playing in today's steelbands," Simpson said.