

WORLD FESTIVAL FINAL PLACING —

Renegades, Despers and Phase II to do musical battle

By SEAN NERO

A PLAN IS being considered for reigning national Panorama champion Witco Desperadoes, 1997 Panorama hat-trick winner BP/Amoco Renegades and Petrotrin Phase II Pan Groove to play-off for a place in the 2000 World Steelband Festival.

A source close to Pan Trinbago told *Newsday* that while plans for the staging of this spectacular and mammoth world event taking place in Trinidad and Tobago was moving apace, the producer of the programme, Pan Trinbago, was reportedly worried that the festival would be unmarketable without one of these three bands as a finalist.

This "play-off" as it's being referred to is tentatively being planned for April 2000.

June is likely to be the month when the actual World Steelband Festival will be staged.

Desperadoes is the only steel orchestra to achieve a hat-trick of wins at the Steelband Music Festival level, while Renegades is the only orchestra to do the same at the national Panorama level. Both bands are equal in Panorama wins with nine titles each under their belts.

The qualifying round for local bands took place last year at the Jean Pierre Complex, Port-of-Spain, and was won jointly by the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force Steel Orchestra and Exodus. Among the other six orchestras automatically advancing to the world final are: Solo Pan Knights, Courts Laventille Sound Specialist, BWIA Invaders and Hydro-Agri Skiffle Bunch.

Richard Forteau, Pan Trinbago's Education Officer, said already there were big movements taking place in Europe in preparation for the festival.

"All steelband associations across Europe have merged to form one body called Pan European; associations such as Calypsocion in France, and the British Association of Steel Orchestras from London," Forteau explained.

This was disclosed when the European representative, Jenny Lee, came to Trinidad and brought Pan Trinbago up-to-date on developments as it related to the pan festival in that part of the world.

The three top steelbands at that festival will play together with local bands at the final where an overall winner will be declared.

Pan European has already secured the commitment from governments in Europe in numerous capacities.

Forteau said when Pan European was founded its meetings were held in Brussels, Belgium, but now meetings are convened at Calypsocion's headquarters in France.