

THE finals of the 1973 Steelband Music Festival now in progress at the Queen's Park Savannah, should convince those who still think of pan as a "carnival instrument" that the steelband is no longer primarily a medium through which superficial entertainment is provided at fetes and "Block-orchestras".

The six bands competing in category "B" showed how serious they were about the noble art of music-making by their discipline and their generally polished performances.

They were Lever Bros, Gay Flamingoes, Amoco Renegades, Merry Tones, Sylvania East Side Symphony, Pan-Am Samaroo Jets and Port Contractors City Symphony.

East Side Symphony emerged winners with 167 1/2 points, Samaroo Jets were second with 160 while Merry Tones secured third place having gained 159 1/2 points.

Melody

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The winning band's choice of tune, the overture from "Rosamunde" by Schubert, was well-prepared. It was a piece dripping with melody, and the players executed it in a cool and unhurried manner. They knew how effective silence could be in music and utilised the rests fully. This lent additional drama to the performance.

The Samaroo Jets were very ambitious in their choice of tune. They selected Felix Mendelssohn's "Rondo Capriccioso in E Minor".

This is a difficult piano solo and transcribing it for pan is not easy. The Samarooos did it successfully, and in a manner that should make the adjudicators happy, for they (the adjudicators) have been complaining since the start of the finals that the panmen overwork the tenor-pans by having these instruments carry the melody nearly all the time.

Soulful

The second pans did their share of the work, especially in certain sections of the "presto" movement, where they played the theme while tenors wove an exquisite web of light and sparkling arpeggios around the melody.

The chromatic runs were also crisp and smooth as a result of the players' exact timing and deft wrist movements.

Apart from virtuosity, qualities of heart are also needed if full benefit is to be derived from the "Rondo Capriccioso", for it is very soulful in content. The Samarooos had both.

It takes very musical people like those who comprise the Pan-Am Samaroo Jets to pull off such a feat, and the musicians, a mere seven of them did so with great distinction.

Merry Tones chose the first movement from Mozart's "Jupiter Symphony". They did not explore the potential of this piece fully and the end result was devoid of most of the drama-

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BEAUTIFUL MUSIC AT PAN FESTIVAL

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By RODERICK LEWIS, SOCIAL AFFAIRS REPORTER

tic content which is an integral part of the work. The cadences were tame and lacked spark, so that the richness of the music

suffered as a result. The test piece, "Marche Militaire", got the best treatment at the hands of Amoco Renegades and the

Pan- Am Samaroo Jets. Both bands over-dramatised it a little and this gave it the stamp of originality. The quiet passages

were played very softly, and the loud sections received just a little bit more volume than was normal.

This adventurousness on the part of these two bands added colour to this flippant and simple melody.

The Samaroo Jets' rendition of Lord Kitchner's "Rainorama" was a great favourite, and it was the only calypso which prompted cries of "encore" from the audience.

Lever Bros. Gay Flamingoes and Port Contractors City Symphony tied for fourth place with 150 points each, and Amoco Renegades were fifth with 145.