

# Pan needs private sector support

**I**N THE MEANTIME the American, Dr Stuempfle's work, referred to previously in this submission, has arisen as the most authoritative work on the steelband story, to date.

The absence of Trinidad and Tobago of any type of regular weekly, monthly, quarterly or even annual journal, magazine or pamphlet on the steelband, betrays a general lack of respect for and commitment to the growth of this so-called national instrument.

We must, however, take note of the work of former Regiment Bandmaster, Capt Eddie Wade, who, on his own account, has been producing various excellent publications on the steelband/instrument. His exemplary efforts need to get the support of international promotion.

## 7. Absence of Steelband Fora:

We have already spoken about the

There needs to be a more aggressive and enlightened intervention by the public and private sector if Trinidad and Tobago is to get its fair share of the benefits to be derived from development of the steelband process in which nationals of this country must play a leading role.  
So say **NESTOR SULLIVAN** and **IAN "TEDDY" BELGRAVE**  
in Part 3 of a four-part series:

absence of the coming-together of our local tuners and the loss to the development of the instrument that this creates. An identical situation exists with the total absence of any forum for steelband arrangers, or composers, or scientists, intellectuals, tutors, entrepreneurs, etc. that one sees regularly all over the world.

In fact, in this country, the only people in pan who seem to get together are the musicians themselves and their leaders and this is almost always to discuss an imminent competition or to have a post-

mortem of a recent major steelband event. The result of all of this, obviously, has been the stultifying of the intellectual growth of the movement and the complete disappearance of any vision of its direction.

## 8. International marketing:

Bob Marley's reggae gripped the popular culture of the youth in the farthest corners of the world, chiefly because of an aggressive and enlightened intervention by the Jamaican State and corporate sector. The benefits to the Jamaican economy

in terms of foreign exchange earnings from tourism, film industry, etc. are now well known. The effect on Jamaican pride and prestige internationally and national self-esteem are immeasurable.

In this country, the marketing of the steelband instrument and music is left entirely to the individual orchestras/ensembles, which travel abroad either by the route of a prize trip or by self-funded personal contacts.

This story is a rather sad tale, of missed opportunities, crude exploitation by foreign agents and the unbelievable absence of any special provisions within the bureaucratic, red-tape structures to facilitate the spontaneous individual efforts of international promotion of orchestras/musicians.

It is true to say that the steelband has reached the world in spite of government bureaucracy and a tourism promotion authority.

## C. A five-year action plan

The evidence presented so far in Sections A and B of this submission seems to suggest, that our efforts to date in this country to promote and develop the steelband are woefully inadequate, in comparison to what is happening in the rest of the world.

Time-Warner does not invest in anything unless it is big—very big. Rondor Music would not publish anything which is not world class. International scientific journals only address scientific developments of significance. German and American steel manufacturers do not get into new product lines unless their planners tell them that there are hundreds of millions of dollars to be had from this investment down the road. Intellectuals and musicians of the developed world never focus on anything new in the underdeveloped world unless it guarantees enhancement of their trade. The Japanese, most of all, only embrace things from the outside, which can make a significant contribution to Japanese life.

In a word, very calculatedly, the world has taken notice of this creation of ours, has studied and evaluated it and has moved to derive all of the value which they see in it. All things remaining equal in five years time, most of our drums (of the best metal, best size and best gauge) to make steelpan instruments, will be imported from abroad. This has already begun! In ten years' time, the best instruments will be produced in foreign countries. In twenty—the best orchestras. In thirty or forty years—the internationally accepted history of the steelband will give us pride of place, but that is all we shall get!

The big question is: what is our response; as a people; as a nation? We could do two things. We could, as we often do, sit in awe of the financial and technological power of the developed world and simply accept that this pan thing has gotten too big for us; let us leave it up to those who have the resources to derive the billions which it now is able to produce. Let us concentrate on the next music festival or the next Panorama and the judges and the isolated scholarship, etc.

On the other hand, we could recognise that we still have the major advantage (as was described in Section B) and move quickly to secure it, in the process marshalling all available national resources to this end.

To achieve the former, we simply continue to go as we are going. To go the latter road, we propose the following:

### 1. Five-Year Development Plan for the Steelband:

#### (i) Development of a skills bank

There has to be an immediate audit of the human resources available within the steelband movement. This must establish a constantly reviewed and updated statistical digest of the various levels of marketable skills available among tuners, composers, arrangers, solo performers, tutors, researchers etc.

This information, together with a list of orchestras/ensembles, will form the basis of an aggressive marketing strategy.

#### (ii) International Marketing

A comprehensive plan for the promotion of the steelband abroad must be immediately established. This promotion must include, the instrument, orchestras/ensembles, soloists, tuners, tutors, researchers, etc, with the more experienced of these having an input in the formulation of a promotional programme.

This plan must include (a) the appointment of a senior officer within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and designated officers within every Trinidad and





# T&T must take the lead again in pan

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Tobago Embassy, High Commission, Consulate abroad charged with the responsibility of steelband promotion (b) a special relationship with the Customs and Immigration Department (c) a special relationship with the Airline and Freight companies and (d) in the long term, the storage of steelband instruments in various centres abroad.

### (iii) Research and Development.

Perhaps our most urgent task at this time is to reestablish Trinidad and Tobago's lead internationally in the area of scientific research and development of the instrument.

The critical player in this scenario is Bertie Marshall. This world-renowned steelband genius must now be offered the most generous package of emoluments and perquisites that any leading bureaucrat/professional in this country can demand and the most technologically advanced facilities which can be made available, so that he can lead a research team that will match and surpass what exists in the world today.

Such a research team must include our other tuners — Roland Harrigin, Lincoln Noel, etc., who must also be offered packages and an environment that will be attractive. The coordinator of such a team ought to be Richard McDavid.

This research team must have at its disposal all the facilities of the UWI, St Augustine, the Bureau of Standards and other government agencies and it must be made possible for the team to access the modern technologies now available abroad.

Its first task must be to revive the brilliant work that was being achieved at Cariri 20 years ago and to expand

into new areas which have become critical. In any case, Mr Marshall will know exactly what has to be done!

The deadline for the completion of negotiations with the members of the team and the procuring of tools, equipment and facilities for the start of the work should be no more than six months.

### (iv) The Education System.

We are more than 30 years behind time in establishing a serious and comprehensive approach to this issue. A proper and realistic plan needs now to be established. This plan must include the following:

(a) the training of all music teachers in the education system in the introduction and use of the steelpan as an educational tool in their music programmes. Steelband tutors drawn from the steelband movement also have to be exposed to some teaching skills, in preparation for their work with the school orchestras. If available, the ideal person for this programme is Captain Eddie Wade, the former regiment bandmaster.

(b) The schools with already established orchestras must be provided with the best instruments and accessory supports available.

(c) All the educational districts have to be surveyed, with a view to establishing school orchestras evenly throughout the country, utilising as venues some schools, appropriate pan yards or other venues. In some cases, it may be advisable to form orchestras comprising students of more than one school.

(d) The Social Studies and History programmes within all secondary schools must include studies of the origin, growth and development of the steelband.

(e) The Technical-Vocational departments in the secondary schools must include the development of skills in steelband accessory production e.g., sticks, stands, T-shirt printing, cases, etc.

(f) The Pan School approach, together with the Police Youth Club effort (as described in Section B) have also to be supported and expanded, under this programme.

### • TOMORROW: Tourism

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