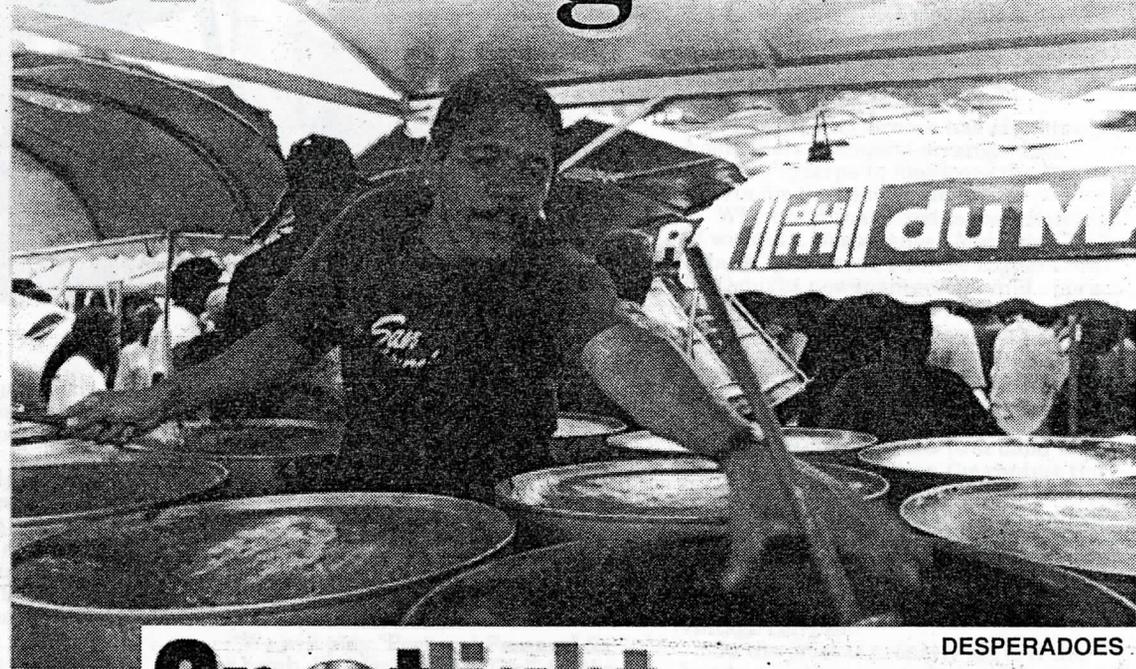


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# Point the way to the pan

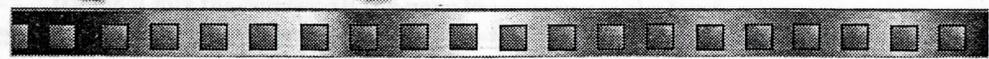
# Exodus and Despers

# in battle of the giants



DESPERADOES

**Spotlight** on Entertainment



By TERRY JOSEPH

The steelband battle is on again. **E**xodus Steel Orchestra is all set to defend its title as champion band when the drums roll in tomorrow's Pan on the Move competition in Point Fortin, but not without the spectre of the mighty Witco Desperadoes hovering over their confidence.

The Tunapuna-based band, which has participated in just about every major competition since its inception, last year won out over Witco Desperadoes by a pencil-slim majority, causing pan lovers to term tomorrow's joust a "battle of the giants".

Indeed, Desperadoes and Exodus are the two major forces in this peculiar competition which demands that bands play three pieces: a calypso from this year, one from ten years ago and a "bomb" tune.

Exodus has beaten all comers on three occasions while Desperadoes has won four times, including pulling off a hat-trick for the first three editions of Pan on the Move.

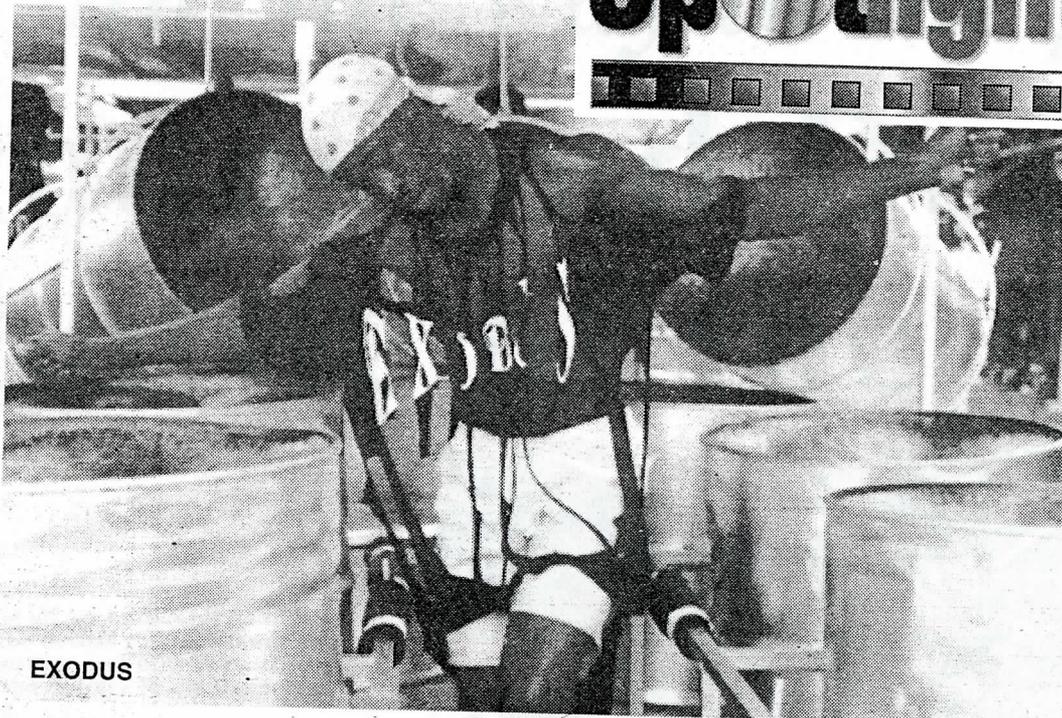
The competition was actually conceptualised by Rudolph Charles, a former captain of the Witco Desperadoes, who thought that it was about time that there be an avenue which brought rewards to the pannist and not channel the lump sum from the band's winnings to the arrangers and tuners.

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# Spotlight on Entertainment



EXODUS

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Ironically, Exodus was the band to break the rule (which everyone had forgotten) and in 1992 played a calypso from ten years ago but not the one the band performed that year.

Now, with the addition of a bomb tune, the concept has been sacrificed at the altar of the general "pan fiesta" that has become Pan on the Move in Point Fortin.

The competition is judged at three points and bands are expected to perform in the relevant categories and then move to the next, or, upon completion of the appointed rounds, play mas in the borough.

It is all part of Borough Week of which the Saturday pan jam last year attracted more than 20,000 to Point Fortin, making it second only to the Panorama preliminaries at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port of Spain.

Airline charters are now specially laid on for the event and thousands from other parts of the island make the trek down to the area at least for the day of Pan on the Move, if not for the whole weekend.

In addition to the pan, beauty queen shows and fetes make up the rest of the week, giving the borough an air of continuing frolic throughout the period.

But even as pannists smile at each other and slap high-fives or share potent beverages, the mind-set of each and all is to win Pan on the Move and this year, the strongest vibes have been coming from Despers and Exodus.

By day, Ainsworth Mohammed manages foreign exchange transactions for Republic Bank. But come dusk, he is the

manager of Exodus.

Mohammed told the *Express* on Wednesday that the band is ready to make it another two in a row (they won in '92 and '93).

"We are more than ready and think that we're right inside there," he said.

He has every right to be confident. Exodus ran away with the spoon last year after magnificent performances of "Oh What a Night (December 1963)", Arrow's "Long Time" and SuperBlue's "Signal to Lara".

The band won the bomb and came in second in the other two categories, but so overwhelming were their points in their winning category, they took the overall prize.

The system has since been changed to one of merit, so should they repeat that

feat exactly, the final standings may be different.

But Mohammed, whose brother Amin founded the band after the majority of players left the Flamingoes (hence Exodus), is not shaken by these circumstances.

Amin is flying in today for the contest. Formerly of Republic Bank himself, he is now senior vice-president of Cayman National Bank.

"We will play "Poet and Peasant" for our bomb, Rudder's "Bahia Girl" for the 1986 selection and SuperBlue's "Bounce" to top it off," says Ainsworth.

"The band is coming with the maximum 60 players and the same construction of a lowboy and a 40-foot container trailer, a mix that allows all the pans to

be properly heard.

"Pelham Goddard has arranged the calypso music beautifully, and Anthony Rose, one of the foundation members has arranged the bomb. Desmond Waithe drills the band into an orchestral finish for the contest, so we feel that we have a winning combination," he said.

But the Witco Desperadoes, not to be outdone on such basic matters, has imported its Carnival arranger Robert Greenidge to bring the band up to speed for Pan on the Move.

Phase II Pan Groove has also brought home their champion arranger Len 'Boogsie' Sharpe to manicure the band's efforts for the competition.

When told that Exodus was confident of winning, Desperadoes Manager Cecil "Malik" Harewood told the *Express* that he thought newspapermen could appreciate a good joke and was surprised to find that we were taking Ainsworth's comments seriously.

"We have no doubt in our minds that we are going back to reclaim the Pan on the Move prize this year," said Malik.

Desperadoes was the first band to go to Point Fortin and won the contest the first three years in a row.

Tomorrow they will beat "Unchained Melody" for the bomb competition, "Blast Off" for the 1996 offering and "The Hammer", a tribute by David Rudder to their late leader Rudolph Charles for the vintage calypso.

So the joust is properly set and the bands are sharpening their skills in order to maintain the so far shared supremacy.

Exodus and Desperadoes tied for third place in this year's Panorama, a fact that heightens the competition between the bands tomorrow.