



Redemption Songs

Redemption Sound Setters, Tobago House of Assembly Pan Champions 2001, is a band with a history, says captain Marie Toby. She was referring to all the people who supported the Bethel-based band from its inception in 1987 on its rocky road to being Tobago's top steelband.

The band was formed with a group of 25 people from Bethel, all of whom could play pan but with only a handful owning an instrument. But the group got together with the clear intention of forming a steelband. Some members bought instruments. They borrowed some from Tobago Buccooneers. And they entered their first Panorama in Tobago, one year later.

Redemption didn't expect to win, Toby says quite frankly, the intention was to get the appearance fee and the assistance money so they could buy instruments. In fact, the band came last. But they got some money to buy equipment.

Members persevered. With still few pans - they could fit into the tray of a pickup - the band involved itself in playing at charity functions; there was little or no money to be earned but it gave the chance to become known. And Redemption got its first paying job, at Grafton Beach hotel when it first opened. The band still plays there to this day.

The band also got a Jerry Stewart as its

arranger and in that year, the climb for Redemption began. In 1994, the band qualified for the National Small Bands competition in Trinidad and came fourth.

In 1995, Winston Gordon took over as arranger for the band and Toby became captain. And in 1997, Redemption Sound Setters won the THA Pan Champs title and went on to win the National Small Bands competition in Trinidad, a win that was not without its own trials and tribulations.

Despite the events of that Panorama, that year it was also the year that Redemption won two titles, one of which they have not given up since; the THA Pan

Champs title, and Panorama with Preacher's "Rain Melody".

Even as it competes in Panorama, Toby points out that Redemption Sound Setters is not just a Panorama band. The band is on the go all year round, heading back to Trinidad for Borough Day celebrations in Point Fortin, keeping its regular hotel engagements, holding its annual Christmas concert and also hosting an annual music programme for young people.

The band also boasts a disciplined management structure with Toby noting that Redemption holds an annual general meeting and general meetings to account to its membership.

Arima Angel Harps

The band was formed in 1961. Around these years of the early 1960's there were many newly formed and established bands around, so that Angel Harps had a tremendous job in qualifying far less winning any competition in their zone and by extension in a national scale competition. But success by sheer dent of hard work was not long in coming. In 1970 the

band was able to in the Eastern Panorama title with the arrangement done by Selwyn Paul. This was before the actual zoning of competitions began in 1976. The first captain of the harps as they were familiarly called was James Joseph while the first arranger was Aldwyn Jordan better known as "Madman". Jordan for his part trained panmen and was responsible in the

conversion of Noctune Fascinators from a traditional to a conventional band. Selwyn Williams was the Public Relations Officer as well as the Manager of the band. Angel Haps have taken part in Panorama competitions continuously and have a proud track record. However, with an association with Jit Samaroo, the band took a quantum leap forward reaching the National

Semi Finals on six different occasions. In 1992 the band played a composition "Steelband Coup" a composition and arrangement of Jit Samaroo and again reached the National Semi Finals. Although the band was sponsored for a short time by Bottler's Limited, its tenacity is beyond doubt which will take it into the future with confidence and success.