

Youths blossom at Laventille pan festival

PETER RAY BLOOD

Two artistic entities from Laventille brought pride to an entire community last Sunday when they participated in the 2012 Laventille Emancipation Steelband Festival, held along Eastern Main Road, in Success Village.

The youth of the Laventille Police Youth Club, leading off the parade, set the pace as more than two dozen steelbands participated in what is being hailed as the largest of these parades ever staged.

Also putting on an impressive showing was the Laventille Rhythm Section, which presented not only masqueraders costumed in mas from Brian Mac Farlane's winning C2K12 Band of the Year presentation—Sanctification—but also paraded this year's winning King of Carnival portrayal—Malak Yahweh—The Praying Mantis. It was appropriate, in light of August being the month of Independence, that the costumes displayed all bore

the national colours of red, white and black.

Notably absent from this year's event were President George Maxwell Richards, and his wife Dr Jean Ramjohn Richards who, at the time, were in London, at the Olympic Games, cheering on T&T cycling Match Sprint semi-finalist Njisane Phillip.

The dignitary box, however, was not bereft of specially invited guests, including Laventille parliamentary representatives Donna Cox and NiLeung Hypolite, Minister of the Arts & Multiculturalism Dr Lincoln Douglas, and Port-of-Spain Mayor Louis Lee Sing.

Taking time out from the onerous task of marshalling the many steelbands on parade and the thousands of spectators, Laventille Steelband Foundation official Julian "Vice" Cudjoe told T&T Guardian: "This year's parade is beyond our expectations. With the heavy showers up to around four o'clock, and the running of the 100 metres

men's race in London, we were a bit concerned. But, after the race, the people just came out, and all of the bands as well.

"We were aiming to have 50 steelbands in the parade to commemorate T&T's 50th anniversary but we managed to host 36, the largest number for this parade.

"It was also the biggest crowd ever at one of these parades. With the inclement weather and larger-than-usual number of participants, and the crowd, it is also the first time that we seem to be going over our midnight cut-off." The parade actually ended at 12.45 am.

Cudjoe was high in praise of not just the exemplary behaviour of the people, but the unprecedented large number of young people participating in the bands, and those on the sidelines enjoying the music.

As in previous years, the Laventille Steelband Festival was incident-free. ■ See Page B7



Members of the popular Wasa Foli dance group do their thing.



The Polyphonics Steel Orchestra youths are focused as they play.

This Wasa Foli dancer brings talent to the fore.
PHOTOS: ABRAHAM DIAZ

