

Starlift in transition, coming and going

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A great orgasmic experience, and an exceptional marriage when ended, can torment the soul and possibly haunt for life if we aren't innately strong. And one wonders if that's the case with experiences enjoyed back in the days between the marriage of Starlift and prolific arranger, Ray Holman.

Enjoying Panorama success in 1969, 1971 and 1978, there was nothing to touch Du Du Yemi (Natasha) and that explo-

sive win in 1978—34 years ago. The world still beckons for that piece, thus, it is beckoning for a repeat performance from the band in concert with any other musical director but the transitioning seems challenging.

Even in the face of benefitting from other reputable arrangers, such as Clive Bradley, Carlyle Oliver, Schofield Pilgrim, Eastlyn Hinds, Annise Hadeed, Herschel Puckrin, Aldon Moore, and most recently, foreign-



based Liam Teague, from 2011, who brought them to Panorama finals last year, it appears as though 'the lift' is struggling to recapture that 70's moment—that Panorama winner killer instinct.

To many members, no one except Holman or his clone will satisfy—provide that loving, that brings the spirit in line with heightened pleasure and motivation.

The world actually rejoiced last year over Starlift's come-back, but following this

year's Panorama semi-finals, it appears as though instead of coming, they are going, having been eliminated from the final line up. That was a heavy blow!

Why is this so? What could have possibly gone awry, when being in the finals should act as a springboard for further progress? What is going wrong?

Is the spirit of the membership right? Is the band being appropriately marketed? I'll share my favourite words: if the spirit isn't right; if people are not genuine, then, no matter how good the music, failure is inevitable.

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“...from its inception, Starlift established itself as a ‘group of pan players’ whose ambition was to participate in all areas involving the steelband movement and to positively pursue specific aims and objectives in an effort to build and maintain a properly constituted and viable organisation,” cited in its historical content. Has this “group of pan players” evolved from simply being a group of pan players to something more substantial, worthwhile, resourceful, meaningful, worldly, structured, visionary, businesslike or powerful?

Upon observing the band becoming stagnant for approximately three years ago, restructuring management and appointing a Board of directors with a view, to enable better management was priority for this gem. But without a corporate partner, to ensure proper guidance, a professional advisory group was engaged to assist in helping find the pathway to heaven. What ever happened with that intervention? Was the intervention received objectively, open-mindedly? Did it leave a spark? What does this group of pan players want? How innately strong are these players—players of the instruments, management committee, support committees and the Board? Has the finger-pointing syndrome begun, again?

When the band made it to finals, was any finger pointed at any one, or more than one person in recognition of respective attributes made towards the step-up? Everyone felt as though they contributed to the success, thus, everyone is to now know that they contributed to the slip-back this year.

Formed in 1956 under the captaincy of Jene Peters, Starlift has been privileged to attract five corporate partners—Angostura, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Trinidad Tesoro, Trintopac and PCS Nitrogen. But one wonders, what drove them away?

Is it inadequate returns or the lack there-of? The band doesn’t portray the sponsor’s brand well? What could it be? These are pertinent questions that must be asked and answered. With a diverse repertoire non-surpass, Starlift’s reputation became immeasurable as masterpieces such as Wanna Hear Some Pan, Penny Lane, Du Du Yemi (Natasha), came to the fore.

We not I, their long-standing motto, secures this pride of Woodbrook with principles of discipline, tolerance, dedication, commitment and respect, enabling chairman, Emile Charles, manager, Michael Franco and the team to be famed for their exquisite, fashionable Carnival presentations, and social event, their Independence Day brunch, tea party and fashion show held at their home.

For 2012, the Carnival routes will be graced with Starlift’s The Gathering. Monday will be the gathering of Cosmopolitan Fashion while Tuesday, the gathering of The Red Men.

Though a bit numbed by the Panorama results, it is imperative to assiduously follow through on new, yearly, social events planned, and as such, on the agenda are a Joey Lewis Dance and a Bingo game.

Committed to making a contribution in the war against crime, Starlift ensures that the members of it’s youth steel orchestra are learning to play pan not simply as a means of recreation, but with a meaningful purpose, as music literacy and becoming certified are integral components of its youth pan programme.