

# Peeved panmen decide today on Panorama's future

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THE pan fraternity will today decide if there will be a Panorama competition next year, in light of recent "disrespectful" statements made by Arts and Multiculturalism Minister Winston Peters.

Secretary of Pan Trinbago, Richard Forteau, yesterday claimed that during a meeting earlier this week, Peters said the \$1,000 stipend paid to pan players during the Panorama competition should be stopped.

Last month, Peters also blamed the annual Panorama competition for "killing steelpan". Pan Trinbago president Keith Diaz yesterday claimed that, to date, the State has not made a contribution towards the preparation for Panorama next year.

Funds were received in November last year for this year's competition, Diaz said.

As a result of the statements made by Peters and the lack of funding from the State so far, Forteau yesterday called on members of the pan fraternity to attend a meeting today to decide on the way forward.

"If we are practitioners of the art and we are involved in the thing then the State must make a contribution and understand and appreciate the people who are actually making the product happen," Forteau said.

"We are asking our members, we are asking all our steelbands to ensure that they can get as many of their members out to the meeting," Forteau said.

The meeting will be held at the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) Hall on Henry Street, Port of Spain, at 5 p.m. today. Bryon Serrette, Pan Trinbago's vice president, took Peters to task for the "reckless" statements about Panorama killing pan.

"Panorama cannot be killing the steelpan, because you have Panorama in more than 30 countries around the world. Panorama has carried steelpan all over the world," Serrette said.

Serrette chided Peters for statements reported in the *Sunday Guardian* over the weekend about Pan Trinbago's still unfinished proposed new headquarters in Trincity.

"We are as concerned as anybody else and even more so about the state of the headquarters at Trincity. Nobody can be more worried and concerned and hurt than we are about what we see every day but the point that the Minister made is reckless. It is very, very reckless," Serrette said.

"We are upset by a lot of the statements the Minister has made," Serrette said. Serrette claimed that Pan Trinbago's attorney will view Peters's statement to see if there are grounds for him to be sued. Pan Trinbago has also requested a meeting with Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar to address its concerns.

In response, Peters said in a statement yesterday: "I believe that Pan Trinbago has played and continues to play an important role in the development of steelpan, which is the country's contribution to the musical world.

"As such I want to emphasise that my statements in the *Sunday Guardian* article were not intended to be a personal attack on Pan Trinbago as an institution nor its executives."

Peters pledged his support "to the strategic objectives and plans of Pan Trinbago".

However he said given the current "economic reality" around the world, "I am of the belief that those organisations which have traditionally depended on the State for funding activities must begin to seek out and undertake new partnerships and opportunities to continue and accelerate their work."

Diaz said the decision to have pan supporters pay \$60 to listen to Panorama on "the drag" earned Pan Trinbago over \$140,000. He claimed that with the Government's assistance the pan industry can be a viable income earner, as steelbands cost some US\$6,000 each in the United States.



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UPSET: Pan Trinbago vice president Bryon Serrette, right, addresses members of the media at a press conference at Pan Trinbago's Head Office in Port of Spain yesterday. Also in photo are secretary Richard Forteau, left, and president Keith Diaz. —Photo: STEPHEN DOOBAY