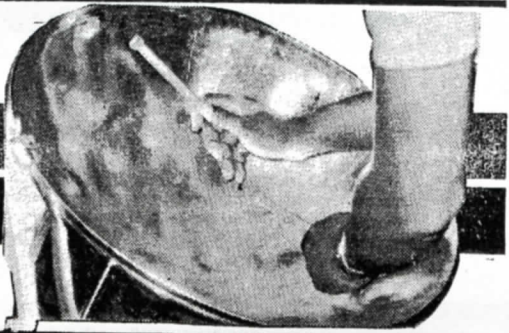


By PAN
JUMBIE



It's Holman vs Sharpe

PAN JUMBIE arrived at the Savannah late. Not entirely my fault and under the circumstances I just could not help it.

Just as I was about to leave home on Sunday, fully prepared for Panorama, my brother walked into the house and asked me "how you could even think of going to Panorama when a young Trinidadian schoolboy set to score the first Red Stripe century against the most feared bowlers in the world, Malcolm Marshall and Joel Garner?"

So off to the Queen's Park Oval we went, pot of pelau, shorts, acid wash jacket, back-to-front cap, yellow umbrella and all, not to mention a vexed wife who had absolutely no interest in cricket, Brian Lara included.

All the way to the Oval I had to listen to how stupid I was for listening to my brother and going to see a little boy bat. How she wanted to hear Amoco Renegades who were playing at number three, Phase Two at number six, and "make sure we reach for Catelli and Despers, they playing at 16 and 17."

And when Lara was finally out LBW to Garner at 92, her response was "It good. Now leh we go."

We did miss Despers and even Fertrin Pandemonium who played behind them, and by the time we got to the Savannah, Gerizim Angel Harps was on stage and my Panorama started.

The Harps put me in the mood immediately with Jit Samaroo's arrangement of Terror's *Pan Is Meh Family*, and Carib Tokyo spun my head with Ray Holman's *My Band*.

The music was so sweet my wife forgot she had not heard her favourite bands. And as band after band produced their scintillating performances, the Jumbie was glad "he eh no judge."

Starlift woke up the place in the wee hours of the morning with Boogsie Sharpe's arrangement of Ray Holman's *My Band*, and that tickled the Jumbie.

and Our Boys in Tobago.

The irony of it all was that Starlift, who last won the Panorama in 1978 with Sparrow's *Du Du Yemi* was now back in the arena after some lean years, as a threat with a Ray Holman composition.

It was a reversed decision which caused the separation between "The Lift" and Holman back in 1974.

Ray, who was the first man to arrange his own composition in a Panorama contest (*Pan On The Move* Starlift, 1972) had started his *Super Pan* but the band committee wanted a calypso which was sung by a regular calypsonian. This caused confrontation between the band and the arranger and Starlift went through with an unfinished *Super Pan*.

Boogsie, who more or less grew up in Starlift, had also moved on, forming Phase II with the younger generation in 1973 comprising players like Pat and Andy Phillip, Noel Seon, Glenn John, Selwyn Tarradath and Brian "Bean" Griffith.

The youths were frustrated because of a decision taken by the Starlift committee in 1971, restricting Boogsie from arranging tunes for the band. Ray was the official arranger and "two bo rat couldn't live in one hole."

Up to 1973 Starlift were tops with a Panorama record envied by many bands. They had been in every Panorama finals. They had placed third in 1964 with Sparrow's *Bull Pistle Gang*, got a special prize in 1966 with Kitchener's *Mas' In South*, second in 1968 with Sparrow's *Jane*, first in '69 with Kitchener's *The Bull*, second in '70 with Sparrow's *Pan Man*, tied with Solo Harmonites for first in '71 with Sparrow's *Queen of the Bands*, third in '72 with Ray Holman's *Pan On The Move*, and fourth in '73 with Holman's *Pan On The Run*.

In 1974 Starlift struck the panic button. They were of the impression their rendition of *Pan On the Run* should have won and blamed the fact they were playing an "own tune" for their misfortune.

Boogsie, in the meantime, and Phase II, stuck to their guns and the principle that the panman had the right to play his own composition in a steelband contest, while Holman, also of the same opinion, roamed from band to band very much like the boll

Starlift was using the old psychology. By selecting *My Band* Starlift was creating a contest between Boogie and Ray, thus ensuring they got the best out of the old Sharpos. Because Boogie would have to prove he was better than his mentor by beating him with his own composition.

Boogie, being the man of the moment, was arranging for no fewer than seven bands: Phase II and Starlift in the north; Siparia Deltones and Skiffle Bunch in the south; Curepe Scherzando and Potential Symphony in the east

weevil, trying to find a home.

It took 15 years to prove this point from 1972 with Ray Holman's *Pan On The Move* to 1987 when Phase II won with Boogie's *This Feeling Nice*.

Now "The Lift" are back in the limelight with a winning chance, and Holman is going to try his best to see the "Old Band" does not beat him.

That in itself is a contest worth witnessing. Two great arrangers Ray Holman, musical, sweet and smooth; and Boogie Sharpe—rough, exciting and moving—attacking the heart.

The Jumbie can't wait to see the outcome.