



RUDY WELLS (centre), tutor of course, chats with students Anthony Crichlow (left) and Jason Mc Kell. PHOTO BY SEAN NERO

ML1040

PANMEN URGED TO LEARN MORE MUSIC

By SEAN NERO *Newspaper* 19/7/01 p. 13

CELEBRATED LOCAL composer Rudy Wells said he would continue to be critical of Pan Trinbago and its efforts towards the development of the steelpan since he believed not enough was being done.

"I am critical because I love the instrument," he said when he addressed the first batch of graduates of a Pan Trinbago-sponsored introduction to music and jazz improvisation at the pan yard of Neal and Massy Trinidad All Stars Steel Orchestra in Port-of-Spain.

Wells expressed satisfaction with the efforts of the students for the duration of the project.

"You have done a great job for the time you have been here. I know it was difficult, but if you want to be a good musician, you have to study well.

"You may find me critical of panmen — that's because I am one.

"Music is not a one-day study. It is a lifetime study," said the former Panorama arranger for the Trinidad All Stars Steel Orchestra.

Wells is of the view that too many people are guessing in the business of pan by looking for an easy way out.

"The easy way out is to be literate musically. Whatever you do must be in compliance with the

laws of music. Every time I return to Trinidad I am invited to shows where pannists perform and I am amazed at what I am hearing.

"They feel they are doing the world, but aren't aware what they are doing was wrong. I was here for the Steelband Music Festival last year. I spoke to foreign conductors who pointed out many flaws in the music by our bands. I was so embarrassed. What made it worst it was all true and I couldn't come to our defence."

He told graduates music literacy depended on them and the age of ignorance should go. He said the days when arrangers walked into a pan yard and called notes and showed chords must become a thing of the past.

"When an arranger comes to your pan yard to show a panman two notes or a chord don't accept it. Ask the arranger what chord or degree of the chord you are playing. Don't use your mouth merely to criticise, rather make sure that you are well educated, so when you go out there you can speak with knowledge on issue," he instructed.

Kendall Lewis, one of the music programme's most outstanding students, said he enjoyed the opportunity to learn about jazz.

"There is no excuse for pan people not to be musically literate. Take any course that affords you an opportunity to learn more in music — especially if it's free," he said.