

Brotherhood of the pan

By TERRY JOSEPH

THE PANYARD of the Amoco Renegades Steel Orchestra devoted itself to full theatre on Monday night, as the Malick Folk Performers combined with calypsonians and the host band to put on a command performance for the visiting fellow pannists of the Swiss National Steelband.

The Swiss, here for the World Steelband Festival — Pan is Beautiful VIII, participated fully, eschewing the safety of the bleachers for hands-on involvement in all of the activities and presentations, except for the two periods when the Amoco Renegades performed.

Whenever the band played, all 65 mem-

bers of the Swiss National Steel Orchestra crowded the yard, trying to get as close as possible to the pans and players.

For the dance, drama and calypso performances, the group remained respectfully attentive. Three of them, however, just *had* to participate in the limbo, albeit before the torch was taken to the bar.

The Malick group attempted to trace the history of Trinidad and Tobago through our cultural traditions. Although some of the statements made with commanding authority by the house MC may not withstand forensic scrutiny, the core of the message, slavery, indentureship, mas, calypso and pan all rolled into a final "Jahaaji Bhai", seemed to

be understood by the visitors.

Calypsonian Typher managed to get much more than a giggle out of the audience when he rendered the Gregory Ballantyne laugh-riot "Gas" and the Mystic Prowler kept up quite a tempo with his medley of old calypsoes. Both performers need to remember that not all the people in the house know the lyrics to the songs in their repertoire. Diction is, therefore, the missing key in their attempts to unlock the secret of calypso and offer its riches to the visitor.

On quite another level, the Malick Folk Performers might wish to take another look at their costumes, weeding out those that have become scuffed and frayed, so as not to

devalue the work of the choreographer and dancers.

The other main performers and hosts, the Amoco Renegades, would do well to keep spare drumheads and skins near enough to the panyard, in case there is a recurrence of the embarrassing scene that occurred on Monday night, when the skin of the kick-drum split.

It was difficult to get either locals or visitors to believe that, for a band of such stature, there was no replacement and the band had to cut short its repertoire and pack up shop well before the tourists and locals alike were willing to release them from the responsibility of providing sweet music.