

By FELIX PAUL

Pan taking a beating

THE NORTHERN Region of Pan Trinbago held its 1996 prize distribution function last Saturday night on a note of cautious optimism. Speaking at the ceremony at the Starlift Pan Theatre, Pan Trinbago president, Owen Serrette, lamented that the ordinary pan player is yet not an educated musician.

He underscored the point that there was great satisfaction with the increasing participation of young people in pan music activities, but stressed that there should be a smooth blending of the generation's needs "to be put in hand by steelband management internal teams."

He added: "We have also noted with increasing dismay, the shortfall of the highly skilled technical sectors, and there I refer specifically to tuners and arrangers. I want to suspect that part of the problem is that at Panorama, bands tend to flock to those who have already established a winning record." On the issue of musi-



ERNEST FERREIRA poses with Culture Minister Daphne Phillips after receiving his special award. Photo by ALDWYN SIN PANG.

cally trained pannists, Serrette said that there was a gap between the language of music, such as that which the judges use, and the ability of the pan players to understand them.

"This," he explained, "is a problem that gives rise to profound misunderstanding but adds to the belief that there is mischief afoot when

bands are disappointed with the result."

Chairman of the Northern Region, Cecil Harewood, raised the issue of the seriousness of the disappearing panyard. He asked if in the year 2003, ten years after pan was declared the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago, "we awaken to the resounding tones of pan

brought by satellite and airwaves from as far as Japan. Or will we tune in to an alien music?"

He continued: "Will we be able to plan a visit to the pan museum and amphitheatre built years before, or will it still be a proposal buried in dust?"

Harewood was questioning, not only the audience, but the larger community — especially in light of a statement by Trevor Belmosa, assistant secretary of the Northern Region, that the teaching of steelpan music has already been placed on the internet by a foreigner.

In the presence of culture minister Dr Daphne Phillips Harewood re-emphasised the sad tale of David Rudder's *Case of the Disappearing Panyard*, stating that bands were being moved and dislocated from their communities while we moan about crime and the missing generation and long for "de ole time days".

"It is strange that even

as we as a people cannot recognise the power of what we have, the US and the UK are using it in programmes to help their youth and to keep them off the streets. This," he added, "whilst we get rid of panyards to build laundromats."

Dr Phillips, in her address, spoke of her ministry's work in lending one of our local pannists to the Virgin Islands in an effort to export Trinidad and Tobago's talents.

She also presented a plaque to Ernest Ferreira, who was described as one of the pan pioneers who came from Portuguese parentage and who helped bring some respectability to the pan movement.

Plaques of appreciation were also presented to Neville Jules, Vernon "Birdie" Manette, Rudolph Ollivierre and Augustus "One Man" Mark.

The following were the winners of this years competition:

THE NEVILLE JULES BOMB COMPETITION (Traditional Bands) — 1st, Scrunter's Pan Groove; 2nd, Rhythm Rockers; 3rd, Laventile Phasphonics; 4th, St James Tripolians; 5th, Music Makers.

(Conventional Bands) — 1st, Exodus; 2nd, Laventile Sound Specialists; 3rd, Phase II Pan Groove; 4th, Starlift; 5th, Neal and Massy Trinidad All Stars.

NICKY INNIS CARNIVAL MONDAY NIGHT BOMB COMPETITION (Traditional Bands) — 1st, Laventile Phasphonics; 2nd, World Wide; 3rd, Scrunter's Pan Groove; 4th, St James Tripolians; 5th, La Creole Pan Groove.

(Conventional Bands) — 1st, Exodus; 2nd, Silver Stars; 3rd, Phase II Pan Groove; 4th, Merrytones; Courts Laventile Sound Specialists.