

*Happy*

# NEW YEAR!



As Chair of the British Association of Steelbands (BAS) I am pleased to be able to contribute to Pan Podium - to highlight some of the Association's achievements over the past twelve months and plans for the coming year.

During 2006 BAS continued to identify and develop key strategies to further promote steel band music and culture not only throughout the UK but also, in partnership with key strategic partners, worldwide ensuring this great art is integrated into all sections of our communities.

In January 2006 the Association set up the **Future Development Forum** (FDF) to enable and empower young pannists to develop the skills they will need to lead future generations of pan players. Their mission is to strengthen the UK pan community by highlighting and developing the innovative skills and talents of young people to enable them to lead future generations of pan players. Chaired by Miss Delphina James, and

supported by Executive Officers of BAS, the FDF held their first event in May 2006 in Birmingham.

In July 2006, the Association established the first structured exchange between the Notting Hill Carnival and the Rotterdam Zomer Carnival. This partnership will see winning orchestras from the UK's National Panorama Competition and Holland's Battle of the Drums participate at each other's events. In August 2006, winners of the 2006 Battle of the Drums, Eternity Brass, visited London and performed at the Panorama to an appreciative audience. In July 2007, Ebony will perform at the Zomer Carnival as winners of this year's Panorama.

August 2006 saw the UK's first international steel pan conference, coordinated by Lionel McCalman, Haroun Shah and the University of East London on behalf of BAS. Attended by delegates from as far away as Japan, this conference is a welcomed and much needed addition to the development of international networks and the standardisation of pan worldwide.

This year Arthur France MBE was inaugurated into the Association's Hall of Fame when he collected the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Association 8th Annual Awards event held in December 2006. Arthur established "The Gay Cavaliers Steel Band" in the 1960's, the Leeds West Indian Carnival in 1967 and, in a renewed effort to continue to encourage young people to learn to play pan, formed the New World Steel Orchestra in 1984. Now in retirement, Arthur continues to press for the establishment of a fully funded centre for a Leeds Steel Youth Orchestra in Chapeltown, Leeds. Also honoured at this year's event were Billy Ocean, Rudolph Walker OBE, Andrew Ramroop, Floella Benjamin and, of

course, the year's competition winners, notably London All Stars who this year won J'Ouvert's 'Bomb Competition' for the third consecutive year.

Throughout the year BAS has provided services and support to its members including setting up web pages and email addresses for all member bands via the Association's website **www.panpodium.com** - to enable more efficient and effective communication, and easier access to resources and information.

2007 presents numerous opportunities for the Association to continue to build on and push forward the carnival arts agenda and, particularly, to promote steel bands and carnival arts nationally and internationally.

- We will work with our regional partners to promote and support the 40th anniversary of Leeds West Indian Carnival.
- We are already working with our European partners - Steelpan European - to plan and stage performances in Paris and London to commemorate the 160th and 200th anniversaries respectively of the abolition of slavery.
- Toussaint Clarke, on behalf of BAS is liaising with bands and members across the UK to identify regional needs so that committees may be empowered to take forward local plans and visions.

BAS is proud to be at the cutting edge of Carnival arts development worldwide.

Pepe Francis