

PAN PODIUM



SUPERNOVAS

Providing music for Trinidad's melting pot of cultures.

CYRIL KHAMAI

Pan is My Life!

Pan Explosion – The Making of The Jit Samaroo Sound

Garvin Blake

DEPHINA 'PANNES' JAMES

Learn Music On Series of Books

+ UK National Steelband Panorama 2021

Musical excellence thrives on creativity and outstanding performances!

the essential magazine for steelpan culture
news • reviews • interviews • special features

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news • reviews • interviews • special features
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PAN
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Editors Message



Hello

The Pandemic has brought about major global changes. As millions quarantined, people were forced to stay home with shutdowns occurring throughout the globe, they relied on digital for entertainment. Physical entertainment declined and the steelband industry was hit hard by these restrictions. But as steelband has lived through its throes from its birth and has never declined against any opposition. Digital concerts, programmes and videos provided platforms for many steelbands and pan musicians to showcase their music.

This digital age stepped up a gear and as always the steelband culture adapted and kept pace with these global changes. The continuity of our culture lies with the youths of our global nations and the changes; developments, creations and innovations they introduce will maintain its momentum in this digital era to command its rightful place amongst conventional musical instruments. Steelpan's global recognition is evident as musicians are promoting the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago worldwide through their performances in concerts, competitions, tours, albums and films.

Endurance and Pan Nation steel orchestras celebrated their 10th anniversary with other bands and musicians commemorating their iconic milestones. BAS/NHC hosted their 43rd National Steelband Panorama in 2021 with Mangrove Steel Band led by Andre White capturing their first hat trick of wins in this competition. The event hosted the parade of several costumed masquerade bands during the performance intervals of each steelband.

Notting Hill Carnival and BAS hosted yet another successful National Panorama. Congrats to Matthew Phillip and Co for the continued development of Notting Hill Carnival and the promotion of the Trinidadian culture in the UK and Europe in these uncertain times. Everyone is looking forward to NHC 2022.

Panpodium and its universal media partners continue the promotion of the steelpan and its culture through its digital media platforms ensuring that the wider audiences and virgin territories are captured where the steelpan culture is yet to reach and be recognised. Panpodium offers its appreciation to our global social media partners for actively supporting and promoting the unselfish efforts of the global steelpan community to world audiences ensuring its recognition is always at the forefront. Spreading the steelpan gospel to uncharted territories and new global audiences.

I offer my personal thanks to everyone who has contributed to Pan Podium's success and look forward to your continued support in making Pan Podium a beacon for the artform.

Pan 4 Life!



Supernovas

Steel Orchestra

Providing Music for Trinbago's Melting Pot of Cultures!

Cultural icon, Dr. Jit Samaroo, always had a desire to start a community steelband as a way to give back to the village that gave so much to him. This was the inspiration that sparked a Supernova...

Hailing from Surrey Village, via Lopinot Road in Arouca, Supernovas Steel Orchestra exploded onto the musical landscape of Trinidad and Tobago in 2010. Formed under the leadership of Amrit Samaroo and management of Anthony Samaroo; Supernovas quickly developed a reputation for being one of Trinidad and Tobago's the most dynamic Steel Orchestras, performing an eclectic mix of music which highlights the versatility of the instrument and skill of the player. Making their debut as runners-up in the Small Band Category of the National Panorama 2012, Supernovas consistently placed in the top three, winning the title in 2014. They stunned the pan world with a second place finish at the International Conference and Panorama in 2015. This set the stage for a much anticipated debut in the Large Band category of the National Panorama 2016.

Supernovas finished that season with another second place standing behind the formidable Desperadoes. With instruments crafted and tuned by, Desmond "Mappo" Richardson and Bertrand "Butch" Kelman; Supernovas have delighted crowds at concerts, pan 'jamborees' and parades. In 2014 they travelled Antigua and Barbuda to perform in Gemonites Steel Orchestra's "Moods of Pan". The following year they represented Trinidad and Tobago at Carifesta XIII (The Caribbean Festival of Arts) held in Haiti.

Also known for developing their own events, in 2015 they hosted "Mallets, Brass and Steel", a unique concert combining University of Delaware Percussion Ensemble and the UTT Brass Ensemble with Supernovas Steel. They followed this by hosting "Reaching Souls", inviting other steelbands to play inspirational and patriotic music.

In 2017 they started their annual event "A Day in Surrey" which is quickly becoming a staple on the steelband calendar. Supernovas also put on "Pan Kingdom, music for the world" their first full length concert in 2017. This performance fully demonstrated the capability in playing music of different genres from all over the world and featured guest artist from the United States, Venezuela and

Japan. This versatility has led them to perform at a wide array of national events in Trinidad and Tobago such as the Divali Nagar 2021 hosted by the National Council for Indian Culture, Steelpan night at the Emancipation Village in 2019 hosted by the Emancipation Support Committee and a command performance following the swearing-in ceremony of Trinidad and Tobago's President Paula-Mae Weekes in 2018.

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In the field of Education, Supernovas has also developed and conducted clinics that gives visiting students of educational institutions, hands-on knowledge and experience in Panorama performance and preparation held at the band's panyard. In 2018 alone, participating institutions included Minnesota State University Moorhead, Costal Carolina University and Wheaton College (Massachusetts). Though 2020-2021, the Covid-19 Pandemic may have grounded many steelbands, Supernovas has managed to stay active working within the new normal of observing health and safety protocols, to collaborate with institutions from around the world for various projects. They hope to continue this trend as the world emerges from lockdown and seek new opportunities to showcase the music of Trinbago's Melting pot of Cultures.

Supernovas Steel Orchestra
 LP 65, Surrey Village, Lopinot Road, Arouca.
 email: supernovas.steel@gmail.com
 www.supernovastt.com
 find us @supernovastt on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube.

Mathieu Borgne

Music is the universal language of mankind!

Born in April 1973, Mathieu started to learn to play the piano at age seven for ten years. Mathieu admits that he did not practice much but ensured that he listened to everything being taught to him at the time.

Piano was his first exposure in his musical journey and then at age fourteen, Mathieu started playing drums and played 'hard rock' in bands. During 1990 to 1992 he attended a jazz C.I.M music school in Paris playing the drums. His music professor, Yves Teslar, taught him all the traditional beats from African to Caribbean.

In 1994, Mathieu played French Caribbean music with a band called, Biguin In, and enjoyed that exposure so much so that it still has its effects on his present day music. He started playing drums with Calypsociation in 1996 and it was the first time that he was introduced to the steelpan.

He was so captured by the sweet strains of the steelpan that he visited Trinidad and Tobago in 1998 and played in his first steelband panorama competition with Carib Tokyo when they played Kitchener's, 'Symphony on the Street' arranged by Beverley Griffiths. The Pan Jumbie had hooked Mathieu. He absolutely loved the musical arrangements and the tune itself.

In 1999, he played with Tokyo Steel Orchestra who unfortunately did not qualify for the finals, so three days before the finals of the Panorama, Mathieu went San Fernando and played with Skiffle Bunch, playing, 'Coffee Street' arranged by Andy Narell in his first Panorama competition. Mathieu described the experience as beautiful.

In 2000, he arranged for Calypsociation for the first 'World Steelband Festival' hosted in Trinidad and Tobago. The Pan Jumbie took him to Desperadoes in 2002 where he played 'Savannah on Fire' arranged by the legendary, Clive Bradley, his mentor. Mathieu's musical quest then led him to New York in 2003 where he arranged, 'Ellie Man' composed by Jeff Narell and sung by Crazy for Women of Steel.

In 2005, he formed his French Caribbean Jazz band, Djazil, they did an album in 2011 and it currently working on their second one. Mathieu visited London in 2006 and played drums with Glissando Steel Orchestra who played, 'Colours Again' arranged by the iconic Rudy 'Two Lef' Smith. Mathieu and Laurent Lalsingué teamed up in 2015 to arrange, 'Prophet of Pan' for Calypsociation in the first International Panorama

hosted in Trinidad and Tobago.

When he spoke about his times playing with Phase II Pan Groove and Dr Len 'Boogsie' Sharpe in the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Panorama competitions, he was beaming with excitement. He was so happy to have had the experience of playing Boogsie's music with Phase II Pan Groove.

His Trinidad and Tobago Panorama experiences saw him arrange, 'Lightning Flash' for Pandemonium in the medium category in 2018 for the first time. In 2019, he arranged Nailah Blackman's, 'Iron Love' for Xpress 21 in the small band category.

Calypsociation is Mathieu's heartbeat, he arranged for them in 2000 and worked alongside Andy Narell from 2002 to 2006 when Andy lived in Paris. They performed at several concerts during that time and in 2004 did an album entitled, 'The Passage'. Calypsociation also went on our to California in 2005 from San Francisco to the Portland Jazz Festival. Mathieu really enjoyed that experience with Andy Narell and Calypsociation.

This talented and driven musician continues his musical journey exploring the different genres of music to quench his thirst and to use his acquired knowledge in creating his own unique style. He is humble and always willing to share his musical knowledge. When asked about his music, Mathieu replied, 'music is love and I share as much love as I can and try to encourage others to do the same'. Panpodium wishes Mathieu a very long musical career.

Mathieu's involvement in the following:
2004 - 'The Passage' - Calypsociation & Andy Narell
2007 - 'Made It' Calypsociation first album
2010/2011 - 'Djazil' - Djazil
2011 'Pan People' - Calypsociation
2016 'Calypso Rose - Tribute to the Queen of Calypso Calypsociation





NHC/BAS NATIONAL PANORAMA STEELBAND COMPETITION 2K21

Musical excellence thrives on creativity and execution!

Mangrove Steel Band retained their title as UK Steelband Panorama Champions in the 2021 competition. After the pandemic stopped the 2020 competition, the Notting Hill Carnival Ltd hosted an online version of the carnival celebrations before the authorities allowed the panorama event to return in 2021. This win ensured Mangrove achieved their first three-peat in this iconic competition which began in 1978. Andre White led Mangrove with his musical arrangements of Lyrikal's 'Happy Place' to earn them 271.5 points and retained their Champion title. This victory saw Mangrove achieve their eleventh win in the competition.

The Covid 19 pandemic severely affected the number of bands in the 2021 competition, with only four competing for the prestigious title of UK Champions of Steel. Held at the Emslie Horniman's Pleasance Park, Kensal Road on Saturday August 28, 2021. There was a raised stage, which was different from previous competitions held at this

venue. The competition started at 9:45 p.m. after a delayed start with Ebony playing David Ijadoula's musical arrangements of Farmer Nappy's 'Back Yard Jam', which saw them capture 2nd place with 255 points. Croydon Steel Orchestra followed with a Paul Dowie's musical rendition of Ella Andall's 'Festival Song'. Their performance earned them 247 points and 4th place in the competition.

Metronomes with their first-time arranger, Vivian Miller, performed in third place, playing Miller's musical rendition of Farmer Nappy's 'Back Yard Jam' which earned them 255 points and tied with Ebony for 2nd place. Mangrove played in the final position and closed the 2021 UK steelband competition with their scintillating delivery of Lyrikal's 'Happy Place' celebrating their three-peat at midnight when the results were announced.

Several masquerade bands paraded their costumes during each steelband performance interval. UK

Soca artiste, Trini Boi Joicee, also performed at the event. Pan 4 Life.

- RESULTS:**
- 1ST – MANGROVE STEELBAND – 271.5 POINTS
 - 2ND – EBONY STEELBAND TRUST – 255 POINTS
 - 3RD – METRONOMES STEEL ORCHESTRA – 255 POINTS
 - 4TH – CROYDON STEEL ORCHESTRA – 247 POINTS



Cyril Khamai

Pan is My Life!



Cyril Khamai has been described as a “Global Pan Pioneer” by Ray Funk (2013), the “Quiet Pan Pioneer” by Ray Funk and Andy Martin (2018), immortalised in “Golden Moments from the Star in Silver” (Stephen Spark, 2018), and Alexander D Great/Debra Romain’s calypso “Unsung Heroes” (2017) and countless clichés by others. Steelpan is etched in his DNA! His 86th birthday, 13th December 2017 was titled ‘Nice One Cyril’ after a song dedicated to England’s Tottenham Hotspur footballer, Cyril Knowles which was released for the Football League Cup Final of 1973. It was adopted as the event’s name for an open steelpan and calypso birthday party that was celebrated at the Carnival Village’s Tabernacle, Powis Square, London on 13th January 2018, a month after Khamai’s actual birthday. It was widely broadcast and brought in enthusiasts from all corners of the carnival community, celebrated on 12th December 2021, the event evolved to ‘Nicer One Cyril’; Cyril had already declared that his 100th birthday will be called ‘Nicest One Cyril’.

Nicer One Cyril.

The Tabernacle provided a magnificent setting for the event which was opened at 7.00pm with the scintillating sounds of St. Michael & All Angels Steel Orchestra (SMASO).

Following SMASO’s performance, Cyril Khamai - who was seated at the top table and flanked by icons such as Michael ‘Bubbles’ Olivier, Freddie Totesaut and Herman Betancourt – was invited by Prof. Haroun Shah (who organised and hosted the event) to receive a series of tributes. These began with a video address from Dr Suzanne Burke, Department of Literary, Cultural, and Communication Studies, University of the West Indies, Trinidad. Dr Burke highlighted how important these occasions were to mark, and that “these rituals are essential to who we are as Caribbean people.” She personally thanked Mr. Khamai for generously sharing his experiences and knowledge - especially of San Fernando. She expressed gratitude to him “on behalf of the communities of practice in the carnival arts, carnival scholars and ordinary citizens, for carrying on this tradition for well over half a century.” She added, “I’m aware that these occasions are often filled with clichés and hyperboles, but it is no exaggeration when I state that your life in pan represents ‘the’ Life of Pan.” She referred to Mr. Khamai as a “living museum whose journey in pan can be used to trace not only the technical developments of the instrument, but also to illustrate its meaning as a tool of resilience, as a symbol of resistance, and as a site of restoration from the many ills and traumas that we experience every day from just being Caribbean in the world,” and thanked him for “the joy that both he and his ministry in pan have brought to thousands of people all over the world.”

Two further video messages were sent from the USA from Prof. Andy Martin (Professor of Music, Inver Hills College, Minnesota USA) and Mr. Leon ‘Foster’

Thomas (Florida International University and Florida Memorial University). Both are steelpan musicians and academics and have frequently commented on the immense value to the community that innovators such as Cyril Khamai hold by openly sharing their life experiences in steelpan.

It was then Cyril’s turn to address the audience and he did so from his ‘throne’ prepared for him by his life-long admirer and renowned pannist himself, Mr. Michael ‘Bubbles’ Olivier

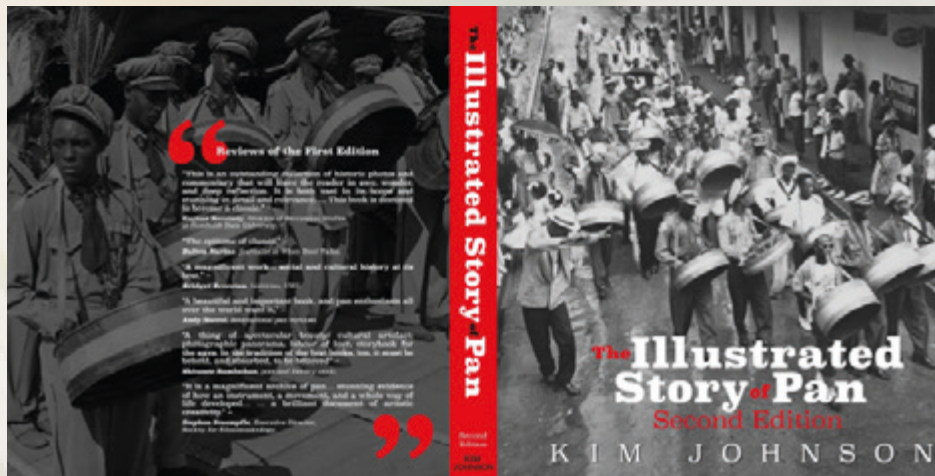
Cyril began:

“At 90 I am still an eligible bachelor, but I am secretly married to my pan. My journey started as a boy of 6 in San Fernando trying to tune tin cans. My father noticed I would spend the whole day doing this and gave me a larger biscuit tin for my 6th birthday. I could not ask for a better present – I soon made a pan with a few musical notes and everybody would come to see it. Even at this early age I enjoyed it so much I decided this is what I wanted to do for my entire life. My father was OK with this unambitious, lowly life but my mother was very upset with me – and often said “You can’t spend your whole life liming”

Often, they (police) came to our panyards and destroyed our pans and take us down to the Police Station where we often spend the night in a cell.

I made my first fully chromatic pan with Melody Makers steelband in 1948 but arranged and tuned for several steelbands in Trinidad before being sent a ticket to travel to Wales in 1957. A group there wanted a steelband and I made and tuned all the pans before heading off for London in 1958. London by this time was acquiring pan players from Trinidad such as Sterling Betancourt, Russ Henderson and many of my friends who are in the room tonight.

REVIEWS
BOOK REVIEWS
 ILLUSTRATED STORY OF PAN (SECOND EDITION)
 BY KIM JOHNSON



The Illustrated Story of Pan, Second Edition is the definitive story of Pan – the instrument, the music, the steelbands and their social, cultural and political history, from the earliest days to the present.

Hundreds of photos and pioneers' verbatim accounts never before published, stories of adventure and discovery, of love and danger, have been threaded along the author's narrative to produce this monumental epic of musicians and scientists, street fighters and politicians, school teachers and their students, promoters and activists, but mostly ordinary people who achieved extraordinary things.

It is the story of Trinidad All Stars and Renegades and Desperadoes and Phasell and Exodus and all the other big steelbands, but also the small bands, Boys Town, Boom Town and Stepyard, the extinct bands, the Tripoli, Bar 20 and Red Army, the "college boy" bands like Dixieland, Dixie Stars, Stromboli and Rogues Regiment, and of course the countless men and women, girls and boys, who created this marvel.

The book in its 10 chapters starts with the background to pan in African culture and Carnival in Trinidad, and moves through the invention of the instrument, the ensemble and its music and their elaboration during and after World War II; the rise of steelband violence and efforts to end it; steelband, Carnival and masquerade, classical music and politics. Women and pan, the rise and rise of Panorama, the spread of pan abroad and the rise of school bands. The final chapter looks at the current state of pan and the challenges the movement faces.

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I have played with many of them through Tropicana and played pan in 35 countries – being lucky to play even behind the Iron Curtain during the years of the cold war.

I have never missed a carnival except for Carnival 2020 when COVID-19 stopped carnival but even then, I was lucky through my doctor (Dr Yasmin Razak) to be given the chance to play during the vaccination programme at St Charles Hospital. I thank them for coming tonight and also for part sponsorship of this evening's event. If I had to do it all over again, there is only one life I would want again – A Life in Pan. I have one wish and that is for the youths of today to continue to work to make pan the best musical instrument ever made. Treat a steelpan as sacred, make it the pride of your life and let it bring peace and joy to you and all your friends and family as it has done for me over the years."

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Mr Khamai received a standing ovation. MC, Haroun Shah adapted the edge of the stage into a 'liming bench' so that participants could come up, sit and articulate their personal experiences with their friend and/or collaborator. A woman of 85 years (Velma 'Vee' Davis, red turban in the photo below) revealed that she travelled on the same boat across the Atlantic to Britain with Mr Khamai in 1957 to Britain, ie the French merchant ship, the S.S. Colombie. She recalled him playing pan at the various gala evenings and described how the West Indians on board were immensely homesick but got to know each other quickly through steelpan. When Clive 'Mash Up' Phillip joined the liming bench, it was an example of how public sharing and storytelling is not only fascinating but enables vital strands of the history of steelpan to be inserted into the common narrative.

Roger Gibbs (Canada), fresh from his presentations and performances at the 8th International Biennial Conference in Carnival Arts (1-3rd October 2021) at the same venue, sang a calypso via video he wrote called 'Uncle Cyril' to his own accompaniment on a cuatro. This was followed by Allison Noreiga-Clarke (Trinidad) who sang her own composition which was produced by David Boothman in Trinidad and sung like an 'Extempo' to the music of 'Sans Humanite.' Her video included a poignant message of good wishes by Professor Dawn Batson (world renowned pannist, previously based at Florida Memorial University).

The inimitable Michael 'Bubbles' Olivier closed the final section of the evening which he labelled 'Back in Time' with the aim of reminding Cyril of his early life. His plans were (1) a Solo Pan performance (2) sing popular songs to backing tracks and (3) a bamboo bamboo parade for Cyril with audience participation. 'Bubbles' ended the event by serenading Cyril Khamai with an astonishing rendition of Louis Armstrong's 'We Have All The Time in The World' which everyone sang along to, closing out what was truly an historic celebration of not only one of the UK's founding fathers of carnival arts, but also a T&T's icon and national treasure.

With so much of the history of carnival arts locked away in the memories of elder artists, occasions such as these help to reignite the grey matter to embellish episodes in steelpan history where there is a paucity of information. For the octo/nonagenarian, long periods of sitting alone with an interviewer can be daunting, strenuous and even unproductive. Pooling artists together with a common interest, and in a less formal setting such as this 'liming bench' may be an effective means to gather more qualitative information on the history of carnival arts. It may also help to give credibility to a topic through consensus in areas of controversy where perhaps only one perspective has been formally presented to date but perhaps is quietly disputed. Such events also serve as educational for younger members of the community.

Haroun Shah closed the evening by thanking Mr. Matthew Phillip and Carnival Village for their support and loan of their facilities. He acknowledged a major grant from the Colville Health Centre via Dr Yasmin Razak (Golborne Medical Centre, W10 5PE) who also gave enormous support to Notting Hill Carnival Community from the start of the pandemic and generous donations from the Khamai and Shah families and friends without whose benevolence the event would not have transpired.

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Present



The Learn Music On

SERIES BY

Delphina James



OUT NOW



The Aim/Objective

To teach beginner Steel Pan learners music theory/literacy and to read music notation

The Concept:

During my woodwind teaching sessions, I started creating my own exercises and compositions to enhance the understanding of a new concept. I saw that my resources were working and helping the students. Slowly, but surely, I begun producing my books using my compositions. First for Clarinet, Saxophone and Bassoon because the learners were already on their music theory journey. In 2019, the idea to have my own music school for Steel Pan came to fruition: TamBam Steel Orchestra Academy. I looked for resources to use for my Steel Pan music School.

All songs are Duets, as I have found it effective for the early stages of learning and learners enjoy practising with others, with the same level parts. The duet format also introduces the learner to playing in an ensemble and basic 2-part harmony and encourages the importance of independent practice.

I just thought, I need a music tuition book just like I use for my woodwind students that teaches how to read music, where their notes are on their Pan (any pan). Includes music theory and great as a homework tool and resource. I didn't find any. So from my own online music theory lessons, my 20+ years of teaching experience and using so many music tuition books; I created my own.

In the Pan community, I'm finding that the background Pans do not get as much attention as the front-line Pans do. As a lover and fluent player of all Pans, there is a 'Learn Music On...'

- The Tenor Pan (Low C)
- The Double Tenor/Seconds Pans
- Guitar and Cello Pans
- The Bass Pans

That cover 2 octaves of notes to create my 2-year curriculum and planning and of course, to support any current Steel Pan authors.

I found 2 books that were more aimed at the tutor and had roughly 2/3 ensemble songs to teach a class. One book is for a small steel band, one book is for the mini (Jumbie)-Pans. So, they were arrangements already done for non-pan music tutors. I just thought, I need a music tuition book just like I use for my woodwind students that teaches how to read music, teaches where their notes are on their Pan (any pan), includes music theory and great as a homework tool and resource

All songs are Duets, as I have found it effective for the early stages of learning and learners enjoy practising with others, with the same level parts. The duet format also introduces the learner to playing in an ensemble and basic 2-part harmony and encourages the importance of independent practice. Learners can swap parts, as the music concept taught in each piece is included in each part. As a supplement, "Learn Music On" can be used for sight-reading practice, technique, aural training, music theory understanding or just exercises.

Why the 'Learn Music On...' series are important. I think, the 'Learn Music On...' series is an important resource because there is nothing out there that is readily accessible for tutors and learners to use.

Once thorough music services and music hubs know that this available, curriculums, constructive planning, a standard and development of the learner (regardless of age, background, and culture) and The INSTRUMENT can be put in place. Players will be put on an equal playing field as conventional western instruments.

More involvement and inclusion for the playing Pan musician in all ensembles and with musicians of other instruments (through hearing and playing along side the Pan player) will gain understanding, knowledge, and a Respect for the instrument from non-Pan musicians.

As well as learning how to read music, the learner will also gain an understanding in the basics of music literacy. This will enable the learner to sit assessments/exams by recognised music associations setting a high, quality standard.

The tutor has an extra resource to help differentiate lessons and teaching methods and hopefully, more teaching opportunities will be needed by schools, even by Steel Bands who can then apply for funding to host such sessions with resources available.

As well as a small group stand-alone tuition resource, 'Learn Music On...' can also be a used for one-on-one tuition. Learners can use this as their only music resource even though I state and recommend using a tutor. Plenary

'Learn Music On...' will be available in hardback form and as an e-book. I learnt how to read music with no tutor but using.... A book. Now, you can 'learn music on....' The Steel Pan.



EVENT

Pan Clash 2021

BY STEELPAN TRUST

Pan Clash 2021 was a YouTube production for the first time showcasing our young steel pan musicians talent to our global audience. The event included five children under the age of 16 in one category and 2 musicians over 16 in another category. Marlon Hibbert from Endurance Steel Orchestra maintained his winning title and received a hatric. Mason Goode from Ebony Steelband entered for the first time in the under 16s category and won the title from Nyle Auguiste whom received 2nd place. Musicians received a total of £1,200 in prize money and it was very well deserved in the under 16s category that had extremely high standards this year.



Pan Clash began in 2007 an initiative by Shareen Gray Director of Steel Pan Trust. This year Pan Clash celebrated 70 years of steel pan in the UK and TASPO's (Trinidad all Stars Percussion Orchestra) performance on the Southbank, London. The event has now had over 50 participants in total. The objective is to promote and improve individual steel pan soloist by giving them a platform to perform and it's a competition to encourage excellence. Ms Gray commented that, "the event needs more inclusivity age wise, it needs another category to keep children and young people participating and I hope to introduce this next year".



The music this year was a true reflection of the times with hits, such as Essence by Wizkid, Go Crazy by Chris Brown and Leave the Door Open by Bruno Mar. It also included a calypso classic, Magic Drum, by Machel Montano.



The experience for the musicians was equal to a professional studio setting and they learned interviewing skills and how to be on high energy for the camera. The judges Mr David Ijaduola (a Pan Clash champion for many years), BAS Secretary, Ms Debi Gardner and Mr Thomas Alleyne (a steel pan agent) also had to make adjustments to satisfy the cameras. Triniboi Joochie known for his hit song Bottle Over Head hosted the event.



Pan Clash was launched as a show on Steel Pan Trust YouTube on Monday 29th November. Unfortunately the visuals and audio was at an extremely low standard due to the 24-hour production turnaround. Over 500 people tuned in to watch Pan Clash 2021. The show has since been upgraded into a high quality production that premiered on Steel Pan Trust YouTube channel in 2022. The event was supported by the British Association of Steelbands and Pan Podium.



Steelpan and Well Being

RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE AND DIVERSITY

BY JAMAL 'PAC MAN' GLYNN

Today, steelpanns are considered 'we ting' all over our small twin island republic. Steelpanns play an important role in developing a sense of identity for young descendants of migrants from the Caribbean. There are approximately 65 registered steelbands in the "British Associations of Steelbands" and several other steelbands, which are not members. Interestingly, a steelpan can sound like another musical instrument whereby the over tones can be heard according to the way the pan is laid out. This creates a wealth of sound because notes resonate into other notes as they are being played. There is a magical bed/sea of sounds that helps another note to create this thick rich harmony. Only the steelpan can produce this type of sound. Additionally, another feature is how people react to the instrument. It is a very physical instrument. People relate to it quickly. For example, children from the ages of one to four may hear a steelpan and start dancing, spinning around, and telling their parents that the instrument reminds them of the sea. The steelpan has a complex tonal quality which often elicits specific memories in listeners. The imagery of sea, sand and sun comes to the minds of many listeners. This is particularly true for many people in the UK. I remember that one listener said to me that hearing the steelpan reminds him of sitting in the sun and relaxing. Thus, the steelpan is a unique instrument that combines percussion techniques and various musical scales.

The relationship amongst steelband, music and wellbeing are that most importantly, steelbands grew in communities throughout Trinidad and Tobago consisting of different ethnicities reflecting our rich cultural heritage and diversity. The panyard is like a second home where steelpan players can access complimentary meals and drinks, socialize in meaningful ways, and learn to play different types of music in a collaborative way. With a wide range of age groups currently involved in a steelband, we have over time; moved away from the era where young men performing in steelbands were called 'Bad Johns'. The image of the steelband has changed into a more inclusive institution as there are many more women associated with a steelband helping to change a negative perception and provide a safer space for musicians. Interestingly, most of the steelband members are from minority backgrounds, or at-risk communities. The music they make helps to empower them in positive ways, while thousands of followers

accompany them during public performances or seasonal competitions.

Since Trinidad was still a British colony during the genesis of the steelpan, steelbands played musical adaptations and arrangements to popular music, jazz, and British folk music. In the 1970's and 80's the instrument took leaps and bounds to a richer harmonic sound making the music more complex and faster and resonating with feelings. The format in which songs were presented moved away from the classical form of theme and variation to more atonal, aleatoric, jazz, tone poem, through composed pieces. Many arrangers started composing their own song /calypso for the annual panorama competition. Which even saw young children in this era/generation learning to play steelpan at schools. These youths would later play an important role in the development of the steelpan movement here in Trinidad and Tobago and abroad.

Fast-forward to today, music literacy and rote learning is combined in the distribution of music. Nevertheless, rote learning reflects the oral traditions of the people of Trinidad and Tobago which originates in slavery's history when slaves were not allowed to read and write and had to find different ways to communicate, e.g. storytelling and African drums.

The story of its invention shows how creativity, and the development of self-esteem can go hand in hand forming something unique. The steelpan is a musical instrument, but it is also much more than that. The steelpan plays a critical role in defining the culture and identity first of black and later of all Trinidadians. Generation after generation demonstrates evidence of an inherent 'melting pot' steelpan music encapsulates, the power and beauty of the instrument overcame prejudices and social exclusion, thus reflecting the spirit of the multicultural and cosmopolitan Trinbagonian population making our music in Trinidad and Tobago a beautiful blend of West African, Western classical and Asian music.



DVD REVIEWS

PANMUNDO - THE EVOLUTION OF THE STEELPAN



Part 1: The Evolution of the Steelpan (2015; 42 mins). A look at the history of the Steelpan (steel drum) from its inception in Trinidad and Tobago until gaining international recognition at the Festival of Britain in 1951. It features interviews from Ellie Mannette, Sterling Betancourt, Cliff Alexis and Ray Holman, to name a few.



Part 2: Pan Worldwide (2018; 85 mins). The global influence of the instrument in Canada, Japan, Nigeria, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States. This part features bands and steelpan legends from all over the globe including Lennox “Boogsie” Sharp, Earl La Pierre, Sr., Michael “Manish” Robinson, Russ Henderson and more. The World Premiere was hosted in Trinidad & Tobago in November 2017, followed by the US premiere in May 2018 and the European one in September 2018.

WRITE IN'S READERS LETTERS

Greetings Panpodium

Thanks for keeping us up to date with the global steelpan news during the pandemic. Being restricted left lots of us mentally vulnerable but your continued online contribution allowed us to stay focused and also entertained by the digital performances. Keep up your valuable work.

Trevor Alexander

Arima, Trinidad

Hello Panpodium

The music industry has been hit hard by the pandemic with live performance revenue the biggest casualty. A six-month shutdown was estimated to cost the industry billions in sponsorships. The steelpan industry is fighting back with new ways to monetize music consumption and innovative models. The collapse of the live industry affected not only artists, but also the thousands of people who work alongside them. Applauds to the Panpodium and the Pan fraternity for stepping up to the challenge and keeping Pan alive.

Richard Holder

Bern Switzerland

Hi Team

Pan-demic - now this is the term we should adopt to continue the global promotion of our 20th century acoustic instrument. Let's spread the Pan gospel far and wide creating a global movement to get the instrument recognised amongst conventional instruments. Pan is a combining form used like a prefix meaning, All. The birth and journey of our instrument depicts this as everyone got involved. Hoping this joint global effort continues far into the future.

Simon Cummings

Birmingham, UK

Hi PP

It was great to see members of Nostalgia and Alexander D Great performed at St. Charles Hospital during the COVID-19 immunisation in March 2021. The captivating music was noticeable which left tensions reduced. Residents expressed their gratitude and the 'Hey Jude' chorus was sung by all for several minutes and was clearly one of the favourites of the day. Thanks Nostalgia.

Anne Ryan

London, England

Dan Sadler

My Musical Journey!

My musical journey started with two failed attempts at learning an instrument, both times I stopped because the teachers did not like that I would try and teach myself melodies. I have always been a rebel but I knew I preferred playing music by ear from a young age. I was a member of the school choir, and drummer for the school swing band. So music was definitely in my blood.

I was 14 years old, when I found pan. I'll never forget walking into the steel band room for the first time after a heated conversation with my music teacher about why I wasn't using my musical gifts and learning an instrument. In my first lesson, I picked up two songs on the Tenor Pan and I never looked back.

In 1998, we bought more pans, merged the two older bands and went on a tour of Barcelona. That year we became a community band called Sounds of Steel, this enabled school leavers to come back and continue to play in the band. I owe most of my success to the experiences I had with this band. It enabled me to become a specialist music teacher, an international touring musician and where I cut my teeth as a steel band arranger. We got to work with so many inspiring arrangers like Earl Rodney, Leroy Clarke, Len 'Boogsie' Sharpe to name a few. Over the years, Toussaint Clarke worked with us the most and was always been good to me, offering me opportunities and experiences that shaped me to become the Musician, Pannist and Arranger I am today.

A few noteworthy experiences I've had was performing at the Royal Albert Hall, on ITV 'Let's Do Lunch' Christmas Special with Billy Ocean, working on-board P&O Oceana on a 5 month Caribbean Cruise, touring 40 countries, performing at the World Steelband Music Festival 2000 in Trinidad with Ebony Steel Band and at the International Panorama in 2015, playing with Renegades in Trinidad Panorama and more recently winning the school Steel Band competition, Classorama, on two occasions with my Primary School Steel Band from Tottenham.

I played my first Panorama in 1999, and then every year consecutively until 2019. Sounds of Steel didn't go to Panorama so over the years I had the opportunity to play with London All Stars, Real Steel, Ebony, Metronomes, Pantasia, Endurance and Pan Nation. In my 20 years of Panorama, I would say the best feeling was going with a band in their first year, you just can't beat that kind of fresh excitement and energy. I'll never forget playing 'The Bomb' with Real Steel, 'Happiness' with Endurance and 'Iron Love' with Pan Nation steel orchestras.



I left Sounds of Steel in 2012, moved to London in pursuit of more pan tutoring opportunities. I dipped in and out of bands and became a trustee for Steel Pan Trust. I was doing more duo/trio work and wasn't really playing regularly in a big band.

In 2018, that changed when I joined Pan Nation full time, this band has such an infectious vibe and Chris Storey creates some incredible arrangements. Where the band needed my help was in the percussion section and I was more than happy to take on the role and helped the whole band have a better relationship with the engine room. In 2019, we went to the UK Panorama for the first time, I was percussion section leader and played four pan in the band. We placed 4th overall and were voted 'Peoples Choice' winners, an absolute honour in our first year.

Recently in lockdown while most schools closed, we kept going online and I was asked to still deliver my Steel Pan lessons by Zoom. Obviously, I couldn't teach 500 kids a week without them having access to instruments, so I wrote an online course for my students aged 7-11. We shared videos and had discussions, the children got to learn about the history of Pan, Carnival and Panorama, they learnt how much effort goes into making and maintaining pans, we learnt about basic musical elements and how to judge Pan music. The children absolutely loved it.

After a year off in 2020, Pan Nation came back strong in 2021 and I am now the band's Vice Captain, giving me a more positive input into the future of the band.

What's next for me? I love Panorama so arranging for a band would be an incredible opportunity. Watch this space.



Pan Explosion – The Making of The Jit Samaroo Sound

By Garvin Blake (WhenSteelTalks)

“I was scared like hell!” Jit confessed. But who wouldn’t be terrified writing music for a band named Renegades, with a leader called “Boldface”? And to make matters worse, Renegades was from LaCou Harpe, an urban area once known for badjohns, jammettes and stick fighters. Jit would require some coaxing before he would commit to the job.

Fortunately, the pan tuner Bertram “Birch” Kelman, who had recommended Jit to Renegades, convinced the young Samaroo to accept the challenge. Despite his initial fear, the soft-spoken 21-year old told Renegades that he was not coming to Port of Spain to imitate the big-name arrangers in the city. Jit was going to sound like Jit.

Skill, luck and courage are hallmarks of artistic excellence. Each ingredient is indispensable, yet inadequate minus each other. Novel ideas without a forum die. Competence absent adventure is dull. Bravery unbound is reckless.

How, why and where innovations occur is mysterious. Who will be the architects? Some trailblazers seemingly spring up out of nowhere; others seem preordained. Some come from the heart of the action; others emerge from off the beaten path.

Always hungry for pan, I took the treacherous drive with some friends to Surrey Village, Lopinot in 2019 to listen to Supernovas rehearse and to see where Jit Samaroo was born.

Located in the foothills of Trinidad’s Northern Range, with one way in via a narrow, winding road that elevates with every turn, Lopinot has a quaint, remoteness about it. It seemed like an unlikely place to produce a towering panman. Finding Jericho, the militant fugitive Kitchener sang about in 1974, or a soucouyant hiding in the forest that surrounds the village felt more likely, if I were daring enough to venture out there in the dark.

I went to Lopinot again in 2020. This time, driving about two miles past Supernovas’ panyard to meet Pablo, a long-time resident and a long-time friend of my friend Bunny. There was an added serenity about the village on the second trip. Maybe because it was daytime and the lush

mountains were in full view. I also found out how deep music ran through the veins of the people.

After offering us some fruits he had just picked from the trees in his yard, Pablo said, “Boy, allyuh must come up here for de Christmas. Is parang music like rain. We does start in September. Ah have mih cuatro inside, in de back. Everybody up here does play something.” That’s when Jit’s story started taking shape.

Jit’s mother, who died before he was a teenager, played the Dholak, a South Asian two-headed drum. Jit played guitar in the local parang bands, and was a member of Village Boys, a pan-around-the-neck steel band. This early exposure to complex Indian rhythms, Spanish-tinged harmonies and African-derived percussions gave Jit a deep musical and cultural arsenal that he would utilize on his creative journey.

In 1965 Jit was taken by a neighbor to play pan with the Canboulay Steelband in Tunapuna, a town five miles from Lopinot. Jit’s talent was instantly recognized, and he was given an opportunity to arrange a few songs for the group. Jit also began taking music lessons, where he showed an uncanny ability to write four-part counterpoint, the art of creating independent melodies in conjunction with one another. Soon, this harmonic device would become one of his trademarks.

Jit’s mother’s untimely death required him to become the caretaker for his younger siblings. Needing a way to keep the family together, Jit brought home some discarded pans from Canboulay, and taught his brothers and sisters how to play. The family group became The Samaroo Kids, and later renamed The Samaroo Jets. They made several recordings, toured the world and competed in Trinidad Steelband Music



Festivals. In 1972, Jit represented the band in the festival, where he won the Ping Pong soloist category.

1972 was also Jit’s first Panorama with Renegades and the band made it to the semifinals playing Sparrow’s “Rope.” Boldface and the players were filled with optimism. But three carnivals would come and go before the group advanced past the preliminary round of the competition. Still, Jit remained undaunted. There was a breakthrough in 1976 when the band qualified for the semifinals performing Sparrow’s “The Statue,” a crowd favorite. Two years later, Jit made it to the finals with his gorgeous handling of “Social Dora” written by Kitchener, his future soulmate. The pan pundits were put on notice. There was a new voice in town.

The 1980s began with a lot of promise for Jit and Renegades. The band placed 3rd in 1980 with their rendition of Kitchener’s “Jean Pierre the Netball Queen.” They moved up a notch in 1981 playing “Mo Pan,” another Kitchener selection. But Jit would have to wait another year before claiming the most coveted prize in the pan world. The crown, however, would not come easily. Renegades would have to withstand one of the fiercest showdowns in Panorama history.

Port of Spain was abuzz for Panorama 1982.

Coming off back-to-back wins with the immortal “Woman on the Bass” and Super Blue’s “Unknown Band,” Leon “Smooth” Edwards and Trinidad All Stars were poised to three-peat with their blistering version of Kitchener’s “Heat.” Just up de hill from Trinidad All Stars, Clive Bradley had returned to Desperadoes, after a one-year hiatus, to compose and arrange the classic “Party Tonight.” A short distance east of Desperadoes, in de Morvant Junction, Harmonites were trying to get back in winners’ row with Earl Rodney’s often forgotten gem “Pan Running Wild” sung by Squibby.

In Belmont, Casablanca were on the rise with a group of young, talented players and the unheralded arranger Henry “Bendix” Cumberbatch. Their brilliant rendition of Scrunter’s “The Will” was a warning shot, as Casablanca would go on to win the Music Festival later that year, featuring a monumental performance of Tchaikovsky’s “The 1812 Overture” under the direction of Anthony Prospect. On Jerningham Avenue, across from the Savannah, the maestro Ray Holman was continuing to stretch the limits of the art form with his lyrical and elegant composition “Musical Showdown” performed by Pandemonium.

Down in de Village in Woodbrook, the gifted musical rebel Len “Boogsie” Sharpe wrote the forward-looking “Pan Take Over” for Phase II Pan Groove. Further west, Power Stars were mounting a threat in St. James playing the veteran musician Edouard Wade’s up-tempo version of Scorcher’s “Party Fever.” At the other end of the east-west corridor, the accomplished Headley brothers did an inspiring interpretation of “The Will” for the Tunapuna band Exodus. The pioneering steelband Invaders, Deltones out of South Trinidad (Boogsie’s second band in the finals) and Sun Valley were also in the fight for pan supremacy.

Meanwhile, back in de Harpe, Renegades were arming themselves with Jit’s seminal masterpiece, “Pan Explosion,” Kitchener’s battle hymn.

This was a golden era for Panorama. Some may scoff at that comment, and say all the eras are golden, or comparing them is impossible, even pointless. Nevertheless, the exercise of evaluating time periods can be instructive, providing a method for understanding how art evolves.

Most fans have a period they cherish, largely informed by age and the success of their favorite band in those years. However, the arrangements between 1976 and 1986 — my cherry-picked golden era — can rival any other ten-year span in the history of Panorama. (Note: there were only 10 Panoramas from 1976 to 1986 because of the 1979 Panorama boycott).

Great songs were played before and after this period, but this era continues to be a yardstick for past and future Panoramas. Crème de la crème pan pieces like Desperadoes' "Pan in Harmony" and "Rebecca," Pandemonium's "Panyard Vibrations," Starlift's "Du Du Yemi," Trinidad All Stars' "Woman on de Bass," Harmonites' "Distant Drums," Renegades' "Sweet Pan," Tokyo's "Pan in Danger" and Phase II Pan Groove's "Pan Rising" were conceived during this era. Not all were winners, but all are jewels. The boycott prevented Bradley's "Symphony in G" and Boogie's "79 is Mine" from getting a final verdict from the judges, but anyone who has heard them know they're superior works.

Jit could not have hoped for a better period to express his music. He had Kitchener's well-crafted songs and Kelman's well-tuned instruments. He had crackshot players and an area hungry for a win. A great environment to experiment and grow. This was the spirit of the era.

This was a time when all the bands had a wide variety of good calypsos to choose from. Bertie Marshall, Wallace Austin, Leo Coker, Lincoln Noel, Jim St. Rose, Herman Guppy "Brown" and others were producing finely-tuned pans. All the top groups had skilled performers. Community support was the norm. And above all, a group of groundbreaking musicians was inventing the language that still serves as today's blueprint for Panorama.

On Saturday, February 20th 1982, the titans of the pan world clashed in the Queen's Park Savannah in front of a packed North and Grand Stands.

The music connoisseurs headed for their seats in the Grand Stands. The vibes-seekers gathered in the North Stands. Throngs of pan jumbies stayed outside, preferring to experience the raw energy of the bands up-close as they rehearse on de Drag. The rest of the country sat and watched the drama unfold on TV or huddled next to a radio in a neighborhood bar or a favorite liming spot.

The nervous, anxious Panorama energy was in the air. Big money bets were placed. Bragging rights and eternal glory at stake. Fans flocked Renegades as the band took the journey up Charlotte Street to the Savannah. Are we going to return to LaCou Harpe elated or deflated? After two years of knocking on the door, there was no place to go but up many supporters felt.

They also knew anything could happen finals night, especially with former champions Trinidad All Stars, Desperadoes and Harmonites coming for the kill. Plus, people in town were saying Pandemonium, Casablanca, Power Stars and Phase II were sounding dangerous.

Playing in position number 2, Renegades would have to pull out all the stops if they were going to get the title.

Dressed in white polo jerseys and light blue caps, Renegades took the stage. Three marksmen fronted the band, with ninety-seven more gunners behind, raring to go. The lights come on. Perched on top the engine room, Jit marshaled the band from de Harpe into action with four brisk blows on a cowbell.

The introduction began with a 6-note motif based on the open line of Kitchener's calypso. This idea was repeated starting on a different pitch, which created a sense of stability. However, the calm didn't last long...

Immediately after the band played the theme, Jit's masterful orchestration was on display. The midrange pans took the lead, while the frontline fired stinging jabs at the chords. The quadrophonics and four-pans were thrown into the spotlight. A spectacle to be seen and heard. There was constant dialog among all the instruments. Beautifully contoured lines flowed from every section of the orchestra. Melodic fragments, executed with rapid-fire speed, filled the Savannah.

Around the five-and-a-half-minute mark, there's a key change using the phrase "is pan explosion," leading to a variation of the verse, highlighted by five off-the-beat bass drops early in the passage. As the chorus begins, the tenors and double tenors unleash a steady barrage of zigzagging notes that outline Kitchener's seductive harmony as the middle pans state the melody in a deep, dark register. The long, mesmerizing run is replayed for those who didn't believe what they had just heard...

The piece was now at a fever pitch. To ease the tension, Jit suddenly broke into a jam, with the frontline riffing over a simple bass figure. It was time to 'leggo' and play yuhself. The band now cleverly exploited the motivic device used to

open the piece to modulate to the original key. The orchestra settled back in and the theme is restated. You could have sensed the end was near.

But before Renegades finished, Jit launched another attack.

As the chorus ended, there was an abrupt stop followed by an ageless syncopated phrase. The frontline then started shouting "is pan explosion" and the middle pans answered with some classic kaiso lines. A few bars later, the basses started urgently playing "is pan explosion" as the tenors retreated and let loose a breakaway rhythm. This was de bacchanal side of Jit.

The crowd was riveted. For reinforcement, Jit called up the full band to blast "is pan explosion." You could feel the power. An upward harmonic progression intensified the passage. Both North and Grand stands were euphoric. And with 10 devastating strikes on a major chord the assault ended.

Finally, the war was over. Jit and Renegades were victorious.

Trinidad All Stars was the first runner-up, Desperadoes the second runner-up. Harmonites, Casablanca and Pandemonium came 4th, 5th and 6th, respectively. Power Stars, Exodus and Phase 2 filled the next three spots. Invaders, Deltones and Sun Valley pulled up the rear, nothing to be ashamed of considering the stacked field.

After cricket and football, arguing Panorama results is the most popular sport in Trinidad. The placings are fiercely debated, sometimes for years. 1982 was no exception.

Many pan aficionados, for good reasons, still claim that "Party Tonight" is the best song that didn't win Panorama. Folks from 'round de Bridge and beyond proudly state "Heat" was a winner. It definitely had all the qualities to win. Phase II diehards will insist the judges didn't understand Boogie's music, a valid point. But, like it or not, a new champion was crowned, ushering in a remarkable decade-and-a-half run for Jit and Renegades.

A lot of Jit's signature ideas were present the year before in "Mo Pan," but they were crystalized and breathtakingly executed in "Pan Explosion."

The music's most vital elements blossomed in the charged inner voices or flew by at lightning speed in the outer voices. All the lines were meticulously constructed and intricately stitched together — a result of Jit's early counterpoint training. And despite the complexity and density of the arrangement, you still felt the Trinidadian lavway, particularly in the jam sections. The Lopinot folk

roots never far away.

This would become the prototype for the "Jit Samaroo Sound."

Unlike Clive Bradley who continuously reinvented himself, once Jit found his voice, his musical approach became measured, preferring incremental change over radical transformation. He refined his exacting arranging technique — most notably by adding Latin grooves, rich modulations and polyrhythms — to win eight more Panoramas with Renegades as well as the first hat trick (1995, 1996 & 1997).

Surprisingly, after the historic three-peat, Jit would not come higher than 4th in Panorama, which occurred in 1998. Renegades would not win another Panorama until 2018, two years after Jit passed away.

The winning formula that served Jit so well fell out of favor with the judges. He nevertheless continued producing beautiful music. His 2006 arrangement of DeFosto's "Judgement Day" - a polished piece, completed a year before he retired as the musical director for Renegades, is a good example of his later work. The arrangement didn't have the same arc as "Pan Explosion," yet it's unmistakably Jit. A gentle soul from Surrey Village speaking boldly, in his own words, in his own style.

Renegades finished 6th in Panorama that year. But by then, Jit didn't need to prove anything. He had already received an honorary doctorate from the University of the West Indies and was awarded two national medals of merit. His non-Panorama compositions, the patriotic "La Trinity" and "Song of Lopinot," an ode to his village, were used as compulsory pieces at Steelband Music Festivals. And he had also written the sound track for Kamalo Deen's aptly titled motion picture "The Panman."

But long before those accolades and accomplishments, Jit's legacy was secure. His name was etched in time that night Renegades left LaCou Harpe, marched up Charlotte Street, invaded de Savannah, fired a few rounds on de Drag, stormed de Big Stage and captured their first victory.

- Garvin Blake is a New York-based pan player and recording artist. His latest CD is Parallel Overtones.

- Look out for Garvin's upcoming book - "Portraits in Pan"

8th International Biennial Conference in Carnival Arts

Tribute to 'TASPO'.



Amidst much uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the shortfall in arts council funding, the 8th International Biennial Conference in Carnival Arts titled "The Transformative Power of Carnival Arts (Steelpan, Calypso and Mas), Rebouncing from the COVID-19 Pandemic; Celebrating 70 years of TASPO's Arrival" successfully went ahead at the Carnival Village's elegant venue, the Tabernacle between 1st -3rd October 2021. Timed to coincide with the start of the UK's Black History Month, the event was live-streamed and brought new audiences to these meetings.

Day 1 of the conference (Saturday 1st Oct.) consisted of a morning session (10am to 1.00pm) titled 'Calypso Rhythms' after the title of invited speaker, Roger Gibbs' presentation. Roger was the only one of five expected overseas speakers who successfully travelled

during this period, but he too faced numerous hurdles in each direction of travel. expected overseas speakers who successfully travelled during this period, but he too faced numerous hurdles in each direction of travel. The afternoon session (3-5.30pm) focused on mas and was titled 'No Mas Here in Great Britain', the refrain taken from the Mighty Terror's calypso to reflect the current period of dormancy imposed by the lockdown.

The papers presented during Day 1 are covered in more depth in the International Journal of Carnival Arts (Vol. 4 -<https://www.steelpan-conference.com/>). The current review focuses on the steelpan component of the conference which began at the opening concert on Friday 1st Oct at 7.30pm.

Local Ensemble Paid Tribute to 70 years of 'TASPO'

World-renowned dramatic soprano, Anne Fridal, who has performed with several steel orchestras in Trinidad and Tobago, opened the evening with a host of popular Caribbean Folks songs such as Yellow Bird, Day-O, Jamaica Farewell, Linstead Market, Chi Chi Bud Oh and Coconut Woman backed this time by St Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra (SMA3SO). Calypsonian Alexander D Great (London) and Roger Gibbs (Toronto) are two of the protagonist in the diaspora who are working tirelessly to motivate steelbands to play more local calypsos and also to stimulate steelpan musician to backlive calypso performances. Alexander D Great's "Unsung Heroes" and "Russell Henderson" were both played with SMA3SO as the backing steelband to end a glorious opening night's concert.

Sessions 1 and 2 on Day 1 were bridged by a Plenary Lecture titled "Steel Orchestras and Legacies of Indenture" by Professor Tina K. Ramnarine. Tina herself was introduced to steelpan in the 1980s while at school and was tutored by a pannist whose interest span both Afro- and Indo-Caribbean music. Her presentation examined the way in which music might have transitioned on these long arduous transatlantic voyages from India to the Caribbean and its possible impact on the indentured passenger. Calcutta the Nawab established a music school near the port, which was important in creating the historic soundscape of Calcutta in the years that indentured labourers left the city for the Caribbean islands.

Day 2 opened with a joint presentation by Haroun Shah and Dr Yasmin Razak who co-organised 'CarniVAX', a steelpan and calypso project in North Kensington to reduce COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and emanated from a paper written by Laila Shah et al., (2021) in IJCA, Vol. 3. May pp 27-45. The presentation commenced with photos of St Charles Hospital in 1881 and its role in Spanish Flu pandemic a century ago. The hospital is located in RBKC, in the heart of Northing Hill Carnival and many of its patients are from the carnival community. When CarniVAX started on 20th March 2021, only one person left the queue before being vaccinated; the day before 120 left prior to vaccination. A

celebration party on 16th May 2021 at St Charles Hospital celebrated the success of the programme and was recorded by BBC - Haroun Shah and Cyril Khamai were interviewed. The interviews were broadcast on BBC television on 21st May 2021 and television stations in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana.

Unofficial figures suggest >70% of young pannists between the ages of 18 -25 are unlikely to play pan again following their entry into British universities. If the university/town they enter don't have a steelband, they generally lose interest following graduation 3 - 4 years later or lack the confidence to restart even if they pick up jobs in a town/city that has an active carnival. As part of the 25th Anniversary of St Michael & All Angels Steel Orchestra, three pannist/students from the band, Candice Falconer, Dylan Mitchell and Laila Shah discussed how they found their own solutions to continue playing pan while simultaneously pursuing their university degrees. The session was steered on by their band leader/arranger, Patrick McKay and co-chaired by Louise Shah. Louise is a primary example of an active pannist with Nostalgia Steelband who went to a university/town that did not have a steelband and while she never misses a Nothing Hill Carnival nor Panorama, has not resumed playing with a steelband.

Current pannist/student, Marlon Hibbert was interviewed by Debi Gardner and Haroun Shah about his strategy to not only play at the highest level but start his own steelband, play in many others and continue his studies at university, initially at Middlesex University. He is currently at Guildhall where he became the first steelpan player in the UK to study at a conservatoire with steelpan as the main instrument. This was followed by another ex-Middlesex University student Delphina James who did her music degree on pan but also tutored and produced theory books for teaching clarinet, saxophone and bassoon. Her music school 'TamBam Steel Orchestra Academy' was launched in 2019. Her presentation covered her steelpan music series 'Learn Music On...', a two-year curriculum for all pans in a steel orchestra and covers two octaves.



The three overseas speakers for the final session of the conference, Dr. Bowie Sonnie Bowie (Nigeria), Professor Andrew Martin (USA) and Mr. Amadu Massally (Sierra Leone) were unable to travel during this period. Mr. Massally was unable to send his presentation, but Prof. Martin's was sent by video and was based on project work he carried out in Antigua. He was impressed with the islands' large youth contingent and the manner in which local schools have integrated steelbands in after-school classes that then flows directly into the large established bands. He believes that the system developed there may be used as a model elsewhere.

Dr. Bowie's plenary lecture titled 'The Rise of Steelbands Across Africa' was done by zoom and delivered with gusto, huge pride, compassion and energy. He charted the trials and tribulations to establish a foothold for steelbands in Nigeria and Africa as a whole following Trinidad and Tobago's Starliff Steel Orchestra's historic visit to Nigeria in 1977 as part of their Festival of Arts and Culture. Dr. Bowie proudly announced that after 44 years, Nigeria boasts some 30 vibrant steelbands and now run their own Panorama competitions. He endeavours to relate its history and spends a great deal of his time to promoting its uptake and culture on the Continent. South Africa leads with >150 Steelbands while Botswana has two and one in Tanzania. There is however, growing interest in Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ivory Coast and other West African countries.

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Panel Debate:

The meeting closed with a lively debate on 'Expanding the Space of the National Panorama'. The panel consisted of most of the leading figures of Notting Hill Carnival; Alexander Loewenthal (aka Alexander D Great), Allyson Williams, Bubbles, Clary Salandy, Debi Gardner, Eversley Mills, Pepe Francis, Patrick McKay, Robbie Joseph, Eversley Mills, Matthew Phillip (remotely) and Toussaint Clarke. Central to the debate therefore was whether the venue, Emslie Horniman's Pleasance, has outgrown its space and is now suppressing the development of Panorama. Consensus could not be reached within the 90-minute allotted time. The debate ended unresolved but perhaps a leaning toward re-examining the potential of Hyde Park as a future venue.

Commemorating the Silver Jubilee of 'St Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra' and the 70th Anniversary of the Arrival of 'Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra' (TASPO) in Concert.

St Michael and All Angels Steel Orchestra was founded in 1996 and remained in the Borough of Brent in Stonebridge and Harlesden. Some 300 youths have passed through the band and many go on to become leading players in bigger bands such as Ebony, Mangrove and Metronomes. Its current leader Patrick McKay stated that many of its youths had picked up prestigious awards and go on to study at universities. The band faced near dissolution in 2016 but bounced back to celebrate their Silver Jubilee in 2021. The first half of the concert on 2nd October was part of this celebration and saw the band entertained a packed audience for over an hour of continuous music with a scintillating and versatile repertoire which included classics, jazz, rock, soul, military, Latin and of course calypso. Alexander D Great, Roger Gibbs and Anne Fridal paid tribute to band in song.

The second half of this concert commemorated TASPO 70th anniversary and started with a PowerPoint by Haroun Shah after which an ensemble of Notting Hill Carnival pioneers played with pans on their laps to mimic TASPO's performance 70 years ago. These included: 'Bubbles' (single second), Haroun Shah (tenor), Patrick McKay (5-note base), Dudley Dickson (dudup), Cyril Khamai (scratcher), Frank Ward (cowbell) and Herman Betancourt (maracas). Herman (95) is the elder brother of TASPO's only living member, Sterling Betancourt. A black and white freeze of the Festival of Britain (courtesy Southbank Archives) was used as a backdrop for the evening. Lord Kitchener's 1950 calypso titled 'Festival of Britain' was played to start the event.

Vivid accounts of three TASPO members were relayed first by Roger Gibbs (from Barbados) who shed light on the background Lt Griffith and his aspirations for starting the first national steelband. Griffith was ably supported by Anthony Williams and Ellie Mannette.

Williams' protégé at Pan Am North Stars, Michael 'Bubbles' Olivier dressed like Williams and provided insight into the genius of this legend - who sadly passed away in December 2021.

TASPO's members, Theo Stephens (Free French) and Belgrave Bonaparte (Southern Symphony) were Cyril Khamai's contemporaries in San Fernando. Cyril provided detailed information on the impact of TASPO in San Fernando, an area where there is huge gaps in our knowledge. (see Laila Shah [Dec 2020], 'Cyril Khamai's Commentary on the Early History of Steelpan in One Corner of Trinidad. IJCA., Vol. 2 pp 23 - 52). The author declared that 6th July 1951, the day TASPO left the shores of Trinidad should be designated "TASPO Day". This memorable evening closed with the 'TASPO Ensemble' playing with the pans on their laps, three classics, 'Matilda', 'Ole Lady Walk a Mile and Half' and 'Doh Stop the Carnival'. The latter was Russ Henderson/Sterling Betancourt's favourite and played in their arrangement, with Sterling's elder brother, 95-year-old Herman Betancourt singing and playing maracas with the ad hoc 'TASPO Ensemble'. By Haroun Shah





STEEL PAN

TO THE WORLD

