

Leicestershire SCHOOLS PAN JAM!

On Saturday 7th July 2007, Leicestershire hosted its first ever all Steelpan event, Steel bands of all abilities from across Leicestershire were brought together for the first time under one roof to create a Massive Jam.

Leicestershire's pan tutor, Pat Munroe, along with the Leicestershire Arts in Education planned this massive steel pan event involving all 21 schools/colleges being taught pan throughout Leicestershire. Pat's idea was to raise the awareness and recognise the importance of Pan in Leicestershire. It was also to give the pupils the opportunity to perform to an audience as some have never before, to meet and hear other people who share the same joy of Pan and to play in a large ensemble.

Pan Jam took place at the Guthlaxton College in Wigston, Leicestershire. One hundred and eight pannists from 11 schools/colleges, a junior and senior steel orchestras and Contrast Steel band all taught by Pat Munroe took part in the event.

Each primary/junior school was taught the same piece of music to perform as an ensemble for the Jam and the same with the senior/colleges. The first time they met was four hours before their performance. Rehearsals went well with some effort spent on synchronising the three drummers from each ensemble. The juniors performed, "I'll Be Missing You" by Faith Evans and Biggie Smalls whilst the seniors performed the classical piece, "The Nuns Chorus". Each school/college was also allocated a 5 minute slot to perform a couple of tunes of their choice from all genres of music. A five man adjudication panel provided written feedback on enthusiasm, rhythm and presentation with general comments and recommendations to all participating schools.



Students made their schools, instructor and parents proud regardless of their varying abilities. In the interval the audience was entertained by The Leicester Contrast Steel band giving the students an opportunity to see a semi professional band perform as well as their tutor performing Pat's musical arrangements of "Colours Again" and "Max It Up" by Destra Garcia and "Bridge Over Troubled Waters" by Simon and Garfunkel.

It was not a competition but I have to say the best band on the night was the Leicestershire Arts Senior Steel Orchestra who closed the event with their arousing rendition of "REMIXX", a piece named by the pupils comprising of a compilation of intros, verses and choruses of music new and old and had the audience in uproar for an encore. The compilation contained music such as "Crazy In Love" - Beyonce, "1 Thing" -

Amerie, "Everybody Dance Now" - Bob Sinclair, "Crazy Frog" - Elephant Man, "Let The Sun Shine" - Lizzie Pattin, "Man-eater" - Nelly Fatado, and ending with "Can't Touch This" - MC Hammer, with all the choreographed singing and dancing, this ending to the show was really fantastic. Their version of "Any Dream Will Do" from the play, Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat followed to calm the audience down.

It was an extremely successful and fantastic event. I hope it has raised the profile and awareness of Steel pan in Leicestershire and that we can continue to hold this and similar events on a regular basis. It was great for the City of Leicester to have its first steel pan show. I hope that it continues to grow bigger and better with time. Thanks to all for Supporting Pan in the UK.

by Pat Munroe



I was first introduced to pan at primary school where I started playing at aged eight. After graduating to secondary school, I joined Stardust Steel Band in 2000 through one of their workshops. I was promoted to a stage side player shortly after joining and I have been playing all year round ever since, regularly gigging and teaching the younger and newer players in the band.

Although I never studied any theory, through my 12 years of playing I have gained a better understanding of music through self-teaching and guidance from my more experienced peers. It has given me the confidence to start arranging tunes and composing my own pieces. My first composition 'Thanks for being you', took Stardust for their first time to compete in the BAS Pan Explosion in 2005.

I have always been interested in meeting and working with pannists from other bands and in 2006 I started attending meetings for young pan players that were set up to give us the chance to air our views and to see how we could help make the UK pan scene more suited to the younger generations. This led to my appointment as the acting Vice Chairman of what became

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the British Association of Steelbands Future Development Forum. FDF's aim is to help tighten the strength of the UK pan community by highlighting and developing the innovative skills and talents of pan players. Working with

people who have the same drive and passion as me only makes my passion for what I do grow stronger. As a member, I am honored to be working with the BAS executives and thank them for this opportunity.

I have played in panoramas both in the UK and in Trinidad under arrangers like the late Randolph Baptiste, Brent Holder and Len 'Boogsie' Sharpe and by

the grace of God and the blessings of my mother I hope and aspire to become an inspiration to others as they have been to me.

By Miles Pascall