



IMAN



IMAN AND PAN

At a mere twenty years old, she is a veteran steelpan musician of more than fifteen years. Usually on tenor, she is equally adept on double seconds, quadrasonic, double and triple guitars and the bass. Like other young people, she 'loves hip hop and funk,' but lists jazz legends Charlie Parker, Stan Getz, Miles Davis and John Coltrane among her icons.



➤ This quiet but self-assured young lady who is overwhelmingly talented moves comfortably among her peers and mentors. Her diminutive stature bellies the strength and maturity which surge to the fore when necessary to assert herself.

Iman Pascall is well-known in the New York pan world, and beyond. Those aware of the emerging steelpan virtuoso since she was little more than a tot are unsurprised by the mark she has already left on the steelpan landscape; in fact they expect even greater achievements.

Iman remembers mom Lynette positioning a tenor pan where she had only to climb up to be within reach (at around four years old). It was mom who stayed with her nightly for steelpan practice, her knowledge of and familiarity with the pan community allowing Iman the opportunity to play with some of the best bands in Brooklyn, New York, when she was still a 'baby' among the community. Some of her earliest experiences, though, were sometimes fraught with

frustration.

One such was around 1995. Though actually seven at the time, people mistook her for four or five while practicing with Moods Pan Groove for New York's panorama. Nobody wanted to teach her the music and older players continually took advantage, taking her pan from her. "I cried a lot," she admitted. But she remembers with great fondness, those who did take the time to instruct her: the arranger himself that year for Moods Pan Groove, the legendary Len 'Boogsie' Sharpe, and ace pannist Freddie Harris, III.

It would become more heart-rending for the seven-year old pan prodigy. Iman 'made the cut' - a competitive elimination process - for panorama - that is, she was selected to be part of the orchestra to take the stage on competition night. What actually transpired though, Iman will never forget. "Someone took my pan just before I went onstage. I went to put on my white sweater, because we had a white sweater that said

'Moods.' I [had] put my pan up. I went back onstage - it wasn't there. And by that time they had started the count [in readiness for the orchestra to begin] and I couldn't do anything about it." Unbelievably, someone crudely cheated Iman out of her big night and along with it, the opportunity to be the youngest steelpan musician on stage that evening under the direction of Boogsie Sharpe. The band played on - without a seven year-old Iman.

Such occurrences toughened up 'little' Iman Pascall. Late master musician and arranger Clive Bradley is also dear to her, because he too, took her under his wing while arranging for the mighty Desperadoes Steel Orchestra, placing her with his frontline musicians for the 1999 Trinidad and Tobago panorama because she was simply that good! Desperadoes went on to win, and Iman was deservedly part of that history-making night.

Today, the young pannist continues to blaze a trail in the steelband world, and is

additionally into arranging and composing. Studies in jazz, the genre which has also captured her fancy is her major alongside the steelpan at Miami's Florida Memorial University where she is now in her second year.

Among her mentors is close friend, fellow student Kareem Thompson of Jambalasi, who excels on the double seconds. Iman credits Thompson with making her an even better player every time they work together, because of his experience, "he's had different training in steelpan than I did" says Iman. "I've grown and learnt so much from him..."

In about five years time, Iman sees herself performing in a combination of both the jazz and hip hop genres, with the steelpan front and center; and leading a steel orchestra, both as a stage side and to panorama. This young lady has big dreams, and is more than halfway along the journey to making them a reality.

Visit www.pantheonet.com for the full Iman Pascall interview.