

WELCOME,



Welcome to another edition of Pan Podium, the only magazine representing and promoting the interests, culture and importance of the steel pan and wider carnival arts.

As we approach the carnival season here in London, I think

it appropriate to look at how far the steel band movement in the UK has progressed since the first appearance of the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO) at the Festival of Britain on 26 July 1951, and how much further we have to go.

Following their appearance at the South Bank, TASPO performed at a series of shows at St Pancras Town Hall, north London. These 'fayres', organised by community activist and founder of the West Indian Gazette, Claudia Jones, captured her passion and unique recognition of the importance and force of culture. They introduced Caribbean arts to London's diverse community.

In 1965, following Claudia's untimely death in 1964, Russell Henderson and his steel band took to the streets of Notting Hill with Rhuane Laslett, a social worker from the East End of London who worked in the area and was determined to promote the cultural diversity of the then deprived Notting Hill area. The focus and determination of these two women laid the foundation for the Notting Hill Carnival – an event that attracts worldwide attention and generates in excess of £1m per annum for London's economy. Yet, despite our history and the invaluable and unmatched contribution made by many thousands of pan men and women over the last half a century, steel bands are still facing an up hill struggle.

As we plan for the 2008 Notting Hill Carnival, we need to ask "why steel bands are not properly resourced?" Young people involved in steel bands are not involved in street or gun crime. Bands deliver

essential services, engaging with hard to reach sections of local communities and providing positive avenues for people to express their creativity, learn new skills and build a new future. We teach not only music and performance but also self discipline, determination and professionalism.

Whilst we may not be recognised or appreciated at home, BAS has been invited by bands across all EU states to take the lead in leading and building Steelpan European organisation, a pan-Europe network of steel bands similar in set up and structure to BAS. We will be talking to Pan Trinbago, the world governing body for steel pan, so that the work we do strengthens and supports all bands and pan players across Europe and has international benefit and impact. With that in mind, BAS will host an international conference in the autumn of 2008 that will have education as its core theme. We are looking for examples of good and/or best practice for inclusion in the programme. Please send your submissions to debi@panpodium.com.

As last year, we are planning to host the 2008 National Panorama in Hyde Park on Saturday 23 August 2008. Hosting the Panorama in the heart of the capital puts steel bands front and centre of the Notting Hill Carnival's weekend of celebrations. This will be followed by the J'Ouvert and Best Steelband on the Road competitions on Sunday 24 and Monday 25 August 2008 respectively.

I wish everyone a Carnival over the next few months and happy, safe and enjoyable time, and to all those competing in competitions, 'GOOD LUCK!'

PS. A date for your diary. The BAS 10th Annual Awards will be held on Saturday 6 December. There are limited tickets for this event. To reserve tickets contact debi@panpodium.com.