



LEICESTER'S SHIRES SCHOOL PAN JAM '08

Pan Jam 2008, Leicestershire's 2nd all steel pan event took place this year at the Peepul Centre, Orchardson Avenue, Leicester on the 21st June. After last year's overwhelming response they had to move it to a bigger venue, which they thought would be sufficient but was proved wrong, the limited capacity for the building was reached well before the start of the show.

Pan Jam's aim this year was to allow people to experience the true feeling of pan and the many wonders they had been deprived of. With steel pan being a new instrument, the audience was able to see pan played at all levels. Following on from last year, a panel of adjudicators were used to comment and give written feedback to all participating schools and colleges so the players would be able to address any areas

that may need improvement. This year's panel consisted of Debi Gardner, Secretary to the BAS and Economic Development and Enterprise Manager for the UK Centre for Carnival Arts, Toussaint Clarke, UK Global Pan Tuner/Tutor/Musical Arranger/Player Rainbows Steel Orchestra, Marcia Douglas, Youth Development Worker for Leicestershire/Part time Pan Instructor and Kallie Mattu, Player/Pan Instructor

for Warwickshire County Council.

Pat Munroe, the main steel pan instructor for Leicestershire looked at the comments and feedback sheets from last year's adjudicators and set her aims and goals this year within her teaching structure throughout the schools to reflect the responses, which included achieving more work from each individual player throughout each and every band, approaching new beats, adding different counter melodies and harmonies, teaching more complex pieces etc. Basically making them learn to play in a fashion which means they can leave Leicestershire and continue playing pan anywhere in the world without too much of a struggle.

Of course, a lot of pupils found it hard and challenging with her new style of tuition, but not as hard and challenging as she found it trying to achieve results in the short and demanding lesson times in which she had to deliver it. Pan is not just Pat's work for a living, she eats, drinks and sleeps pan as a vocation, in which she gains a lot of knowledge and experience from travelling around the UK as well as beyond, visiting other schools, bands and pan instructors, watching and learning different techniques, performing and taking part in competitions. All this has helped to enrich her teaching and initiate a start to bringing Leicestershire in line with the rest and best of the pan fraternity. This was seen at the BAS/FDF 9th



Pan Explosion in May 2008, where Pat organised and steered some players from Contrast Steel Band to a second place win. This was a great achievement for Contrast Steel Band as well as Leicestershire.

Soloist, Kallie Mattu, who performed a medley of classical pieces using only one hand, opened the show. His impressive performance had the audience amazed. The night's performances contained Leicestershire Arts Junior steel orchestra, a 25 piece band, who opened with *Valerie* by Amy Winehouse and *A Message To You* by the Specials, and Leicestershire Arts Senior steel orchestra, a 29 piece band, who closed the show and brought the house down with a celebration medley containing pieces like *Holiday* (Madonna), *Happy Birthday* (Stevie Wonder), *Final Countdown* (Europe), *Walking On Sunshine* by Aly and Aj, *Get Down On It* by Kool and the Gang, *In The Air Tonight* by Phil Collins and of course *Celebration* by Kool and the Gang. They chilled the audience back down with *Kiss from a Rose* by Seal.

The audience was also treated to performances by seven junior/primary school bands playing renditions of traditional folk songs, pop, reggae, hymns and ballads in soca, reggae, calypso, ska and whatever style or fashion Pat thought fitted that band. All seven schools were joined together

for a 2-hour workshop in the afternoon to learn to play *Don't Stop* by S Club 7 for the evening show, which had the audience and players jumping and clapping all the way through.

During the interval the crowd was entertained by Contrast Steel Band, so the students and audience had a chance to see their instructors perform all genres of music giving them something to aspire to.

The five senior schools/colleges who took part wowed the crowd with pieces from Jimmy Buffett, Bryon Otis, Robbie Williams, Akon, The Specials, Elvis, Sean Kingston, Enrique Iglesias, Harry Belafonte and TV theme tunes. They also had a 2-hour workshop to learn and perform *Love Me Tender* by Elvis Presley in the Ska beat. This also went down extremely well considering by the end of the workshop it did not sound like it was going anywhere else but in the bin.

The majority of the performers in the show have no more than a 30-minute lesson once a week, some were seasoned performers, some completely new to the stage but all performers, tutors, panel, guests and audience thoroughly enjoyed the whole day and hope to make it a regular event. KEEP PAN LIVE!

By Pat Munroe