



COPENHAGEN Steelband Festival '08

A lot of Danish people are still unaware of the existence of the large steelband community in their capital area. Thus the reason why SteelpanDK arranged a mini steelband festival by the Copenhagen waterfront on the 3rd of August.

The prevailing weather did not deter this year's steelband festival at one of Copenhagen's most preferred summer hang-outs, the waterfront at Islands Brygge. Sunrise Steelband from Hillerød Music School opened the show at 6 pm in high spirits. It only took them a few minutes to catch the audience's

full attention. Regardless of the fact that they are a school steelband consisting of relatively young kids they were able to set a high standard for the remaining bands to follow.

The performance stage was quite remarkable. The stage was roofed by

the wooden hull of an old steamboat turned upside down and angled against the sunset over the city and the harbour. The sweet strains of steelband music attracted a fairly large crowd of happy people who danced on the dusty ground in front of the stage. One of the steelbands failed to turn up so

Sunrise Steelband and Hotpans (the "older" band from Hillerød Music School) had to extend their repertoire to fill the gap. Hotpans' repertoire included advanced arrangements by Jit Samaroo, Ari Viitanen, Thomas Mehr, and Sune Borregaard. Their choreographed dancing, synchronised movements coupled with lots of smiles got the crowd even more excited.

The last band, Copenhagen Steelband, the oldest steelband in Denmark went on stage at 9 pm. They have been around since the mid-eighties and four of the original members are still playing in the band. This band performed a very varied and rather interesting repertoire ranging from soca hits like "Somebody" to more popish Matt Bianco tunes and A.C. Jobim. They had a wonderful engine room that apart from a sticky groove featured many great chases between congas and timbales. The show was billed to end precisely at 10:00 pm as per city rules but officials allowed it to continue for a short period owing to the vibrant audience participation and loud applause. Unfortunately, Copenhagen chose a rather lengthy one, and the concert was brought to

an end in the middle of the tune.

Nevertheless, City officials were very happy with the festival and are already talking about next year's event at the same venue. SteelpanDK welcomes the thought and sees it as the start of a great tradition in the Danish steelband community.

This Festival was arranged instead of the Danish Panorama which has taken place in the last 3 years. Danish pan people including bands and organisers thought that a non competitive event would encourage further development of the artform through interaction, sharing and learning. The Festival proved this to be true ensuring that Danish steelbands development continues to evolve.

by **Sune Borregaard**

related sites:

- www.steelpan.dk - website of the Danish Steelpan Association
- www.sunrisesteelband.dk
- www.hotpans.dk
- www.copenhagen-steelband.dk

