

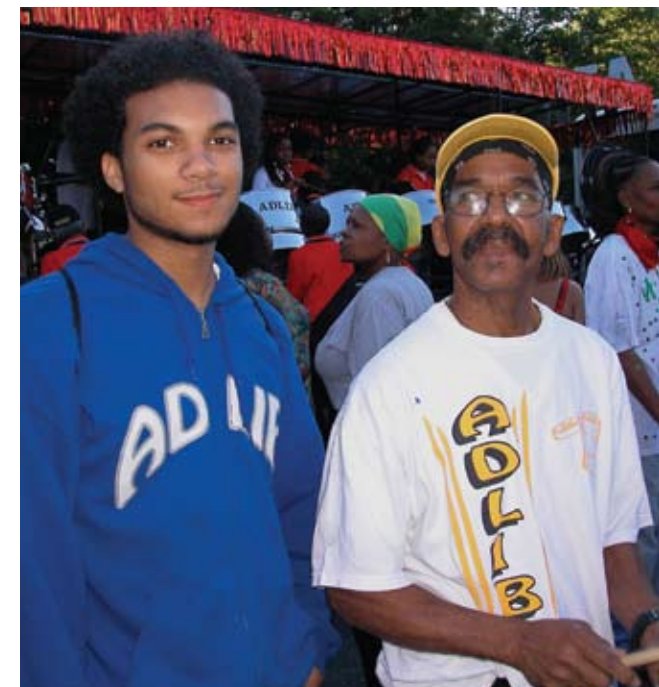
The Unforgettable Year of ADLIB, and André White

➤ His steelband story began when he was little more than a tot; and the son of his babysitter at the time, was then one of ADLIB's older members. Little André was fascinated by the steelpan, and eventually himself joined the orchestra. He was all of six years; since then he has never looked back. Coincidentally, it happened that on the very night of ADLIB's winning the New York panorama - André saw his former babysitter's son for the first time in more than a decade - this individual who had been the fateful nexus between him, and what would turn out to be both his instrument of choice, and vehicle to fame.

Through it all, André has remained unwavering and very well grounded, giving full credit to his mom Colleen, Grandmother Maureen, both from Jamaica, and his extended family, ADLIB's management team of "Uncle Frank," "Auntie Jean" and Lisa, their daughter. The talented teen much prefers that the 'hoopla' be about ADLIB the orchestra - fielding talented and committed young musicians with the skills to bring his musical creation 'to life' - than about him. Hugely crediting ADLIB's stage side (the smaller representation of a steel orchestra that is active year round, which can be anywhere from ten to thirty musicians) for their pivotal role in the band's success, André says: "I would tell anybody - the stage side really had just as much to do with it [ADLIB'S triumph], as me; if anything, probably even a little bit more.....they, and eventually the rest of the band knew to 'do what they had to do and execute the song.'"

What does André see as the foundation of his success? "As far as understanding music - the reason, for me - why I reached so far is because of music theory. If there is any advice I could give anybody planning to be an arranger, or anybody my age or younger than me, coming up - it's take a music theory class or learn your music theory - it helps - a lot! Your chords, your progressions, your modes, your scales - it makes life easier!"

The numerous congratulatory calls André received from around the world included those from members of England's Mangrove Steel Orchestra, for whom he also arranged for the 2008 UK panorama. The band eventually placed sixth, a position impacted by several factors, not least of all being slotted to play first - relegating them to being the 'sound check' band [the steel orchestra that plays in position one, and usually the first chance sound engineers get to try to figure out what they are seeking to achieve sonically - during the actual band performance] of sorts. And, if André is right, 2008 was also the first year that the UK panorama was actually 'miked' or sound reinforcement was put in place. It was a phenomenon with which André was only too familiar; ADLIB suffered a similar fate in the New York panorama a couple years ago - they were the 'sound check' band in the WIADCA (West Indian American Day Carnival Association) panorama at the Brooklyn Museum.



With multiple classical and jazz influences (André lists John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Wyclif Gordon, Thelonious Monk and others among the latter); André continues to strive for perfection, having enrolled at the Berklee College of Music last fall. It is not only the steelband world that André has caused to take pause. **In December 2007 when he auditioned at Berklee (his choice of college as they allow the steelpan as a student's primary instrument, added to their available scholarship opportunities) - because of both his prowess on the pan, and the classical arrangement he submitted for review, he was asked "How old are you again?"**

As the rest of the world plays catch up, it was many moons ago that When Steel Talks (WST) identified André as a 'musical talent to watch.' WST has been following ADLIB for several years, and has pictures of the players - the majority who grew up with the band - since some were barely able to reach their instruments. And that includes André. He is looking forward to taking advantage of the wealth of musical knowledge that is out there. But he has already journeyed very far in a short space of time and at a tender age. And he will only get better.

➔ **by When Steel Talks**
Read André's full story at www.PanOnTheNet.com.

As 2009 comes into focus, for André White - 2008 has been that 'year to remember.' For this young musician who set the steelband world on its ear, life will never be the same. New York steelband panorama veteran arrangers - some previous competition winners themselves - had to respectfully duff their hats to André White in the early hours of Sunday September 1 - when his arrangement of Amrit Samaroo's Heat as executed by his band, Long Island's one hundred-strong ADLIB Steel Orchestra, made them New York Panorama champions for the first time ever, and by default conferring upon him, the title of 'champion arranger.' But the additional history-making element is André's age. He was a mere eighteen years old.