



to arrange for the Caribbean Airlines Invaders Steel Orchestra in 2005, he brought fifteen years of competition in New York often competing against the legends like Clive Bradley and Len Boogie Sharpe. He had brought CASYM to the winner's circle for four years, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2006 and came in second in 2003, 2004, 2007, and 2008.

For him it was like coming home to Invaders yard for 2005 and he brought with him some of CASYM's best to join him. Many people commented on the sound he gave the band. Many supporters thought he had captured the old signature sound of Invaders style and people liked what they heard. He has made it into the finals with Invaders twice in the last five years. In 2009, he was very busy for the Carnival season, having been asked to arrange for two steelbands in different categories:- Laventille Serenaders from Laventille, Port of Spain in the Small Band category and La Famille United Steel Orchestra from Cascade, Port of Spain in the Single Pan category. The bands played "Wild and Wonderful" and "Stranger" respectively.

Invaders has used him not just their Panorama arranger but also for the spring Pan in the 21st Century competition making it as high as third in 2006 with his arrangement of "For the Love of You" by the Isley Brothers. Their performance has been posted on YouTube. Meanwhile, Invaders latest album *Town Say* features the live recording of Herbert leading Invaders to 5th at 2005 Panorama finals with Baron's "Say Say".

His debut in the UK Panorama

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competition was with the Croydon Steel Orchestra with an exciting arrangement of "Pan Redemption". Herbert recalls the experience as one of the most memorable and rewarding experiences he has ever had, as he reflects on the similarities between the purpose of Croydon and CASYM Steel orchestras: youth empowerment.

Croydon Steel Orchestra, like CASYM, does not just exist for the purpose of musical performances, but utilizes the steelpan as part of an overall strategy and medium to provide a positive alternative for young people in the communities that are underserved. Although he has had over 20 years of arranging experience in Trinidad and New York, he was thrilled and shocked by the commitment, dedication, and sheer hard-work that Paul Dowie, Musical Director and resident arranger for the Croydon Steel Orchestra, and the band members put out during the grueling two weeks they had to prepare for the competition. "I was totally impressed by the talents and skills of the young players and certainly believe that the Croydon Steel Orchestra will continue to make progress and be a force, not just in Panorama and other steelband/musical competitions, but also as a community-oriented organization that provides the sorts of opportunities and resources that are necessary for the success and young, impressionable minds." Herbert also recalls that one of the most pleasantly surprising moments was the maturity and professionalism that the band, particularly the young members, accepted the Panorama results: a trait or characteristic that is not always encouraged or practiced by the leaders, managers, or adults in many steel orchestras.

Herbert plans to continue to work with diligence and focus in 2010 to making the steelbands and organization achieve their stated objectives. "As always, I am looking forward to the Trinidad Panorama competition." He recognizes it is certainly a challenge, but knows with the dedication of the players and Invaders management, 2010 will be another successful and progressive year. He also is looking forward to working with the Croydon Steel Orchestra in the UK and its wonderful management team and players and will be continuing his quest for dominance in the New York Panorama competition.

Herbert credits his success to God for granting him life, strength, and blessings throughout the years, his extremely supportive parents, his family and friends that has supported and encouraged him.

By **Ray Funk and Jeannine Remy**
Photos by **When Steel Talks**

The Pan Man

A film by Michael McKenzie

In Michael McKenzie's excellent documentary, the legendary Russ Henderson MBE comes alive as a man and as a multi-talented musician. Russ is entirely serious about his music, but performs it with an irrepressible sense of fun.

Michael, a musician as well as a filmmaker, first got to know Russ when he played gigs with him: "We talked on the way to gigs and in between songs and I found him to be a very interesting man, full of history about London in the 50s and 60s and what it was to be a black musician back then."

At the age of 85, Russ is still playing, still teaching and still at the heart of the London music scene. Playing with the new generation has clearly kept him young and in the film, leading producer and guitar teacher Keefe West describes him as "an original man in every sense".

Pan players everywhere will love the story of this Trinidadian who came to Britain in the 1950s and launched Britain's first-ever professional steel band.

In 1950, Trinidad sent a steel band to London, as its contribution to the Festival of Britain – the first time that unique sound had been heard in England.

At about the same time, Russ had come to England hoping to develop his career in music. Following up on that Festival of Britain success, he formed his first steel band with Max Cherrie, Ralph Cherrie, Sterling Betancourt and Irwin Clement.

Fellow band member Max Cherrie remembers there were some high society gigs in those days, from hunt balls to playing for the Queen. It was not just a free pint, but champagne on ice for these guys.

But at the same time, Russ recalls having to face up to the same kind of racism that fellow West Indians had to deal with in

those migration days after the war.

It was in 1960, that Rhaune Laslett held a street party for children, just off the Ladbroke Grove, and asked if the band would appear. They agreed, and played old style, pan around neck. Russ remembers they were getting tired just standing, so decided to 'just make a march – make the rounds and get the kids to follow us' – and that was the first Notting Hill Carnival!

But of course, Russ is not only a pan player. He is a leading light of the British jazz scene, having founded his first jazz and calypso quartet in Trinidad in the 1940s.

We see Russ in action as a jazz player in what Michael McKenzie says is his own favourite part of the film: "Russ is playing piano at the 606 Jazz club when he suddenly gets up and walks over to the bass player takes his bass and starts playing it like a double bass. I didn't expect that and it reminded me to be ready for anything when I'm filming."

Russ's friend and fellow pan player, Pene Welch, says Russ sees himself as an entertainer first and foremost. She was amongst many friends, colleagues and fellow musicians who campaigned for him to receive an MBE, which he did in 2006, for his services to steel bands, to jazz and to the Notting Hill Carnival.

You can arrange to have a screening of the film and Michael would also be willing to speak at film projects.

And look out for his next film, which is going to focus on more West London musicians. Michael stated, "In my local area there are many great musicians that most people may not be aware of, but who have a great story to tell and are still performing. They are great in age but appeal to all generations."

By: **Penny Cole**

