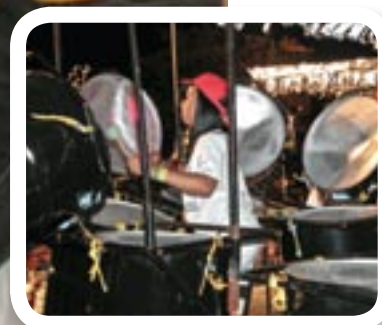




Bandoleros invade Brooklyn and Capture New York Championship - Sonatas Steel Orchestra style

This one will be talked about for ages. Years from now children will ask their grandparents with great intrigue - "Were you there when dem Bandoleros called Sonatas Steel Orchestra from Brooklyn, Crown Heights, descended on the Brooklyn Museum grounds and captured New York?" And thousands will respond "yes, I was there, I saw and heard it all, it is a night I will never forget."



With a blinding flurry of 32 second-notes (demisemi-quavers), perfectly synched musical jabs that would make Muhammad Ali blush, mixed in with an overhand crushing right cross, followed by a wicked volley of musical chromatic triplets to the head - plus the dynamic delivery of a visual and choreographed set of body dips, twists and turns, finished off with solid blows to the midsection -- 1-2-3- it was over! Down and out for the count. Dem "Bandoleros" took over the town. A well-balanced attack indeed. The Big Apple once again belongs to Sonatas Steel Orchestra. And as the "Borgs" do in "Star Trek" - Sonatas' Bandoleros broadcast well in advance that "resistance is futile." With strategy laid down by their arranger/music director Yohan Popwell, field officer duties handled by band captain Sherwin "Pin" Edwards, legendary tuner Birch Kelman in charge of supplying and maintaining the musical arsenal (steelpans), providing the best sounding sonic instruments (ammunition) in the country and their highly-respected, unflappable general Mack Scott leading the charge - Sonatas let it be known that they are back in the driver's seat - and they are planning to stick around town for a while!

But there was much resistance, although all through the season Sonatas had been dropping hints that all foes should leave town by the appointed showdown time of 7:30 p.m. Saturday, September 5 if you did not want to get your feelings hurt, or worse - have to be rolled out after the dust had settled at the Brooklyn Museum.

The other groups in response let it be known that they were not going down peacefully, and definitely not without a fight. They came to the showdown to meet the challenge armed in total with four cases of **Magic Drum**, two cases of **Pan Redemption**, and another even dared to come, too, as heavily armed **Bandoleros** themselves - from Bed-Stuy (Bedford Stuyvesant). One even employed **Rocket Man** (a song about world-record sprinter Usain Bolt), with which they believed they could outrun any type of attack. And one felt that simply doing it the **Trini Way** would be enough to take charge.

In the end, not even the defending champions, ADLIB Steel Orchestra, could stave off the inevitable. One hundred Sonatas' bandoleros rode up or, should we say, rolled in. They were dressed to the nines, and wielding pan sticks in place of pistols. With them were their deceptively beautiful women in Spanish style skirts, alluring flowers in their hair, but who were just as committed to the cause - clinching the Panorama title - as their male counterparts. They had no problem exhibiting their deft musical skills on this night.

With Sonatas' final score of 464 points (after the dropping of the highest and lowest scores, retaining those of three of the judges), the next closest competitor - ADLIB - came in ten points behind with a score of 454.

It was a very entertaining panorama, because there were a lot of high expectations for all the groups. Very few were simply counted out. From that perspective, they delivered. The crowd remained literally to the end. They took it all in with keen and critical interest. For the most part, people appeared at ease with the results.

Perhaps perched atop the roof of the Brooklyn Museum and looking down on the panorama, the late New York panorama titan Clive Bradley had to be watching and be happy with Sonatas and all the participating bands. On this night, also in Bradley's company would have definitely been Winston "Mouthabee" Phillips and Kenneth Moore, both who were posthumously honored at this year's Panorama. In addition, it is safe to assume that Scipio "Sarge" Sargeant who passed away earlier this year, and who, like the others, had a tremendous impact on New York pan - was also looking down with approval.

Brads himself very clearly understood panorama and all that it brought: the joy, the fun, the drama, the passion, the story lines, and of course the music. Brads had a special connection with the young people who played for him. One can see a comparable phenomenon unfold with Yohan Popwell and his troops in Sonatas.

Panorama 2009 has come and gone but dem Bandoleros from Crown Heights known as Sonatas Steel Orchestra own New York for one full year. To all Panorama towns: be afraid... be very afraid - dem Bandoleros comin' to a town near you!