

Laventille Serenaders

Formed in 1958 as a conventional steel band and known as Love Serenaders under the leadership of Sylvan Morris aka Grant who held that title for many years before his reign came to an end in the sixties.

One of his favourite musical arrangements for Serenaders was, 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' which was a massive hit at the time. Gerald Forsyth MBE took charge of Serenaders after Sylvan left and also acted as their tuner and musical arranger before he migrated to England in the late sixties. Gerald went on to hold the office of steelband co-ordinator for schools with the Greater London Council (GLC) and was responsible for introducing the steelpan into the school curriculum in London schools. By 1978, he had steelpans in over fifty schools. After Gerald's departure the band was dormant for many years.

Anthony 'Ben Up' Kinsale started his steelpan career at age twelve with the renowned WITCO Desperadoes Steel Orchestra. In 1963, he performed with 'Desperadoes', known at that time as Coca Cola Desperadoes, at his first Panorama competition. After his performance he became a member of their stage side and toured with the band. Anthony has visited New York, Texas, San Francisco, Washington DC, Cuba, Jamaica, Paris and Miami playing with Desperadoes. He attained the positions of vice captain and captain of the band at different times of his playing career and professed that he enjoyed every moment as a musician. **His musical quest saw no boundaries as he went on to capture the art of musical arrangements during his tenure with Desperadoes which he randomly shares with Laventille Serenaders.**

In 1976, Anthony travelled to London and played with Ebony who at the time were led by Randolph Baptiste and based at the Paddington Crib. This was around the same time that the legendary Len 'Boogie' Sharpe performed with the Bay 57 steelband in London. A year later he became musically involved with the Mangrove steelband led by Clive 'Mash Up' Phillips. Anthony harbours fond memories of performing with young talented musicians in the likes of Justin 'Microdot' Russell, Aaron, Matthew Phillips, Nadia Boyce, Julian Russell, Winston, Bobby, Wayne and Austin. In 1996, Anthony 'Ben Up' Kinsale and a few others revived Serenaders as a single pan band with the assistance of a few corporate sponsors. Special mention must be made of Florence Watson who has continually supported Serenaders from the very beginning to presently. **Their players are between the ages of twelve and late fifties. The band is based at the corner of St Barbs and Laventille roads, East Dry River, Port of Spain, next to the basketball court. Through their laborious efforts, the band members have built their own pan theatre.**

Since 1996, Serenaders have maintained a stage side that have participated in many competitions including Panorama and the Steelband Music Festival. They ended their status as a single pan band in 2007 and converted to a small conventional band in 2008, this transformation was spear headed by 'Ben Up'. In their inaugural year in this new category they were able to capture 7th place in the National Panorama prelims and 11th in the semi-finals. In 2009, they placed 6th in the prelims and 3rd in the semis. In the finals, they achieved 7th place with 408.5 points playing 'Wild and Wonderful', an arrangement by Arddin Herbert.

Although this band is based in Laventille, the players are very dedicated and talented. Committee members work hard for the advancement of both the players and the band. Being located next to a basketball court is at an advantage to this band since a visit to the panyard can be quite enjoyable. Activities on a daily basis apart from band practice include basketball, football and netball. Sumptuous snacks e.g. corn soup are on sale. You can contact the band by calling 625-1608, 785-2522 or faxing them at 622-7966.

Dedication, Commitment, Belief, Vision, Talent, Honesty and Hard Work are the qualities that ensure that the Laventille Serenaders continue to offer their local community such a valuable facility.