# REFLECTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STEELPAN MUSIC COMPOSITIONS FOR STEEL ORCHESTRA

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# A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAMME IN MUSIC

YORK UNIVERSITY,

TORONTO, ONTARIO

**JUNE 2017** 

#### Abstract

The steelpan is a musical instrument created in Trinidad and Tobago circa 1930s. It has secured a place in the country's cultural identity as one of its most important musical developments. It is authenticated as an orchestral instrument in which skilled players may perform any fugue or arrangement in any genre of music. Its creation and development by ingenious men and women with limited resources cannot be overstated; and ironically, an upper and condescending class who failed or refused to acknowledge a musical phenomenon in its embryonic stage, now shares equally in the pride and international recognition of this national treasure that has gained critical acceptance from musicologists and other scholarly experts. The accidental discovery of the affectionately nicknamed "pan", its development and eventual acceptance into the family of idiophones, provide the inspiration for a series of compositions reflected in this thesis.

#### Acknowledgements

As I have moved through another stage in my musical journey, it is important for me to acknowledge several people who have contributed immensely to my progress. In particular, Mark Promane has facilitated my entry into the world of academic music.

Pat La Barbara was one of my teachers whose wisdom, patience and encouragement, spurred me on, even when I doubted myself. Thank you, my friends, Lindy Burgess, for guiding me through to a successful graduate application, and Oscar Wailoo for equipping me with books and insights in the world of steelband music. A master and authority in many things steelband, Salah Wilson has been, not only my mentor, but a repository for valuable steelband resources that will be of great importance to me long after my graduation from university. One of my closest friends and intellectual mentor for many years, Henry (King Cosmos) Gomez has been a great source of inspiration and scholarly counseling – he is my academic savant; his reassuring confidence in my academic ability and his constant nudging have given me the impetus to forge ahead.

To my teachers at York University, I say a special thank-you for your guidance; when my studies seemed to be going a little awry, I found you to be approachable, accommodating, supererogatory, always making a concerted effort to put me on the right track. My thesis supervisor Al Henderson, has been exceptional; he has guided my research with patience and overall support that facilitated my journey through this academic project.

Tere Tilban-Rios, Graduate Program Assistant, many times I left your office with these final words: "I'm glad I came to see you", and I meant every word of it. It seemed like there was always a suggestion or something you did to help me untangle the seemingly bureaucratic web, or suggesting a logical alternative to navigate the unforeseen. I attribute my success to every one of you; I consider your contribution to my academic pursuit a lifetime endowment.

And finally, I owe a deep sense of debt and gratitude to the people who have given me the greatest and most important support, my wife Christine, my children Judy, June, Jamila, and Safiya; your patience, understanding, encouragement, and assistance in so many ways have helped me to complete this journey. To you I have given my unconditional love and thanks.

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#### INTRODUCTION

This thesis is, in part, an accumulation of musical thoughts, achievements, and objectives, pertinent to my interest in, and exploration of, the steelpan and its music. At an early age, I was captivated by the ingenuous creation of this unique instrument. I played pan as a child but the focus then was no more than immature curiosity in different pitches being generated from discarded metal.

As an adult musician, my attention has been drawn to the historic transformation and development of this percussion instrument that has transcended its unflattering origins to become an authentic idiophone and national treasure, worthy of such status. As I continue on this path to develop my musical skills, and to further explore the complexities in the creation and musicality of this unique instrument, I'm inspired and proudly challenged by the opportunities to compose music that is geared towards the preservation of the instrument and its history.

Having been exposed to a period of steelband's rancor and the apparent resulting disinterest in pedagogical posterity, my inspiration to continue the dissemination of steelband education through musical arrangements, and other academic dispensation, is based on the feelings that pan enthusiasts, as I am, with some knowledge of the earlier period, can offer a unique perspective based on personal experience. I am keenly committed to the preservation and development of steelpan music and culture, with a focus on orchestration for today's steel orchestra.

#### **PART I:**

#### AFRO-TRINIDADIAN MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS PRE-1930s

In 1883, the colonial powers in Trinidad imposed laws banning the playing of skin drums, as well as other activities relating to Afro-Trinidadian celebration and work music.<sup>1</sup> This resulted in an instinctive and exigent drive to replace the prohibited musical instrument, which was such an essential element in their daily lives.

#### Bamboo to Tamboo Bamboo

The use of bamboo (which is abundant in Trinidad) in the manufacture of musical instruments can be traced back to the Afro-Trinidadians' ancestral West African culture. Since this hollow plant was hard enough, had a large enough circumference and grew long enough to produce varying sounds when cut into required lengths and beaten with objects or struck against a hard surface, it was an ideal substitute for the prohibited drums. The resultant instrument became known as tamboo bamboo and the assembled musical ensemble was called a tamboo bamboo band.

The band consisted of four main instruments: bass (or boom), foule (or fuller), cutter and chandler. These correspond roughly to bass, tenor, alto and soprano voicing. The stalks were selected and cut into specific measurements: bass (three joints), foule (two

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> William R. Aho, "Steelband Music in Trinidad and Tobago: The Creation of a People's Music," Source: *Latin American Music Review. University of Texas Pres* Vol 8. No. 1. (Spring-Summer 1987), 26-58, accessed October 13, 2016, *JSTOR* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Stephen Stuempfle, *The Steelband Movement: The Forging of a National Art in Trinidad and Tobago*, (The Press University of the West Indies, Jamaica, 1995), 23.

joints), cutter (one joint) and chandler (one joint).<sup>3</sup> (See table 1.1 below for instrument details)

Table 1.1: Tamboo Bamboo Instrument Details

Note: No formal title was assigned to the individual players. They were informally referred to by the instrument they played, e.g. the foule man, iron man etc. In the text, iron man refers to the person who plays the iron instrument. Material Made Instrument of Pitch Class Number of Dimensions in Length & Name From **Joints** Diameter 25 ins x 3.5 ins Cutter Bamboo Soprano 1 Chandler 1 35 ins x 4 ins Bamboo Alto Foule or Fuller 2 12 ins 3 ins Bamboo Tenor Boom Bamboo Bass 3 60 ins 5 ins Metal (preferred N/A Iron N/A N/A automobile brake drum) Glass (Thick gin Bottle & N/A N/A N/A bottle and Metal Spoon spoon)

Example 1.1 Primary instruments in tamboo bamboo band



Bamboo



Automobile brake drum



Bottle & spoon

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Roger James, "Roger's Trinbago Website aka TnTisland.com". Tamboo Bamboo. Last revised October 13, 2016. <a href="http://www.tntisland.com/tamboobamboo">http://www.tntisland.com/tamboobamboo</a>.html

#### Metallic Addition

Although the primary instrument was made from the bamboo plant, during ensuing experimentation periods other elements were integrated into this amalgam. This was done partly to enhance the rhythmic variety and tonal balance, and partly to substitute for bamboo broken by the incessant pounding. Two notable additions were 1) a variety of metal objects, preferred for their rugged "indestructibility" and penetrating sound, and 2), thick gin bottles, partially filled with water and beaten with metal spoons. The latter was, and still is, referred to as bottle-and-spoon. It produced a high-pitched, metallic-like timbre that added an overall complimentary rhythmic and tonal brilliance to the less-resonating bamboo sound. At times, tamboo bamboo bands merged with other orchestras. James Roger notes that:

...on carnival days, brass bands or string bands found themselves playing alongside a tamboo bamboo band. At first, the musicians would complain about the unmelodic noise made by the tamboo bamboo bands. Not being able to do anything about it, thus, many string bands and brass bands sometimes joined forces with the tamboo bamboo bands.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Tamboo Bamboo - Primary Function**

One of the primary functions of the tamboo bamboo band was to provide rhythmic accompaniment for vocal groups during Afro-Trinidadian festivities. Activities such as Canboulay, Kalinda, Dame Lorraine, and Orisha, were pervasive in the Afro-Trinidadian community, and the music defined a resistance to the colonial authorities that sometimes led to violent confrontations. The traditional call-and-response lavways (songs) were led by a chantwell (lead singer) who sang the chants that solicited energized responses from the choral group and audience. The following is a call-and-response excerpt sung by a chantwell during a 1937 labour protest:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Stuempfle, *The Steelband Movement*, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> James, "Roger's Trinbago Website aka TnTisland.com".

Call: We eh working at all, we want money

Response: Hooray, Hurrah!

Call: Monday morning give we we money

Response: Hooray, Hurrah.<sup>6</sup>

Whether the pulsating rhythms whipped up by the tamboo bamboo band were for songs of protest, derision, praise, satire, or lament, it engendered an air of invincibility in its purveyors, who jostled with competing groups for supremacy, as referenced by Dr. Felix Blake in *The Trinidad and Tobago SteelPan.*<sup>7</sup>

The tamboo bamboo instrumentation consisted of relatively uniformed categories. However, there is no evidence of an uniformed intervallic range in the pitch class; rather, they more closely represented a cacophony of random, unspecified pitches. Still, they played a vital role in the development of the pan; and a performer required extraordinary techniques and dexterity to become an effective player. 8 The pitch and tone of the bottle-and-spoon were manipulated by the quantity of water placed in the bottle. Combined, the rhythmic balance of this crude assembly of make-shift instruments, played by men of "lesser" musical daring and prowess, was summed up by both a middle class and their rival stringed-band counterparts (who vehemently opposed them) as 'unmelodic noise made by the tamboo bamboo bands. 10 However, the concurrent polyrhythms resulted in a unifying contrapuntal whole that was seductive and spellbinding to the players and spectators. 11 Each player's rhythm was unique and unspecified. but cohesive. Among the many variations employed by each player, there are typical patterns

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Kim Johnson, From Tin Pan to TASPO: Steelband in Trinidad, 1939-1951 (University of The West Indies: Trinidad, 2011), 45.

Felix I.R. Blake, "The Trinidad and Tobago Steelpan," History and Evolution. Rivalry and Banning: 1995 48-50, last modified June 23, 2014. http://www.seetobago.org/trinidad/pan/ref/tamboo2. Html.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> James, "Roger's Trinbago Website aka TnTisland.com".
 <sup>9</sup> James, "Roger's Trinbago Website aka TnTisland.com".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> James, "Roger's Trinbago Website aka TnTisland.com".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Shannon Dudley. Music from Behind the Bridge: Steelband Spirit and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 45.

that are common to some instruments (see those shown in Example 1.2 below) described in Shannon Dudley's *Music from Behind the Bridge*. <sup>12</sup>

Example 1.2: Tamboo Bamboo Rhythm



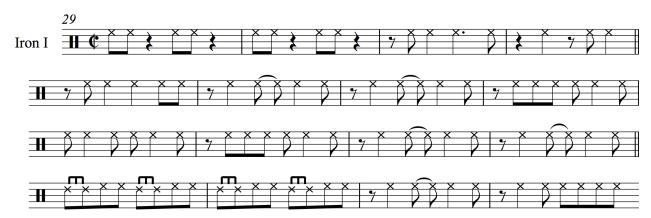
### Composition I: "Tamboo Time"

The composition "Tamboo Time" demonstrates a typical tamboo bamboo ensemble with metal and bottle-and-spoon, common in the latter period of the group's popularity. Generally, the group maintains rhythmic consistency for unspecified durations; but energized by the concurring lyrics of the chantwell or vocal chorus, players also express themselves autonomously.

Bars one to twenty-eight of this piece demonstrate the consistency in each player's rhythm, but the individual variation, starting from bar twenty-nine with the iron, indicates a build-up of excitement that changes the dynamics of the performance. This energy manifests itself in different musical expressions, gradual increase in tempo, volume, individual solos or other spontaneous input. Example 1.3 below is an excerpt, starting from bar twenty-nine of the iron man's performance. Note that the rhythm from bars thirty-one to forty-four changes to a syncopated mixture, implementing a muted, tone-manipulating technique on the first two eighth notes of every beat in bars forty-one and forty-two.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Dudley. Music from Behind the Bridge, 33

Example 1.3: Iron, Bars 29-44, rhythmic changes



The lyrics of this recording reflect the continuing impact of the rhythmic characteristics of yesteryear's performers on today's calypso singers. A very large percentage of calypso verses are supported by a vocal chorus response, typical of the prior call-and-response style. In this rendition, I have contextualized words and phrases of that period to closely replicate the tamboo bamboo era. There are many entrenched words and customs in the Trinidad lexicon that have French derivatives. The original name of the bamboo ensemble was tambour bamboo. Tambour, the French word for drum, was a clever prefix adopted by the Africans for the bamboo instrument after the banning of all drum activities in the 1800s. Over the years, the word eventually got dialectally emaciated into tamboo. Hence, tamboo bamboo.

The colloquial French dialect, Patois, was introduced to Trinidad by French planters and Creoles who were brought in from French speaking Caribbean islands;<sup>13</sup> this dialect became the widely-spoken language of Afro-Trinidadians' daily activities, and was thus widely used in their songs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Music of Trinidad and Tobago - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music of Trinidad and Tobago#Tamboo-Bamboo Accessed October 31, 2015

In "Tamboo Time", the lyrics are interspersed with patois and English words to authentically represent the customs of that period. Stick-fighting was one of the sports that employed the music of the tamboo bamboo band, and the beliefs and practices of some stick fighters are also implied in the song. The reference to a mounted bwa - a fighting stick possessed with supernatural power - highlights a prevalent assumption that such powers were attainable through a deity or high priest of their religion; and many fighters sought such powers. In describing the protocol that governed such powers, Errol Hill wrote in his book "The Trinidad Carnival; Mandate for a National Theatre:"

Curing of sticks was developed to a high degree of perfection to obtain pliability, strength, and a balanced weight. Superstition was rife, particularly about the ability of obeah men - the local witchdoctors - to charm or "mount" sticks, thus making the batonnier invincible.<sup>14</sup>

Example 1.4 below is an excerpt from the "Tamboo Time" composition, showing the interspersed patois and English lyrics. In areas where local parlance is used to authenticate the language and custom of the day, English interpretation is provided for clarity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Errol Hill, *Trinidad Carnival: Mandate for a National Theatre* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1972), 26.

Example 1.4: Patois/English lyrics



Colloquial=Englishmoi de=I say

Lévé = get up, wake up

 $\begin{array}{ccc} Ah & = & I \text{ or } A \\ meh & = & my \end{array}$ 

bwa = fighting stick/wood

mount = possessed with magical power, invincible.

ma pee-pee = poisonous, dangerous local snake.

Jouvay (jou-vert) = a period of the carnival celebration.

Tamboo Bamboo = Percussion ensemble comprised mainly bamboo instruments.

swinging = dancing dey = there or they

garson = boy

moi ka alé = I am going

Canboulay = a festival derived from the extinguishing of sugar cane fires.

#### **Iron/Metal – The Precursor**

As metal objects unobtrusively crept their way into the tamboo bamboo ensemble, however well-intentioned, their resilience and brilliant sound eventually heralded the demise of the tamboo bamboo as an adequate and preferred instrument of these penurious musicians. In an interview describing the advent of metal into the percussion assembly, Oscar Pile, an eye-witness, and participant of that historic period, who subsequently became a leader of a prominent steelband – Casablanca – remembered the 'excitement...and the more stinging and more rhythm sound' of a dust bin cover "acquired" by a member of a performing ensemble. 'The more melodious sound led other bands to pilfer anything metal, especially biscuit drums from the biscuit company'. 16

This substitute that eventually supplanted the bamboo was the precursor of today's steelpan. The metal was a more desirable and durable noisemaker, but the bands were unflatteringly referred to as the 'dust bin bands'.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Composition II: "The Beginning of Times"**

"The Beginning of Times" is a composition that addresses the advent of an all-metal band. This is the sound that revolutionized the entertainment period of the late 1930s - early 1940s for Afro-Trinidadians. The all-metal band still has a nostalgic presence today, though with a smaller complement of musicians and instruments. This writer has witnessed and participated in similar ensembles, and a video clip of one recent performance included in my videography and the corresponding internet site will attest to such experience.

Although there was no uniformity in the type, size, or sound of the metal used in these bands, there were certain rhythmic consistencies that facilitated a cohesiveness that was pleasing

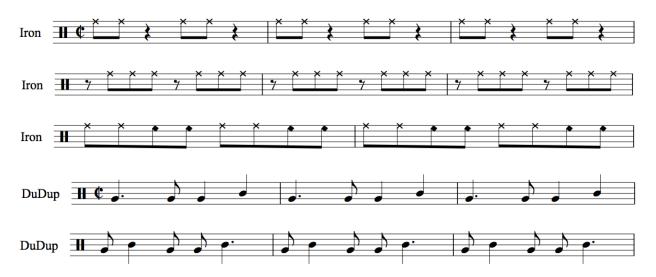
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Aho, "Steelband Music in Trinidad and Tobago".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Aho, "Steelband Music in Trinidad and Tobago".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Aho, "Steelband Music in Trinidad and Tobago".

to the listeners' ears. For example, a two-note drum called the dudup (pronounced doo doop), served as a quasi-kick drum with a strong pulse on the down beat of the bar; together with the iron, these two consistencies generated a polyrhythmic cohesion and a kind of metronomic pulse that kept all other percussions and ancillary "noise makers" together. There were some standard rhythmic patterns played by these instruments, some of which are demonstrated in the above arrangement. The following patterns in example 1.5 are synonymous with the iron and dudup rhythms and were pivotal timekeepers in the ensemble.

Example 1.5: Typical iron and dudup patterns



All the instruments, except one – chipping - listed in this composition, are typical parts of the orchestration and are still prevalent in modern compositions today. Chipping is the insertion of a sound that adds a unique rhythmic ingredient to a typical unamplified street parade.

The medium tempo ( $\pm$  90 bpm) synchronized movement of the revelers is called chipping, and the sound created by footsteps as they move to the rhythm, blends in with the music to add another layer of percussive tonality. In the composition, three tones are melded together to signify the obvious random sound generated by random elements, like shoe size,

various soles, weight, paved surface etc. Example 1.6 is a notated representation of the chipping sound. An audio reference is included in the discography. The fixed rhythm, for obvious reasons, falls with the footsteps on the down beats of the bar.

Example 1.6: Notated representation of the chipping sound



Many issues that affected the daily lives of the community were generally addressed through music, as they considered this vehicle a safe and effective way to convey their thoughts, frustrations, and resistance against a system that was hostile, indifferent, and unapproachable. The vestiges of enslavement continued through the colonial period, and the racial superiority assumed by the European colonizers created a sub-class under which the Afro-Trinidadians were forced to exist. 'Control of the people as wage labourers, was institutionalized by laws, and institutions such as religion and education.' Institutionalized violence by these privileged, upper-class Europeans who considered themselves elites, were used to enforce adherence to such laws and conditions. This racial divide, socio-economic and political deprivation, were deep rooted cause of the frustrations and ongoing conflicts that led to violent confrontations.

As the musical preferences of the Afro-Trinidadians were more attuned to their African heritage, the dancing and singing were replete with physical expressions, such as active body movements, and gyrations which were interpreted by the colonialists as sexual vulgarity and devil-worship. The stereotypical denigration of the exciting rhythmic drums and vocals as noise and potential encrypted language for the planning of seditious acts, was their plausible justification for a ban, while their European-based choice of music met no such imposition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Hollis Liverpool, *Rituals of Power & Rebellion: The Carnival Tradition in Trinidad And Tobago 1763* – 1962 (Frontline Distribution Int'l Inc. Chicago IL 60619 USA 773-651-9888, 2001), xv.

The lyrics of The Beginning of Times (see example 1.7) offer a glimpse into the panmen's appreciation for, and excitement about, the "new discovery" – steelband – and the ability to use such medium for entertainment, protest, and escape from the everyday drudgery of an imposed second-class status.

Example 1.7: Call-and-response excerpt from "The Beginning of Times"

	Lyrics (excerpts)	colloquial words		English interpretation
Call -	We eh lookin' for no fight But let them know we goh fight them down for we right	eh goh we	= = =	are not will, are going to our
Response -	We jamming from night till morning We could hear the steelband calling	jamming	=	dancing, partying
Call -	It's a new thing with a sweet ring You cyah help but to dance and sing	ring cyah	= =	tone cannot, can't
Response -	We playing a sweet, sweet steelband Hear the rhythm, badang, bang, balang.	sweet badang	= =	tonally beautiful a rhythmic beat
Call -	Every day is carnival We like we bacchanal.	bacchanal	=	ruckus partying or scandalous behavior

It is important to note that even though the music was categorized as being rudimentary, it was an effective conduit through which the communities disseminated information or topics of collective interest. The simple melodies and easy sing-alongs of calypsos facilitated larger group participation, thereby, conveying the message to a wider audience. Calypsonian and scholar, "Chalkdust" (Dr. Hollis Liverpool) expressed similar sentiments in his book, *Rituals of Power & Rebellion:* 

Calypso in Trinidad during the Jamette carnival functioned as social commentary, ridiculed and mocked undesirables, mobilized the community, communicated events, and resisted the discriminatory practices that the upper class levelled upon the lower classes.<sup>19</sup>

The "Beginning of Times" serves as a bridge between the tamboo bamboo music period and the introduction to pitch steelband period. The composition has expanded on ideas and systems gleaned from the tamboo bamboo period, referring especially to metal's genesis; these systems and ideas have given impetus to the creation of the pitched-note phenomenon. The discovery that metal is a more resilient and tonally richer alternative to bamboo was the catalyst that heralded the creation of the accidental pitched steelpan.

The combination of different metallic sounds and musical systems employed in this composition transform the tamboo bamboo era into an enveloping percussive phase of spectacle and fun. The dudup or two-note bass - a significant "timekeeper" - and the iron, remain prominent features in steelband music today. The socio-political context of the lyrics is reflective of the sentiments and relentless grouse of those disenfranchised Trinidadians. As the call-and-response structure maintains the four-bar musical trade, the chantwell is adding more melodic variations to the lead lines.

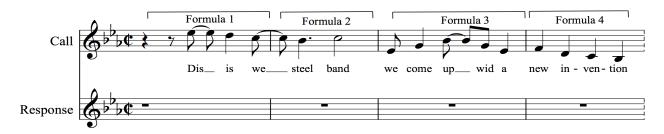
Although songs were regularly rendered in minor keys, the harmonic implications of this melody are a combination of minor and major key signatures. The melodic variations of the composition, typical of the tamboo bamboo era, suggest a formulaic approach. Example 1.2 shows a few formulae that are used. In its entirety, "The Beginning of Times" uses about sixteen formulae.

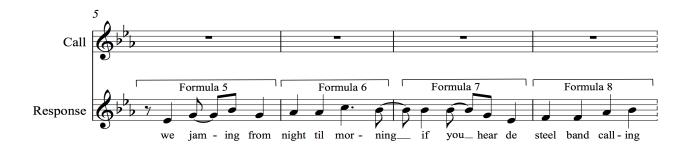
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Liverpool, Rituals of Power & Rebellion, 292.

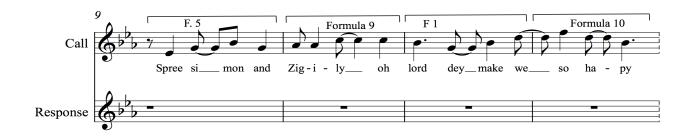
Table 1.2: Vocal Form - The Beginning of Times

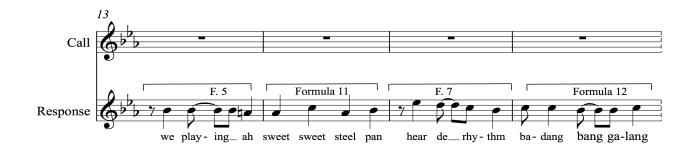
Chantwell (lead singer)	call (Verse)	Chorus group	Response (Chorus)
No. of verses	16	No. of choruses	16
Bars per verse	4	Bars per chorus	4

Example 1.8: A few formulae used in The Beginning of Times









#### **PART II:**

#### PITCH DISCOVERY

#### **Distinguishable Tones**

This section will focus on the transformative process from "noise" to musical pitches in the infancy of the steelband movement; a composition reflecting the steelband music of that period will be presented. This transitional period has never been accurately dated, but oral records suggest that circa late 1930s – early 1940s the first melodic pitches were created on a pan by hammering specially grooved indentations on the playing surface, thereby, separating one note from the other. There are contradicting claims about the first person who invented this technique. Some of the names most frequently mentioned as the first creator of pitched notes are Victor "Totee" Wilson, Emmanuel "Fisheye" Ollivierre, and Winston "Spree" Simon. Different stories, each with equal veracity, are attributed to each of these players' "first invention". The following is an excerpt from an article written by Norman Darway, "Norman Darway Speaks: The Story of the Steelpan", regarding "Totee" Wilson's creation of the "first notes on pan":

...there was little private competition that take place with the steelband and it was in 1939 the same year, that the guy called Victor "Totee" Wilson who was from "Alexander Rag Time Band", who take one of the paint pans and tune it to the chiming of the Q.R.C. clock. The Q.R.C. clock goes 'Ping Pong', 'Ping Pong' every hour, so when he did that, he told them, 'look ah have meh Ping Pong'. Victor "Totee" Wilson was from 176 Western main road, is there he use to lime. After that, they could have played 'Mary had a little lamb' and Alan Ladd's 'This gun's for hire', but as soon as he got these four notes to sound like that, news went out and people start putting on one more note and another note enter again and so on. <sup>20</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Norman Darway. "Norman Darway Speaks: The Story of the Steelpan", last modified March 1, 2005, accessed March 23, 2017. http://www.trinbagopan.com/darway/0103056.htm

Winston "Spree" Simon, a prominent name in the steelband movement of the 1940s, explained how he created the first pitches on a steelpan (see example 2.1 below) in an interview with Dr. William R. Aho:

"I had lent this drum and on coming back to retrieve my drum, the face of the drum was beaten in so badly that it had taken on a concave appearance. Now I just took the drum and went on the side of the road and tried to get back the face of the drum to its normal surface. By pounding on the inside with a stone and a stick, in and out, I discovered that I was able to get four distinct notes, which enabled me to play something of a bugle call—and therefore I played at that moment (a short bugle call – sung by "Spree Simon") (Martin, 1981).<sup>21</sup>

Example 2.1: Spree Simon's description of his first melody



Previously, these metal objects were used solely as unpitched rhythmic percussion instruments. Like the banning of the drums in 1883 which led to the discovery of the tamboo bamboo instrument, the banning of carnival during WWII also meant the prohibition of steelband activities on the streets and in public places; but the steelband men retreated to clandestine areas that were seemingly beyond the reach of the police, or that were so tenaciously guarded by an unwavering community support, that the pan men felt emboldened in their cocoons to carry on research and development of their newly discovered instrument. Still, periodic police raids led to violent confrontation and resistance, resulting in injuries to lawmakers and panmen, and often arrests, fines, and imprisonment for the latter. However, their experimentation during that period continued unabated, giving rise to a successful and unparalleled development of the instrument. Among such developments were the use of larger (55-gallon oil) drums, change from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Aho, "Steelband Music in Trinidad & Tobago".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Kim Johnson, *If Yuh Iron Good You Is King: Pan Pioneers of Trinidad and Tobago* (Pan Trinbago, 2006), 46.

convex to concave playing surface,<sup>23</sup> and creation of additional pitches which facilitated the graduation from unpitched to pitched percussions.

#### Steelband Innovation, Proliferation - VE and VJ Celebration

Instead of curbing the enthusiasm of the steelband men, the banning of carnival presented them with an opportunity to experiment further with new innovative techniques that resulted in a proliferation of steelband ensembles. As stated by Kim Johnson, 'between 1942 and 1946 many new steelbands were formed throughout the colony, defending tooth and nail, their right to exist'.<sup>24</sup>

Every band strived to acquire a competitive edge by producing a better sound, or creating more notes, or playing a more captivating rhythm. It was mainly the tuners, in many cases captains (leaders), who shouldered the burden of achieving superiority for their band. Between the period that Spree Simon claimed to have revolutionized the function of the steelband and the post-war VE/VJ day celebration, steelband technology had significantly advanced to warrant a change in its status from unpitched to pitched idiophone.

During that celebration, Spree Simon's band, Destination Tokyo, delighted the governor, one of the dignitaries in attendance, with a rendition of the national anthem, *God Save the King*, and a varied repertoire of popular tunes of the day.<sup>25</sup> It is said that the governor sprang to his feet in delight at attention on hearing his anthem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> "Ellie Mannette: Father of the Modern Steel Drum," Catalog No. CFV10471; Copyright 2013 Smithsonian Institution, video clip, accessed March 1, 2017,

YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23Bp59xfAUw <sup>24</sup> Johnson, *From Tin Pan to TASPO*, 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ernest D. Brown, "Carnival, Calypso, and Steelband in Trinidad" The Black Perspective in Music, Vol. 18, No. 1/2 (1990), pp 81-100, accessed October 16, 2016, JSTOR.

#### **Composition III: "Ole Time Steelband" (pitched)**

"Ole Time Steelband" is a representation of the progress made in the development of pan during the WWII prohibition. That was an incubation period with positive outcomes for the steelband. Pitched instruments developed and proliferated rapidly, so that when the ban was lifted at the end of the war, the steelpan was then a melodic instrument capable of playing discernable melodies with harmonic accompaniment, with the lead instrument (the ping pong) having as many as nine independent pitches. The pans were no longer exclusively relegated to rhythmic accompaniment, but now performed as musical ensembles with melodic and harmonic structures.

The call-and-response accompanying role of their unpitched predecessor now morphed into independent melodic performances. The fierce competition for musical and technological supremacy among the bands led not only to violent physical confrontations, but also to innovations that resulted in an upward spiral of overall musical improvements.

Acculturation of American and European music was adopted and Africanized in a way that lent credibility to the musical status of the instrument and panmen. "Ole Time Steelband" is a medley that contains two original compositions and the British Royal Anthem; these are similar to selections played by Spree Simon's Destination Tokyo in the presence of the governor during the VE/VJ day celebration.

The purpose of this three-part medley in the key of concert C, is to highlight the advancement from unpitched to pitched steelpan, and the players' ability to transition between tunes, tempi, and time signatures. Early instruments were simple and few (see table 2.1 below), and the songs the players selected reflected their limitations. The difference in melodic and harmonic expansion between the first and second song, illustrate the progress in tuning techniques within a relatively short period.

Table 2.1: Ole Time Steelband Instrumentation

Late 1930s – early 1940s<sup>26</sup>

Early 1940s - 1946<sup>27</sup>

Instrument	Function	Musical notes	Instrument	Function	Musical notes
Ping Pong	Melody	3 -4	Tenor Pan	Melody	8 - 13
Tenor Kittle	Harmony	4	Second Pan	Harmony	8 - 10
Tune Boom	Bass	2	Bass	Bass	4
DuDup	Rhythm	2	DuDup	Rhythm	2
Iron	Rhythm	N/A	Iron	Rhythm	N/A

Table 2.2: Ole Time Steelband Medley (Form)

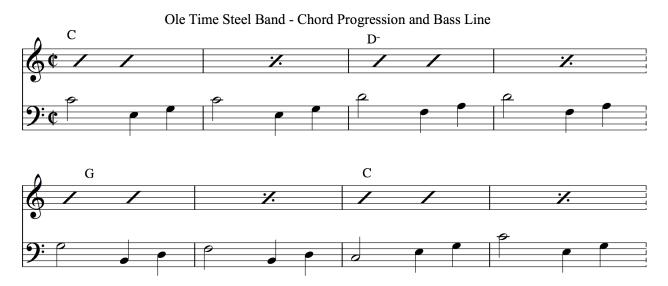
Ole Time Steelband	Key C	100 BPM	Intro	Verse	Chorus	Band Chorus	Outro
bars			8	16	16	16	Fade out
Play repeat 3X			1	: 1	1	1 :	1
Tena Topsy	Key C	96 BPM	Intro	Verse	Chorus	Band Chorus	Outro
bars			4	8	16	8	4
Play repeat 4X			1	: 1	1	1 :	1
British Anthem	Key C	96 BPM	Anthem				
bars			14				
Times played			1				

The first part of the medley is a calypso composition with three verses, written in cut time at 100 BPM, spotlighting the simplicity of pitched steelband's early history. All songs, except the Royal Anthem, are written in cut time, as that is the preferred time signature for calypso musicians and writers. A simple I, IIm, V, I, harmonic progression is applied throughout the song. A typical "ole time" calypso bass line (see Example 2.2) is founded on outlining the basic triad in one or more inversions. At times, the line will be varied with an eighth-note run.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Elizabeth DeLamater "White College Boys Steelbands in 1950s Trinidad": How Middle-Class Teenagers Helped the Steelpan Gain National Acceptance. Research Paper, University of Arizona December 2011. Accessed March 26, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Johnson, *From Tin Pan to TASPO*, 155.

Example 2.2: "Ole Time Steelband" chord progression and Bass Line



Since there was no sustained-note mechanism other that a roll, which could not be performed effectively with one hand, players used interesting rhythmic camouflages throughout a song in lieu of a sostenuto. A typical usage is seen in Example 2.3 below:

Example 2.3: Sostenuto substitute – bars 25 - 28

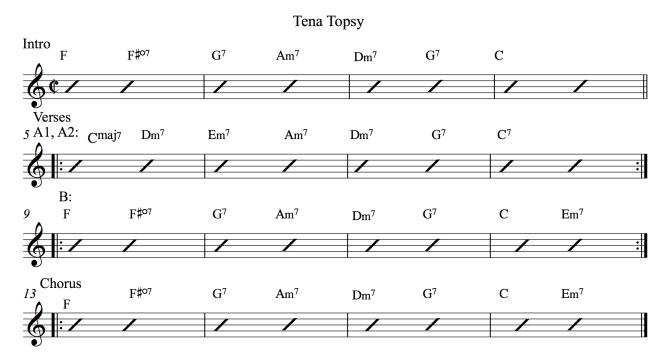


A roll, which is performed using both hands, was impractical at that stage of the pan's development because the player held the pan with one hand, while he held the single playing stick with the other.

After a four-bar rhythm break at the end, comes "Tena Topsy", a contrafact of "Tie Tongue Mopsy", one of the songs performed at the VE/VJ day celebration by Spree Simon's

Destination Tokyo. It is introduced at 96 bpm. The North American influence is evident in the interpolation of the harmonic structure; a semblance of a Tin Pan Alley AABA form is also noticeable in this song. This development signaled steelband's continued musical ascension, and its due recognition as an authentic musical instrument suitable for artistic expression. The chart in example 2.4 outlines the Tena Topsy" chord progression: This song precedes the Royal Anthem that is delivered in 3/4 time at the same tempo. The medley ends with a return to the last eight bars of "Ole Time Steelband" that repeats and fades out for the end of the composition.

Exemple 2.4: Tena Topsy chord changes



The significance of the selected songs is two-fold: the royal anthem is to emphasize the impact it had on the governor who, it is said as mentioned earlier, sprang to his feet in delight on hearing his anthem,<sup>28</sup> and the contrafact "Tena Topsy" as a recognizable melody with a recognizable and widely popular chord changes, was an introduction to the segment of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Brown, "Carnival, Calypso, and Steelband in Trinidad", 15.

population to whom steelband was only a noise-making nuisance. Given the Governor's prominent symbolic and social status, his positive reaction might have signaled the reluctant and belated acceptance of the steelband by the elite class. Although the note range in this medley is a major ninth, the notes do not necessarily follow a diatonic pattern, as the tuning ability at that period was still limited; notes were fashioned to accommodate specific tunes favoured for performance by the players.<sup>29</sup>

Between 1946 and 1956, the quality of steelband music and the technical skills of the players had been elevated to an unparalleled level of sophistication. Tuning innovations, expansion in note range, improvement in timbre, and addition of new instruments were advances that propelled these fiercely competitive bands to perform technical European classics and other genres that hitherto were unachievable.

A more musically sophisticated audience directly recognized such development when a special group of players chosen from different bands, represented Trinidad and Tobago at the prestigious Great Exhibition of London, *Festival of Britain*, in 1951,<sup>30</sup> a festival that featured more than four hundred musical events with performers from different nationalities. The steelband performance was a success, measured by public response and complementary articles written in the British and French press. Once again, snobbish Trinidadians begrudgingly took pride in the country's newly discovered invention.<sup>31</sup>

Johnson, From Tin Pan to TAS, 258.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Stuempfle, *The Steelband Movement*, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Kim Johnson, "When Steelband Took London by Storm" CaribbeanBeat: Issue 113 (January/February 2012) http://caribbean-beat.com/issue-113/when-steelband-took-london-storm#axzz4jtoHmUHR

One can hear an appreciable difference in tonality between a 1940 recording by Hell Yard Steelband<sup>32</sup> – a band that was in the forefront of the instrument's gestation period – when contrasted with the innovative sounds of the 1950s Katzenjammers Steel Orchestra.<sup>33</sup> One of the leading innovators in this development was pan visionary Bertie Marshall. In the 1950s he made a major breakthrough in the sound of the steelpan when he developed the timbral tuning technique that regulated the overtone series, resulting in "clearer" notes; the richness of that sonority has been equated to the tonal colour of a Stradivarius violin by some steelband enthusiasts. Such characterization is evident in Robert Greenidge's 1987 rendition of *Stardust*.<sup>34</sup>

Like any maturing organism, the sound of the steelpan was continually morphing into interesting modulations of timbres that could not have been predicted by its history; so, to appreciate every generation of sound, it would be helpful to reflect on preceding generation of instruments. The mixture of unpitched sounds from six metal containers and other assortment of percussions used in 1940 by Hell Yard Steelband in the first recording of a steelband was adequate accompaniment for an established calypsonian such as The Roaring Lion because the leap into steel was a giant step up from the less resilient timbre of its forerunner, the tamboo bamboo band.

The adventuresome musicians of the 1950s were moving at such a rapid pace with their development that in a relatively short period of time after that first recording, the melodies, and harmonies of Casablanca's 1947<sup>35</sup> pitched steelband were considered euphonious sounds in the evolution of the instrument. The 'luminous sound of "garbage cans" that later captured the ears

<sup>32</sup> "First Steelpan Recording, 'Lion-Oh' Hell Yard Steelband & the Roaring Lion, 1940", [n.d.], video clip, accessed September 29, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvsV7iJ2YZs.

<sup>33</sup> "The Enchanted Steelband": Katzenjammers Steel Orchestra, 1957, video clip, accessed March 11, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KLBlbChumc.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> "Robert Greenidge - Hoagy Carmichael – Stardust". Northern Illinois University Steelband, 1987, video clip, accessed March 11, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k0Z-J4sLi0

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> "Casablanca Steel Orchestra - Early Recordings (1947-1953)"Medley", "In A Calabash", video clip, accessed March 11, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lySPREIPHsI

of Liberace at the 1967 Montreal Exo<sup>36</sup> was far superior to what was previously considered euphonious and rhythmically exciting.

This comparative gradation can also be applied to the distinction between the terms "steelband" and "steel orchestra". Early steelband was limited in range, pitches, tonal clarity, and other prerequisites that would necessitate the accepted standards of an orchestral performance. The origin of the name steelband, and its association with a class and culture that was frowned upon by the colonial oppressors, were all part of an inferior status that was unjustly thrust upon the associates. The term orchestra had a musical connotation that implied superiority or belonging to a higher musical stratum. As the inventors' focus was always on improving and furthering their yesterday's achievements, their work had eventually taken the pan to a plateau where its legitimacy as a bona fide multi-octave musical instrument was unquestionable, and its versatility unlimited. Thus, their capacity to perform any musical work had elevated an ensemble of pans to the status of orchestra.

A comparison chart between instruments used in a 1947 steelband and instruments used in a steel orchestra for which the following compositions are written, should lend some credence to the claims of this symphonic leap. See Table 2.3 and 2.4 below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> "Liberace & the Trinidad Tripoli Steelband". NPR News, [n. d.], video clip, accessed March 11, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETeDOvcFM30.

Table 2.3: Typical 1947 Steelband instrumentation

Local Name	Class	No. of Musical Notes	No. of Pans	Instruments
Ping Pong	Melody	9 – 13	1	
Second Pan	Harmony	9 – 12 (random)	1	
Guitar Pan	Harmony	6 – 8 (random)	1	0
Tune Boom	Bass	4 – 6 (random)	1	
DuDup	Rhythm	2 (random)	1	
Iron	Rhythm	1	N/A	
Scratcher	Rhythm	N/A	N/A	

**Note**: On some earlier steelpans, notes were not chromatically tuned, but were randomly inserted to accommodate the tunes performed by the players.

Table 2.4: Synopsis of modern steel orchestra instrumentation.

Local Name	Class	Note Range	No. of Pans	Instruments
High Tenor	Soprano	D4 – F6	1	
Low Tenor	Soprano	C4 – Eb6	1	
Double Tenor	Alto	A3 – C#6	2	
Double Second	Alto	F3-Bb5	2	
Double Guitar	Tenor	C#3 – G#4	2	
Quadraphonic	Tenor	B2 - Bb5	4	
Four Cello	Baritone	B2 – D5	4	
Three Cello	Baritone	B2 – G4	3	
Tenor Bass	Bass	G2 – E4	4	
Six Bass	Bass	A1 – B3	6	
Drum Set	Unpitched	N/A	N/A	Typical drum set
Percussions	Unpitched	N/A	N/A	A variety of instruments, e.g. congas, guiro, iron, clave etc

The composition "The Defiants" is dedicated to the musicians' tenacity in an environment of dismissive condescension. The arrangement is envisioned with the use of the contemporary instruments shown in Table 2.4 above.

#### Composition IV: "The Defiants"

Composition IV further contrasts the innovation in all aspects of steelband development after World War II. The juxtaposition of this composition with "Ole Time Steelband" for example, displays a revolutionary achievement that is the very antithesis of the instrument's characterization by condescending detractors. This selection is comprised of two segments - "The Defiants" and "The Defiants In Repose". The first is a contemporary soca rhythm with three verses, sung by a lead singer, and four choruses sung by a choral group. The second is a slower contemporary soca instrumental, but with a rhythmic beat more akin to medium highlife music. In this segment, the bass pedals an ostinato pattern for a sustained period over a limited number of chord changes. The melody alternates between the tenor and alto instruments while the soprano pans provide the accompaniment and counter lines. The melody is made of simple, singable lines because of its intended purpose – audience participation. The full range of the steelpan instrumentation was utilized but they are grouped into their respective SATB categories.

The layout of the piece represents a chronological growth that ascends through a variety of successful experimentations. The name "Defiants" connotes defiance by those who stubbornly resisted the suppression of their creativity and culture. At 130 beats per minute, this energetic first movement moves through a series of key changes with an aggressive and intricate melody and counter melody among the lead, background, and bass pans. The ascending scalar trajectory symbolizes the continual forward motion by these innovators. The ascending chord changes are: Emi9, Ami7, Fma7, Gma7, Abma7, A7, Dma7, Emi7, Fma, G7<sup>(b9)</sup>, C.

The non-diatonic element represents a (musical) diversion from the norm and a venture into the unknown before arriving at the comfort of the home key, C. The standard calypso formula of introduction, verse, chorus, and band chorus, is substituted with an unconventional format that introduces a forty-bar introduction, a thirty-two-bar band chorus, a thirty-two-bar chorus, and a thirty-six-bar verse. "The Defiants" introduction deviates from the typical calypso introduction, which is usually identical to the band chorus in terms of harmonic progression. Tables 2.5 and 2.6 below provide a visual breakdown between "The Defiants" and conventional calypso forms.

Table 2.5: A typical calypso form

Note: As opposed to jazz or North American standards, a chorus in calypso music is more closely related to the B section of an AABA form. The preferred time signature in calypso is ¢ (cut time). Introduction and Band Chorus can be built around the chorus harmonic progressions. Number of verse/chorus varies. Outro or coda ending can take different forms.

Typical Calypso Form	Band Chorus	Verse	Chorus	Outro
3 Repeats	: 1	1	1 :	1
Typical bars	16	32	16	Varied

Table 2.6: Form of "The Defiants"

The Defiants	Introduction	Chorus	Band Chorus	Verse	Coda		
3 Repeats	1	: 1	1	1 :	1		
Typical bars	40	32	32	36	40		
Diatonic chord progression, interspersed with non-diatonic and extended chords.							
Rhythm closely resembles Ghanaian Highlife.							

When I started working on "The Defiants", I envisioned the piece as a theatrical representation of a story, scripted with lyrical contents. The play is intended to address the era of confrontation with the authorities from the 1930s – 1960s, with a view to enlighten the public of the continual confrontation between the authorities and the disenfranchised citizens, who, despite the obstacles and objections, emerged victorious – at least, in terms of acceptance. In the

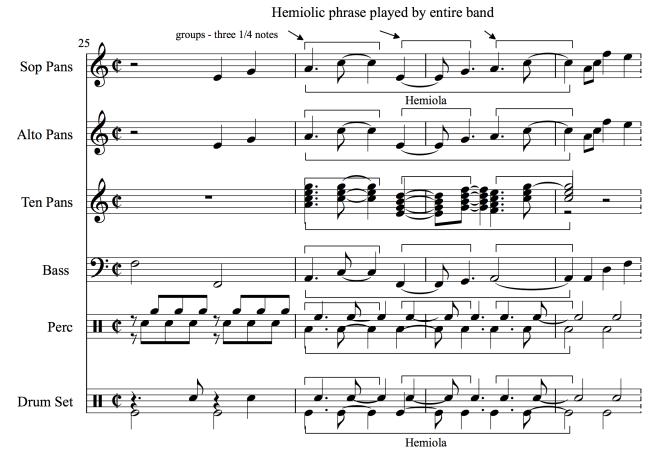
dramatization witnessed by an audience, the panmen would be casted as the protagonists, and the authorities and upper class, the antagonists.

Each of the three verses describes a different encounter or treatment meted out to the protagonists, while the lyrics of the chorus describe the beautiful sound of today's steel orchestra and its enshrined contribution to the nation; the contemporary audience is reminded in the verses of the adversarial conditions under which such achievement was realized. The lyrical contents are described in the chorus and verses listed in Appendix B.

The chordal harmony in the verse and chorus is also enhanced with extensions such as flat ninths, elevenths, and tri-tone substitution. Other techniques are used, such as hemiola – a rhythmic device by which a temporary change in perception in the metric pattern from duple to triple (or vice versa) occurs.<sup>37</sup> Such disruption in the regular pulse creates a different and noticeable rhythmic impact. In the chorus at bars twenty-five, twenty-six, thirty-three and thirty-four, among other areas in the song, the band plays an accented hemiola (see example 2.6 below) that is used specifically to create a dramatic effect in the music. In this example, two bars of simple duple time are articulated in groups of three quarter notes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Mike Downes and Brad Clump. *Jazz and Contemporary Music Theory*: Humber College, Toronto, Canada, (2006), 44-45.

Example 2.5: A Hemiolic phrase - Defiants



The syncopated rhythm that pervades this song, and calypso music in general, is a testimony that notwithstanding other cultural influences, the genre that preceded the tamboo bamboo and skin drum before it, still exudes the hypnotic magnetism that the Mighty Sparrow, one of the greatest names in calypso, described as "a certain kind of spirit."

After the "soca" operatic rendition is ended at the third verse and chorus, the segment appended to the preceding dramatization - "Defiants In Repose" - is introduced by a concluding coda. The deliberate referenced name signifies a hard-won triumph in a musical journey, deserving of a repose. "Defiants In Repose" smoothly transitions one half-step up through a gradual two-bar tempo change into a medium 100-beats-per-minute highlife type rhythm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Brown, "Carnival, Calypso, and Steelband in Trinidad", 82.

The use of a different melodic style in "The Defiants In Repose" segment was to create an atmosphere of (musical) relaxation after an energetic narration of calypso theatre. The thought of repose was envisioned with a comparison to everyday life – after a long day of focus and intensity, a relaxing tune is soothing for the psyche. In addition to the laid-back moments for the protagonists, this segment of the play also signals a cessation of hostilities between all factions. Finally, a consensus *ad idem* - the pan is recognized as an exceptional invention, and a moral and communal contract on the part of everyone to continue its advancement is in the best interest of the nation. The audience is now invited to a steelband singalong in the recapitulation, signifying the nation's embrace of the once derided "noise maker"- turn instrument of love, peace, and country fellowship.

#### Part III:

## From Jamette and Garbage Bins to Symphonic Sounds

The improved pan withstood grueling reprobation to emerge as the pride and joy of the nation, reverenced by its citizenry of every creed, class and race. The steelband has engaged musicians and ethnomusicological scholars, who have studied its transformation from discarded garbage containers to authentic orchestral instruments; they comprise some of the largest music ensembles in the world.<sup>39</sup> Panists welcome intricate fugues and symphonic arrangements as challenges to be performed with professional precision. Some see their performance as a dutiful and passionate commitment to civic responsibility.

Shannon Dudley observed such passion for the music. In *Music from Behind the Bridge*, he wrote:

I was inspired in my task not only by my own experience playing, but also by the ever-blooming enthusiasm of panmen and panwomen, who sacrifice family life and carnival season diversions to be in the panyard rehearsing every night for up to two months."

## The Global Impact

This enthusiasm has been an ingrained ingredient in the culture of the music. It is exemplified by resistance and persistence<sup>41</sup> against the colonial authorities and privileged class, who were once vehemently opposed to the instrument and its "Jamette" culture, made up of the bad johns and outcasts of the demi-monde. The steelband men who belonged to this culture, eventually became the propellant of its exposition. Their resistance has paid a cultural dividend in the form of global recognition and adoption.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Stuempfle, *The Steelband Movement*, xiv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Dudley, *Music from Behind the Bridge*, 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Johnson, From Tin Pan to TASPO, 96.

Among the global events is a world pan festival, attracting world-wide participants.

Panists have distinguished themselves in recordings and performances with world class musicians and groups like Winton Marsalis, Art Blakey, Prince, Spyro Gyra, Earth Wind and Fire, Harry Neilson, RCA, John Lennon and Ringo Starr of the Beatles, Jimmy Buffett, and the Coral Reefers Band, just to name a few.

The marketing impact of a steelband commercial engenders a feeling of holiday, fun and sun and rum and coconut water on the beach. The transition from bamboo (tamboo bamboo) band to steel orchestra is a long and jagged musical evolution, but the success of the steelband as a national symbol of achievement is considered a vindication of Afro-Trinidadian culture.

## **Composition V: "Auriolus Melus"**

"Auriolus Melus" is a dedication to, and an admiration for, steelband exponents, past and present, especially those who have given so much and left without the deserved recognition or compensation. The "Auriolus Melus" (Beautiful Melody) fugue is comprised of two themes — "Rockalypso" and "Waltz of the Pan People": they demonstrate the intricate maneuvering of complex passages and the versatility of a modern steel orchestra. It amalgamates steelpans and conventional orchestral instruments to create unique timbral characteristics. Instruments used in this composition are: steelpans, violins, violas, piano, trumpets, saxes, trombones, electric bass, percussions.

The rhythmic setting of the 4/4 'jazz/rock' theme "Rockalypso" is a mélange of jazz, rock, and a light flavouring of calypso in an ABCA form. In "Waltz of the PanPeople" the smoothness of the traditional 3/4 waltz as a dance for panmen is specifically composed with a view to psychologically engaging their emotional sensitivity in positive ways which may

ameliorate their "gang war" proclivity (this writer believes that music has the potency to awaken the compassionate and caring inner soul which every one of us possesses). The form is AABAC.

Strings and cello pans playing in different octaves, coupled with an expression mark of dolce expressivo in the introduction, is intended to conjure up an aura of musical adventure and beauty. At least, the perception is that the aesthetic quality of the steelpan with symphonic instrumentation in a jazz/rock setting, performing a romantic melody, rendered with soulful heartfelt emotion, will create a feeling of romantic wander. The introduction sets up an atmosphere that prepares the listener for an enjoyable musical safari.

In the thirty-two-bar jazz/rock section, soprano and alto pans play the lead, while the strings, brass and tenor pans provide counter melodies. Percussions and vertical instruments provide the obvious rhythmic and harmonic balance. Several varied motivic implications create a sense of unanticipated movements. The first four-bar phrase is repeated, but the melodic structure between bars ten and eleven is rearranged to produce a sense of variety, while the intervallic structure of the harmonizing instruments remains consistent. The motivic variation within the phrases creates interesting melodic contours that lend credence to the safari wandering. Two repeating phrases in the following eight bars present a melodic diversion that gives the "ears" a reason for a second listen. A repeat of the first eight bars completes this thirty-two-bar segment.

At the end of the jazz/rock, the tenor pans and percussion provide a four-bar "um papa" ostinato rhythm break that leads into Waltz of the PanPeople. The soprano and alto pans play the lead in the sixteen-bar A1 section; the sparse instrumentation at the opening of the waltz suggests a quiet reflective moment in this musical journey. The story is no less impactful; but rather, it is a period for interim summation of the preceding experience. This A2 sixteen-bar phrase is

answered by the strings and tenor pans. Soprano and alto pans resume the lead in the eight-bar B Section. Finally, strings and tenors go back to the A3 section.

With the absence of bass and vertical instruments in the C section, the strings, alto and tenor pans paly a warm, dense melody in the lower range. The cello pan alternates between melody and cantus firmus lines, while the brass provides counter punctual support. This introspective mood is repeated for thirty-two bars; then comes to a definitive terminus that reverts to the second sixteen-bars of the jazz/rock to complete the composition.

I have described the performance thus with a view to relating music to an active, physical occurrence. I endeavour to "see" notes and melodies in action in the compositions, as they shape the architectural images in a musicscape that connects aspects of the sensorium and the physical being. In many, if not all cultures, music is an integral component, linked to almost every aspect of life. These compositions are auditory portals that allow the listener to gain some insight into the ongoing evolution of the steelpan.

# **Symphonic Beauty - Contemporary Orchestral Performance**

Symphonic recordings by exponents of this art form are referenced in Videography.

The writer's appreciation for the genius of the pioneering innovators of this instrument is informed by comparisons between orchestral renditions like Hell Yard's 1940 *Lion Oh*<sup>42</sup> and Boogsie Sharpe's <sup>43</sup> *In the Rain Forest* (2000) <sup>44</sup>. Andy Narell's big band composition, *One More* 

<sup>43</sup> "Lennox Sharpe," [n. d.], video clip accessed October 26, 2016, YouTube, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lennox Sharpe

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> "First Steelpan Recording, 'Lion-Oh' Hell Yard SteelBand & the Roaring Lion1940" February 11th, 1940. Video clip accessed October 26, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvsV7iJ2YZs

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> "Skiffle Bunch - In The Rain Forest (2000)", video clip accessed May 20, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OG-aiCJQ-ks

*Touch*, <sup>45</sup> performed by Germany's WDR Big Band at the Koln Philharmonic, displays the steelband in symphonic performances with compositions written for steel orchestra and augmented with conventional brass and strings. These references demonstrate the authentication of the steelpan, its adaptability to genres, its instrumentational development, and the prowess of its performers. These elements, and the brilliant sound of *Stardust*, <sup>46</sup> performed with nimble dexterity by master panist Robert Greenidge, are essential in demonstrating the growth and uniqueness of the pan and its amalgamation into the modern family of idiophones.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> "Andy Narell, Relator, WDR Big Band", February 2010. Video clip accessed November 2, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5EpOFMPQpg

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> "Robert Greenidge - Hoagy Carmichael – Stardust". [n. d.], video clip accessed November 15, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k0Z-J4sLi0

#### CONCLUSION

With a dearth of original documented facts, accounts of steelband's derivation and early development vary widely among contemporary historians. This could be because its origin was forged by a disenfranchised people, who lacked economic and other resources necessary for the initial documentation of facts; and/or, because their focus might not have been on musical posterity. Oral tradition and memory retention were the essential preservers of their achievements. Today, as a complement to the limited documentation of the period, we may rely on steelpan artefacts as physical evidence of their necessity to create for survival. Interpreted correctly, these artefacts may also show the spontaneity in the steelband's creation and development over an extensive period.

Musicologists, other scholars, and musicians have realized the potential of the pan and its impact on music over the years. They are endeavoring to preserve its history as accurately as possible, but cannot credit its invention to any one person. Early steelband pioneer, Oscar Pile, stated in an interview with Dr. William R. Aho, that "no one person can claim that they invented the pan". <sup>47</sup> Participants of this historic period have given different oral accounts of identical instances; however, many give credit for the pan's early development to the pioneers, only a few of whom are mentioned, with a partial list of their exceptional creations:

Spree Simon credited with playing the first distinguishable melody on the pan.

Neville Jules created the bass pan, guitar (or quarto) pan.

Ellie Mannette created the concave playing surface, put rubber on sticks.

Bertie Marshall regulated the overtones, created the double tenor, steelband canopy.

Anthony Williams tuned a half note, invented double seconds, spider web system

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Aho, "Steelband Music in Trinidad & Tobago."

In this thesis, I have attempted to create a manageable collection of documented information, including recordings, that best illustrates the resistance to the banning of drums and other forms of activities relating to the Afro-Trinidadian culture, and the resolute fortitude and persistence that eventually led to the creation and development of steelband music. My compositions and their accompanying recordings are based on my reflections on this desirable art form which, in its embryonic stage, seemed a chimerical fancy to its detractors.

Steelband pedagogy seems relatively limited in relation to what is available for some other artistic creations, possibly because of modest availability of original documentation, or, the inventors' focus on personal development of their newly discovered craft, as opposed to pedagogical dissemination. However, their contribution has endured and scholars and expert performers will continue, very effectively, to translate their (the inventors') work into scholarly pedagogy; and pan enthusiasts, as I am, will continue to be awed in our reflections on this phenomenon. We will continue to find more ways and reasons to create arrangements that showcase and glorify the pan's continuing development.

A part of this process could involve finding new methods and applications to continue the advancements the pioneers have so successfully championed. Traditionally, steelband musicians have, to a large extent, learned their music by rote. Although that system is still in use today, it is not uncommon to see an orchestra with sheet music, being read by qualified musicians, or, a symphony conductor, guiding his/her orchestra through technical and intricate musical maneuvers. I have always had a great admiration for steelpan players performing from written scores, while still capturing the authentic "unwriteable" or ineffable nuances that give character to the genre. It's my desire to see my compositions being performed with the full scores laid out in front of every musician who is not only an accomplished reader, but also capable of interpreting the essence of my musical thoughts and expressions.

As in any other discipline, the more technical knowledge the musician acquires, the more possibilities of innovation and growth. For a beginner steelpan player, acquiring the rudiments of music at his/her introductory level, including reading skills, steelband history with a keen focus on the innovators and their struggles, can earn him/her an appreciable degree of fluency and independence on the instrument, and possibly advance their musical aptitude and the type of education necessary to perpetuate the pioneers' vision and the advancement of the pan. With measurable steelband scholarships now being pursued in institutions from primary to post-secondary to post-graduate levels, these small steps can eventually play a significant role in the continuing development and proliferation of steelband activities.

Further development in the standardization of the instrument can possibly increase a player's opportunity to master several instruments; such structural continuity can minimize the obstacles in the player's efforts to move freely between different sections of the orchestra.

Advances in technology have led to the creation of electronic steelpans that mimic the authentic instrument, but to maintain the legacy of early pioneers, pan manufacturers must explore for avenues of advancement that will take the instrument to another level of musical sophistication.

Bertie Marshall was making progress with his experimentation with amplified pans and sustained notes, - a creation he named The Bertphone - but a tragic fire destroyed his achievements and dampened his enthusiasm; as stated in his own words: 'ah was on a good thing and then ah had ah disastrous fire that burn out everything so ah never go back into that'. 'As This tragedy, compounded with the fact that there was no significant or appreciative outreach by government or anyone to alleviate the financial burden on a man of modest means, significantly impeded an area of steelband development that could have had a major impact in its continuous

 $<sup>^{48}</sup>$  "Steelband Pioneers," published March 13, 2008, video clip accessed November 15, 2016, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n3auP1RriOo

evolution. However, with research in metallurgy geared towards the improvement in steelband technology, the prospects of further musical elevation are limitless.

My admiration for, and reflections on the development of this instrument, have inspired me musically, and have created a reservoir from which I source musical illumination and scholarship.

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# **APPENDIX A: SCORES**

- 1) "Tamboo Time"
- 2) "The Beginning of Times"
- 3) "Ole Time Steel Band"
  - a. Ole Time Steel Band
  - b. Tena Topsy
  - c. God Save The King
- 4) "The Defiants"
  - a. The Defiants
  - b. The Defiants In Repose
- 5) "Auriolus Melus"
  - a. Rockalypso
  - b. Waltz of the PanPeople





























# Beginning of Times













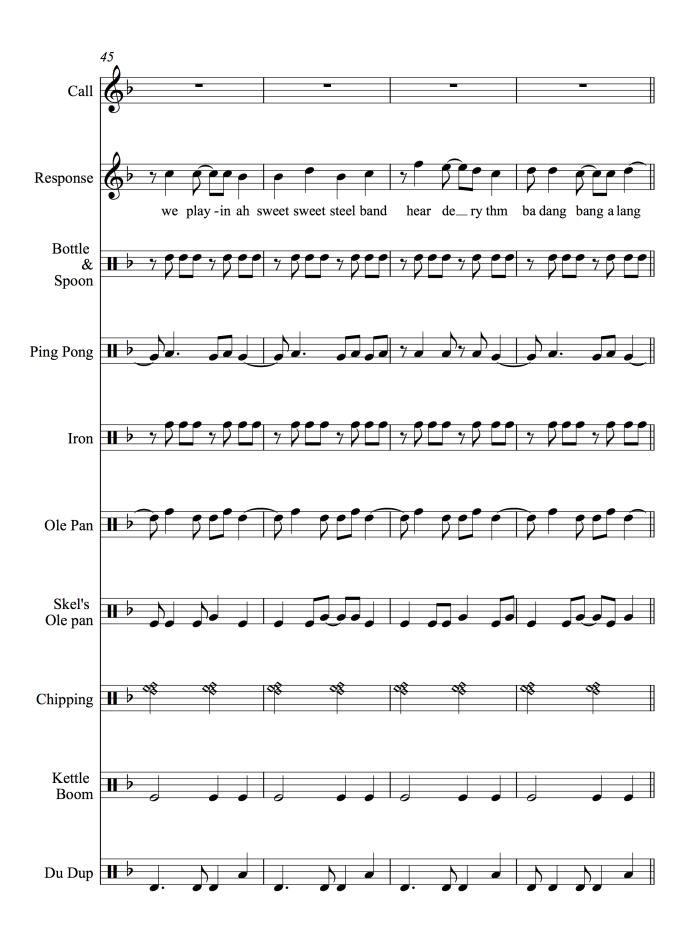


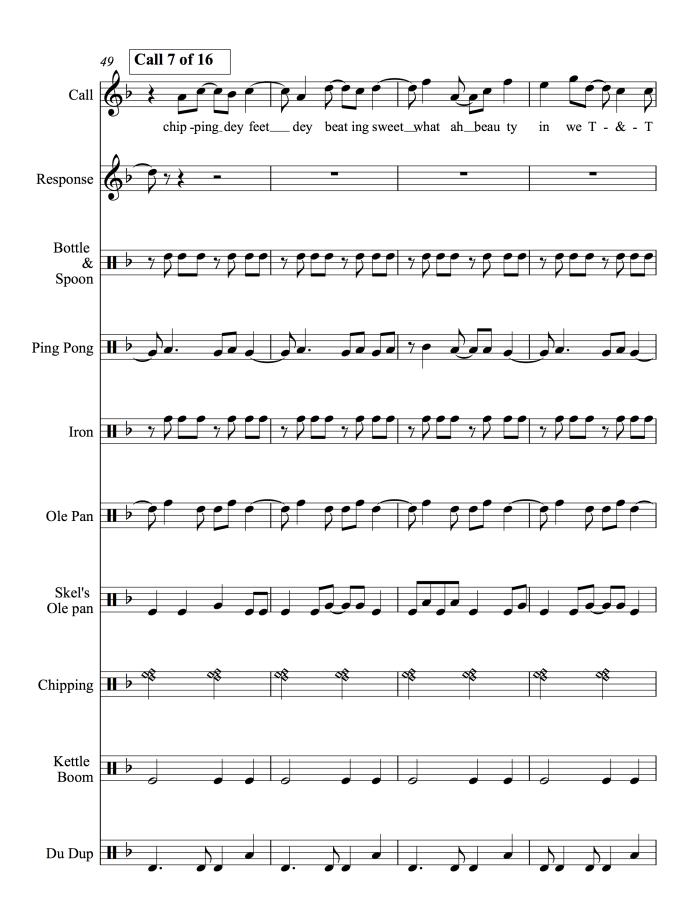


















































## Ole Time Steel Band

(Ole Time Steel Band/Tena Topsy/British Anthem)

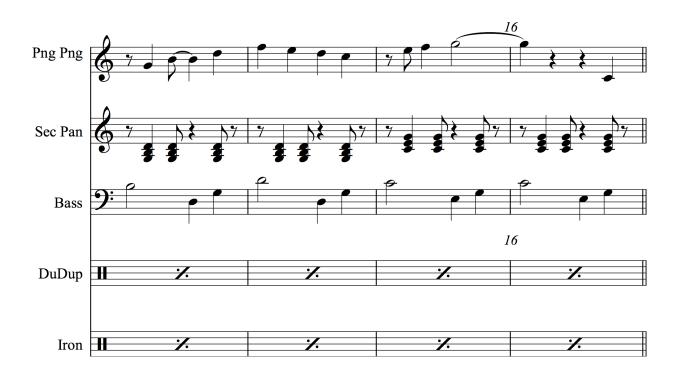


































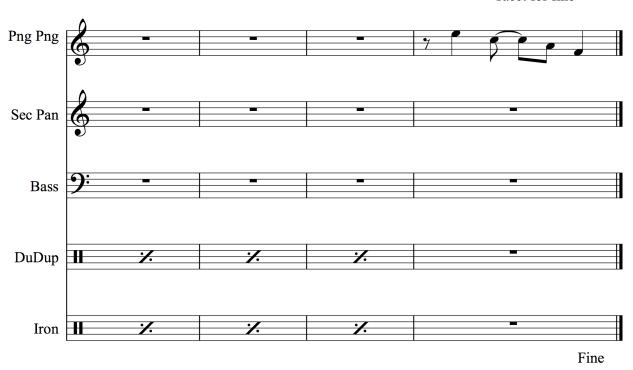






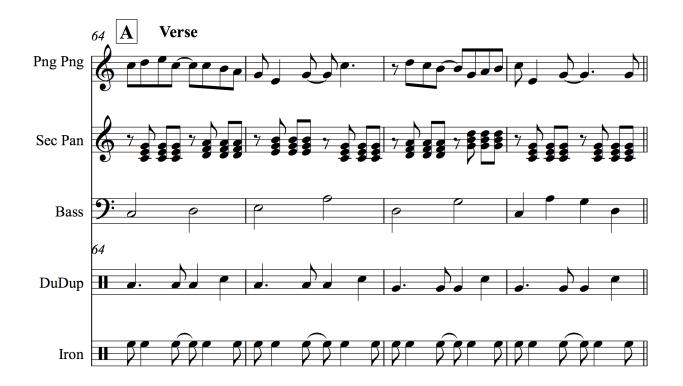










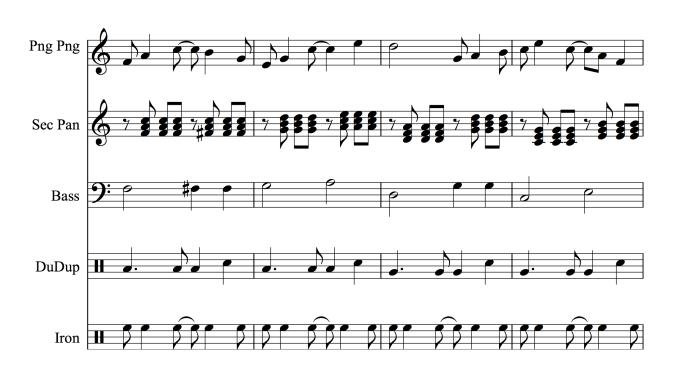








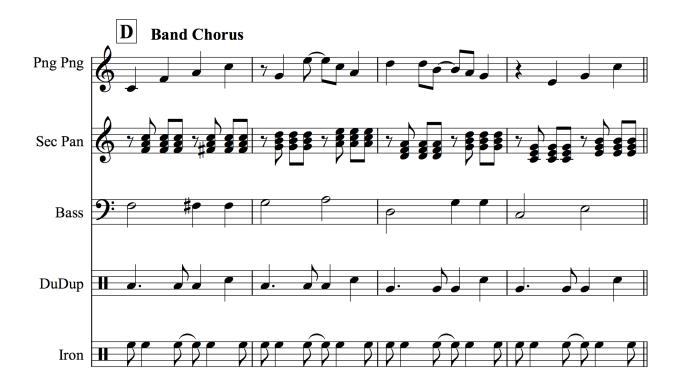






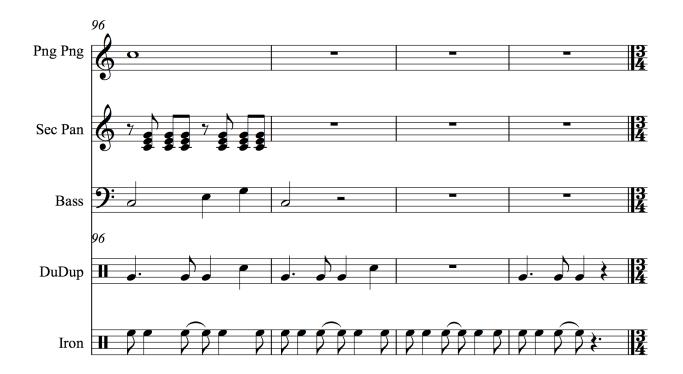














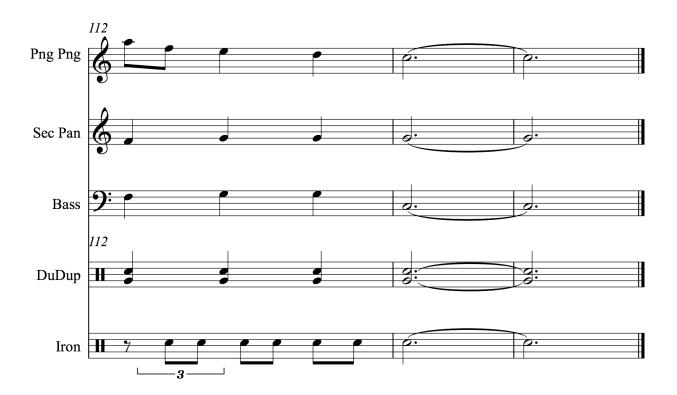






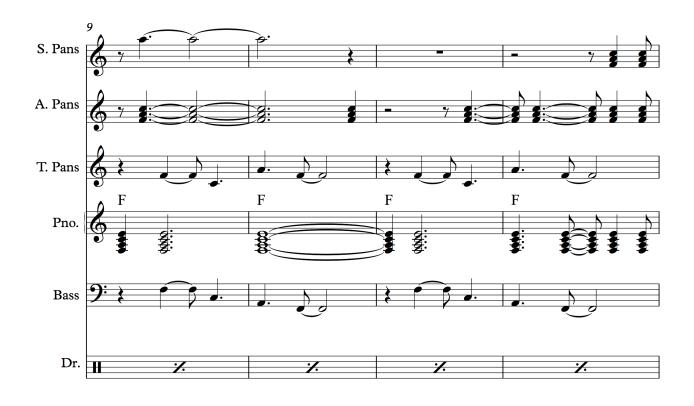






## THE DEFIANTS







































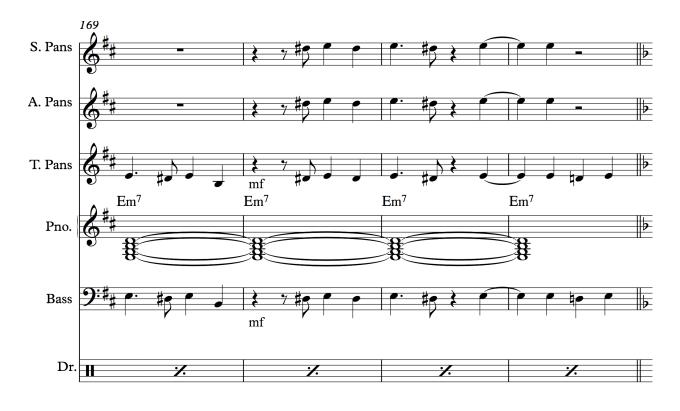




























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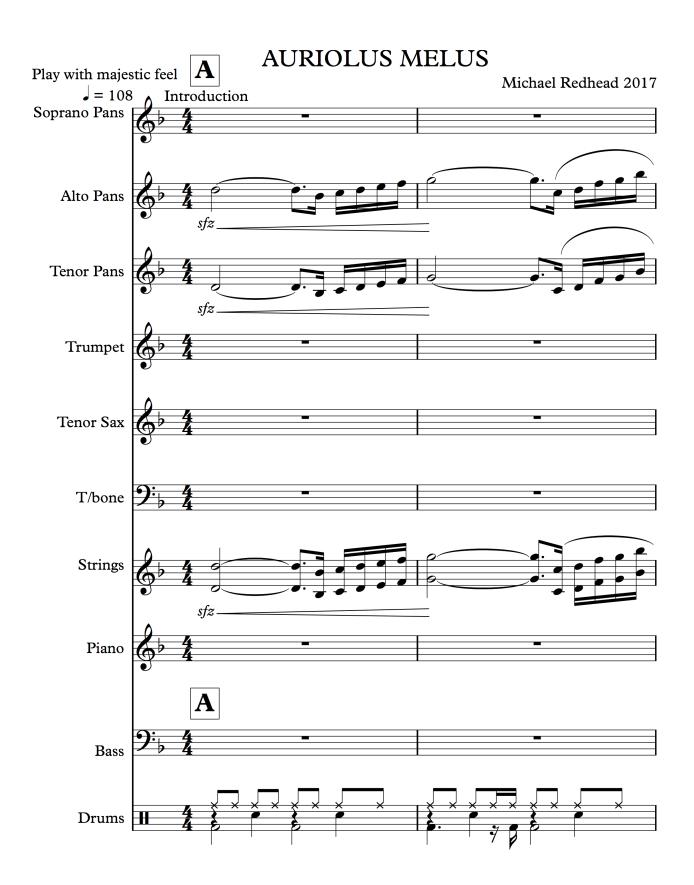


































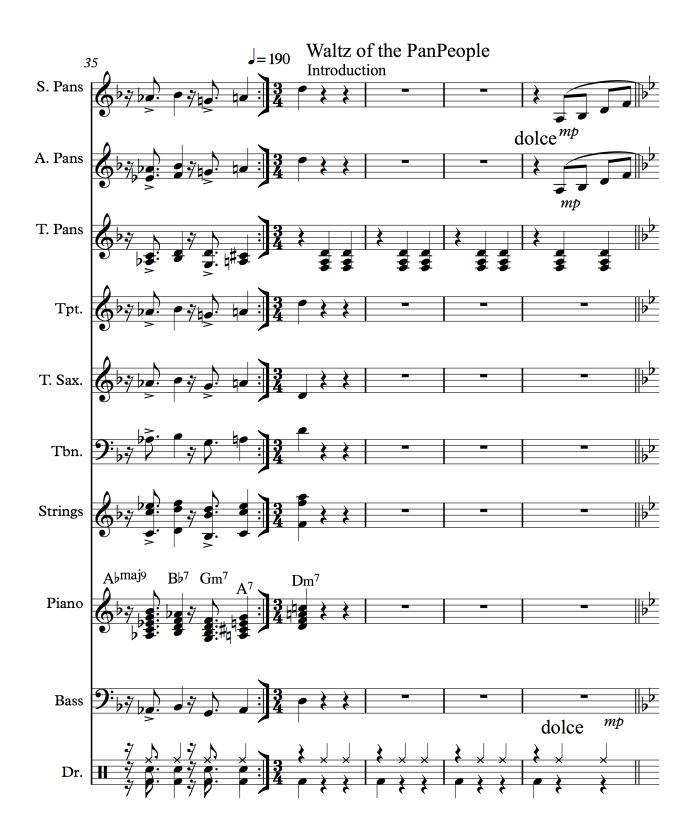










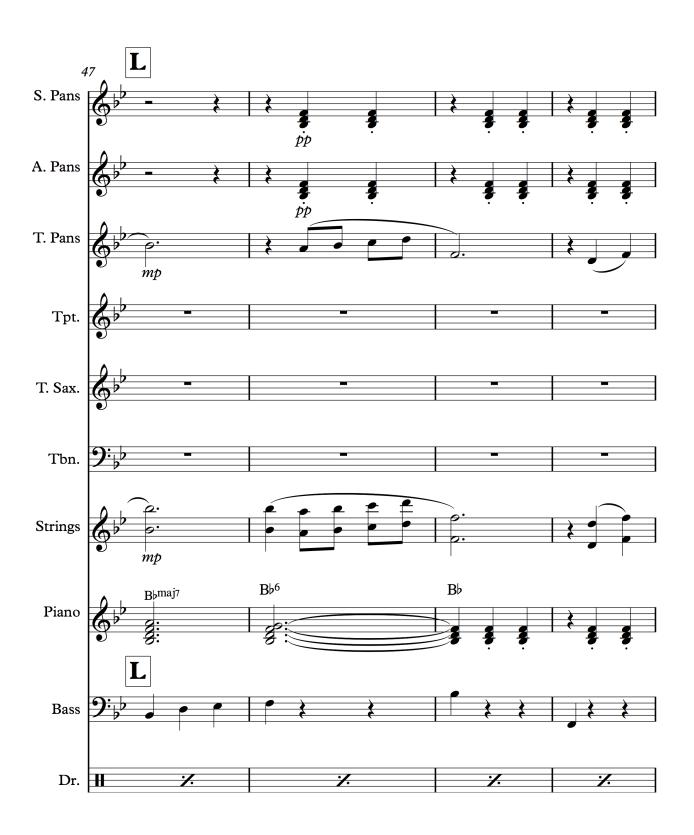




















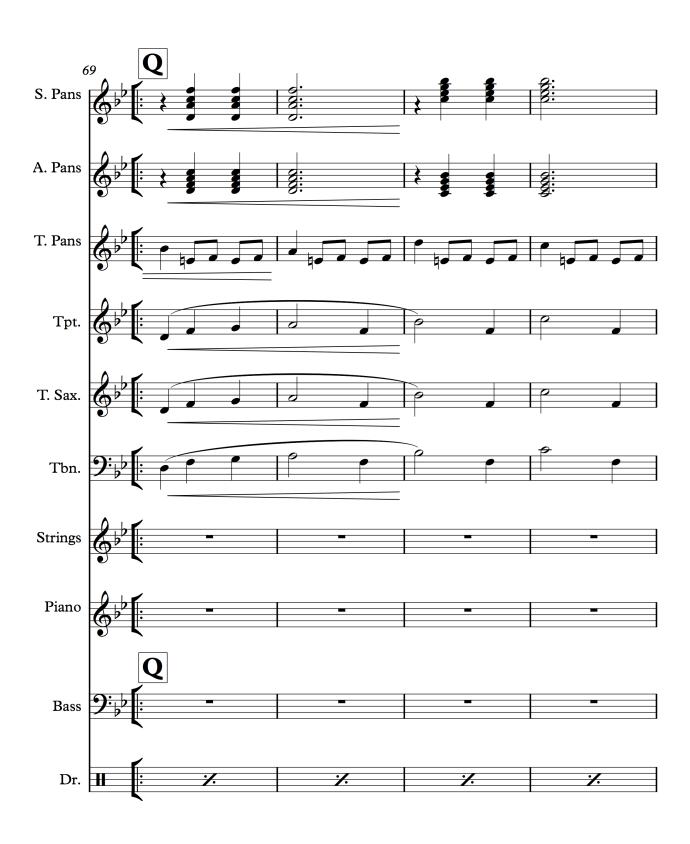






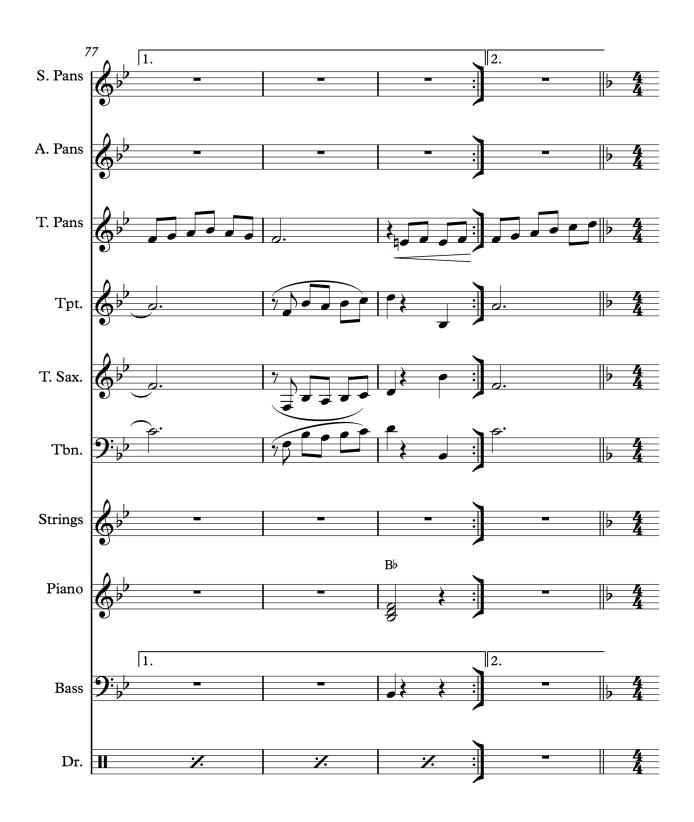
























## **APPENDIX B: LYRICS**

## **Tamboo Time**

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( all	1 — Mini	de	leve	leve	leve	leve	leve	leve	oason	oade	Canboul	av
Cull	, 11101	ac	10 10,	10 00,	10 10,	10 10,	10 10,	1010	Sason	Saac	Culloun	uy

Response – Jouvert, Jouvert, ah tamboo band swinging down dey

Call) – Ah have meh bois mount ahready, prepare for war like ah ma-pee-pee

Response

Call) – Moi de lévé, lévé, lévé, lévé, lévé, lévé.

Response

Call) – Nobody goh stop we carnival, we fetting we love we bacchanal

Response

Call) – Is licks like fire and dey bound to surrender, more bad than William de Conqueror

Response

Call) – Dem police wuune leave we alone, they insist on creating a war zone

Response

Call) – Hear dem footsteps chipping to the beat, when we play sweet music on the street

Response

Call) – Sailor mass all over de place, dussing powder in people face

Response

Call) – We moving we grooving we jamming we bumpin up and down George St. in de morning

Response

Call) – Dem police say dey want we off de street, dey better kno dat is no retreat

Response

Call) – We jumping up in we carnival, one of the world's greatest festivals

# **The Beginning of Times**

Call) – This is we steelband, we come up wid a new invention
Response 1 – We jamming from nite till morning If yuh hear de sweet pan calling
Call) – Spree simon and Zigilee oh Lord, dey make we so happy
Response 2 – We playing a sweet sweet steelband, hear de rhythm badang bangalang
Call) – We chipping down Charlotte street, sweet pan we sounding so sweet
Response 1
Call) – Another band from Lavantille, beating pan just like we
Response 2
Call) – It's ah new ting wid a sweet ring you cyah help but to dance and sing
Response 1
Call) – Every day is carnival we like we bacchanal
Response 2
Call) – Chipping dey feet dey beating sweet what a beauty in we T&T
Response 1
Call) – And as we wine and grind and we juuk and jam and we playing <sup>2</sup> from dusk til dawn
Response 2
Call) – Tell dem we demand we liberty to celebrate we discovery
Response 1
Call) – We fighting a beast we eh have no peace but we eh backing down til advantage done
Response 2
Call) – We eh looking for no fight but let dem know we goh fight dem down for we rights
Response 1

Repeat and Fade

## The Defiants

Chorus	colloquial	English
And when you hear steelband		
sounding like a symphony		
flowing from heaven		
please remember the inventor		
his legacy enshrined in a nation		
so proud of his creation		
that was born from the depths of oppression		
by a people who had little		
but they survived the licks and tricks		
of the "massa" man.	massa	slave master

cyah stop we

Haul he arse

cannot stop us

profanity

## Verse 1

They were pioneers
they were true innovators
but as history will show
that for all they endured
their will could not be broken
by colonial subjugation of a whole race
Shango drums forbidden
you play is licks or prison
what the Africans do
they turn to bamboo
defiant and angry
they say you cyah stop we
we playing mass
governor could haul he arse.

#### Chorus

#### Verse 2

Repudiated
no respect for their culture
it was a rhythm understand
it was so African
they play with a passion and conviction
polyrhythm syncopation
the music vibrating
body gyrating
the ruling class
they couldn't get pass
Shango and Kalinda
they see as inferior
they say dey bound
to keep the Africans down

# Chorus

# Verse 3

Men like Oscar Pile
Ellie Mannette, "Totee" Wilson
don't forget Spree Simon
and Tony Williams
Bertie Marshall standing tall
with giants of creation of the steelpan
he regulate the overtones
his tonal clarity was well known
progress you could measure
hear Casablanca
then listen to Hell Yard
man, Bertie was real bad
the steelpan wars
was how panmen settle scores

# Chorus