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TITLE OF THESIS:
The Contribution of Pan Trinbago to the Promotion and Development of the Steelpan in Trinidad and Tobago from 2009 to Present.

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Abstract:

The main purpose of going forward with this Caribbean Studies Project was to evaluate the performance of the “World Governing Body of Steelpan,” Pan Trinbago, in its contribution towards the promotion and development of the steelpan over the last seven years (2009-2017). Pan Trinbago was established in 1971 and has been known as the main association representing the interest of steelbands. Over the past few months however, the steelpan fraternity have had reason to question and criticize the operations of the association, as Pan Trinbago failed to issue players’ remittances following the National Panorama of 2016.

Research was conducted utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data was collected via questionnaire, which was distributed both online and manually. A total of forty questionnaires were distributed while only twenty-nine of them were returned and completed. Qualitative analysis was collected through a series of interviews, conducted with three former executive members of the association, Bryon Serrette, Aquil Arrindell and Nestor Sullivan, and another current member of the association, Marcus Ash.

It became evident throughout the research that Pan Trinbago, although establishing a clear vision for steelpan, was not equipped with an adequate team of executive members to complete their set goals. Due to alleged inner corruption and mismanagement of funding, the association has failed to carry out its functions efficiently and are presently facing an enormous debt of thirty million dollars. However, to this date no allegations have been confirmed and the steelpan fraternity awaits the results of current ongoing investigations that will determine the fate of Pan Trinbago.
Introduction

Rationale

The steelpan is known today as the National Instrument of Trinidad and Tobago. However, it was not an easy task for its inventors and innovators, who had worked assiduously over the years in its development to achieve such acceptance and acknowledgement, as it receives today. As a result of their diligence and persistence, today the steelpan has become an integral part of Trinidad and Tobago’s culture. The instrument has gained so much prestige that it is now incorporated in schools’ curriculums, the military and armed forces, and even in religious gatherings. Additionally, its capacity to produce any genre of music, including the highly-esteemed classical genre, has made it attractive, so much so that it is in high demand in the local, regional and international commercial markets. Hence, the steelpan has become a profitable creation and product as it attracts tourists, international institutions and players from all over the world. This signifies that any organisation affiliated with the promotion of the steelpan should channel a great deal of its energy into maintaining and developing the instrument. The association responsible for governing the operations of the steelpan art form and by extension the steelband movement is Pan Trinbago Incorporated. During the early stages of the association, a period which expanded from the early 1950s to the 1980s, Pan Trinbago had been known as a highly proactive and enthusiastic group of band leaders and government officials who shared the primary interest of promoting the success of the steelpan as an art form. As the organisation began to undergo changes in administration however, it has appeared to become less productive in its operations and members of the steelpan fraternity have had cause to question the management and leadership capabilities of the association. As I am also a member of the steelpan fraternity and have been affected by the decreasing efficiency of the association, I have also developed a deepening concern and interest for exploring the possible
reasons for this sudden change. It seems that the body that was once a beacon of light and a helping hand in the promotion and development of the accomplished musical instrument has allegedly become an opposing threat to the growth and prosperity of the art form.

Background

As far back as the 1830’s, the magnificent history of the steelpan had already planted its roots during the era of skin drums, and has been sculpted into the vastly developing movement known as the steelpan industry. Similar to any other great historical art form or invention, the steel drum, known more fondly as the steelpan, faced extravagant torrents on its path to becoming the National Instrument of Trinidad and Tobago. A brief history on the steelpan gives insight on how much effort its inventors and innovators put forward, as a people who were desperate to establish a culture, as well as the delicate journey of the now accomplished instrument, and by extension its transformation from steelpan to steelband (Beck, 297). As steelbands developed and began performing on the streets during Carnival, players had grown attracted to the performance opportunities, competitions and sponsorship. Such attractions called for proper band maintenance, repertoire improvement and better musical techniques. Hence, steelbands now had to employ various strategies for legible management and administration within the band (Huggins-Watts, 6).

“However, due to the social barriers that existed between the business class and that of the performers in the 1940’s, players had to rely on their own knowledge and instinct in order to manage the bands during the early stages of the construction and management of the steelband” (Huggins-Watts, 7). Hence, they employed principally internal management strategies and systems which were quite underdeveloped and were carried out predominantly by one individual, usually the founder of the band or the owner of the property on which the band was located.
Thus, steelbands’ management and leadership styles utilized mainly an autocratic approach. In most cases, captains of the bands were also band leaders and managers who had not acquired their positions through election or appointment (Huggins-Watts, 8).

As the artform became more developed, bands needed finances even though during the time of the 1940’s there was not much need to manage large sums of money in steelbands. Finances were needed however to participate in festivals and competitions, cover transportation costs and payment of players. These finances were sought from financial business organisations at the time (Huggins-Watts, 10). Hence, the bands maintained self-management systems up until the year 1950, when a group of leaders of steelbands came together with the support of public and private officials, forming the first democratic federation of steelbands that catered for the social and cultural needs of the steelbands. This association was called the Trinidad and Tobago Steelbands Association, and was headed by President Sydney Gallop. Due to the rapid growth of band membership within the association, they resorted to establishing regional branches around Trinidad, the first two being in San Fernando and Oropouche. Gallop remained head of the association until 1957, after which George Goddard became President, leading the association all throughout its transitional stages, from the Steelbands Association, which then became the National Association of Trinidad and Tobago Steelbandsmen (NATTS) in 1962. However, due to a conflict arising between members of the association and its President at that time, due to his involving the association in his personal political affairs, some of the members came together and made attempts to replace the members of the Central Executive by forming their own cabal. However, despite the efforts made, the attempt was unsuccessful. Later, another group emerged out of the members of NATTS and they gave themselves the name the Steelband Improvement Committee (Wilson, 15). “In 1971, when George Goddard fell out of grace with Eric Williams-
Eric Williams called at certain people to form a new organization for steelband- Steelband Improvement Committee (SIC)” (Serrette, interview). The formation of SIC resulted in two associations representing the interest of steelband players operating at the same time, until SIC held a convention at which a new Central Executive was chosen, finally forming Pan Trinbago in 1971 (Wilson, 15).

George Goddard Jr, in an article he published on When Steel Talks’ website indicated that under his father, George Goddard Sr’s leadership, Pan Trinbago had accumulated various achievements. Shortly after being elected, he, along with a committee, successfully drafted out the union’s first constitution which enabled them to be officially registered as an establishment by 1958. Junior Goddard also stated that in the year 1963, Goddard led the arrangement of Trinidad’s first annual National Steelbands’ Panorama held at the Queen’s Park Savannah, and introduced the Steelbands’ Classical Music Festival the following year. Since then, the National Panorama has become one of the highlights of Trinidad and Tobago’s Carnival, known as the biggest steelband event in the world (Goddard Jr, pp. 9). Hence, in its earlier years, Pan Trinbago had experienced rapid growth as its administration seemed to have had a greater enthusiasm for innovation and promotion of the developing artform and the country’s culture. In an interview with Nestor Sullivan, who was elected Vice President of the association in 1979, Sullivan recalls that the members of the Central Executive at that time had gotten along well with each other, as they collectively agreed on the concepts of democracy, total participation, collective decision-making and teamwork. Pan Trinbago became known as the cultural union representing the interest of pan players. However, as time has progressed, the association, experiencing many changes in its management and administration, is increasingly being criticized and questioned by members of the public and individuals within its own membership about its effectiveness in
playing its role as the leading organisation responsible for the prosperity of the steelpan artform. Members of the pan fraternity began to get sceptical about the association’s operations after Pan Trinbago failed to issue players’ remittances, following National Panorama 2016. As frustration began to sprout within the pan fraternity, their lashing out at the association attracted the attention of the media. A deeper investigation into Pan Trinbago’s operations, source of income, management skills, and manner of executing its stated objectives may assist in revealing possible explanations as to why Pan Trinbago, the “World Governing Body of Steelpan,” as the organisation describes itself, is at present, allegedly on the verge of insolvency. Guardian newspaper journalist, Joel Julien, reported that according to PKF Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors, after carrying out the latest Independent Auditor’s report on Pan Trinbago, “there is “significant doubt” about Pan Trinbago’s ability to continue as a “going concern” in the light of a $34.5 million debt facing the organisation” (A9). Former Vice President, Bryon Serrette, was the one who, through carrying out his own investigations on Pan Trinabgo’s financial expenditure, discovered what he described as “a trail of questionable financial transactions and a large and growing debt” (When Steel Talks). Therefore, it has become necessary to evaluate the performance of Pan Trinbago in its contribution towards the promotion and development of the steelpan instrument over the past seven years, uncovering the issues that may have been attributed to the association’s financial predicament.
Methodology:

The research was carried out by a means of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. A total of forty questionnaires were distributed to participants of the National Panorama Competition of 2016, twenty-four of which were distributed via Survey Monkey, an online forum for distributing surveys, and the remaining sixteen were distributed physically. Twenty-nine out of the forty questionnaires were completed.

A total of four interviews were conducted with present and past executive members of Pan Trinbago. The first interviewee was Bryon Serrrette, who is the former Vice Present of the current Central Executive. The interview was conducted at his home in Maraval, on Monday 20th February 2017. Two days later, an interview was conducted at the National Academy for Performing Arts (NAPA), with Marcus Ash, who is currently the Secretary of the Eastern Regional Office. On Thursday 23rd March 2017, another interview was conducted with Aquil Arrindell, former Education Officer of the Central Executive, at his home band, San City Steel Symphony, San Fernando, and the final interviewee was Nestor Sullivan, former Vice President of one of the previous administrations, under the leadership of Arnim Smith. This interview was conducted on Wednesday 30th March, at his home band, Pamberi Steel Orchestra, Santa Cru Old Road. The interviewees were questioned on their perspectives of the goals of the executive to which they belonged, the initiatives that were put forward and the challenges that they faced in the process of achieving their set goals.

Research Questions:

- What are the achievable goals of the association under Keith Diaz’s leadership, and what was the intended purpose behind setting those goals?
- What were the steps put in place to achieve these goals?
• What are some of the challenges faced by the association in the process of achieving its goals?
• Were the goals achieved?
Chapter One

A Review of Previous Literature

In her Caribbean Studies project, “Management Styles of Steelbands from 1950’s to Present: From Autocracy to Democracy,” Michelle Huggins-Watts examines the types of leadership that existed within steelbands from 1950 to 2002, and how they evolved, with relevance to the characteristics of leadership existing within the Governing Body of Pan, Pan Trinbago. In her paper, Huggins-Watts relates a detailed history of the processes steelbands endured in their road towards developing efficient management systems, aimed to introduce and maintain professionalism and class within steelbands. With relevance to Pan Trinbago’s contribution to the promotion and development of steelpan, Huggins-Watts, in her research briefly made mention that the management style carried out within Pan Trinbago’s association may be directly related to their performance as the union representing pan players’ interests. She argues that Pan Trinbago is known to depend heavily on government subventions and promises, which in most, if not all cases rarely meet their intended purpose. However, the primary focus of this study was to examine the efficiency of the different management styles within the steelbands rather than the operations of Pan Trinbago. Hence this research was useful to my project as it gave information on the journey that led to the formation of the first Steelband Association.

Margaret Mohammed, in her Caribbean Studies project entitled “The Origin and Development of the Steelband Movement in Trinidad and Tobago,” similar to the previous study briefly mentions Pan Trinbago and its role in the Steelband Movement. Mohammed provides a brief history on the formation of the second Steelband Association, the National Association of Trinidad and Tobago’s Steelbandsmen (NATTS) and vaguely explains how Pan Trinbago emerged. Similarly, while this project maintained certain relevance to Pan Trinbago’s contribution, due to its primary focus of the journey of steelbandsmen in their efforts to establish
the steelband, it did not cover the operations of Pan Trinbago, their methods of carrying out their purpose, or anything about the organization’s endeavours after the year 1971. The study did cover however, the specific aims and objectives of the association, which was to function as a registered trade union in efforts to affiliate with other organizations operating in the field of art and culture and to form healthy relationships between its members, steelbands and the public.

Rhonda Wilson in her Caribbean Studies Project entitled “The Organizational Development of the Steelband Movement from 1950 to 1977” discusses the transitional stages of the Steelbands Association from its inception in 1950 up until the year 1977, by which time its name had already changed to Pan Trinbago. Wilson contends in her research the objectives of each phase of the association during their initial stages, along with the appropriate accomplishments that correspond to said objectives. She also describes various significant conflicts that each association experienced. Hence Wilson’s research has been useful in that it directly addresses Pan Trinbago’s contribution towards the development of the steelpan and the steelband movement. The latter part of Wilson’s research addresses the circumstances within the steelband movement that were significant to the establishment of Pan Trinbago, described as a “rival organization on the horizon” (15). Her research highlighted the formation of the Steelband Improvement Committee (SIC), which consequently became Pan Trinbago after a convention held by the body in 1971, and listed the newly formed objectives of the association under its new structure. Coherently, Wilson then provided information on the challenges that Pan Trinbago faced during the late 1970s, with which she concluded her research stating that only by overcoming these challenges Pan Trinbago can function with efficiency. Therefore, Wilson’s research has proven to be quite informative and auxiliary in reference to the association’s contribution to the growth and development of the steelband movement over the years. However,
this research has been dated up to 1977, which leaves a huge gap between the events of 1978 to present.

George “Sonny” Goddard, in his book entitled “Forty Years in the Steelbands, 1939-1979,” relays the constant efforts made by the association to generate income and to have the capacity to serve the steelband movement. This comprises of a series of steelband recitals set up in effort to raise funds for the Trinidad All-Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO), a product of the Steelband Association, to be able to attend the Festival of Britain (64). The profits made through steelband recitals also contributed toward the building up of the association itself. Goddard explains that they primarily reached out to the Government for funding, but were rejected because of their last-minute requests. However, this obstacle did not cease their operations. The association came together and made the decision to raise funds on its own, even at the expense of having to cut back on various normalities. Goddard quoted a statement made in the Trinidad Chronicle 1957- “No awards were made at the first in a series of steelband concerts, sponsored by the Steelband Association.” (Goddard, 85). Hence, this research was useful as it gave insight on the mindset that the earlier administrations of the association had toward channelling their efforts into the promotion and development of the steelpan artform.

Shannon Dudley, in his book entitled “Music from Behind the Bridge: Steelband Spirit and Politics in Trinidad and Tobago” provides information on the previous executive of Pan Trinbago, under the leadership of Patrick Arnold and the contribution they made to the National Panorama aspect in efforts to secure finances for the association around the early 2000s. In his literature, he describes Pan Trinbago’s attempts to make effective change to the Panorama setting by moving the Panorama Preliminaries from the Queen’s Park Savannah to the respective panyards of the participating steelbands, in the year 2002. This change was made in efforts to
evade the spending of millions of Government funds in the transportation of steelbands to the judging venue and to eliminate the burden such arrangements put on the association (Dudley, 244). Another innovation geared toward the economic benefit of the association in 2003 was the rerouting of the path that steelbands occupied as they approached the stage for performance. “Pan Trinbago decided to reroute the steelbands as they approached the stage, bringing them through a fenced off staging ground to the west of the stage, where only ticket holders could enter” (Dudley, 245). Doing this meant that the association was able to avoid the “freeloader” problem that occurred every year as a result of the ease of access to vendors and sweet steelpan music outside of the Grand Stand, where the bands performed before the judges. Although these changes had brought about a negative reaction by the attendants of the National Panorama, Pan Trinbago had viewed these reforms as a means to protect the steelbands financial interest (Dudley, 246). While this research was quite useful as it provided information on the operations of the most recent former administration of Pan Trinbago, the book is not centralised on such specific themes, rather on the aspects of steelpan music and its development.
Chapter Two

Findings

Over the last year, the steelpan fraternity has had cause to question Pan Trinbago after having not received their players’ remittances following the National Panorama of 2016. The remittances are the payments that players receive after having participated in the preliminary round of the National Panorama Competition. Additionally, due to the lack of communication between the President of Pan Trinbago and the members of the Central Executive, and a blatant dismissal of concerns of the membership, on the part of the President, Bryon Serrette, Vice President at the time, felt that he had no other choice but to carry out his personal investigations, regarding the financial outputs of the association. In November 2016, Rennie Bishop invited Serrette as a featured guest on his radio talk-show, Brunch at 107.7, at which Serrette related his perspective on the matter. “When I started my investigation, what I found in the first instance was this acquisition of the car” (Pan Times, Bryon Serrette Interview). According to Mark Bassant, Senior Multimedia Investigative Journalist, what Serrette had uncovered in his investigation was the purchase of two luxury vehicles- a 2001 BMW X5 and an Audi Q7 (4). Due to the alleged corruption and mismanagement of funding, Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, Minister of Culture and Arts, instructed the National Carnival Commission (NCC) to take charge of collecting the gate receipts for National Panorama 2017. Furthermore, as Pan Trinbago’s recent expenditure consequently affected the members of the pan fraternity, resulting in a change of behaviour and attitude toward the approaching National Panorama Competition 2017, it was necessary to gather information from both the internal and external sources.

Data was collected through a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. A total of forty questionnaires were distributed, with twenty-nine out of the forty completed and
returned. These questionnaires were aimed toward gathering the opinions of members of the steelpan fraternity on the theme of National Panorama participation and the operations of Pan Trinbago. In order to provide a differing perspective, a series of interviews were conducted among four officials that held executive positions within Pan Trinbago. The four interviewees were Bryon Serrette, Former Vice President of the association of 2009, Marcus Ash who is currently the Secretary of the Eastern Regional Office, Aquil Arrindell who held the position of Education Officer of the Central Executive until he resigned this year, and Nestor Sullivan, who was the Vice President of the association during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Of the twenty-nine participants who completed the questionnaire, sixteen of them were tertiary level education students who were pursuing a degree in Musical and /or Performing Arts. The remaining participants comprised of a mixture of unemployed persons, military musicians, musical directors and performers. This reflects that majority of the participants who were willing and available to complete the questionnaire were students. Fourteen out of the twenty-nine participants were stage side members of one band,¹ and one participant out of the entire sample belonged to more than one stage side. Thus, out of the sample size, there was a greater number of participants who did not belong to a stage side, than those who did belong to one. A total of twenty-two participants performed with multiple bands in the National Panorama Competition, while the remaining seven participants committed only to one band. The practice of performing with multiple bands was derived from the notion of “contract players,” which is the informal contracting of steelpan players from external groups, to help make up the required number of performers for the competition.

¹ Stage side members are those who are core members of steelbands who perform throughout the year.
Among the total number of participants, there were several trends that stood out, drawing the research to a point of discussion. Firstly, among the students who participated in the questionnaire, twelve of them performed with multiple bands at the National Panorama Competition. The most common reason for participating in the competition in this way was financial gain. Pan Trinbago usually issues a remittance of one thousand dollars ($1000) to those players who perform in the preliminary round of the National Panorama Competition. Hence, every year, some performers look forward to the monetary rewards that they receive, and tend to view it as a means of generating income during the Carnival season. Second in rank among the reasons for students’ participation in National Panorama, was experience, and the third most common was career. Many people simply wish to experience the various musical styles and preferences of different arrangers. Others are more interested in enhancing their capacity to play different pans.

The questionnaire also contained a few questions with responses of ranking order, one of which addressed players’ enthusiasm to participate in National Panorama 2017, having not been paid for their participation in National Panorama 2016. Participants were required to choose from a scale of one to five, one being the lowest or least enthusiastic, and five being the highest, or most enthusiastic. The responses for this question were divided into two broad categories which consisted of participants who played with multiple bands, and participants that played with only one band.

There was a total of twenty-two participants who performed with multiple bands, among which thirteen of them participated in the panorama competition for monetary reasons. Out of this subset, most them were not enthusiastic about participating in National Panorama 2017 (response rankings between one and three). One of the most common reasons for the lack of
enthusiasm was that these participants were those who rely on players’ remittances as a source of income. There was a remaining minority of those who participated for monetary reasons, but were still enthusiastic about participating in National Panorama 2017, although having not received their remittances for National Panorama 2016 (response rankings between three and five). A common trend among this subset of participants was that they participated in panorama for various reasons, apart from the financial gain such as experience and recreation. Seven respondents participated in National Panorama for reasons other than finance. Among these participants, the most common reasons for their participation were experience and career.

There were a total seven participants who performed with only one band. A general trend among this group was that they do not participate in the National Panorama for monetary reasons. All of the seven participants recorded that they participated for experience, recreation or passion for playing the instrument and consequently, all were enthusiastic about participating in National Panorama 2017, although they had not received their remittances for that of 2016.

Participants were also questioned about whether they believed that Pan Trinbago was entirely responsible for the delayed payment of players’ remittances. Nineteen out of the twenty-nine participants agreed that the delay in payments was entirely Pan Trinbago’s fault, five believed that they were not entirely responsible and the remaining five participants were uncertain of what factors were responsible for the delayed payments of players’ remittances. Of those who placed the entire responsibility of the delayed payments on Pan Trinbago, the most common reason was that the association is guilty of the mismanagement of funding as a direct result of the corruption that exists among the members of the Central Executive. Among those participants who believed that Pan Trinbago was not entirely responsible, the most common reason was that the Government was also at fault, due to the issue of late payments. Those
participants who expressed their uncertainty on the matter mentioned that they had not been aware of the allegations of corruption and mismanagement that were made against Pan Trinbago.

Finally, participants were asked to give their opinion on the decision made by Dr Nyan Gadsby-Dolly to hand over the management of the Panorama gate receipts to the National Carnival Commission. Among those who responded to this question, the majority acceded to the decision made by Dr Gadsby-Dolly explaining that the NCC appears to be adequate in their operations of organising and managing the events of Carnival every year, which makes them competent as holders of the gate receipts. Some even suggested that the decision would go so far as to allow pan players to feel respected, as the remittances may be issued within a reasonable timeframe. However, there were several participants who disagreed with this decision. A common reason for this disagreement was that there is no guarantee that the NCC would handle the funding any more responsibly than Pan Trinbago.
Chapter Three

Discussion

Keith Diaz is Elected President of Pan Trinbago.

Keith Diaz was elected President of Pan Trinbago in October of 2009, at the Triennial Special Convention hosted by the association every three years, as the name suggests, in accordance with the constitution, at which the executive body is re-arranged through a process of nominations and elections. Prior to 2009, Patrick Arnold held the position of President of the association and had once again entered his nominations to run for President, along with Keith Diaz and Bryon Serrette. In a recent interview with Bryon Serrette, former Vice President of Pan Trinbago, Serrette recalls “as a matter of fact in 2009, I had also put in a nomination to be President, but there were some issues in respect to the validity of the nominations.” Although Mr. Serrette had not disclosed which of the regulations the nominees had failed to observe, he gave sufficient details of the process prior to President Diaz’s triumph in the elections of 2009.

Well two things happened. One: the secretary at the time indicated that the nominations—my nominations, some of Diaz’s and Patrick Arnold’s were not valid and I agreed. However, Patrick Arnold did not agree and he started legal procedures in respect to that. What happened was that on the day of the election, to forestall any legal things taking place, the general membership said: “Well look anybody who put in nominations for any position would be able to stand,” so they set aside what was in the constitution. (Serrette, Interview)

With respect to elections, the constitution outlines various regulations that each member of the association should comply with in order to be deemed legible as a candidate for nomination. Hence, Serrette’s argument was that while the Central Executive had the authority
to make to modify any given part of the constitution, as it is written in Article 18- Review and Amendment of the constitution, “The provisions of this Constitution may be modified, altered or amended by two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of all registered and certified delegates of members and member bands entitled to attend and vote at a meeting of the Convention or Special Convention of the Association,” he was not in agreement with modifying the constitution for the convenience of this specific election, which culminated in his decision to withdraw his nomination as President. He relayed the rest of his experience expressing that whilst the General Membership could make that decision, he could have accounted for himself, so as a matter of principle he withdrew his nominations for President, and ran for Vice President instead. Keith Diaz then became the President of the organization and Patrick Arnold lost the election.

What are the achievable goals of the association and what was the intended purpose behind setting those goals?

The Central Executive, under the leadership of Keith Diaz had generated a few achievable goals during past seven years. One of the first goals of the President, as stated by Bryon Serrette, was to complete the construction of a new Headquarters for Pan Trinbago in Trincity, which had started in the early 2000s by the previous administration. This new structure was to serve as a pan information centre, with an adjoining steelpan factory (Long, pp. 9). The cost for completion of this structure had accumulated to an estimated seven million dollars. which the Government had promised to cover as elaborated by Cherisse Moe, journalist of the Guardian newspaper: “Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar says Government has allocated $7 million for the completion of Pan Trinbago’s headquarters in Trincity” (Moe, pp. 1).
However, up to date the completion of Pan Trinbago’s new headquarters has been unsuccessful due to lack of funding and political will (Serrette, interview).

Another goal of the organisation, as mentioned by Mr. Serrette, was to encourage more steelpan playing throughout Trinidad and Tobago. “As a matter of a fact, we spoke it that we would like every day of the week in Trinidad and Tobago, there must be a steelband playing somewhere so that anybody coming could go,” explained a reminiscing Serrette on the matter. Similar to the opinion of Mr. Serrette was that of Nestor Sullivan, during a personal interview, regarding the goals of the Central Executive under the leadership of Arnim Smith during the 1980s. “When we had replaced the previous leadership, one of the faults of that leadership was that they were a Panorama Organization. After Panorama, you not hearing nothing” (Sullivan, interview). Hence, both administrations shared the opinion that steelpan playing should be a year-round activity, and made efforts to host events throughout the year such as the Steelband Music Festival, Champs in Concert, and other regional Jamborees.

A third goal of the association, as mentioned by Marcus Ash, current Secretary of the Eastern Regional Office of Pan Trinbago, in another recent interview, is globalizing the steelpan. “Pan Trinbago is fighting to establish an international steelpan body, because many people know Pan Trinbago as the ‘world governing steelpan body,’ but it really isn’t. It’s only the Trinidad and Tobago’s governing body for steelpan,” are the sentiments expressed by Mr. Ash concerning the association’s current global status. Aquil Arrindell, former Education Officer of the current Central Executive, stated during an interview that the purpose of this international movement was to “target the schools” of foreign countries, as music education, with the inclusion of steelpan, is spreading throughout United States and the rest of the world. Satanand Sharma, Lecturer in Music Education of the University of the West Indies also made mention that the
steelpan “has been accepted as an effective medium for music making in the public education system in North America, Europe, and the Caribbean” (1).

Self-sufficiency and independence is a final goal that was commonly shared among the four interviewees that formed part of Pan Trinbago’s internal membership. For Pan Trinbago to be able to function as the ‘World Governing Body of Steelpan,’ they must be able to financially support themselves, desirably to the point where Government funding and corporate sponsorship are auxiliary, rather than primary. In relation to the theme of a self-sufficient association, Marcus Ash expressed that Pan Trinbago should not be in any position to be seeking “hand-outs” from the Government. Anthony Blackman, journalist of the Guardian newspaper also argued in his article that Pan Trinbago’s “track record” and “balance sheet” should reflect an “enterprise” that is capable of governing steelpan across the world (B7).

What were the steps put in place to achieve these goals?

With the goal of accomplishing year-round steelband activities, Pan Trinbago has hosted a few annual events that occur throughout the year in order to showcase the capacity of the steelpan outside of the Panorama arena and the soca/calypso genre. The Steelband Music Festival is one of the most popular festivities arranged by Pan Trinbago and is second place to the National Panorama. Nestor Sullivan recalls that the Music Festival was one of the products of the association’s striving toward self-reliance.

The responsibility for the Pan Movement started with us, so we had to depend on ourselves first to make the first move and then we could engage with other people outside of the movement. So that was the theme of the operations. The festival was a part of that (Sullivan, interview)
Another event that was hosted by Pan Trinbago during the term of Arnim Smith was “Pan Through the Eyes of the Calypsonians” which was a commemoration of the history of the steelpan and its transitional stages, from African drums to “tamboo bamboo,” to metal tins and finally to the steel drum (Nestor Sullivan, interview). It seems however, that the current administration has been primarily focused on the National Panorama competition as there had not been any records of the usual annual festivities over the past year.

Pan Trinbago hosted The International Conference and Panorama (ICP) from 4th-9th August 2015, as the major initiative put forward to achieve the goal of establishing an international steelpan body. Aquil Arrindell related that the ICP came off quite successfully. “It was a premier event, having possibility of being the ‘World Cup of Pan,’ and there is a lot of success behind it” (Arrindell). The conference had been arranged by two committees- the International Conference and Panorama (ICP) and Pan Trinbago. The event consisted of a variety of workshops and conferences with featured international and local speakers, working toward the global development of steelpan, and ended on Sunday 9th April with the International Panorama Competition, which consisted of a mixture of local and international bands of various sizes.

Marcus Ash also shared his opinions on the idea of this initiative. “When it comes to the execution of the event, I think the International Panorama went well. The actual event itself went smoothly and it successfully happened” (Ash, interview).

Various initiatives were also taken in efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and independence. The association indulged in a variety of fundraising activities in order to generate funding for the operations of the association. “They formed PANVESCO, which was an organisation created to give loans to steelband institutions for a lower interest than bank rates. So, Pan Trinbago profits and bands also have it easier” (Ash, interview). He also mentioned that
Pan Trinbago had formed a company with the Trinbago Unified Calypsonians Organisation (TUCO) and the National Commercial Bank (NCB) to launch a new bottled water. Bryon Serrette added to this list of initiatives, as he had taken up the position of the Event Manager of the Central Executive and had been responsible for organising some of the fundraising events. “Well of course you heard about “The Greens.”\(^2\) They didn’t know what it was, and there I came with this thing and it made a set of money for them, so they were happy.” recalled the former Vice President of the association. He also mentioned that Pan Trinbago had hosted a concert series called “Pan in De Countryside,”\(^3\) which was also to be geared toward generating funding for the association, but instead resulted in a loss, as it was a “money-spender” more than a “money earner” (Serrette, interview).

*What are some of the challenges faced by the association in the process of achieving its goals?*

Although Pan Trinbago had set off to achieve specific goals over the years, the fulfillment of these set goals have been affected by a variety of challenges that are both internal and external to the organisation.

Primarily, there seems to be a lack of unity among members of the association, as all the interviewees that were headed by Keith Diaz recorded that the aspect of decision making had always been a problem.

I have sat in meetings where the President has said, “Well the Executive has made a decision that…x,y and z,” and then I would see other persons from Central Executive looking at him like, “We did? Did we make that decision?” And the evidence was there.

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\(^2\) Annual festival hosted by Pan Trinbago alongside the National Panorama Competition, that is filled with Carnival festivities and live performances, as an attempt to attract the youth and generate revenue for the association.

\(^3\) Annual celebration, usually hosted at various rural areas throughout Trinidad, at which steelbands are invited to perform their repertoires.
If you speak to Cindy Rosemin or Aquil Arrindell, who recently resigned a month or two ago- they resigned about three days apart. Ask them! (Ash, Interview).

While Marcus Ash still holds the position of Secretary of the Eastern Regional Office, Bryon Serrette and Aquil Arrindell, who sat on the Central Executive Board, sent in their resignation letters a few months apart. Serrette, who resigned in November 2016, also commented on the issue of decision-making as he recalled that when Keith Diaz had become the President of the association in 2009, he had his own manifesto which contained his personal goals for the association, and other members of the executive had their own goals. It appears that this sort of individualistic thinking had already sprouted at the beginning of the current administration’s term in office and continued all throughout the duration of their leadership. Aquil Arrindell who had only joined the association in October 2015 explained that there has been a lack of communication even in understanding the operations of the association. “This is one of Pan Trinbago’s faults. Even being there, one does not know how things are run. There is no introduction in respect to someone going around with you in the office if you need to get something done. You have to figure it out on your own” (Arrindell, interview).

As the criticisms against the Central Executive by the steelpan fraternity suggests, Pan Trinbago has been accused of mismanaging funds and breeding corruption within the association. Among the twenty-nine participants who completed the questionnaire, several of them had shared the opinion that the Central Executive uses the funds they generate from fundraising events, and the subventions they receive from the Government for their personal benefit. One participant commented that the delayed issuing of pan players’ cheques following National Panorama 2016 was due to the squandering of the organisation’s funds on the part of the President. Another participant stated that the association is known for “frivolous spending,
poor budgeting and the tendency to elect incompetent individuals.” While the criticisms made against Pan Trinbago are the opinions of individuals external to the association, the opinions of present and past executive members did not seem to differ from those of the steelpan fraternity. Bryon Serrette confirmed through the results of his investigations on the association’s expenditure, that the President was guilty of squandering Pan Trinbago’s funds, unknowing to the members of the Central Executive. “When I showed the treasurer what he was paying for, he was in shock. He didn’t know. He knew that there was a car involved, but he didn’t realise that he had paid for another car” (Serrette, interview). Also, Nestor Sullivan criticized the concept of the members of the Central Executive being paid by the organization.

“In the earlier days, in my time we got our income from the public service, but now Pan Trinbago pays the President $75,000.00 a month. The monthly wage bill of the present organization is $300,000 dollars. If you examine what services we get, what is it equal to? That other side of the equation is questionable” (Sullivan, interview).

**Did Pan Trinbago achieve its set goals?**

Regarding goal of achieving an increase in steelband performances throughout the year in Trinidad and Tobago, Serrette gave a positive report. “We wanted to have more pan playing in Trinidad and Tobago, which we more or less achieved. That’s something that we all agreed on (Serrette, interview). However, presently it seems like Pan Trinbago has gone back to what Nestor Sullivan described as a ‘Panorama Organisation,’ as there has not been any record of steelband events hosted by Pan Trinbago after “Pan in De Countryside,” which took place 16th March 2016.
Another potential achievement had been the International Conference and Panorama (ICP), hosted in August 2015, with the goal of establishing an international steelpan body. “The ICP was one of the fruits of the idea of establishing the international body. I do not know where that idea is going right now” (Serrette, interview). Marcus Ash also commented on the progress of the ICP. “Because Pan Trinbago’s name is in the mud, it’s much harder than it would have been before. It was the right start, but it’s a bit dirty now with the way things have turned out within the past few months” (Ash, interview).

The final goal that Pan Trinbago had hoped to achieve was to become a self-sufficient organisation. They had put forward various initiatives to achieve this, most of which consisted of several fundraising strategies. It remains however, that Pan Trinbago is heavily dependent on funding from the Government and the corporate sector. “The majority of the executive are very happy to still be receiving funds from the Government” (Serrette, interview). Presently, it is evident that over the seven-year period, Pan Trinbago’s Central Executive was not able to achieve most, if not all its set goals. Because the progress of the association has now become stagnant, its membership, as well as the pan fraternity are now calling for the President and his band of executives to resign. “You want to get something done, but sometimes the best way to get it done is to just move aside. I can’t guarantee that any clear goal that was set was achieved. There is a lot more work to be done for that” (Ash, interview).
Conclusion

The intended purpose of this Caribbean Studies Research Project was to evaluate the contribution of Pan Trinbago towards the promotion and development of the steelpan over the seven-year period of 2009 to present, under the administration of Keith Diaz. Keith Diaz was elected as President of Pan Trinbago in October of 2009 and is currently still the President of the organisation. Under his leadership, Pan Trinbago put forward a number of initiatives that were expected to elevate the current prestige and status of the steelpan instrument in the global environment. As Trinidad and Tobago is the birthplace of the steelpan, one of the goals of the association had been to establish themselves as the world governing body responsible for the success and prosperity of the artform, and controlling the operations of steelpan throughout the world. In order to achieve this overall objective, Pan Trinbago began to work towards becoming a self-sufficient organisation, forming a global steelpan fraternity and placing Trinidad and Tobago on the map as the main producer of steelpan music. However, as a consequence of inefficiency and impropriety within the association’s core body, which is the Central Executive, Pan Trinbago has not been successful in accomplishing all of its set goals and objectives. The steelpan fraternity and the Government have lost confidence in the competency of the association to carry on its operations. Results from the last Independent Audit, that was carried out with regards to the Pan Trinbago’s funding, revealed that the association was on the verge of insolvency.

During the data collection process, the research presented several limitations with respect to acquisition of both primary and secondary sources. One of the limitations to the study was that there exist limited credible sources that provide information on the topic of the operations of Pan Trinbago. Majority of the data was collected through the interviews that were conducted throughout the research. It was evident that the chosen topic of research was not a common topic
of discussion. Another limitation to the research was the lack of willingness and availability among current members of the Central Executive to share their perspectives on the allegations and accusations that had been made against Pan Trinbago. The distribution of questionnaires for quantitative analysis also presented various limitations. A total of forty questionnaires were distributed and only twenty-nine out of the forty were returned and completed. Also, while analysing the questionnaire responses, I noticed that several open-ended response questions were left blank, which posed various restrictions in the process of data analysis.

To this date, Wednesday 19th April 2017, investigations are still ongoing concerning the current state of the association. It seems thus far that the allegations of squandering, mismanagement and corruption made against Pan Trinbago, by members of the steelpan fraternity have been confirmed, as revealed by the some of the former executive members of the association who recently resigned, but the steelband movement is still awaiting official confirmation from the authorities that have been assigned to conduct investigations on the operations of Pan Trinbago. Meanwhile, Pan Trinbago’s operations are at a standstill as their backs are against the wall. The Central Executive has lost the support of the members of the steelpan fraternity and also of its own internal membership.
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