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MUSIC FOR STEEL BAND:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE VARIOUS STYLES
WHICH DEVELP SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE SKILLS.

By
David Brian Walton, Jr.

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A Document Submitted to the Faculty of the
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1996
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the document prepared by David Brian Walton, Jr. entitled MUSIC FOR STEEL BAND: AN EXAMINATION OF THE VARIOUS STYLES WHICH DEVELOP SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE SKILLS and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

Final approval and acceptance of this document is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the document to the Graduate College.

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SIGNED: Doe Walton
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ABSTRACT

The steel band is one of the fastest growing ensembles in university and school settings. There are many types of steel bands and several different approaches to how the ensemble is taught, the styles of music that are taught and the reasons why those styles of music are presented.

This document is directed toward instructors and students at institutions that have or intend to have a steel band as a regular rehearsing and performing ensemble. This research work will assist in understanding the styles of steel band music, the various methods by which those styles may be taught and what music performance skills will be exercised and developed by different styles and different presentations.

The history of the steel band in Trinidad and the United States will be dealt with briefly. Latter portions of the document discuss the music performance skills that are exercised and developed by steel band experience, the different styles of music that a steel band rehearses and performs, the methods of music presentation possible within a steel band and the different performance skills that each type of presentation will favor. Also included are a glossary of steel band terms and a selected discography of exemplary steel band recordings.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The steel band is one of the fastest growing ensembles in university and school settings. Several major university music schools and conservatories count a full steel band among the regularly rehearsing and performing ensembles.¹ Many established steel bands enjoy a high level of performance success and are "an effective recruitment-promotion ensemble for the percussion department and the entire music department."² In spite of the success of these established steel bands there may often be a misunderstanding or misrepresentation about what constitutes a steel band, what educational purposes the steel band may serve and what types of music may be performed.

One aspect of the ensemble that receives the least amount of attention is the educational repertoire of the band and more specifically the consideration of why a steel band

rehearses and performs certain types of music. The different styles of music that a steel band may play are almost unlimited, and the level of quality and intellectual opportunity may range from simple tunes to sophisticated orchestrations, and from classical transcriptions to highly stylized arrangements and original works.

As of this writing there are no standardized instructional methods, published books or other media that deal directly with appropriate instruction for steel band in an institutional ensemble setting.

The proper integration of music and teaching methods must be offered to those who have started or intend to start a steel band. This examination and discussion is needed to enhance and assist the promulgation of the art form of steel band music as a whole, and in college and school percussion groups in particular. "The academic community, whether it be in a university or public school environment, must remain receptive to new information, teaching techniques, trends and

---

styles and must constantly strive for improved standards in teaching and learning."

A steel band may become enmeshed in performing a single type of music. In some instances this may be due to perceived limitations of the instruments or the performers, or it may be the result of a "musical prejudice" that insists that only a certain type of music is acceptable on steel drums. These orientations demonstrate a lack of materials and understanding of the musical benefits inherent in playing a variety of musical styles.

There is a need to develop an integrated collection of music styles and presentation methods which will address the steel band as a vehicle for instruction in an ensemble learning situation. The steel band offers several unique and creative opportunities for individual musical development, group growth and multi-cultural awareness. By taking advantage of the full possibilities of music for steel band

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members of the ensemble will be able to explore the following criteria:

Table 1: Music Ensemble Education Criteria

1. The intention of the ensemble and the performances.
2. The enhancement of rhythmic awareness.
3. The enhancement of aural skills.
4. The utilization of written music and the enhancement of reading skills.
5. The awareness of the musical function of an instrument, the surrounding instruments and the ensemble as a whole.
6. The use and encouragement of improvisation and composition.
7. The opportunity to develop alternate learning strategies and awareness of how students learn and grow through the presentation of different styles of music.
8. The benefits inherent in presenting the musical and cultural aspects not only of Trinidadian music but all world music.

Definition of a Complete Steel Band

A steel band is defined as an ensemble of chromatically tuned hand-crafted instruments made from fifty-five gallon barrels which cover the instrumental range of soprano, alto, contralto, tenor and bass. There are a variety of instruments available to make up a steel band and there are

\[5\] All of the goals listed above are in keeping with the Standards of Arts Instruction adopted by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC).
multiple names for each of the individual instruments. Some instruments may double the function of other instruments, and while new designs are constantly added, many ranges are standardized. For the purpose of this study the most common instruments and names will be referred to, which are:

Table 2: Instruments of The Steel Band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>No. of Drums per Inst.</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Tenor or Lead</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Tenor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>sop/alto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Seconds</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>alto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadrophonic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>alto/tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double or Triple Guitar</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>alto/tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple Cello</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Cello</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>tenor/bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor Bass</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>bass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The complete steel band should also feature a percussion section or "engine room" consisting of an iron (a metal instrument made from a car brake drum or an electrical junction box, played with steel rods and used as the primary timekeeper), drumset (also a primary timekeeper), congas, bottle and spoon and other assorted Trinidadian, Latin-

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American and African percussion instruments such as cowbells, shakers and scraped instruments.

**A Brief History of the Steel Band**

The steel band evolved from a mixture of African drumming traditions, French Mardi-Gras style masquerade balls, French Catholic religious festivals and East Indian holiday drumming processions. The island of Trinidad was ruled by many different European cultures during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries as the Spanish, French, English, and Dutch fought over and controlled the many islands of the Caribbean area. ¹

African slaves were brought to the islands beginning in 1530 to work the many plantations. The slaves were deprived of all links to their homelands and cultures, and often times the only reminders of the old life and religious rituals was to clandestinely play some drums that a few slaves had tucked away. As a result, the slaves brought with them to Trinidad

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several concepts of rhythm, melody and musical style from Africa.

In 1776 King Charles II of Spain (the Spanish ruled Trinidad at this time) granted Spaniards and particularly foreigners of the Catholic faith easy land grants on the island. These land grants allowed many French planters and settlers to relocate to Trinidad and establish French cultural practices on the island, with the aim of defending the island from British invasion.¹

The French Catholics brought to the island the calendar and religious celebrations of the Roman Catholic church. The religion of the ruling white classes was forced upon the slaves, with the result being the slaves blending their own deities and holy rites with the rituals of the Catholic church. Perhaps the most influential portion of the Ecumenical calendar was the pre-Lenten festivities known as Carnival (also known as Mardi Gras). Carnival is a two-day celebration which runs from midnight Jouvert morning to the dawn of Ash Wednesday. It was during Carnival that the

¹Anthony, 2.
slaves were allowed to celebrate, dance, play music, sing out and generally enjoy the relaxed mood of the celebrations without fear of remonstrance from the upper classes."

During the Carnival celebrations groups of musicians would parade in the streets making music to accompany the Mas' bands. Mas' bands, or masquerade bands, were groups of people that gathered together in similar costumes to portray a theme such as sailors, warriors of the past, the devil and his court and so forth. Mas' bands competed against each other for the title of the best band, and prizes were awarded to the top groups. "The dancing, singing, masquerading, parading and stick fighting all demanded musical accompaniment." The music that accompanied the bands was usually a group improvisation on African drums, shakers, reed flutes, conch shell trumpets, an occasional string instrument or whatever else was at hand.

The French (and indeed all of the various ruling cultures from Europe) provided the lower classes with

---

9Anthony, 2-3.
10Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 298.
11Ibid.
exposure to western European art music. As the lower classes began to emulate the mannerisms of the ruling elite they had the opportunity to experience European musical formats and harmonic structures. Many musicians of the barrack yards in Trinidad would ultimately integrate western European concepts of tonality with the traditional rhythm patterns of African heritage while playing Mas' during Carnival. This fusion of European harmony with African rhythm patterns would result in a new style of music called calypso.12

When Trinidadian blacks were finally freed from slavery in 1838 the plantation owners still required a labor force to work the fields. The newly freed blacks were hired at miserly wages and were still looked upon as a people of no importance. The plantation owners also began to bring indentured workers to the island, and the majority of the people indentured were of East Indian descent.13

The East Indians brought with them Tassa drumming, a type of music performed at Muslim Hosay religious festivals featuring very fast, danceable rhythms and percussive sounds. Tassa music also added to the melting pot of styles and celebrations of Carnival.  

Tassa drums are small, deeply shelled drums played with small sticks. The characteristic sound is a thin, high pitched sound that compliments the rhythmic style of Tassa drumming, which is very fast and energetic.

By the last decades of the 19th century a few blacks were performing music on some European instruments such as the violin or trumpet, but these instruments were expensive and hard to come by. Most festival celebrants would play music on whatever makeshift instruments they could put together on their own. There was some traditional African drumming also going on, but this was not to last.

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14 Thomas, "Steelband/Pan." 299.
"From the years of 1883 to 1934 the use of drums in street parades was outlawed since the colonialists feared that the passing of secret messages by means of drumming might become the impetus for social unity and revolt among the black [population]. The ban of drums led to the use of tuned bamboo sticks in street parades."\textsuperscript{15}

Bamboo was used as a replacement for the drums, with the resulting name of "tamboo bamboo" given to the new instrument and the band that was performing with bamboo. The name comes from a Creole alteration of the French word for drum, \textit{tambour}, thus "bamboo drum." "Tamboo Bamboo bands, though, did not exist prior to the suppressive legislation of 1884, and they appear to have been developed specifically to fill the need for a strong, rhythmic Carnival music that would not be restricted by any of the existing ordinances."\textsuperscript{16} Tamboo bamboo pieces are traditionally played by stamping the different length tubes on the ground, producing quasi-melodic drumming patterns. Many of the various types of bamboo were


\textsuperscript{16}Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 300.
also beaten upon with smaller sticks called cutters in order to create complex cross rhythm patterns.\textsuperscript{\textdegree}{17}

Many sources suggest that the tamboo bamboo bands were consequently outlawed due to clashes in the streets, and while the newspapers of the time do mention violence arising amongst various street bands, official police records do not show any ordinances dealing directly with a prohibition of bamboo as a musical instrument. Tamboo bamboo became the instrument of choice during several years of Carnival celebrations, but ultimately the tamboo bamboo bands were soon to be relegated to history. "It gradually succumbed to the lower class Carnival musician's inventiveness, resourcefulness and imagination."\textsuperscript{\textdegree}{18}

The beating of biscuit tins was introduced to Carnival celebrations by the late 1920's and soon the tamboo bamboo bands had become a mix of steel and bamboo. By 1934 there were a variety of small instruments being beaten within the bamboo groups. "As Tamboo Bamboo bands evolved, bands

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{\textdegree}{17}Eugene Novotney, "The Deepest Roots of Pan," PanLime November 1995: 4.\textsuperscript{\textdegree}{18}Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 301.}
eventually began mixing metal instruments such as salt boxes, biscuit tins, olive oil containers and tin pans with the bamboo." Biscuit tins and dustbin covers were often played by banging a small stick or a steel rod on the edge or side of the tin. A bottle beaten with a spoon, small pieces of iron and dustbin covers struck with sticks were also typical instruments found within the tamboo bamboo bands.

The roots of the steel band can be traced directly to a Masquerade band of Port-of-Spain called Alexander’s Ragtime Band. This group was formed in 1938 by the "Lord Humbugger" (Carlton Forde) and was the first group to perform exclusively on metal instruments. The primary reason for the formation of the all metal orchestra arose partially from the lack of good cane to be had that year and partially from the desire to create a louder din than other competing bands. The instruments collected by Forde were a motley assortment of trash can lids, biscuit tins, pitch oil cans, small pieces of an automobile (such as brake drums) and homemade

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19Novotney, "Deepest Roots..." 4.
instruments like maracas, colanders, cheese graters (used as scrapers) and the bottle-and-spoon.\textsuperscript{21} The all-steel group caused a sensation and the following year there were several all-steel groups on the road.

During the war years of 1942-1945, Carnival celebrations were banned due to wartime black-out procedures. No bands were allowed to take to the streets for Carnival festivities.\textsuperscript{22} As a result many Mas' band participants from all over Trinidad spent time working with steel instruments in the hope of making improvements. The person most noted for an improvement is Winston "Spree" Simon, who is said to have created the first true melody instrument from a biscuit tin.\textsuperscript{23} By hammering on the bottom face of the tin Simon was able to form convex areas that sounded like different pitches. His tin carried eight relative notes. Simon performed music by carrying the drum under one arm and tapping out short melodies with a stick in the opposite hand.

\textsuperscript{21} Goddard, Forty Years , 36-37.
\textsuperscript{22} Remy, Historical Background, 20.
\textsuperscript{23} Remy, Historical Background, 20.
At war's end in 1945 there was a spontaneous celebration in Trinidad and people took to the streets once more. The "melodic drum" was a new and exciting addition to street celebrations and within a year or so many players had roughly tuned metal vessels upon which short melodies could be played. "A simple melodic motif containing a limited number of pitches was then chosen from a current calypso, a Christian hymn or other popular or folk song." Soon individual players were combining to together to form larger groups of iron bands that could play simple tunes.

The early steel groups began to compete for titles and prizes in a manner similar to the Mas' bands. Competition forced bands to add new sounds, play new, longer melodies and add harmony. Through constant demand and innovation the art of steel drumming began to evolve. The steel drums became larger, carried more notes and players began to accompany each other with simple harmonies. By this time the steel drum also acquired its original name: Pan. The name "pan" soon began to mean any type of tuned steel drum.

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24 Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 303.
By the late 1940's most mas' bands featured full ensembles made up mainly of melodic and harmonic pans plus the traditional percussion instrument such as scrapers, shakers and the iron. These ensembles are the first true steel "bands" that led to the full scale steel orchestras of today although all of the instruments of the late 40's were still made of small barrels such as biscuit tins, caustic soda pans or zinc oxide drums.\textsuperscript{25} The instruments were carried by means of a strap or string that went around a player's neck and allowed the performer to use both hands to play. This approach to playing has since been called "Pan-Around-the-Neck."

Over the years further improvements were brought about, including rubber strips added to the tips of the sticks or mallets in order to produce a mellower tone, and the creation of instruments of strictly harmonic function such as the dudup, chufay, balay and slap bass. Many of the names for

\textsuperscript{25}Novotney, \textit{Deepest Roots}, 5.
the pans were derived from onomatopoetic sounds that the instruments made. 

The single most important innovation in pan building was the decision to make a pan from a 55 gallon barrel. Some authorities ascribe this decision to Anthony Williams while other historians favor pan innovator Ellie Mannette. Mannette had improved pan building by sinking the bottom of biscuit tins in a concave shape, thus allowing the player to reach more notes quickly and easily. Regardless of who actually chose the barrel, by using a 55 gallon barrel pan builders introduced a vessel that was made of better quality metal, was more durable and could accommodate a larger range of notes. "1947-49 were the last years of the small melodic steel pan; in 1948 the 55 gallon oil drum finally replaced the biscuit tin as raw material for all the voices of the ensemble. The first fourteen-note steel drum with chromatic tones was developed." 

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26 Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 305.
27 Kronman, Steel Pan Tuning, 11.
The first bass pans were designed and added to the steel ensemble by Ellie Mannette, under the direction of Police Band director Joseph Griffith, who was asked to lead the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO) in 1950. TASPO was a collection of the ten top pan players from rival groups, formed as one band and taken to England to represent Trinidad and Tobago at the Festival of Britain. Griffith realized that in order to perform a large repertoire the quality of sound must be improved and the range of the drums needed to be increased. "TASPO featured expanded sets of the tenor- and bass-voiced pans (a set of two tenor booms rather than one tune boom; a set of three bass booms rather than two) and improved quality of construction material."^28

The chromatic steel drums crafted from 55 gallon barrels continued to be improved upon by Ellie Mannette, Perry Thomas and other innovative tuners. Pans were sunk deeper to accommodate the increasing range of notes on each instrument. By 1952 the first double pans were created, which eventually necessitated the formation of stationary stands to hang

individual drums on. This eliminated the pan-around-the-neck approach to playing.

Another major turning point for the steel band was the change in set up of the pans. By 1957 pans were being mounted in rolling racks that allowed for greater mobility and complete set-ups for multi-pan players. For example, a single bass player was now able to perform on a complete chromatic setup consisting of as little as six and as many as ten drums. Thus, the old bands of players carrying a single drum each were replaced by fully voiced ensemble of up to 100 players that could explore a large range with greater dexterity.

The final major turning point in the evolution of pan was the development of harmonic tuning, or the addition of the overtone series in each note of the drum. This method of tuning was first perfected by Bertie Marshall during the mid-1960's when he created the Double Tenors. Tuning in this way allowed for new and unique timbres to be explored and

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29 Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 309.
30 Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 309.
utilized by arrangers, and the stage was set for the modern steel orchestra.

Developing in Trinidad along with the steel drum itself was the organization of steel drum players. By 1950 the first official leadership of pan players was being organized in Trinidad. Competitions to raise public awareness and to promote the art of steel drum playing and craftsmanship were organized, and by the late 1950s the primary governing body of the steel band movement was called Pan Trinbago. The Pan Trinbago organization helped to bring respect to the steel drum movement and also assisted in setting standards for pan competitions, unifying performance fees for the bands and soloists and the general approach to steel drum playing.31

The Rise of College Steel Bands in the United States

Beginning in the 1960's there were several isolated instances of steel drums being used in random percussion ensembles or as "color" instruments for special jazz band or percussion ensemble works. There were no officially

31Goddard, Forty Years, 61.
sanctioned college steel bands in the United States until the early 1970's. Howard University in Washington, DC boasted a group of West Indian students who had put together a small pan group in 1963 as a means of supporting their studies but this group was a private ensemble.

The first officially sanctioned college steel bands in the United States were started by 1972. One band was founded at the University of Colorado at Boulder and the other was founded at Northern Illinois University at Dekalb.

The first college steel band was started in 1972 by John Galm, Professor of Percussion studies at the University of Colorado in Boulder. The drums were purchased by Galm (without financial assistance from the university) from Trinidadian builder Vernon "Birdie" Mannette, brother of pan innovator Ellie Mannette. "Galm initiated the steel band as adjunct to the percussion ensemble."32 Today, this band consists of about six to eight players and is an integral part of ethnic studies in music at UC- Boulder.

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The steel band at Northern Illinois University was founded by G. Allan O'Conner, Director of Percussion Studies. The band began rehearsing in the fall of 1972 on a full set of instruments that were purchased in Aruba, a small island country in the Caribbean ocean. O'Conner had given money to a student who was traveling to Aruba, and he asked the student to pick up a set of steel drums. "Initially, the steel band started as a part of the percussion program."\(^{33}\) The band performed regularly on percussion ensemble concerts. Based upon student and audience reaction O'Conner began to realize the potential of the ensemble from several different educational points of view.

With the help of colleagues in the Music School a curriculum was proposed that would develop ethnic music performance ensemble courses. "The course was approved and by 1974 O'Conner had organized and developed three steel bands."\(^{34}\) In 1987 the Board of Regents allowed a curriculum with a performance degree that featured steel drums as the


\(^{34}\)Parks, "The Steel Band", 23.
focus instrument. A student in the program is required to demonstrate performance proficiency on all steel drums as a soloist and in ensemble, shall be able to teach steel band, arrange or compose for various size groups of pans and will demonstrate knowledge of the building and tuning of pans.

Currently each of the bands at NIU boasts enough instruments for at least 20 players and more instruments are being added at regular intervals.

As a result of these two pioneering groups, steel bands at the college level have begun to flourish. "A strong pan movement...continues to develop in universities and colleges of the United States."\(^{35}\) A few of the many institutions that have established programs include: "University Of Illinois, Urbana IL, (1977); the Oberlin Conservatory at Oberlin, OH (1978); the American Conservatory of Chicago (1980); The University of Akron in Ohio, (1980); Lamar University of Beaumont TX (1981), The University of Arizona (1987)" and many other groups far too numerous for inclusion here.\(^{36}\)

\(^{35}\)Parks, Role, Function and Value, 20.
\(^{36}\)Remy, "Establishing a Steel Band..." 24-26.
As of 1993 there were approximately 50 full scale established steel bands at universities and colleges around the country, with approximately four to seven new bands being founded each year. The steel band is becoming a standard ensemble in collegiate music programs.
CHAPTER II: PERFORMANCE SKILLS

The Intent of the Ensemble

The purpose a music ensemble serves in an educational setting should be of primary concern in determining what music is selected for rehearsal and performance, how music is presented, taught and rehearsed and the ways in which students learn and grow from the study and experience. "Why have a steel band?" "Are there useful learning opportunities and growth experiences offered by the steel band that justify teaching the course?" These and other questions lead to the consideration of whether the class may serve as a viable approach to music education.

Several bands have been established to augment an existing percussion program, and many programs take advantage of the opportunities for multi-cultural learning, public outreach and recruiting that a steel band offers. "The steel band is...an excellent ensemble for promoting/recruiting on behalf of the university or college percussion program and music department." 37 However, there are many factors that

37 Parks, Role, Function and Value, 33.
exist within a rehearsal situation that allow for deeper study into the nature of what experiential learning may occur.

Most music ensembles exist to serve numerous purposes including the exploration of the aesthetics of music, the awareness of art for art's sake, the discovery of personal learning strategies, new methods of communication and the development of specific performance skills.\textsuperscript{38} The steel band is no different from other music ensembles. In fact, the steel band offers concentrated focus on certain music skills that other groups may not offer.

Several steel drum ensembles exist as vehicles for community outreach, incorporation of staff and faculty in campus events, or as rewards or diversional meetings for groups of advanced players. Still other ensembles have been founded initially to serve a larger ensemble, (i.e., some steel bands have been established only to function as the front-line section for a marching drum line). If a steel

band is merely to be used for brief novelty appearances on percussion ensemble concerts, or if the group exists solely to occupy the time of a certain collection of players during the "off season" of another ensemble perhaps individual student growth is not of concern for the music director. Ensembles that serve some function other than direct student growth and experience are beyond the scope of this discussion.

The Enhancement of Rhythmic Awareness and Ability

Most steel band music has deep connections to African drumming; therefore, the first musical dimension considered is rhythmic awareness and ability. Each player must either already possess or else quickly develop a strong sense of inner time and the ability to perform well all common rhythms and complex cross rhythms.

Kinesthetic reinforcement through the playing of a percussion instrument tends to assist in the development of an inner timing sense. The simple act of striking a percussion instrument often stimulates the performer to
become more cognizant of his or her own physical being. "Furthermore, a sensitive awareness and synthesis of kinesthetic experiences (sensations perceived from movement, position and tension in the parts of the body)...facilitate the learning and development of playing skills." This increased awareness allows the performer to realize and develop a sense of inner time and then function within and contribute to the community timing called for in ensemble performance.

For most players the inner timing sense will be further developed and refined through the performance of ostinati based on the indigenous rhythm patterns of calypso, soca, reggae and Latin-American music. Learning such patterns requires each member of the group to internalize pulse reliance and then contribute to the energy and drive of the music during performance. There is a common vocabulary of "basic patterns" inherent to much steel band music that each player must learn and internalize in order to perform quality steel band music correctly (see Table 3).

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39 Cook, Teaching Percussion, 3.
Many of the rhythm patterns for calypso, soca, and Latin-American music are considered somewhat difficult by inexperienced players. Several of the patterns may seem inordinately complex at first consideration, but with patience and practice most musicians will develop the ability to perform the patterns easily. When the patterns have been internalized then the process of creating a "groove" or feel may be approached.
Good musicians have always been aware of the musical value of adding phrase weight or agogic stress to a pattern of notes, whether those notes occur melodically or only rhythmically. When specific agogic stress is added to an ostinato pattern a natural phrase structure begins to assert itself. Agogic stress may be applied to the beginning, middle or end of an ostinato pattern, and by doing so a player has the ability to control and define a musical line, create a groove and make a musical statement. "Subtle nuances in the actual rhythmic placement of notes in the measure and between the beats help to create a better musical performance." 40

Consider the following passage:

Example 1

\[ \text{Example 1} \]

\[ \text{mf} \]

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40Cook, T.P., 93
If one were to add certain inflections and stresses to the same passage, such as:

Example 2

\[ \begin{array}{cccccccc}
\text{\textit{mf}} \\
\text{\textbf{A}} & \text{\textbf{A}} & \text{\textbf{A}} & \text{\textbf{A}} & \text{\textbf{A}} & \text{\textbf{A}} & \text{\textbf{A}} & \text{\textbf{A}} \\
\end{array} \]

a natural sense of forward motion becomes apparent, and the passage flows and grooves. Phrasing, groove and musical line become even more important as complimentary rhythms are stacked together to create polyrhythms within the ensemble.

Since much steel band music relies on a driving rhythm it is not enough for a player merely to "play the right notes" in the correct rhythm. Phrasing is an important part of any music making and in highly rhythmic music an awareness of phrasing contributes toward the rhythmic drive and the "feel" of the piece. "The impelling motive behind musical performance is self expression that stirs the listener to some sort of emotional response—the most undesirable response being indifference."\(^4\) Energy and excitement in music can be

build or diminish merely by how well the band interprets and performs a certain type of rhythmic feel. The individual player must develop the manual and mental agility to perform and phrase complex patterns with a groove while at the same time be cognizant of the harmonic and melodic structure.

**The Enhancement of Auditory Skills**

Playing in a steel band offers many unique ways for performers to explore aural skills such as melodic recall, chord structure and function, voice leading within chord progressions and melodic and rhythmic improvisation.

**Melodic recall**

Melodic recall will be enhanced to a large degree through the experience and instrumental performance of new melodies, counter-melodies and chord voicing.

Lead pan players will need to learn the melodic line quickly in order to perform the "tune" accurately, phrase as a section and lead the rest of the ensemble. During the rehearsal of a piece in which the ensemble strums chords the players will be required to recognize and perceive form of
the melody in order to progress through the form of the piece. A quick way to enhance melodic recall is call-and-
response teaching, where the players hear a short melodic motive played and then work out the passage on their own instrument. Scalar passages are usually the easiest to find, followed by motivic material that has small leaps or skips.

In much steel band music the writing for each instrument features melodic ostinati or "riffs." Table 4 illustrates a few common steel drum riffs. By learning common ostinati and by focusing attention upon how riffs or simple melodies interrelate, pannists learn to expand their awareness of the various component parts of a work.
When learning a new work, all ensemble performers must develop or already have strength in melodic recall and awareness of group performance while maintaining their own part. The fact that much steel band music is new to the players assures that they will need to focus intently in order to perceive the melody and the form of the work.

In much music for steel band there are open solo sections or vamps where the majority of the group plays chord
progressions in specified rhythm patterns to support a soloist. The way for the group to progress in the form following the solo is to perceive that the original melody is being recapitulated.

Chord recognition

All of the pans in the ensemble may be used for harmonic support and as a result, pan performers must familiarize themselves with a wide variety of chords. Most players recognize simple chord progressions such as a ii-V-I or blues progressions, although some players may not comprehend more difficult progressions. Playing in a harmonic support situation allows many musicians who typically play only melodic instruments (such as flute or violin) the opportunity to discover first hand how an ensemble voice other than soprano or bass will affect a harmonic situation. This insight then carries over to performance in other ensembles such as orchestra or wind band and solo performances.

Music that features advanced chord changes allows performers to develop a better sense of recognizing and processing chord progressions as vertical structures and
harmonic complexes. Steel band experience offers many players the opportunity to augment auditory skills by experiencing new harmonic complexes and common harmonic progressions from a new perspective.

**Voice leading concepts**

In typical steel band music many of the voices are called upon to support the harmonic motion by a process called "strumming," similar to the way a guitarist strums chords. Strumming on a steel drum entails the rendering of two notes of a given chord by playing them in a particular rhythmic ostinato. Since the performer can only play two pitches of a chord at a time, there must be a split-second decision regarding which two pitches of a three-, four-, or multi-note chord to play, while at the same time realizing proper voice leading (the performance of three or four note chords by holding multiple mallets in each hand is an advanced technique that is not used extensively in ensemble pan playing).

When the chord progression is written out on a chart (see Example 3) the performer will develop the ability to
recognize the intended progression and also hear how the chord structure of a piece functions in relation to the melody. A chord chart will allow a performer to create simple counter lines to support the primary melodic line.

Example 3

A Veces Tu

In many types of steel band music the voice leading used in the strumming sections provides an intellectual challenge. A chord chart that does not suggest specific voice leading allows each player to experiment and derive unique voice progressions. Concepts of voice leading may be explained to the beginning ensemble so that new players gain familiarity with the pans. These voicing ideas may be established as
"rules" for certain sections so that beginning players may explore new music with relative ease and enjoy early success.

An easy (and standard) "rule of thumb" for sectional voicing of a chord chart arrangement would be as follows:

Table 5: Steel Band Voicing by Section

**Bass, Tenor Bass** - Root and fifth of a chord as a simple bass pattern in a particular rhythm, such as quarter notes or other predetermined rhythm pattern.

**Cello, Guitars** - Strum root and fifth of chords in a given rhythm.

**Seconds, Guitars** - Strum root and third OR third and fifth, whichever combination is lowest in the range of the pan.

**Double tenors** - Strum third and fifth OR root and third OR third and seventh of a four note voicing; again determined by whichever combination is lowest in the range.

**Tenors** - If a player is not playing the written melodic line then that player should choose whatever chord tones lay in the lowest range possible so as to avoid interfering with the melody or soloist.

Certainly the sectional voicing chart above is not the only way to voice the ensemble.42 Taking simple voicing ideas a step further, the cellos, guitars and quads may use

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the intervals of major and minor sixths, a voicing derived from root and third or third and fifth of a chord. This "wide" voicing on the lower pans lightens the texture so that voices move with greater fluidity, and this structuring will result in voice leading that is smooth, full sounding and pleasing to the ear.

The double pans may create broader harmonic textures by voicing the third and seventh (or ninths) of chords and resolving them according to typical voice leading conventions (seventh down by diatonic step, etc.). By giving the basic voice leading of sixths to the cellos and guitars, the double seconds and double tenors then have the opportunity to play more of the "color" tones of complex chords such as dominant function chords, suspension chords and elaborate "jazz" extensions such as ninths, elevenths and so on.

Obviously the bass line will become far more interesting simply by utilizing other notes of the scale, especially leading tones that resolve into the next chord. Making use of standard bass patterns would depend upon the style of the
piece or if there is an existing prominent bass part (as in the case of a reggae tune).

The use of conventional voice leading practice will allow players to reinforce in their own minds (and ears) standard music theory practice that has been learned in class lectures. Through discussion of voicing concepts and by requesting players follow specific stylistic strumming patterns a sense of theoretical reinforcement is created, requiring players to draw upon their own musical training in harmony and chord theory. Players often find that after a few rehearsals that they are better prepared for ear training, sight singing and voice leading practice since they have had the opportunity to cultivate and apply aural skills in a performance setting.

The sectional voicing practice listed above (Table 3) will work well in getting inexperienced pan players (who have some knowledge of chord theory) started quickly; although confusion may arise when traditional voice leading rules are requested. The creative and musical director (and player) will discover ways to combine traditional voice leading
practice with the voicing rules listed above in order to generate strumming that will exercise chord theory and aural skills and enhance musical performance.

**Improvisation**

Since much steel band music is derived from folk music origins many arrangements allow for creative improvisation. This improvisation can range from the creation of simple voice leading or counter-melodies (as discussed above in the voicing section) to open solos. Example 4 shows an open solo section from a popular steel band calypso.

**Example 4**

```
(open solo)
Bb    F7
G7    Cm7
C7    Gm7
Dm7    Em7
Dm7    C7
F7    Bb
F7    Bb
F7    Bb
F7    Bb
F7    Bb
F7    Bb
```
Many players possess interest in improvising on a steel drum. Allowing players to improvise encourages them to develop better listening skills, write new music, strive further with innate creative abilities and interact with other players in new ways and with new languages. "The study of jazz improvisation may in fact promote a clearer understanding of other musical styles." 41

Free improvisation should be a part of any instrumentalist's practice regimen, for this experience allows the player to enjoy the simple act of creation without inhibiting structures or guidelines. Each performer should be offered the opportunity to improvise music solely for the sheer joy of creative play. Creative thought directed towards combining melodies and sonorities can become an enlightening experience that works for the betterment of all who attempt it. Improvisation allows the individual to reach new heights of awareness while performing, which manifests better tone production, improved music reading, extended technical ability and a general rise in confidence as a

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41Lawn, Jazz Director's Manual, 73.
musician and performer. "There is no substitute for the creativity, sensitivity, originality and emotional involvement provided by jazz improvisation."  

**Enhancement of Reading Skills**

Steel band music offers a unique opportunity to advance sight reading skills. The general rhythmic drive of the music tends to reinforce beat or pulse awareness and helps to strengthen a player's inner timing sense. Basic rhythm patterns are easily interpreted and focused, and complex patterns may be learned at a faster rate since pulse awareness is such a prominent factor.

Sight reading will also be assisted by indigenous strumming patterns, common bass line constructions and melodic conventions. Many of these indigenous patterns are of a highly syncopated nature that may seem difficult to comprehend and perform, but with experience, faster recognition of complex rhythmic structures will develop. While many of these patterns are often non-traditional and non-predictable compared to typical western music (see

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Example 5), rhythmic perception and performance will increase over time, especially when performing typical western music patterns. Since several styles of steel band music feature similar ostinati, the performer will read and process written information much more clearly and easily through familiarity.

Example 5

Music reading in a group encourages musical growth and stimulates reading and instrument abilities by keeping the flow of reading constant and even. Reading in an ensemble setting also halts many individuals' hesitant "stop-and-go" method of learning a passage.
CHAPTER III: STYLES OF MUSIC

There are many different types of music that a steel band may perform and care should be taken that unique musical styles not be blurred together or mis-performed due to lack of understanding or perception. The study of all the different styles that are applicable to steel band requires interest and dedication not only from the director of the band but also from the players in the ensemble. Direct exposure to the original format of a unique style of music is essential in order to fully appreciate the tempi, scoring, rhythms, harmonies and most importantly the proper execution of a particular kind of music.

It cannot be stressed enough that each style should be thoroughly examined as a group in the classroom and individually by the director and players alike. Interest in developing awareness regarding several different types of world music is a necessity to perform new and different styles correctly and effectively. All members of the group must be encouraged to develop their own awareness of and individual tastes regarding a varied selection of soca,
calypso, reggae, Latin-American, European and American popular and classical music.

The following discussion of styles will assist in identifying the different types of music that a steel band may perform, but only through exposure to quality live performances and representative recordings in each style will the true nature of the unique music styles be absorbed and acknowledged.

**Trinidadian Calypso**

The most common style of steel band music is calypso. Developed in Trinidad, this popular song style combines the intense polyrhythmic grooves of African music with the harmonies and chord progressions of western art music. This form of song has developed from very simple tunes of African origin to the current trend of exciting and complex dance music that presents social commentary on events of the day in Trinidad.  

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45 Quevedo, Atilla's Kaiso, 2-13.
Calypso has roots in a wide mix of musical genres including African folk songs, slave work songs, religious hymns, insurrection chants, African dance accompaniments and 18th and 19th century French court dances, such as the Belair and Cariso.

The lyrics of early calypsos often dealt with political events of the day, although the inclination of more recent calypsonians is toward lyrics that feature a political or sexual double entendre. The best and most competitive calypsonians pride themselves on being able to spontaneously create lyrics about any given subject.4

When a steel band performs calypso music, rhythmic drive is of prime importance. The basic beat derives from the Shango dances of Africa, and is represented by a simple 2-over-3 polyrhythm played by the drumset. The drumset and engine room create a groove that sets up the basic feel of the piece (Example 6).

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4Quevedo, Atilla’s Kaiso, 22-26.
Patterns for inner voice strumming are derived from syncopated ostinats based on traditional African drumming patterns (See Chart 2 above). Melodic lines also are of a highly syncopated nature, reflecting the articulate speech patterns of Trinidad dialects.

Most calypsos do not feature extensive chord changes or extensive harmonies. The melody is primarily a vehicle to transmit information, and while rhythmic syncopation and inflection are important, the emphasis is on a basic concept of melodic line that will adapt to several verses of text.
Calypso music is a good vehicle to teach players about common Caribbean approaches to syncopation, stylistic points of Caribbean harmony and melody, basic groove and phrasing structures.

Soca

Soca music is the direct descendant of the traditional calypso merged with the influence of disco and blues music of the 1970's. The word "soca" evolved from the first two letters of the word calypso being added to the last two letters, although many sources also suggest that soca is a contraction of the words "soul calypso." The interest in high energy dance music with interesting lyrics and new sounds led to the development of soca from the calypso bands of Trinidad and Tobago. "[Soca] began to evolve during the mid-1960's as local studio musicians and calypsonians began to experiment with fusing musical ideas derived from [African] drumming ensembles.... tassa and other Indo-
Trinidadian styles...spirituals...and African-American music from the United States (disco, funk, r&b and jazz).  

Soca music is an intense dance-music, generally more energetic and exciting than calypso. Similar to calypso, soca lyrics are often charged with double meanings and skillful word play that make the music fun to experience on both intellectual and emotional levels. Typical soca music includes a wide variety of instrumentation including all manner of brass and wind instruments, strings, percussion and the latest synthesized and electronically sampled technology instruments.

For transition to the steel band, the predominant drumset rhythm of soca is taken from the blending of the standard calypso feel with a disco drum beat. The bass line is usually syncopated, although the most common bass pattern is derived from the last two eighth notes in a bar of 2/4 time. (See Example 7).

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47 Thomas, "Steelband/Pan" 326.
Steel band arrangements of soca music typically feature elaborate rhythmic interplay for the inner voices, with the most common rhythm being one of displaced eighth- and sixteenth-notes. The strumming patterns and much of the melodic material is extremely syncopated with an off-beat sixteenth-note feel that bring much energy and forward motion to the music. Many examples of soca music require the use of separate and distinctly different strumming patterns that will interlock to create an unique groove (Example 8). Often the melody will rhythmically anticipate the chord
progression, setting up a series of harmonic tensions that are resolved by the chord arrival on the next pulse.

Example 8

Due to the increasing competition of the calypsonians and the public's desire for a steady stream of new material, many soca tunes feature complex chord progressions and structural formats that have given rise to music of greater sophistication and quality. While several of today's calypso and soca artists utilize simpler chord progressions, many artists are taking note of harmonic structures used in jazz and are applying those structures and concepts to the soca (and calypso) idioms. The result is a creative, unique and exciting style of high energy music.

Both soca and calypso music are important musical styles to play in a steel band, for they are the music that had the
greatest initial impact on the steel band. Further, these two styles of music focus highly on developing rhythmic awareness, familiarity with advanced types of syncopation, groove and phrasing study. Calypso and Soca can also be used to exercise sight reading and improvisational abilities since they may feature interesting chord progressions and harmonic structures.

**Jamaican**

Reggae music has been a staple of steel band performance since the rise of reggae in the early 1960s. Reggae encompasses a variety of folk styles that grew out of the urban areas of Kingston, Jamaica, and has a unique musical history all its own that parallels the rise of calypso and soca. The melodies, harmonies and lyrics often reflect the nature and feelings of a people suppressed by economic and political upheaval. Reggae is "a mix of several styles of urban Jamaican popular music that is a synthesis of traditional African drumming, ska, and rhythm and blues. The
texture is characterized by a constant emphasis on offbeat rhythms."

In the early 1960s many artists and bands of Jamaica were performing and recording music that was very similar to the rhythm and blues music coming from the United States. The primary difference was that guitarists, instead of playing chords on the downbeat of the music, were strumming chords on the off-beat in order to create an original feel. This shift in rhythmic feeling, which gave the music a type of rocking feel, was named "ska." Much of the music that eventually lead to reggae has roots the blues oriented ska feel.

Today, reggae music is built primarily around the bass line and the drumming pattern. The more inventive the bass line, the more interesting the particular piece. Over time the boundaries that have musically defined reggae have stretched to include many drumbeats, tempi and styles, but the predominant indicator of reggae music has always been the

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off beat chord strumming or "skank." "The ramifications of this linger to this day; for, in one way or another, the after beat has remained the essential Jamaican syncopation." The playing of the chord progression off beat while the second beat of the bar is given the primary agogic (or downbeat) stress is what creates a unique musical feel.

A typical reggae feel has the rhythmic downbeat actually occur opposite the melodic downbeat (i.e., the bass drum is struck on beat 2 while the hi-hat reinforces the off beat skank of the strumming pattern in 2/4 time). Example 9 illustrates a common reggae drumset and bass pattern.

Example 9

Reggae music has become diversified and reflects many strata of pop music culture. The precursors and current styles of reggae include ska, rock steady, dance Hall, dub

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and the roots-rock movement. All of these different styles are divergent offshoots that have unique expressionistic abilities, yet each also has direct connections to the original rhythms and patterns of the early reggae artists.

As with calypso and soca artists, the majority of reggae artists rely on basic chord patterns, yet the demand for originality is leading composers toward a greater complexity of bass and melodic lines combined with interesting and challenging chord progressions.

Reggae music is an excellent vehicle for developing strong concepts of phrasing, ostinato patterns, rhythmic inter-relationships, phrase structure concepts, awareness of cross-rhythms, groove study and inner time reliance.

**Latin-American**

There are several distinct styles that have come to be associated as "Latin-American," though it is crucial to be aware that each style has a unique approach and rhythmic feel. The role of clave in all these styles is a key point that must be defined and explored in great depth.
Samba and bossa nova styles come from Brazil. Salsa styles such as son, son-montuno, rumba, afro, bolero, danzon, guajira, cha-cha, mambo, rumba, songo and guaguancó come from Cuban descent and work very well in the steel band, as do the plena and bomba of Puerto Rico and merengue of the Dominican Republic. Perhaps the two styles that are most familiar and accessible are the samba and the bossa nova, although all of the salsa styles are also excellent styles for teaching and performance.

Samba

Samba is a popular style of music from Brazil. The street parades of Mardi Gras in Brazil have the same ties to religious festivals and African drumming that Trinidad Carnival does. The music is designed to be played on the move and is intended to foster dancing. The most influential groups on the origins of samba are the Bantu and Yoruba tribes of Africa.\(^5^0\)

Samba bands are street bands made up primarily of percussion instruments. Typical instruments include the surdo (a large, double-headed drum played with a soft mallet in one hand and alternately muffled and opened with the opposite hand, producing a low pitch), the tamborim (a high-pitched, single-headed drum smaller than the tambourine and without jingles, played with a single stick), the repinique (a medium size double-headed drum high in pitch played with one or two sticks), the ganza (a metal tube shaker), snare drum (known as a caixa), the pandiero (a large metal-shelled tambourine requiring great dexterity and skill of the player), ago-go bells and the cuica (a single headed-drum with a stick attached to the head, the stick being pulled with a small cloth to allow friction to create melodic lines).

The basic patterns of sambas are derived from the patterns played by the surdo or "deaf man" drum. All of the rhythmic passage work that makes up a samba are designed to mesh with and enhance the long-short, long-short feel of the surdo. Several highly syncopated ostinato patterns are added
to the principal surdo feel and lend much energy and excitement. The original all percussion samba orchestra is known as a "batacuda." (see Example 10).

**Example 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Serto</th>
<th>Loe Surdo</th>
<th>Canza</th>
<th>Tumborim</th>
<th>Casa</th>
<th>Ape go</th>
<th>Cuca (improvs)</th>
<th>Pandiero (improvs)</th>
<th>Repinique (improvs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the rhythm patterns used by the traditional *escola de samba* or "samba schools" translate easily into strumming patterns for the steel band and will create subtle effects with creative voice leading. The several different syncopated ostinato patterns, quite different from calypso or soca patterns, are designed to carry forward the motion of
the music, and the rhythmic feel of samba brings new vitality to the traditional collection of music that many steel bands rely upon. These rhythms will also be effective in reinforcing pulse perception and sight reading skills.

The bass pattern may vary but is generally derived from surdo patterns. The melodic lines of much samba music are often very syncopated and are derived from the patterns of the cuica, the repinique and the tamborim.

Harmonically, sambas can be simple or challenging. When the first jazz big band leaders began incorporating the samba feel into jazz music, they utilized many advanced progressions from bebop and cool styles, although less challenging progressions also work well and offer listening and perception goals to students.

Bossa Nova

"Bossa nova is a new style of samba that reflects some characteristics of cool jazz but is based upon popular Brazilian songs. " Distinct from samba music, bossa nova

music is Brazilian music that does not have a predecessor in street parade drumming; rather the rhythms of samba were modified and implemented in music composed specifically for melodic and harmonic instruments.

This style is often performed at slower tempi than traditional sambas. The harmonic progressions tend to be fuller and more complex. Bossa Novas also feature intricate melodic lines and rhythmic accompaniment. The intent of the early bossa composers was to slow down the traditional up-tempo feel of the samba while refining the emotional content in order to create a type of song that is very personal and intimate. Many bossas are written as love songs, and the instrumentation is usually small; in most cases just piano or guitar accompanying a vocalist to give the impression of an intimate soiree between a lovelorn couple.

Bossa tend to be very lyrical in nature and provide a good vehicle for the exploration of refined musicality, expressive counter lines, slow tempo control and finesse. The steel band may use this style as a means of exploring a

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52 Ponseca, Brazilian Rhythms, 8.
unique rhythmic feel while at the same time adding a genre of music that includes ballads and slow dance tunes.

**Salsa Styles**

Salsa is a general term that covers a broad range of styles. While the word *salsa* means simply "sauce," the word has recently become equated with many complimentary music styles from Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Son, son-montuno, rumba, danzon, afro, bolero, cha-cha, mambo, pachanga, guaguancó, guajira, bomba, plena, mozambique, merengue, conga-habenera and songo are all unique and exciting styles of music, each with a distinct feel and history.

The elements that form salsa music are as diverse and varied as those found in the evolution of calypso, reggae and samba. "Cuban music is a melting pot of African and European harmonies, melodies, rhythms and instruments." In this case the most influential rhythmic concepts stem from the African tribes of the Bantu, the Ewe-Fon and the Yoruba.

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The clave plays a unique and crucial role in the evolution, composition and performance of salsa music. The various parts that make up any particular style relate wholly to the orientation of the clave, be it a 3-2 pattern, or 2-3 (See Example 11).

Example 11

The three side of clave is considered the "strong" section of the two bar phrase, while the two note side is considered "weak." It is this contrast of strong/weak or tension and release that creates the unique foundation of any type of Latin-American music, and this perception of clave relates even to the basic composition of calypso, soca, samba and reggae music. Indeed, almost all forms of popular music from the regions of the Americas have the clave concept in their history.

There are different variations of the basic clave feel including son-clave, 6/8 clave, brazilian and rumba clave and all may be felt in either 3-2 or 2-3 patterns (Table 6).
Table 6: Types of Clave Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clave Type</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/8 Clave</td>
<td>[Diagram]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son Clave</td>
<td>[Diagram]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumba Clave</td>
<td>[Diagram]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian Clave</td>
<td>[Diagram]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the many styles listed above offer many opportunities to explore unique bass lines, strumming patterns, and melodic/harmonic structures that are original and challenging. While the list of individual styles is too large for discussion here, there are several basic factors that relate to the concepts presented with soca and calypso, reggae and samba and bossa nova.

Rhythmic ability will be developed and enhanced through the exploration of new and unique rhythm patterns. Harmonic structuring from simple to complex is a feature of all of the salsa styles, and the melodic lines of salsa music also offer interest and challenge to musicians.
Latin-American music provides the opportunity to experience cultural music different and yet related to Trinidadian music. The distinct ostinato patterns and intricate harmonic-rhythm structuring present new and challenging musical ideas to music students.

**Pop Music**

In this study, "pop music" refers to any type of music popular in the United States that features simple melodic lines, melodic ostinati or riffs, common chord changes and is based on rock-and-roll rhythm patterns. This includes most of the commercial music genres including Top 40, easy listening, disco, art rock, new age, jazz rock, grunge, rhythm and blues, fusion, alternative, heavy metal, rap, hip-hop and country-and-western.

Many pop pieces work well in the steel band genre since they feature familiar melodies, common phrase structures and are based on predictable forms. Most pop tunes are derived from folk music origins and rely upon riffs and melodic ostinati for germinating ideas. Most popular works also feature a straight-forward structure consisting of an
alternating verse and chorus layout. Typically, pop tunes are intended as dance music and thus make use of rhythmic styles different from world music styles that may be focused and studied. These aspects make transcriptions of pop tunes interesting for the band and audience and they are usually easy to put together and rehearse.

Since many music students will be playing rock oriented music in their own careers, the use of pop tunes will provide opportunity to experience and discuss what makes a good melody, a good rhythm feel and how to assess the difference between American popular music and the pop music of other cultures. This assessment and exposure will then allow for expanded awareness of new and different concepts of feel, groove and phrasing structure.

The impact of popular music has the effect of "recruiting" many listeners (and players) to the art of steel band performance. By including all styles of pop music there is an opportunity to reach a larger audience and potential performers. Through rehearsal and performance of pop music inexperienced players will relate to the group better since
playing music that is familiar eases concerns about ability. The change of attitude brought on by rehearsing a current hit tune can be valuable in getting the ensemble to work as a unit toward the goal of unified group performance. The use of pop tunes also offers the opportunity of reinforcing ear training and melodic recall since the music is readily familiar and not especially difficult.

**Classical Transcriptions**

Classical music has been associated with the steel drum since the inception of the first melody pans. In 1946 Winston "Spree" Simon performed on pan for the Governor of Trinidad, playing repertoire that included *Ave Maria* and *God Save the King*. In the 1950's the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO) traveled to England for the Festival of Britain and utilized several transcriptions of classical music to augment the bands' repertoire including *Serenata* by Tuselli, the *Cradle Song* by Brahms and the traditional melody *Drink To Me Only*.

Currently a music festival entitled "Pan Is Beautiful" is held every fall in Trinidad. The odd numbered calendar
years are designated as the National School's Steel Band Festival for children and the even numbered years are for the adult's pan festival and competition.\textsuperscript{54}

The adult festival includes a competition category for pan soloists, "old-time" pan-around-the-neck bands and a full steel band music competition. For the ensemble portion each full-sized steel orchestra performs a test piece (a new piece composed each year specifically for the competition and played by all competing bands) and a "Tune of Choice". Although each band may select from any type of style for the "Tune of Choice", most bands choose a classical transcription to show that they can perform "serious music" as well as popular works with variations.

"Pieces chosen in recent years, including Symphony \#4 in F minor, Op. 36 (1880) (Tchaikovsky), Symphony \#40 in G minor (1778) (Mozart), Billy the Kid Suite (1938) (Copland), and Rhapsody in Blue (1924) (Gershwin), indicate the degree to which the performance of Western art music has become a firmly rooted tradition within Trinidad and Tobago's steel band movement."\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{54}Remy, "Interview with Al O'Conner," 31.
\textsuperscript{55}Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 311.
Rehearsing and performing transcriptions of classical music repertoire serves many purposes. For many students (especially those with limited contact with orchestral music), this may serve as an introduction to European art-music and will foster interest in hearing not only the original orchestral work but others of similar format and genre. The development of chamber music skills and the experience of the rhythmic subtleties, nuances of musical inflection, the interest of advanced harmony structures, and exploration of music that requires a conductor will stimulate new ideas and creative and expressive abilities for the group.

**Historically Appropriate Music**

Steel band music evolved out of styles that reflected an indigenous culture's need for music in all activities of the day. Much of the music was rhythmically oriented to provide a solid, repetitive feel to make laborious work less strenuous. Melodies were often short and simple, with

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harmonic changes that were not complex. Much of this music became part of the daily life of the people of all the Caribbean islands. As a result, the formative years of steel band witnessed a reliance upon simple melodies and Afro-Caribbean drumming rhythms that are often perceived by the public at large as "island music." While Trinidad and Tobago as a nation are responsible for the creation of a unique form of music, the calypso, this art form has continued to be reshaped and reworked by the artisans who are responsible for creating it. Calypso music, as indeed with any other music style or art form, must evolve and grow if it is to survive. Calypsos being composed today are just as interesting, exciting and entertaining as older works that have ceased to be representative of current styles and musical trends.

In the United States there are certain misconceptions and misnomers regarding the types of music that should be performed on steel drums. There are those who seem inclined to keep the steel drum and the steel ensemble firmly rooted in the birth years of 1940s and 50s. Due to years of unfortunate racial stereotypes and misunderstandings the
steel drum has become equated with many pieces of music that actually have nothing to do with the steel band movement or the nation of Trinidad and Tobago. So called "traditional" melodies such as *Yellow Bird*, *Sly Mongoose* and a number of Caribbean works popularized by the vocal artist Harry Belafonte in the 1950s and 60s are not representative of the true cultural evolution of Trinidad and Tobago that gave rise to the modern pan orchestra.

Of concern is the fact that many popular Caribbean melodies originated on an island other than Trinidad and in some style other than calypso and are not truly of the Trinidadian "school" of composition or pan performance, yet they have come to be irrevocably connected to the pan movement. Many people believe melodies such as *Day-0* (the banana boat song), *Koka-Yoka* or *Maryann* to be the epitome of steel band music. "There is no reason that convention should determine the stylistic boundaries of the steel drum."57 Perhaps the grossest example of this is the melody titled *Yellow Bird* (also known as *Destiny*). This melody was

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57Gibson, "Techniques for Advanced Arranging," 49.
originally composed in the late 1880s on a plantation on the island of Antigua and was about a hat that a concubine wore. The melody eventually permeated all of the Caribbean islands under the guise of several styles of music and with different lyrics, yet it is erroneously (and constantly) associated as an original piece composed in Trinidad for a steel band.

The steel band in the classroom offers the wonderful opportunity to experience the culture of other lands and the rich variety of music types that can be explored. Few other ensembles are able to play the multitude of styles available to a steel band, and to rely primarily on a few overplayed "standards" that do not represent the true steel drum genre is to do a disservice to the performers, the ensemble, the audience and the history and culture of the Caribbean people. "Yes, it is important to please your audiences because they financially support you, but it is also important that you educate and represent Trinidad's current musical contributions."^{58} While certain older works may evoke in some listeners thoughts of a Caribbean idyll, they are

^{58}Remy, "Establishing a Steel Band...," 19.
actually painful reminders of racial inequality, novelty music of questionable value and are the final vestiges of a magical holiday world that exists only in travel brochures.

"Pan music must no longer be reduced to the status of cheap entertainment." While it is true that these songs do hold a certain mystique, and they do work well on steel drums, there are authentic pieces of music that offer practical instruction opportunities. If there is a desire to perform older Trinidadian music there are many works with captivating tunes, simple yet interesting chord progressions and appropriate grooves that truly are a part of steel drum history, and most of these works can be located and rehearsed with little effort in research or arranging.

Since its inception the steel band movement has always embraced the creation of new music and alternate and exciting styles of performance. In keeping with this tradition there is always an opportunity for arrangers and composers to create new works in appropriate styles. Encouragement to

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60 Holly, "Cliff Alexis and Liam Teague," 40.
members of the ensemble to create new works is educational and provides opportunities for creative learning through arranging, composition and transcription. The arranging/composing approach could also involve the group as a whole, allowing all members to contribute to a new work and thus offering yet another way to bring creativity and group effort to the rehearsal setting.
CHAPTER IV: METHODS OF MUSIC PRESENTATION

Depending on the players' ability levels and the difficulty of the music, a steel band could be taught in a number of different ways. Music taught by rote, rote-assisted music, lead sheets, fully voiced arrangements and new compositions in all styles may be presented with success to the band.

By experiencing the different instruments in the ensemble, players will gain a better understanding of the function each "voice" serves in an ensemble. A performer that traditionally plays only on a melodic instrument, such as trumpet or clarinet, will develop a better understanding of the function of bass lines in music by playing a bass instrument, and thereby gain further knowledge of how a melody works in context with harmony and bass. Since rhythmic and harmonic aspects of the different styles are intertwined, performers quickly gain a better sense of the styles and ensemble performance by experiencing how the various parts work together.
How long a player should work on a specific instrument may depend on the talents and abilities of the entire group. Some steel bands require players to remain on a single instrument for a period of time, and then allow players to switch at the semester break or at the change of year. This approach helps to focus on developing strong ability and skill in performing on a specific instrumental voice. Other steel bands allow members to play a different instrument for each tune, so that every player will experience all voices of the group through the course of each rehearsal and concert. This method encourages a fuller group awareness and promotes a rounded ability on all pans. "While it is important that players be familiar with the various sets of instruments [in the steel band] this familiarity is easier to achieve if a player stays on a specific set of instruments until he has really mastered them."\(^6\)

By playing the variety of styles available and by understanding the function music serves in Trinidadian and

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other societies, musicians are developing a better sense of the world around them and are contributing to an enlightened sense of a global community. Steel band music is growing popular around the world and is just one example of the world music "explosion."

**Teaching Steel Band Without Written Music**

The traditional teaching method is rote; a method which assists many players in developing better aural skills and kinesthetic abilities. This method of presentation would further enhance understanding of the culture and society of Trinidad.

**The Trinidadian Panorama Approach**

In Trinidad most steel bands come together once a year during preparation for Carnival celebrations, and each steel band may have as many as one hundred forty playing members. The bands compete for prize money (and bragging rights) in a nationwide competition called "Panorama." "The Trinidadian people view these competitions as significant national events
bestowing the winners as national heroes." The format for
the competition mandates that each band will perform a ten-
minute work based on a popular hit calypso of the current
year. A tune is selected and the band begins work on what is
most often a double theme-and-variation in the soca style.

Of great help in the music presentation is the fact that
the players usually know the melody and general form of the
work before they learn the parts they will play. Also of
account is the fact that the bands rehearse for several hours
every night until the night of competition. Each rehearsal
usually begins around seven or eight PM and continues until
approximately three or four in the morning. Most bands begin
rehearsing about a month before Carnival, and as the
performance date comes closer the rehearsals start earlier
and go longer into the evening.

In the Trinidad panyard, the presentation of the music
occurs by demonstrating section by section the various parts
of the work. Passages are demonstrated first by showing the
patterns of the music on the instrument. Names of the

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different notes are not referred to, nor do the Trinidadians discuss the types of rhythms, for few of the pan players read music or have any standard musical training. The steel drum often has no markings of any kind, thus the ear is exercised, and visual and kinesthetic memories are utilized to keep track of the many patterns and movements that make up the typical ten-minute double theme-and-variation format. Few players have the means or training to record previously learned sections (either graphically or electronically) and the only method of recall is to play through sections "a capella" or with other members on similar parts.

The melodic lines and voicing are demonstrated to the group through a ripple effect. "These rehearsals begin with the arranger first teaching the verse and chorus (or refrain) to the section leaders." For example, the captain or "first chair" of the lead pan section would be instructed in the melody of a given section beginning on a given note, and once the captain had the section learned he would demonstrate to players around him. Those players would then demonstrate

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63 Remy, Historical Background, 27.
to the outlying lead players. Finally all lead players would be rehearsed as a group to clear up any inconsistencies in pitches or rhythms. Then the process would begin again as a new extract of music is demonstrated and added to the last. "The variations were not taught in sequential order, the order of the melodic sections was joined together just before the first preliminary competition." Other areas of the ensemble would be taught in a similar manner, until the band could begin rehearsing the large portions of the piece with the engine room.

By presenting music in this manner the members learn the music by drawing from aural, visual and kinesthetic references. This "triple channel" learning has been proven to be extremely effective in preparing for performance oriented tasks and the Trinidad method utilizes all three channels for presentation and recall. The players are encouraged to sing the parts they are learning, providing reinforcement from their own ear. They watch how the

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"Ibid.
65Joseph O'Conner, Not Pulling Strings, 5-23.
patterns lay on the drums, how sticking patterns connect and flow, and they also refer to body positioning relative to the drums in order to recreate passages during performance. Once the music is ready to be rehearsed in full ensemble, emphasis is placed on getting the whole group to perform with the same type of groove or feel. Since music reading is not a distraction, awareness may be immediately directed toward the overall groove of the music and the phrase structures of certain passages. Awareness also is focused toward the overall precise execution of the work.

Obvious drawbacks to this method stem from the inability of most groups outside Trinidad to rehearse for several hours on consecutive days, thus hindering long-term music recall. The development of sight-reading is not an issue at all. Little or no reference is made to musical graphics such as note names, chords or rhythms. The speed in which music is processed depends on the ability of the individual players to digest and correctly recreate music, and the overall progress is slow when compared to ensembles that can read music.
Theory Based Rote Methods

Of growing use in the United States is rote demonstration that relies upon reference to the names of notes, scales and chords. Often the names of the different pitches are labeled on the pans, and as music is taught pitch or chord names are called out in sequence. Rhythms are then applied to the sequences, and sections of music are then strung together. When the occasion demands passages may be demonstrated at the instrument or a sticking may be suggested.

While this method can allow players to progress at a steady pace, most of the drawbacks that apply to the Trinidadian rote method also apply here. Rehearsal time is often an issue, no music reading is involved, long works become difficult to rehearse due to many sections, and the whole ensemble may progress only as quickly as the slowest learner permits.

On the other hand, triple channel learning is utilized, thus enabling a multitude of ways to enhance awareness through performance. The groove of a piece may be emphasized
and ensemble playing is usually enhanced due to rhythmic awareness of the entire group. Aural skills combined with music theory concepts may be tested and explored while rehearsing and learning new music. "It can help students with their ear training and gives them a better understanding of the art of steel band as it is practiced in Trinidad." An option during the learning situation would be the requirement of the players to notate their own parts to the piece, further assisting melodic and harmonic recall skills. Also of use might be crib notes or even audio (and video) tape recordings of rehearsal sessions to assist recall and practice outside of full rehearsal.

**Orff Approach**

Some steel bands are taught music through the instructional concepts of Karl Orff. Some groups allow printed parts or scores for the transmission of music but most groups rely on oral transmission since the emphasis is

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on group listening skills and interpretation. In this presentation students are taught music by singing through call-and-response. A phrase is sung first by the instructor and then repeated back by the players. The rhythms of the melody are then clapped or tapped on various body parts such as the chest or legs as singing continues. Next, accompaniment rhythm parts are demonstrated and then played upon the floor or on hand percussion while the players continue to sing aloud, and sometimes the players are required to play just the rhythms as they keep track of the music in their heads.

Once the majority of the group has learned the tune and can perform all rhythms accurately the music is transferred to the steel drums one phrase at a time. Players are encouraged to work out the passages on their own. Harmony parts are then sung, practiced, and transferred. Bass parts and the engine room (if one is used) are added last. This method of presentation confirms that all players are familiar

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with not only the melody, but the harmony and rhythms regardless of which part they are playing, and most players are able to shift from one part to another with relative ease.

The music may be worked out on the traditional Orff instruments prior to performance on the steel drums, and many of the parts may be doubled on the Orff keyboard instruments even after the parts are complete on the pans, giving a different timbre and a different approach to arranging and performing.\(^6^8\)

A unique aspect of the Orff approach is that body movement and choreography are factors explored in assisting players to learn and later recall musical passages, thus drawing on kinesthetic reinforcement to provide learning structure and memory feedback. Dancing and specific body movements are usually taught and encouraged to help students learn and demonstrate music passages.\(^6^9\)

\(^6^8\)Averill and Teason, Pandemonium Rules, 10.
Orff teaching focuses on the development of aural skills through the use of call-and-response vocalizing and the transferal of melodic and harmonic material from one instrument to another. Advanced aural skills such as interval identification, voice leading ideas and chord theory concepts may be exercised although many steel band groups do not take greater advantage of the opportunity.

Improvisation is of major concern in the Orff approach and many groups encourage and allow for improvised sections and new song construction through creative group interplay. "Instruction through improvisation invites the interaction of the students with the music, each other and the instructor."70

Music reading development is of little concern with this method, and the complexity level of the music rarely reaches beyond that which can be demonstrated orally in a short amount of time.

70 Steen, Exploring Orff, 6.
Rote-Assisted Methods

Another type of presentation used to teach steel bands is tablature-assisted rote methods. This consists of teaching music primarily by rote but using charts with tablature information for quick identification and recall. Charts are provided to all members of the group and different symbols may be used to represent note names, rhythms, various points such as repeats, the overall form and dynamic schemes.

In most charts of this type a given melodic line would be broken down to a sequence of pitches needed to create the tune. For example, the opening of *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* might be written out as:

**Example 12**

\[\text{C C G G A A G F F E E D D C}\]

In this case the names of the pitches are merely symbols to be followed, and the melody could be written out using other symbols such as circles, squares and triangles with corresponding symbols on the drums to show players where to hit. This type of tablature does not demonstrate how the
collection of notes are to be played rhythmically, in what range, at what tempo or at what dynamic. Typically this information is demonstrated during full ensemble rehearsal and the chart serves merely as a reminder as to what note to begin on and how notes fall in succession. Rote assisted methods are not limited to only the melodic lines for much information can be conveyed on the chart. For example, a melody may rely on a recurring rhythm pattern. The ensemble would be taught a predetermined rhythm pattern, such as:

Example 13

\[ \begin{array}{cccc} \hline & & & \\
\hline & \hline \end{array} & & & \]

A collection of notes in the melody would then feature a sequence that is underlined, the underlining showing which five notes would be played in the predetermined rhythm, such as:

Example 14

\[ E E E E F G D D D D F G \]
A second predetermined rhythm sequence could be illustrated as a line above a collection of notes. A short syncopation might be illustrated as a bracket above two or three notes, half notes could be indicated as an equal sign (=) above a pitch name, whole notes as a cross (+) and so forth. Many different rhythms may be applied to separate sequences, and the number of ways to convey rhythms is limited only by the amount of space on the page.

Tablature for harmony instruments would feature "stacks" of note names that would inform inner voice players what notes to play together in order to strum chord progressions, such as:

Example 15

\[\begin{align*}
E & = E E F F F E E F A A A E E F E E E \\
C & = C C C D D D A A D C C C G G D C C C
\end{align*}\]

Bass parts would of course have note names for the bass line with appropriate markings for necessary rhythms.

\(^{71}\)Jerry Lopatin, The Steel Band by Rote, (Scottsdale, AZ: Lopatin, 1994) 11-12.
For much of this type of notation other standard music signals may also be added to the page. Repeat signs, accent patterns, and coda markings are common additions to many rote assisted sheets. Other pertinent information such as tempo and dynamic indications (even in English, such as loud or soft), roll markings and more may be transmitted using various markings and the chart may feature a wealth of information which becomes very complex upon first observation.

This rote assisted approach can be beneficial for getting non-music reading players started on the pans. This method has proven especially useful in instructing young players, for the charts work well in providing reminders of how to start a passage and how to string sections together. There is opportunity for triple channel learning, especially if the players are required to memorize sections quickly. Auditory skills may be exercised by the instructor performing a passage first and then requiring pannists to work out the music on their own instrument, or passages may be demonstrated at the instrument.
This type of presentation neglects true music reading skills. Many players learn to process rote-assisted information quickly, but charts that feature extensive symbols and complex markings can become cumbersome and counterproductive. It seems a small (and logical) step to merely transfer the music to common music notation and teach musicians to read properly notated music. Just how much rote interpretation may occur depends upon the experience of the players, for if the charts contain enough information it is possible for a band members to interpret these charts and work out the music on their own. A further consideration is that only music of a certain complexity level may be presented with rote-assisted presentations.

**Teaching Steel Band With Written Music**

For most classroom settings the use of some form of printed music is a necessity, due in part to performance deadlines and the time between rehearsals. In many cases the difficulty level of the music and the skills of the performers determines the format of printed music utilized.
Fake Books or Lead Sheets

Many groups rely upon fake book or "lead sheet" charts to prepare music. This type of music also may be referred to as chord charts. Lead sheets typically contain a single line melody that features chord progressions listed above the melodic line (See Example 14). Header information (performance indications listed at the top of the chart) would include the tempo, the style (bossa, soca, ballad, etc.), and strumming patterns for the different voices. The changes of chords may also have some simple rhythmic indications to show how certain tutti passages are to be executed. The tenor and double tenor players would play the melody while the rest of the band strum the chord changes according to some prearranged voicing rules (See Example 16).
There is a multiplicity of difficulty levels to these types of chord charts or lead sheet tunes, ranging from the simple "single melodic line with changes" where all members read the same printed page, to works with separate chord charts written out for each section of the ensemble. The latter type often features not only the chord progression but
suggested voice leading for each strumming voice of the ensemble.

This type of presentation allows for generally quick preparation of ensemble music. Chord charts are also useful for getting beginning or inexperienced bands started, and this method would allow players opportunity to work their own aural skills and support abilities.

There are some detriments to the lead sheet approach. The balance of the strumming voices versus the melody player(s) can be overwhelming, and for many players endless strumming while the lead players have all the fun is less than stimulating or encouraging. "While this may get the job done, it doesn't make the piece interesting." To be considered also is that a concert of all fake book tunes tends to wear on the ear of the listener, for the full range of coloristic possibilities is ignored, and there are definite limitations on the level of complexity and interest that an "all chord chart" type of band may reach.

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72Gibson, "Techniques for Advanced Arranging," 46.
Fully Voiced Arrangements and Compositions

Another type of presentation fully arranged and written out music demonstrating the full timbral, rhythmic and virtuosic possibilities of a steel band. This variety of music could also be used to further the reading abilities in the entire ensemble, and there are a large number of arrangements and original compositions now available to steel band directors from percussion specialty shops and various music publishers.

Novelty Music

Much of the printed music available relies heavily upon dated sounding music of the late 1950s and early 60s such as Maryann, Yellow bird and Day-0. There are also new works that have come to be considered "standard" steel band repertoire such as Under the Sea and Kiss de Girl of Disney fame.

These works may be used to exercise the music reading skills of the ensemble and may serve as a convenient method to introduce the rough idea of calypso, soca or reggae music. Few of these offer much in the way of interest for the entire ensemble, for these works tend to rely solely on the novelty
aspect of the sound of the steel drums and rarely explore the rich and varied range of musical possibilities.

Compositionally, most of the pieces in this vein rely on a format of arranging that features the lead pans only and neglects the rest of the ensemble. Other charts require the use of non-traditional instruments such as marimba, glockenspiel, piano or saxophone to reinforce the melody or support the harmonic structure. These works may be used to augment learning goals for ear training and voice leading although they quickly become of little challenge to experienced players due to unsophisticated chord progressions.

Novelty pieces also tend to blur the lines of discrete styles. Few of these pieces reflect the style of music originally intended and are more often blended into a mix of styles that is at once all styles and none. In many cases the very charm (and selling point) of the piece is the indigenous syncopation of the melody or unique placement of chord structures; yet the arrangement features parts that are so
harmonically edited and rhythmically watered down that the original style is non-existent (See Example 17).

Example 17

On a final note, novelty pieces tend to perpetuate a "non-serious" and therefore non-educational view of the steel band and reflect the unfortunate attitude that only certain
works simple in construction and of a somewhat watered down Caribbean feel are good music for pans. Here it is enough to say that while these pieces are easily put together there is a wealth of much better music in a variety of exciting, authentic styles that will better serve musical and educational purposes than watered down familiar melodies that rely on the "novel" sound of a steel drum.

All Panorama Music Approach

There are sources available at this time for transcriptions of several of the best Panorama arrangements from Trinidad. These extended length works are often of extreme difficulty and are designed to highlight all sections of the ensemble with exciting technical displays. These pieces are wonderful for both the crowd and ensemble, for they are usually large scale compositions that represent the epitome of high level musical composition from Trinidad.

Panorama arrangements are composed specifically for competition, and there are certain guidelines that are set for the creation of a competition tune. Nearly all of the pieces are composed around a double theme-and-variation
format. Panorama competition music is based on current popular tunes of Trinidad, and these hit tunes have a standard verse-chorus layout. The principal job for the composer/arranger is to state the verse and chorus, create variations on both that will evolve from the key center, melody and chord progressions as far as possible before final restatement of the tunes in the original key.

Related to the success of the arrangement is the level of virtuosity required to perform the variations and the tempo of the work, which must be fast enough to allow the pannists to show off but still keep the music grooving and danceable. Also of importance is that the original melodies may be perceived throughout the duration of the work (see example 18).
Positive points of these charts include focus on reading ability, rhythmic awareness, ability to groove, technical precision and ensemble awareness. Sight reading will be developed to a large degree for many of these types of charts require familiarity with a multitude of syncopations, the entire range of the instruments and the proper phrasing interpretations of soca and calypso. These works are very
good for helping players develop the stamina and concentration to perform high energy works of extended length. They also feature complex harmonic and rhythmic structures that will challenge any level ensemble. Players will learn to function both in the capacity of accompanist and soloist for at some point in the chart each section of the group will be featured.

To be guarded against is the sole rehearsing and programming of this type of work, for while these charts are representative of the state of the art of pan music, they require roughly the same ability level from all members of the band, and all the charts rely on the same type of rhythmic feel, that of soca or calypso. While these types of charts may be beneficial to the ensemble in several ways, they do not present a wide spectrum of musical education when the goal is a technically precise performance only. Few if any of these pieces have open solo sections, and every note of all the parts is written out, so that aural skills may not be challenged as they would by other presentation formats.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This document has examined the various styles of music that a steel band may perform. Calypso and Soca music are the two primary styles for steel band, although Reggae, Latin-American styles, Jazz, popular works, and classical transcriptions are also viable music formats.

By programming a wide variety of styles students will be encouraged to explore new areas of music, art and culture. The audience will also be far more receptive to repertoire that is interesting, varied and intellectually stimulating. Cultural development and cross cultural understanding through arts and especially music allows for better integration of new ideas and relationships.

As with any music ensemble the value of music study is rewarding in itself, but there is also intrinsic value in the process involved in the acquisition of music skills, the development of alternate learning strategies, the encouragement of self-discipline and the acceptance and commitment on the part of the individual toward the greater whole.
It becomes clear that to provide the most options and benefits to the steel drum ensemble the discriminating director would not only select a wide variety of musical styles but also give consideration to the wide spectrum of teaching presentations as well. In preparation for an upcoming performance a steel band would receive a well rounded education from a mix of rote learning, chord chart tunes, a Panorama style chart and various levels of written out tunes in many world music styles, for this mix of styles and methods will exercise rhythmic skills, aural skills, music theory concepts, music reading abilities, ensemble preparation and cultural awareness and understanding of music and art on a higher level.

There are numerous approaches to teaching different styles of music, and each style of music and the type of presentation offers certain options and limitations regarding the development of specific performance skills in an ensemble setting. The opportunity to develop specific skills often depends on several factors.
The manner of instruction is paramount. There are many opportunities to develop specific music skills through multiple teaching approaches.

Rhythmic awareness will become stronger through the experience of rehearsing and performing several styles of steel band music. Pulse perception and the inner timing sense of players will be developed in direct relation to rhythm oriented and groove emphasized music.

Aural skills such as chord recognition, melodic and harmonic recall and dictation, sight singing, chord voicing, voice leading, and large scale formal structuring concepts will be developed and strongly exercised during rehearsal and performance of various types of steel band music.

Sight reading of music will be enhanced through the use of several different types of ensemble music including chord chart or "fake book" arrangements, fully voiced pieces and precision oriented ensemble works. Group instruction tends to develop better sight reading skills, and the reliance on grooves and different types of musical feels also assists
players in developing sight reading because of strong rhythmic reinforcement.

Players will have the opportunity to experience and learn how different voices of an ensemble provide different functions, such as bass lines, harmonic support and counter lines. Players will also experience how all parts of an ensemble piece interact and contribute to the overall musical effect.

Improvisation on the various instruments of the group will be developed and encouraged through the use of music that requires all players to develop unique voice leading and harmonic support "on the spot." Individual improvisation will also be developed through music that features a soloist. Creative music development may also be encouraged by offering the opportunity to compose new arrangements and original compositions for the ensemble.

Rehearsing and performing different types of music in different styles tends to reinforce and combine alternate learning approaches. New methods of presenting, playing and performing new melodic, harmonic and rhythmic structures will
allow for different ways to augment ear training skills, music sight reading skills, rhythm perception, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic phrasing. "Steel band improves the student's overall musical skills, rhythmic abilities, performance skills on the drumset and performance skills on ethnic percussion."\textsuperscript{73}

**Suggestions for Future Study and Research**

For the future of steel bands in the United States, several points should be considered. Further study must be directed toward the codification of building and tuning pans, the methods of orchestrating for the ensemble, the techniques required to properly perform on pans, the manner in which the steel drum is being used in other ensembles and the music being composed that features the steel drum as a virtuosic solo instrument.

At this time there is a growing number of people learning not only to play steel drums but to build and tune them. Building and tuning workshops such as the West Virginia Pan Tuning Project, the building and performance

\textsuperscript{73}Parks, Role, Function and Value, 40.
workshops held at Northern Illinois University, University of California- Arcata, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and the University of Arizona are generating new interest in pan building, new designs and better equipment and technology for steel band. Ulf Kronman's book Steel Pan Building and Tuning represents one of the first clear and systematic attempts to describe and discuss the modern pan tuning and building process in print.

The instruments of the band are not standardized. Many of the best tuners are still at odds concerning the best layout of notes, the proper range of the drums and the placement of voices in the ensemble. "The two greatest obstacles preventing widespread standardization of pans are the ongoing independent revising and redesigning of the instruments by tuners and the system of arranging pans within the steel bands." 74

As the steel drum generates a wider acceptance from the general public and composers as a viable instrument of high artistic ability, composers must begin to include the steel

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74 Thomas, "Steelband/Pan," 316.
drum in traditional composition formats. "The steel drum band deserves to be treated as seriously as the symphony orchestra."\(^7\) This has been accomplished to a small degree although further use and study is always beneficial. A few of the current works that utilize steel band or steel drums include several percussion ensemble works of Akira Nishimura, the concerto for percussion ensemble and orchestra of Toru Takemitsu (premiered by NEXUS), and the *Concerto for Steel Drum Soloist and Orchestra* by Jan Bach and performed by Liam Teague with the St. Louis Symphony.

\(^7\)Gibson, "Techniques for Advanced Arranging," 49.
APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms

**Alexander's Ragtime Band:** Considered by most sources to be the first all metal beating band in Trinidad Carnival, which later gave rise to the all steel orchestra. This band was first formed in 1939 from a Tamboo Bamboo band.

**Agogic Stress:** A situation in music where a note in a rhythmic line of music is given emphasis not through dynamic or change of pitch but rather through duration. Agogic stress refers to the emphasizing of a note or pattern of a recurring portion of a music by adding a slight duration to the note without disturbing the overall rhythmic placement in time.

**Barrack Yard:** Urban slum dwellings in the tenement areas of Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, where groups of street musicians would gather to rehearse and jam. Currently called a Panyard for this is where steel bands now rehearse.

**Bass Boom:** The lowest sounding instrument of a Tamboo Bamboo group; also a name given to early bass steel drums.

**Batacuda:** A Samba played by an all percussion orchestra of Brazil. Batacuda instruments include the Surdo, Tamborim, Repinique, Ganza, Caixa, Pandiero, Agogogo bells and the Cuica.

**Beat Pan:** To play a steel drum.

**Beater:** A musician or person who plays pans.

**Belair:** Stemming from old French Court dance, it is now a type of song modeled on the calinda of Trinidad; it was typically more lyrical in nature and the lyrics feature double entendre.
Biscuit tin: A metal container of moderate size used to hold crackers or cookies. One of the earliest metal vessels to be beaten as a rhythm instrument during Carnival in Trinidad.

Bottle and Spoon: A simple rhythm instrument of a bottle (empty or filled to any level) beaten with a spoon. A traditional instrument of Carnival and steel band engine rooms.

Brake Drum: Taken from the brake system of an automobile, this is a metal "drum" used as a primary rhythm instrument in steel bands. See also "iron."

Calypso Tent: An entertainment venue for a calypso singer. Most often used during Carnival celebrations; a place where a singer entertains the crowd by creating humorous rhymed verse on the spot on a given subject, usually political or sexual. The singer is typically accompanied by a soca band similar to a jazz combo.

Carnival: Pre-Lenten festival activities taking place from Dimanche Gras (the Sunday before Ash Wednesday) to Mardis Gras (Midnight Tuesday before Ash Wednesday). In Trinidad, Carnival is the most important festival of the year, and is marked with street parades, costumed bands, concerts and the national steel band competition called Panorama.

Caustic Soda Drum: A type of metal container similar to a biscuit tin that was used for early metal beating bands and early tuned steel drums.

Chord Chart: A type of notational music that only lists the chord progression of a piece of music. The term also refers generally to a type of steel band music where the lead players have the melody and the rest of the ensemble strums the chord changes and does not have any melodic interplay or counterlines.
Clave: The primary rhythmic pattern around which Afro-Cuban music is composed and performed. Clave consists of a pattern of 3 notes over two pulses in the first measure and 2 notes in the second measure. The 3 side is considered "strong" or the tension side, and the 2 side as the "weak" or release side. Clave may be played either in 3-2 or 2-3, but the rhythmic formula for the accompanying patterns must agree in phrasing with the initial pattern of the clave. There are variations of clave, including son-clave, rumba clave, Brazilian clave and clave in 6/8 time. The term also refers to the sticks that a clave pattern is played on.

Cutter: An instrument of high but indefinite pitch that is used as a primary time keeper in African drumming, Tamboo Bamboo bands, Salsa music and Steel bands.

Dance Hall: An offshoot of Jamaican reggae music that features a moderate dance tempo and is characterized by a basic rock beat on the drumset.

Dub: Another variation of Reggae, but very similar to American Rap Music. Dub usually features the traditional skank, bass and drumset patterns common to most forms of reggae, but it has a hypnotically spoken text over strict ostinati and different instruments may drop out of the mix at certain times. Dub and Rap music both grew out of the urban style dance music played by street DJ's in larger inner city areas in the 1980s.

Engine Room: The section of a steel band that features all of the percussion instruments including but not limited to one or more of the following: irons, drumset, congas, shakers, cowbells, metal guiro or scratcher and tambourines. This section has the responsibility of keeping solid tempo with a good, danceable groove.

Escola de Samba: A Samba School. In Brazil the many different street bands get together to rehearse the feel
and overall precision of the samba that will be played out in the streets. Each band is referred as it's own "school" of samba.

**Fake Book or Fake Chart:** This is a type of notated music that features a single line of melody and the chords and harmonies to the piece marked above the staff. Often used by jazz combos and steel bands for quick preparation of music.

**Grooving:** A term used to describe how dance music feels when the rhythms flow and get people moving. A good groove is important to most types of steel band music and the music is not acceptable if it does not groove or have a good feel. "You can't move if it doesn't groove." The term also refers to the lines made in a pan by a tuner/builder to separate the different notes.

**Harmonic Tuning:** The modern method of tuning steel drums that incorporates a harmonic (at the octave) into each note of a steel drum, thereby producing a mellower, ringing tone to each note. Also called octave tuning, it was introduced and perfected by pioneer pan tuner Bertie Marshall in the mid-1960's.

**Iron:** The cutter of the steel band. An iron is usually a brake drum from a car or an electrical junction box, struck with a short piece of steel rod, producing a bright metallic sound that cuts through the sound of the steel band. Irons may be played separately or in groups with interlocking rhythm patterns.

**Iron Band:** Early name for all metal beating bands of Trinidad that had evolved from the older Tamboo Bamboo bands. Iron bands featured random pieces of metal and metal containers such as biscuit tins, caustic soda drums, brake drums and small pieces of metal junk and are the precursors to the tuned steel drum bands of the late 1940's and early 50's.
Jouvert: (Pronounced joo-vay) The name of the opening morning of the Carnival time.

Kaiso: The correct term for the music called calypso. The name kaiso is a slang alteration, possibly of Nigerian descent, which originally meant "bravo". Today the word is interchangeable for Calypso, a style of music that comes from the island of Trinidad.

Kalinda: (or Calinda): A style of dance that evolved out of the stick fighting of gangs in the streets of Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. The fighters would often begin dancing when police officials would appear so as to avoid being incarcerated. It is now a high art form that has roots in the martial arts and street dancing, and it is somewhat dangerous for the novice.

Lead Sheet: See Fake Book or Fake Chart above.

Mas': Taken from the French Masquerade, to wear a costume or disguise. To play mas' means to join a parading group that wears theme outfits such as sailors, devils or soldiers. Most often one would play mas' during Carnival or Mardi Gras.

Mas' Band: A large group of parading Carnival revelers that take to the streets in similar costume and enter competitions. Mas' bands traditionally emphasize a particular theme or event, and are accompanied in the streets by music played by a band. Most mas' bands feature subdivisions of members that demonstrate different aspects of the chosen theme, and the bands also have elaborately decorated Kings and Queens who compete for prize money and awards.

Octave Tuning: See Harmonic Tuning above.

One Drop: In reggae music the beat of the bass drum in the traditional reggae feel. The term now usually refers to
the style of drumbeat where the bass drum is struck only once (on beat 2) in a bar of 2/4 time.

Pan: The Trinidadian name for steel drums.

Pan-around-the-neck: Early method of playing a steel drum by suspending it with a string or strap around the neck, allowing a player to use both hands. Eventually given up when multiple drum setups led to the use of stationary stands that allowed for suspension of the drums.

Pan Is Beautiful: A steel band competition held every Fall in Trinidad. Odd numbered calendar years are for the National School's Steel Band Festival (for children), and even numbered calendar years are for the adult festival. The competition concerns the performance of a test piece composed specifically for the competition and then a tune of choice of each band. The tune of choice for each band is usually a transcription of a major work of classical music.

Pan Trinbago: The governing authority of all steel drum activities in Trinidad and Tobago. The board was first formed in 1950 under a different name. This group oversees the judging of Panorama and Pan Is Beautiful competitions, the criteria for the performances and sets the pay scale standards for steel band shows and competition awards.

Pan Yard: The area where a steel band rehearses in Trinidad, usually a large open air area.

Panorama: The national steel band competition of Trinidad and Tobago, consisting of the top steel bands from all over both islands. The total ordeal begins with Prelims, moves on to Semi-Finals, then to Zonal Finals and then finally to the Panorama competition during Carnival. The final round consists of the top ten bands, which are then ranked by performance. Most bands average 100
players, with the top limit being 140 players. The competition began formally in 1963.

Panorama Chart: A generic term that indicates a written transcription of a piece composed for the Panorama steel band competition of Carnival. The term may also refer to any large scale composition for steel band that features extended thematic variations, elaborate interplay between the voices of the steel band and makes challenging technical demands of the steel band.

Riff: A term borrowed from jazz terminology that means a short rhythmic and/or melodic phrase that is repeated.

Rock Steady: Another form of reggae music. This is the style that came after the ska era, and was initially created by the influence of rock music and the need to slow down the tempo. The tempo was slowed down because Jamaica was experiencing a heat wave and the uptempo feel of ska was causing dancers to pass out from the heat.

Roots Rock: A variation of reggae music where the focus is on the biblical implications of Rastafarianism and the eventual triumph of the downtrodden and oppressed. The style is marked by simple but innovative bass lines, melodies and harmonies.

Salsa: Sauce. The term also has come to refer to a large number of Latin-American styles of music including: the Samba and Bossa Nova of Brazil; the Son, Son-Montuno, Rumba, Danzon, Afro, Bolero, Cha-cha, Pachanga, Guiro, Gaujira, Mozambique and Conga-Habanera of Cuba; the Bomba and Plena of Puerto Rico and the Merengue of the Dominican Republic.

Ska: Early form of reggae music that was up tempo and reminiscent of American popular music of the late 1950's and early 60's. Heavily influenced by American Rhythm
and blues of the 1950s and 60s, but featuring the characteristic offbeat chording pattern known as skank.

**Skank:** The name given to the offbeat strumming rhythm of all forms of reggae music.

**Soca Bass:** A syncopated bass line in the style of soca music. Soca Bass lines typically feature the bass rhythmically playing the last two eight-notes in every bar of 2/4 time.

**Strumming:** A method of supporting the harmonic motion of a piece of music through an ostinato. Strumming on a steel drum entails the rendering of two notes of a given chord by playing them in a particular rhythmic ostinato.

**Tablature:** A form of music notation that shows the pitches in sequence but may not illustrate other information such as rhythms, tempo, dynamics or tessitura. Guitar tablature or tablature for string instruments often depicts the neck or fretboard of the instrument and the relative placement of the fingers to accomplish melodic lines or chord structures. Tablature for steel drums does not have pictograms showing players where to hit.

**TASPO:** Acronym for the Trinidad All-Steel Percussion Orchestra. This steel band consisted of ten of the top pan players from around Trinidad, brought together under the direction of Police Band director Joseph Griffith and sent to England in 1950 to represent Trinidad and Tobago at the Festival of Britain.

**Tassa:** Here tassa refers to an East Indian style of drumming. A Tassa drum is a small but deeply shelled instrument played with two small sticks. The style of drumming is very fast, ornate and syncopated.

**Tamboo Bamboo:** Rhythm band comprised of different length bamboo stamping tubes and bamboo sticks. The bands
arose as a result of the ban on African drumming that took place in Trinidad from the late 1880's until the advent of metal beating bands.

**Triple Channel Learning:** For this study triple channel learning refers to three ways of learning, processing and performing music. Passages of music may be processed aurally, visually or kinesthetically, and when all three are combined the result is typically more effective than when only one area is stimulated. A method of processing performance oriented information that stems from Neurolinguistic Programming or NLP.
APPENDIX B: Selected Discography of Exemplary Steel Band Music


76This listing is by no means complete. Interested readers are urged to consult Forty Years of Steel: An Annotated Discography of Steel Band and Pan Recordings, 1951-1991 by Jeffrey Ross Thomas, and the mail-order catalogues of PanYard, Inc.


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