

Friday 26th January, 2007

Benefit birthday bash for Prince of pan



Pan icon Bertie Marshall, right, hangs out with Clyde "Lightning" George at The Diego Martin Pan Institute.

The Diego Martin Pan Institute (DMPI) will once again celebrate the birthday of "the prince of pan," Bertie Marshall, with benefit performances and a dinner hosted on Tuesday, February 6, from 6 pm—10 pm, at the DMPI headquarters in Diego Martin.

Marshall, the immortal pan innovator who invented the double-tenor, has been hospitalised twice in recent years with complications stemming from a stroke and diabetes. All proceeds from the DMPI event will go to the Bertie Marshall Fund.

Clyde "Lightning" George, the well-known jazz pannist, who played with Marshall in the Highlanders during the 1960s, and who is also musical director at DMPI, will head-up the music bill with his Trini-based band Steelinversions. This star studded ensemble includes Tony Voisin, Wayne Guerra, Winston Matthews and Russell Durity.

Also performing will be calypso stalwarts Crazy, Conqueror and the dynamic duo of Regeneration Now.

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Since 2004, Clyde and his wife, Cathy George, of the DMPI, have raised more than \$10,000 on Marshall's behalf.

They also have spearheaded an online fund-raiser to assist the pan icon, at www.paninstitute.com

I would like people to know that our motto at the DMPI is 'Live Music is Best!'" said DMPI event director Cathy George. "We don't do 'canned music' at DMPI. Artistes who want to attend the party and perform to honour Bertie can leave their CDs at home."

George also said that all pannists—especially those who have used Marshall to tune their pans over the past half-century—are invited to join the jam and will be admitted to the celebration free of charge.

Marshall, who tunes the pans of his longtime friend and pan master Len "Boogsie" Sharpe and Ken "Professor" Philmore, taught Lightning George how to use three or four sticks to play the instrument, which only a handful of pannists have mastered. George promises to display those techniques at the DMPI event.

Joining George's Steelinversions will be the highly regarded drummer from Chicago, Aras Biskis, creator and director of two Urban Gateways touring ensembles and a featured soloist in the Swing Shift Orchestra, which performs every Thursday at the world famous Green Mill Lounge in downtown Chicago.

Food for the event will once again be provided by the well-known gourmet chef Oral "Baby" Thomas, the culinary director at DMPI.

Ticket prices for all the fete are \$100, including dinner.

For more information or advanced tickets, please call 637-4102.

The Diego Martin Pan Institute is located at 75 Benjamin Street in Diego Martin. There is a sign on the main road just past La Puerta Ave.

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