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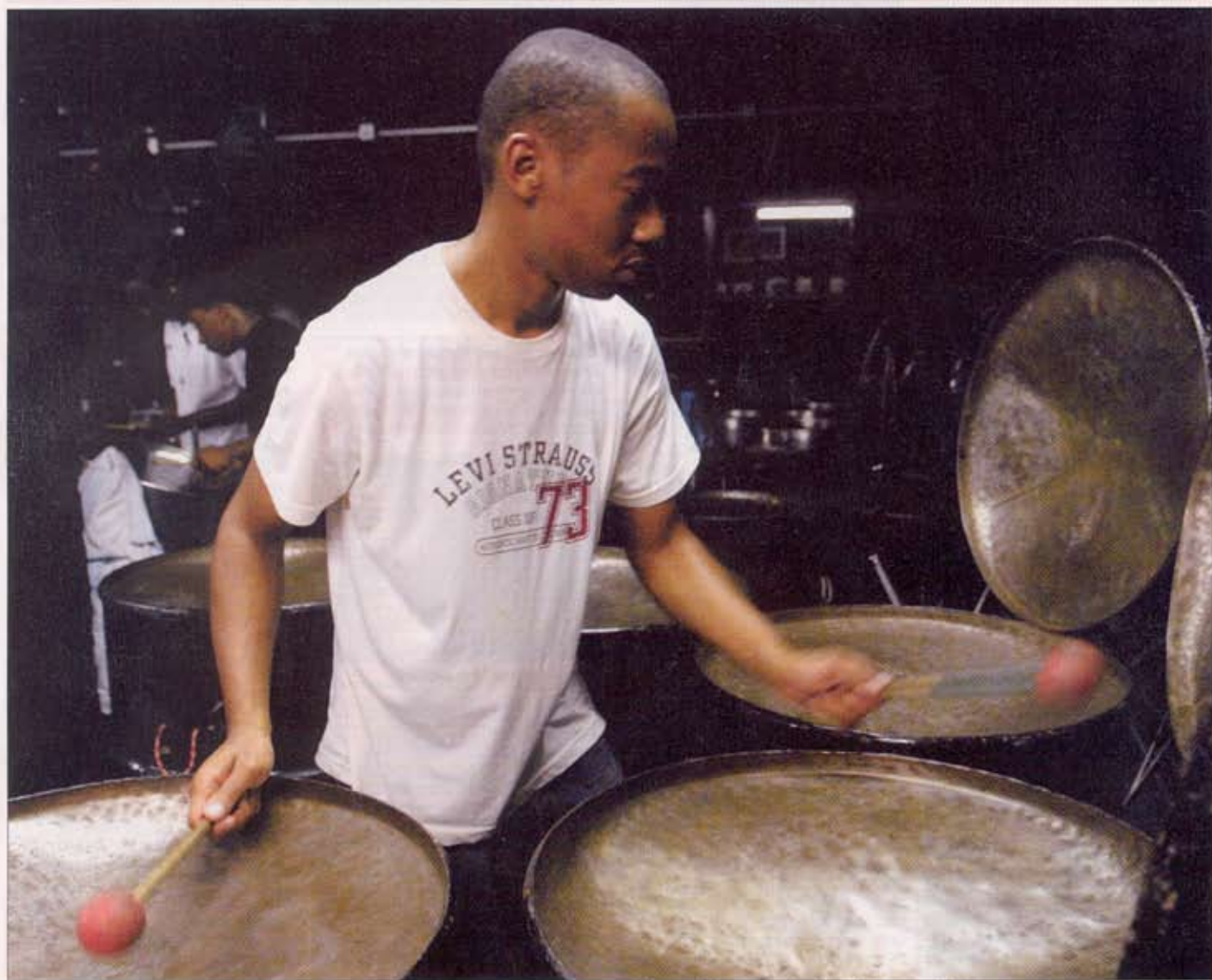
A girl's guide to rude boys and hot sounds

Plus The ultimate steel band stand-off
A hookah-toking tour of town
Sexiest outfits for autumn



Heavy

metal



The bass pans have a really impressive booming sound... You don't want your kids practising them in the bedroom, mind

The hotly contested Panorama steel band competition has been a precursor to the Carnival for 27 years, with the cream of UK talent battling it out. But now these talented musicians are struggling to stay in Notting Hill. **Eddy Lawrence** meets the performers. Photography **Rogan Macdonald**

Despite what experience – or inferior guides – may have told you, Carnival starts on Saturday. For a lot of people, it ends on Saturday too. That's when an enthusiastic crowd converges on Horniman's Pleasance Park on Kensal Road to watch the weekend's best-kept secret. Panorama is the UK's national steel band competition, and whether you know it or not, it's the beating heart of the whole shooting match.

A lot of people who love Carnival are unaware that Panorama even exists, yet its roots are intertwined with those of the whole event. Steelpan music has been a central part of the celebrations since the Carnival's very first year, in 1964, when Rhaune Laslett invited the pan players who regularly performed at The Coleherne pub in Earl's Court to play her inaugural street party. A then-impressive but now quaint-sounding 1,000 ravers turned out to the Notting Hill Chil-

dren's Neighbourhood Festival to dance in the streets to the Russell Henderson Steelband and Sterling Bettancourt's band, Nostalgia.

Although Panorama itself didn't evolve as a competition until 1978, it has since grown to be one of the biggest and most respected steel band competitions outside of Trinidad & Tobago. Compared with the modern delights of the Rampage Sound System and friends, this might seem like a quaint boast, but seeing the amount of work put in by the reigning champions, Ebony Steelband, puts it into perspective.

Ebony was founded 38 years ago, and has taken part in every Panorama since its inception. Over the years, they have won the contest a more-than-respectable 14 times, including nine consecutive wins between 1985 and 1994. Anise 'Hafers' Hadeed is the arranger for Ebony's 'big band', the top players who represent the orchestra

in concert and competition. They practice for at least three hours a night, five nights a week for a month preceding the event, and the arranger's job is somewhere between composer, conductor and football manager. The arrangement is all-important in steelpan; in 2004, five of the seven Panorama finalists played the same tune (De Fosto's 'War 2004'), but it was arranged in five totally different ways. So personal style must be very important, right? 'I wouldn't put myself in no bag with no personal style. I just deal with music. I have a theme – which is what we call the song or score – and I work with that and improvise as I go along. So you're arranging, but it's a form of improvisation and composition at the same time.'

Hadeed took over as arranger with Ebony in 1984 and has been in charge for all but one of their Panorama-winning performances. He says that what has kept him loyal is simple – ▶



Top-flight 'big band' panamaniacs play an array of pans simultaneously



The rubberised tip of a steelpan hammer



The lead pans take flight



The arranger instructs via his Bluetooth headset... not really

...not really. Hadeed is a professional musician and arranger, and he has been in charge of the band's sound for over 20 years. He says that what has kept him loyal is simple – ▶

