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GO TO IT!

Complete guide to arts and entertainment events in our area for the weekend and next week.

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Set to steel the show!

6 bands in battle for B'klyn

By KAREN KRAMER

Special to The News

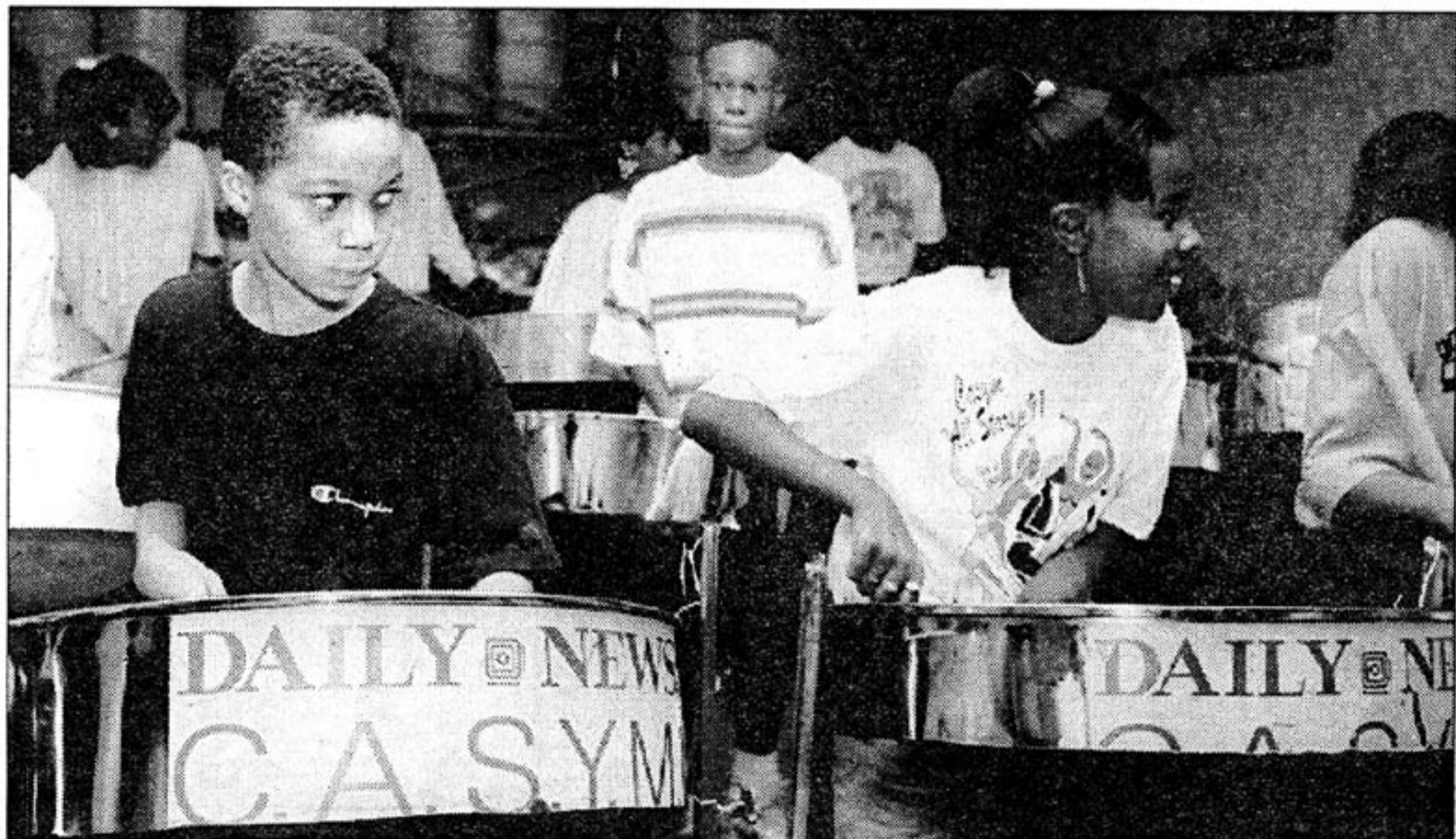
For the past month, Brooklyn neighborhoods have been jumping as six steel bands get ready for the big Panorama Steel Band Competition at Carnival Festival '92 tomorrow night at the Brooklyn Museum.

Gathering in parking lots, church basements and backyards, the groups have been practicing nearly every night since July, often until 2 a.m.

Over on Church Ave., The Pan Rebels, a group of about 80 members, has been working on "The Party Starts Now."

"We buy plain oil drums from Exxon and Shell," said Clyde Wilson. "We bring them back here, we sink them with a hammer, then we groove the notes out, then we burn them." Then the tuner, Wallace Austin, shapes them and gives them the tone. Wilson said. He tries to make them sound close to a piano by bringing in a keyboard. The smaller pans are sent to a factory to get coated with gold and silver to give them a higher pitch.

At the Brooklyn competitions, groups often offer a tune that originated in Trini-



TWO MEMBERS of CASYM practice in basement of church on Lincoln Road in Brooklyn.

CARMINE DONOFRIO DAILY NEWS

dad's latest Carnival. The BWIA Sonatas group is rehearsing "Bee's Melody," a tune that the famed calypsonian Lord Kitchner introduced last March. Mark Scott, who has managed the band since 1981, said the Sonatas have won six competitions in 10 years.

"Bee's Melody" will also be played by CASYM, whose members range in age from 6 to 22. Nine-year-old Jason

Jack, who was born on the island of St. Vincent, learned to "play pan" for the first time this summer. "We can compete with anyone, large or small," said his cousin Tosca.

A Caribbean boost

"Using steel band music is a way of keeping the kids in positive activities," said Ardin Herbert, their musical director.

Although all of the bands

competing in Panorama are Brooklyn-based, special arrangers and tuners are often flown up from the Caribbean. Arranger Len (Boogie) Sharp, for example, is the arranger for both Pan Rebels and Moods Pan Groove, a group that has been rehearsing all month in the parking lot of Medgar Evers College. Their tune for the competition will be "Pan Meh Jumbie."

"Many guys in the band had to chip in to bring our tuner and arranger here," says Tony Joseph, a leader of the Metro Steel Orchestra, the winner of the last two Panorama competitions. "Our band works well because of the love we have for each other." The group of about 60 performers includes members of several nationalities. "We're a very multi-cultural group," Joseph said.