

Local

Steel drums, limbo dances and broken glass

Carnival of Trinidad performs calypso



Staff photo by Jeff Kerber

The Ujamaa Dancers perform a human limbo in Tuesday evening's OPAS presentation of the Caribbean Carnival of Trinidad.

By CAROL AUSTIN TEMPLIN
Battalion Reporter

Of all the cities that celebrate the coming of Lent carnival-style, namely New Orleans, Rio de Janeiro and Trinidad Port-of-Spain, the latter is the most exotic. MSCOPAS' presentation of the Caribbean Carnival of Trinidad was a colorful glimpse at the spirit of the people and the music that motivates them.

Calypso began in the days of slavery, with sawed-off oil drums, pots and pans, anything that would make noise. The lyrics reflect the conditions that surround the people, quite candidly at that. Today subjects range from drunkenness to food prices, equal rights, prostitution, etc. Though the subjects have become more cynical, the sawed-off 55 gallon drums remain.

Tuesday evening's performance, despite the biggest names in calypso highlighting the show, was a version of the Carnival for American tourists at home.

With the limbo, which was excellent, and the broken bottle dance, which was not, (although rolling the

face in broken glass added a nice change of pace) the show lacked the one ingredient to bring it to life...rum.

Two personalities dominated the performance, the "Queen of Calypso," Singing Francine, and Mighty Robin. It was Mighty Robin's humor and rendition of old calypso classics that was truly delightful, (you know, the songs your grandfather came home from the war singing?) while Singing Francine was more of a singing travel brochure.

Another bright spot, blindingly so, was the finale, complete with prize-winning homemade costumes, fascinating in their intricate design of chicken wire, crepe paper, feathers, mirrors and mylar.

The people of Trinidad and Tobago are happy people, and it shows in their music. It was obvious that the Starlift band was uncomfortable on a stage before exceedingly well-dressed people, and only relaxed near the end, though it did not affect their excellent performance.

I guess we just had to have been there.

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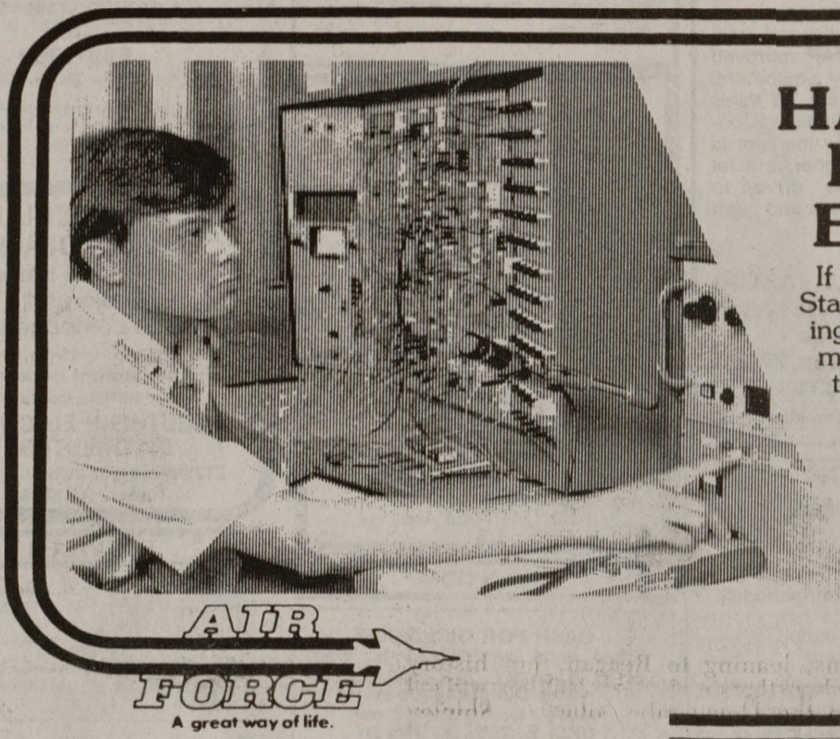
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Time writer will discuss Afghanistan

probe Talbott, Time magazine dramatic correspondent who was in Afghanistan during the Russian invasion, will talk about his experiences Tuesday at 8 p.m. in Rudder Center. Talbott's going to cover the invasion of Afghanistan and how it transpired. Ted Beason, coordinator of programs for Great Issues, said Talbott will also talk about the Olympic boycott and presidential politics.

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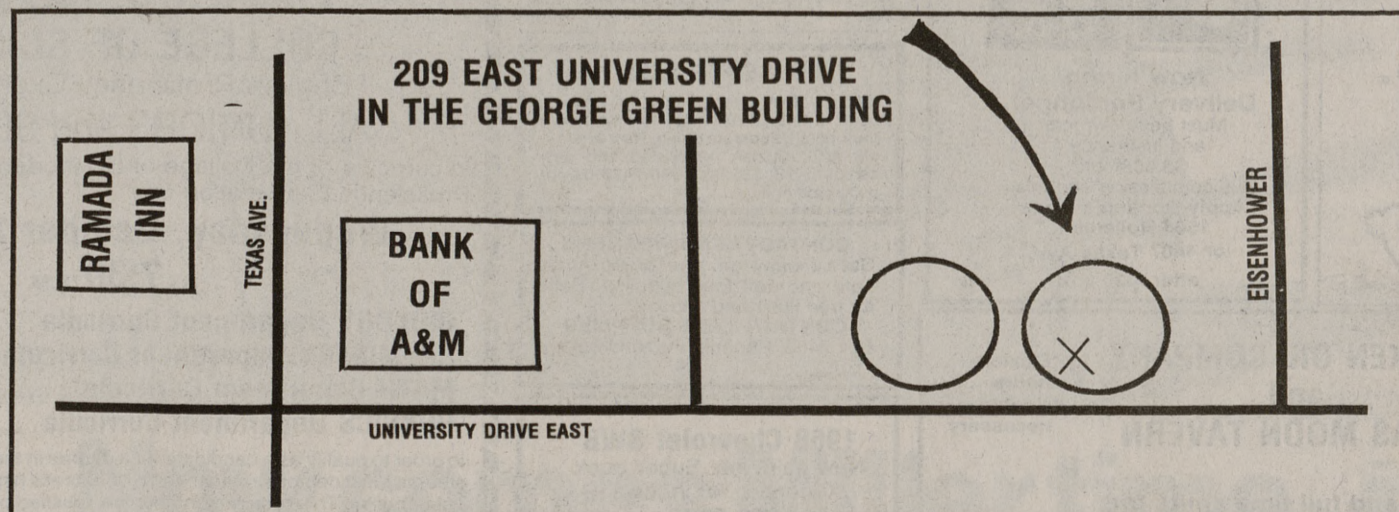
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