

Stan, the Steelpan Man



Stan, the Steelpan Man—or Truman Pringler to his parole officer—was one of the world’s foremost players of steel drums, especially the big ones. His personal collection included a sheet metal steelpan the size of Manhattan’s Columbus Circle that was ornamented with animatronic rubber noses dancing the fandango. Stan’s favorite, however, was a much smaller “rocketpan,” which he’d made out of an LGM-25C Titan II nose cone. No surprise, then, that the sounds it produced were generally regarded as “otherworldly.” To keep them that way, Stan employed a team of laid-off NASA engineers to thoroughly clean the instrument after each performance. Given Congress’s annual slashing of agency funding, the engineers were only too happy to have the work.