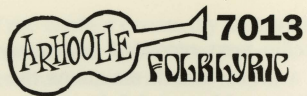


# AU BAL ANTILLAIS

*Franco-Creole Biguines from Martinique*  
Historic Recordings of Caribbean Dance Music



1. AH! GADE CHABINE LA (Stellio) - *Orchestre Antillais*: Alexandre Stellio-clarinet; Ernest Léardée-violin; Jeanne Rosillette-vocal; Archange St. Hilaire-tb; Victor Colas-bass; Orphélien-drums & vocal. (10/16/29)

2. EN SENS UNIQUE S.V.P. (Stellio) *Orchestre Antillais*, (same as #1).

3. RIALTO! SENS UNIQUE (G. Sylvestre) *Orchestre Créole "Kaukira Boys" de C. Martial*, vocal by E. Tubinal (2/15/33).

4. METTEZ I DÉHRÔ (Alphonso) - *Alphonso et son Orchestre Typique Antillais* (4/13/51).

5. MUSSIEU DOLLAR (Stellio) - *Orchestre Antillais*, (same as #1).

6. MUSSIEU SATAN FACHÉ (Stellio) - *Orchestre Antillais*, (same as #1).

7. BALCON FLEURI (Stellio) - *Orchestre "Tagada-Biguine" de Alexandre Stellio* (1932).

8. BA MOUIN EN TI BO DOU DOU - *Orchestre Créole Delvi*, vocal by Delvi (10/23/31).



9. BELLE MADAME (Matéo-Delvi) - *Orchestre Créole Delvi* (1/11/32).

10. A SI PARE (Stellio) - *Don Barreto et son Orchestre Cubain*: Emilio "Don" Barreto-guitar/vocal; Filiberto Rico-clarinet/flute; Raymond Gottlieb-piano; José Riestra-bass; Florentina Frontella (percussion/vocal) London, (7/15/32).

11. PARIS BIGUINE (Stellio) - *Orchestre Du Bal Antillais* (1/20/30).

12. PANI TI MOUN (Lancry) - *Sam Castandet et son Orchestre Antillais* (12/1/50).

13. MALADIE D'AMOUR (arr. Charlery-Banguio) - *Orchestre de la Boule Blanche*, vocal by Leona Gabriel-Soime (2/7/31).

14. CHERIE (Charlery) - *Orchestre Typique Martiniquais Charlery-Delouche* (1/27/32).

15. ANGEÏNA (Maurice Noiron) - *Sam Castandet et son Orchestre Antillais* (12/1/50).

16. C'EST BIGUINE (Coridun-Charlery-Banguio) - *Orchestre de la Boule Blanche* Vocal by Leona Gabriel-Soime (2/7/31).

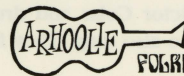
(Continued inside booklet)

## CREOLE BIGUINES FROM MARTINIQUE

### EARLY RECORDINGS OF CARIBBEAN DANCE MUSIC



# AU BAL ANTILLAIS



CD-7013



## AU BAL ANTILLAIS

### L'Ame Negre En Exile

#### *Franco-Creole Biguines from Martinique*

As the threat of the First World War loomed over Europe, each country involved marshalled its reserves to defeat the German menace. In addition to its native population, France called on young men from its Caribbean colonies, Martinique and Guadeloupe, to join the effort. Inevitably a few veterans elected to remain after the Armistice, bringing Paris a Creole element which soon found musical expression both in its own right and as it blended with the fashionable jazz music which the city was absorbing in the 1920s.

By the latter part of the decade, a popular dance hall called Le Bal Nègre, on Rue Blomet, was featuring Martiniquan music, using an amateur group put together by the club's owner, Rézard Des Vouves. In May 1929, the great clarinetist Alexandre Stellio, (born Fructueux Alexandre, [1885-1939]) arrived from Martinique with violinist Ernest Léardée and trombonist Archange St. Hilaire. They added two more musicians, bassist/cellist and pianist Victor Colas and drummer Orphélien, who also sang. They formed

the resident group at Le Bal Nègre for less than a year, after which Stellio moved on while Léardée and Colas remained to form a new group. The original orchestra can be heard on six sides made for Odéon in October 1929. Four of these are included here; the others may be heard on a CD devoted to Stellio, (MM 30838).

Despite Odéon's enthusiastic acclamation in a catalog published with the release of the records a few weeks later, the music has a raw, exotic flavor which must have jarred conventional sensibilities in 1930. Stellio's music isn't jazz but his clarinet shares the sweet orotund sound of his New Orleans counterparts. The staccato counterpoint of St. Hilaire's trombone and the sound of the violin and bowed bass (or cello, in this case) also parallel the music of early New Orleans Creole ensembles. In addition, Léardée frequently enhances the rhythm by strumming his instrument in the manner of a cuatro player. The singing, by Orphélien and Jeanne Rosillette, is in an Antillean patois comprehensible to few

Parisians.

Stellio next recorded in January 1930 with a group which maintains the rough island ensemble sound. Subsequent records show him developing into a star soloist along the lines of Louis Armstrong and participating less in the ensemble blend.

Ernest Léardée's new orchestra was the next to record Creole music in Paris and the 1930s saw a proliferation of other groups with varying degrees of the old island sound, among them various orchestras under Stellio's leadership. The Orchestre Créole Delvi's records are particularly interesting, with a blending of reeds (two clarinets and baritone sax), horns, rhythm and head arrangements which suggest the beginnings of jazz influence. Delvi was the band's singer, the leader's name is remembered only as Matéo. Though the band didn't record until 1931 and may have employed American and/or Cuban musicians by then, Alain Boulanger says it was active in the 1920s and possibly the first Antillean band in Paris. Pianist Emilio "Don" Barreto led a popular Cuban orchestra in Paris in the 1930s, occasionally adding a Martiniquan biguine to his list of rumbas. Stellio composed *Asi Pare*, though Cuban-born Filiberto Rico is the clarinetist featured on this recording. Its

striking similarity to *Tiger Rag* suggests that both tunes may be derived from a common folk melody. Both sides under banjoist Charlery's co-direction are by quartets consisting of himself, piano, drums and lead clarinet. Their sound parallels the free-for-all atmosphere which pervaded some of the early jazz bands; surely their music was as visual as it is listenable.

*Cherie* is an interesting medley of biguine and mazurka tunes, the latter having nothing in common with triple time dances of that designation in Europe. Even while resisting the impulse to draw too many comparisons with early jazz, it's impossible not to note the two robust choruses by a pianist who keeps the flavor, if not the style, of ragtime.

The leader of the Kaukira Boys is Claude Martial, who could be playing either piano or banjo; the quartet is rounded out by two reeds and percussion. Pianist Jean Alphonse was also called Alphonso. His smooth piano and the controlled rhythms of his drummer give his quartet more than a little feeling of the Cuban rumba elements which were affecting a broad range of 1930s popular music. Clarinetist Sam Castandet was a

fixture of the Paris music scene for years and is especially remembered for a long stay at Le Canne À Sucre (Sugarcane) ballroom in Montparnasse. His recordings are relatively recent, but the folk quality of the clarinet-trombone duets is quite in keeping with the music introduced to Paris by Alexandre Stellio in 1929.

Music from the Antilles continues to play a part in French musical life, though in an evolved style far removed from Stellio, Delvi and Léardée. Jazz and rock have played important roles in that evolution, much as they have in salsa, calypso and reggae.

## THE BIGUINE

Though one of Cole Porter's biggest hits was *Begin the Beguine* (he used the Spanish spelling: *beguine*), his song more resembled a bolero. It's doubtful that Porter ever heard a real biguine; the music is indigenous to the French island of Martinique, with elements reaching back to the 17th century, when French colonists and their slaves first settled there. The dance itself evolved from a fusion of African style with French ballroom steps.

As in other French-speaking New World locales, string band music played a dominant role in Martinique, with the louder

sound of the clarinet eventually taking a lead. Trinidad and even New Orleans developed music similar in many respects to what we hear in this collection. In America, reeds and brass all but replaced the strings by the time of the "jazz age," although the sound of Creole clarinet giants like Jimmie Noone, Barney Bigard, Lorenzo Tio, Jr. and Johnny Dodds has much in common with their distant Caribbean cousins.

(Richard K. Spottswood- 1988, 1992)

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(continued from back cover)

17. **RETOUR AU PAYS** (E. Delouche)  
**Orchestre Del's Jazz Biguine**, J. Riestro-cl.; R. Marounzy-alt. sax; P. Rassin-tb; Claude Martial-p; S. Martial & R. Monmarché-dm; E. Delouche-vo/ldr. (1951).

18. **TES YEUX!** (Vals) - **Orchestre Del's Jazz Biguine** (same as #17).

19. **BELLE - BELLE** - **Orchestre Créole Delvi** (10/23/31).

20. **POUR METTRE UN PEU D'EN-TRAIN** - (Biguine de un Soir de Reveillons) ( Jean Boyer & R. Moretti) - **Orchestre Créole "Kaukira Boys" de C. Martial** (2/15/33) Vocal by E. Tubinal.

21. **QUAND MEME** - **Orchestre du Bal Antillais** (1/20/30) .

22. **OLGA** (Stellio) - **Stellio et son Orchestre Créole** (4/16/34).

23. **AMANTINE!, AMANTINE!** - **Stellio et son Orchestre Créole** (4/16/34).

All recordings, except #10, made in Paris, France. All selections are marked "Biguine" except #7 and #14 which are described as "Mazurka-Biguine," and #18 which is marked "Vals."

Edited by Richard K. Spottswood.  
Produced by Chris Strachwitz. Cover by Elizabeth Weil & Jil Weil.

Cover photo of Stellio's orchestra, courtesy Robert Crumb.

Special thanks to Jack Towers, whose remastering has restored the sound of these rare, historic, 78 rpm performances with skill and care, and to John Cowley for many discographic details.

1: Ki 2653-1, Odéon 165.792; 2: Ki 2652-2, Odéon 165.792; 3: 139055-1, Parlophone 85.584 4: Ki 11468-1, Odéon 279.987; 5: Ki 2657-2, Odéon, 165.793 6: Ki 2654- 1, Odéon 165.793; 7: 301347-01, Pathé X.96085 8: 138514(M3-48318), Parlophone 85.130; 9: 138613(M3-55149), Parlophone 85.228; 10: FGB4661-2, Decca F.40263 11: Ki 2880-1, Odéon 165.898 12: CL8889-1, Columbia DF3379; 13: L2759, Columbia DF428; 14: Ki 5218-1, Odéon 250.154, 15: CL8822-2, Columbia DF3356, 16: L2760-1, Columbia DF428, 17: M3-133336, Ritmo 3, 18: M3-133338, Ritmo 3, 19: B138515 (M3-48319), Parlophone 85.130, 20: B 139057-2, Parlophone 85.584, 21: Ki2876-2, Odéon 165.896, 22: Ki6613-1, Odéon 250.668, 23: Ki6617-1, Odéon 250.668

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# AU BAL ANTILLAIS

Franco-Creole Biguines from Martinique



**Over 60 Minutes of Historic CARIBBEAN DANCE MUSIC**

*Orchestre Antillais de Alexandre Stellio:*

1. AH! GADE CHABINE LA (Stellio) (10/16/29)

2. EN SENS UNIQUE S.V.P. (Stellio) (10/16/29)

*Orchestre Créole "Kaukira Boys" de C. Martial:*

3. RIALTO! SENS UNIQUE (G. Sylvestre) (2/15/33)

*Alphonso et son Orchestre Typique Antillais:*

4. METTEZ I DÉHRÔ (Alphonso) (4/13/51)

*Orchestre Antillais de Alexandre Stellio:*

5. MUSSIEU DOLLAR (Stellio) (10/16/29)

6. MUSSIEU SATAN FACHÉ (Stellio) (10/16/29)

*Orchestre "Tagada-Biguine" de Alexandre Stellio:*

7. BALCON FLEURI (Stellio) (1932)

*Orchestre Créole Delvi:*

8. BA MOUIN EN TI BO DOU DOU (10/23/31)

9. BELLE MADAME (Matéo-Delvi) (1/11/32)

*Don Barreto et son Orchestre Cubain:*

10. A SI PARE (Stellio) London, (7/15/32)

*Orchestre Du Bal Antillais:*

11. PARIS BIGUINE (Stellio) (1/20/30)

*Sam Castandet et son Orchestre Antillais:*

12. PANI TI MOUN (Lancry) (12/1/50)

*Orchestre de la Boule Blanche:*

13. MALADIE D'AMOUR (2/7/31)

*Orchestre Typique Martiniquais Charlery-Delouche:*

14. CHERIE (Charlery) (1/27/32)

*Sam Castandet et son Orchestre Antillais:*

15. ANGEÏNA (Maurice Noiron) (12/1/50)



*Orchestre de la Boule Blanche:*

16. C'EST BIGUINE (2/7/31)

*Orchestre Del's Jazz Biguine:*

17. RETOUR AU PAYS (E. Delouche) - (1951)

18. TES YEUX! (Vals) - (1951)

*Orchestre Créole Delvi:*

19. BELLE - BELLE - (10/23/31)

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*Stellio et son Orchestre Créole:*

22. OLGA (Stellio) - (4/16/34)

23. AMANTINE!, AMANTINE! - (4/16/34)

*Cover photo:* Alexandre Stellio (clarinet) & his band.

Edited by Richard K. Spottswood. Produced by  
Chris Strachwitz. Cover by Elizabeth Weil & Jil Weil.  
Cover photo of Stellio's orchestra, courtesy Robert



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