

# CALYPSO EXPOSED



scandals straight from Trinidad  
— by the very elite, in the person of

**Lord Melody**  
**Mighty Cypher**  
**Mighty Skipper**  
**King Sparrow**

**PLUS**

**SAXOPHONE**, a special bit for psychological shut-ins  
concocted *sans souci* by Herbert Howard and the infamous  
**Brute Force Steel Band of Antigua**



## Calypso Exposed

The recent rash of overt cocktail humor has in effect served to unlock this album from its private collector's jail. This record is a graduate course for calypso cognoscenti; also, the songs are made to be painstakingly and sometimes joyously understandable thru fragmentary verse transcriptions below. However, neither space nor a recently liberated social convention would make prudent a full annotation.

### If you never dug calypso

read these lines

One might say that the well-balanced man, animal and all, is made to fight, to laugh, to love, to work — and possibly sometimes to think.

Calypso does not help to satisfy the need to work. But it blasts off on all the other pads. Yes, a good calypsonian will sometimes make us think — a little! In a world where honest fighting is out-of-style, indiscriminate laughing dangerous, and where only demons openly speak of and practice the anatomy of love, frustrative pressures build up.

Someone should translate the output of a Calypso Auxiliary Unit into 72 tongues and dialects complete with the colloquialism, glaring metaphor, spidery allegory and grammatical rapine. They could then become a major force for peace—at the United Nations. So be it, and a pox upon all this philosophizing.

### Adventure

You are about to unravel the cuneiform mysteries of calypso. It will take many happy hours of repeated playings to savor the last enjoyable drops of melodic comfort and meaning from these verses. Given the ample clues below, if calypso still remains barren of meaning for the gentle listener, he is either blind, deaf, dead, or just a terribly mixed-up kid—what the West Indians sometimes call a *zombie*!<sup>1</sup>

They say a zombie is someone who has really died but is still walking around. And you can tell him from other people because zombies cast no shadows. Think about that one for a moment; there are double-takes buried in it. Watch for that shadow!

**PUNCTUATION, Mighty Skipper** — taken in calypso tent, this is an idiomatic allegorical jungle infested with dangerous predatory metaphors.

*Tuesday lesson was dictation,  
And a little punctuation;  
All day you sit down on your big fat comma,  
And you ain't cook nuttin' up;  
But I could — this hyphen in your semicolon, And bust up your —!*

1— If you are charmed by this sort of magic, we have a truly rare album of West Indian Fairy Stories — they call them 'Bre'r Nancy' stories — collected from the darkest english-speaking corners of the Caribbean. It is numbered E-105, \$4.98 at your dealer, or if not in stock order direct from us. Children love it, too — of course! We also have lots of other calypso albums. Send for free catalog!

**SAXOPHONE, Herbert Howard & Brute Force** — recorded outdoors in Antigua.

#### CHORUS:

*Saxophone — o leave me saxophone,  
Saxophone — yes, 'e blowin it outa tune,*

*Saxophone — ah, you can't make de note,  
Darlin', take care you hurt you troat!*

*De way she lift de saxophone,  
As if she bitin' piece a bone,  
She say she would like to play the tune,  
That remind she of her honeymoon.*

*Just as I laid down to relax,  
Into her mouth she put the sax.  
A-wil, a-wil she start to blow,  
Oh, I tried to tell her, NO!*

*The reed went soft and outa tone,  
And she leave me with a broken saxophone!*

**LOVE, AND MISS DOVE, Mighty Cypher**

— The generous indoctrination and instruction of supposedly pure and uninformed females is one of the traditional calypso gambits:

#### CHORUS:

*I told her love is a ocean  
Full of motion  
Well attached to the police station.  
A young lady whose name is Miss Dove  
Wanted to know the meaning of love,*

**SUGAR PIE, Lord Melody** —

#### CHORUS:

*Let us make love my sugar pie,  
For life is short and we may die;  
Hold me and kiss me honey,  
Tell me for once you love me,  
Let us make love my sugar pie!*

*Oh, they got some old women playin'  
young,  
Causin' confusion in this town,  
I met a big black one by the grocery,  
Who swear to heaven she love me,  
She took me home and that was . . .  
Old women they really possessed!*

*Dis time the old woman drinkin' gin,  
An' scratchin' me underneath the chin,  
(OH, LAWD) I jump off the Morris chair,  
She said to me, 'Look, it's over there!'*

**MIGHTY SPARROW, The Attempt as Good as the Act** — taken during carnival time in a calypso tent. *Za-za* paper comes in rolls. Blind man passes fish market with traditional delta<sup>2</sup>switch. Sparrow relies much on a charming lyrical quality of voice and on balladry in his verses. Allegory and metaphor are scarce; he gives us the facts straight from the shoulder. The free-flowing unsophisticated audience response will be interesting to students.

2— This is the scholarly word for *scatological*.

3— *Creature from Black Lagoon* is in *Calypso Kings & Pink Gin*, Cook No. 1185, \$4.98; *Mama Looka Booboo* is in its original cast premiere in *Jump-Up Carnival*, Cook No. 1072 (also available in stereo edition), \$4.98.

**DEVIL DOWN DEY, Lord Melody** — a handier excuse than mice running out on the floor, for this girl to jump into the arms of she man:

#### CHORUS:

*I've seen the devil,  
With his head as clean as a whistle;  
Here we go, I can't stay,  
The devil sittin' down dey —*

**CAROLINE, Lord Melody** — the story of an ancient profession.

#### CHORUS:

*When I was as young as Caroline,  
Any man I came across is mine;  
I used to make them feel happy,  
As long as they have money;  
When I was as young as Caroline*

*Every day she chasin' Carol,  
The house ain' got food for tomorrow,  
Not a drop o' rice in the place,  
An' you only shakin' you waist!*

**ROMEO, Lord Melody** —

#### CHORUS:

*Don't ever leave me, don't let me go,  
I love you Melody, please leave a baby,  
Please do, the image of you, —  
(Darling, I love you)*



saxophone proprietor Herbert Howard, and friend

**WOMAN GOOD, WOMAN BAD, Lord Melody** —

#### CHORUS:

*I livin' with a man and his every cent  
he does give me,  
I friendly with a man an' I love him  
not for his money;  
I don't know why I love men company  
so!*

*Woman good and woman bad,  
Dis one was rather hard; (rep)  
A old, broad-mouthed ugly one,  
Livin' quiet up in Junction;  
I thought she was goin' mad,  
When she name all the men she had —*

**HOW MOMMY MADE ME, Lord Melody**—

*Every night is a bam-bam, Willie,  
Not me and this bloomin' Millie;  
They take me for Belmont donkey,  
They know how mommy made me —*

*The girl cryin' out for she belly;  
So I figure at once she was hungry —  
O Lawd mister I feelin' pain,  
In agony the girl shout out again . . .*

*Finally a crowd gather around,  
This time the girl still on the ground;  
She was exposed she didn't care,  
You should have seen the atmosphere;*

**LET'S TAKE A CHANCE, Lord Melody** —

#### CHORUS:

*Let's take a chance — NO!  
You love me — NO!  
Tell me why — NO!  
You hate me — NO!  
I'll marry you — NO!  
I'll die for you — NO!  
I'll tell your mother so — NO!*

*But if I did decide I would marry,  
The decision lies with my mommy;  
She saved it from year to year,  
She wants me to marry a millionaire —*

## About Lord Melody

Beyond compare in his own time, Fitzroy Alexander is unquestionably the Shakespeare of contemporary calypsonians. With subtle turns of phrase, fragrant connotation and exquisite musico-literary symmetry he conjures into the mind of the most inhibited a series of scorching 4-color day dreams. Observe the consummate A-B-A form of the words and music in the choruses of **Sugar Pie** and **Caroline**, the moving images erected by the verses of **How Mommy Made me**, the romance and pathos of **Let's Take A Chance** and **Romeo**.

Had the accident of birth happened to Melody in Europe, say, his operettas would obviously have vied with the best for top popularity. He is a Gilbert and Sullivan rolled into one, and an ugly one, at that; when he made **Creature From the Black Lagoon**<sup>3</sup> and the 1956 hit **Mama Looka Booboo**<sup>3</sup> he was being autobiographical.

Working in the comparatively obscure field of calypso, Lord Melody is leaving a monumental heritage. In calypso, he is the great, the supreme one. **Emory Cook**

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