

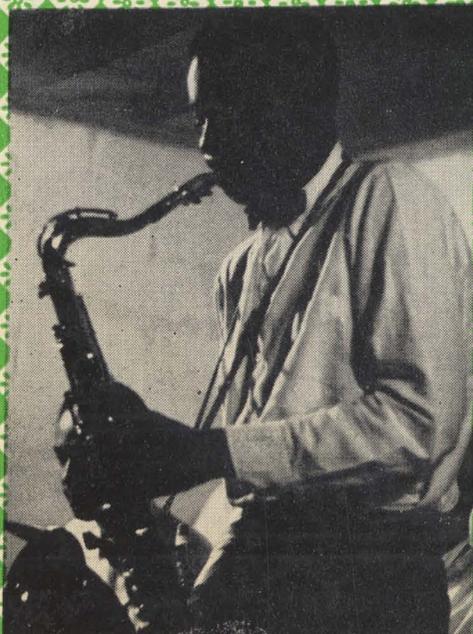
COOK

Sounds of Our Times

le

JAZZ

SI-FP-FW87-D C --00665
Clemendore, Rupert
Le Jazz Trinidad



trinidad

Patois Jazz with Rupert Clemendore & his band

Jazzman about a jazzman



His appearance and dress are remarkable for what they're not . . . no bop glasses, no sharp sport shirt, no beret. Instead, a Bond Street hat fitting too high and too soon—he's never without it, even in rehearsals—with immaculate dress shirt and subdued tie, high lace shoes and umbrella crooked over his arm.

Here it comes again. Here is jazz revisited. As vital, potent and male as it was when it hit New Orleans and bounded around in the teens and twenties. To New Orleans and the rest of the South—to Chi, New York and around the world. And back to B. W. I. where the great rhythmic and melodic influences came from.

In those days the embodiment was Oliver, Armstrong, Celestine and a handful. Here is Rupert and a handful. Here is progressive music—if you must have a label—but with bone and sinew grafted and fresh blood transfused.

OK, so I've lapsed into purple prose (take away a piano and replace it with a pencil and that's what you get)—but that's what this guy'll do to you. You listen and you'll mumble superlatives and make predictions about the direction of jazz and you'll check this kid's photo and make a mental note of his name and you'll think to yourself here's a boy they'll lecture about, these professors of semantics, jazz and folklore in otherwise staid and respectable Eastern colleges.

I'm a shade more gassed by him right now than you are because I know him, I've talked and jammed and drunk with him. My drink was rum—his red soda water. He has an amazing singleness of purpose; rum isn't going to stop or atrophy his jazz as it's done for his uncles, cousins and friends.

Whether you're long hair in your tastes, Dixie, swing or 'progressive', or lean toward serious modern composition this will get you. If you like music, hate horn-rimmed glasses and enjoy the company of the opposite sex, you'll like this.

RED CAMP

Rupert the inscrutable

If he goes much farther—and he will—Rupert could find himself the chief grand potentate of a new school of surrealist sound. The virulent germs are all there . . . just waiting to consolidate into an irresistible new cult.

Who else but Rupert would keep the same off-beat two measures going for three and a half minutes under his own vocal? What's more, almost everyone so far likes it; that's what's so disturbing. Neither of the two vocals is sung. The one with the syncopated perpetual motion is a rather involved story called *Clem's Confusion* relating various adventures with a kind of international harem which descends on innocent *him* while walking down Park Street. Strictly speaking this is more of a recitation than a song—but not to be confused with the school room type.

What Rupert does with his voice in *Chop Suey Mambo*, the other one, must remain completely unclassified. Over a steel spring mambo rhythm he cavorts through some unlikely story dealing with an Oriental girl arguing with her Chinese father about marrying a Creole gentleman of doubtful antecedents. Rupert takes all the parts.

If these bizarre concoctions illustrate how Rupert's mind runs, the same delightful originality illuminates his jazz. If he has a STYLE it is this improbable blend of pixie surprise . . . and extremely advanced rhythmic figures.

By trade he is a highly skilled drummer—*ibid*, three solid minutes of it in *Drummer's Mood*—but he doesn't drum much with the band anymore. His trademark now is mostly vibes. (In Trinidad this may be literally a trademark. There must be others, but this set was the only one we saw in Port of Spain the whole time. Most Trinidad instruments are so much on the go musicians don't take much to those which have to be plugged in.)



COOK Laboratories,

101 Second Street, Stamford, Conn.



" . . . comes big Bakanal—Biff! Bam! Boom!"

photos: Cook

After the first few downbeats, listeners almost always mention the "Shearing Influence." After the next few they're engrossed in the silent pleasure of following Rupert's probings into new and unexpected instrumental colorings, intricate passages of sax and guitar unison for example . . . vibes added like spice by a master chef.

The daring syncopation of all the unison work would seem to demand an almost military schooling for precision. Not so. Rehearsal is light, 'arrangements' extremely haphazard. Even the bandsmen come and go. What makes it all work is the common inheritance of the Trinidad musician, and a rapport which comes from sharing what is certainly one of the highest developments of the rhythmic instinct reached anywhere.

BB

Side A:

Mambo Chop Suey
Mambo Metronome
Eastern Conga
Off Beat
If Sorrow Fills My Heart
(composed by Denner)
Clem's Confusion

Side B:

Drummer's Mood
Doris, "Oh!"
(by Vivian Comma)
8 Hours a Day
Short Pants Saga
Mambo Ebonier
Eulogie
Progression Calypso

DRUMS, VIBES: Rupert Clemendore

TENOR SAX: Sunny Denner

PIANO: Bert Innis

BASS: Gerald Charles

GUITAR: Les Sergent

DRUMS: Randolph Lewis

TIMBA DRUMS: Clayton Peters

BONGO DRUMS: Calvin Lorelike

(All arrangements and compositions by Rupert Clemendore except where noted.)

Send for catalog of exclusive on-the-scene Caribbean recordings by Emory Cook