

COOK

Sounds of Our Times

long play 10890

An on the scene recording at Port of Spain, Trinidad, British West Indies

Dance and Music from the Island Tropics

- Calypso Jazz
- The Terra Seca
(Brazilian Lament)
*with Clarence Drysdale,
Lorna Pierre & chorus*
- All-Girl Oildrum Orchestra
The "Girl Pat" Steelband
- John Buddy Williams Band
- Johnny Gomez Band
- Grand Curucaye String Orchestra
(Traditional Venezuelan)

THE Castilianne MARACAS WALTZ

cover print courtesy Alcoa Steamship Co.

equatorial jazz & pops

"When the Negro arrived here, he was quick and smart like Saci,*
By rivers, jungles and fields he lived and played...
But time has passed, and the earth become barren,
Oh, God, this is going to end this life of the tired body.

"The thought runs something like that," says Beryl McBurnie. "The *Terra Sêca* is packed with creole references and idioms, so a great deal of it is not strictly Portuguese. The words deteriorated while I was in England, and so today, copy has moved away from the original."

**one-footed, pipe-smoking folklore character*

In Belem, at the mouth of the Amazon, is where Trinidad's Beryl McBurnie first heard *Terra Sêca*, the Brazilian lament. She brought it back to her island, and there they play it, just as Trinidad plays most of the music from the tropical corner of the continent. Listening north and west from Cayenne, Paramaribo and Georgetown, into Venezuela, there is a certain common denominator in the popular music and music for dancing. Each form is the product of thousands of ingredients from the Portuguese, French, Indonesians, Africans and Spanish.

This record contains a wide variety of dance forms whose derivations are shrouded in the tropical mists and whose expression is also on the superheated side. Most fascinating is the form called the 'Castilienne' also known as the 'Venezuelan Waltz' whose most immediate antecedents are the *zoropos* and *manzanares* of Venezuela, also heard on the record. The kaleidoscopic rhythms of the Castilienne would probably drive an oldtime jazzman right out of his mind, with the heady mixture of two and three beat music, played simultaneously.

The South American continentals do not go to the extreme of improvising for the sake of improvisation, although they are certainly influenced by jazz from the north. It remains for Trinidad, sitting there like a huge bulldog on guard at the crossroads of the sea and air lanes, to assimilate and to apply the jazz twist before kicking this music off and out into the Anglo-Saxon world.

The workings of this process are apparent on side B, opening with a jazz Castilienne by Johnny Gomez' group, then instances of the same form as played by the Girl Pat all-girl oildrum orchestra under the direction of Hazel Henley. The provocatively danceable prototype of the whole business, the *zoropo*, is gleaned from the comparative isolation of the Grand Curucaye hills, where Beryl McBurnie found and brought together a group of onetime Venezuelan emigrants who remembered and played for us.

Comments on the Castilienne by Jazzman Red Camp

I had never challenged the idea that 4/4 is the ideal framework for jazz. If you had asked me why, I would have said, well it swings, or, it's a matter of cross rhythms, or, that's the way it started go away mind your manners.

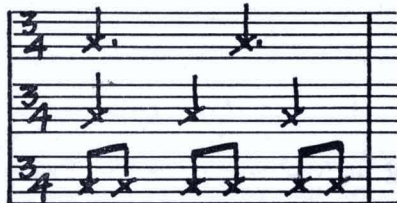
Now I'm not so sure. I've heard and tried to play a waltz that would swing the pendulum off a clock. I had to sweat out the cross rhythms standing over each instrument in turn, counting on my fingers to find out what was going on.

This much I can tell you. Above all it is a strong accent on the first beat in the Grand Curucaye the full string bass was playing this first beat.

The media (half-bass, three-stringed cello) was playing in two, like so (3/4)

The cuatros (four string guitars) were divided; some were playing in three,—

..... and the other half:



The violin and flute were playing melodies and countermelodies completely antipodal to everything else that was going on. The total effect was breathtaking unconstrained and inevitable. And there you have it, but you don't,—because there is the little matter of accent, nuance and convention handed down from father to son and uncle to cousin, from bawdy-house to bar to British-white-tie joint, from Spain to Venezuela to the crossroads that is Trinidad.

They do a dance to this waltz, a sort of toe-tap twice, and whirl around a time or two that's something to watch and hear. When Gomez swung into this at the Normandie (British coat-and-tie mill), the effect on the audience was electronic.

So it swings, allows for interpretation, has cross rhythms, and I'd like to submit that except for an accident of fate, instead of the Fox Trot or Bunny Hug, this highly complex waltz might have been the framework for American jazz.

photos: Cook



Castiliannes from Johnny Gomez
—Hotel Normandie, Port of Spain



the shape of things to come
the Girl Pat all-girl oildrum orchestra



John Buddy in person

Johnny Gomez' Band (at the Hotel Normandie, Port of Spain)
2 CASTILIANNES

John Buddy Williams' Band (at the Little Carib Theatre in Trinidad)

TERRA SECA
(from Brazil) with Clarence Drysdale tenor,
Lorna Pierre soprano, & chorus

CREOLA
—a medley of mainland songs

BIG MAN, SWEET MAN
—calypso (selling rum in the wang)

GEE BONGO LAY
—a Tobago bongo gone calypso

SHOEING THE MARE
—Cuban

TERRA SECA
(instrumental)

Girl Pat oildrum orchestra (recorded in front of the Bretton Hall Hotel)
2 CASTILIANNES

Grand Curucaye String Orchestra (bandol, 3 cuatros, flute,
guitar, violin, cello, bass, piano)
CARACAS (zoropo)
MANITA OCTAVO (zoropo)
MANZANARES

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