

FOLK MUSIC OF HAITI

RECORDED BY HAROLD COURLANDER / ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4407



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1951

MUSIC LP

FOLK MUSIC OF HAITI

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET
ETHNIC FOLKWAYS LIBRARY FE 4407

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

SIDE I

- Band 1. PILE PIED'N (Ibo Dance Song)
(Morgina Lavache, with Chorus, Drums)
Band 2. M'PAS BWE M'PAS MANGE (Work Song)
(Libera Borderau and Ti Yogan, with
Mortar Sounds)
Band 3. OGOUN BALINDO (Invocation)
(LaFrance Belvue)
Band 4. EZLIE WEDO (Invocation)
(LaFrance Belvue)
Band 5. LA FAMILLE LI FAI CA (Ibo Dance Song)
(Lena Hibbert, with Chorus, Drums)
Band 6. MOUNDONGUE OH YE YE YE (Moundongue Dance Song)
(LaFrance Belvue, with Chorus, Drums)
Band 7. ZAMIS LOIN LOIN (Secular Song)
(Dimervil Servers)
Band 8. ALEXIS NORO (Political Song)
(Dimervil Servers)
9. OU PAS WEM INNOCENT (Secular Song)
(Aloanne Francois)

SIDE II

- Band 1. MAININ'M ALLE (Congo Dance Song)
(Ti Yogan and Morgina Lavache, with Drums)
Band 2. COTE YO... COTE YO (Mats Dance Song)
(Libera Borderau, with Bamboo Stamps and Irons)
Band 3. CRAPEAU TINGELE (Play Song)
(Libera Borderau and Ti Yogan)
Band 4. BALANCE YA YA (Play Song)
(Edgar Derostier)
Band 5. TROIS FE (Social Criticism)
(Christophe Oxtias, with Mosquito Drum)
Band 6. SPIRIT CONVERSATION
(Cult Priest at Leogane)
Band 7. GENERAL BRISE (Quilta Dance Song)
(LaFrance Belvue, with Chorus, Drums)
Band 8. MAYOUSE (Carnival Song)
(Male voices with Marimba)
9. PAULETTE (Romantic Song)
(Sigibrien Bellis and Vensise Macelisse,
with Guitar, Marimba)

See L & 1458 - 1462, v. 51, pt. 1, p. 262
R 54-3

MUSIC OF HAITI

Vol. I, FOLK MUSIC OF HAITI

Vol. II, DRUMS OF HAITI

Vol. III, SONGS AND DANCES OF HAITI

Recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander.
Introduction and notes on the recordings by
Harold Courlander.

The music of Haiti is the music of more than 3,000,000 peasants, caneworkers and day laborers who populate the mountainous country. Only a short flight by air from Miami, almost within sight of the most eastern point of Cuba, Haiti and its people are, at best, vaguely known to Americans to whom places like Guadalcanal, Java and Iwo Jima have become familiar.

Yet Haiti has one of the proudest histories of the American republics as well as an old, rich culture. It's the kind of culture you don't see clearly at first glance. The handicrafts aren't prolific or striking, there is no strong tradition for painting or wood-carving, and there is relatively little metalwork. What the Haitian people do with their hands is directly utilitarian. They weave baskets and hats, carve mortars, wari boards and drums, forge machetes and hoes, but few of these will ever come to rest in museums. The significant part of Haitian culture is the part that's not immediately visible to the naked eye. It consists of a vast unwritten literature, dances, music, an inbred awareness of democratic principles stemming directly out of the French revolution, and a complicated but integrated religious relationship with the gentle and violent forces of nature, a religious outlook known as Vodoun.

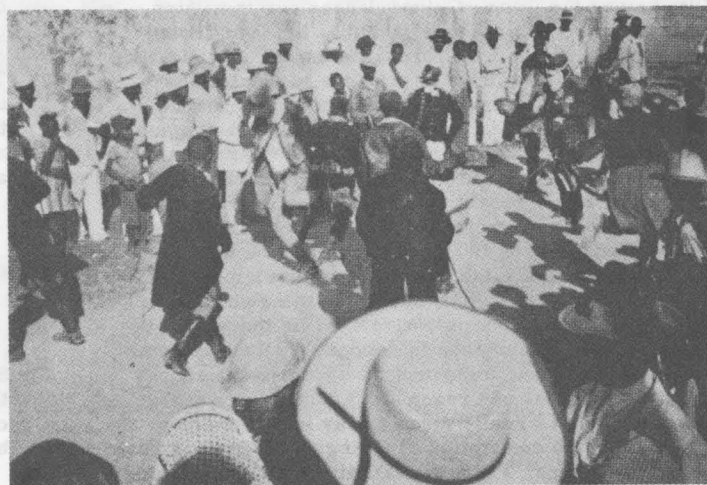
For many years the subject of ridiculous and sometimes gruesome "voodoo" tales, Haitian life has in recent years been studied seriously by such scholars as Melville J. Herskovits (*Life in A Haitian Valley*) and James Leyburn (*The Haitian People*). Some of Haiti's folktales and folksongs have been collected and published in English, and alert Haitians are now turning for creative inspiration to the folklore and folk music that they once regarded as savage.

But outside Haiti, Haitian music is still largely unknown. It touches almost every phase and detail of Haitian life. Probably the cult music has received more attention than any other. The Congo, Dahomey, Ibo and other religious groups have preserved, sometimes in their purest forms, the musics of those regions of Africa from which the Negro slaves came in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The drumming, singing and dancing of the culture have been inherited legitimately, and are part of a meaningful way of life.

In addition, however, there is a vast body of secular music. It includes worksongs, playsongs, secret society music, songs of protest and ridicule, political songs, story songs, and otherwise unclassifiable social music, all stemming out of an essentially African tradition. Some ballads and lovesongs in the more common Latin-American idiom are also



Haitian Stick Dancers



Comic Dance Team
performing "Dance of the Generals"



Afternoon IBO Dance

heard in the towns but the full impact of rhumbas, congas, sones and other so-called Afro-Cuban or Afro-Latin forms has never been felt because there has never been a musical vacuum in Haiti, and because the social sense of its own tradition was so deeply rooted.

The Africans who were brought to Haiti as slaves came primarily from the areas known as the Grain Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and most of the rest of West Africa from Angola to Senegal. They represented countless tribes, spoke different dialects or languages, and had different religious beliefs. Mohammedans as well as pagan Africans found their way to Haiti. Some of the slaves came from central and East Africa. The West Coast people predominated, and two main cults emerged, the Congo-Guinee group and the Arada-Nago group. Today each of them has its own rites, its own drum rhythms, its own songs, its own dances and its own supernatural beings.

Haitian dancing is essentially African in style. The religious dances -- those concerned with cult life in one way or another -- generally take place in a covered court adjoining a hounfor (temple) or some other building. What is called the Vodoun dance may actually be the Arada, Jenvalo, Zépaule, Nago, Dahomé, Carabienne, Calebasse, Maïs, Mazonne Rada, Bouleverse, or any one of many other dances belonging to the Arada-Nago cycle. The Ibo dance is closely related to the cycle, but is usually regarded as being outside of it. Among the Congo-Guinee dances are the Pétro, Quitta Moyé, Quitta Chêche, Bumba, Solongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Pastorel, Mousondi, and Moutchéché. Like the Ibo, the Kanga dance is outside the main groups. Students of African geography and ethnology will recognize among these dances a large number of tribal and place names. But there has been considerable invention, and many dances have been developed in relatively recent years. Secular dancing may take place in a covered court, but the festival dances such as Rara and the Mascaron occur in the streets. While Haitian dancing is packed with the elements of drama, probably the most important thing about it is that it is primarily participative. While there may be an audience, that audience is secondary, usually composed of resting participants, the aged and the sick, and others who for one reason or another are unable to join in. What I really mean to say is that there is no sophisticated conception of a singing or dancing performance as such. There is no tradition of famous dancers, famous singers or famous drummers. Drummers come the closest of any to having professional status. Good dancing and good singing are recognized and applauded, but these like the audience, are a by-product, not the ultimate objective. The prime reason for the dance is participation.

While drums are the most common of Haitian instruments, there are many others, predominantly percussion, including: bamboo stampers which are beaten upon the ground; rattles of many kinds; bamboo and conch trumpets; simple iron percussives and bells; the single stringed earth-bow, or mosquito drum; tambourines; scrapers, claves and whistles.²

¹For Haitian folk tales see: Elsie Clews Parsons, Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English, American Folk-Lore Society, 1936; Harold Courlander, Uncle Bouqui of Haiti, Morrow, 1942; George Simpson, "Loup Garou and Loa Tales from Northern Haiti", Journal of American Folklore, Oct. -Dec., 1942. For folk songs see: Courlander, Haiti Singing, U.N.C. Press, 1939; "Profane Songs of the Haitian People," Journal of Negro History, July 1942; "Haiti's Political Folksongs", Opportunity, April 1941.

²For a fuller discussion of Haitian musical instruments see "Musical Instruments of Haiti," The Musical Quarterly, June, 1941.

Side I, Band 1--PILET PIED'M: This song is from the repertoire of the Ibo Dance, which is usually associated with the Arada-Nago cult or the Congo-Guinee cult. The dance itself takes its name from a tribe in Southern Nigeria, from which some of the Ibo music in Haiti is clearly inherited. The typical Haitian Ibo drumming, for example, is known among the African Ibos, where it is regarded as their own characteristic rhythm.

PILET PIED'M is a parable-like song, in which a moral is drawn indirectly. It says, in essence, that an injury once done cannot be talked away. In the Ibo language of West Africa the words Ibo lele mean "Ibo says". In Haiti Ibo lélé is sometimes taken to be the full name of the loa (or spirit being) Ibo, or sometimes they are presumed to be "singing words" associated with Ibo songs. In this case the West African translation seems appropriate:

Ibo says!
Ibo says!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
What good is the pardon going to do me?

Side I, Band 2--M'PAS BWÈ M'PAS MANGÉ: This is a fragment of a work song, with two men participating. They are pounding grain in a large wooden mortar and the sound of their long wooden pestles sets the rhythm of the singing. For responsive purposes, a man sometimes assumes a falsetto, as is the case here.

The theme is one of humorous bravado. They sing that they have been summoned by the president, but that they can't come because they haven't had their dinner-- a note of personal independence that is very familiar among the work songs:

Rwo! It is the president who sends to call me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.
The president sends to call me, rwo!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.

Side I, Band 3--OGOUN BALINDJO: An invocation to the loa, or spirit-being, Ogoun Balindjo, this song is a complaint against the behavior of one's friends or neighbors who act as hypocrites. A typical stanza goes:

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look
To go away and talk, oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
The eyes (should) see, the mouth is closed oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Don't you see they come to look at me?

Side I, Band 4--ÈZILIE WÈDO: This invocation belongs to a ritual service of the Arada-Nago cult, and is addressed to the female loa Èzilie Wèdo. Religious in character, it represents the sentiments of the loa herself as she enters the hounfor, or cult temple:

Èzilie Wèdo, ago-é!
Oh the Creoles say like this,
We are not in Africa any more,
We shall do as we wish, oh!
I shall bring myself,
I shall take myself away.
To do what I wish, oh!
I shall bring myself,
I shall take myself away.
To do what I wish!

Side I, Band 5--LA FAMILLE LI FAI CA: The words of this Ibo dance song are a gay, commonplace comment on some activity in the cult temple. They say simply that the family (cult) does what the loa (spirit-being) Ibo Lazile wishes them to do -- that is to say, dance:

His (Ibo's) family does this.
 Yes does this.
 His family does this.
 Ibo Lazile wishes it.

Side I, Band 6-- MOUNDONGUE OH YÈ YÈ YÈ: This song belongs to the Moundongue cult, which is part of the Congo-Guinée cycle of rites. It takes its name from the Moundongue tribe in the upper Congo. Among the early slaves in the West Indies the Moundongue people (remembered in Cuba as the Moundongos) were sometimes regarded as cannibals. Even today, one Haitian peasant may insult another by calling him a Moundongue. Actually, however, there is no evidence but folk lore that the Moundongues were cannibals in Haiti. The Moundongue ritual sacrifice involves the killing of a goat or the clipping of a dog's ears. The loa, or spirit-being, of the cult is himself named Moundongue, and he is believed to be especially fond of dogs, so that persons possessed by him are apt to pick up or fondle any dog within reach. Normally, however, dogs are only in the rarest cases regarded as pets. This song is a description of the food being prepared for loa Moundongue behind the cult temple:

Moundongue oh!
 Oh Moundongue oh, yè yè yè!
 Moundongue oh!
 Oh Moundongue oh, yè yè yè!
 Moundongue eats boiled goat!
 Moundongue eats roast goat!
 Yè yè yè!

Side I, Band 7-- ZAMIS LOIN MOIN: A social criticism song, the words here are a complaint against friends who are not loyal:

Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
 Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
 Friends far away from me are saved money!
 Friends close to me are a two-edged knife, go far away from me, friends!

Side I, Band 8-- ALEXIS NORD: This is a song commemorating a Haitian president by the name of Alexis Nord, or Nord Alexis as he was variously called. During his administration, early in the century, there was a shortage of national currency, much of which was circulating outside of Haiti. Nord Alexis called in the old paper money and issued new, to the great satisfaction of the Haitian people. These are the words of the bugler's "assembly" in the Haitian Army. The commemorating phrases are put in the mouth of Alexis Nord's wife, Cece:

Ceçé said Alexis Nord is a fine man all over!
 Ceçé said Alexis Nord is a fine man all over!
 Ceçé said he will quit whenever he sees fit!
 Ceçé said Uncle Nord is a fine man all over!

Side I, Band 9-- OU PAS WE'M INNOCENT: This is a religious song, but the content is variously concerned with the ritual and with social protest. "Ferei's goat" refers to the sacrifice for the loa Ferei.

Innocent, don't you see I am innocent!
 It is God in Heaven who will judge me!
 Innocent, don't you see I am innocent!
 It is God in Heaven who will judge me!
 Ferei's goat looks for the road to the water!
 The saints' goat looks for the road to the house!
 In Africa everyone is sick, oh!
 Papa, I will save them!

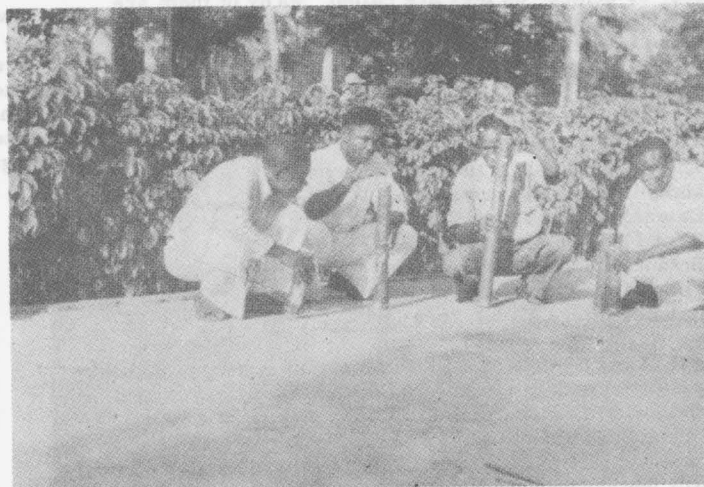
Side II, Band 1-- MAININ'M ALLÉ: This is a secular piece of the type that may be heard at any of the non-religious Congo dances. The theme is common in Haitian musical literature - humorous bravado. When the song originated, Borno was President of Haiti. The words say, in Haitian idiom, "Who's afraid of Borno?" As proof of his contempt for the highest authority in the country the singer demands to be confronted by the president himself:



Congo Society Festival



Playing the Vaccines, or Bamboo Trumpets



Playing the Gambos, or Bamboo Stamping Tubes

Take me, oh!
Take me into Borno's parlor!
Take me!
Take me!
Take me into Borno's parlor!

Side II, Band 2--COTÉ YO, COTÉ YO: Belonging to the Vodoun or Arada-Nago cult ritual, the Maïs dance takes its name from the Maïs tribe in West Africa. Most commonly the Maïs dance is played with three drums and an ogan. (an iron bell with an external clapper, or simply two pieces of iron struck together). Here, however, the musicians are playing ganbos, bamboo stamping tubes. One end of the tube is closed by a natural joint in the bamboo, the other end is open. The closed end is struck sharply on the ground, and a tone is produced from the open end. Different lengths and diameters of tubes produce different tones. The song is about the spirit called Sobo, who is the protector of the hounfor, or temple. Sobo's impatience for the ritual service to get under way is described in the lines:

Where are they? Where are they?
Sobo asks for Arada drums.
Where are they? Where are they?
Where are they? Where are they?
Sobo asks for Arada drums.
Where are they? Where are they?
Where are they? Where are they?
Where are they? Where are they?
Sobo asks for Arada drums.
Where are they? Where are they?

Side II, Band 3--CRAPEAU TINGÉLÉ: On the night of a death, when a wake takes place, the house of the deceased person is the scene of community singing. While inside the house itself there is a singing of canticles, outside, where the younger people gather, there are games, stories and play songs. Again on the Saturday night following burial and continuing until Sunday night, rituals for the dead take place, and once more there are games, storytelling and songs outside the house. The stories may be serious or humorous, perhaps dealing with the folk characters Bouqui and Ti Malice. Many of the contes, or narratives, contain songs which are taken up by the listeners to the accompaniment of handclapping. The fragment of a wake or gaille song included here has to do with the fable of the horse and the frog who were courting the same girl and had a race to see which one would win her. As they go down the road, the frog hopping, the horse galloping, the frog taunts the horse for being so slow:

Frog hops ti-dong ti-dong-dong ti-dong frog hops!
Lord, Brother Horse, do you call that running?

Side II, Band 4--BALANCÉ YAYA: Some of the play songs are self-contained, while others are taken from the cante fables, or contes, as they are called. Many of them are rather ambiguous taken out of their context, and it is only possible to guess at their exact meaning:

It is little Marie Joseph oh!
The rat has eaten my pigeon!
It is little Marie Joseph oh!
The rat has eaten my pigeon!
The rat passes by, aubINETTE passes by,
Make little Marie run away!
Balance things Yaya, Yaya oh!
Yaya Madame Mango!
Balance things Yaya, Yaya oh!
I say my prayers for Yaya!
Balance things Yaya, Yaya Oh!

Side II, Band 5--TROIS FÉ: The tambour maringouin, or mosquito drum, isn't a drum at all but a single-stringed earth bow. It is made in the following way: a hole is dug in the earth to a depth of perhaps a foot or eighteen inches and about a foot in diameter. This is covered with a piece of stiff leather or bark which is fastened firmly to the ground. A cord is fastened to the center of this membrane and tied tautly to a small green sapling bowed over the

hole. The taut cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while its tension is varied by pressure upon the bowed sapling with the free hand. Accompaniment for this instrument, in addition to voice, is played with sticks upon some handy object, perhaps a board, which gives off a sharp sound. The words of the song given here seem to refer to a pouin or fetish prepared for someone by a bocor (diviner and practitioner of black magic). The bocor has not been paid for the work he did, and he warns the recipient of his services that a time will come when he will regret it. The language is tangent, laden with hidden meaning:

Three leaves, three lemons oh!
Three leaves, three roots oh!
I say rwo! One day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have a pool, three roots fell into it!
When you want to forget it you will have to remember!

Side II, Band 6--SPIRIT CONVERSATION: On certain occasions, religious rites concern themselves with communication with the loa, deified spirit beings, and the ancestor spirits. The cult priest upon going into a trance talks "voices", which are readily identifiable by those who listen. On this occasion the cult priest was in a trance state for more than a half hour, crouched in a small structure built for the occasion. As he conversed with the loa and the family ancestors he tinkled a small hand-bell, which can be heard faintly in the background. Voices of spectators can be heard now and then replying to the spirit voices. This piece is merely a fragment, and is given not as an example of Haitian music, but as an example of how music is woven into the very fabric of religious life.

Side II, Band 7--GÉNÉRAL BRISÉ: Général Brisé, who is the subject of this song, is one of the loa of the Quitta family of deities or spirit beings, and the Quitta cult belongs to the Congo-Guinée cycle of rites and dances:

Général Brisé, the country is in the hands (of God) oh!
Ago-é!
Général Brisé, the country is in the hands oh!
I am appealing to God, oh!

Side II, Band 8--MAYOUSSE: This is one of the carnival type songs that may be heard during such festival times as the pre-Easter weeks, All Saints Day, etc., as well as on many informal occasions. One of the instruments which is very popular for this kind of music is the marimba which is a development from the tiny thumb piano (sansa) of West Africa. The marimba is made of a box to which strips of thin steel have been affixed, and it is played by plucking these "keys".

Side II, Band 9--PAULETTE: Strictly romantic songs do not play a large part in Haitian singing, and where they exist they are traceable to other Latin American influences. Even the guitar, heard here along with a marimba, is foreign to most Haitian music. Ballads such as this represent only a small, incidental aspect of Haitian musical activity, but the ballad form and the romantic song are becoming more and more popular in urban centers. This piece tells the story of a man who loses his childhood love and meets her again as a grown woman. He sings:

Paulette, remember long ago when we were small, our
houses face to face!
When you made mudpies! It was always asking
for Paulette!
When you went away you didn't say where you were
going, Paulette!
When you went away you didn't say where you were
going Paulette!
It was one Saturday morning when I, a farmer, went down
to the city!
When I saw Mama Paulette, the tears ran from my eyes!
When you went away you didn't say where you were
going, Paulette!
When you went away you didn't say where you were
going, Paulette!

Side I, Band 1--VODOUN DANCE, played on three vodoun drums, the manman, moyen, and bébé, with sticks and bare hands. The sharp tone that is heard is made by the player of the large (manman) drum by striking his stick on the wood. This is the main dance of the Vodoun cult, whose mythology is built mainly around the religious practices of the Nago and Arada people, from Nigeria and Dahomey respectively.

Side I, Band 2--IBO DANCE, played on three drums and ogan (iron percussion instrument). The small drum (bébé) is played with sticks, the two larger drums with the hands. This is the main dance of the Ibo cult, which takes its name from the Ibo tribe of southern Nigeria. Ibo cult activities are sometimes regarded as closely related to the Vodoun cult, sometimes to the Congo-Guinee cycle of rites. The Ibo dance is gay and lively, although it is definitely religious rather than secular in character.

Side I, Band 3--SALONGO DANCE, played on two drums with hands, with occasional use of sticks. This is a rest or relief dance belonging to the Congo-Guinée cycle of rites. It is used to break the tension in the course of a long ceremony. Nevertheless, even this music is tense compared to some of the secular drumming.

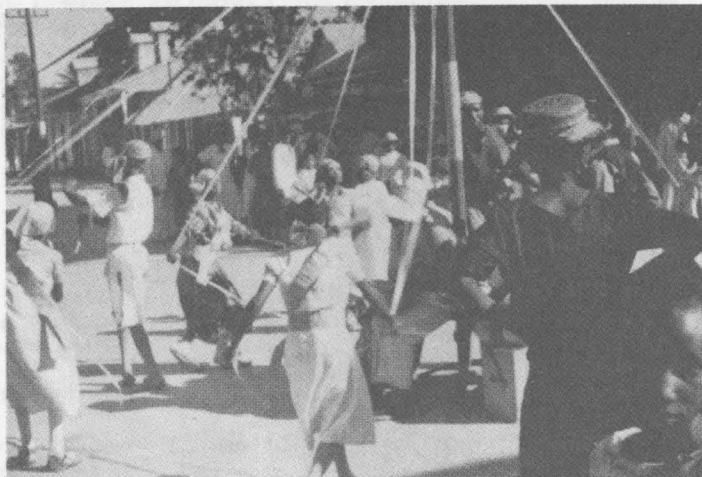
Side I, Band 4--JUBA DANCE. Two players on one drum. The drum lies on the ground, and one player straddles it and plays upon the head, using his heel for a damper; the second player beats sticks against the body of the drum. The Juba Dance, sometimes called the Martinique, is today a semi-social dance identified with rites for the dead. Some of the old people believe that the Juba was once associated with festivals held upon the completion of cultivating, planting, and harvesting, while the Martinique was a similar style of dance connected with death rituals. The Juba was at one time known throughout the Antilles, as well as in New Orleans. For some Haitians the Juba today has religious significance.

Side I, Band 5--PÉTRO DANCE, played on two drums with hands only. The Pétro Dance is associated with Pétro cult rites, and is one of many dances which are part of the Congo-Guinée group of rituals. Pétro music is always played on a battery of two drums with goatskin heads, and the use of sticks is never permissible. Occasionally in such music there may be an accompaniment of an ogan, but this is exceptional. There are several theories as to the origin of the cult name. The chief loa (spirit) of the cult is Dan Pétro. Some Haitians take the word Dan to mean snake, a significance it has in West African idiom. Early observers in Haiti, however, express the view that the cult was built around Dom Pedro, an emperor of Brazil. One aged informant suggested that the cult derived its name from one Don Pedro, a former slave and cult priest who lived in the Spanish-speaking part of the Island.

Side I, Band 6--QUITTA DANCE, played on two goatskin head drums, with hands only. This dance, like the Pétro, belongs to the Congo-Guinée cycle of which Cymbi is the main loa (spirit).

Side II, Band 1--BABOULE DANCE, played on three drums with hands and sticks. A social dance related to the Juba. This is probably the same dance as the Bamboula, which was reported by early travellers in the West Indies, and which is still known in other West Indian islands.

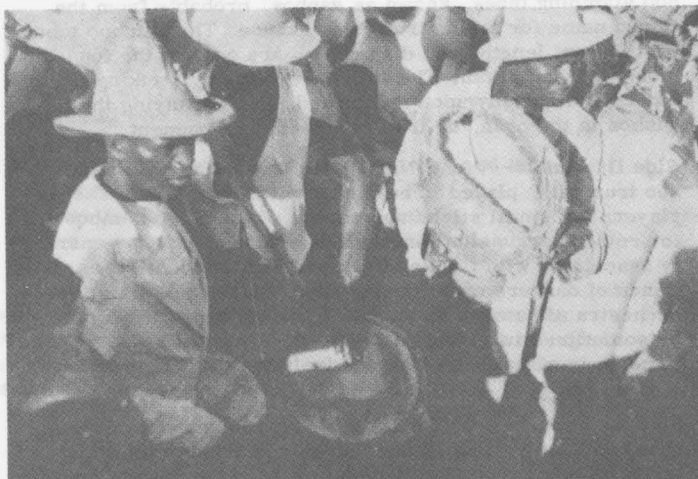
Side II, Band 2--MASCARON DANCE, played on two drums and a basse (large tamborine), with hands only. The deep insistent tones, sometimes in the form of a glissade, come from the basse. This is a secular festival dance, particularly common during such occasions as the pre-Easter Mardi Gras gatherings.



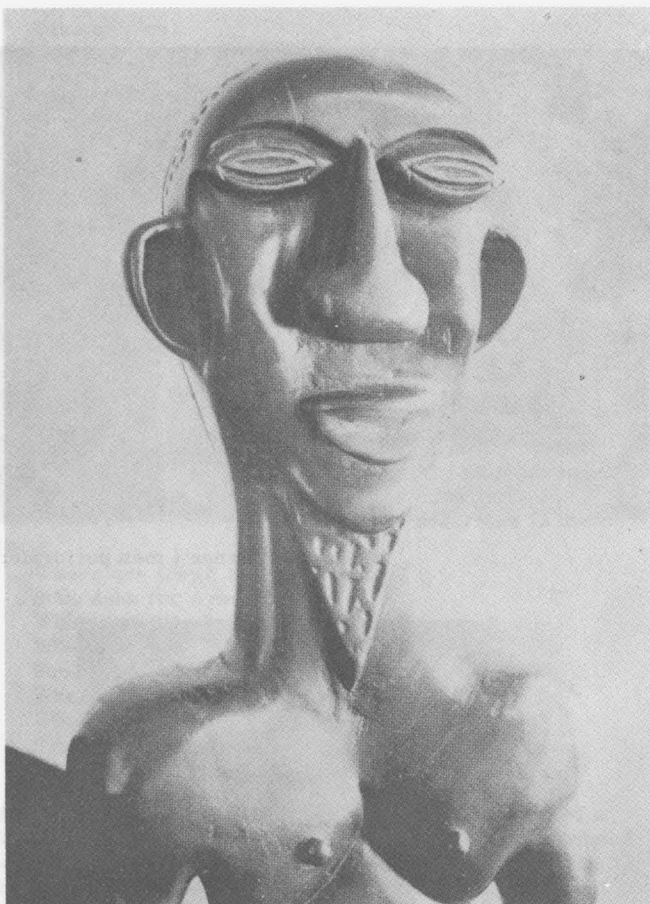
Maypole Dance (men performers)



Petro Dance



Congo Society Drummers



Loa Loco (wood carving)

Side II, Band 3--CONGO PAYETTE DANCE, played on three drums, with hands only. A secular dance, the "straw-Congo" derives its name from the straw costumes that are worn on carnival occasions when this music is performed. The wailing sound, resembling the tones of a friction drum, is made by sliding the fingers over the drumhead.

Side II, Band 4--CONGO LAROSE DANCE. Three drums, played with hands only with the same glissade technique as in the previous piece. The Congo Larose is also known as the Congo Creole and Congo Mazonne, and is a semi-religious dance. The term Congo Mazonne came into use when the Congo rites became intermixed with the secret society ritual of the Masonic order. Secret societies have always had a great appeal within African cultures.

Side II, Band 5--GANBOS. This music is played with bamboo stamping tubes, known as ganbos, probably from the Congo name for the instrument, dikanbo. The bamboo tubes, of different lengths and diameters, are open at the top, closed at the bottom. The tones are made by striking the closed end sharply upon the ground. Accompanying the ganbos is the ogan, or iron percussion instrument.

Side II, Band 6--VACCINES. Vaccines are simple bamboo trumpets, played in batteries of three or four. The players tap small sticks against the sides of the bamboo to provide percussion tones. This kind of music is generally associated with the Rara, or pre-Easter, festivities. Bands of dancers move through the villages following the orchestra of bamboo trumpets. Each trumpet gives one, or sometimes two, tones. The trick is for each player to come in with his note at precisely the right moment.

Side II, Band 7--BUMBA DANCE, played upon two drums, with hands only. This dance, closely related to the Pétro, takes its name from the Bumba people in the upper Congo region of Africa, and is part of the Congo-Guinée constellation of rites and music.

The first six selections in this collection were performed by the Ayida Group of Port-au-Prince. Whereas the recordings in Volumes I and II of this series are primarily documentary, emphasis in Volume III is on group performance under relatively good recording conditions. Under documentary conditions group singing is difficult to record, due to improper acoustic placing of drums and constant movement of dancers and singers. The Ayida Group is one of the modern folklore groups that have sprung up in Haiti since the basic folk patterns were finally accepted as a rich source for creative art forms. The Ayida Group, while performing as an integrated group in non-documentary settings, preserves the simplicity and directness of the folk music.

Haiti has become very conscious of its folk heritage in recent years, and as a result many so-called folklore groups have sprung up--most of them, unfortunately, enthusiastically dedicated to polishing, changing and "improving" the folk music for the benefit of tourists. While adaptation of folk themes and traditions to the stage could be a worthy objective, many efforts in this direction have been too conscious of the lure of professionalism. The Ayida Group, headed by Simeon Benjamin, is composed of ordinary Haitians with a background of close association with folk music in its natural setting. The members mostly come from the Belair section of Port-au-Prince. The drummers are Louis Celestin, Dalimar Celestin, and Pierre Desramaux. The singers are Catherina Clermont, Josianne Jeanbaptiste, Anaise Valmé, Sidalise Dorcé, Dieudonné Pierre, Janine Dorcé, Elvire Ducasse, Estella Dorméla, André Celestin, Richemane Lalanne, and Gabriel Plaisidor.

The selections on side two of this record are documentary. Two of them -- carnival or Rara bands -- were recorded in 1952 by Marshall Stearns.

Side I, Band 1-- CÉ MOIN AYIDA (Zépaule Dance): This is religious music of the Dahomey or Vodoun family of rites. It is primarily a shoulder dance ("les épaules"), and is used during Vodoun services to supplicate the loa or spirit beings. The loa being addressed in this song is Ayida Wèdo, a member of the Dahomey pantheon.

Abobo!

Cé moin oh cé moin Manzè Ayida oh cé moin.
 Cé moin oh cé moin Manzé Ayida oh cé moin.
 Chita abord batiman ya pa' lé nou mal oh.
 Cé moin oh cé moin po'teau planté oh cé moin.
 Cé moin oh cé moin Manzè Ayida cé moin.
 Cé moin y'apé pa'lé.
 Cé moin oh cé moin Manze Ayida cé moin.
 Chita abord batiman y'a pa'le nou mal oh.
 Ce moin oh ce moin po'teau plante oh ce moin.

* * *

Abobo!

It is I, it is I Mademoiselle Ayida, oh it is I.
 It is I, it is I Mademoiselle Ayida, oh it is I.
 Sitting on the boat they spoke badly about me.
 It is I, centerpost, it is I.
 Etc.

Abobo is a ritual beginning and ending for Vodoun songs. The centerpost referred to in the fourth line is the post which stands in the center of the dance court, usually holding up the roof. It is believed that the loa enter the ritual gathering by coming down this post.

Side I, Band 2-- AYIDA DÉESSE ARC EN CIEL (Mahi Dance): The Mahi, (or Maïs) dance differs from the Zépaule in rhythm, but it is an integral and important part of the Vodoun cycle. The deity invoked here is the same as in the preceding piece, Ayida Wèdo. She (like the loa Damballa Wedo) is identified with the rainbow and the snake. In Dahomey, where Ayida and Damballa were the same deity, it was believed that the rainbow was Ayida crawling out from under the world to drink. Ayida was conceived as a great serpent. The symbolism is preserved in this Haitian song:

Ayida cé arc en ciel oh.
Ou ap' vin' fai coulev!
Ayida cé arc en ciel.
Pas wè n'ap fai coulèv'?

* * *

Ayida is a rainbow oh.
You (Ayida) will come like a snake.
Ayida is a rainbow.
Don't you see I come like a snake?

Side I, Band 3-- AYIDA PAS NAN BÈTISE (Péto Dance):
The Péto Dance belongs to another cult group, called Congo or Guinée. It has its own pantheon of deities and many distinctive rites and services. While the loa invoked here is named Ayida, she is not the same deity as in the previous songs. The same deity, theoretically, could not belong to the Vodoun and the Congo-Guinée cults. Where transference of a deity from one cult to another takes place, as it sometimes does, the loa acquires a different personality and different attributes in the new setting. He is regarded as distinct from the original loa by the same name. The Péto deities are generally regarded as stern and uncompromising if not altogether malevolent, though some Péto loa --like the Vodoun--are benevolent. In this song there is a warning that the loa will not stand for foolishness.

Bilolo!

Ayida pas nan bètise oh.
Ayida pas nan bètise ave yo.
Enlé, langaille oh.
Ayida pas nan bètise oh.
Ayida pas nan bètise avè yo.
Ça qui vlé content content.
Ça qui vlé passé passé oh.
Ayida oh

Ayida pas nan bètise avè yo.

* * *

Bilolo!

Ayida is not joking oh.
Ayida is not joking with them.
Enlé, language oh.
Ayida is not joking oh.
Ayida is not jok' g with lmem.
Those who wish to be satisfied will be satisfied.
Those who wish to go will go.
Ayida oh
Ayida is not joking with them.

(In the first line, bilolo is ritual language used to commence a cult song, used in the sense of "attention" or "ready." In the fourth line, enlé is exclamatory; the word "language" is a literal translation of langaille, meaning "old tongue" or African ceremonial language. Bits of langaille appear frequently in the cult songs.)

Side I, Band 4-- VIVE LE ROI: This is a Martinique or Juba Dance piece. This type of dance is usually connected with celebrations marking the end of mourning for a deceased person.

Vive le roi cher la reine oh.
Encore malheureux a pa'lé enro moin.
Difé oh chaleur,
Difé oh chaleur oh.
Encore malheureux a pa'lé enro moin.

* * *

Long live the king and dear queen oh.
Again misfortune, they talk behind my back.
Fire oh heat,
Fire oh heat oh.
Again misfortune, they talk behind my back.

The "king and dear queen" allusion is not clear, but the theme of protest against gossip is a standard one in Haitian life. "Fire and heat" is a reference to the fury of the gossip.

Side I, Band 5-- MAMBO AYIDA (Congo Dance):

Mambo Ayida é.
Pral nan Guinée, pinga ou misé m' tendé.
Si ou joint bon ouanga wa po'té.
Si ou joint bon lotion wa po'té.

* * *

Mambo (Priestess) Ayida é.
(You) go to Africa, take care you do not stay, I am waiting.

If you find a good ouanga carry it back.
If you find a good lotion carry it back.

It is believed that the loa go to Africa and return at will. The loa Ayida is here asked not to forget that her Haitian people are waiting for her return. And she is asked to bring back from Africa a ouanga (protective fetish) and a lotion for some unspecified purpose.

Side I, Band 6-- LEGBA AGUATOR (NAGO DANCE):

Legba Aguator is a member of the Vodoun pantheon of loa.

Ochan Nago.
Legba Aguator yé oh qui loa ou yé? Ago loa'm na.
Legba Aguator yé oh qui loa ou yé?
Quitti-quitté oh Nèg' Nago loa'm na.
Legba Aguator yé qui loa ou yé?

* * *

Ochan Nago.
Legba Aguator, what loa are you? Ago, I am this loa.
Legba Aguator, What loa are you?
Wherever I go I am a Nago loa.
Legba Aguator, what loa are you?

Side II, Band 1-- ANGÉLIQUE OH (JERICO): This is a popular Meringue-style song, sung by a blind minstrel. He plays a guitar and is assisted by a small boy who sings faintly and plays the cha-chas (rattles). In Creole the words go:

Allez caille manman ou,
Allez caille manman ou,
Pas vin ba'm désagrément.
Allez caille manman cher,
Allez caille manman cher,
Allez caille manman mon cher,
Pou pas ba'm désagrément.
Ti fille qui pas con' lavé passé
Allez caille manman ou.
Ti fille qui pas con' lavé passé
Allez caille manman ou.
Jerico, Jerico, allez caille manman ou.
Jerico, Jerico, allez caille manman ou.
Etc.

* * *

Go home to your mother,
Go home to your mother,
Don't come to quarrel with me.
Go home to your mother, dear,
Go home to your mother, dear,
Go home to your mother, my dear,
And don't quarrel with me.
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron
Go home to your mother.
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron
Go home to your mother.
Jerico, Jerico, go home to your mother.
Jerico, Jerico, go home to your mother.
Etc.

There are variations on the lines throughout the song, with a certain admixture of double meanings. "Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron" has a double-entendre.

Side II, Band 2-- **BALILÉ**: This is a carnival song, sung during the Rara or pre-Mardi Gras festival. It was recorded in the town of Pétionville by Marshall W. Stearns. The group is a wandering Rara band which includes such instruments as a drum, a whistle and a trumpet. The words of the singers are difficult to transcribe, but the title -- Balilé -- signifies "give him room." One might reasonably guess that it is a reference to the main dancer of the group who has demanded that the crowd stand back while he performs. In the Haitian tradition, his words have become transformed into a song.

Side II, Band 3-- **FIOLÉ**: This is another Rara song, also recorded by Marshall W. Stearns. Like the preceding

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Production Director - Moses Asch

piece, it is documentary, and was recorded in the town of Pétionville. The song is in praise of a certain Fiolé, a public official of Port-au-Prince who endeared himself to many people through his devotion to the welfare of the public. The words ask, "Fiolé, where are you going?" and then they describe what a fine fellow Fiolé is, an "elegant young man" and a man of learning.

Side II, Band 4-- **BELLE MANMAN**: A meringue played by a small cafe orchestra, the Jazz Majestic Group. This style of meringue is a relatively modern development, and as the name of the group would indicate, affected by influences of jazz. (For contrast with slow, concert-type meringues, see Folkways record FP 837, HAITIAN PIANO.)

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