

JUNKANOO BAND — KEY WEST

Recorded by Marshall W. Stearns in Key West, Florida

Folkways Records FL 4492

JUNKANOO BAND — KEY WEST

FOLKWAYS FL 4492

JUNKANOO BAND — KEY WEST

PERSONNEL: CHARLES "BOOKIE" ALLEN, LEADER, MARACAS;
LEONARD ALLEN, SAW; JOSEPH ALLEN, HOME MADE DRUM;
JOE WHYMS, CLAVES; ALVIN SCOTT, BELL; KENNETH
RAHMING, CONGA DRUM.

JUNKANOO NUMBER 1 - Instrumental
CONCH AIRY GOT NO BONES
BONE FISH
TANGERINE
SPONGER MONEY
WE'RE GONNA TEAR DOWN THE IRON BED

KEY LIME BEAT - Instrumental
SAPODILLY LIMBO
MATILDA HOLD THE LIGHT
SARAH LEND ME YOUR PIGEON
POOR HOUSE ALLEY SPECIALTY - Instrumental

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET
Library of Congress Catalog Number: R 64-1186

with change in personnel: LEONARD ALLEN, HOME MADE DRUMS;
ALVIN SCOTT, CONGA DRUM; JOSEPH ALLEN, BELL;
KENNETH RAHMING, CLAVES; CHARLES ALLEN, MARACAS;
JOE WHYMS, OUT.

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

COVER PHOTO BY FREDDIE MAURA

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album FE 4492

Copyright(c)1964 by Folkways Records & Service Corp. 165 W. 46 St. N. Y. C.

KEY WEST JUNKANOO

RECORDED JAN. 19, 1964

by MARSHALL N. STEARNS



SIDE A

1. Junkanoo #1
2. Conch Ain't Got No Bones
3. Bonefish
4. Tangerine
5. Sponger Money
6. Tear Down the Iron Bed

SIDE B

1. Key Lime Beat
2. Sapodilly Limbo
3. Matilda Hold the Light
4. Sarah Lend Me Your Pigeon
5. Poor House Alley Special

PERSONNEL: On all numbers except Poor House Alley Special:

Leonard Allen, saw
Joseph Allen, home-made drum
Joe Whym, claves
Alvin Scott, bell
Kenneth Rahming, conga drum
Charles Allen, maracas, leader

On Poor House Alley Special:

Leonard Allen, home-made drum
Alvin Scott, conga drum
Joseph Allen, bell
Kenneth Rahming, claves
Charles Allen, maracas
Joe Whym, saw

Vocals are by Charles Allen, Leonard Allen, and Alvin Scott.

Joe Whym, claves

Nobody seems to know where the word junkanoo comes from. Three educated guesses: from John Conny, a tribal chieftain of Axim on the Guinea Coast of Africa (this was suggested as early as 1774); from John Canoe, referring to the elaborate head-dresses--including miniature canoes--worn during the masquerade (I've seen them in Nassau); and from gens inconnus, a French phrase meaning "unknown people" used to describe the masqueraders who are always in disguise.

In any case, the word has been used for many years in the British West Indies to describe a series of masquerade-dances during the Christmas holidays, a sort of Protestant equivalent of Mardi Gras, which center around a special kind of music played by a special kind of band.

The music is essentially dance music and the basic instrument is the drum--usually two or more. Like everything else, the drums are improvised: in the Bahamas they are made of nail kegs and goat skins; in Key West of crawfish buckets and, when nothing else is available, raccoon skins.

The rest of the instruments may include whatever is within reach--as long as it is percussive: "cleavers" (claves which, like maracas, come from Spanish-speaking West Indies), cowbells, and "scrapers", which describe anything from an animal's jawbone to a carpenter's saw scraped with a table knife. (In Jamaica they have borrowed the fife and triangle from military bands.)

The music is in the West African style, a powerful tradition that extends throughout the West Indies and along the Eastern shores of Central and South America. Wherever it is still associated with religious ritual--the source of its origin--this drumming has kept its vigor (listen to the music of the Sanctified Sects today), but where it has overflowed into secular life--as in the Bahamas-- it has become diluted by the flood of West Indian and American popular music.

The connection between Key West and the Bahamas has been close. In the early days, many citizens of both areas made a living from the numerous shipwrecks off the Florida coast. In 1825, an act of Congress ruled that only Americans could continue in the wrecking business. So the Bahaman wreckers, who were tops in the trade, moved to Key West bringing their domestics (sometimes seven or eight to a family) and often their entire houses which set a fine style and may still be seen to this day.

In 1835 when slavery was prohibited in the Bahamas, immigration to Key West was accelerated because nobody wanted to work the played-out soil at home. By 1850, Key West was the richest town per capita in the U.S.A. Less than 200 colored people lived in Key West before 1845 but over 550 between 1845 and 1850. This number increased just before the war between the states when workmen were imported to build the forts. Key West, in spite of its Southern sympathies, stayed with the Union.

Then Spanish-speaking Cubans began to arrive and by 1870 Key West had the largest cigar-making industry in the world. Later on, sponge fishing became the big business. Around 1900, with a population of about 16,000 consisting of approximately one-third of Cuban ancestry, one-third of Afro-American, and one-third what-have-you, they say that the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Key West was established once and for all.

Within the U.S.A.,--with the notable exception of New Orleans where Latin-Catholic laissez-faire predominated--the drumming, along with the dancing, was pretty well eradicated by British-Protestant prohibitions. It now appears that Key West is a partial exception, too, in which the ethnic history of New Orleans is partially reversed.

Thus, Latin-Catholic until 1803 when it became a part of the United States and increasingly open to British-Protestant influences, New Orleans is almost the opposite of Key West which was originally British-Protestant until, in 1868, Cubans fleeing the revolution and building up the cigar industry, brought their Latin-Catholic culture to Florida to blend with Afro-American traditions. Both Key West and New Orleans were boom-towns --Key West at a later date--as well as cross-roads of the New World.



As a result, the musical customs of Key West and New Orleans are not unlike. They both have the same kind of funerals, going to the cemetery slowly and sadly and returning joyfully; the same kind of parades, with dancing in the streets (there are dozens of military bands for models); the small string-bands for society and the raucous spasm-bands for everyone else. With one great difference: what Jelly Roll Morton called "the Spanish tinge" in New Orleans is a solid coloring in Key West which permeates the music with "Latin" rhythms from Africa by way of Cuba. And yet, perhaps because the Spanish influence arrived late, the "native" music of Key West is not well established and shows signs of disappearing altogether.

Key West is the only city in the United States where I have come across a home-made drum (we know they once had them in New Orleans) in the authentic African style. This one is made from a palm tree with pegs at the top for tuning and a face carved on one side (see illustration). It was made a dozen or so years ago, they tell me, by an old fellow named "Okra Soup" who came from Cat Island in the Bahamas. He has since disappeared.

The leader of the band whose whiplash voice dominates the music is Charles "Bookie" Allen, a gentle and generous soul (he presented me with a home-made drum from the Junkanoos), who is a little older than the rest. Bookie served in the Navy, travelling extensively and, upon his honorable discharge, returned at once to Key West where he has a government job. He is convinced that there is less racial prejudice in Key West, a fact that squares with its history. His nickname was given to him by his grandfather, he says, and comes from a folk-tale about Brer Rabbit. (In the Oulof tribe of West Africa, I discovered, bouki means "hyena" and is the name of a trickster.)

The music is social and they are following a local tradition: "Barroso's Daddy had a 'Nassau' dance every Saturday night," says Bookie referring to drummer Kenneth Rahming's father who also sang. "It was in his big back-yard and he sold beer and everybody sang, danced, and drummed." They started their musical careers here. As children, they began making music with "bottles, wood boxes, tin cans, buckets, washtubs," says Bookie, "we even got a tone from conch shells."

Most of the musicians in the sextet are young. The two stars--Leonard "Uncle" Allen who is a virtuoso with the table knife and carpenter's saw and Alvin "Cheesie" Scott who creates exciting rhythms with the cowbell--are still in their teens. Uncle, who looks wise beyond his years, learned to play the saw by watching "Black Shirt" playing at the Nassau dances. The trick consists of flexing the saw to make it produce different tones while scraping the teeth with a knife, a technique that traces back to Africa. Black Shirt is still riding a bicycle around Key West. "He be's at the bight every afternoon," says Bookie.

The members of the band are Afro-Americans born and bred in Key West, but they trace their ancestry back to the Bahamas. The ancestors of the three Allens (they are cousins) came from Eleuthia Island and those of Rahming and Whyms from Andros Island. Alvin Scott isn't sure. They are all Methodists, speak fine eighteenth-century English mixed with today's slang, call the rest of the United States "the mainland," and live near each other just south of the cemetery on Poor House Lane. The name of that street is like a battle cry to them.

The present songs come from anywhere and everywhere. In practice, the words are irrelevant, the melody immaterial, and the harmony unimportant. It's the rhythm that counts. "Sponger Money," however, besides being well-played, can be traced back to a tune and title recorded for the Library of Congress by Alan Lomax and others at Chosen, Florida, in 1935. It was also recorded in Key West in 1940 under the direction of Mr. George M. White, unofficial ambassador of good will in Key West and local director of the WPA music project at the time, as sung by Theodore Rolle accompanied by Stetson Kennedy and Robert Cooke.

Since the lyrics of "Sponger Money" deal with the lush life of sponge fisherma

Since the lyrics of "Sponger Money" deal with the lush life of sponge fishermen ("Sponger money never done") as contrasted to the failing business of the cigar-makers ("Cigar makers on the bum") -- an economic switch that took place some time ago--the words and even the tune may well have originated in Key West, although the melody sounds like any good calypso. A few years back, avant garde jazzman Sonny Rollins recorded the same tune under the title "St. Thomas" and listed himself as composer. (This is customary--the litigation begins if and when a tune begins to make money.)

The rest of the tunes are impossible to pin down. "Bonefish" was also recorded in Key West in 1940, where bonefishing is tops, but it could have come from anywhere in that general area. "Tangerine" is a popular number that reached Key West on recordings. The rest probably owe something to the Bahamas--especially the instrumental numbers which are by far the best. On them, Bookie conducts like a musical martinet: "Gimme more saw...now let me hear bell...now gimme drum...more saw...way down now!" This is music for carnival dancing.

Assembling the musicians after they had made a hit at a Saturday-night street-dance turned out to be a community project. Painter Marion Stevens made numerous arrangements, actor-radio-announcer Ashley C. Jeter offered the studios at WKWF, and Rod and Millie Rodriguez, owners of Rod's Inn, a popular eating place, furnished the transportation and helped pay for the tapes. Once in the studio, Bookie Allen took charge and, with the exception of a local request to please cut down the noise, everything went smoothly. Here is a new chapter in the history of American music.



Other Records of Interest from FOLKWAYS

CENTRAL AMERICA, WEST INDIES AND ISLANDS OF THE CARIBBEAN

GENERAL

FE4533 CARIBBEAN FOLK MUSIC; a cross-section of traditional music from the West Indies, compiled by Harold Courlander; incl. songs and dances from Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Bahamas, Trinidad, Cuba, Haiti, Martinique, other areas.
2-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay records.....\$11.90

FW6840 CARIBBEAN DANCES. Folk dances recorded by Lisa and Walter Lekis. From the Virgin Islands, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Trinidad, Antigua, Curacao, Calypso, waltz, quadrille, tumba videe mambo seven step. Played by outstanding folk dance orchestras including the Brute Force Steel Band. Ill. notes.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FW8809 SONGS OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES. Folksongs from the Caribbean sung by the West Indian Society of McGill University of Montreal. Soloists with chorus and piano drum and guitar accompaniment.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FW8811 CARIBBEAN RHYTHMS. Recorded by Thomas Price of Queens College (Dept. of Anthropology) in San Andres. Vocal and instrumental Calypso songs and dances. Notes and song texts.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

BAHAMAS

MUSIC OF THE BAHAMAS - 3 volume set of authentic folk music from the Bahamas Islands, recorded and edited by Samuel B. Charters. A listening treat in hauntingly unusual vocal and instrumental music. "Recordings of exceptional quality." - *Sat.* Review of Lit.
FS3844 (Vol. 1) Bahaman Folk Guitar - Joseph Spence
FS3845 (Vol. 2) Vocal Music
FS3846 (Vol. 3) Instrumental Music

FW3845 MUSIC OF THE BAHAMAS, vol. 11. Vocal Music. Recorded and with notes by Samuel B. Charters. Side 1, Sacred Music with Wake Services, Dig My Grave, etc. Side 2, Launching songs and ballads, with Long Summer Days, Pytoria, etc.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FE4440 RELIGIOUS SONGS & DRUMS IN THE BAHAMAS, recorded in the Bahamas by Marshall Stearns. This recording points out the meeting of British and African musical traditions, with infiltrations from the Spanish and French speaking islands. The Baptist Methodist Choir, Church of God Service. The drums include "Fire Dance", Ringplay, Jook Dance, "Heel & Toe" and Jump Dances. Notes
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FW6824 GOSPEL SONGS (Spirituals), recorded in the Bahamas by Marshall Stearns with the Missionary Quintet. Includes Dry Bones, On This Side, In that New Jerusalem, My Lord Did Deliver, Let the Church Roll On, Old Time Religion, Climbing Up the Mountain, Home in that Rock, Jesus on my Mind. Text.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

CALYPSO

FW6808 CALYPSO and MERINGUES. Meringues recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander with Jazz Majestic Orch. Nous Allons Dodo, Trois Angelique Oh, Menage Qui Belle. Calypso with Duke of Iron, Lord Invader, Macbeth, Reflex & his Internationals. Carnival, Dorothy One Morning, Mary Ann, Druscilla, Cousin Family. Text.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FW6914 CALYPSO, (Vol. 2), with LORD INVADER and The Trinidad Caribbean Orchestra. Selections include: Brooklyn Brooklyn, Brown Skin Girl, 29 Port of Spain, Reincarnation, Barbados, Barbados, Barrack Room Scandal. Text.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FW6865 STEEL BAND. TRINIDAD PANHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, recorded in Trinidad by Vita Art Productions Includes: Matilda, On Parade, West Indians Take Over Master Planter, Trinidad Castillane, Brown Skin Girl, Merry Meringue, Merengue Boom, Mama Gave You Something. Instrumental only. Notes.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FC7262 CALYPSO FOR CHILDREN. Lord Invader and group. Brown Boy in a Ring, Mother Love, No Place Like the West Indies, Romance with Lord Invader, Calypso Tune, Me One Alone, Fidel Castro.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FC7744 WEST INDIAN FOLKSONGS FOR CHILDREN with The Lord Invader; Instrumental and vocal accompaniments by Calypso orchestra Songs for sing-along games, dance improvisations, etc. Merrily We Roll Along, Ring a Ring a Rosie, Christmas Christmas, Early in the Morning, Limbo Dance, Show Me Your Motion, In a Fine Castle, If You See Little Brown Boy, Annie, Ronnie. Texts.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FW8733 CALYPSO TRAVELS. Lord Invader and his Calypso Group. Lieutenant Joe, Fidel Castro, Me One Alone, Auf Wiedersehn, Brussels Fair, Carnival, Te We (Callendar), Beway (Callendar), Cat O' Nine Tails, Steel Band war, Woman Always Rule. With texts.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

CUBA

FE4410 CULT MUSIC OF CUBA, recorded in Cuba by Harold Courlander. Eleven recordings of Afro-Cuban cult music including Lucumi, Abakwa, Djuka, Afara; songs to Legba, Orisha, Chango, Oko, etc. Notes by Harold Courlander.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

GRENADINES

FM4011 THE BIG DRUM DANCE OF CARRIACOU. Recorded by noted collector and authority on music of the West Indies. ANDREW C. PEARSE. Extensive background notes and song translations in English. This is the most characteristic music of this small island in the island in the Grenadines (Grenada to St. Vincent in the Windward Islands of the British West Indies). Usually performed on festival or ceremonial occasions: marriages, memorials, births, etc. Includes: Cromanti songs, congo, temne, moko, chambo, juba, bongo, bele hallecord chifone kalenda.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

HAITI

FE4403 DRUMS OF HAITI, recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Thirteen examples of the drum and other percussion instruments of Haiti. Included are the Vodoun Dance, Ibo Dance, Salongo Dance, Iuba, Petro and Quite dances, etc., featuring bamboo trumpets, stamping tubes. Notes by H. Courlander.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FE4407 FOLK MUSIC OF HAITI, recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Secular and cult music, work songs, songs of special criticism, political songs, songs of supplication and invocation, carnival and play songs. 18 examples of Haitian folk music. Notes by Harold Courlander.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FE4432 SONGS and DANCES OF HAITI, recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander and Marshall Stearns. Secular and religious songs and dances by the Ayida group. Minstrel's song. Meringue, carnival singing; special accent on group participation. Drum-dances include Zepaule, Mahi, Petro, Nago, etc. Notes.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FW6811 HAITIAN FOLK SONGS, sung in traditional style by Lolita Cuevas with guitar by Franz Casseus who arranged these songs. Text in Creole and English. The Harvest Song, In Guinea, Little Bird, Choucounne, Angelique OI, and a guitar solo arranged by Casseus of a piano piece by Ludovic Lamothé "Sobo".

FW6822 HAITIAN GUITAR solos arranged and played by Franz Casseus. Haitian Suite: Petro Mascaron, Yanvalloux, Combite; Etude (Fernando Sor); Romance; Lullaby; Dance (Lamoth No. 2). Notes.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FW6833 CREOLE SONGS OF HAITI, sung by Emerante de Pradines and the Michele Dejean chorus. Solel, Manman'n voye'm pote cafe, Legba na Console, Cimalo, Song to Ogoun, Papa simbi voye'm cherche dieau, Dodo to pitit manman, Bousol Dames, Ca Ka pecevoir moin'. Text in Creole and English by Harold Courlander.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FW6837 HAITIAN PIANO, played by Fabre Duroseau, some selections acc. by violins, Jeannette, Retour Des Cayes, Gallop, Un Soir (No. 1 and No. 2), Pourquoi Ces Larmes Deux Amours, Luca. Recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Text.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FC7107 UNCLE BOUQUI OF HAITI. Author and folklorist, editor of the "Ethnic" series of FOLKWAYS RECORDS, Harold Courlander is best known for his books and recordings of Haitian music and folklore. His "Bouqui" stories have a special place in the literature for young people. AUGUSTA BAKER, reader at the N. Y. Public Library (42nd

Street Branch) for children, narrates three stories from the book: Uncle Bouqui Gets Wheel-Ai, Uncle Bouqui Rents a Horse, Uncle Bouqui and Godfather Malice.

1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

HONDURAS

FE4435 THE BLACK CARIBS OF HONDURAS, recorded by Peter K. Smith for Willard Pictures. Selections include fiesta songs and dances work songs, serenades, "stand-by" songs, women's songs; instruments: drums, rattles, other percussion and guitars. Notes by Doris Stone include texts, translations and transliterations of songs, plus reading list.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FW6834 FOLK MUSIC OF HONDURAS (Marimba). Lullaby, El Sique, Rio Lindo, El Banacro, Corrido en Honduras, Mi Vida, Sois un Angel Fandango Los Inditos. Recorded in Honduras. Notes by Doris Stone. Text in Spanish and English.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

JAMAICA

FE4453 FOLK MUSIC OF JAMAICA, recorded by Edward Seaga. Detailed texts and song translations. Includes: KUMINA "country" songs and Balo; Work Songs and Ringplay; ZION Chorus; FUKKUMINA Chorus and instrumental. Instruments include drums, scraper, tam-bourine, cymbal, rattles. Solo and group singing. Recorded in Jamaica at "special" meetings and ceremonies.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FE4461 JAMAICAN CULT RHYTHM, recorded in Kingston, Jamaica by George E. Simpson. Includes songs and services of all the major cults of Kingston, with percussion accompaniment. Drums, which play a large part in the cult music, are featured. Recordings include examples of "trumping" (forced breathing) to heighten ecstatic feeling, speaking of "tongues", and songs of the "back to Africa" Ras Tafari group. Booklet notes and photographs by George E. Simpson.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FW6846 JAMAICAN FOLK SONGS. Linstead Market, Chi-Chi-Bud, Hossana, Cudelia Brown, Day Dah, Light, Dip, Dem, Me Want Me Daughter, Under the Coconut Tree, Dry Weather Houses, How You Come Over, Hol' 'm Joe, Towns of Jamaica, Sung by Louise Bennett.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

FC7250 JAMAICA SONGS AND GAMES sung by Louise Bennett with a group, Rocky Road, Emanuel Road, There's A Brown Girl, Jane and Louisa, River Bank-Covalley. Rhyme O, Little Sally Water, Jamaica Alphabet, Under The Carpet, Zuzuma, Kuratch. With instructions and text.
1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$4.25

PUERTO RICO

FD5559 NUEVA YORK. Documentary of Puerto Ricans in New York City conceived, recorded and edited by Tony Schwartz. Includes, Migration, In New York City, Housing, Food and Clothing, Juke Box Record Translations, Newspapers-magazines-theaters, Employment, Religion, Dance, Children (Street Games and Songs), Schools, Puerto Rican Anthem. Notes. Illustrations by Joseph Carpin.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FW8802 FOLK SONGS AND DANCES FROM PUERTO RICO. Recorded by Dr. William S. Marlen. Instrumental and vocal pieces: love songs, Christmas carols, work songs, decima, seis, danson, etc. Includes: Aguinaldo Hibaro, Mazurka Maria, Merengue-Oue Caminao, The Tragedy of September the 3rd, Under the Shade of a Pine Tree, Bajo las Sombras de un pino, Seis Choreao, Esta Navidad, This is Christmas, mapalle, De las Montanas Venimos, We come From The Mountains. Notes.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

TRINIDAD

FE4478 CULT MUSIC OF TRINIDAD recorded in Trinidad by George Eaton Simpson (Ethnic Folkways Library). Recordings from Belmont, Arouca, Couva, Santa Cruz, Tunepuna, Daberdie; SHANGO CULT: Shango Oh Bababa, Annual Ceremony, Solo To Yoruba Deity, Bell Ringing, Singing at Shouters' Service, Praying and Singing, Singing and Handclapping, Fragment of Sermon, Speaking in "Tongues." With notes.
1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.....\$5.95

FOLKWAYS RECORDS
165 W. 46 Street New York, N.Y. 10036

LITHO IN U.S.A. 