

CARIBBEAN DANCES



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1681
A1
C37
1953
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MUSIC LP

RECORDED BY WALTER AND LISA LEKIS

MARTINIQUE, VIRGIN ISLANDS,

MADELOUPE, TRINIDAD, ANTIGUA, CURACAO

LYPSO, MAZURKA, VALS, VIDE, SEVEN STEP, QUADRILLE, WALTZ, BULA WAYA—TUMBA,

STEEL BAND—MAMBO

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6840

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CARIBBEAN DANCES

VIDE

MARTINIQUE MAZURKA
MEDLEY OF OLD CALYPSO
VALS GUADELOUPEENNE
MAMBO
BULA WAYA
SEVEN STEP
AURA WALTZ
FOURTH FIGURE OF LANCEROS

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 6840

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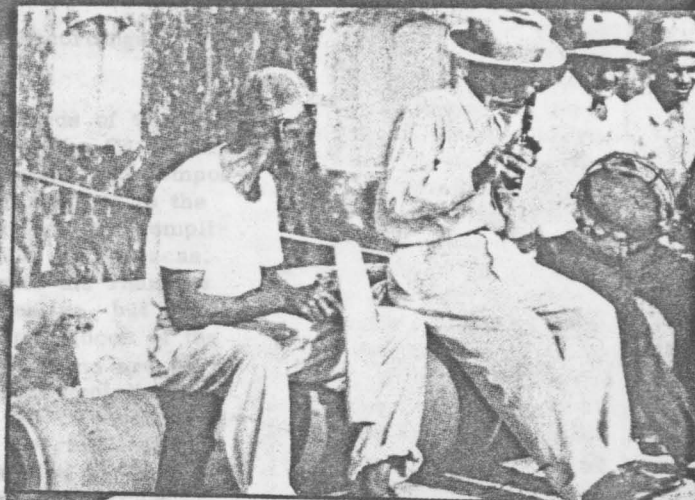
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MUSIC LP

RECORDED BY WALTER AND LISA LEKIS • MARTINIQUE, VIRGIN ISLANDS,
GUADELOUPE, TRINIDAD, ANTIGUA, CURACAO
CALYPSO, MAZURKA, VALS, VIDEÉ, SEVEN STEP, QUADRILLE, WALTZ, BULA WAYA—TUMBA,
STEEL BAND—MAMBO

FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE CORP. N. Y.

Band 1. VIDEÉ. Orchestre du Groupe Folklorique, Martinique. The climax of the year in Martinique, one of the islands of French possession in the Western hemisphere, is Carnival. The period of the few days before Lent is anticipated and celebrated not only by every inhabitant of Port de France, the capital, but by men, women, and children from every little seaside or mountain village.

Throughout the streets and mountains for the three days of the Carnival is the hypnotic beat of the drums and the rattling of the bands, shafts of light participating in the general excitement that is a part of the festival. This is the music of the streets filled with dancers each reacting to the persistent beat of the drums, weaving, in the mysterious spirit of intrigue, for three days without stop and the crowds following ever higher to a climax until suddenly Carnival becomes again a sleep each year to be awoken.

Band 2. MARTINIQUE. Orchestre du Groupe Folklorique. No doubt a little different from the music of the West Indies. Although no tradition, is claimed nearly every part of the nearly every day play at least one form. United States the dance Valseviennaise and it is many sections of the dance, the original form by the French colonists. Rhythms of the novel -- the Beguine. The Beguine itself was the result of the mixture of European and African music and the Mazurka 3/4 time was simply superimposed upon the already developing Beguine rhythms and styling. The dance is performed much more rapidly than the original Mazurka

and is accompanied by drums, the cha-cha and maracas so characteristic of nearly all the Caribbean countries. This particular Mazurka devotes itself to the romantic theme of the kiss: "Donnez-moi un tibo, deux tibo, trois tibo" (Give me one kiss, two kisses, three kisses).

Band 3. MEDLEY OF OLD CALYPSO. Quinteto Trinitario, sung by the Mighty Zebra (Young Friends Calypso Tent). Long before the popular "Coca Cola" made Trinidad famous as the home of Calypso, singers and troubadours were writing their verses telling of the life on their native island. Calypso which throughout the English speaking Caribbean has taken many forms. Popular singers have almost certainly which makes Trinidad speak up anywhere else in the world and the nearly a separate language. It will be found in Trinidad, especially preceding Carnival many Calypso present a form of music very close with an attempt to make the words understandable to any other than natives. The Calypso tents where the compete for the honor of composing the and sometimes the most rousing artists direct in Port of Spain, and Calypso of the old style may be far removed from the modern both in style and in instrument. Calypso heard on this recording, "Mighty Zebra", consists of Calypso the old style accompanied by horns and a guitar. The words tell of trials and tribulations as well as of a poor Calypso singer and the his neighborhood. Like the troubadour many years before education became central to Trinidad, the whole story passed from one generation to the verses of the Calypsoians. The is not the characteristic of the which is the misplaced accent on which makes it almost impossible to understand even after years of residence in Trinidad. The Calypsoian has also developed his own rhythm which is typical of the music and beat accompanying the song, and Calypso rhythm is the dance rhythm of the British West Indies. It may be heard played by orchestras at government house as well as by native musicians in the villages of the Caribbean.

Introduction and Notes on the Recordings by Lisa and Walter Lekis

For the past fifty years the islands of the West Indies and the countries of the Caribbean have given inspiration to musicians and composers of many lands and have introduced to the world of popular music the violent and complicated rhythms of the drums and the maracas. Nearly everyone is familiar with the rhumbas of Cuba and the tangos of Argentina, but many of the rhythms, instruments and dances of the Caribbean are relatively unknown and are only lately being recognized as a real contribution to the whole field of music. All of these musical styles have developed as the result of the combination of the polyglot peoples of the Caribbean with the basic strains of Africa which dominate the music of the West Indies.

Among the literally thousands of islands making up the chain which bounded the old Spanish Main, there live people representative of nearly every country of Europe and many of Asia, speaking many languages, each with his own heritage of culture. Each island differs from the others depending upon the course of its history and settlement, but all were originally slave islands. The melodies and rhythms included in this recording are examples of the music of the society ballroom and the honky-tonk of the West Indies. Some of it is played on instruments brought from Europe - some with the homemade instruments of the Caribbean, but all is a part of the life, expression and mood of a land which looking toward the future retains the vestiges of a turbulent and romantic past.

Band 1. **VIDEE.** Orchestre du Groupe Folklorique, Martinique. The climax of the year in Martinique, one of the islands of French possession in the Western hemisphere, is Carnival. The period of the few days before Lent is anticipated and celebrated not only by every inhabitant of Fort de France, the capital, but by men, women, and children from every little seaside or mountain village.

Throughout the streets, along the beaches, in the mountains for the three days of the year that spell **CARNIVAL** is heard the music of the Videe -- the hypnotic beat that be-devils the most respectable citizen into dancing the jump-up, following the bands, shuffling along the streets and participating in the general revelry and excitement that is a part of the street processions of Martinique. This is the music of the multitude, the music of the streets filled with costumed and masked dancers each reacting in his own way to the insistent beat of the drums, to the shouting and the weaving, to the mystery of the masks, to the spirit of intrigue, romance and adventure. For three days without stop the bands walk the streets and the crowds follow; the excitement mounts ever higher to a climax of gaiety and abandon until suddenly Carnival is over and Martinique becomes again a sleepy peaceful island waiting each year to be awakened by the violent Videe.

Band 2. **MARTINIQUE MAZURKA.** Orchestre du Groupe Folklorique, Martinique. While it is no doubt a little difficult to recognize this particular music as a Mazurka at all, nevertheless it is representative of what happened to the Mazurka when it reached the French islands of the West Indies. Although the Mazurka, according to tradition, is claimed by Poland it traveled to nearly every part of the world with the result that nearly every nation can claim to dance and play at least one form of the Mazurka. In the United States the dance became known as the Varsouvienna and it is still regularly danced in many sections of the United States. In Martinique, the original Mazurka which was imported by the French colonists became mixed with the rhythms of the most typical of Martinique music -- the Beguine. The Beguine itself was the result of the mixture of European and African music and the Mazurka 3/4 time was simply superimposed upon the already developing Beguine rhythms and styling. The dance is performed much more rapidly than the original Mazurka

and is accompanied by drums, the cha-chas and maracas so characteristic of nearly all the Caribbean countries. This particular Mazurka devotes itself to the romantic theme of the kiss: "Donnez moi un tibou, deux tiboux, trois tiboux" (Give me one kiss, two kisses, three kisses).

Band 3. **MEDLEY OF OLD CALYPSO.** Quinteto Trinitario, sung by the Mighty Zebra (Young Brigade Calypso Tent). Long before the popular "Rum and Coca Cola" made Trinidad famous as the home of Calypso, singers and troubadours were inventing their verses telling of the life and loves of their native island. Calypso which has developed throughout the English speaking islands of the Caribbean has taken many forms. Some of the popular singers have almost eliminated the accent which makes Trinidad speech unlike that found anywhere else in the world and which has become nearly a separate language. But there may still be found in Trinidad, especially in the season preceding Carnival many Calypso singers who present a form of music very close to the original with no attempt to make the words of the song understandable to any other than native Trinidadians. The Calypso tents where the singers compete for the honor of composing the most intriguing and sometimes the most risqué verses, line certain streets in Port of Spain, and it is there that Calypso of the old style may be heard. It is often far removed from the modern night club version both in style and in instrumentation. The Calypso heard on this recording, as sung by the "Mighty Zebra", consists of Calypso verses sung in the old style accompanied by home made instruments and a guitar. The words tell the story of the trials and tribulations as well as the frustrations of a poor Calypso singer and the daily events of his neighborhood. Like the troubadours of old, for many years before education became more general in Trinidad, the whole story of a people was passed from one generation to another by the verses of the Calypsonians. The language is English but the characteristic of the Trinidadian speech is the misplaced accent on each word which makes it almost impossible to understand even after years of residence in Trinidad. The Calypsonian has also developed his own rhythm which is typical of the music and beat accompanying the song, and Calypso rhythm is the dance rhythm of the British West Indies. It may be heard played by orchestras at government house as well as by native musicians in the cafes of the Caribbean.

Band 4. VALS GUADELOUPIENNE. Orchestre du Fanfant Gilbert, Guadeloupe. Guadeloupe, the sister island of Martinique has produced many rhythms that are similar to those of the other islands of the French group but still retaining an element that identifies them as purely representative of the leisurely life of Guadeloupe. Here too the Beguine is the basis for nearly all of the popular music of the island, and the waltz which, like the Mazurka, was originally imported from Europe, has also been subject to the persuasive beats of the Beguine. Of all the imported music of the French West Indies, the waltz has probably lent itself best to adaptation to the Beguine style and it is in this manner that it is played here. Familiar to all classes of Guadeloupe society and heard everywhere, the waltz is the romantic counterpart of the more violent and uninhibited Beguine.

Band 5. MAMBO No. 5. Brute Force Steel Band. St. John's, Antigua. The steel band is one of the modern musical phenomenas of the entire world. Originating in Trinidad, its use has spread to nearly all of the islands of the British West Indies group where the din of competing bands can nearly always be heard. For many years the use of drums was prohibited in the British islands, but the ever resourceful islanders soon discovered that garbage cans when pounded with sticks made a penetrating metallic sound which proved to be an adequate substitute for the lost drums. For a time the steelbandsman was considered almost the outcast of society. However, when at last recognition of the musical qualities inherent in the steel drums, or pans became apparent, rather than outcasts the musicians became popular figures and now nearly every child's ambition is to become a steelbandsman and play with one of the several outstanding groups. The present day steel band which has developed only during the past fifteen years, is made up of fifteen to twenty or more members playing drums ranging in size from a full size oil drum down to a cut-off section only six inches in depth. The size of the drum regulates the tone and by marking the pans off in sections and by a remarkable tempering process, various parts of the pan give varying notes which blended together produce a most melodic effect similar in sound to a Marimba. The band heard on this recording is known as the Brute Force Steel Band of Antigua and is one of the finest in the West Indies. While the rhythms generally played by steel bands range from church music, to popu-

lar tunes from the United States, the most popular is the Calypso rhythm which dominates the British West Indies. Lately, however, the Mambo from Cuba has swept all of the islands of the Caribbean not excepting Antigua and on this recording can be heard the rhythm of the Cuban Mambo as played by the steelbandsmen of the Brute Force Band of Antigua.

SIDE II

Band 1. BULA WAYA. Padu Del Caribe and the Netherlands Antilles Orchestra. Among the Netherlands West Indies group there has been more European influence than any other group of islands. There still remains, however, as a result of the inevitable combination of European melody and African rhythm, a tempo known as tumba which comes only from the islands of Curacao, Aruba, and Bonaire. Many of the melodies which have been written in Netherland West Indies have found their way to Cuba and have been altered to fit into the rhythm of rumba or guaracha but in this recording the Bula Waya is played in the original Tumba style. Bula Waya itself means to "jump the fence" to reach his sweetheart. The melody is an old one but the new interpretation has been taken up everywhere in the Netherlands West Indies.

Band 2. SEVEN STEP. Mebobo's Quintet, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Many years ago during the time of slavery in the islands, the slaves used to gather near, listen to the music and observe the dances at the plantation houses. In time they incorporated both the music and the dances into their own culture giving a strictly West Indian interpretation to what were once popular French, Spanish and English court dances. For example to the old quadrille dances was added certain rhythm instruments indigenous to the West Indies -- the maracas and the guiro or guicharo. The dances, while retaining the old quadrille forms were given a much more lilting step. In the islands of the Virgin Island group these old dances are still performed occasionally. The musicians use the flute for accompaniment.

Band 3. AURA WALTZ. Padu Del Caribe and Netherlands Antilles Orchestra. In the Netherlands West Indies two quite different popular dance and music styles have been developed; the Curacao waltz and the Tumba. Here in these islands so much influenced by the Dutch tradition, the waltz was early imported from Europe and subject to the influence of the African part of the population, quickly took on characteristics which made it something apart from the original waltz pattern -- not in rhythm, but in style and feeling. The Curacao waltz is regarded as an old dance -- the feeling is of the last century rather than this -- but at the same time it has retained its popularity generally and is still often heard and is being currently used as an inspiration for composers. The language of the song is Papamiento, the strange combination of Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and a bit of nearly every known tongue, which is spoken everywhere in the Netherlands West Indies.

Band 4. FOURTH FIGURE OF LANCEROS. Mebobo's Qunitet, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Among the old quadrilles which still survive in the West Indies is the Lancers. Remembered and danced also in Puerto Rico, Haiti and Jamaica as well as in many other parts of the world, the dance brings memories of the 19th century when the quadrille swept over the world. Originally from Scotland, the Lancers became popular throughout Europe and soon found its way to all parts of the New World. The quadrille itself is composed of five separate figures and may be danced by four, eight, sixteen or thirty two couples at a time, each figure having its own music. It is most interesting to compare the various forms of the Lancers or Lanceros as it is found now in other islands, Mexico, California, the Phillipines and Europe. In the Virgin Islands all of the basic figures have been retained but the dance is done in West Indian style and the music is no longer a slow procession but has something of the rhythm of the Calypso while the step is also lively rather than dragging.

WEST INDIAN POLKA SONGS. Song in traditional style in Latin America was popular in the West Indies. The first was in Cuba and Central America. The second was in the West Indies, and the third was in the West Indies. The fourth was in the West Indies, and the fifth was in the West Indies.