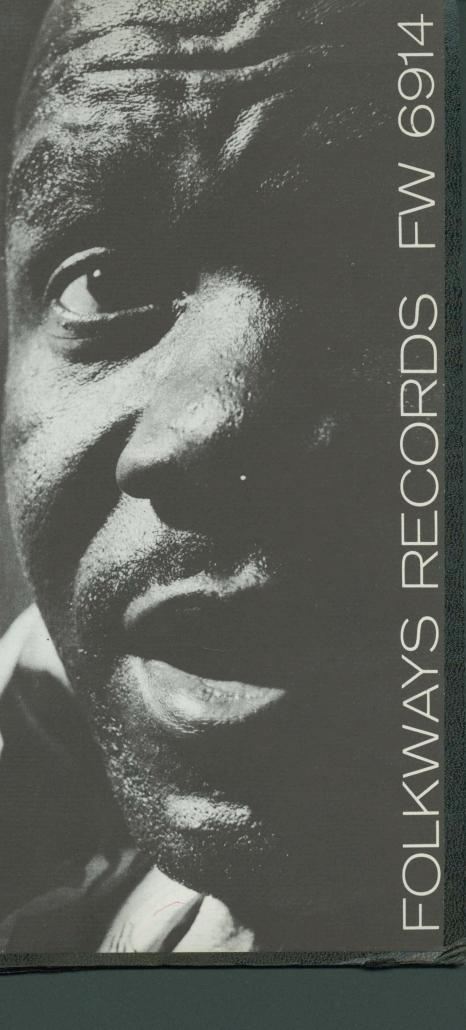
nvader 1681 T718 L866 C169 1960



University of Alberta Library

0 1620 0032 4291

BARRACK ROOM SCANDAL

REINCARNATION

BROWN SKIN GIRL

BROOKLYN, BROOKLYN,

BARBADOS

PORT OF SPAIN

LABOR DAY

WHERE JONAH GONE (Spiritual Shout)

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

CHIPSO Section

PHOTO BY DAVID JACKSON

**CALYPSO** 

with the

LORD INVADER

and

LIBRARY

TRINIDAD

CAIBBEAN

**ORCHESTRA** 

Notes by Charles Edward Smith

One night in San Fernando, Trinidad, a tiny colony of the British West Indies six miles off the coast of Venezuela, a resident of that city was singing calypso for a group of friends that included his tailor. After an especially inventive bit of improvisation, soft-voweled and curiously enunciate I, his tailor murmured a soft, "Caleso!" and commented, "I tell you, Rupert, you should call yourself Lord Invader so when you go up to the city you be invadin' the capital." And with that little formality Rupert Westmore Grant a few years-later returned to Port of Spain where he was born December 13, 1914.

San Fernando, south of the capital, is Trinidad's second largest city. Some miles outside its limits are oil fields and, a respectable distance from them forests of oil derricks, but neither these nor their refineries held more than an academic interest for Rupert Grant. As a boy he began to improvise calypsos, awkwardly at first but fast becoming so adept at this species of versifying to melody and rhythm that before long his singing was known throughout the neighborhood.

In San Fernando he was a professional but when in 1937 he went to Port of Spain he had still to prove his merit to join the ruling heirarchy of Calypsonians. In those days an "amateur" might appear in the "tents" of established singers but only as a side dish, worth about two shillings (48¢) to the management. So Lord Invader repaired to an establishment on Queen Street where he could keep his self-respect. He often sang in company with The Tiger, Lord Caresser and Lord Albany, all from San Fernando.

"I left Queen Street on a Tuesday night." Tuesday?
--we asked him, summer? "In Trinidad," he said,
"it is summer all the time," He paused, then added,
"-- except when it rains!" We waited for him to continue. "The story is -- a city councillor came into that structure one night and ask me if I want to sing with Attila. I told him yes and Tuesday I went to see Attila on Madison Street."

All calypsonians claim to possess a native shrewdness and those who haven't it do a good job of pretending. But Attila belonged to the first category. He offered Lord Invader the chance -- really a test -- to appear with himself at the Gaity Theatre in San Fernando. The reception was such that Lord Invader was invited to join Attila's group. He accepted and they returned each Wednesday to San Fernando, appearing at the Gaity or the Empire. One of the clippings he has saved proclaims him, "Lord Invader, the Southern idol."

Deeply rooted in the folklore of the island, calypso was a potent expression of its people. As a generic term, calypso refers only to the improvisation of of words -- it is fitted to many types of music. In both music and text it reflects the racial mixtures of the island and historic backgrounds. Its storysinging draws upon the African but owes as much if not more to Creole -- the stinging satire, the love for gossip and the uninhibited thrusts at people, places and events. In pronunciation and musical forms, it reflects both Spanish and French influence.

The thatched bamboo tents that used to house the Calypsonians gave way to tents with galvanized roofs. Singers during Carnival appeared at different tents or sometimes formed a group to build one. Lord Invader, for example, shared one, managed by Harold Kahn, with Attila, the Lion, King Radio and The Growler. He also covered the neighboring islands during the season, returning to the Queen City of Calypso, Port of Spain, well before the "last lap," Carnival Day. There he often sang with bamboo and bottle bands.

The Carnival season begins the first week in January. Kings of Calypso thought up insulting taunts to potential adversaries, scanned the loves and hates of the neighborhood, the political horizon and world events. Audiences came and paid throughout the season, including tourists and during the war, our own armed forces stationed there. That fact, plus recordings and insipid imitations, familiarized Americans with calypso

MUS LP M 1681 T718 L866 C169 1960 Shouts of "Caleso!" encouraged singers as Spanish gypsies do when they shout "ole."

Calypsonians were not the inventors of the singing commercial but they got a good head start on our radio hucksters. Seeing the popularity of the singers who bent words into new shapes and threw brick-bats, firms commissioned paens for the products. This commercial phase of Carnival, no more to be deplored than radio sponsorship, reached its climax the Saturday before Lent, called Coronation Day for new Kings of Calypso who might arise. On that day during the many competitions you'd be as likely to hear a litany to Angostura Bitters as a fervent defence of the Earl of Windsor's claim to fame. Singers vied with each other in extolling everything from Arrow shirts to Siget Rum, or in contests of spot improvisation. And in the process it would not be King Edward who lost his throne!

Less bloodless were the contests of the past when singing took second place to "stick-fighting" during the final days of what was, in effect, a year's respite from poverty and work. In those times -- recalled now only in song, in the pantomime of the "stick men" and in dance forms -- the Calinda, danced to the beat of the grand tambour on the night of Messe Gras (Fat Mass), fed fuel to emotional fires that could be quenched only by penitent ashes on midnight of Shrove Tuesday.

The Calinda was never officially outlawed in Trinidad, though efforts were made in that direction. The authorities, in fact, knowing the emotional will of a people, let English prudence outweigh English morals. For the Calinda was both beautifully rhythmic and frankly suggestive.

In an old yellow'd book I came across in a rare book collection on the West Indies, the connection between the <u>Canne Brulee</u> (stick-fighting) of <u>Negre Jardier</u> and calinda was already established. Let's look back to the origins of this phase of Carnival, when the booming <u>grand tambour</u> still rang in listener's ears along with the more sanguine blows of the <u>Canne Brulee</u>.

Canne Brulee began simultaneously with the festival on the night of Messe Gras (with calalou the favorite food and rum the favorite drink) and reached its most brutal excesses on that of Shrove Tuesday when maskers dodged roving bands of stick men with flaming torches who sought each other out and fought with a brutality sometimes ending in death. These fights with bamboo poles were engendered less by personal or intramural enmities than by deep and perhaps to themselves, unfathomable hostilities.

Only the outward form of the canne brulee remained -- contest but not combat. Movement as grace-

ful as that of bull-fighters, the <u>breaks</u> comparable to the <u>au garde</u> of fencers. Catlike shifting of feet and the flash of the bamboo gripped in both hands, watched intently by onlookers who were also judges.

The Invader was, in fact, a modern master of the stick-fighting technique. On several visits to this country Lord Invader has had theatre and concert tours as well as night club engagements. We asked Invader if his style of putting across his songs had changed in this country. "I smile more since I come here. It fits in with some songs, with others no."

### SIDE I

# BARRACK ROOM SCANDAL

Two women living next to me,
All time quarreling, they can't agree;
Two young ladies living next to me,
All time quarreling, they can't agree.

The one name Olga, she can curse, for so, She is the biggest curse-bird I ever know; When she started her filthy expression Jeannie started out singing this song.

Chorus: I went in the market, uh huh,
And I buy a basket, uh huh,
And I buy a three cent lime,
And I buy a three cent disinfectant;
To do what I won't tell you
Olga, wash the dress mama gave you.) (2)
what!

When Jeannie heard Olga lavway(\*)
Then she started to curse and breakaway;
Filthy expression, for so
I sorry I can't explain you in Calypso.

She said: "Why you don't haul, you're Nelson Street, You son of a George and Charlotte Street, I feel to kick you inside your Port of Spain;" Jeannie came back singing the same song again.

## Chorus

And as a Bacchanal Calypsonian, I wanted to get the right interpretation; So I turn and ask Olga, But she start to sing louder and louder.

She said: "Do you think you can curse with me?
Somebody say they see you at 116th Street and Lenox
Avenue at night.
Don't you curse me, you know I am a decent woman.
I hear they see you at 125th Street and 8th Avenue
I'm going to put you in court."

Chorus

### REINCARNATION

Yes, I heard when you die, after burial )
You got to come back as some insect or animal.) (2)

Well if it's so, I don't want to be a monkey, Neither a sheep, a goat or donkey, My brother said he wants to come back a hog, But not Invader, I want to be a bed-bug.

Chorus: Just because I want to bite them young ladies, partner,

Like a hot-dog or a hamburger.

If you know you're thin, don't be in a fright,

It's only big fat women I want to bite.

What you want to be I asked Mister Ross.
He said he'll ask the devil to turn in a horse.
I ask another fellow they call Laurence,
He said he want to be a big black wood-ant.
(they're too foolish)

When you turn a horse, you got to carry people's loads,

And get licks from your boss. And like a wood-ant wood is all you have to eat; But as a bed-bug I can bite the human meat.

### Chorus

Yes, I want you believe me, so help me bless, I will be a different kind of bed-bug from all the rest.

I ain't bitin' no ordinary people, They got to be quite social and respectable.

Such as female doctors and barristers, Duchesses, princesses with nice figures; And when I bite them I'm going 'bout and boast And I'm calling myself King Bed-bug the First.

Chorus

## SIDE II

## BROWN SKIN GIRL

What's wrong with you, Miss Ivy, girl? )
Why you tryin to trap me with that baby?)(2)
We only got friendly in September,
And the baby was born in November.
Girl, you can't fool me like that,
Tell me how a monkey can make a cat.

(So we singin' 'bout)

Chorus: Brown skin gal, stay home and mind baby, (2)

I am going away on a sailing boat,
And if daddy don't come back
Throw away the darn baby.

Now this is something a blind can see,
That the baby aint belong to me;
You can see I am a fellow with a funny face,
And the baby aint belong to the Negro Race.
If she come to America,
She compelled to find the right father.
So girl, don't worry with me,
You can't tie me up with that blue-eyed baby.

#### Chorus

Yes, Ivy, girl you made an error,
To be in love with that Yankee feller;
You thought he really came here to live,
It better you had met a Native;
You said they came for ninety-nine years,
And now they leave you with that baby shedding
tears;

And now you want me to pay the tax,
Go and cut down the tree where you grind
your axe.

## BROOKLYN, BROOKLYN

Yes, people keep asking me every day ) How I'm enjoying my stay in the U.S.A.) (2)

Yes very fine, I reply, They further ask me where I rather to reside; But I said if someone give me a home free, Not me to reside in New York City.

Chorus: I love to live Brooklyn, Brooklyn,
It's very nice and quiet, no foolin,
All over the U.S. I go, but I rather to
live Brooklyn
Where the tree grows.

I went to Washington, D. C. by bus, Baltimore and Boston, Massachusetts; Atlantic City and Chicago, Albany, New York and Cleveland, Ohio.

I went to California, San Francisco, I also crossed the border of Mexico; Yes, I was asked to remain, but I won't decide, Because Brooklyn is the best place to reside.

## Chorus

The girls in Brooklyn are so accomodating, Fascinating and don't talk about romancing; Their physical stature have me hypnotized The way they gaze at me with their magnetic eyes.

They does hold me so tenderly
And cuddle me romantically;
In love making they make me feel alive
And I just love the way they lay down their jive.

## BARBADOS

Barbados, Barbados, the land )
Of flyin fish an' potatoes. ) (2)
What a beautiful island,
Tourists go there to spend their vacation.

Yes, I just go there annually Because I love the people's hospitality.

(Well let me tell her)

Chorus: Lillian, Lillian, darling,
Please divorce your husband;
If I got to swim or sell my clothes,
I'm coming back to the Island of Barbados.

In Trinidad the girls may get fretful,
And say the Lord Invader's ungrateful;
But, when I had plenty money,
I spent it with them extrav agantly.
Homes for them I furnished,
Now I am suffering financial paralysis.
What they did to me is a mortal sin,
But is Barbadian Lillian who took me in..

(Well let me tell her)

Chorus

The B'adian girls are so accomodating, Fascinating and don't talk 'bout romancing; When I wake in the morning, They trolley to my bed, is breakfast they serving; Flyin fish for dinner, Turkey and lamb and sometimes is lobster. What made Lillian go staring mad, When I told her that I going back to Trinidad.

(Well let me tell her)

Chorus

## 29, PORT OF SPAIN

When you talk of tanglers, in a dance,)
Bounce up them female distressers. ) (2)
After they eat you and drink you out
Well partner, when you hear the shout,
And when your bucket's run amuck,
And you think you're going home with them,
bad luck!

Chorus: They going to tell you,

I will see you, we're goin to catch up,
Partner, what is your name - Ah girl!
Don't forget the address I gave you
29, Port of Spain.

One night I went out with Iris
To a Carnival dance at Park Palace,
A woman told me she live alone
And after the dance we both going home.
I bought her champagne, brandy and whisky,
I treated her and her whole family;
After the dance I looked for her all about,
O, how you don't know the lady got out.

Chorus

When you ask them about a sweetheart,

They'll say, two months now me and Johnnie part,
And I am now living at my mother,
But I come in the dance with my next-door neighbor,
And if you believe them and take a chance
This time they have the old man at the dance.
And if you get jealous, that is the case

You may receive a beer bottle in your face.

Chorus

### LABOR DAY

Labor Day I felt happy )
Because I played Carnival in New York
City. ) (2)
Seventh Avenue was jumpin
Everybody was shakin.

(singing)

Refrain: Jump in the line and shake up your body line

I tell you roll it like twine,
Jump in the line and shake up your body line.

From 110 to 142nd
We had bands of all description.
I am not only speaking of West Indians,
Ninety percent was American.
They love the Carnival
And that is why they join the bacchanal.

(singing)
Refrain

Macbeth the great and Houdini They all joined the festivities. Also the Duke of Iron He too was leading a band. Nobody could tie me Was to see me with my old lady.

Refrain

New Orleans have this same festival, Annually they play Carnival. This is the first time New York ever had Carnival on the streets like Trinidad.

Queen Calypso and Lord Invader.

Refrain

# WHERE JONAH GONE (SPIRITUAL SHOUT)

Where Jonah gone
To Ninevha...
Jonah never died
In the belly of the whale...
Gone over there,
Milk over there....etc.

LITHOGRAPHED IN U.S.A 2777 - 159