

RECORDED AND ANNOTATED BY EDNA SMITH EDET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7856

Caribbean Songs & Games for Children

Puerto Rico - Trinidad - Jamaica - Haiti - The Bronx



M
1992
W522
1978

MUSIC LP

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7856

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7856

West Indian Songs and Games for Children

NEW ADDRESS
FOLKWAYS RECORDS
632 Broadway, 9th fl.
New York City, N.Y. 10012



Edna Smith Edet

Dr. Edna Smith Edet is a musician, educator, author and lecturer. She is a recognized authority on Black and African music. She has had a long and varied career in the field.

She was a base player and arranger for the Sweethearts of Rhythm, Vi Burnside's Band, Edna Smith Trio, and other professional organizations.

Dr. Edet was the Head of Music at the University of Nigeria where she did extensive research in West African music. She is a professor of music and coordinator of music at Medgar Evers College, City University of New York.

She has been a guest lecturer and workshop leader for many colleges and prestigious organizations. She has had numerous articles published in scholarly journals and magazines. She is the compiler and editor of Songs for Nigerian Children and The Griot Sings, Medgar Evers College Press.

The racial composition of these islands differs because of historical factors. Haiti, for example, became independent from France in the Nineteenth Century. Consequently, there is a large population of African origin and a relatively small creole community. Trinidad is almost equally divided racially between the East Indian and African because these groups were imported to work the plantations and have largely kept their racial identities. The people of Puerto Rico, on the other hand, are a racial melange with few inhabitants having one racial strain.

There are also differences in languages and cultures in the Islands. The West Indies are thus a polygot of languages, a moasic of cultures and a racial melting pot.

In 1975 and 1976 I visited these islands under the sponsorship of the Research Foundation of the City University of New York to collect children's songs and games to be used in the New York City schools. I visited Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Haiti and recorded children in the playgrounds and schools, on the barbecue (drying yard) and in their homes. In addition, I recorded songs and games with adult informants to obtain materials which are not presently in use. The songs and games obtained in these field trips are included in my collection The Griot Sings Songs From The Black World. The materials for this recording have been selected from this collection.

The Music:

West Indian children's music is a combination of African and European music. The European diatonic scale is used though some tones may be omitted. The African call and response form is dominant except for school songs with European themes. Even these songs have been adapted to the islands by adding rhythmic elements and antiphonal singing. All of the songs, when performed in a play situation utilize hand clapping which is more akin to African music. The languages used in the songs are essentially European with Creole overtones. There are some exceptions. In Haiti, the language is French in the town and Creole in the bush. In Trinidad and Jamaica, school songs are sung in English while the moonlight games or ring ding are sung in broken English.

The West Indian Archipelego stretches from the coast of Florida to South America in the Carribean Sea. It consists of the Bahamas, The Greater Antilles (Cuba, Hispanalio, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico) and the lesser Antilles (Trinidad and Tobago, Barbadoes, and the Leeward Islands.)

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The games and songs may be taught in school, transmitted by older children during play or absorbed by exposure to adult play during moonlight nights and the nine nights of "set up." The latter songs are simplified by the children for their use. New words and concepts are added by successive generations of children which reflect the realities of their world.

Most of the children's games are performed in a ring. The most ubiquitous of the ring games are the "Show me your motion games." They are found in all the islands and are vehicles for demonstrating individual movements by solo performers which can be admired by the other participants.

Another popular game is the passing game. The children pass handkerchiefs, stones, shoes, and other objects around the ring while one child endeavors to find the object.

Another kind of game is the chasing game. In one type, a child runs around the ring with an object while another child chases him. In another variety, a child stands inside the ring while another child outside tries to touch him.

Counting down rhymes are used in conjunction with such activities as jumping rope and playing ball.

The children also have line games and dances. The actions in these games takes place either in front of the line or between two lines with two or more children performing dance steps in turn.

These games have universal appeal. I have taught many different children these games and they seem to understand the rules and enter into the play regardless of their own ethnic origin.

I wish to thank the griots of the New World and the many children who dances and sang into my music box. My sincere acknowledgements and thanks go to the staffs of the following organizations for their kindness and assistance: National Cultural Council of Trinidad, University of Puerto Rico, Jamaican Music School, and P.S. 42 and I.S. 74 in the Bronx. Finally I wish to thank the City University of New York Research Foundation whose support made this collection possible.

Edna Smith Edet

Side I

Band 1 - 5 recorded at St Belmont's Home, Trinidad
Band 1

GYPSY IN THE MOONLIGHT

Gypsy in the moonlight
Gypsy in the dew.
Gypsy never come back
Before the clock strike two.

Walk in gypsy walk in.
Walk right in I say.
Walk in to my parlour
To hear my banjo play.

I don't like nobody.
Nobody loves me.
All I want is _____
To come and dance with me.

Tra la la la la la
Tra la la la la la.
Tra la la la la la
Tra la la la la.

The gypsy is outside the circle of children. During the second verse she enters the circle. She chooses a partner in the third chorus and the two dance together during the last chorus. The gypsy then joins the circle while the other child goes out to become the new gypsy.

Band 2A

IN A FINE CASTLE

Circle I

In a fine castle do you hear my sissy oh.
In a fine castle do you hear my sissy oh.

Circle II

We want one of them do you hear my sissy oh.
We want one of them do you hear my sissy oh.

I

Which one do you want do you hear my sissy oh?
Which one do you want do you hear my sissy oh?

II

We want _____ do you hear my sissy oh.
We want _____ do you hear my sissy oh.

I

What you going to give her do you hear my sissy oh?
What you going to give her do you hear my sissy oh?

II

We going to give her rotten frog do you hear my sissy oh.
We going to give her rotten frog do you hear my sissy oh.

I

That don't suit her do you hear my sissy oh
That don't suit her do you hear my sissy oh

II

We going to give her wedding dress do you hear my sissy oh.
We going to give her wedding dress do you hear my sissy oh.

I

Farewell _____ go and take your wedding dress.
Farewell _____ go and take your wedding dress.

The children stand in two circles. They sing the words as indicated in the directions. At the end of the chorus, the chosen child joins the second circle. This continues until all the children from the first circle have left.

Band 2B - JANE AND LOUISA - Trinidad

Jane and Louisa will soon come home
Soon come home, soon come home.
Jane and Louisa will soon come home
Into your beautiful garden.

My dear will you 'low me to pick a rose
Pick a rose, pick a rose.
My dear will you 'low me to pick a rose
Into your beautiful garden.

My dear will you 'low me to waltz with you,
Waltz with you, waltz with you.
My dear will you 'low me to waltz with you.
Into your beautiful garden.

Two children stand facing a line of children. The children in the line start singing the first chorus while the two children holding hands approach. When they reach the line of children, they separate and go to the ends of the line. They then mime the second chorus plucking the roses from the children. They pick partners in the third chorus. These partners become the new Jane and Louisa.

Band 2C - THERE'S A BROWN GAL IN THE RING - West Indies

There's a brown girl in the ring. Tra la la la la
There's a brown girl in the ring. Tra la la la la
There's a brown girl in the ring. Tra la la la la
For she look like a sugar and a plum plum plum.

2. Girl come show me your motion.
3. Girl hug and kiss your partner.

This circular game is performed by a mixed group with one child in the center. The words of the song control the movements. "Young girl," "brown boy," etc. are also used.

Band 3A - SISSY IN THE BARN - Trinidad

Sissy in the barn the barn de lerie
Sissy in the cupboard the cupboard we'll see,
Oh by and by, I'm the one who
Say little Sissy won't you marry me.
Just step back girl
Don't come near me
Say little Sissy won't you marry me.

The children are in a circle with "Sissy in the middle. She chooses a partner on "Oh barn." On "step back," she pushes the partner from her, points her finger and shakes her hip. They reconcile at the end and she leaves her partner (usually a boy) in the middle of the circle to start again.

Band 3B - BO BO BO CALINDA - Trinidad

Lively

Bo Bo Bo Calinda.
Bo Bo Bo Calinda.
Bo Bo Bo Calinda.
What you do my darling.

2. Right hand up. Bo Calinda.
3. Left hand up. Bo Calinda.
4. Both hands up. Bo Calinda.
5. Do si do. Bo Calinda.
6. Come on down. Bo Calinda.

This game is played in a circle with the other children imitating the movements indicated by the leader. It is also performed in two lines. On "Come on down," the last couple does a special turn.

Band 4 - I WENT TO A PARTY - West Indies

I went to a party. I went to a fair.
I saw _____ with the curlers in her hair.
Oh twist im baby, twist im baby,
Twist in all the time.
And all the boys and all the girls
Were playing in this clime.
Turn to the east, turn to the west,
Turn to the one we love the best.

One child is in the middle of the circle. This child follows the movements indicated by the words. The other children clap in the circle.

Band 5 - COMING DOWN WID A LEMONADE - Trinidad

Coming down wid a lemonade,
coming down. Oh lemonade.
Coming down wid a lemonade,
coming down.
That girl can't do she ole thing
Chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi.

The girls stand in a circle. One girl stands in the middle of the circle. On "That girl can't do," she chooses her partner. If the partner cannot imitate her motions, the other girl goes into the middle. This is also danced in a line and seems to be a variant of "Coming down wid a Bunch of Roses."

Band 6-9 Recorded in P.S. 48, Bronx

Band 6 - JUMP SHAMADOR - Jamaica

Good morning to you daughter.
Good morning to you mother.
What is your intention?
I want to be a doctor.
You can't be a doctor.
I must be a doctor.
Well jump shamador my darling,
Jump shamador my dear.
Jump shamador my darling,
Jump shamador my dear.
Jump shamador, jump shamador,
Jump shamador, jump shamador.

The mother walks around the ring picking daughters at random. The child gives the profession. The mother answers, emphasizing her objections by shaking her head and stomping her foot. Each child gets a chance to be "mother."

Band 7 - I LOS MY GLOVE - Trinidad

I los my glove on Saturday night
and found it Sunday morning.
Drop Peter drop.
Boy Peter wouldn't drop.
Boy drop drop drop.

The participants are in a ring facing inward with eyes closed. Peter has a glove or some other object. He walks outside the circle. On "Drop Peter drop," Peter drops the glove behind one of the participants. This person must catch Peter before he gets to his place or he will become the new Peter. In one version, the boy whips Peter if he catches him.

This game is also known in Jamaica. However, in this variant, the children pass the glove behind their backs until Peter finds it.

Band 8 - GO IN AND OUT DE WINDOW - Trinidad

Go in and out de window.
(In again) In and out de window.
(In again) In and out de window.
(In again) See a rose again.

2. Then you stand before your partner.
3. Then you dip before your partner.
4. Then you skip before your partner.
5. Then you wheel and face your partner.

This is in the follow-the-leader genre. The leader goes in and out of the circle in the first chorus, chooses a partner on the second chorus, and thereafter performs the actions indicated by the words. This game is also known in Jamaica and in America. In one variant, two players are used. In another, each new child joins in until all children play.

Band 9 - SALLY GO ROUND THE MOON - Trinidad

Sally go round the moon
Sally go round the sun
Sally go round the chimney top
On a Sunday afternoon whoops

Put your right hand in
Put your right hand out
Shake it a little a little
And turn yourself about

2. Left hand
3. Right foot
4. Left foot
5. Whole self in

Side 2 Band 1 Recorded in P.S. 48, Bronx

SAN SERENIN

San serenin, a la buena,
Buena vida.
Hacen asi, asi las lavanderas
Asi, asi, asi,
Asi me gusta a mi.

2. San serenin, a la buena
A la buena, buena vida
Hacen asi, asi, las planchadoras
Asi, asi, asi,
Asi me gusta a mi.

Translation:

To the good good life,
To the good good life.
This is the way they wash,
This is the way they wash.

To the good good life,
To the good good life.
This is the way they iron,
This is the way they iron.

The girls stand in a circle facing the middle. They clap hands on the first two lines and follow the words on the other two lines.

Band 2 Recorded at I.S. 74 - THE MERECUMBE

El juez le dijo al cura
El cura le dijo al juez.
Que donde esta ese ritmo
Caramba del merecumbe.
Whee shake it morena, shake it.
Shake it morena wo.
Que a donde esta ese ritmo caramba,
Del merecumbe.
Un pasito alante y otro paratras.
Y dando la vuelta y dando la vuelta
Quien se quedara.

Suggested English words:

The judge told the Padre
The Padre told the Judge
Do you know what is the rhythm of the Merecumbe.

Shake it my darling, shake it.
Shake it my darling Wo.
Where is the rhythm, my darling of the Merecumbe.

Step right out to the front,
Step right out to the back
Then, turn right round and open your eyes
To see who will be next.

The children stand in a circle facing the middle. One child is in the middle. On "Shake it morena," the child shakes it and follows the words of the song. At the end she points to her successor.

Band 3
AMBOS A DOS

Ambos a dos matarire rire, rire
 Ambos a dos matarire rire, ron.
 Que quire ud? Matarire rire, rire
 Que quire ud? Matariré rire, ron.
 Yo quiro up paje matarire, rire, rire
 Yo quiero un paje matarire, rire ron.
 Que clase de paje? matarire rire, rire.
 Que clase de paje? matarire, rire ron.
 Yo quiero a Norma matarire, rire, rire
 Yo quiero a Norma matarire, rire ron.

Que officio le pondremos? matarire, rire, rire
 Qe officio le pondremos? matarire, rire, ron.
 Le pondremos cantadora matarire, rire, rire
 Le pondremos cantadora matarire, rire ron.

Ella dice que si le gusta matarire, rire, rire
 Ella dice que si le gusta matarire, rire, ron.

Celebremos todos juntos matarire, rire, rire
 Celebremos todos juntos matarire rire ron.

Translation:

2. What do you want?
3. I want a page.
4. What type of page?
5. I want Norma
6. What job will we give her?
7. We will make her a singer.
8. She says she likes it.
9. Let's celebrate all together.

The children stand in two lines facing each other.
 The leader stands in the middle. She chooses a
 page who selects an occupation. The lines approach
 each other and retreat during the chorus

Band 4A - LA SENORITA - Puerto Rico

La Senorita X entrando en el baile
 Que lo baile, que lo baile.
 Y si no lo baila tendra un castigo malo,
 Pero malo, malo, malo.
 Saque usted que lo quiero ver bailar.
 Brinca bailando, por los aires
 A la mona a la mona monita.
 Dejela sola sola solita.

Translation:

La Senorita X is standing in the middle
 In the middle, in the middle.
 She must do what we say or we'll punish her.
 We'll punish her.

Go and shoose a partner from the other side.
 Now go on dancing through the air and the clouds.
 Yes the air and the clouds.
 Turn her around, leave her alone.

There are two rows. The girl in the middle sashays
 from side to side. On "choose a partner," she takes
 one of the boys, dances with him, and leaves him in
 the middle.

Band 4B
LA CARBONNERITA

Dónde vas carbonnerita?
 Dónde vas a hacer carbón?
 A la buena a la buena
 A la viña ña, a la viña ña, del amor

2. Me diras si eres casada,
 a si tienes un amor,
 A la buena, a la buena, a la vina, na,
 a la vina, na del amor.
3. Si eres una nina pobre,
 que jugga con el carbon,
 Vamos juntos a la vina, na,
 a la vina, na del amor.

One girl is in the center of the circle. The other
 children sing the first verse. She answers. During
 the last verse, she chooes a partner who dances with
 her.

Band 5 - A-LA-LIMON - Puerto Rico

A-la-limon, a-la-limon
 Que se rompio la fuente
 A-la-limon, a-la-limon
 Mandarla a compener.
 Uri, uri, ura la reina va a pasar.
 La reina va a pasar.

2. A-la-limon, a-la-limon
 con que se hace el dinero
 a-la-limon, a-la-limon
 de cascaron de huevo.
3. A-la-limon, a-la-limon,
 pasen los caballeros.
 A-la-limon, a-la-limon
 nosotros pasaremos.

Translation:

To the lemon tree, to the lemon tree,
 The fountain is broken.
 To the lemon tree, to the lemon tree
 We are going to fix it.

The boys form two lines facing each other. The two
 lines take turns singing the song and approaching
 each other.

Band 6-7 Recorded at Newport, Jamaica

Band 6 - JOHN CROW

John crow say he can't walk,
 He can't walk he can't walk pon Sunday.
 Think a lie me tell. Kill your mudder cow.
 Think a lie me tell. Kill your mudder cow.
 John crow say he can't walk,
 He can't walk, he can't walk pon Sunday.

2. John crow say he a righteous person
 Can't walk can't walk pon Sunday.
3. John crow say he a rich man pickney
 Can't walk can't walk pon Sunday.

John crow is the crow in Jamaica, scavenger of the
 island. He is also one of the characters of the
 John Canoe dancers at Christmas time.

Band 7 - I COME TO SEE JANIE

I come to see Janie I come to see Janie.
I come to see Janie and how is she now?
She's washing her clothes, washing her clothes,
She's washing her clothes and cannot be seen.
Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye,
Goodbye, goodbye, I'll come back again.

Mother,

2. She's starching her clothes.
3. She's ironing her clothes.
4. She's sick.
5. She's gone to the doctor.
6. She's dead.
7. What shall we bury her in?
8. Red is for the constable. What shall we do?
9. Black is for the mourners. What shall we do?
10. White is for the duppy.

Children,

2. Goodbye etc.
3. Goodbye etc.
4. Goodbye etc.
5. Goodbye etc.
6. Goodbye etc.
7. Bury her in red and that will not do.
8. Bury her in black and that will not do.
9. Bury her in white and that will not do.

This game is performed in a line. Janie may hide nearby or walk behind the mother. The other children stand in a line facing the mother. They approach and retreat on "I'm coming to see Janie." The mother follows the same motions on her response, "She's washing her clothes." etc. All of the children cry on "Janie is dead." When the mother finishes singing "White is for the duppy," Janie comes out of hiding and chases the other children until she catches a new Janie.

Band 8A-11 Recorded in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Band 8A - ZAMMI MANN MAN-MAN

Zammi mann man-man. (Oui roi)
Quimbe ti poulet. (Oui roi)
Ti poulet sauve. (Oui roi)
Bali la basket. (Oui roi)
Quimbe li pour moin. (Oui roi)
Madam roi besoin'l. (Oui roi)
Pran'l, pran'l, pran'l. (Oui roi)

The children stand in a circle with one child in the middle and another child outside the circle. The child outside the circle tries to touch the "poulet" who is trying to get out. If she catches her, the other child takes her place and a new "poulet" is chosen.

Band 8B - TOI SI BONNE

Toi si bonne, toi si parfaite
Qui nous aime de ton amour
Maman, c'est aujourd'hui ta fete.
Pour tes enfants quel heureux jour.

This song is used to celebrate the mother's birthday.

Band 8C - PETIT OISEAU

Petit oiseau viens avec moi
Voir la cage si bien parlee,
Les fruits que j'ai cueillis pour moi,
Les fleurs humides de la rose.

English words - Edna Edet

My little bird please come with me
To see the cage I've brought for you,
The fruits that I have brought for me,
The roses still wet from the dew.

Band 9 - FEUILLES YO

Feuilles yo!
Sauve la vie moin
Nan mise moin ye, oh!
Pitit moin malade
Moin couri caille gangan
Si ou bon gangan
Oua sauve la vie moin,
Nan mise moin ye, oh!

Suggested English words:

Feuilles oh!
Listen to my plea
In my misery oh!
For my child is sick
And I'm so afraid.
I ask the Good Lord
For help to save my child
In my misery oh!

The mother prays for her child's life.

Band 10 - LUNDI MATIN

Lundi matin, le Roi, sa femme et le Petit Prince
Sont venus chez moi pour me serrer la pince.
Comme j'etais pas la, le Petit Prince a dit
Puisque c'est ainsi nous reviendrons mardi.

Translation:

Monday morning, the King, his wife and the Little Prince

Came to my house to shake my hands.
Since I was not there, the Little Prince said:
If that is so, we will come back Tuesday.

This song is repeated using all days of the week.
On Sunday morning it ends, "Puisque c'est ainsi nous ne reviendrons plus." "If that is so, I will come back no more."

Band 11 - DO DO TITITIT MANMAN'L

Do do tititit manman'l.
Si li pas dodo crab la va mange'l.
Do do tititit manman'l.
Do do tititit manman'l.
Manman li pas la. L'alle la rivie.
Papa li pas la. L'al peche poisson.
Do do tititit manman'l.
Do do tititit manman'l.
Diab la va mange tititit manman'l,
Crab la va mange tititit manman'l.

LITHO IN U.S.A.