Just Look at these Names

King Fighter
They Ballin Me Name
Indo Law Na Say So

Wrangler
Chinese Wife • Limbo Teacher
• Bongo Man

Nat Hepburn
Donkey Must Wear Pants

Mighty Striker
Can Can Girls

Viper
Dog Better than Man

Bomber
Gloria • Wife in Hawaii
• Kiss of Fire
Ripe Atrocities

Like farmer versus kangaroo, I never believed it myself until, after having actually heard it, I recorded a real calypso orchestra which played on true pitch, with reed and brass choruses interleaved like a squad of marines on parade drill.*

It is rather like the difference between an initiate and a novitiate at a ritual. The whole tenour of events can be misconstrued because of some basic misconception. The first of these is that they can't sing decently and can't pronounce intelligibly. Quite possibly this may be so in some cases, but the real answer is that they don't want to and don't intend to. Lined up alongside love and politics as targets for the jeering crossfire of calypso are the conventional notions of good music.

The second mistake can lie in the evaluation of the accompanying orchestras. Calypso engineered for mainlanders is usually played on a chromatic scale with divergences no broader than a flatted minor third. These chaps are playing out-of-tune and raggedly because they are laughing while playing, or else they are speaking unspeakable lyrics into the mouthpieces of the horns they blow. They are just being swept along with the calypsonian into the making of a calypso's goal, a fully rounded pear-shaped atrocity.**

Atrocities generally may be grouped into divisions and sub-heads such as political, social, economic or architectural. But within the spheres of the various art forms, the deliberately perpetrated atrocity is rare. Passing quickly over the pedantic point as to whether or not calypso is music, and all music art, one emerges with calypso, this singular example of perversion.

*Only for money, mainlanders or when hopped. cf. Castiliane, cat. 10890, $4.98

**cf. overture, side B Me Ting Is Mine.

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