SONGS AND DANCES OF HAITI
The music of Haiti is the music of more than 3,000,000 peasants, caneworkers and day laborers who populate the mountainous country. Only a short flight by air from Miami, almost within sight of the most eastern point of Cuba, Haiti and its people are, at best, vaguely known to Americans to whom places like Guadalcanal, Java and Iwo Jima have become familiar.

Yet Haiti has one of the proudest histories of the American republics as well as an old, rich culture. It's the kind of culture you don't see clearly at first glance. The handicrafts aren't prolific or striking, there is no strong tradition for painting or woodcarving, and there is relatively little metalwork. What the Haitian people do with their hands is directly utilitarian. They weave baskets and hats, carve mortars, wari boards and drums, forge machetes and hoes, but few of these will ever come to rest in museums. The significant part of Haitian culture is the part that's not immediately visible to the naked eye. It consists of a vast unwritten literature, dances, music, an inbred awareness of democratic principles stemming directly out of the French revolution, and a complicated but integrated religious relationship with the gentle and violent forces of nature, a religious outlook known as Vodoun.

For many years the subject of ridiculous and sometimes gruesome "voodoo" tales, Haitian life has in recent years been studied seriously by such scholars as Melville J. Herskovits (Life in A Haitian Valley) and James Leyburn (The Haitian People). Some of Haiti's folktales and folksongs have been collected and published in English, and alert Haitians are now turning for creative inspiration to the folklore and folk music that they once regarded as sauvage.

But outside Haiti, Haitian music is still largely unknown. It touches almost every phase and detail of Haitian life. Probably the cult music has received more attention than any other. The Congo, Dahomey, Ibo and other religious groups have preserved, sometimes in their purest forms, the musics of those regions of Africa from which the Negro slaves came in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The drumming, singing and dancing of the culture have been inherited legitimately, and are part of a meaningful way of life.

In addition, however, there is a vast body of secular music. It includes worksongs, playsongs, secret society music, songs of protest and ridicule, political songs, story songs, and otherwise unclassifiable social music, all stemming out of an essentially African tradition. Some ballads and lovesongs in the more common Latin-American idiom are also
heard in the towns but the full impact of rumbas, congás, sones and other so-called Afro-Cuban or Afro-Latin forms has never been felt because there has never been a political vacuum in Haiti, and because the social sense of its own tradition was so deeply rooted.

The Africans who were brought to Haiti as slaves came primarily from the areas known as the Grain Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and most of the rest of West Africa from Angola to Senegal. They represented countless tribes, spoke different dialects or languages, and had different religious beliefs. Mohammedans as well as pagan Africans found their way to Haiti. Some of the slaves came from central and East Africa. The West Coast people predominated, and two main cults emerged, the Congo-Guinean group and the Arada-Nago group. Today each of them has its own rites, its own drum rhythms, its own songs, its own dances and its own supernatural beings.

Haitian dancing is essentially African in style. The religious dances -- those concerned with cult life in one way or another -- generally take place in a covered court adjoining a hounfor (temple) or some other building. What is called the Vodoun dance may actually be the Arada, Jenvalo, Nago, Dahome, Carabienne, Calebasse, Maïs, Mazonne Rada, Bouleverse, or any one of many other dances belonging to the Arada-Nago cycle. The Ibo dance is closely related to the cycle, but is usually regarded as being outside of it. Among the Congo-Guinean dances are the Pétro, Quitta Moyoé, Coute, Solongo, Bambara, Moundongue, Pastorel, Mousoundi, and Mouchétique. Like the Ioo, the Kangà dance is outside the main groups. Students of African geography and ethnology will recognize among these dances a large number of tribal and place names. But there has been considerable invention, and many dances have been developed in relatively recent years. Today each of them may take place in a covered court, but the festival dances such as Rara and the Mascaron occur in the streets. While Haitian dancing is packed with the elements of drama, probably the most important thing about it is that it is primarily participative. While there may be an audience, that audience is secondary, usually composed of resting participants, the aged and the sick, and others who for one reason or another cannot join in. What I really mean to say is that there is no sophisticated conception of a singing or dancing performance as such. There is no tradition of famous dancers, famous singers or famous drummers. Drummers come the closest of any to having professional status. Good dancing and good singing are recognized and applauded, but these like the audience, are a by-product, not the ultimate objective. The prime reason for the dance is participation.

While drums are the most common of Haitian instruments, there are many others, predominantly percussion, including: bamboo stampers which are beaten upon the ground; rattles of many kinds; bamboo and conch trumpets; simple iron percussives and bells; the single stringed earth-bow, or mosquito drum; tambourines; scrapers, claves and whistles. ²


2 For a fuller discussion of Haitian musical instruments see "Musical Instruments of Haiti," The Musical Quarterly, June, 1941.

Vol. I, FOLK MUSIC OF HAITI (P 407)

Side I, Band 1 -- PILET PIED'M: This song is from the repertoire of the Ibo Dance, which is usually associated with the Arada-Nago cult or the Congo-Guinean cult. The dance itself takes its name from a tribe in Southern Nigeria, from which some of the Ibo music in Haiti is clearly inherited. The typical Haitian Ibo drumming, for example, is known among the African Ibos, where it is regarded as their own characteristic rhythm. PILET PIED'M is a parable-like song, in which a moral is drawn directly. It says, in essence, that an injury once done cannot be talked away. In the Ibo language of West Africa the words Ibo lele mean "Ibo says". In Haiti Ibo lélé is sometimes taken to be the full name of the loa (or spirit being) Ibo, or sometimes it is presumed to be "singing words" associated with Ibo songs. In this case the West African translation seems appropriate:

Ibo says!
Ibo says!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
What good is the pardon going to do me?

Side I, Band 2 -- M'PAS BWE M'PAS MANGÉ: This is a fragment of a worksong, with two men participating. They are pounding grain in a large wooden mortar and the sound of their long wooden pestles sets the rhythm of the singing. For responsive purposes, a man sometimes assumes a falsetto, as is the case here.

The theme is one of humorous bravado. They sing that they have been summoned by the president, but that they can't come because they haven't had their dinner -- a note of personal independence that is very familiar among the worksongs:

Rwo! It is the president who sends to call me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.

The president sends to call me, rwo!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten.

Side I, Band 3 -- OGOUN BALINDJO: An invocation to the loa, or spirit-being, Ogoun Balindjo, this song is a complaint against the behavior of one's friends or neighbors who act as hypocrites. A typical stanza goes:

Ogoun Balindjo They come to look To go away and talk, oh! Ogoun Balindjo The eyes (should) see, the mouth is closed oh! Ogoun Balindjo Don't you see they come to look at me?

Side I, Band 4 -- EZILIE WÉDO: This invocation belongs to a ritual service of the Arada-Nago cult, and is addressed to the female loa Ezilie Wédo. Religious in character, it represents the sentiments of the loa herself as she enters the hounfor, or cult temple:

Ezilie Wédo, ago-6! Oh the Creoles say like this, We are not in Africa any more, We shall do as we wish, oh! I shall bring myself, I shall take myself away.
To do what I wish, oh! I shall bring myself, I shall take myself away.
To do what I wish!

Side I, Band 5 -- LA FAMILLE LI FAI CA: The words of this Ibo dance song are a gay, commonplace comment on some activity in the cult temple. They say simply that the family (cult) does what the loa (spirit-being) Ibo Lazile wishes them to do - that is to say, dance:
His (Ibo's) family does this. 
Yes does this. 
His family does this. 
Ibo Lazile wishes it.

Side I, Band 6-- MOUNDONGUE OH YÈ YÈ YÈ: This song belongs to the Moundongue cult, which is part of the Congo-Guineé cycle of rites. It takes its name from the Moundongue tribe in the upper Congo. Among the early slaves in the West Indies the Moundongue people (remembered in Cuba as the Moundongos) were sometimes regarded as cannibals. Even today, one Haitian peasant may insult another by calling him a Moundongue. Actually, however, there is no evidence but folklore that the Moundongues were cannibals in Haiti. The Moundongue ritual sacrifice involves the killing of a goat or the clipping of a dog's ears. The loa, or spirit-being, of the cult is himself named Moundongue, and he is believed to be especially fond of dogs, so that persons possessed by him are apt to pick up or fondle any dog within reach. Normally, however, dogs are only in the rarest cases regarded as pets. This song is a description of the food being prepared for loa Moundongue behind the cult temple:

Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh, yè yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh, yè yè yè!
Moundongue eats boiled goat!
Moundongue eats roast goat!
Yè yè yè!

Side I, Band 7-- ZAMIS LOIN MOIN: A social criticism song, the words here are a complaint against friends who are not loyal:

Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
Friends far away from me are saved money!
Friends close to me are a two-edged knife, go far away from me, friends!

Side I, Band 8--ALEXIS NORD: This is a song commemorating a Haitian president by the name of Alexis Nord, or Nord Alexis as he was variously called. During his administration, early in the century, there was a shortage of national currency, much of which was circulating outside of Haiti. Nord Alexis called in the old paper money and issued new, to the great satisfaction of the Haitian people. These are the words of the buñuelos "assembly" in the Haitian Army. The commemorating phrases are put in the mouth of Alexis Nord's wife, Cece:

Cece said Alexis Nord is a fine man all over!
Cece said Alexis Nord is a fine man all over!
Cece said he will quit whenever he sees fit!
Cece said Uncle Nord is a fine man all over!

Side I, Band 9-- OU PAS WE'M INNOCENT: This is a religious song, but the content is variously concerned with the ritual and with social protest. "Ferei's goat" refers to the sacrifice for the loa Ferei.

Innocent, don't you see I am innocent!
It is God in Heaven who will judge me!
Innocent, don't you see I am innocent!
It is God in Heaven who will judge me!
Ferei's goat looks for the road to the water!
The saints' goat looks for the road to the house!
In Africa everyone is sick, oh!
Papa, I will save them!

Side II, Band 1-- MAININ'M ALLE: This is a secular piece of the type that may be heard at any of the non-religious Congo dances. The theme is common in Haitian musical literature—huiorous bravado. When the song originated, Borno was President of Haiti. The words say, in Haitian idiom, "Who's afraid of Borno?"

As proof of his contempt for the highest authority in the country the singer demands to be confronted by the president himself.
His family does this.
Yes does this.
His family does this.

Ibo Lazile wishes it.

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Oh Moundongue oh, yè yè yè!
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Moundongue eats roast goat!
Yè yè yè!

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As proof of his contempt for the highest authority in the country the singer demands to be confronted by the president himself:
COTE YO, COTE YO;
MAYOUSSE;
TROIS FE;
PAULETTE; Strictly romanUc

They go down the road, the frog hopping, the horse galloping, contain songs which are taken up by the listeners Bouqui and Ti Malice. Many of the contes, or narratives, are self-contained, while others are taken from the canteen songs. I am appealing to God, oh!

Side II, Band 3 -- CRAPEAU TINGÉLÉ: On the night of a death, when a wake takes place, the house of the deceased person is the scene of community singing. While inside the house itself there is a singing of canticles, outside, where the younger people gather, there are games, stories and play songs. Again on the Saturday night following burial and continuing until Sunday night, rituals for the dead take place, and once more there are games, storytelling and songs outside the house. The stories may be serious or humorous, perhaps dealing with the folk characters Bouqui and Ti Malice. Many of the contes, or narratives, contain songs which are taken up by the listeners to the accompaniment of handclapping. The fragment of a wake or gaille song included here has to do with the story of a man who loses his childhood love and meets her again as a grown woman. He sings:

Frog hops ti-dong ti-dong-dong ti-dong frog hops!
Lord, Brother Horse, do you call that running?

Side II, Band 4 -- BALANCÉ YAYA: Some of the play songs are self-contained, while others are taken from the canteen fables, or contes, as they are called. Many of them are rather ambiguous taken out of their context, and it is only possible to guess at their exact meaning:

Take me, oh!
Take me into Borno's parlor!
Take me!
Take me!
Take me into Borno's parlor!

It is little Marie Joseph oh!
The rat has eaten my pigeon!
It is little Marie Joseph oh!
The rat has eaten my pigeon!
The rat passes by, aubinette passes by,
Make little Marie run away!
Balance things Yaya, Yaya oh!
Yaya Madame Mango!
Balance things Yaya, Yaya oh!
I say my prayers for Yaya!
Balance things Yaya, Yaya Oh!

Side II, Band 5 -- TROIS FE: The tambour maringouin, or mosquito drum, isn't a drum at all but a single-stringed earth bow. It is made in the following way: a hole is dug in the earth to a depth of perhaps a foot or eighteen inches and about a foot in diameter. This is covered with a piece of stiff leather or bark which is fastened firmly to the ground. A cord is fastened to the center of this membrane and tied tautly to a small green sapling bowed over the hole. The taut cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while its tension is varied by pressure upon the bowed sapling with the free hand. Accompaniment for this instrument, in addition to voice, is played with sticks upon some handy object, perhaps a board, which gives off a sharp sound. The words of the song given here seem to refer to a pouin or fetish prepared for someone by a bocor (diviner and practitioner of black magic). The bocor has not been paid for the work he did, and he warns the recipient of his services that a time will come when he will regret it. The language is tangent, laden with hidden meaning:

Where are they? Where are they?
Sobo asks for Arada drums.
Where are they? Where are they?
Sobo asks for Arada drums.
Where are they? Where are they?
Sobo asks for Arada drums.
Where are they? Where are they?
Sobo asks for Arada drums.
Where are they? Where are they?

Side II, Band 6 -- SPIRIT CONVERSATION: On certain occasions, religious rites concern themselves with communication with the loa, deified spirit beings, and the ancestor spirits. The cult priest upon going into a trance talks "voices", which are readily identifiable by those who listen. On this occasion the cult priest was in a trance state for more than a half hour, crouched in a small structure built for the occasion. As he conversed with the loa and the family ancestors he tinkled a small hand-bell, which can be heard faintly in the background. Voices of spectators can be heard now and then replying to the spirit voices. This piece is merely a fragment, and is given not as an example of Haitian music, but as an example of how music is woven into the very fabric of religious life.

General Brise, the country is in the hands of God oh!
I am appealing to God, oh!

Side II, Band 7 -- GÉNÉRAL BRISÉ: Général Brisé, who is the subject of this song, is one of the loa of the Quita family of deities or spirit beings, and the Quita cult belongs to the Congo-Guinean cycle of rites and dances:

When you went away you didn't say where you were
Three leaves, three roots oh!
I say two! One day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have a pool, three roots fell into it!

When you want to forget it you will have to remember!

When I saw Mama Paulette, the tears ran from my eyes!
I say no! When you didn't say where you were going!
Paulette!
When you didn't say where you were going!
Paulette!
When you didn't say where you were going!
Paulette!

I say no! When you didn't say where you were going!
Paulette!
When you didn't say where you were going!
Paulette!
Side I, Band 1--VODOUN DANCE, played on three vodoun drums, the manman, moyen, and bébé, with sticks and bare hands. The sharp tone that is heard is made by the player of the large (manman) drum by striking his stick on the wood. This is the main dance of the Vodoun cult, whose mythology is built mainly around the religious practices of the Nago and Arada people, from Nigeria and Dahomey respectively.

Side I, Band 2--IBO DANCE, played on three drums and an ogan (iron percussion instrument). The small drum (bébé) is played with sticks, the two larger drums with the hands. This is the main dance of the Ibo cult, which takes its name from the Ibo tribe of southern Nigeria. Ibo cult activities are sometimes regarded as closely related to the Vodoun cult, sometimes to the Congo-Guinea cycle of rites. The Ibo dance is gay and lively, although it is definitely religious rather than secular in character.

Side I, Band 3--SALONGO DANCE, played on two drums with hands, with occasional use of sticks. This is a rest or relief dance belonging to the Congo-Guinea cycle of rites. It is used to break the tension in the course of a long ceremony. Nevertheless, even this music is tense compared to some of the secular drumming.

Side I, Band 4--JUBA DANCE. Two players on one drum. The drum lies on the ground, and one player straddles it and plays upon the head, using his heel for a damper; the second player beats sticks against the body of the drum. The Juba Dance, sometimes called the Martinique, is today a semi-social dance identified with rites for the dead. Some of the old people believe that the Juba was once associated with festivals held upon the completion of cultivating, planting, and harvesting, while the Martinique was a similar style of dance connected with death rituals. The Juba was at one time known throughout the Antilles, as well as in New Orleans. For some Haitians the Juba today has religious significance.

Side I, Band 5--PÉTRO DANCE, played on two drums with hands only. The Pétro Dance is associated with Pétro cult rites, and is one of many dances which are part of the Congo-Guinea group of rituals. Pétro music is always played on a battery of two drums with goatakin heads, and the use of sticks is never permissible. Occasionally in such music there may be an accompaniment of an ogan, but this is exceptional. There are several theories as to the origin of the cult name. The chief loa (spirit) of the cult is Dan Pétro. Some Haitians take the word Dan to mean snake, a significance it has in West African idiom. Early observers in Haiti, however, express the view that the cult was built around Dom Pedro, an emperor of Brazil. One aged informant suggested that the cult derived its name from one Don Pedro, a former slave and cult priest who lived in the Spanish-speaking part of the Island.

Side I, Band 6--QUITTA DANCE, played on two goatakin-head drums, with hands only. This dance, like the Pétro, belongs to the Congo-Guinea cycle of which Cymbi is the main loa (spirit).

Side II, Band 1--BABOULE DANCE, played on three drums with hands and sticks. A social dance related to the Juba. This is probably the same dance as the Bamboula, which was reported by early travellers in the West Indies, and which is still known in other West Indian islands.

Side II, Band 2--MASCARON DANCE, played on two drums and a basse (large tamborine), with hands only. The deep insistent tones, sometimes in the form of a glissade, come from the basse. This is a secular festival dance, particularly common during such occasions as the pre-Easter Mardi Gras gatherings.
Vol. III, SONGS AND DANCES OF HAITI (P 432)

The first six selections in this collection were performed by the Ayida Group of Port-au-Prince. Whereas the recordings in Volumes I and II of this series are primarily documentary, emphasis in Volume III is on group performance under relatively good recording conditions. Under documentary conditions group singing is difficult to record, due to improper acoustic placing of drums and constant movement of dancers and singers. The Ayida Group is one of the modern folklore groups that have sprung up in Haiti since the basic folk patterns were generally accepted as a rich source for creative art forms. The Ayida Group, while performing as an integrated group in non-documentary settings, preserves the simplicity and directness of the folk music.

Haiti has become very conscious of its folk heritage in recent years, and as a result many so-called folklore groups have sprung up—most of them, unfortunately, enthusiastically dedicated to polishing and “improving” the folk music for the benefit of tourists. While adaptation of folk themes and traditions to the stage could be a worthy objective, many efforts in this direction have been too conscious of the lure of professionalism. The Ayida Group, headed by Simeon Benjamin, is composed of ordinary Haitians with a background of close association with folk music in its natural setting. The members mostly come from the Belair section of Port-au-Prince. The drummers are Louis Celestin, Dalimar Celestin, and Pierre Desrameaux. The singers are Catherina Clermont, Josianne Jean-baptiste, Anaïse Valmé, Sidalise Dorcé, Dieudonné Pierre, Janine Dorcé, Elvire Ducasse, Estella Dorméla, André Celestin, Richemane Lalanne, and Gabriel Plaisirdor.

The selections on side two of this record are documentary. Two of them—carnival or Rara bands—were recorded in 1952 by Marshall Searns.

Side I, Band 1—Déesse Arc En Ciel (Mahi Dance): The Mahi, (or Mais) dance differs from the Zépaule dance, most of them, unfortunately, enthusiastically dedicated to polishing and “improving” the folk music for the benefit of tourists. While adaptation of folk themes and traditions to the stage could be a worthy objective, many efforts in this direction have been too conscious of the lure of professionalism. The Ayida Group, headed by Simeon Benjamin, is composed of ordinary Haitians with a background of close association with folk music in its natural setting. The members mostly come from the Belair section of Port-au-Prince. The drummers are Louis Celestin, Dalimar Celestin, and Pierre Desrameaux. The singers are Catherina Clermont, Josianne Jean-baptiste, Anaïse Valmé, Sidalise Dorcé, Dieudonné Pierre, Janine Dorcé, Elvire Ducasse, Estella Dorméla, André Celestin, Richemane Lalanne, and Gabriel Plaisirdor.

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Side I, Band 1—Cé Moin Ayida (Zépaule Dance): This is a religious dance of the Dahomey or Vodoun family of rites. It is primarily a shoulder dance ("les épaules"), and is used during Vodoun services to supplicate the loa or spirit beings. The loa being addressed in this song is Ayida Wèdo, a member of the Dahomey pantheon.

Abobo!
Cé moin oh cé moin Manzé Ayida oh cé moin.
Cé moin oh cé moin Manzé Ayida oh cé moin.
Chita abord batiman ya pa le nou mal oh.
Cé moin oh cé moin pa'teau planté oh cé moin.
Cé moin oh cé moin Manzé Ayida cé moin.
Cé moin y'apé pa'lè.
Cé moin oh cé moin Manzé Ayida cé moin.
Chita abord batiman y'a pa le nou mal oh.
Ce moin oh cé moin pa'teau plante oh cé moin.

Abobo!
It is I, it is I Mademoiselle Ayida, oh it is I.
It is I, it is I Mademoiselle Ayida, oh it is I.
Sitting on the boat they spoke badly about me.
It is I, centerpost, it is I.
Etc.

Abobo is a ritual beginning and ending for Vodoun songs. The centerpost referred to in the fourth line is the post which stands in the center of the dance court, usually holding up the roof. It is believed that the loa enter the ritual gathering by coming down this post.

Side I, Band 2—Ayida Déesse Arc En Ciel (Mahi Dance): The Mahi, (or Mais) dance differs from the Zépaule in rhythm, but it is an integral and important part of the Vodoun cycle. The deity invoked here is the same as in the preceding piece, Ayida Wèdo. She (like the loa Damballa Wedo) is identified with the rainbow and the snake. In Dahomey, where Ayida and Damballa were the same deity, it was believed that the rainbow was Ayida crawling out from under the world to drink. Ayida was conceived as a great serpent. The symbolism is preserved in this Haitian song:
Ayida cè arc en ciel oh. 
Ou ap' vin' fai ouANGOUwa. 
Ayida cè arc en ciel. 
Pas wè n'ap' fai ouANGOUwa?

***

Ayida is a rainbow oh.
You (Ayida) will come like a snake.
Ayida is a rainbow.
Don't you see I come like a snake?

Side I, Band 3 -- AYI DA PAS NAN BÉTISE (Pétro Dance):
The Pétro Dance belongs to another cult group, called Congo or Guinée. It has its own pantheon of deities and many distinctive rites and services. While the loa invoked here is named Ayida, she is not the same deity as in the previous songs. The same deity, theoretically, could not belong to the Vodoun and the Congo–Guinée cults. Where transference of a deity from one cult to another takes place, as it sometimes does, the loa acquires a different personality and different attributes in the new setting. He is regarded as distinct from the original loa by the same name. The Pétro deities are generally regarded as stern and uncompromising if not altogether malevolent, though some Pétro loa--like the Vodoun--are benevolent. In this song there is a warning that the loa will not stand for foolishness.

Bilolo!
Ayida pas nan bêtise oh.
Ayida pas nan bêtise ave yo.
Enle, langaille oh.
Ayida pas nan bêtise oh.
Ayida pas nan bêtise ave yo.
Ça qui vié content content.
Ça qui vié passé passé oh.
Ayida oh
Ayida pas nan bêtise ave yo.

***

Bilolo!
Ayida is not joking oh.
Ayida is not joking with them.
Enlé, language oh.
Ayida is not joking oh.
Ayida is not jok'g with 'eném.
Those who wish to be satisfied will be satisfied.
Those who wish to go will go.
Ayida oh
Ayida is not joking with them.

(In the first line, bilolo is ritual language used to commence a call song, used in the sense of "attention" or "ready." In the fourth line, enlé is exclamatory; the word "language" is a literal translation of langaille, meaning "old tongue" or African ceremonial language. Bits of langaille appear frequently in the cult songs.)

Side I, Band 4 -- VIVE LE ROI: This is a Martinique or Juba Dance piece. This type of dance is usually connected with celebrations marking the end of mourning for a deceased person.

Vive le roi cher la reine oh.
Encore malheureux a pa'lé enro moin.
Difé oh chaleur,
Difé oh chaleur oh.
Encore malheureux a pa'lé enro moin.

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Long live the king and dear queen oh.
Again misfortune, they talk behind my back.
Fire oh heat,
Fire oh heat oh.
Again misfortune, they talk behind my back.

The "king and dear queen" allusion is not clear, but the theme of protest against gossip is a standard one in Haitian life. "Fire and heat" is a reference to the fury of the gossip.

Side I, Band 5 -- MAMBO AYIDA (Congo Dance):

Mambo Ayida è.
Pral nan Guinée, pinga ou misé m' tendé.
Si ou jound bon ouanga wa po'té.
Si ou jound bon lotion wa po'té.

***

Mambo (Priestess) Ayida è.
(You) go to Africa, take care you do not stay, I am waiting.
If you find a good ouanga carry it back.
If you find a good lotion carry it back.

It is believed that the loa go to Africa and return at will. The loa Ayida is here asked not to forget that her Haitian people are waiting for her return. And she is asked to bring back from Africa a ouanga (protective fetish) and a lotion for some unspecified purpose.

Side I, Band 6 -- LEGBA AGUATOR (NAGO DANCE):

Legba Aguator is a member of the Vodoun pantheon of loa.

Ochan Nago.
Legba Aguator yè oh qui loa ou yè? A go loa'm na.
Legba Aguator yè oh qui loa ou yè?
Quitti–quitté oh Nèg' Nago loa'm na.
Legba Aguator yè qui loa ou yè?

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Ochan Nago.
Legba Aguator, what loa are you? Ago, I am this loa.
Legba Aguator, What loa are you?
Wherever I go I am a Nago loa.
Legba Aguator, what loa are you?

Side II, Band 1 -- ANGÉLIQUE OH (JERICO): This is a popular Meringue-style song, sung by a blind minstrel. He plays a guitar and is assisted by a small boy who sings faintly and plays the cha-chas (rattles). In Creole the words go:

Allez caille manman ou,
Allez caille manman ou,
Pas vin ba'm désagrement.
Allez caille manman cher,
Allez caille manman cher,
Allez caille manman mon cher,
Pou pas ba'm désagrement.
Ti fille qui pas con' lavé passé
Allez caille manman ou,
Ti fille qui pas con' lavé passé
Allez caille manman ou,
Jerico, Jerico, allez caille manman ou.
Jerico, Jerico, allez caille manman ou.
Etc.

***

Go home to your mother,
Go home to your mother,
Don't come to quarrel with me.
Go home to your mother, dear,
Go home to your mother, dear,
Go home to your mother, my dear,
And don't quarrel with me.
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron
Go home to your mother.
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron
Go home to your mother.
Jerico, Jerico, go home to your mother.
Jerico, Jerico, go home to your mother.
Etc.

There are variations on the lines throughout the song, with a certain admixture of double meanings. "Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron" has a double entendre.
FIOLE: This is a carnival song, sung during the Pétionville Mardi Gras festival. It was recorded by Marshall W. Stearns. The group is a wandering Rara band which includes such instruments as a drum, a whistle and a trumpet. The words of the singers are difficult to transcribe, but the title -- Ballè -- signifies "give him room." One might reasonably guess that it is a reference to the main dancer of the group who has demanded that the crowd stand back while he performs. In the Haitian tradition, his words have become transformed into a song.

Other Folkways Records of Interest

FE4633 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 record.

FW6840 CARIBBEAN DANCES. Folk dances recorded by Lisa and Walter Leki, from the Virgin Islands, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Trinidad, Antigua, Curacao, Calypso, Waltz, quadrille, tumba vido, mambo seven step, played by outstanding folk dance orchestras including the Brute Force Steel Band. Ill, notes. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

FW6869 SONGS OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES. Folk songs from the Caribbean sung by the West Indian Society of McGill University of Montreal, Soldiers with chorus and piano drum and guitar accompaniment. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

FW8111 CARIBBEAN RHYTHMS. Recorded by Thomas Price of Queens College (Dept. of Anthropology) in San Andres, Vocal and Instrumental Calypso songs and dances. Notes and songbook. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

BAHAMAS


FW8358 MUSI C OF THE BAHAM AS, vol. 11, Vocal Music. Recorded and with notes by Samuel R. Charters. Side 1, Sacred Music with Wales Services, Dig My Grave, etc. Side 2, Launching songs and ballads, with Long Summer Days, Pityours, etc. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

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 fin de saon from the Spanish and French speaking islands, The Baptist Methodist Church, Church of God Service, The drums include "Pipe Dance," Ringdok, Joy Dance, Steel & Tone and Jump Dance. Notes. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

FW9254 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. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.


CALYPSO

FW6898 CALYPSO AND MERRINGUE. Meringue recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander with Jazz Majestic Orch Nos Allon Dodo, Trois Angleique Oh, Menege Ou Belle, Calypso with Duke of Iron, Lord Invader, Machet, Felix & his International, Carnival, Dorothy One Morning, Mary Ann, Drucilla, Cousin Family, Text. 1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

FW6914 CALYPSO, (Vol. 2), with LORD INVADER and The Trinidad Calypso 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.

FW6865 STEEL BAND, TRINIDAD PANHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, recorded in Trinidad by Tel-Art Productions. Includes: Mattie, 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.

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, Pidé Castro. 1-10" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

FC7774 WEST INDIAN FOLKSONGS FOR CHILDREN with The Lord Invader; Instrumental and vocal accompaniments by Calypso orchestra Songs for sing-along games, dance improvisations, etc. Merry We Roll Along, Ring a Ring a Rose, Christmas Christmas, Early in the Morning, Limbo Dance, Show Me Your Motion, In a Fine Castle, If You See Little Brown Boy, Annie, Ronnie, Texas. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

FW8733 CALYPSO TRAVELS. Lord Invader and his Calypso Group, Lieutenant Joe, Fédel Castro, Me One Alone, Auf Wiederschein, Brunele Fais, Carnival, Te We (Callendar), Seway (Callendar), Cat O' Nine Tails, Steel Band was Woman Always Rule, With texts. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

CUBA

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

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 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, Vevine, Moloo, Chamba, Juba, Congo, belle halleluc chifonne, etc. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

HAITI

FE4400 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, Illa Dance, Salongo Dance, Juba, Petro and Quitta dances, etc., featuring bamboo trumpets, sampling tubes, Notes by H. C. Whitehead, Castle, Reincarnation, 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

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, carnivval and play songs. 18 examples of Haitian folk music. Notes by Harold Courlander. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.

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 Zepaade, Mabi, Petro, Nago, etc. Notes. 1-12" 33-1/3 rpm longplay record.