CALYPSO AWAKENING
FROM THE EMMORY COOK COLLECTION 1956-1962
Compiled and annotated by Kenneth Bilby and Keith Warner

A flourishing of calypso creativity, a dramatic period in Trinidad's history and an audio engineer inspired these exciting tracks, originally released on Cook Records between 1956 and 1962. Emory Cook used innovative recording techniques to capture the active interplay between calypsonians and their audiences. We hear classic song-duels between calypso legends like The Mighty Sparrow and Lord Melody, lively steel band processions, and a wide range of provocative calypso songs about life, love and politics. Live and studio recordings from Trinidad. 32 page booklet presents notes, song texts, Cook discography, bibliography. 67 minutes.

1. Saturday Night Blowout  John Buddy Williams Band (1956)  3:27
2. Carnival Celebration  Small Island Pride (1956)  2:17
4. Federation  Small Island Pride (1956)  2:37
5. No, Doctor, No  Mighty Sparrow (1957)  2:58
6. Taxi Driver  Small Island Pride (1956)  3:24
7. Tuning of a Pingpong  (1956)  0:38
8. Yankees Gone  (Steel band procession) (1956)  2:21
9. Yankees Gone  Mighty Sparrow (1956)  1:44
11. Cowboy Sparrow  Lord Melody (1957/8)  3:21
12. Reply to Melody  Mighty Sparrow (1959)  3:51
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16. Teresa  Mighty Sparrow (1959)  4:44
17. Come Go Calcutta  Lord Melody (1957/8)  3:03
18. No Crime, No Law  Commander (1959)  2:48
19. He No Dead Yet  King Fighter (1962)  3:19
20. Bongo Man  Wrangler (1962)  2:45
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Cover photo: Calypsonians celebrate the news that Trinidad has been elected as the capital of the West Indies Federation (1957). Top row, left to right: Nap, Hepburn, King Fighter (Shurlond Wilson), Laddie (Conrad Prescott), Mighty Sparrow (Slinger Francisco), Lord Coffee (Edward Broomes), Lord Cobra (Wiffred Berry), Young Killer (Daniel Jardine). Bottom row, left to right: Harold F. Lord, Caruso (Trinidadian Pierre), Al Thomas, Arnold “Bass” Brown, Errol McLean, “Wata” Bentley Jack. (Courtesy of Kevin Burke, photographer unknown)

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 Saturday Night Blowout John Buddy Williams Band (1956) 3:27
2 Carnival Celebration Small Island Pride (1956) 2:17
3 Booboo Man Lord Melody (1956) 4:18
(Lord Melody (Fitzroy Alexander)/Duchess Music Corp)
4 Federation Small Island Pride (1956) 2:37
5 No, Doctor, No Mighty Sparrow (1957) (Slinger Francisco) 2:58
6 Taxi Driver Small Island Pride (1956) 3:24
7 Tuning of a Pingpong (1956) 0:38
8 Yankees Gone (Steel band procession) (1956) 2:21
(Slinger Francisco)
9 Yankees Gone Mighty Sparrow (1956) (Slinger Francisco) 1:44
10 Picong Duel Mighty Sparrow and Lord Melody (1957) 4:22
(Slinger Francisco); Lord Melody (Fitzroy Alexander)
11 Cowboy Sparrow Lord Melody (1957/8) 3:21
(Lord Melody (Fitzroy Alexander)/Trinidad Music Co.)
12 Reply to Melody Mighty Sparrow (1959) (Slinger Francisco) 3:51
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The first reissue from the remarkable recordings of Emory Cook. An audio engineer and inventor, Cook used his Sounds of Our Times and Cook Laboratories record labels to demonstrate his philosophy about sound, his recording equipment, and his manufacturing techniques. From 1952 to 1966 Cook recorded, mastered, manufactured, and distributed some of the highest quality recordings in the world. The 140 titles on Cook Records include European and American concert music, U.S. and Caribbean popular and traditional music, as well as mechanical and natural sounds. Emory and Martha Cook donated their record company, master tapes, patents, and papers to the Smithsonian Institution in 1990, where they are being preserved for future enjoyment, education, and research. We are very grateful for their generosity and kindness.

A list of Cook recordings is appended to the notes; all are available on CD-R with the original notes from our mail order office. Track lists may be accessed from our Web site at www.si.edu/folkways/cooklist.htm.

Anthony Seeger, Curator
Jeff Place, Archivist
The Cook Collection

COOK AND CALYPSO
by Kenneth Bilby and Keith Warner

IMAGINE THE SETTING: TRINIDAD IN THE MID-1950s. A time of ferment. The Caribbean birthplace of the calypso was in transition. The Yankee military presence was being phased out, and post-war exhilaration was giving way to a politically charged atmosphere in which the old colonial hierarchy of race and class was being challenged. The People's National Movement (P.N.M.) was on the rise and would soon come to power in what was to be an uninterrupted term of thirty years. Talk of federation and independence was in the air.

Like the rest of society, calypso was experiencing renewal. In 1947 the Young Brigade had been founded and over the years had become home to a brash new breed of calypsonian. These younger artists were breaking out of the mold, introducing melodic innovations, incorporating foreign stylistic influences, and exploring new themes even as they paid homage to their predecessors. Calypso was awakening to a new era, and the emergence of the Mighty Sparrow in the same year as Eric Williams and his P.N.M. is not mere coincidence.

Into this climate of openness and experimentation stepped a North American recording engineer named Emory Cook—an innovator in his own right. Cook was a man obsessed with the idea of faithful sound reproduction, a man described by friends as “ear-driven.” Beginning in the 1940s, his quest for audio perfection had led to a series of inventions that were to have a profound effect on the recording industry. His new method of applying “negative feedback” in cutting records greatly reduced playback distortion in the late 1940s, while his process of “microfusion,” employing powdered instead of solid vinyl, was one of the outstanding developments in sound reproduction in the 1950s. The “binaural” disc design he pioneered, featuring separate bands for left and right channels, was used to produce the first commercially sold stereophonic records. This binaural microgroove record, introduced to the market in the early 1950s, was the immediate precursor of the single-groove stereo LP, which was to revolutionize the music industry in the 1960s and become the standard format over the next two decades.

By the early 1950s, Cook had achieved fame among audiophiles (as the rapidly growing legions of recorded-sound buffs had become known), not only for his technical genius but also because of his penchant for explor-
CALYPSO AWAKENING

Cook did not limit himself to calypso as such. His search for interesting audio experiences and his appreciation of the rich Caribbean musical heritage led him to the Trinidadian countryside, where he made a number of rare and historically valuable recordings of root traditions that were among calypso's sources. These included tambo bamboo (precursor of the steel band), bongo (Afro-Trinidadian wake music), kalinda (drumming that accompanied stick-fighting), and the Venezuelan-influenced string-band music that is played in certain parts of Trinidad—all of which could be heard, in stunning stereo, on Cook label releases during the 1950s. Over the years, the label also brought out a number of valuable field recordings from other parts of the Caribbean, made not only by Cook himself but by a stable of fieldworkers that included noted collectors such as Daniel Crowley, Andrew Pearce, Carter Harman, and Sam Eskin.

Cook was hardly the first to hit the road with his equipment, or to make field recordings in their proper cultural context; for years folklorists and ethnomusicologists had been attempting the same thing in many parts of the world. But Cook's recordings are distinguished from those of other field recordists of the era by their extraordinarily good sound quality. Made on the best portable equipment of the day by a leader in the emerging field of high-fidelity stereophonic sound reproduction, Cook's 1950s live recordings of calypso and other Caribbean music are exceptional by any standards. That they feature a number of seminal calypsonian performing live in their own element—with background noise, audience reactions, false starts, and improvised exchanges between players forming other parts of the dynamic whole—makes them rare treasures. Thanks to Cook's scrupulous devotion to audio realism, these recordings still sound alive and fresh.

Several of the brightest gems from the Cook collection are included on this sampler. One finds here a priceless 1957 recording of a traditional picnic duel—an impromptu exchange of sung insults—between two calypso giants, Sparrow and Lord Melody, before an audience in the Young Brigade tent. In another very live selection (aptly labeled “Saturday Night Blowout” by Cook), dancers can be heard crying out with joy as one of Trinidad's best orchestras at the time, the John Buddy Williams Band, drives them to a fever pitch.

Elsewhere Lord Melody elicits gales of laughter from his audience with a hilarious rendition of “Booboo Man” (later covered by Harry Belafonte), while Sparrow delivers a rousing performance of “No, Doctor.
No," his classic critique of Eric Williams' People's National Movement. Three superb numbers by Small Island Pride are also here—"Carnival Celebration," "Taxi Driver," and "Federation"—all recorded on the scene in calypso tents. Also worthy of note is the audio vertie image of a pan being tuned, captured on the spot by Cook; and a spectacular 1956 field recording of a steel band parading down the street during Carnival accompanied by an ecstatic crowd of revelers. To top it off, the compilation includes a historic live recording of the very performance of "Jean and Dinah" (also known as "Yankees Gone") that won Sparrow his first crown in 1956.

These are but some of the gems on this compilation. Also included are a number of studio recordings later issued on the Cook label, not all of which were engineered by Cook himself. Though some of these lack the atmosphere and presence of the live recordings, they were nonetheless selected for this compilation because of their cultural significance and musical quality. "Cowboy Sparrow" and "Reply to Melody," for instance, belong to a celebrated series of recorded exchanges between Sparrow and Lord Melody in the 1950s that adapted the old tradition of picong to the new medium of mass-produced commercial recordings. Wrangler's "Bongo Man" in both lyrics and music displays the influence of the traditional bongo dance performed at Afro-Trinidadian wakes and exemplifies the creative interaction with other Trinidadian musical styles that has long played a part in calypso's development. Lord Melody's "Turn Back, Melody" is of special interest because of its incorporation of the call-and-response form typical of the kalinda stick-fighting tradition. And "No Crime, No Law" by Lord Commander is a masterpiece of social satire that in the best calypso tradition uses irony to knock those officials charged with enforcing the law—police and judges—off their pedestals. Other selections such as King Fighter's "He No Dead Yet" and Wrangler's "Neighbor Jacqueline" found their way into this compilation largely on the basis of their musical appeal.

This compilation only skims the surface of the Cook collection of Trinidad calypsos—an extraordinary body of recordings that captured a pivotal moment in the music's history. How fortunate for lovers of Caribbean music that Emory Cook, one of the fathers of high-fidelity recording, became a part of that exciting moment.

The Songs: Transcriptions and Notes

1. Saturday Night Blowout (John Buddy Williams Band, 1956, from Jump-Up Carnival, Cook LP 1072)

One of the best Trinidadian bands of the 1950s lets loose for a Saturday night performance at the Carib Theatre in Port of Spain. While the calypso tradition is best known for its songs and the verbal agility of its lyricists, it has also produced its share of great dance music, heard in the road marches of carnival and in dance halls and night clubs. This exciting instrumental jam shows that long before dance-oriented soca took over in the 1970s, musicians might keep things low-key while backing calypsonians but, when the time was right, could turn up the heat and pack the dance floors. It also bears witness to Trinidad's long-standing musical ties with other parts of the Caribbean and the U.S. The impact of jazz is hard to miss here (as it is on several of the other selections on this CD)—in the way the horns play off each other and in the muted "vocalizations" of the trumpet. At the same time, the clarinet sings in a broad "creole" style once heard across the Caribbean from Martinique to Jamaica. But the music's roots remain in Trinidad.

2. Carnival Celebration (Small Island Pride, 1956, from Dance Calypso, Cook LP 2180)

Verbal bravado abounds as the calypsonian issues a challenge to well-known hoodlums like Mastifay and Cutouter. There were several calypsos of this type, since the singers were easy prey to various underworld characters. The sparse instrumentation, featuring prominent guitar and maracas and no horns, harks back to an earlier, pre-commercial era of calypso.

Chorus:
Ah, Mastifay, Mascity/Marry me down by the Croisee
And Cutouter, Cutouter/Marry me down by Green Corner.

Well, I waiting for this carnival/To jump up with these criminals
I going to arm myself with a big stick/Any man in town I meet,
that is real kicks.
Cause I done tell Mammy already/Mammy do, do tie up your belly.
Cause is murder, federation/With war and rebellion
When they bar me by the junction, /Chorus

Monday morning I waking early/Two drink of Vat* to steam up my body
And I jumping up like I crazy/I alone go collapse the city
With my razor tie on to my poul**/I like a badjohn in the 18th century.
And with my stick in my waist/I chopping in space/Is to spit in ole nayga face./Chorus
I wonder why nobody don't like me/Or is it a fact that I'm ugly? (repeat)
I leave my whole house and go/My children don't want me
no more
They cursing black is white and thing/And when I talk they start to sing

Chorus:
"Mama, look, a booboo," they shout/Their mother told them,
"Shut up your mouth
That is your daddy. " "Oh no! My daddy can't be ugly so"
"Shut your mouth, go away!"/Mama, look, a booboo day.

1. Federation
(Small island Pride, 1956, from Dance Calypso, Cook LP 1380)

The question of a West Indian Federation was mooted on several occasions during the islands' colonial history. The one attempt at uniting the Commonwealth colonies under a federation failed a mere three years after it was officially started in 1958. Here the calypsonian, a non-Trinidadian, has his lady show how easy it is to federate, using the social to parody the political.

Chorus:
Lillian, change your plan/Next year is Federation
There'll be no discrimination/Between a Trinidadian and a Grenadian.
Well, it have a Grenadian living next to me/If you know how them natives does torture she (repeat)
Every time they in for a confusion/They does bawl, "Small Island, go back to your land"
But the Grenadian sit down and she draft a plan/To stop them from all this tormentation
Every time they shout, "Smalley, find your land!"/She does jump up with this fauvity like a mad woman.
Chorus

The Trinidadian turn to the Grenadian/Ant said, "Girl, can you explain me what's Federation?"

The Grenadian said, "Girl, Federation/Is a combination of generation
Because my mother was a Barbadian/She married to my father, a Trinidadian
I make two children, one for a Chinese man/And they say the next one is a St. Lucian
Try your best and contact the generation/And the answer to that is Federation.
Chorus

The Trinidadian: "Hush, you stupid woman/Every night I does bounce up Federation
Monday night I went out with a Chinese man/Tuesday night, girl, I slept with an Italian
Wednesday and Thursday I done with two Martiniquan/Friday night I get a cuff from a Yankee man
Saturday morning, I was in the hospital van/Fighting hard to deliver Federation.
Chorus

The Grenadian jump up and she bounce she hand/Said, "Girl, is we bored 'bout Federation
We the Bajan mix with the Grenadian/Them St. Lucian tie up with the Antiguan"
She said, "That Captain Ciprian is rehearse this to me/That T. Albert Marrishow does fight for we
So don't mind them just come politician/They don't know one damn thing about Federation."

Lillian, change your plan/Try your best and hold down your man
When they sign this Federation/I going to leave you like Moses on the promised land.
Chorus

Dance-type calypso; # Trinidadian and Grenadian politicians
5. **No, Doctor, No** (Mighty Sparrow, 1957, from Calypso Kings and Pink Gin, Cook LP 1185)

Sparrow reacts to the reality of the new-found political responsibility in post-P.N.M. Trinidad and Tobago. Party leader Eric Williams had tried his best to educate the public (in Woodford Square, which he dubbed "the University of Woodford Square"), but it is clear that belt-tightening is a bitter pill to swallow.

Listen, listen carefully, I am a man does never be sorry, repeat. But I went and vote for some council men / They have now in the pen

After promising so much tender Fey / Not me, I stick to my mango wood.

* Reference to the politician Alberʷ Gomes, who was defeated by Eric Williams and the P.N.M. in the election of 1956

**Chorus:**

Because they raise up on the taxi fare / No, doctor, no
And they have the blasted milk so dear / No, doctor, no
I want them to remember / We support them in September
They better come good / I have no intention of throwing down my mango wood.

6. **Taxi Driver** (Small Island Pride, 1958, from Jump-Up Carnival, Cook LP 1072)

Great use of double-entendre in which the courtship ritual is expressed in automotive terms.

The pace of the calypso rises to fever pitch until the young lady and her car both catch fire. Like track 2, this one has an old-time sound. Instrumentation is limited to acoustic guitar, bass, and maracas. The guitar strums with a pan-Caribbean rhythmic feel reminiscent of Jamaican mento, Guineyan badji [bhaage], and other related rural West Indian song and dance styles.

**Chorus:**

Well, last year at Venzuels/Boys, I bounce with a señorita

Yes, she wanted a taxi driver / To drive her out when she in for pleasure
Boy, I sent her my application / And she send me her resignation
She say, "You car is a Ford / It don't respect Highway Code / It does skid when it overload"
Oh, but she give me a chart
Telling me to drive it fast / Don't mind if it out of gas
If the radiator start to boil / Don't stop, let the water wash down the col

Well, as a driver with wide experience / Boys, I send this car for inspection
I give the mechanic man my instruction / To check up from the diff to the pistons
I even beg him plug the muffler / Because I know these old Ford love to backfire
I beg him clip some of the wires that it mightn't cause no fire
Boy, and plug the radiator / Because I know all my change is to drive she fast
Don't mind if she out of gas
But if she radiator start to boil / Don't stop, let the water overflow the col

Well, the car came back from inspection / I told her Monday was the demonstration
She told me, "No, honey, wait until Wednesday / I want to fix the springs in my upholstery
Because when we start this fast driving / And my car start over shaking
The slightest jerk affect my brain / My back might get strain
And then I feel an afterpain."
But I told her, "No, I driving far / Don't mind if you out of gas
But if your radiator start to boil / Don't stop, let the water tear loose the col."

7. **Tuning of a Pingpong** (1956, from Jump-Up Carnival, Cook LP 1072)

Cook made this on-the-scene audio document of an artisan tuning a pan for use in the road March of 1956. (A snippet from the recording Cook made during the actual road March is heard on track 8.)

**Chorus:**

Well, the car came back from inspection / Boys, we went out on demonstration
You know she drive ten miles and a quarter / I told her stop, turn this wheel over
Boy, is now I start my fast driving / A lot of funny things start happening
You know the wires cross one another / The water hose bust / Loose the radiator
Well, boys, the gearbox start a grinding / This gear so hard I can't get it go in
So I pull out my gear lever / Muster through she muffler
And the whole car went on fire
If you hear her: "Stop, driver, not so fast" / I said, "Why?" She said, "The car out of gas"
I said, "Girl, your piston still patching oil / And why the hell water can't wash the col?"
8. Yankees Gone ("Jean and Dinah") (Live Recording of Steelband, 1956, from Jump-Up Carnival, Cook LP 1072)

The excitement of Carnival is beautifully captured here. A steel band parades down the street surrounded by costumed revelers. The tune that won Sparrow his first calypso crown, "Yankees Gone" (also known as "Jean and Dinah"), was clearly the people's choice. The crowd already knows the lyrics and urges the steel band on by singing along.

9. Yankees Gone ("Jean and Dinah") (Sparrow, 1956, from Jump-Up Carnival, Cook LP 1072)

Sparrow celebrates the departure of the American soldiers from Trinidad. Many local men, unable to compete with the Americans' easy money, had lost their women in the period following World War II. This recording was done at the venue of the annual Calypso King Competition on the very night that Sparrow won the crown for the first time. The calypso became immediately popular under the title "Jean and Dinah."

Yankees gone, and Sparrow take over
Things bad, if you see them cry./Not a sailor in town, the nightclubs cry
Only West Indians like me or you/Going to get a drink or two
And as we have things back in control/I seeking revenge with my heart and soul
Brother, when I spread the news around/Is to sell all them sago boys * in town
Just to bounce up.

Chorus:
Jean and Dinah, Rosilda and Clementina
Round the corner posing
Bet your life is something they selling
And if you catch them broken
You can get it all for nothing
Don't make a row
Since the Yankees gone, Sparrow take over now.

It's the glamour boys again/We are going to rule Port of Spain
No more Yankee to spoil the fun/Dorothy have to take what she get
All of them who used to make style/Well, they glad for anything with a smile
No more hotel to rest your head/By the sweat of thy brow, thou shall eat bread.

Chorus
* Playboys

10. Picong Duel (Mighty Sparrow and Lord Melody, with Johnny Gomez and his band, 1957, from Calypso Kings and Pink Gin, Cook LP 1185)

Verbal dexterity and the ability to compose verses ex tempore have been greatly appreciated over the years. Picong melodies are nearly always the same, but the friendly insults (picong) vary according to circumstances. Picong belongs to a larger African and Afro-American legacy of sung (or otherwise performed) insults, represented in the U.S. by traditions of verbal dueling such as "the dozens" (also known as "signifying," "snapping," etc.).

Sparrow:
Well, Melody, come close to me/I will tell you plain and candid
Don't stop in the back and smile/Because you have a face like a crocodile.

Melody:
Sparrow, you shouldn't tell me that at all/I mind you when you was small
Many of the nights I used to mash your head/In crossing to go on your mother.

Sparrow:
I know you think you are looking sweet/You posing here in your own false teeth
Is a lucky thing your uncle kick out/For you to get the false teeth to put in your mouth.

Melody:
That is all you can say/in every angle and every way
But the way you watching at me/I go bust a right hook in your belly.

Sparrow:
It look as if you want trouble here tonight/All you always looking for fight
I'll tell you this candidly/That is why the jail never empty.

Melody:
You know that I'll be proud and glad/I Samson and Delilah come back to Trinidad
But when they come I wouldn't go in the theatre/Because I look, the jawbone of the ass right here.

Sparrow:
Well, ladies and gents, to tell you this I'm sure/When the circus was here they had a big uproar
Walking hand in hand/The female chimpanzee take Melo for she man.

Melody:
Sparrow, that is a mistake/And in my opinion you give me a headache
This is what I'm forced to say/Is the same mistake you going to make today.

Sparrow:
Well, Melody, you have me in a rage/Wining* up on he stage
You feel you are locking cute/But when you finish, take off the dead man suit.

Melody:
You shouldn't tell me that/This is what I am compelled to tell you flat
I hope you don't say that I am crack/in a while I'll be winning behind your back.

Sparrow:
Well believe, don't touch my flesh/I wouldn't say you fresh
Back to back, belly to belly/And I think you are slack.

* From the English verb "to wind," or "wining"
Musically, this selection—with its prominent piano—outshines other examples. Out of a gun
You were in love
The son of a catarrh-nose popular
brand
used as a rhythm instrument—typifies an up-tempo
too-facedness
incident about which Sparrow himself sang in “Ten name
Sparrow. you should use your
Melody here alludes to the allegation
Shooting
Chorus:
Again! Lord Melody Sings Calypso, Cook
LP 906
Melody portrays the traditional carnival character
American Red Indian and uses him to spread terror
in the hearts of his potential enemies.

(Chorus of fake “Indian” speech)
Well, this year in town is trouble, bobooga*/I tell you jump if
you able
Lord, this year is the trouble, boops/I tell you jump if you able
Well, I am going on proclamation/And I going to play my wild
Indian
I like a zwilf in a modu,† talk/The government bound to put
me in jail
When I shout: Chorus
Weil, my bigshot friends like O’Reilly/I want him close to
assist me
I won’t keep out Mr. Burkett/That scamp, I know he love such
a racket
My shield he must be carrying/And I don’t want to catch him
shaking
It would be like two black Indian clash/I sure to give big head
Burkett a lash
With the shout: Chorus
Well, as an Indian cosmopolitan/I the Lord crown myself king
of the Indian
No respect for the laws of the land/Feel me, I feel as strong
as Superman
When I jump and sing Lekyabors/With my ten warriors behind
me
And I chopping from man to child/I let show the public that I
14. Paye (Mighty Sparrow, 1959, from King Sparrow’s Calypso Carnival, Cook LP 920)

A pro-P.N.M. calypso that seeks to ease the unpalatability of a new income tax system. Eric Williams thought this calypso one of the best in the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

It’s a shame, it’s a shame/But we have hemos to blame
Because we ask for new government/Now they taking every cent.
Cost of living is the same/It is really a burning shame.

Chorus:
Because the doctor say to pay as you earn/But the Sparrow say you paying to learn.
And my father say he sharpening the axe/For when the collector come to pay income tax.

15. Turn Back, Melody (Lord Melody, 1959, from Melody’s Top Ten [alternate title, Calypso!! Through the Looking Glass], Cook LP 927)

Call-and-response approach to the problem of hooliganism. The antiphonal form—like the pugnacious lyrics—recalls the sung challenges of stick-fighters in the African-derived kalinda tradition that was one of calypso’s sources.

Chorus: Turn back, Lord Melody, turn back.
I go fight them, I go fight them.
Chorus: Turn back, Lord Melody, turn back.
I go fight them, I go fight them.

16. Teresa (Sparrow, 1959, from King Sparrow’s Calypso Carnival, Cook LP 920)

Very popular calypso about a woman probably (and typically) from a Spanish-speaking country reneging on her apparent promise of certain favors to the calypsonian. Typically, the final stanza sheds light on what was really happening.
17. Come Go Calcutta (Lord Melody, 1957/8, from Again! Lord Melody Sings Calypso, Cook LP 914)

Trinidad is home to a large population of East Indian descent, whose ancestors came from India in the nineteenth century to work on plantations, then settled there. Melody’s song recounts a flirtatious encounter between two Trinidadians of African and East Indian descent, a relationship filled with stereotypes and humor. Using the Trinidadian English Creole word “nayga” as a term of obvious endearment, the calypsonian emphasizes the non-threatening aspect of relations between Afro- and Indo-Trinidadians.

Chorus: Ow, nayga, sweet nayga/Ow, nayga, come go Calcutta.

No, doolahin girl, I can’t come back here again/I telling you plain, doolahin, I can’t come back here again
Suppose your man catch we in the act/ Take a big stick and open my back
So you see, somebody go dead/The Indian girl hold on to she head.

Chorus: Ramal ain’t making fun/When he know he go use the gun
Doolahin cry/When I told her this was goodbye
She run on me and she start to bite/Kilwain,’ sleep with me tonight
I told her I can’t make the grade/She ask me why, I said I’m afraid
Melody, you can’t leave at all/And as I kiss she start to bawl.

Chorus: Creole (i.e. Afro-Trinidadian) man

18. No Crime, No Law (Commander, 1959, from Calypso Atrocities, Cook LP 1123)

A delightfully absurd concept (but is it?) that without criminals there can be no law. In this case, the law is really the people who administer it as opposed to the rules, etc., by which a society preserves order. Known to his fans as “Mr. Action” because of his odd, flamboyant performing style, Commander was one of calypso’s great eccentrics. (His present-day heirs include that master of the weird and offbeat, Shadow.) This calypso moved Derek Walcott to write in 1960 that “Commander’s ballad of last season on the paradox of crime and justice can stand by Germany’s best poet of this generation, Bertolt Brecht, in its irony.”

I want the government of every country/Pay a criminal a big salary
And when they commit a crime/The law shouldn’t give them any long time

A police should be glad when someone twist a jaw/Lock your neck, break a window, break open a door
He should be merry when somebody violate the law/For that is what the government is paying him for.

Chorus: If somebody don’t bust somebody face/How the policeman going to make a case?
And if somebody don’t kick out somebody eye/The magistrate won’t have nobody to try
And if somebody don’t kill somebody dead/All the judges got to beg their bread
So when somebody cut off somebody head instead of hanging they should pay them money instead.

A thief give the whole force a promotion/From a police to a commissioner
And is the commissioner living in the big mansion/And the man who promote him down Carrera
And if somebody don’t crack somebody skull/It ain’t go have no jail, courthouse, or magistrate
Still when a man cut open somebody belly/Is custody and the ass o’nine tails for her.

Chorus: If a man don’t kick out a woman feet/Or she don’t part he face with a pouf
Or bore out he eye with a saw/What the government going to pay men of the law for?
If when you kick me and I break your ankle/Men of the law becoming honorable
Still, when you do them things they send you straight to jail/And from the time they hold you they saying “bout no bail.”

Chorus: Don’t doubt me. Is through all the criminal/Men of the law
Voom fly a follow he.

This is only prayer book tear.

I tell you, do, for heaven sake/Please give him a break.

So when a man kill, instead of swinging he head/They should make him Governor-General instead.

20. Bongo Man (Wrangler, 1962, from Hellish Calypso, Cook LP 1122)

Kalinda-style rhythms pace this humorous calypso about village life in northeast Trinidad, where an African-derived dance called the bongo is performed in the context of wakes. The chorus section (sung partly in French Creole) is taken from a well-known traditional bongo song. Although Trinidadian French Creole has very few speakers today, it was once widely spoken on the islands—in fact, it was the original language of calypso—and many bongo songs still have lyrics in this language.

Tonight is the bongo night/Vini wè, vini wè*/Bongo, vini wè

But this one beat everything/Once a fellow went out hunting

He was so glad for the break/He man start to bongo in his own wake

Chorus:

Migayé/Tonight is the bongo night
Vini wè, vini wè/Bongo, vini wè

Bongo Macedonia/Vini wè, vini wè/Bongo, vini wè

Jackass go laugh and talk/Vini wè, vini wè/Bongo, vini wè

Well, the light won’t candle/Was oil and cloth in a bottle

Music kicking hell in the place/Don’t mind a bamboo joint was the bass

Man jumping like if is non-stop/Don’t care even if their trousers drop.

21. Neighbor Jacqueline (Wrangler, 1959, from Calypso Anthologies, Cook LP 1123)

More double-entendre about the heavy demands placed on the calypsonian’s “equipment.” Rarely has a song of complaint sounded so sweet.

My new neighbor Jacqueline/She was too disgusting (repeat)

I used to sell refreshment/So I had my equipment

But was trouble with Jacqueline/Every day the woman wanted refreshing.

Chorus:

Ohy, I bought a nice soursop/Neighbor, let we swizzle up

Bring the swizzle stick/I got my glass cup

Swizzle it, swizzle it, sweet like syrup

Neighbor, let we swizzle up.

First thing every morning/Last thing every evening

Whole day she going on/I can’t get a vacation

Just lie down to take a rest/She calling out like a pest

Boy, don’t worry with sugar/All you got to do is bring the swizzle./Chorus

Chorus:

I don’t like reproaching/But I can’t forget Jacqueline

Good thing I got control/Else I knock she down cold.

I used to swizzle with Lynn Lee/Anytime that Lynn thirsty

But was no gratuity/As my stick spell she stop talking to me

No more./Chorus
Suggested Reading


Quevedo, Raymond. 1983. *Atilla’s Kaiso: A Short History of Trinidad Calypso.* St. Augustine, Trinidad: University of the West Indies.


Afterword

**A Quirky Cook and the Calypsonian: A Match Made in Trinidad**

by Donald R. Hill

The period so wonderfully chronicled in this CD was a time of change and creativity in calypso. Nineteen fifty-six ushered in the rise to stardom of Slinger Francisco, the Mighty Sparrow. Many devotees argue that the Mighty Sparrow is the greatest calypso singer of all time, and that “Jean and Dinah” is the greatest road march of all time. The listener to this CD will hear the very moment that the Mighty Sparrow won his first Calypso Monarch title with the very song that will live forever among aficionados. Even more surprising, the man who recorded Sparrow and the rest, the great guru of high fidelity, Emory Cook, also recorded “Yankees Gone” by a steel band that was leading revelers through the streets of Port of Spain.

Emory Cook was a pioneer in the development of high-fidelity and stereophonic recording in the decade and a half after World War II. He was also one of the first to use a tape recorder in the “field.” Cook recorded more than music; he recorded a culture as it unfolded before his eyes. He takes us to the Trinidad Carnival, where the sounds of joy explode on all sides and where music is the driving force behind the melee. We hear the music, the audience, the pan being tuned, all duly documented by the somewhat quirky Mr. Emory Cook.

Cook put these sounds on a series of long-playing albums recorded over a span of about ten years. It is sometimes difficult to figure out which songs are on which of Cook’s albums. Sometimes the correct titles are listed on an album cover, sometimes no titles are listed at all. As for the records themselves, sometimes the discs come in hard pressboard covers, sometimes thick, clear plastic covers. Usually the record is black, but sometimes it is red or turquoise.

Emory Cook also wrote many of the liner notes for his calypso albums. These notes don’t tell us much about the music, but they do reveal Cook’s unlikely genius. With his notes Mr. Cook lets us in on the fun of Carnival in Trinidad from this singular Yankee’s perspective. As he writes on the back of album 01180, *Dance Calypso!:*
Calypso is:
A humor-coated gallet of uncamouflaged truth.
- Taking the opportunity of saying something to somebody in song that you couldn't say in polite society.
- An orchid and a sea nymph,
An expression which, having heard, you modestly admit is exactly the way you would have put it yourself, come to think of it, ...
Satire that makes you laugh because in it is unveiled all that is ludicrous and irrational in a lot of other fellows; sometimes you may even recognize yourself if you listen hard.
- Free association plus improvisation,
- Reading a lesson of male supremacy in the face of war, sea, danger, politics and rum, - in fact in the face of anything except woman, ...
- The dummy for a singing ventriloquist,
- Of Trinidad, and Carnival,
- Not susceptible of precise definition.

The logic of calypso and the spirit of Carnival touched this Yankee free spirit with the same magic that calypso works on anyone who cares to take the time to try to comprehend the incomprehensible.

Discography
Cook Recordings from the Caribbean

ANTIGUA
Steel Band Clash Brute Force Steel Band, Big Shell Band, and Hall Gate Band (1955) COOK 01040
Beauty and the Brute Force Brute Force Steel Band (1957) COOK 01049
Brute Force Steel Band of Antigua with Big Shell Band Brute Force Steel Band (1955) COOK 01042
Music to Awaken the Ballroom Boast Brute Force Steel Band (1957) COOK 01048

BRITISH GUIANA
Fate for Sol Tom Charles and His Syncopater Orchestra (1959) COOK 00911

CUBA
Jawbone of an Ass: Musica de Cuba (1955) COOK 01083
Three Rituals (1955) COOK 01043

HAITI
Meringue Ensemble aux Calebasses (1958) COOK 01186
Tiroro: Haitian Drummer Tiroro (1948) COOK 05004
Haiti Confidential Lavinia Williams' Group Folklorique (1958) COOK 01022

JAMAICA
Calypso Jamaica Lord Myrtle, Cecil Mitchel, and James Convery (1960) COOK 01125

MARTINIQUE
Un Tim Bo Groupe Mi-o (1958) COOK 01021

PUERTO RICO
Island in the Moonlight Trio Los Rubies, Grupo Paquito Lopez Cruz, Las Hermanas Colon, Marita Cuadrado (1958) COOK 01121
A Night at the Tropicoro Juan Luis, Osvaldo Soda, and Lito Peña Band (1959) COOK 01187
New Paths for Steel Band 10th Naval District Steel Band (1965) COOK 01102
ST. LUCIA
Music of St. Lucia (1953) COOK 00103
Rada (a branch of Haitian-Dahomean vodun) (1958) COOK 00104

TRINIDAD
Afro-West Indian Cultural Practices (1957/58) COOK 00106
Against Lord Melody Sings Calypso Lord Melody (1957/58) COOK 00914
Bamboo-tambou, Bongo, and Belair (1956) COOK 05017
Belly to Belly Clarence Curvan, Johnny Gomez, Tom Charles, Fizz Vaughn Bryan (1960/61) COOK 00930
The Boti, The Cocolute, and Brazil Escola Be Samba Bé Brazil (1957/58) COOK 00107
Calypso Atrocities (1959) COOK 01123
Calypso Cross Section Young Killer, the Mighty Bomber, Small Island Pride, the Mighty Wrangler (1957/58) COOK 00916
Calypso Kings and Pink Gin: Trinidad Carnival Tent Lord Melody, the Mighty Sparrow, others (1957) COOK 00185
Calypso Lore and Legend (1956) COOK 05016
Calypso Through the Looking Glass Lord Melody (1959) COOK 00927
Caribbean Limbo Music Rupert Clemondoro Orchestra, Cyril Diaz Orchestra, others COOK 01280
The Castilione Johnny Gomez Band, John Buddy Williams Band, Girl Pat Steel Band, and Grand Curacaye String Orchestra (1956) COOK 10890
Champion Steel Bands of Trinidad The Highlanders, Southern All Stars, The Katzeniammers, others (1957) COOK 001046
Dirty Jazz from Down South: Trinidadian Instrumentals (1958) COOK 00188
Drums of Trinidad (1956) COOK 01045
East Indian Drums of Tunapuna, Trinidad (1956) COOK 050180
The Enchanted Steelband The Katzeniammers (1957) COOK 001047
Epitaph to the String Band Tradition (1956) COOK 05020
Hellish Calypso King Fighter, the Mighty Bomber, others (1962) COOK 00122
Jump-up Carnival: Calypso Tent (1956) COOK 01072

VIRGIN ISLANDS
Steel Band in San Juan: The Invaders from St. Croix. (1964) COOK 01101

COMPILATIONS
Calypso Exposed Lord Melody, Brute Force Steel Band, King Sparrow, the Mighty Cypher, and Skipper (1961) COOK 01189
Caribbean: Hidden Music from the Caribbean (1949) COOK 05003
Dance Calypso Johnny Gomez Band, Small Island Pride, Dictator, others (1956) COOK 01180
Steelband Promenade Brute Force Steel Band, the Merrymakers, Southern All Stars (1958) COOK 00140

SPOKEN WORD
Calypso Lore and Legend (1956) COOK 05016
Grenada Stories and Songs (1957/58) COOK 00101
Jose Ramon Fortune and Olga Comma Maynard Nancy Stories (1956) COOK 00105
About the Compilers:

Kenneth Bilby is a Research Associate in the Department of Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution. He is the author of *The Caribbean as a Musical Region*, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music from Rumba to Reggae* (with Peter Manuel and Michael Largey), and compiler of numerous albums featuring Caribbean musical traditions.

Keith Warner is Professor of French and Caribbean Studies at George Mason University. He is the author of *Kaiso! The Trinidad Calypso* and has helped compile and annotate a large number of calypso anthologies on LP and compact disc. He has edited a number of books on Caribbean literature and is the translator of Berthe Juneau’s *Les Bâtaris* as well as other Caribbean novels.

Production supervised by Anthony Seeger and D. A. Sonneborn
Production coordinated by Mary Monseur
Production assistance by Rachel Conrad
Editorial assistance by Peter Seitel and Carla Borden
Design and layout by Sonya Cohen Cramer, Takoma Park, MD

Additional Smithsonian Folkways staff: Judy Barlas, manufacturing coordinator; Heather Berthold, financial officer; Lee Michael Densey, fulfillment; Kevin Doran, licensing; Brenda Dunlap, marketing director; Scott Finholm, audio assistant; Shareen Kavetski, mail order accounts manager; Helen Lindsay, customer service; Nakieda Moore, fulfillment; Jeff Place, archivist; Ronnie Simpkins, audio specialist; John Smith, marketing assistant; Stephanie Smith, assistant archivist

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ABOUT SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Folkways Records was founded by Moses Asch in 1948 to document music, spoken word, instruction, and sounds from around the world. In the ensuing decades, New York City-based Folkways became one of the largest independent record labels in the world, reaching a total of nearly 2,200 albums that were always kept in print.

The Smithsonian Institution acquired Folkways from the Moses Asch estate in 1987 to ensure that the sounds and genius of the artists would be preserved for future generations. All Folkways recordings are available on high-quality audio cassettes or by special order on CD. Each recording is packed in a special box along with the original LP liner notes.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings was formed to continue the Folkways tradition of releasing significant recordings with high-quality documentation. It produces new titles, reissues of historic recordings from Folkways and other record labels, and in collaboration with other companies also produces instructional videotapes and recordings to accompany published books, and other educational projects.

The Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet record labels are administered by the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies. They are one of the means through which the Center supports the work of traditional artists and expresses its commitment to cultural diversity, education, and increased understanding.

You can find Smithsonian Folkways Recordings at your local record store. Smithsonian Folkways, Folkways, Cook, Paredon, and Dyer-Bennet recordings are all available through:

Smithsonian Folkways Mail Order
750 9th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20560-0953
phone orders: (1) (800) 410-9815
fax orders: (1) (800) 853-9511
folkways@aol.com

(Discovers, MasterCard, Visa, and American Express accepted)

For further information about all the labels distributed through the Center, please consult our Internet site (www.si.edu/folkways), which includes information about recent releases, our catalogue, and a database of the approximately 35,000 tracks from the more than 2,300 available recordings (click on database search).

To request a printed catalogue write to the address above or email folkways@aol.com