



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Calypso music : identity and social influence : the Trinidadian experience

Charles, C.N.

Citation

Charles, C. N. (2016, November 22). *Calypso music : identity and social influence : the Trinidadian experience*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45260>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45260>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/45260> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Charles, Clarence

Title: Calypso music : identity and social influence : the Trinidadian experience

Issue Date: 2016-11-22

Calypso Music

Identity and Social Influence: The Trinidadian Experience

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van

de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden

op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,

volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties

te verdedigen op dinsdag 22 november 2016

klokke 16:15 uur

door

Clarence N. Charles

geboren te Port-of-Spain (TT)

in 1951

Promotores

Prof.dr. Joep Bor

Universiteit Leiden

Dr. Wim van der Meer

Universiteit van Amsterdam
Universiteit Leiden

Promotiecommissie

Dr. Adriana Churampi

Universiteit Leiden

Prof.dr. Rokus de Groot

Universiteit van Amsterdam

Prof.dr. Corinne Hofman

Universiteit Leiden

Dr. Hollis Liverpool

University of the Virgin
Islands

Prof. Frans de Ruiter

Universiteit Leiden

Disclaimer

The author has made every effort to trace the copyright and owners of the illustrations reproduced in this dissertation. Please contact the author if anyone has rights which have not been acknowledged.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	3
Glossary of Terms	7
Acknowledgments.....	9
Introduction	11
Chapter 1 Social, Historical and Cultural Background.....	25
Chapter 2 Defining Calypso.....	71
Chapter 3 Defining Identity	125
Chapter 4 Calypso's Function in Trinidadian Society	137
Chapter 5 Change and Analysis	183
Conclusion	199
Bibliography.....	207
Discography	221
List of Calypsos	223
Biographies of Some Major Calypsonians.....	233
Summary	239
Samenvatting.....	243
Curriculum Vitae.....	247

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

Fig. 1:	Table	Birth places of native-born Africans in Trinidad in 1813	26
Fig. 2:	Drawing	Carnival parade around 1888	28
Fig. 3:	Drawing	Post-Emancipation carnival celebration	29
Fig. 4:	Drawing	Jamette yard	35
Fig. 5:	Drawing	Calypso tent in the early days	36
Fig. 6:	Photo	Bamboo instruments of various sizes and functions	37
Fig. 7:	Photo	Typical Venezuelan string-band	38
Fig. 8:	Photo	Percussion ensemble during the early years	40
Fig. 9:	Photo	Assortment of percussive utensils	40
Fig. 10:	Photo	Tamboo-bamboo band with metallic instruments	40
Fig. 11:	Photo	Steelband at carnival during the 1940s	41
Fig. 12:	Photo	Four-note pan	41
Fig. 13:	Photo	Spider web pan	41

Chapter 2

Fig. 14:	Table	1946 British West Indian Census	76
Fig. 15 a:	Transcription	<i>Tresillo</i>	77
Fig. 15 b:	Transcription	<i>Cinquillo</i>	77
Fig. 16:	Transcription	<i>Matilda</i>	77
Fig. 17:	Transcription	<i>Ai Si, Ay No</i>	78
Fig. 18 a:	Transcription	<i>Maria</i> – Introduction Trumpet line # 1	80
Fig. 18 b:	Transcription	<i>Maria</i> – Response - Trumpet line # 2	80
Fig. 18 c:	Transcription	<i>Maria</i> – Response - Trumpet line # 3	80

Fig. 19 a: Transcription	<i>Gloria</i> – Band chorus	81
Fig. 19 b: Transcription	<i>Gloria</i> – Verse	81
Fig. 20 a: Transcription	<i>Slave</i> – Introduction and Partial Verse	82
Fig. 20 b: Transcription	<i>Slave</i> – Lament	83
Fig. 21: Table	Chronology of entry of nation groups	85
Fig. 22: Table	1960 Population composition of Trinidad and Tobago	86
Fig. 23: Transcription	Virgin Islands careso <i>Give Her the Number One</i>	91
Fig. 24: Transcription	Martinican caliso <i>L'Année Passée</i>	91
Fig. 25: Transcription	Bahamian calypso <i>Mama Don't Want No Rum</i>	92
Fig. 26: Transcription	Guyanese shanto <i>B.G. Bargee</i>	92
Fig. 27 : Transcription	Commercial-type calypso <i>Don't Touch Me Tomato</i>	94
Fig. 28 : Transcription	Commercial-type calypso <i>Fire Down Below</i>	94
Fig. 29: Transcription	Jamaican mento <i>Linstead Market</i>	95
Fig. 30a: Drawing	Bélé performance layout	101
Fig. 30b: Photo	Bélé performance	101
Fig. 31: Transcription	Bélé (Belair) melody and rhythm	101
Fig. 32: Transcription	<i>Sly Mongoose</i>	102
Fig. 33: Transcription	<i>Limbo Like Me (the Limbo Song)</i>	102
Fig. 34: Drawing	Bamboula Dance	105
Fig. 35a: Photo	Calinda (Bois Bataille, Stickfighting): Posturing	107
Fig. 35b: Photo	Calinda: Charging a blow	107
Fig. 36: Transcription	Calinda chant <i>Ten Thousand to Bar Me One</i>	108
Fig. 37: Transcription	Calinda chant <i>Mooma Mooma</i>	109
Fig. 38: Transcription	Lavway: i - iv or ii - V7 - i <i>Carnival Celebration</i>	112
Fig. 39: Transcription	Lavway: i - iv - i - V7 <i>Zingay</i>	112

Fig. 40:	Transcription	Lavway: I - vi - ii - V7 <i>Trouble in Arima</i>	112
Fig. 41:	Transcription	Lavway <i>Tan Tan</i>	113
Fig. 42:	Transcription	Lavway <i>Fire Brigade Water the Road</i>	113
Fig. 43:	Transcription	Sans humanité stock melody	115
Fig. 44:	Transcription	Sans humanité calypso <i>Rum Glorious Rum</i>	116
Fig. 45:	Transcription	<i>Don't Stop the Carnival</i>	122

Chapter 5

Fig. 46:	Table	Data showing the allocation of participants to groups	187
Fig. 47:	Graph 1	Data reflecting initial responses to the questionnaire	187
Fig. 48:	Graph 2	Data reflecting post-listening responses of random group	188
Fig. 49:	Graph 3	Data reflecting post-listening responses to the control group	189

Glossary of Terms¹

<i>arawak</i>	Indigenous Indian tribe of the Caribbean
<i>bamboula</i>	a) Neo-African song genre and dance b) Type of African drum
<i>belair (bélé)</i>	Afro-French Creole dance and song genre
<i>broken English</i>	Colloquial lingo of Trinidad and Tobago – a mixture of Spanish, French Creole, and English that utilizes faulty grammar and syntax, contains words that have been mutated or otherwise altered, and are sometimes difficult to trace to any one of the three languages
<i>calipso, calyso, careso, cariso (kaiso)</i>	Names by which calypso was previously called
<i>calinda (calenda, kalenda, kalinda)</i>	(a) Call-and-response type of songs accompanied by drumming, and sung during stick fighting (b) Stick fighting duel (Fr. bois bataille)
<i>cannes brûlées, canboulay, camboulay</i>	Recreation of fire drills, symbolic of the burning of sugarcane at harvest time during slavery, that are performed during carnival in commemoration of Emancipation
<i>carib</i>	Indigenous Indian tribe of the Caribbean
<i>chantuelle, chantwel, (shantwel, shatwel)</i>	Lead singer of calindas and lavways
<i>cock-man</i>	Casanova, playboy, womanizer
<i>extempo, extempore (picong)</i>	Verbal competition in song
<i>fte</i>	Public indoor or outdoor party with dancing and singing
<i>gayelle</i>	Stickfighting arena in Trinidad and other parts of the Caribbean
<i>ghouba, giuba (juba)</i>	Neo-African song genre
<i>jamette</i> (mutation of Fr. diametre)	The underclass sector of society, or a member of that group

¹ Words not found in the Standard English dictionaries are italicized unless they appear in this glossary. Other words that appear in the text of the calypsos referenced, but are not found in the Standard English dictionary, derive from Broken English. See footnote 4 on page 51.

<i>jooking</i>	Delivering pelvic thrusts simulating the sex act
<i>juba</i>	See <i>ghouba</i>
<i>jump-up</i>	Street dancing to calypso music during carnival
<i>kalenda, kalinda</i>	See <i>calinda</i>
<i>kaiso</i>	See <i>calipso</i>
<i>lavway</i> (mutation of Fr. la voix)	Processional masquerade song of the chantwels
<i>mamagism</i>	Act of cajoling someone
<i>mardi gras</i> (Fr./Patois-Grand Tuesday)	Last day of carnival when costumes are displayed in their grandest splendor
<i>mas</i> (Trinidad-tr. lingo for masquerade)	Costumed topical portrayals
<i>mulatresse</i>	Woman of mixed (black and white) ethnicity
<i>negre de jardin</i> (Fr.)	Negro field slave
<i>negue jardin</i> (Fr. Creole)	Negro field slave
<i>patois</i>	Common name for Fr. Creole and other dialects
<i>picong</i> (tr. lingo)	Alternate name for extempo
<i>road march</i>	Most popular lavway/calypso performed in the streets during carnival
<i>sanimanité</i> (mutation of Fr. sans humanité)	a) Term designated to calypso genre in which competition is characterized by exchanges of insults and ridicule rendered in song rhyme b) Term interjected at, and signaling the end of each sortie of 'sans humanité' calypsos, literally meaning without pity, or without mercy
<i>shak-shak</i> (of Afr. origin), also <i>chac-chac</i> (Fr. Creole)	African musical instrument of the percussion family, the same as the maracas (Sp.)
<i>sortie</i>	Verbal attack sung during picong competition
<i>tamboo-bamboo</i> (Fr. tambour-bambou)	Percussion ensemble consisting of various lengths of bamboo struck against the ground or beaten with sticks
<i>vaps</i> (singular noun - a <i>vaps</i>)	Whim or feeling of being propelled into action
<i>wining</i>	Sensual gyration of the hips simulating copulation while dancing

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my general gratitude to everyone who has assisted me along the path that led to the completion of this study, and in doing so, I would like to specifically mention the following people whose assistance was paramount to the success of this venture: Slinger Francisco “The Mighty Sparrow” for his vast contribution to the repertory of Trinidad calypso culture, and for having planted some of the first seeds of cultural steadfastness that have kept me rooted in our calypso culture; Dr. Wim van der Meer for having pointed out the distinction between Cultural Musicology and Ethnomusicology thereby keeping my focus centered, for having given me the opportunity and encouragement to pursue and accomplish a task of such magnitude, and for his feedback, guidance, patience and friendship throughout the years; Dr. Rokus de Groot for having initially accepted me into the doctoral programme at the University of Amsterdam; Errol Michael “Philo” Phillips for his unending resourcefulness, scholarship, friendship and support; Mervyn Taylor for having taught me in my youth, the art of storytelling; Shawn Rando for having provided access to his vast collection of calypso music, and for his patience in putting up with the unreasonable requests of a perfect stranger; Dr. Samuel B. Howard for his encouragement, feedback and support; informants and observers Alfred “Freddy” Harris, Ellie Manette, Dave and Jenifer Defoe, and the late Lendor “Mackie” Mac Donald, for their resourcefulness.

I would also like to thank Dr. Hollis Liverpool a.k.a. “The Mighty Chalkdust” for his musical and academic advice in regard to social commentary about Trinidadian society, and for having accepted the invitation to be a member of my doctoral defense committee; Dr. Gordon Rohlehr for having provided the extensive amount of written material that illuminated the scholarly path which led to this juncture; Willard Harris a.k.a. “Relator” and Earl Edwards for their musical input during the closing performances associated with my presentation; my family for their undying love, support and encouragement; and especially my wife Jamilla Carolina Charles for having endured the long, silent hours. Finally, I would like to thank Professor Dr. Joep Bor for his feedback and guidance and for having accepted my dissertation at the University of Leiden, for this has allowed me the opportunity to contribute to the scholarly repertory of that institution and to the musicological community of the world, and Professor Frans de Ruiter for accepting me in the doctoral program of the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts at Leiden University.

