

# Popular Music: Identity, Social Change and Human Rights: Responses from Trinidad's Calypso Music

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## Abstract

*Popular music has had a relationship with the attainment of human rights in myriad ways which have been inclusive of: the right to demonstrate the individual will; the right to develop some measure of self-determination and; the right to encourage the citizenry to charge forward towards goals for social change. This paper explores the lyrics and the narrative web of Calypso Music through the discursive themes of Music as Identity and Music as Social Change as applied to issues of human rights. Undertaking a thematic analysis of the written texts of selected Calypsos The Calypsos described in this paper and the lyrics analysed have expressed how music can be mediated in the public space which can in turn produce considerable complexity while highlighting the nexus among Popular Music, Identity, Social Change and Human Rights while simultaneously addressing the relationships and between musical meaning, social power and cultural value.*

**Keywords:** Calypso, Human Rights, Social Change, Identity Politics

Popular music has had a relationship with the attainment of human rights in myriad ways which have been inclusive of: the right to demonstrate the individual will; the right to develop some measure of self-determination and; the right to encourage the citizenry to charge forward towards goals for social change. These noted tenets have long been at the forefront of popular music's approach to human rights. In times of challenging international geopolitical realities as well as instances of protests against social injustice, human rights agendas have been expressed through the production of narrative texts which foretell the intersectional relationships between music and human rights.

At various epochs in history, the violation of various human rights worldwide has been used as a medium to bring forth the immediacy of expression on or about the on the ground realities. This article intends to use the popular music of Calypso of Trinidad and Tobago as its main genre through which an analysis will be undertaken.

## Popular Music

As posited by Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2), the term *popular music* has been used in reference to music which is mediated electronically and which comes to its listeners via the playback of audio and video recordings, or via the internet, or through performance on film or television, or in amplified live performance. However, as these two authors go on to posit, electronic technologies which are assumed to define popular music as a commodified form have also undermined the meaning of popular. Further they assert that technologies of recording and circulation have enabled a huge variety of sounds from other times and places to become popular, in the sense of widely experienced and/or enjoyed. Noting the conundrum in defining what is popular music, I agree with Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2) that there is a challenge in using such a reductionist explanation to express that which is popular about music. The lens through which I intend to delve into and discuss *popular music* in this article will be through the frame of unearthing what is popular about music outside of the spectacle of "mainstream" or "fringe". Instead the popularity associated with music will

reject such superfluous descriptors as amplified technology and repeated programmed rotation and alternatively focus on music which creates a groundswell of public support for its ability to resonate with matters of human rights and social change. Popular music will then be revealed as music having popularity and resonance on the ground.

### **Music, Social Injustice and Human Rights**

There are various genres of music which have served to protest against the perception and reality of social injustice. Research has revealed that (i) Songs of immigrants from myriad groups; (ii) Native American Music from conquest and removal to Indians in the twentieth century; (iii) African-American Music from songs from the Slave Trade to Rap ; (iv) Women's Lives and Songs, Feminism and the Women's movement to the role of women in the music industry (v) Political protest songs from across diasporas and (vi) Reggae music and Calypso music designed to effect social change in the English-speaking Caribbean. This list is not intended to be exhaustive but it provides a panoramic overview of the range and scope of the issues which inspire the connectivity between music and human rights.

Scholars such as Weissman (2010), Peddie (2006), Averill (1997), Morris (1986), Pring-Mill (1987) have opined on the links between popular music and resistance to domination and social and political activism and in doing so have interrogated widely across several genres. This study, though cognizant of the meaningfulness of genres will not place its focus on the styles of music but instead on the lyrics of songs. This approach is being undertaken as a thematic framework for analysis will be utilised in which songs used to channel human rights through the social change narrative via the artform of Calypso music will be the main focus of the study. Two main themes which will form the basis for analysis of the song narratives are music and identity and music as social change.

### **Identity, Trinidad's Calypso Music and Human Rights**

Extrapolating from the theme of Music as Identity, the obvious connections were between a moment of creation, as being representative of self and reflecting identity. Moreover, with the lens of the interpretive sociologist, it was envisioned that the role of the Calypsonian would be one which would channel the issues of national identity within his/her performance while simultaneously addressing the group, ethnic and individual identity of each listener.

#### *Perspective of International scholars – Music as Identity*

The works of authors such as Adorno (2015), DeNora (2015), Dowd (2015), Frith (2015), Guilbault (2007), Hesmondhalgh (2012), Martin (2015), McClary (2007), Robertson (1994), Stokes (2004) and Turino (1999, 2004, 2008) were examined to ascertain a working knowledge of the theme – music as identity. The multiple authors viewpoints on the linkages between music and identity is captured in a quotation derived from Stokes (1997) and Turino (2004):

Music then is seen as one of these habits or markers of identity. Martin Stokes has emphasised that music is a significant contributor to identity formation because it “evokes and organises collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity.” (Stokes, *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* 3)

To Turino, music can represent and articulate identities through association and by extension showcase its ability to create or re-create iconic and indexical relationships. (Turino, “Introduction” 17)

In Trinidad, Calypso music has a history dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Throughout the decades it has received primacy of place as the popular music in the island that gave life to the social and political commentary of the day.

Lott (162) put forward the perspectives that prosperity, war, depression, ethnic rivalries,

gender relations, demographic shifts, and culture wars, for example, shape the course of genre histories. Indeed, in the wider Caribbean, and in Trinidad and Tobago, research has been shown by several scholars (Guilbault 11) that social and political movements are among the main catalysts for the emergence and subsequent development of musical genres.

In reviewing the literature on the artform of Calypso, it is necessary to explore the historical and cultural underpinnings which led to the development of the artform and also the ways in which the identity of the slave, the ex-slave, the colonial subject and the independent citizen realised their sense of identity through the narrative expression of the Calypso. According to Carole B. Davies in the 1985 article entitled "The Politics of African Identification in Trinidad Calypso," "Calypso is said to be both a traditional popular song and a creative act in which the artist both expresses and shapes popular opinion." (77). Later on in the text, Davies goes on to posit that "the earliest Calypso-type songs were sung in an African-based creole and explicitly espoused freedom." (78). Gleaning from Davies' argument, it is seen that Calypso music from its nascent beginnings was representative of the expression of identity. Slaves, cognisant of the present condition employed music to channel their existence away from the plantation. The identity of the slave and that of the former free man were at odds with each other. The calypso "Slave" by the King of Calypso, Mighty Sparrow, exemplifies this duality of identity in the slave especially in the words,

*I'm a slave from a land so far  
I was caught and I was brought here from  
Africa  
Oh Lord. Lord, I want to be free*

In Geoffrey Dunn's and Michael Horne's 2004 signature film on Calypso entitled *Calypso Dreams*, Calypsonian Chalkdust stated that, "Calypso music was created to accompany Carnival celebrations". To him, Carnival would not exist without Calypso Music. Culling from the words of Chalkdust, I note that the creation of the popular music, Calypso is inextricably linked with identity of the space from which the

music emanates as well, being inter-twined with its purpose which is one of political and social contestation. The people's Carnival is a festival emerging out of protest and tumult in response to slavery and colonialism.

Dovetailing with Calypsonian Chalkdust, Davies attests that Calypsos are created and performed as an integral part of the annual Carnival festivities (Davies 1). This perspective of Davies marries closely to the viewpoint of Giuseppe Sofo in his 2014 article entitled "Carnival, Memory and Identity" in which he makes the linkages between the culture of Trinidad, the event of Carnival and identity of the people. To him, the Carnival of Trinidad is a performative ritual of cultural resistance and awakening, claiming a space and celebrating freedom from any kind of oppression. The history of this ritual is strictly connected to the process of cultural decolonisation and political independence of the Caribbean country from the mother land; it is in Carnival and for Carnival that Trinidadians have successfully fought colonialism to gain their freedom" (17).

For Sofo (2014) like Davies (1985) and Liverpool (2001), Carnival and its accompanying Calypso music are inextricably interwoven and are tied to the identity of the Trinidadian.

Giuseppe Sofo quoting Pat Bishop states that "every culture came to Trinidad, with some part of carnivalesque. Arima and Santa Rosa de Lima festival. Catholic Carnival. Amerindian celebrations. All of these played a role in building what we now call Trinidad Carnival. We are a festive country. All our festivals are part of the carnivalesque." (17). In a 2013 article by Giuseppe Sofo entitled "Popular Music, Resistance and Identity," it was stated that "music in Trinidad has in fact represented not only the expression for the thoughts of a nation, but something to fight for, a fundamental weapon for the fight against colonialism and for a new nation identity." (24). In Lise Winer's article entitled Socio-cultural change and the language of Calypso, she quotes Calypsonian The Mighty Chalkdust and his definition of the Calypso as an artform which "captures our whole lifestyle, history, social past. It's a reflection in song of our way of life." (Liverpool qtd. in Winer 113). Emerging from the accounts from Sofo

(“Carnival, Memory and Identity”), lyrics from several Calypsonians make the case that there are synergies which exist between Calypso music and its ability to express and reflect the identity of Trinidadians.

As stated by Raymond Quevedo (Calypsonian “Atilla The Hun”) in his seminal 1962 work “History of Calypso” in *This Country of Ours: Independence Brochure of The Nation* (81-97), the earliest Calypso-type songs were sung in an African-based creole and explicitly espoused the ideals of freedom. In fact, according to Errol Hill in his 1972 work “Trinidad Calypso: Form and Function,” he posited that a number of British historians and journal writers reported of the singing of songs which were largely unintelligible to Europeans given that they were sung in African languages or the patois of slaves. Further as posited by Quevedo, one of the earliest recorded songs, accepted as an antecedent to Calypso which expressed the definitive protest against the suppression of African culture was:

*Ja Ja Romey Eh*  
*Ja Ja Romey Shango*  
*Ja Ja Romey Eh, Mete Beni*  
*Ja Ja Romey Shango*

The above excerpt was part of the complete Quevedo manuscript edited by Errol Hill and published in 1983 as *Atilla’s Kaiso: A Short History of Trinidad Calypso* (6).

In this example, it is clear that issues of identity and a commentary on human rights were encapsulated in the music of the slaves. Despite the slave-masters attempt to instil a vehement denial of African culture and identity, the slaves defied those ordinances and established albeit clandestine, expressions of their music and culture identity.

Moving on to the pre-emancipation era, it has been noted by several scholars and I quote here from one such scholar writing on Calypsos in that period. Davies stated that the “Calypsos in the pre-emancipation stage which were recorded show veiled social and political commentary, were infused with irony and satire, possessed the devices of double entendre and subtlety”. (78). In the main, the literature suggests that Calypsos of this period actively protested the condition

and notion of slavery and sought to articulate freedom for African people. In this stage, as in the one prior, we see that music, identity and social change appear to be inextricably linked.

In reading J.D. Elder’s 1968 account in “From Congo Drum to Steelband”, this researcher realises that Calypsos of the immediate post-emancipation period (1838-1898) continued to place a focus on African and African-based themes as well being sung in African creole. Further Elder goes on to indicate that the presence of the Cannes Brulees (Canboulay) parades, the African freedom celebrations inclusive of the traditions of drumming and masking and the presence of the French creole Carnival, all allowed for the wedding of all these traditions to facilitate the continuing use of music to reflect the identity of the people. The African identity was still entrenched in the national psyche and as such, in true art imitating life fashion, the Calypsos displayed that reality. Errol Hill in his text *The Trinidad Calypso: Form and Function* (59) delineates how songs of derision on policemen and other “decent people” in the middle and upper classes continued to be reported which in turn led to the Canboulay Riots in 1881. The colonial administration’s response to such acts of “indecent” was the establishment of the Peace Preservation Act of 1885, the main intent of which was to outlaw songs, drumming and other cultural and religious observances of the Africans.

Moving from the use of African creole to English usage in the Calypso tradition at the beginning of the 1900s marked a change in the content. The themes of African and African-inspired traditions were gradually being replaced by songs showing allegiance to Great Britain, and not Africa, as the mother country. During this period while Calypsonians continued in the tradition and criticised social conditions, censorship of the singers and their lyrics sought to curtail continued widespread themes of contestation. This was the first response by the Calypsonian. The second was to adopt “sobriquets” to mask the voice, identity and perspective of the singer. As posited in Sophie Lamson’s 1951 M.A. Thesis entitled “Music and Culture in the Caribbean” (17), she explains that in the early colonial days, Calypsonians used

sobriquets of royal affiliation like Lord and Lady, Prince and Duke. Gleaning from the literature, I posit that this act reflected the Calypsonians' attempt to use the guise of both name and sobriquet to grant poetic license to be the buffer against any inflammatory lyrics which may have been attributed to the Calypsonian himself. In Geoffrey Dunn's and Michael Horne's 2004 film *Calypso Dreams*, Calypsonian Chalkdust attests in one of his interviews that the sobriquet can be likened to the wig of the English judge who uses the wig for the purposes of anonymity. Chalkdust says, in the case of the English Judge when the wig is in use, a man can be convicted of a crime, and it is clear that it is the Judge which is doing the convicting and not the man beneath the wig (*Calypso Dreams*). In this same way, Chalkdust likens the sobriquet of the Calypsonian to act as Judge and convict the political directorate of injustices against the populace, but it is not the Calypsonian himself who is the accuser.

With the onset of Garveyism, the African-themed Calypso began to gain in prominence given the milieu of the organisation of several UNIA branches, rallies and meetings in Trinidad. Additionally the propaganda reports against the Garvey movement via the Seditious Publications Ordinance (1920) which was aimed directly at the Negro World hastened the reaction of the African population to move to a call for arms and by extension the response of the Calypsonian, who is "the people's newspaper" so said Calypsonian Brigo in his interview in the 2004 film *Calypso Dreams*.

Inspired by the "Back to Africa" activity of the 1920s, the Calypsos of the next decade possessed a more politically-conscious commentary based on world matters affecting the African continent.

A move back to the African-themed Calypsos focused on creating the link between the music and identity through song was seen during the Black Power Movement of the late 1960s and 70s. In particular two songs which I choose to highlight are "Slave" and "Congo Man" by the Mighty Sparrow. The classic Calypso "Slave" hearkens back to the slavery experience and the toil and tumult which was associated with it. It begins by stating,

*I'm a slave from a land so far  
I was caught and I was brought here from  
Africa.*

It ends with a crescendo of African drumology and the poignant wail of

*Oh Lord, Lord, I want to be free*

The Calypso "Congo Man" in contrast to "Slave" is more complex. In "Congo Man"

*Two white women find themselves in the  
hands of cannibal head hunter*

Both speak to the identity of the African but at opposite ends of the spectrum. In "Slave" the African is in a state of powerlessness while in "Congo Man" the status of the African is seen as one in control, decisive and in a privileged position over two white women. However, these two Calypsos by Sparrow epitomize different aspects of the African identity emphasizing the duality of the identity of persons of African descent in Trinidad.

Continuing in the 1970s and onwards to the 1980s, there was a change in the topic focus of African-inspired songs as well as there was the emergence of a more politically and socially responsible new breed of Calypsonian who began to express in both lyrics and song the trajectory of African people in the Caribbean as opposed to on the African Continent. Interwoven into this new consciousness was the belief that there were apparent similarities of the plight of the African across the Caribbean and that these "stories" needed to be told. Here again we see the shaping of a new identity of the African and the manner in which it is delivered within the genre of Calypso. In the main the Black Power Movement of the 1970s in Trinidad and its accompanying national, political and social activity being spearheaded by the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC) lay the groundwork for the shift in the rhetoric espoused by the new breed of Calypsonians during the period. As discussed by authors Tony Thomas and John Riddell in their 1971 book, *Black Power in the Caribbean*, NJAC was an active political

organization with an African socialist ideological orientation. The new breed of Calypsonians were those who had been already influenced by the Civil Rights/Black Power Movement in America had a predisposition to follow suit and identify with the Black Power discourse taking place in their own land. Calypsonian Brother Valentino (Emrold Phillip) was one such. In a 2011 book written by Zeno Obi Constance, *The Man Behind the Music: The People's Calypsonian*, which chronicles the life and music of noted Calypsonian Emrold Phillip, author Zeno related how Brother Valentino openly credits NJAC with creating the climate and audience for the reception of the serious calypso. Further, The Mighty Duke, and Black Stalin were two other Calypsonians who like Brother Valentino were part of this new vanguard of Calypsonians.

"Caribbean Unity," released by Black Stalin in 1979, highlights the change from the solely African-themed Calypsos to those with a specific focus on the Caribbean and the new sound Calypso which expressed a call to arms, the pledge for human rights and was the consciousness of social change for the new Caribbean citizen.

*[Verse]*

*You try with a federation  
De whole ting get in confusion  
Caricom and then Carifta  
But some how ah smelling disaster  
Mister West Indian politician  
I mean yuh went to big institution  
And how come you cyah unite 7 million  
When ah West Indian unity, I know is very  
easy  
If you only rap to yuh people and tell dem like  
me, dem is...*

*[chorus]*

*One race (de Caribbean man)  
From de same place (de Caribbean man)  
Dat make de same trip (de Caribbean man)  
On de same ship (de Caribbean man)  
So we must push one common intention  
Is for a better life in de region  
For we woman, and we children  
Dat must be de ambition of de Caribbean  
man*

*De Caribbean man, de Caribbean man*  
Another such Calypso was "Black is Beautiful" penned by The Mighty Duke.

*Chorus*

*Black is beautiful  
Look at the gloss  
Black is beautiful  
It's the texture of course  
Lift your head like me  
You got to wear the colour with dignity  
How it go now!  
Black is beautiful  
Ah say to sing it aloud  
Black is beautiful  
Say I'm black and proud  
It's high time that we get rid of that old slave  
mentality.  
It's quite important, simple though it seem  
We have achieved what once was thought a  
dream  
We have been imitating in the past  
Now we have found our very own at last  
No more hot combs to press we hair  
And no more bleach creams to make us  
clear.  
Proudly I say without pretext  
No more inferiority complex  
Because we know*

Again in this Calypso we see the topic of African pride being highly prized as a feature to be loved. Through the lyrics and music, the Calypsonian has been able to reflect the times and help members of the society self-identify.

Both Calypsos by Black Stalin and The Mighty Duke reflect the themes of pan-African unity, African history and cultural Identification with Africa.

For the Calypso artform, the topics sung about by the Calypsonians focused on a theme of music and social change which arose out of issues related slavery, post-slavery, de-colonisation, Independence, post-independence period and beyond.

## Social Change, Trinidad's Calypso Music and Human Rights

Another theme which this work is focussing on is music as social change agents with the aim of demonstrating how human rights are advocated through the musical expression. Music as Social Change scholars who have written on the topic ranged among the following: Bennett (2002), Cohen (2002), Guilbault (2007), Hebdige (1979), Mengerink (2013), Thornton (1995), and Weismann (2010). The work of these theorists assisted this researcher in developing a relevant definition of music as social change. Using Guilbault (2007) as a frame of reference for this theme, the following is submitted:

...the trans-cultural and trans-national history of the Calypso artform is traced and it is demonstrated how "from the outset, Calypso's sounds have been hybrid products enmeshed in colonial cultural politics. ... musical tours, recordings, migration, new instrumental technologies and audiences from outside Trinidad have spurred the continual transformation of Calypso. (22)

The following Calypsos with the theme of Music as Social Change were chosen based on their lyrical content and their focus on the sub-themes which emerged analysis (i) music as social change – the performer as change agent, and (ii) music as social change – a call to arms.

The Calypsos chosen were "Progress" by King Austin (1980); "Appreciation" by Johnny King (1985); "Come Let Us Build a Nation Togedda" by Merchant (1982); "Trinidad is Nice" by Brother Valentino (1975); "We Can Make It If We Try" by Black Stalin (1988); "Die With My Dignity" by Singing Sandra (2009) and finally "Watch Out My Children" by Ras Shorty I (1997). In each one of these songs, the Calypsonian implores the society in general, or members of the political directorate to ruminate on the state of Trinidad and make a change. As change agent, the Calypsonian's role is not to actively make the change but be the conduit through which change can be made. The lyrics of the Calypsonian acts as the lobby. As the voice of

the people, the Calypsonian was expressing the views of the masses.

"Progress" by King Austin (1980)

*Today when I look around in the world what do I see  
I see footprints that man have left on the sand while walking through time  
I see fruits of our ambition, figments of our imagination  
And I ask myself "when will it end, when will it end?"  
It is plain to see universally this land is not bountiful as it was  
Simply because in its quest for success nothing stands in man's way  
Old rivers run dry, soon the birds will no longer fly and the mountains no longer be high and when I think about it, I does wonder why, the price of progress is high real high*

*Where do we go from here?*

This song clearly delivers a view of a progressive society as ill-conceived. The Calypsonian lists the injustices and provokes the listener to question whether a change, a social change is needed to right the wrong of the high price of progress.

"Appreciation" by Johnny King (1985)

*All man strives to be happy  
With endless self luxury  
In search of peace and happiness  
The human mind will not rest*

*A constant nag within we soul  
Demanding respect from the world  
We get the urge in different forms  
But luxury is the norm*

*Money is very essential  
But cyah buy peace of mind at all  
We still like dogs without a bone  
If we have the money alone*

*Because appreciation based on the human mind*

*Everyone needs some for happiness all the time  
Because important if we are trying to live  
Everyone's on the hunt, Everyone ought to give  
Generously*

For this Calypsonian he paints the picture of man in torment with all of material wealth and calls for appreciation of wealth to be actualised in the re-look at society. Further he implores his listeners to be the social change agent by giving generously instead of clamouring for individual self-gain.

“Come Let Us Build a Nation Tokedda” by Merchant (1982)

*Now the election bacchanal die away  
In short this is what I have to say  
Let us forget spites and grudges and concentrate  
Come let us sit and try to relay  
Cause now more than ever we must show  
Discipline Tolerance and Production  
To build a strong and better nation  
I say that is the main foundation  
So...let us work hand in hand  
Because this is our land  
And Let us build a nation together*

In the song above, the lyrics speak to nation-building and a call to social change via a collective responsibility of the members of society.

“Dis Place Nice” by Brother Valentino (1975)

*You talk 'bout a place  
Where the people are carefree living  
It is such a place  
Of fun loving, spreeing and feting  
Tis the land where people  
Don't care if Ash Wednesday fall on Good Friday  
Man they love to struggle  
In this happy, go-lucky way  
It's blockorama, feteorama  
And just now is masorama  
So the foreigner come for Carnival  
And he telling heself after he had a ball*

*Trinidad is nice, Trinidad is a paradise  
Mr. Foreigner in La Trinity  
The people have a Carnival mentality  
Trinidad is nice, Trinidad is a paradise  
They are not serious, very few conscious  
So I cannot agree with my own chorus  
Trinidad is nice, Trinidad is a paradise  
But I'll hear some people talking about  
Revolution Day  
Changes on the way*

For this Calypsonian, he uses the language techniques of satire and sarcasm to deliver his scathing review of the people's lack of desire to engage in social change. Albeit at the end of every chorus he uses reverse psychology to instruct his listeners to bring about change in their behaviour.

“We Could Make It If We Try” by Black Stalin (1988)

*So the Treasury broke and they say that  
recession jamming  
And so to foreign countries Trinis start  
migrating  
They lose faith in their country, they say we  
gone down the drain  
They say no more could we see happy times  
again  
But the will to recover in my people I have  
confidence  
Although many may seem to feel that I  
talking nonsense  
But the majority of we decide we not going to  
run  
Because now is the time to show we  
patriotism.*

*For we country facing its darkest hour  
So our people need us today more than ever  
But in our fight to recover, if ever you feel to  
surrender  
It have one little thing that I want you always  
remember...*

*We could make it if we try just a little harder  
If we just give one more try, life will be much  
sweeter.*



The direct approach taken by this Calypsonian to hammer home the point of “we could make it we try” challenges the listener to become part of the collective and forge social change as a member of the society.

“Die With My Dignity” by Singing Sandra (2009)

*You want to help to mind your family,  
you want to help your man financially  
But nowadays it really very hard to get a job  
as a girl in Trinidad  
You looking out to find something to do, you  
meet a boss man who promise to help you  
But when the man let down the condition,  
nothing else but humiliation,  
They want to see you whole anatomy, they  
want to see what you doctor never see,  
They want to do what you husband never do,  
still you ain't know if these scamps will hire  
you,*

*Well if is all this humiliation to get a job these  
days as a woman.  
Brother they could keep their money, I go  
keep my honey, and die with my dignity!!*

From the female perspective, this Calypso touches on social issues between males and females. In addition, the performer uses the technique of story-telling followed by an instruction towards action as she plans to act to deliver social change within the society.

“Watch Out My Children” by Ras Shorty I (1997)

*My sons and my daughter, to you I plead  
Take just a minute and listen to me  
I know you don't to want no sermon  
But my admonition is to guide you against all  
the evils of life  
That create strife and destroy life, oh*

*Walk cautiously, children be alert, oh  
You have an enemy, that is roaming Jah  
earth  
I know that you are young and restless  
But you don't have to be careless*

*Sober thinking leads on to righteousness  
And happiness, spiritual bless - so let me tell  
you this*

*Watch out my children, watch out my children  
You have a fellow called Lucifer with a bag of  
white powder  
And he don't want to powder your face  
But to bring shame and disgrace to the  
human race*

In this Calypso, a direct instruction is given to the youth to stay away from drugs given its detrimental effects. They are being implored to heed a warning to make change on a societal level.

In sum, the ensuing analysis has sought to explore and bring to the fore the impact and resonance of Trinidad's popular Calypso music. This study desired to expand the perspective of “popular” to be more than the media's explanation of a commodified, capitalist pursuit of the latest musical fad. Instead, the “groundswell popularity” of a music that has currency that critical mass support was used to demonstrate how a musical genre can express identity and inspire social change.

## Conclusion

In the literature, popular music has shown a commitment to focusing on the politicisation of music to the extent that questions about social power have become part of the critical mass. Calypso music addresses both the political and the social in its lyrical content as well as in its impact on the politics and the society which it critiques. As posited by Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2), social power within popular music is bound up with questions of cultural value, about who has the authority to ascribe social and aesthetic worth and to what kinds of music and why.

Calypso music as popular music possesses much cultural value within the native spaces in which it was created, fuelled and honed. Trinidad is the mecca of Calypso music and such, the Calypso artform engages in a not-so-delicate call and response between the citizenry and the orator as the each demand a response from

each other to foretell of the everyday realities. The question about who is vested with the authority to ascribe social and aesthetic worth is easily answered with the Calypso artform as the citizens or the members of society have a vested interest in how valuable any particular song is for any Carnival season. Acting as a lobby against the purveyors of social and political injustices, the Calypso, gains social and aesthetic worth by all those in the society for whom unjust practices are not seen as part of the nation-building goals of former colonies. In societies like Trinidad in which the Gas Riots, Water Riots, The Black Power Revolution and the attempted coup were all a part of its history, the numbers of consenting supporters for the Calypso are numerous.

The Calypsos described in this study and the lyrics analysed have expressed how music can be mediated in the public space which can in turn produce considerable complexity while highlighting the nexus among Popular Music, Identity, Social Change and Human Rights while simultaneously addressing the relationships and between musical meaning, social power and cultural value.

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