

Giving rise to pan

The Carnival Institute is researching and producing pamphlets on Carnival history. The first of these distributed at a breakfast meeting of the Institute and the National Carnival Commission last week, deals with an early Carnival patron Ignacio Jose Bodu.

FROM THE late 1880s, the street Carnival in Trinidad was dominated by bands that engaged in stick fighting. When, in 1881, the police attempted to stop the procession of bands, they united

against the police, giving rise to the Canboulay Riots. The commissioner, RCG Hamilton, who investigated the causes and circumstances of the riot reported:

"...since 1868 certain bands of ruffians have come into existence, who take advantage of the Carnival to muster in force to fight with each other, and to carry riot and disorder throughout the town.

"These bands, which are composed of persons of the lowest character, many of them immigrants from other islands, appear to exist for no other purpose than fighting each other, and of creating riot and disorder." (*Fair Play and Evening News*, November 16, 1881, p. 1)

The genesis of these bands dates well before 1868 and, while they were constituted as fighting bands, their activities were far more organised and elaborate than Hamilton

made them out to be.

These were the kalinda bands whose organisation, order, procession and personnel contained the blueprint for the carnival, steelbands and the calypso of the 20th century. There was the Pierrot (the king of the band), the chantwell (the calypsonian), the chorus, the drummer and other percussion musicians, each occupying a particular position that was organised by leading figures in the barrack yards of Port of Spain.

These bands were anathema to the ruling British elite and in the years before the riots, there were several Orders in Council aimed at curbing their activities. For others, the bands were part of a tradition that they appreciated and encouraged.

One such person was Jose Bodu.

Papa Bodu, as he was affectionately called, was a mer-

Atila's Kaiso, 20-20

I intended to give you
a castigation
But instead you will
get my compassion
You have demonstrated
your inability and
you have failed miser-
ably
You can't sing on
Papa Bodu, whom we
all know,
The friend and patron
of caliso
You can't give satis-
faction
You are a mock
kaisonian.

chocolate milk Toddy,
for which the syndi-
cate was named.
Either way, he was
one of the great
patrons of the calypso
in the early 20th cen-
tury.
Atila also recalls
that on one occasion,
Papa Bodu, called
upon to pay extem-
pore homage to Papa
Bodu, had failed to
give a creditable
account of himself
and was upbraided by
Inventor as follows:

exchange for adver-
tisement in song.
According to Atila,
the first tent organ-
ised by calypsonians
was the Toddy
Syndicate, from 1929.
Among calypsoni-
ans involved in this
venture were Lord
Executive, Modern
Inventor, Trafalgar,
Mentor, Persecutor
and Atila himself
(Atila's Kaiso, 39).
It is believed that
Papa Bodu was the
distributor of the

From the late
1920s, the calypson-
ian gradually became
separated from the
carnival bands and
began performing in
tents, sponsored by
merchants

4, the Peace Preservation Act became
driving kalinda bands out of the city to
parts of the countryside where the
presence was not as vigilant

the kalinda era into
tamer competitions.
"...at stated times,
fixed by the Carnival
officials, all the bands
meet in the park and
go through the same
manoeuvres in friend-
ly competition. Mer-
chants and public-
spirited individuals
organisations offer
prizes for excellence
in such matters as
costume, theme, exe-
cution of theme, cho-
ruses, and brilliance
of performance of
chantwells." (Letter to
the Argos, 1920).
It is here that the
20th century score-
sheet for the Calypso
Monarch, Parade of
the Bands and Pano-
rama competitions
find their origins.

council-
mateur
location,
touch-
aspects
its peo-
ties.
Honourable method."
(Letter to the Argos,
1920).
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bands
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upon the
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Duncan
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George