

Abstract

Popular Music As Communication:
The Political Calypso In Trinidad & Tobago
1962-1987

Louis Regis

The Calypso, one of Trinidad and Tobago's music art forms, is and has been a viable medium "through" which the grassroots and especially urban AfroTrinidadians communicate views about politics, politicians and powersharing. This is attested to by the popularity/notoriety of particular calypsoes and the high level of appropriation from the Calypso in other discourse.

This thesis proposes that the continued relevance of the Calypso derives from its rootedness in popular traditions of expression, traditions which celebrate linguistic mastery and cultivate novel ways of perceiving and articulating the common reality. In the period 1962-1987, the political Calypso was continuously shaped by a complex of internal dynamic and external forces, a shaping which provides exciting insights into the nature of process and product as well as into the study of continuity and change in a traditional art-form.

Equally illuminating has been the individualising of that common experience given that each calypso is a particular reaction/response as much to the common reality as to happenings within the private world of each calypsonian and to the public world of calypsodom. On this evidence the thesis presents a broad-based view of the political Calypso 1962-1987. It is largely descriptive and analytical, evaluative rather than prescriptive.