

Calypso and Steel Band

Calypso is the national dance of Trinidad and Tobago. Steel Bands also originated from these islands. Caribbean music combines elements of **AFRICAN MUSICAL INFLUENCES – SYNCOPATION, CROSS-RHYTHMS, PERCUSSION, CALL AND RESPONSE** and **EUROPEAN MUSICAL INFLUENCES – TONAL HARMONIES AND MELODIES** and instruments.



<p>Characteristic Rhythms and Metres, Traditional Rhythm Patterns & Repetition and Ostinato</p> <p>CALYPSO is originally the national dance of Trinidad and Tobago and is particularly associated with social gatherings such as CARNIVAL. Calypso is normally in 4/4 METRE and uses SYNCOPATION combining story telling with memorable melodies. Calypso often uses three-beat rhythms with two long beats followed by a short beat. An example of a Calypso rhythm is as follows:</p> <p>SYNCOPATION is also used in Steel Pan music, both in the melody line and in the chords which are often performed OFFBEAT.</p>		<p>Harmony and Tonality</p> <p>Harmony of Calypso often enriched used ADDED NOTE CHORDS e.g. <i>added 6ths, 7ths and 9ths and Diminished 7th chords</i>. The HARMONIC RHYTHM of Steel Pan music is SLOW – with a single chord often lasting an entire bar. Harmonies are mainly simple and use PRIMARY TRIADS in MAJOR TONALITY and phrases often end with PERFECT CADENCES. The BASS PAN plays the ROOT of the chord, the CELLO/GUITAR PAN plays the THIRD AND FIFTH of the chord and the ALTO PAN plays the ROOT AND THIRD of the chord. A typical CHORD RHYTHM could be:</p>	<p>Dynamics, Expression and Articulation</p> <p>Since Calypso and Steel Pan music is designed to be performed at carnivals and outdoors accompanying dancers or in front of large audiences, the dynamics are generally VERY LOUD – FORTISSIMO (ff). Steel pans are played with sticks/beaters with rubber tips and notes of LONG DURATION are playing by ROLLING, giving a TREMOLO effect which produces a 'shimmering' sound as is a unique TIMBRE/SONORITY to Steel Pans.</p>
<p>Pitch & Melody and Ornamentation</p> <p>The melody of Calypso music often features IMPROVISATION by the instrumentalists often on an "established", pre-existing (folk) melody or one that has been composed who add ornaments and decorate a melody line during a performance.</p>	<p>Texture</p> <p>Steel Pan music – mainly HOMOPHONIC (MELODY AND ACCOMPANIMENT) – additional textural layers added by CHORD RIFFS and percussion instruments which thicken the musical texture.</p>	<p>Form & Structure and Phrasing</p> <p>Calypso often uses CALL AND RESPONSE regular (e.g. 4 or 8-bar) phrases which are IMPROVISED. Songs are normally in POPULAR SONG FORM. Steel Pan music often has a recurring 'A' section and made up of short REPEATED PHRASES.</p>	
<p>Origins and Cultural Context of the Traditional Music</p> <p>Calypso is the national dance of Trinidad and Tobago and is based on a traditional syncopated rhythm. Steel Bands also originated from these islands. Steel Drums were discovered in the late 1930's by hitting a dented section of an oil barrel which produced a particular tone.</p>	<p>Musical Characteristics of Folk Music</p> <p>Calypso and Steel Band music has African musical influences including: Syncopations and Cross-Rhythms, use of percussion instruments, call and response and singing styles as well as European musical influences including tonal harmonies and melodies and instruments such as the guitar.</p>	<p>Impact of Modern Technology on Traditional Music</p> <p>With advances in recording technology, Harry Belafonte recorded a "Calypso Album" in 1956 selling more than a million copies bringing Calypso to a wider audience worldwide. Calypso has also been used in modern-day films e.g. "Under the Sea" from 'The Little Mermaid'.</p>	<p>Artists, Bands & Performers of Calypso and Steel Pan Music</p> <p>Harry Belafonte David Rudder Mighty Sparrow Andry Narrell</p>

Instrumentation – Typical Instruments, Timbres and Sonorities

Instruments used in Calypso include the Acoustic and Bass Guitars with Trumpets, Saxophones, Electric Guitars, Drum Kit, Vocals and **LATIN PERCUSSION** which includes many types of drums and hand-held percussion instruments including:



Steel Bands began in Trinidad when a great many oil drums were left lying around after World War II. It was soon found that they could be turned into musical instruments. Steel Pans are made by cutting oil drums into different sizes and then beating the tops into concave bowls. Each individual note is then beaten into a small area of the bowl. Small rubber-headed sticks are used to strike each note. These days, Steel Bands consist of a number of different-sized Steel Pans, and a rhythm section of Latin-American percussion instruments. Each pan or pair of pans has its own name according to its pitch-range. Some of the pans have more than one name although they mean the same thing.

Names of the Steel Pans (in descending pitch order)	The part they play in the band
Soprano, Ping Pong, or First Tenor	Usually play the melody
Double Alto, Double Second or Second Tenor	Play a second melody underneath the Soprano part
Single Alto	Play two-note Chords
Cello, or Guitar	Play Chords, Melody or Bass
Bass	Plays the Bass Part

