

**JAMESIE PROJECT: ANDREA E LELAND producer**  
**Tape BB / Feb 18, 2004**  
**Jamesie, Derby & Trashy @ Peggy's Interview transcription**  
**Matt Benedict on camera / Andrea interviews**

00:00:00  
starts playing

00:19:00  
D: Trashy, what year did the band fire up this ----- we come from (sound cuts off briefly at points)

T: ----- um, in the sixties the sixties ----- we have no more ---- (sound cuts off briefly at points)

D: ----- , in, forty, ----- ----mostly a lot of them guys come from the steel band, I met them in

T: In Puerto Rico

D: ---- (sound on and off) in Puerto Rico, when I had been in Florida a lot of them guys came across and went to California, I used to sing for a classy nightclub, with a, a --- B. Marley's night club.

T: Like, Stanley, Stanley ....

D: Edwards

T: Stanley Edwards.

D: I met him too

T: And the, --- Stanley, which is, Canada brought-up, he went to Puerto Rico, from Puerto Rico he went to --(sound cuts off)-- Cornelius he was, he stayed in Puerto Rico, but he come up they he went back down. Then he died. Then couple of ----- fellows ---- come back up, then they went St. Thomas, come back and that was it, the band...

D: ---- Paris

T: Paris was...

D: He was down in Puerto Rico too

T: Puerto Rico too, yea

D: I met him there.

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T: The last ----- came up from Puerto Rico was *Soda*, *Soda* live in *Kahoon* but he came up --- he was playing music on the outside. And he was ----- then he came up, he was the last person that came up. And then we had -(sound cuts on/off)

D: Cause in the sixties when the steel band music come ----- we had Invaders, Trojans, and a lot others, but others, the music the steel band was popular outside so all the bands...

T: We had no band here, then couple of bands them start coming, but then they went again

D: Cause I remember --- was Frank Sinatra, ---- Jackie Gleason, we were workin same night club, in Fort Lauderdale, we work there together, then around the winter months we used to come down to Puerto Rico and I used to work in a hotel name, the joint name, it was in San Tusa, Calypso club. I was the first calypsonian to ever sing in that club, so I used to go between Puerto Rico, back to Florida, back and forth. Was a classy night club.

03:48:26

A: So have people -sound cuts off/on--- In those days, did they know about scratch music or not?

3:58

D: Not much, up till now scratch music has not really been exposed, you say the music is unique right? And it's hard to play. I don't care what university you go to, I don't care what reading, whatever you read on the sheet, reading is one thing, but together reading a song, we just do it. it's a very very hard music to play.

04:27:16

A: Play one...

D: Very very hard to play.

04:30:13

A: Play one, play another one. And then maybe explain why it's so hard.

06:19:00

J: when they come to, they have, like when they got this s quadrille music now, you know you got (\*plays\*) right, so they don't know how to play this, gotta learn how to play the quadrille.

D: It's a feeling, to this music that isn't written. You could read all the notes you want, you cannot find, you could bring the best sax-man of any part of the world, put him a sheet here in front he gonna read that, but it gonna never sound like how Blinky gonna blow it or

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how IRA gonna blow it or Stanley gonna blew it. It's not what you can read, it's feelings, it's something that within, that music is not easy to play. It's not like playing reggae.

7:12 Reggae is close to the hard rock music they play in the United States. They, the musician will play the reggae because the same bass, its closer to it, so they are familiar with it, they can deal with it, it's like giving them a calypso to play, that's why those music is not that big, because the people they cannot play the music.

7:43. It's not the written part of the music, its what's coming from within, it's the feelings. You play for example, these Quelbe only got two cords, the amount of things the sax-man will do around those, I mean you are not a musician, around those cords, that, that thing, that music is not easy to play.

8:14 When you think of calypso think of how Harry Belafonte will sing it, that is not calypso in the true form. Because they're singing it that they could understand it, they are not using our dialect to sing it... see...

\*plays\* (makes fun of dialect of Belafonte)

09:18:20

D: It's different, it's completely different because a real Calypsonian, ok I'm kinda modified, international because of this, I mean I sing professional, so I have to sing that the people understand what I'm singing, so I have to dilute it then, I go take off some of the sweet, I gonna water it down, that they could be part of it.

9:52 NoW, in a way the ----- that American people white or black, will understand what a reggae singer is singing, but they are familiar with the music, they can deal with the music because if I'm a West Indian and I read Jamaican talking or singing it I got a problem with someone singing, I mean it's simple common sense. So when you gonna tell me they love reggae, they love reggae because of the beat, because they cannot understand reggae really, you know, the beat, they are not really listen to what they are saying, because, brother Bob, when he become international he had a little crossover with Stevie Wonder and sing it in a way that they could be familiar with the words,

10:47 but if he had to sing the real raw reggae, they wouldn't understand it, but they could deal with the beat. And then we're going back to the hippies, if you're familiar with it, the long hair only thing, it's a black man hair and a white man hair really long so, we don't think about the way the guys then dress, we think about the hippies, how they used to carry the long hair styles, it's a Little crossover, but this music, calypso music and quelbe music you not gonna find people play that, that's why it's not big they can't play IT, I mean I been all over the place and I know they can't play.

11:41:14

A: Do you sing Quelbe?

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D: I will try, but he can sing it not me. I will sing it, but, I can't be close to him. Cause calypso more of a wider scale with the composing cause you looking for a full verse thing, the days of quelbe, as I said, lot of the white people them couldn't really write that so they have to memorize, so a two liner they sing it over and the music play wrongly so you think of how I will sing a song, calypso, now,

12"31 going back to the *ignorance* that they're playing these guys sing it and they won't call it calypso, *push-back* ---- all day all night. So they stay two cords, *push-back* ----

12:48 calypso telling a story. But today people taking the music to be a dance music. Quelbe was so great, that it is not the music too much that in Quelbe really mean a lot to us. It, those people were like newspapers, cause mostly all the songs then quelbe saying something that happen years ago here here in the days of slave when they could not be seen speaking to each other. So everything that happen like, they made the song, one of the biggest songs to me in quelbe music is Queen Mary. Because that's about we have the *fire burn* to make a change in our island. So that is the greatest quelbe song to me, because it's saying something about where we come from where we have to march and burn the town down to get to our freedom and to do what we want, to be really liberated so that Queen Mary is really a powerful song. Now the music is complicated too, it significant what it meant to all people in the days of slavery, so that song mean something. It have No quelbe song is as great as that. You might have quelbe song that carry better melody but what that mean to us, and then,

14:30 take for example the schools, when I was a boy in school we had no history book, we know nothing about Queen Mary we hear it in the songs, so it was educating, it was educating us La Biga Carousel, all those songs people working for 3 cent a day, another kind of thing, Nothing in our books, no, so we was educated what happen around our community by these songs. That's why Quelbe so important.

15:20

You go back to the human part of it you had a woman thief some chicken and things like that, those things were true, it was not for written, but it was saying she really did thief,

J: She ---- that little pela

D: She ----- that little pela. In America the right way is pelo, but we said pela, that's -----  
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15:56

A: You wanna play that one?

17:58:15

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D: To me that is the greatest song. Cause, its about free will. And you can't write another one like that. So, this qulebe music is so great to our...

18:14:28

A: So im beginning to get the picture now, that, that quelbe was here before it was about history, it was about the people that knew, its about, I can see that you're saying it's a simpler cord structure but there's a lot more feeling in it. That's what I'm understanding.

D; You right, that's exactly what it is.

18:37:15

A: And the calypso, is more like the modern, commentary.

D: Right, modern commentary, with the ---- then all the big instrument, the European instrument like the sax, trumpet, then, it becomes more of a musical structured music.

18:58:14

A: So have you ever had people, I know you've obviously heard music from Jamaica and the States, and other places, have you ever had African musicians come here and play music, have they said anything about Quelbe or, have you heard the drumming and drummers, where else have you ever heard in your travels...

19:19

D: Quelbe? This the only place, they have other countries, like St. Lucia, and those places, are playing, similar music like this., but they don't have that belly to it, that heartness, and its different, like St. Lucia they play more or less quadrille in a folk way, use lot of violins and things like that. And, some of them might, talking about the struggles that they went through and things like that,

19:57

but you see what happen in calypso now, that, it's a wider field because we got the Trinidad in which its number 1, got Barbados, St. Martin, all those places have calypso music, but they don't have Quelbe music. So it's different, we are unique, this music should not be big like reggae, or anything if it been market right, and been exposed, like how reggae is.

20:40

But I feel that the cause, of, is not market, it cannot play. In other words we may have to have to do something, dilute it, which would be taking away the strength of what is really meant to sell it when you call it a crossover, but then, when you crossing over ---, its to cross back, like for example, jazz, you got Latin jazz, they play it in a way they can play, so we call it Latin jazz, When I *was growing up I didn't know no Latin jazz*. So that is a crossover now, others are crossovers, everybody's put in... you hear about Jamaican Quelbe

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or --- Quelbe, you hear about St. Martin calypso, Barbados Calypso, Antigua calypso, all this calypso, but you don't hear anything Quelbe.

21:39:29

A: So one last question then maybe you can just play some music and relax a little,

J: Wait, let me ask you something. You say it just a little time, but this is going farther than --- prison, *we going to continue, what you trying to play?*

A: You can play some calypso too, I'd like to hear that again. But we don't have to record this, I'm just curious, I've been asking other people is it scratch or Quelbe, where did that name come from, what is the controversy around that?

22:27

J: Well you see, won't get in it, because I say very clearly, when I knew this thing here, they used to call it a string band. Because ----- the more, matter that they had, that we had, was, we couldn't buy strings, electric wire, and some people will, some used to use marlin twine, and, everybody make their own thing to play, and that's why the guy when ----- and - ----Joseph right? You only see flute, steel, and these are thing that man make to play the music, so they used to say scratch band music, because you start from scratch, you understand? But when they were just coming to Quelbe, they have called to come to interview me with it, and I said me ain't going and I hear that lately, you know what I mean, cause your man used to just take sardine pan and some type of bucket to make a drum, man take them big *gord*, and they groove, groove part of it to make scratch, because it couldn't be a scratch.

24:11 Mr. Clark was a man in Bethlehem who used to make steel for people. So, the people used to call it scratch band music.

D. They call it Fungi band,

J. Yea, fungi band.

24:33

D: This music, right, when I grew up here, it wasn't so, it was more entertainment for listening under the tree. In other words no body really respect that music to that, because this music was, if we wasn't playing for the days like Easter or holidays, it was under the tree we were playing, or the hotel then for the tourists. But our people then weren't really listening to this music to that extreme, to not actually, to the saxophone music with Archie and Vivatones, to the big bands with the saxophone, and thing, but it wasn't in our music, our music was like a stupid music to them. This was our own music. People have a good time under the sun under the tree, coconut drinker anybody take a spoon and a thing and hit pow-pow, everybody get drunk and have a good time. Our music was not commercial, then they ask you how much you charge to play a tune for me. Can you play a tune for me? It free, as long as you got food to eat and thing to drink. We go and we play

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J: Man come down and walk from 6 o'clock, to reach, but we come a long ---- remember -

And man come right there, and start playing music from coming down the street right, when you look, some people use to put a sheet in the middle of the street and then we play coming down, and they try and put money inside there, then somebody will pick up that, so when we was done, somebody else got lower down again, that money, somebody have the money -----

D: It was fun, it wasn't the money part of it.

26:38:28

A: Is it like that at all now?

D: Oh God now, if you ask we gonna play tonight, we ask how much, how much you gonna pay? It isn't fun no more, it gone.

26:53:19

A: Do you have fun playing?

D: Yea, cause I love to do it, The money really don't mean nothing to the extreme. But if people gonna make money from my doing, then you gonna give me some too. but not that I actually, I work at a school something like 20 years, I teach there, -----, say do I get paid to teach. I do it because I love it, and I love children, They might give me a little stipend, a little \$5 or something, and 90% got --- on the children. I bought a bus out of my own money to transport the children. After --- I drop them this place, that place, ----- don't give me nothing. Why I have to do it? It keep me happy, and life is happiness. As long as you happy what you doing, you gonna go a long long way. The interest, because you like what you doing, if its money you say well if I don't get paid today I'm not coming, wanna become one of us, come commercial.

A: I understand.

D: You understand

28:30:13

A: I understand, I'm not getting paid. I understand, it has to be some kinda, there's a reason, music changes, people evolve, things change. What's going to make this music go into the future?

D: The future. People like you.

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A: Well because we're getting it out there.

D: Documented, getting marketed. I don't care how good you is. You could be good in a bad room, but if it is not being heard it is no good. It's like saying one of the best *corned beef*, I mean one of the leading *corned beef* is *Libby's*. It don't mean it the best *corned beef* it the most advertised *corned beef* so everybody know that. *Libby's* is the best is like the leading beer in the world is Budweiser beer, it don't mean it the best beer, it's the most advertised, marketed beer. So people look in that, for that because of the name, a name could carry you a long way. But that name don't mean it the best, but those are the best names that are being marketed, you see?

29:47:15

A: Play a song? A calypso song, you gonna make one up?

34:30:07

D: (singing) It is delighted to be here with you all.....