

Tape I Feb, 2004

Jamesie and Blinky at Peggy's Interview transcription

Andrea E Leland on camera

(not every word was transcribed because unable to understand dialect. Refer to original video for complete transcription)

09:43:00

J: You see, one of us try to tell them ----- simple ----- you don't find no, no – man like Paul. Full of this culture music like that. You know what I mean?

B: No, -Meg was the only time, now Paul

J: Yea, and that's what I was telling Derby. The same thing I tell, Derby, I said Derby when you come through the *fast* culture music, I said but in the style of how the music was played, you gotta change that strum. Because, he don't like to play quadrille music.

B: Right. Ok, well you know how –i-- was strum, so you tell he how to strum it. But what you supposed to do get a record a tape of you playing with ----- and then....

J: Yea,

B: ---- bomba... He playing modern... modern...

J: He looking at the guy, I tell him I said for the real playing -----, he really good. Because what he try to doing me is try to get me to change my strum and want me to go in these different keys. That's what kill the music. I still old fashion way.

B: Kill the type of music that we play. Have a special ----- regard it into Trinidad calypso.

J: Like how, when, Stanley them, they gone way up the road.

B: Sometimes it will come back but in the, they gonna do.

J: I aint moving, not a shit man, joking? ----- . This the way Stanley play, no see I gonna sing this song. (plays dirty Helena)

13:37:30

J: See that Stanley right? I tell him, when I say "Helena ----" they in the back should say "show me the way" this was a man from right there by man in ---- remember they had -----, had a man there a red man, used to ride at the cars, -----, well his dad, was this guy used to play music this guy John Edwards. And he had, in them time, when you ----- you got to tell the mother and the father.

B: Right cause she going to sit down ----- and she gonna write that song, she gonna hear...

J: So, when he was talking with the mom --- the jack-ass, when the wife was telling him what she, he want. He ask him, why you think you can support my daughter? So he turned to her

Tape I Feb, 2004

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Andrea E Leland on camera

and say, you got to show me your nasty style. And then, that day had moved man Jones, is the one that sing that song in Concordia, then that *faniso* my song with Anne Robinson they make a great --- icon ----- . So that I used to sing.

B: The ----- *tiva*, *not tiva* the other boys play, ----- Concordia, where it all first started, the other boy used to play this with ---, started to play ----- then disappeared, young boy, some family ---- one. ----- . You know who first start to play this with you? -----
- right? Before *Tiva*. No, this a young boy. I don't even see no more. Some family *he goes home*.

J: That was, that was the guy that had been with Cyril brother ----- . He been with...

B: This boy *been 18 years young* when he was playing with you.

J: Yea

B: You, ---- low low low, not positive. When you first start up, ---- playing guitar there then this boy start playing bass, I don't remember name but some family that you was ----- or that ----

J: Okay. I want to ask you, who was the person in charge of Concordia?

B: That is a good question. I don't know.

J: This is what I had really wanted to do, to get a video taken.

B; Oh yea,

J: That woulda been a nice thing for they to have a video of that.

Play a song (ends 19:16:00)

B: Play uh, ----- make good song.

J: Yea here. Hah.

B: It's got some meaning behind that song. -----

J: Don't go there

B: Don't go there, ok.

J: The young one them, the young one them no ----- (*hard to understand, Blinky and Jamesie talking at same time*)

Tape I Feb, 2004

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Andrea E Leland on camera

B: Right now, come, come a good brush ---- the mustache.

J: So that's, that what they want?

B: Yea well that's ----- cat. So they whiskers then can make with soap, and the soap with make with anything.

J: I don't go into ----- got to, no, ----- (*mumbling*)

B: Just trying to say ---- -in front of the camera. Ok, um, don't hide no seek here. Think, I ---

C: What do you mean?

B: Can you get me a bear, I don't want to really disturb you.

20:53:00

I was just wondering how, if ----- was going to make that soup, do you have to strain it

B: Soak it,

C: Soak it, so it's soft.

J: (*laughing*)----- any song I sing she always, you know, and I trying because, I don't want...

B: You know I got some, um, -----, over from when ---- you know Christian place, I buy some -----, say we don't got no *soap* here, no *soap*. Put it in a today, you put ----- tomorrow it will take it then you start -----, take some of that water, make a sauce with a lime, a pepper, and celery and so on, then between ----- flour, dumpling, -----, bite and say -
-----.

J: - you got to -----

B: So I gonna soak some tomorrow.

J: Andrea, I think you say you going to ask some questions

22:28:00

A: Yea, we're just still trying to get the light right

22:47:12

Tape I Feb, 2004

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One thing you've already kind of talked about the structure, you've already talked about there's basically a two cord structure, and everything that's evolved from that is really different

J: Three cord.

Three cord? Well okay,

B: Well you could ask us, ----- you gotta ask us some questions.

23:02:00

No I know, when you come to a point we'll ask a question. So, do you want to talk about the structure of traditional Quelbe?

B: As soon as I get my beer, yea.

Yes, we know it's important.

23:13:15

A: Basically, its, what's the structure of the music and is it the same now as it was in the 30s or the 40s, has it evolved, how has it changed? That's one question. Has you're music personally changed over the years and how has it changed?

C: And also, if you want to get into it your personal history together, I mean your cousins you grew up here, if you want to later

23:40:29

A: Yea, later. First just talk about the actual structure of the music. I don't understand music real well

B: You don't understand music?

A: I understand it...

B: I got a surprise for you, neither do I.

B: As far as I know in music, I think of getting a sheet and reading it and that's music. What I do, I play by ear, or what I hear

24:14:19

A: Hold on stop, Can you start again, sorry, the camera wasn't rolling. Sorry. You said that you don't understand music either, without reading the sheet music, just start right from there, sorry.

Tape I Feb, 2004

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24: 30

B: No, you said that you don't know music or something that you don't understand music, that I don't understand music either. I figure that music is getting a sheet with music written in it and you read from that and play it. . That's music. I don't read music I hear music, I play my, what I have heard, I can make up a few things when I going along, but it's usually not from the book but out of my head, you know? If ---- taking a solo, that strictly from the head.

25:10Musicians, for instance, people who read sheet music, not everyone, but when you hear they take a solo, you can look in the music book and find that solo in the book of scales or something, just look hard enough you find it. but what I do is out of my head, you not gonna find that in a book of music. So, that's what I was saying about music. Now, again...

25:42:00

A: Is that true with you too Jamesie, maybe you can just ask Jamesie to talk together about how he does it?

J: With me, there a man he can --- with this music thing, but my thing I keeping out of his road. I staying on my own road, I like to walk on and mash the stone, and when ----- I stay old fashion, when I start this thing in Concordia, and Cyril, you know Cyril he was a fireman. He brought a lot of, he brought us culture music.

B: Bradley

J: Bradley, wife husband, and it was he and that fellow Hoggins, and a boy named ---- Williams, and we I met them and say, I say how Mr. man Jones used to, that he could make them banjo really good skin right? But I see he didn't have no drill in them time, and who had a drill or them drill that you used to go like this? So when I, I been ---- Mr. Macho, Willy Macho, and I been helping him and I know them big -----,

27:13 know them sardine can right there they have, so I take the spike wheel and I see how he put it in the fire and hold it with the pliers and just tap it with a wood hammer till the smoke gone, then put it back in the fire again. And I make one,

28:00

It was marlin twine in that time no, so I put on, I get done I fix it and see how he -----, I said children not with these, they could do what they like. My father marlin twine, he used to go fishing with, he from Groove, he was a fisherman, living in Groove, -----, so I see he put one of them twine and one of them ----- on the banjo, so I go to my father and I ----- my father and when I went in the kitchen and I take the knife and I cut, who tell me to cut his twine? When he a ct, I take it out, why, well that day alone I got a mark, got a mark there (show's scar). He had --- wiped me across my shoulder. And cut me, I was living in his time, at that time he do that. My grandmother nearly -----, the house, thenmy grandmother start to look around and she ---- house, that man had two sons, had a daughter used to walk and they had to go look for her, they had two son, and one of they had a guitar. And my mother used to work there, and

Tape I Feb, 2004

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then I used to go over there and used to let me play, and then he went from here and my grandmother bought that guitar for me. And we used to come up on the road, and walk the road - -----, we walked up the road just walking and playing playing playing. So then, after we get, who start, James father, remember he had a -----, when they coming down you know the *latry* place ----- on the right hand side, over on the other side, remember today used to ---- old man James.

B: yea, *flaming*-----

J: Yea but it been on that side before, back then. The yard, I think ----- we used to go there man Jones used to play there. And then, they had to stop because they had so much demand for fish they had no time. And, I start every song that I hear them sing I used to sing. So, me and, your father, your father, we used to come round -----, and sit down there. We used to listen to he, and he used to tell us the songs then ----- so I just walk and listen. It wasn't hard in this time, to then ---- we had for them but for me.

(31:50:29)

B: I remember, remember, a long time ago, I had just started to play guitar we being down on the grass and Mr. Stimon sitting down on the bridge there, ask Henry and --- sailor. I was doing picking and you strumming, my father come by and he say ---- just in time for ----. So we start the picking and playing right then, and -----, had a big tree there and bridge we sit on. Playing, what the hell they call that thing, *maranbola* we playing a reggae song. This being in the early 50s or late 40s. Anyway

J: You forgetting that you want fight me when we went up to, that place ----- been up there

B: Who want?

J: You.

B: You. Why you, this ----- every time that woman see me want to fight me, mistaking me for you. Say that you doing something there, say Miss not me, say yes you.

33:19

J: But Junie , the thing of it is that you want fight me for ----- and it wasn't me. It wasn't me, the girl, the nice looking girl right on the ----- . That boy Weathers, do that to her. Have you...

B: You talking about *Slur*, *Slur*,

Tape I Feb, 2004

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Andrea E Leland on camera

J: Mr. Peterson. He was? That, had ----- right on the counter----- when you come from the welcome ----- remember all of us that was a hangout that we used to hang out. You used to walk in the street, picking -----, and then, remember when you come up in the church, you make a left, when you reach to the -----, across they, that ----- upstairs there. That too

B: Not Peterson, you talking about Louisa, them. Louisa.... ----- Archie, Archie used to walk with Peter -----, he, Louise...

J: Yea Louise Peterson. And they had another one, one of the more shy than the other.

B: --- yea but I was so young for them

J: What, yea but we all about you was, was, was, cat man, ----- when you coming up on the guitar and walk up there and see Louisa that man take off because ---- guitar. Sing the *western* music. We, got that sing, singing that our own type music and you copy the western song. Then, we, come up man ----- you forget? You cat-man. That was you ----- Jesus Christ man, you walk up, all the way up to, Mr. Brown used to be out there ----- . But anyhow, I learned a lot form your father too. See, hear it, what we know about that, when he used to walk behind me like a bunch of ----- from the front.

B: ----- (36:46:12) Anyway we were talking about music, how he got into music and so on. --- your father. My father taught me the scale, yea saxophone said this was yours own, he had another one. There wasn't much money ----- everybody around here in my growing up in the late 30s early 40s people were mostly poor around here. Some reason, my father never worked for anybody. But we always had I'm happy to say the ---- hungry days, hungry for two three days I've never known a hungry day in my life. And he didn't work anywhere, I mean he didn't work for anybody. He had his own things playing music, he did a little fishing, and he had gamble house, he used to run a gamble house. The fishing, we had goat and sheep, we didn't have any sheep, we had goat I think, we had growing up, I had to take care of goat, sheep...

38:05

After that where we got ----- and sold off all those things. Fishing, and he stuck with that, music I used to play in his band as a guitar player, guitar player. I was um, John -----, he used to play, he was first guitarist, I was second guitarist, first and second. We play all night and then Christmas time, we get paid get paid according to the instrument we were playing, I got, we were playing all night we sat for a *bucket marlin* went out all the way to ----- go play, I get \$3.

38:51

That was very good money, then back then. Last me a whole two, two, three weeks. First guitar player he got a little more than me. After that, I started to play the saxophone he let me play a song, I would play one song I know, and play that. After he came over I go back to my guitar and so on and so on. Get a little better at it...

Tape I Feb, 2004

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39:22

So I said didn't know a hungry day, and he had the gamble shop which he run until before he died he was running a gamble shop. So I was pretty well off, and he had, so when he play he had all the instrument, he had the saxophone, the guitar, the drums, everything was his.

Never had to use ----- I going home I would take an instrument ----- I could remember *Soda*, ----- All the instrument was his. If we're going, leave it there.

40:27

So, I've always been, he has always had, we had saxophone, he had bass, drums, trumpet, *clarinet*, he had trumpet but he had *clarinet* it look like a trumpet but it not a trumpet. Flute, I could play the flute a little bit, guitar, saxophone tenor and alto. Because they were right there in the house. (41:01:12)

J: This man that used to be with he too was a very nice man too. *Tino* father, grandfather.

B: Mr. Harris?

J: Mr Harris. The two of them...

B: Mr. Harris was a flute player. Mr. Harris son, which was Willy Harris, married my aunt, which was my mother's sister.

J: Right, that's why I know, I didn't know they were married. This is what I am saying, they were very socialized in this thing cause your father used to go up by the ----- tree, where the ----- live, know the ----- tree? Then he got -----, when they used to been there. My uncle JoJo, remember JoJo,

B: I remember, yes.

42:00

J: Yea, well that's where we, that's where I used to been when I come there with them people. And when it was me, I used to go with my father walk from Concordia to town and you start from 10 o'clock and you play music until 5 o'clock in the morning. And, when I see how Fanza- you use the money, well that's true now Junie, in that time, people never we never hear nobody quarrel over we aint got this we aint got the other.

B: You know who I met the other day, remember Caribbean bar, you know a man used to run it a Puerto Rican man named Camillo, I met him last weekend in ----- he play one hour than ----- he came to me said you remember me? I said yea man you Camillo right? He said, how you know that, I said I see the resemblance but he old and gray now he said he was in the states *he live here*, he been in the states all this time he just come back here. I said that's nice.

Tape I Feb, 2004

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Andrea E Leland on camera

J: You know that same place, you play there one time, right, and ----- sting inside, went for ----- had it

B: Douglas?

J: Yea man he had a house over there by ----- I think that's where, the, ----- had to do mechanic work.

B: Um, uh huh, when he was, he used to sell -----, what I was saying didn't need *anything in them cords, money*, remember *money* right in the park there, ----- got big deal for -- ---, got *calc and rosefish*, anybody could go over there and eat.

J: I remember, I remember. -----... Don't give them people too much ----- . Especially that one *I read* -----.

Plays a song (finishes 47:05:00)

B: Ok now we can go back to..

47:09:08

A: I have a question I want to ask, but, I keep coming over there cause we are trying to get the light reflected in here on your face, cause it's light on one side dark on the other side, I keep going back and forth that's what's happening.

J: That goes in the story, but now -----

B: What's the question

47:31:05

A: Ok the question is, I've heard about your youth and how you came up with the music, but then if it has evolved, I mean you've traveled around overseas, and Jamesie you've traveled to Denmark and you've gotten a lot of exposure not within your community but outside the community, so how has that effected your music and could you talk a little bit about that, where you traveled, and how going beyond Fredreksted has effected your growth as a musician?

48:10

B: OK let me start out with, there was a band here they were very good at playing Latin music here. They didn't play Cruzan music, they played calypso, which is from Trinidad and they played you know ----- first and latin music. And they had a chance to go to Puerto Rico they were hired to go to Puerto Rico and they went down there because they were so good at Latin music they played the Latin music over there, and the people didn't like that. They wanted to hear the music from here, not come down there and play their music. You can't beat Puerto Ricans at Latin.

Tape I Feb, 2004

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Andrea E Leland on camera

J: Not you

49:00

B: So they didn't make out so good. So, anytime we go somewhere which I have been in several places like huh Virgin Gorda, Tortola, St. Thomas, St. Martin, places like that. But when they hire you to go to these places they don't want to hear you come and play their music. They want to hear you play the music where you come from. So, as far as influence goes, what I can say, in my playing with the saxophone, I have add a lot more in my repertoire in featuring or soloing, I put in a lot, a little bit of you, might find a little bit of calypso in there maybe a little bit of jazz in there. That is the only ----- take in my soloing, but in the major song, the song itself remains the same. Just the soling is the difference. But, what about you, have you changed? Have going to Denmark changed your style of playing?

J: Well the oldest part, Junie, when I went up there, and the thing of it I couldn't believe when I went to Denmark that they would play my music. Because I drop in the *tours*, and when I was in the *tours*, I just went in a room downstairs and I understand I knew that is, ----- . One of the rooms to practice in. So, I see the man ----- and I go right by the door and then all of the sudden I hear a kid start to play and when I listen to it I say wait, how you get this, he said, how we get this, a friend give me, so we knew you were coming so we wanted to see if what is playing here is original. So I said look, play it again, and when he play it again, the phone ring, the first guitar the ----- the lead sax, so I took I said, why you bring me here? Said because when we go out there we want to hear the same thing what you had on that. So we went out, we did it, and it was so, so happy. One because the weather -----, those people how down here is, to how them people treat you there is Jesus, mother mercy, when I went Germany the same thing brother. But when you, you know down here the ----- they kill the spirit.

B: But did your trip to Germany or Denmark have any effect on your music that you play. Did you change your style then because of that?

J: No. No. And them they play the same way like we play down here.

B: Well I spoke to one of the guys, he told me, what he did, he must have been bartender, he bought records of me, he bought records of you, he bought the ----- record, he bought Stanley -- ----, and then they went back to the states and they practiced and practiced till they get it perfectly, and that's how they started to play ----- . And I have noticed over the years when we play some place, we are playing at the -----, they come and they sit and clap for me, but he got a *recorder going*, he used to copy some of the songs we play. Go back and they play. But it didn't change your style of playing.

53:40

Tape I Feb, 2004

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Andrea E Leland on camera

J: No, the only thing I put inside it, that because, the guy most of some of the music you hear the steal play, right, it wasn't me playing an instrument, it was the guy that played the conga. You see, that's when I went to, the way east side over there, and that's where I went to a school something like with some children

54:10

and then when I went there I hear the guy start to sing "one, two, three" and by the time he say three they start to play so I ask the guy playing conga why you bring me here? Because, this same, what the boy doing man. They doing it just like me doing it, the problem they had was the bass guy, He looked like he, he couldn't move the movement of his hand, and then the guitar guy give him the guitar and he take the bass, and that's the way ----

54:57

But Junie man, I don't mind when nobody say, I aint gonna change, me and you is blood. But there's is one thing I will tell you, I will go for you, (blinky) god know's it, I will talk about you. But the only thing you have to stop and leave me alone when you see I talking to do. Man, you --
------(mumbling) But we gonna let this thing dead or no, we gonna keep this up?

B: But anyway, does this answer the question of the influence and change of music?

55:51:12

A: It's okay Cathleen because it's going to go behind a cloud.

J: But what you are wanting to hear, is what you are looking for is what you want?

B: If the upside going to the different places had any influence in changing our style, or music, does that answer it?

A: Yea, I have another question too.

56:10:09

C: Early on, when you were first starting with it, you know first bands, did you always have a drummer?

B: Oh, no, he, well when he first started he didn't have any drummer.

56:23:00

C: When did that change, when did drum sets become a part of the culture?

B: I remember when he started with his own little group, he just had what a bass, guitar, and some, the same boy I telling you about playing bass, but he didn't have any drums or nothing, I mean, around, I think it was after we went to Puerto Rico and we played down there, but -----
(56:54:00)

JAMESIE PROJECT: ANDREA E LELAND producer
Tape I Feb, 2004
Jamesie and Blinky at Peggy's Interview transcription
Andrea E Leland on camera

12