

MUZILOG

MY WEEKLY BLAH (BLOG)

WHERE MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURE RESIDES.



If we doh wave we flag

If we doh wave we flag
 Who go wave it fuh we?
 If we doh maintain the engine room,
 Who go know we identity?
 If we women can't showcase their beauty
 Who go flaunt it fuh dem?
 Who go beat the drum, so she waistline
 could roll and when?

If motherland cease to be mother
 What will the offspring do?
 If we doh love we self
 Who go love we self fuh we?
 Who?
 If we doh believe
 Who go believe fuh we?
 If we can't write our story
 Who go write the story fuh we

Even if you have to stand alone:

Wave yuh flag,
 Play yuh iron,
 Identify and represent,
 Sisters, show we the real shape, tantalize
 me a bit nuh?
 Roll the waistline as mother earth roll
 her's
 Love yuh self, love yuh passion
 Believe you can achieve,
 Write your story, write our story so that
 it will be our story
 And not his story...
 written by Samuel Archer



Natural Expressions setting up

Calypso City Celebration

writer: Samuel Archer

Brooklyn (Crown Heights/9/4/2010)
 It was around 2:30 PM in the
 afternoon and it was time to head
 out to Charlie's Calypso City on
 Fulton Street. It was the Labor
 Day weekend fete hosted by
 Rawlston Charles. This was the
 36th Anniversary and I was going
 to be there.

As I got out to the corner of
 Lincoln Place and Nostrand Ave.,
 I saw the West Indian engine
 starting up for the rest of the
 weekend. Nostrand Avenue was
 busy with patrons, vendors and the
 traffic started to look like a long
 dragon.

continued on page 2



BACK STAGE: Calypsonian "Crazy," posing
 with a friend for Fuzion. Notice Crazy's T-shirt
 bearing the image of the present Prime
 Minister of Trinidad & Tobago; Kamla Persad
 Bissessar.



STANDING ROOM ONLY: One of the many
 City's within the Calypso city. This standing
 crowd is inside the record store having their
 own party with cultural food and beers while
 they enjoy the music and the "bazodee" sounds
 of the iron men.



THE IRON MEN Masters of the engine room
 playing their instrument in the record store.
 They keep the familiar sound that's a defining
 musical element in the music of Trinidad and
 Tobago.

Labor Day Jam in Brooklyn... (Story continued from cover page.)

There was a display of numerous Caribbean flags in various forms, whether it was a bandana, on T-shirts or in clusters of decorations hanging from storefronts and lampposts. "This thing has really grown," I said to myself. I wondered if [Carlos Lezama](#) had a clue of what he started back in the late 1960s would grow into the world-renowned celebration it is today. Did he have an inclination that people will travel from around the world to experience this Caribbean celebration?

I decided to walk towards Fulton Street and take in the priceless view of the Caribbean storm that will soon take over Brooklyn in a couple hours. Fulton Street

As I turned on Fulton Street, I was greeted with the sound of an iron rhythm section or what we call "the engine room." It's the sound of iron being hit in rhythmic patterns. The sound of hitting iron makes up a major part of the percussion section in Soca and calypso music. As I got closer I realized there was a known song playing in time with the rhythm. It was a DJ mix. This DJ did a clever mix of combining a West Indian Iron Section Rhythm and Michael Jackson songs, which had a tantalizing effect on the folks that were gathering to see the show begin. By the time the show would have begun, the gathering crowd would be warmed up.

The street was blocked off and the NYPD was in effect to keep things on point. There was something a bit different about these police officers. They seemed to fit right in and understood what was going on every step of the way. They were on guard but interacted with the gathering crowd and everyone was at ease.

As always in these events, no artist likes to start the show, so they all show up late. If you interview most artists about being prompt, depending on the circumstance they have a good excuse. Not being prompt creates the disaster formula at the end of the show when they have to be mindful of the clock. Starting on time never happens on Labor Day. West Indians seem to work under the time pressure very well. Unless they're being paid, it's going to be a late start.

It was now 3:40 PM and Prince George introduced himself as the MC for the evening and brought up Calypsonian "Imadd" who opened the show. His song was "I Wish You Well," In tribute to President Obama. After a spirited performance, I learned that Imadd is from St. Vincent. Other artists followed as the crowd kept growing. As the crowd grew I began to understand why it's called "Charlie's Calypso City." On this day it became a city within a city. Many things were taking place at the same time. As the show on the street progressed, there was a Party in Charlie's record store where food and drinks were available. Customers were able to buy CDs or whatever music related thing they needed. Also there were a few iron players in the store playing along with the calypsos being played in the store. There was only standing room in the store. Two doors down from Charlie's is a Roti shop called Ali's Trinidad Roti Shop. The line was extended out to the door. I wasn't in the mood to stand in a long line of people to order a Roti. If there was a Roti vending machine I might have tested it out. Right in front of Ali's a percussion band was

setting up at the same time, bearing the red white and black colors signifying extensions of Trinidad's musical anthropology. Natural Expressions was the name of the percussion orchestra. They had timbales, congas to kettledrums, and cymbals to iron car parts. It was amazing. On the adjacent end about 20 meters from the main stage was the Eastside Symphony Steel Orchestra providing some classics tunes as the on lookers and patrons were passing by.

It was a joy to see reunions, families and friends having a good time in fellowship. Children were playing, singing and dancing. By 7:30 PM there had to be approximately five thousand people or more. The Calypso City was in full effect. The sun was going down and the street was just busy and buzzing.



The attending crowd during the intermission



Musicians about to play live...



KC, known as the James Brown of Soca on stage.

Who's the man that runs Calypso City?



So who is [Rawlston Charles](#)? Who's the man that runs the Calypso City during Labor Day weekend? First one must respect the dedication to the culture that Mr. Charles displayed in the early history of Calypso being available and recorded in Brooklyn. The presence of Calypso music in the streets of NY during the early 70s is credited to Rawlston.

He hails from Tobago, the smaller sister Isle of the twin republic of Trinidad and Tobago. After relocating to the US in the late 60s, he noticed that he couldn't hear any calypso in the parties and gatherings he attended. He decided to turn things around and started to DJ around Brooklyn. Eventually in 1972, Rawlston opened a record store and started importing calypso records from Trinidad. Shortly after Mr. Charles began to invest in recordings and started Charlie's records. By 1984 he owned a fully furnished state of the art recording studio. This Calypso City is home to many Calypso hits recorded by artists such as the Mighty Sparrow, Calypso Rose, Kitchener and Maestro among others. The band Charlie's Roots was also named after

Mr. Charles since he was the initial Executive Producer. Charlie's Roots helped to springboard the career of David Rudder.

As the evening progressed, I rubbed shoulders with the likes of Singing Francine, Crazy, De Culture, and Swallow to mention a few. There was a rich attendance of major musicians from the Calypso community that came out for the fellowship and some even accompanied artists that performed on the stage. I met a few friends and associates that I hadn't seen in a while.



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