John Gray

Carnival, Calypso and Steel Pan: A Bibliographic Guide to Popular Music of the English-speaking Caribbean and its Diaspora. Nyack NY: African Diaspora Press, 2015. xv + 480 pp. (Cloth US\$124.95)

Carnival, Calypso and Steel Pan is the final Caribbean entry in John Gray's remarkable *Black Music Reference Series*. It retains the basic organization that served so admirably in the series's previous volumes, with sections on "Cultural History and the Arts," "Caribbean Festival Arts," "Music of the English-Speaking Caribbean and Its Diaspora," "Regional Studies," and "Biographical and Critical Studies." Like its predecessors, it also features helpful lists of sources consulted and relevant libraries and archives, as well as useful appendixes (listing individuals and ensembles by idiom/occupation and country) and comprehensive author and subject indexes. With 3,420 entries, it comes closer than any other bibliographic resource to date to exhaustive coverage of this rich vein of Caribbean music.

Following common practice, Gray separates the music of the English-speaking Caribbean into "two principal hubs," Jamaica and Trinidad (p. x). Since Jamaica already received treatment in a volume of its own (the second in the series), the present volume focuses primarily on Trinidad and the other Eastern Caribbean islands, but also gives some attention to other circum-Caribbean locations shaped by English colonization or diasporic extensions of Anglo-Caribbean culture, such as Guyana, Belize, Costa Rica, and Panama. Gray suggests, sensibly, that the two books be used as companion volumes.

The biggest section of the book is the one on regional studies, with entries ranging alphabetically from Antigua and Barbuda to the Virgin Islands. Not surprisingly, the largest number relate to Trinidad and Tobago—one of the Caribbean's undisputed musical powerhouses—but researchers will also find many resources for the study of musically less known but equally interesting parts of the region such as Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent. Within each subsection on a particular island or territory, attention is given not only to local manifestations of pan-regional forms such as calypso, soca, and steel pan music, but also to less widespread genres (for example, parang in Trinidad and punta rock in Belize). The breadth of coverage is impressive.

Because of the prominence of Trinidad's annual carnival tradition and its enormous impact on other parts of the Eastern Caribbean (as well as the Caribbean carnivals of New York, Toronto, and London), "Caribbean Festival Arts" turns out to be the second largest section in the book. While providing a wonderfully comprehensive resource for those interested in carni-

val studies from an Anglo-Caribbean perspective, this section also makes evident the kinds of problems that can arise when drawing boundaries in such a culturally fluid region. Gray decides, for instance, to cover the indigenous Jamaican version of the Christmas masquerade known as Jonkonnu (John Canoe, Junkanoo, Jankunu, et cetera) “only tangentially,” while the “Trini-style” carnival introduced to Jamaica only in the 1990s is here “documented in full” (p. xi). This means that Jamaican Jonkonnu (generally agreed to be the source for all other variants of the festival carrying this name) ends up being short-changed, receiving insufficient coverage (as it also did in the Jamaica volume), even as Bahamian Junkanoo, Belizean Jankunu, and North Carolina John Kuner are allowed numerous entries.

In a 2015 review (*NWIG* 89:61–68) of the previous Caribbean volumes in this series, I pointed out the tremendous gaps that remain in our scholarly knowledge of Caribbean musics, partly because there is so much of significance that has eluded written forms of documentation. The same caveat applies to the present volume. Gray seems to recognize the value of directing users to somewhat less mediated forms of musical knowledge, listing audiovisual materials at several points. In a few cases, he even references valuable archival collections containing only audio recordings. Yet there is no mention in this volume of what is probably the single most important collection of field recordings from the Eastern Caribbean, made by Alan Lomax in 1962. Most of Lomax’s collection relates directly to the genres on which this bibliography focuses, and much of it was commercially released on CDs in the 1990s and early 2000s, along with booklets containing extensive documentation. In 2004, Timothy Rommen characterized Lomax’s Caribbean collection (now housed at the Library of Congress) and the related CD series as an unparalleled and “invaluable contribution to musical scholarship in the region” (*World of Music* 46:161–68, p. 163). Its absence from this otherwise extremely thorough reference work is hard to explain.

Such relatively minor complaints are easily forgiven when the scope of Gray’s accomplishments is considered. This final Caribbean volume nicely rounds out an unusually ambitious series that, taken together, sets a new standard likely to remain unsurpassed for years to come.

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