

Lord Kitchener - If You're Not White, You're Black

Your father is an African
Your mother may be Norwegian
You pass me, you wouldn't say goodnight
Feeling you are really white
Your skin may be a little pink
And that's the reason why you think
That the complexion of your face
Can hide you from the negro race
No! You can never get away from the fact
If you not white, you considered Black

You jet along the thoroughfare
You shake your waist like Fred Astaire
And when you see me passing by
You watch me with a crooked eye
And yet, you speak to Mr. B—
Who does not want your company
In every way you endeavour
To show yourself superior
No! &c

Your negro hair is obvious
You make it more conspicuous
You use all sorts of Vaseline
To make out you are European
You speak with exaggeration
To make the greatest impression
That you were taught, apparently
At Cambridge University
No! &c
You hate the name of Africa
The land of your great-grandfather
The country where you can't be wrong
The home where you really belong
You rather be amongst the whites
Than stick up for your father's rights
And very often, from your face
To think you're from the negro race!
No! &c

Biography

edit bio

Aldwyn Roberts, the Lord Kitchener, is the acknowledged Grandmaster of Calypso, whose musical oeuvre displays an uncanny affinity to Mas and the Steelband. His records for winning the most Road March titles, and for producing the largest number of winning compositions in the Panorama competition, testify to this unique relationship.

He was born in an environment of rhythmic sound, to a blacksmith father and home-maker mother in Arima, east Trinidad. From the beginning, music was his stock in trade. His first paying job was to entertain water employees while they laid pipes. He quickly made a name for himself, being crowned Calypso King of Arima for four straight years, from 1938. The next move was inevitable. He went to Port of Spain and joined calypso's big league, singing for \$1 a night alongside presiding greats Growling Tiger, Roaring Lion and Attila The Hun.

In 1944, Kitchener penned his first composition for Pan with "Beat of the Pan". It marked the beginning of a unique relationship between calypso and steelband, in which Kitchener's compositions would come to influence the musical direction of the Panorama competition. He had his first big hit that year with "Green Fig". Three years later, he had his own tent, the Young Brigade. But the urge to spread his wings was growing. In 1948, Lord Kitchener left Trinidad for London via a six-month stay in Jamaica, where he taught calypso and played to packed houses.

The arrival of calypso's newest sensation sent spirits soaring among West Indian immigrants. Through his music, Lord Kitchener became the voice of the West Indian community and a mobilising spirit for the island emigrants so far from home. Despite his London successes, Lord Kitchener stayed close to the calypso scene in Trinidad where he kept his fans dancing with such hits as "Nora, Nora" and "Trouble in Arima".

By 1963, encouraged by the Mighty Sparrow, Lord Kitchener returned to newly independent Trinidad and Tobago. His impact was immediate as he hit his stride, winning three consecutive Road March titles with "The Road", "Mama Dis Is Mas" and "My Pussin'". Over the next three and a half decades, this musical genius dominated the calypso world, writing over 350 songs, running his own Calypso Revue tent, winning 10 Road March titles and composing the music that would win 18 Panorama titles and entertain generations of musicians to come.

Source: National Icons of The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Award Ceremony 2013