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**“HOMOSEXUALITY HAS INSPIRED SOME OF CALYPSO’S GREATEST IMAGINATIVENESS” – Kaiso lovers invited to listen and chat**

**WHO:** Calypso lovers. Colin Robinson, blogger/community organizer  
Dr. Charleston Thomas, cultural critic. New CAISO coalition

**WHAT:** Free listening session to two dozen calypso recordings in a tent-like setting, followed by a short, interactive discussion

**WHEN:** Thursday July 30, 2009 • 7:30 to 9:30 pm

**WHERE:** Alice Yard, 80 Roberts St., Woodbrook  
(btw. Brooklyn Bar & Woodbrook Playground)

**WHY:** Calypso’s imaginative treatment of homosexuality is as fascinating and it is unacknowledged. Homosexuality too often divides Trinbagonians unnecessarily.

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The media is abuzz with reasoned debate about homosexuality of late. But a group of Trinbagonians wants to take a different, unconventional approach to that too often controversial topic. They are asking people who share a love of the national artform to gather together to spend an evening listening to calypso.

On July 30, they will create a tent-like setting from 7:30 to 9:30 pm in Woodbrook’s Alice Yard to listen to the ingenious and playful ways in which two dozen recorded calypsoes have treated with homosexuality over six decades. The event is scheduled during the month when members of Trinidad & Tobago’s gay community have for the past 15 years celebrated pride in their identity. But it is “deliberately about getting people together regardless to sexual orientation, around something we share a love for”, say its organizers.

Building on published research by retired UWI professor Gordon Rohlehr, one of the pre-eminent scholars of calypso, cultural organizers Colin Robinson, Charleston Thomas and others have collected some 30 recordings from the 1950s to the present that “show remarkably witty treatments of the topic”.

“It’s not the *only* approach to homosexuality in calypso,” Robinson continues. “There *is* moralizing, scorn, violence, ridicule. But unlike Jamaica, playfulness seems to be the dominant approach in *our* indigenous music. And to me homosexuality is one of the topics to which calypso has brought some of its subtlest imagination and sweetest ingenuity.”

The audience will be invited to share their own memories of other treatments of the topic, talk about the meaning of the music, why dancehall and calypso treat so differently with the same issue, and what implications the music and its history might have for debates about homosexuality in the current political moment. Plans for Carnival season activities on the topic will also be aired. The programme has been organized in tribute to CAISO, a coalition recently formed to promote an inclusive, 20/20 vision of sexual orientation and citizenship in Trinidad & Tobago. Robinson is one of two authors of the group’s new blog at [gspottt.wordpress.com](http://gspottt.wordpress.com).

- “Patricia has left me. You would be shocked to hear who replace me.” Which calypsonian is able to both cry and laugh at the 1950s horn his wife put on him? “Millicent move Patricia out my place.”
- *Which relative of a political leader is the subject of the subtlest pong that has largely gone unnoticed in a 2006 parangsoca tune?*
- What famous line promoting homosexuality was on the lips of thousands of Trinbagonians around the world in 1992? (It’s something Penelope told Mr. Peters in a fete.) And what did **Shorty** sing that Assing wanted a man for?
- *What were Nurses Ivy and Mona doing in the bathhouse why **Roaring Lion** couldn’t get in? And where in 1958 did **Invader** feel a sudden chill and become hypnotized by the gaze of an object of the same species as he?*
- Did **Blakie** sign one or two autographs when current went?
- *Why does **Bomber** know the title of every 1970s Woodford Square drag queen and who is their man?*
- What brand and packaging of softdrink did **Sparrow** use to make fun of a pattern of sexual violence in 1957?
- *While the Andrews Sisters were singing about mothers and daughters and Belafonte about banana men, which 1950s American was lirting about a “gay young lad from Trinidad”?*
- Who or what did **Cypher**’s Hinds and **Zandolie** himself jockey?
- *Whose recommendation letter and picture did **Black Prince** present to the smooth goodlooking darkie he was tracking; and why didn’t it work?*