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What She Go Do: Women In Afro-Trinidadian Music (Caribbean Studies Series)



Synopsis

In the 1990s, expressive culture in the Caribbean was becoming noticeably more feminine. At the annual Carnival of Trinidad and Tobago, thousands of female masqueraders dominated the street festival on Carnival Monday and Tuesday. Women had become significant contributors to the performance of calypso and soca, as well as the musical development of the steel pan art form. Drawing upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the author in Trinidad and Tobago, *What She Go Do* demonstrates how the increased access and agency of women through folk and popular musical expressions has improved inter-gender relations and representation of gender in this nation. This is the first study to integrate all of the popular music expressions associated with Carnival—calypso, soca, and steelband music—within a single volume. The book includes interviews with popular musicians and detailed observation of musical performances, rehearsals, and recording sessions, as well as analysis of reception and use of popular music through informal exchanges with audiences. The popular music of the Caribbean contains elaborate forms of social commentary that allows singers to address various sociopolitical problems, including those that directly affect the lives of women. In general, the cultural environment of Trinidad and Tobago has made women more visible and audible than any previous time in its history. This book examines how these circumstances came to be and what it means for the future development of music in the region.

Book Information

Series: Caribbean Studies Series

Hardcover: 224 pages

Publisher: University Press of Mississippi; 1 edition (June 20, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1496807537

ISBN-13: 978-1496807533

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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