

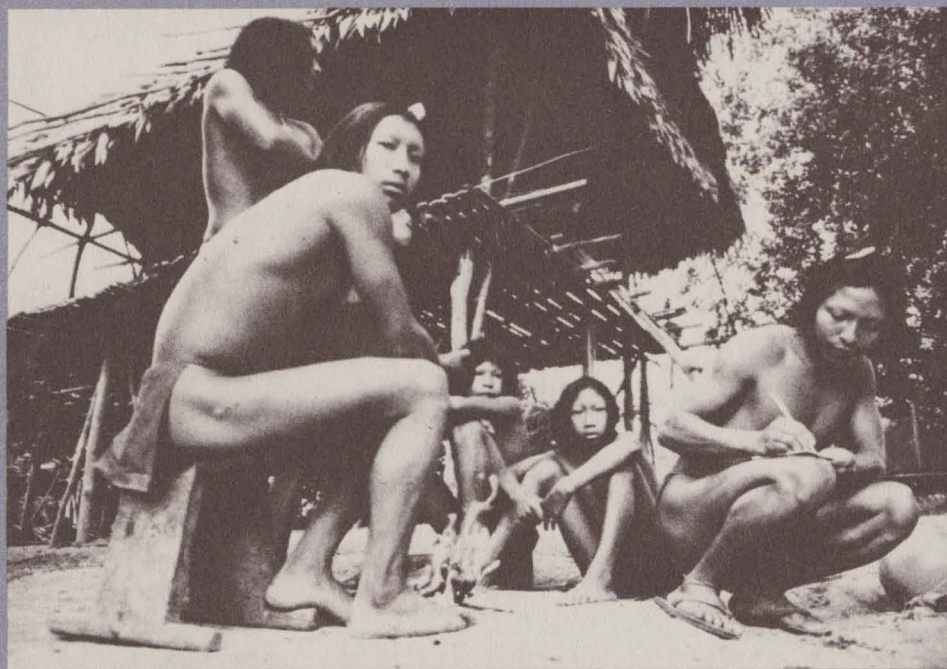
ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4235



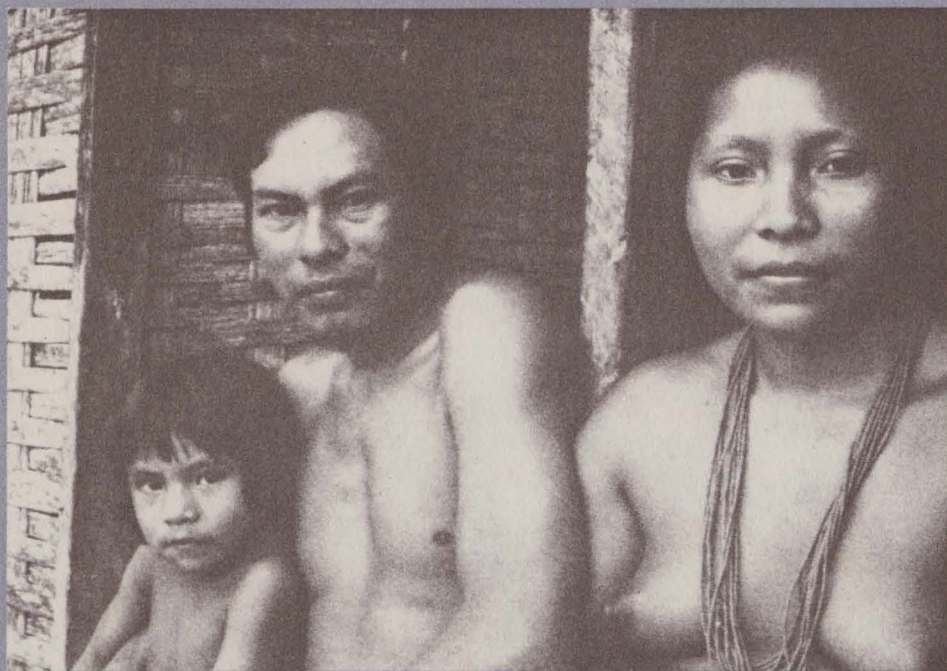
MUSIC OF THE HAUT OYAPOK

Oyampi and Emerillon Indian Tribes, French Guiana, South America

RECORDED AND ANNOTATED BY DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER



OYAMPI



EMERILLON

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4235

SIDE A: EMERILLON INDIANS

All Emerillon songs sung by village headman, Captain Monpera. These songs are related to hunting and fishing.

BANDS:

1. "ACHA AE"
2. "KONO WAH COUPI MAE"
3. "OH DETO ME"
4. "MICKERO PAN TO" Children singing along
5. "OH POOH POH NE"
6. "MYARI CHA"
7. "TAPI JAH"
8. "JEMA MARUHA"
9. "UH MAE AE" Children in background
10. "YAH HI AH" Chant
11. BONE FLUTE—Elder Oyampi playing at Camopi
12. BONE FLUTE—Young boy playing at Camopi

The music recorded of the Emerillon chief, Monpera at Camopi were chants believed to evoke luck and prosperity in the Hunt. "Captain Monpera" said that the Emerillon inhabited in the past areas further up the Camopi river in the interior, but fled to Camopi after the epidemic and thanks to the French his family now numbered about 60 persons.

The songs were sung as he lay on his hammock at dusk, surrounded by his immediate family.

SIDE B: OYAMPI INDIANS

BANDS:

1. "OLA MISSIEU" Recorded at Camopi, Creole Carnival song introduced by canoe pilots who make the St. Georges-Camopi-Trois Saut river run—Oyampi version of Carnival.
2. "VAVAL" Sung by Creole-Indian and Indian canoe pilots, serenading Oyampi village at Camopi.
3. "EKA EPU PAH" Sung by Oyampi boys. Initiation and festival music recorded at Trois Saut.
4. "MYA AI" Recorded at Trois Saut.
5. "ENGA TOIA-LE" Recorded at Trois Saut.
6. "EPI MO PO U PI YA YA YA" Recorded at Trois Saut.
7. METAL FLUTE Melodic Tune "LA-KEL" by KWI-O-LI. Recorded at Trois Saut.
8. METAL FLUTE Animal and bird influences. By KWI-O-LI.

The songs, "Vaval" and "Ola Missieu," having a characteristically Carnival theme, one of revelry and celebration, were adopted from the Creoles.

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HAUT OYAPOK
Oyampi and Emerillon
Indian Tribes,
French Guiana,
South America**

RECORDED AND ANNOTATED BY DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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MUSIC OF THE HAUT OYAPOK

Oyampi and Emerillon Indian Tribes, French Guiana, South America

Notes by David Blair Stiffler



Oyampi

Isolated from civilization by the rapids and waterfalls of the Oyapok River in French Guiana, two Amerindian tribes, the Oyampi and Emerillon, continue to live in seclusion, hunting, fishing and food gathering as they have for centuries before the white man came. In the absence of encounters with the outside world, they have developed through ritual, a style of music inspired by their close relationship with nature and the jungle.

Living on the upper region of the Oyapok River, the natural boundary between Brazil and French Guiana, the indians rely solely upon their hunting and fishing skills for survival. This area was untouched by the white man until the French explorer de Baube et Ferre explored the Oyapok to its source in 1831. Since that time the only outside contact that the indians have is the occasional manuver by the French Foreign Legion, stationed in Kourou, or the sporadic scientific and administrative missions sponsored by the French Government that occasionally travel up the river.

There is however one outpost manned by a handful of Gendarmes and their families at the confluence of the

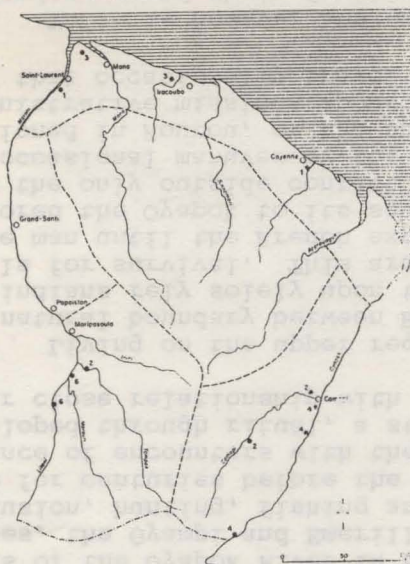
Campoi and Oyapok rivers. This station, in the territory known as Inini, houses a dispensary, a helipad and a two-way radio. It is also home for the Oyampi indians who number approximately 120. In the nearby village of Edouard on the banks of the Camopi river live another tribe of Amerindians called the Emerillons. The Emerillons are part of the same language group as the Oyampis, the Tupi-Guarani family. They live in adjacent settlements and are governed by a headman whose name is Monpera. Their population is now up to about 90 persons following an epidemic that previously almost wiped out the entire tribe. The tribe was down to almost 60 persons but due to the medical assistance provided by the French government the trend was reversed and the Emerillon now have the highest birthrate among all of the indians in French Guiana.

Further upstream on the Oyapok river, near its source in the Tumuc Humuc mountain range, lies the village of Trois Saut. It is inhabited exclusively by the Oyampi indian tribe who number about 150. Between Trois Saut and Camopi on both sides of the Oyapok river live several families of nomadic indians who have chosen not to be part of village life.

Historically the Oyampis were believed to have originated in Brazil near the region around the middle Xingu river. They were thought to have fled from the Portuguese across the Amazon up the Jari river and into French Guiana in the 18th century.

Aside from the men's hunting and fishing, for subsistence there is one other major activity carried on by the women of both tribes. That activity is cultivating and preparing Manioc. Manioc or Cassava, known along the Oyapok as Quoc, their chief food staple, is prepared from the tuberous root and made into a starchy flour or grainy meal that serves as the basis for their diet.

FRENCH GUIANA AND ITS INDIAN GROUPS



- 1 Arawak
 - 2 Emerillon
 - 3 Galibi
 - 4 Oyampi
 - 5 Palikur
 - 6 Wavana
- community borders



From the Quoc an intoxicating beverage is produced by fermenting the grain in large wooden drums. This manioc beer or beverage is called Cashiri and it plays an important role in all of the tribes' ceremonial rites and celebrations.

Of all of the tribes' ceremonies, probably the most important is the manhood or initiation rite, for it prepares the male youth with art of endurance and survival. This ritual, that takes place every 3 or 4 years, has two stages, commencing with a feast in which the participants dress in costumes made from long feathers of the scarlet Macaw and called a Calimbe. The youth dance and sing continuously for about 2 days, all the while drinking Cashiri. The ceremony is continued until there is none left to drink. This is facilitated by induced vomiting.

The final and most difficult phase of the ritual is the ant ordeal which is called the Marake. The Marake entails more dancing, singing and drinking up to the final climax where a basketry frame woven in an animal pattern, with live stinging Tocanderra Ants (Cryptocerus Atratus) is placed against the initiate's body.

The test is to withstand and endure the pain of the ants stinging and biting without crying out or withdrawing. After the ordeal is successfully completed, the boys are led back, often in a semiconscious state, to rest and recover in their hammocks. The remainder of the ordeal requires that the initiates practice archery while undergoing a fast of small fish and birds. Their heads are shaven and their bodies painted with the dye of the Roucou plant. The older boys and men taunt the initiates with offers of food that they must refuse.

The selection of music recorded at Trois Saut is typical of the ceremonies that have been described. The chants of the young boys are sung over and over again during the ceremonies in various repetitions.

The recording at Campoi offers a rare view of the introduction of Creole music and customs into an Amerindian village. The recordings were made at a time that corresponded to Carnival in Brazil. The music and custom was introduced by the men who made the provision and medical runs to St. Georges, a border crossing for Brazil. Periodically the indians who pilot the canoes must wait downstream at St. Georges for a day or more and have established relationships with the creole population living there and naturally adopt some of their cultural traits.



Oyampi home



Emerillon

The songs, "Vaval" and "Ola Missieu," having a characteristically Carnival theme, one of revelry and celebration, were adopted from the Creoles.

"OLA MISSIEU" no translation, thank you father, mother, enjoy today, tomorrow life is over.

"OLA MISSIEU"

Merci papo
Ola Missieu
Merci maman
Ola Missieu

Moi alle avec blanc
O avec noir
Ola Missieu

Moi alle cousin o ba mail cousine
Ola Missieu
Moi alle cousine o ba mail cousin
Moi alle papa o bail mama

Ola Missieu

A dans comic, pas demain
Ola Missieu

Fini demain i en a tomain
Ola Missieu

A dans pays pas ni des rois
Ola Missieu

Fini des rois i manouaoua
Ola missieu

A dans pas ni de ca
Ola Missieu

Fini des papli no gropa
Ola Missieu

A dans pays pas ni demain
Ola Missieu

Fini demain i en a guomain
Ola Missieu

"Vaval" Sung about a girl who has left her home and family despite a good life.

"VAVAL"

Vaval nous a quitte
Malgre a vie e belle
Malgre tout a qu'il a dit

Et qu'a quitte nous
Vaval nous a quitte

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Mr. Stiffler, an artist and designer living in New York City, has spent time in the Far East, North Africa, Europe, and Latin America doing documentary and cultural research.

SPECIAL THANKS:

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