

Ayiti Cheri

traditional Haitian folk song, arranged by Don Fallick

Gentle Calypso rhythm: 1/4 note = 100

Instrumental Intro:

G7

(DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up / DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Verses:

G7

A-yi-ti cher

C

i _____

pi

Gen

bon

so

-

le _____

/ DAMP _____ /

DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

bel

pe

-

i

pa - se

F

ou

nan

G7

pwen _____

bon

riv - ye

e

bon

pye

bwa _____

/ DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Fòk mwen te

ki

-

te ou _____

pou mwen

An

-

ba

pye

bwa _____

/ DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

te

ka - pab

com - pran

C

va

-

lè

ou

ki tou - jou gen _____

bon

lon

-

bwaj _____

/ DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Fòk mwen te

le

-

C7

se

ou _____

pou te

Gen

bon

ti

van _____

/ DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

How to play the Calypso Strum:

The rhythm is syncopated in three phrases per measure (stressed beats in CAPS):

DOWN-down-up down-DOWN-up DOWN-up

To get the timing right, you have to run the three phrases together fluidly. Strum some of the down beats with your middle finger, and some with the thumb, like this (two measures):

/	DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up								/	DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up								/
	F	T	F	F	T	F	F	F		F	T	F	F	T	F	F	F	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

It works more smoothly if you move (or twist) the entire right hand, in time with the “finger” strokes.

However, the words do not begin on the first beat of the measure. There’s a damped strum, and an instrumental rest first: (stressed syllables shown in CAPS)

[----introduction----] / [strum] [----- rest-----] [start Calypso strum]																
(D-d-u, d-D-u-D-u) / DAMP								/	DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up							
								A-YI-ti cher - I_____ pi								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

The damped strum is done as a regular, DOWN, accented strum, but damp it off, short, with the palm of the right hand, to give a staccato effect. Then, begin singing, but don’t start the strum until indicated.

The lyrics are slow, but the Calypso strum is fast. In 8/8 time, each measure / shown between slashes / contains 8 eighth-notes. Two eighth-notes = 1 quarter-note, and it’s the quarter-notes that are counted on a metronome. In this song, there are 100 quarter-notes, or 200 eighth-notes per minute! There are fewer than three syllables per measure, so the guitar is going more than four times as fast as the lyrics, which makes them seem very slow and lazy:

Intro:

/	DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up								/	DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up								/
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

Verse:

G7								C															
A-YI-ti cher								I_____ pi															
/ DAMP _____ /								DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								
								F								G7							
BEL pe - I pa - se								OU nan PWEN_____															
/ DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /								DOWN-down-up, down-DOWN-up-DOWN-up /															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8								

Kreyòl - English Vocabulary

kreyòl	sounds like	French root	English translation
a la	ah la	voila	behold!, What a...!
anba	on-BAH	en bas	beneath, under
apresie	a-pray-see-EH	apprécier	appreciate
ayiti	a-yee-TEE	Haiti	Haiti
bay	buy	-----	to give
bel	bell	belle	beautiful
bon	bone	bon	good
bondye	bone'd-YAY	Bondieu	God
cheri	sher-EE	cherie	dear
compran	comb-PRAWN	comprendre	understand
e	eh	et	and
fòk	folk	il faut que	must
freche	fresh-EH	fraîché	coolness
gen	genn (hard G)	gainer	there's
kapab, kab	cop-OBB	capable	can
ki	key	qui	who, which
kite	key-TAY	quiter	to leave, to depart
lese	less-EH	laisser	to leave alone
lonbwaj	lone-BWAZH (z as in azure)	l'hommage	shadow
mwen, m'	mwa (a as in cat)	moi	I, me, to me
nan pwen	non-PWA (a as in cat)	n'en point	not a bit
nou	new	nous	we, us, you (plural)
o	oh	O	Oh
ou	ooh	tu	you (singular)
pase	passAY	passer	exceeds
pei	payEE	pais	country
pi	pee	plus	more
pou	poo	pour	for
pyebwa	p'yay-BWAH	pied-bois	trees
rivye	reeve-YAY	rivière	river
sa	sah	ça	that
santi	sahn-TEE	sentir	feel
se	say	c'est	is, am, are
sole	so-LAY	soleil	sun
te	tay	été	<i>past tense indicator</i>
ti	tea	petit	little, a little
toujou	too-ZHOO	toujours	always
valè	vah-LEH	valez	value
van	vanh	vent	wind
vreman	vray-MANH	vraiment	true, truly
ye	yay	----	to mean
yon	yone	un	a, one