

# No Calypso for Monty—Just Jazz

By JACK LLOYD

*Of The Inquirer Staff*

You may or may not have heard about Jamaican music. Thanks to the efforts of such people as Johnny Nash and Paul Simon, there has been more than a little talk these days about reggae music. The trouble is no one quite knows just what reggae music is.

Monty Alexander isn't saying, either. Not that Monty doesn't know. But reggae, really, is more of a feeling, and Monty isn't that much concerned with definitions.

"You can't define reggae any more than you can define jazz," he said prior to a performance at Just Jazz, the 21st and Arch sts. jazz room.

And he made a solid point. Monty Alexander is living proof. Even though he is a native of Jamaica and was raised in the traditions of calypso and, yes, reggae, Monty Alexander is a jazz musician through and through.

It worked out this way because at an early age Monty heard the music of people such as Nat King Cole and Louis Armstrong.

And after this calypso —

not to mention reggae — never stood a chance.

Monty came to this country at the age of 17, which is just about 10 years ago. He met with immediate success, thanks largely to the fact that one of the first persons to notice his work at the piano was Jilly Rizzo, who runs a saloon in New York and is a very close pal of Frank Sinatra.

But then none of that really matters. It serves only to introduce Monty Alexander to those who may not have heard of him before.

What counts is that Monty Alexander is a superb musician, but there is hardly any mystery over the fact that after 10 years of making the round of jazz spots in this country—and that includes many of the better jazz spots—Monty Alexander is not among the more commercial jazz names around.

His music, in short, is not an easy study. As just Jazz MC Jim Brisbane fretted after

his introduction, "I'm afraid that he might be over the head of a lot of the people here."

Well, Brisbane's concern was a legitimate one. To say that Monty Alexander's music is an exercise in free-flight jazz is putting it mildly.

Monty does not obey the tried and true rules. He is not readily accessible. Hell, there's a strong possibility that you won't even recognize the melody. In some quarters, this is a cardinal offense.

But then there is something majestic about that free-flight. The music soars. Backed by Bobby Durham on drums and Gene Wright on bass, Monty Alexander's keyboard work takes off in high gear and never settles back down to earth.

There is a non-stop flow of music, and there is hardly any doubt that Monty Alexander is among the more innovative forces in jazz these days.

As for reggae, well that's for all of those Americans who are running down to Jamaica these days to capture the sound. Monty Alexander headed North for his influence.

## Swimming Deer Caught in Pacific

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (UPI). — Anglers aboard the New Vera II on July 10 made a unique catch while fishing out on the Pacific Ocean, according to the state department of fish and game.

They saw a doe swimming about a half-mile off Muir beach in Martin County. The deer, described in good shape, was hauled aboard and turned over to the department which released the animal in the nearby hills.

# Remember..?

