

life

Roaring Lion a hit on Santana's new album

The evergreen Carlos Santana and singer Buika.



RAY FUNK

On Carlos Santana's new album, *Africa Speaks*, the song that Rolling Stones asserts is most likely to be the hit is *Breaking Down the Door*. It was the second single released back in April on a special Record Store Day vinyl release. At the same time he released a vibrant music video on YouTube, further pumping interest in the song, now with almost a million views. Santana recently performed this calypso on fatal domestic violence on Jimmy Kimmel Live.

If you look in the album booklet for the composer credit for this runaway hit, you will find is a list of six who have never been in the same room: "Carlos Santana, Manu Chao, Buika, Drew Gonzales, Ivan Duran & Rafael de Leon." The last is, of course, Trinidad's calypso great *Roaring Lion* (1908-1999). So how did they all get composer credit for this composition? The answer is that as music artists arrange, sample, and are inspired by other works and include lyric or melodic fragments that are traceable to other compositions, giving credit where credit is due results in longer and longer lists of co-composers.

The earliest source material for this piece is a *Roaring Lion* calypso Tina recorded in March 1938. Tina recounts from a male perspective a breakup after a tumultuous relationship which a hook line in the chorus notes, "Who is it you had, breakin' down the door?". Drew Gonzales created a new calypso from the music and chorus of *Lion's* calypso but from a woman's perspective imagining a very different situation, a tragic death of a woman killed by her abusive husband.

*He called her sugar and spice,
Bought her everything nice,
And she ignored her best friend's advice
'cause he had money, words like honey,
Never considered the price*

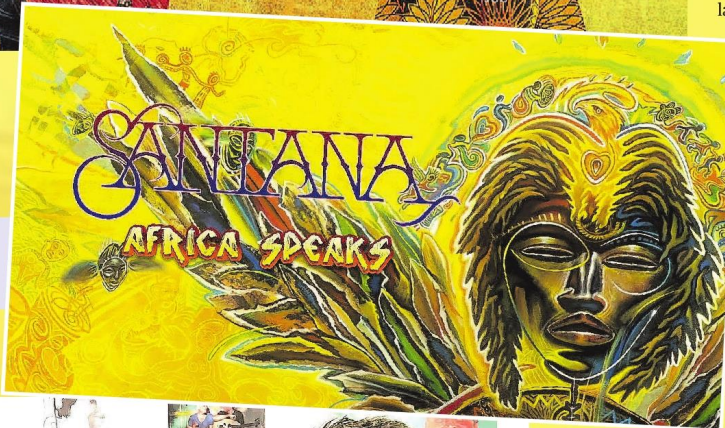
Today, Gonzales can't recall exactly what inspired the answer song to *Lion's* original. "I grew up very close to some very difficult and abusive marriages, but to be honest, I am not sure what it was about

the refrain of *Lion's* old *lawway* which prompted me to think of a tale of domestic violence and murder hidden behind the façade of affluence and respectability. Perhaps it was just the haunting catchiness of the melody." It became the most popular song from the album, picked up on a world music anthology and played on a leading radio show in England.

Born and raised in Diego Martin, Gonzales grew up in Canada. He ended up in Toronto and formed a ground-breaking group called *Kobo Town* in 2004 with a pan Caribbean take on calypso featuring his original compositions. *Kobo Town* has been an award-winning group in Canada, successful touring North America and Europe. Gonzales developed a close relationship with Ivan Duran who went on to produce their second and third albums.

Duran is from Belize but now based in both Montreal and Belize. He started *Stonetree Music* in 1995 and already had a very successful world music label featuring artists from both the Caribbean and Central America including Aurelio, Andy Palacio and the *Garifuna Collective*. In 2015, Duran with Gonzales and Manu Chao collaborated to work on the production of *Calypso Rose's Far From Home*. The award winning album was certified Platinum in France and has brought her increased acclaim and *Kobo Town* backs her in North American gigs. One of the most popular tunes on *Far From Home* was her recording of *Abatina* with her special touches from all three producers.

Calypso Rose's recording caught the attention of Santana or his staff and he wanted his version to show his input with new arrangement and trademark guitar solo, thus in the end this long list of co-composers and even a new name for the song!



The cover of Santana's *Africa Speaks*



Calypso Rose is flanked by Drew Gonzales, left and Ivan Duran
PICTURES COURTESY RAY FUNK

VIDEOS

Kobo Town Abatina https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=27&v=kP11eAVF4dY

Calypso Rose Abatina <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNcGaYfa0o>

Carlos Santana with Buika *Breakin Down the Door* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J50spxMTwis>