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File under post-colonial calypso rock:

Kobo Town brings the past to the surface on *Where the Galleons Sank*

Drew Gonsalves was on a boat when the idea came to him. The **Kobo Town** bandleader was heading out on the *Gulf of Paria*, a pocket of the Caribbean Sea which stretches between Trinidad and Venezuela, when he spotted the rusted wreck of an old barge beneath the surface.

"Looking down I was struck by how much of our history - like that sunken vessel - lies buried under waves, its outline barely visible in the blue shadows", the Trinidadian-Canadian songwriter observes in his liner notes to Kobo Town's long awaited third album, ***Where the Galleons Sank***. Gonsalves continues: *"Beneath this much traversed patch of ocean lie Spanish galleons, slaving ships, pirogues (fishing boats), oil tankers and U-Boat submarines – all covered by that vast water which serves as both a barrier and bridge between our islands and the wider world."*

The barriers and bridges built by the colonial rule that governed Trinidad have long been at the heart of Drew Gonsalves' much acclaimed writing. On "Galleons", he sets out to raise some of that hidden past to the surface. He named his band Kobo Town after the historic neighborhood in Port-of-Spain where calypso was born. Over the past decade, the Toronto-based musician has reinvigorated and reimagined *calypso*, infusing this Caribbean folk music with reggae, ska, and an array of contemporary sounds to create Kobo Town's driving, joyous calypso rock.

On his new release, Gonsalves continues to explore 500 years of history through his Trinidadian lens, armed with his trademark wit and gift for melody. Belizean producer **Ivan Duran** - integral to the success of 2013's *Jumbie in the Jukebox* - is once again manning the console, creating a warm, percolating, richly layered sound. The making of "Galleons", which was recorded in Montreal, was delayed when Gonsalves was asked to team up with **Manu Chao** to co-write and tour with Trinidadian star **Calypso Rose**, whose new album has gone platinum in France.

As on Kobo Town's two previous outings, "Galleons" is filled with buoyant music that stimulates both body and mind; propulsive, infectious grooves are juxtaposed with incisive lyrics that expose human folly and our tendency to repeat our mistakes. Part poet, part correspondent, Gonsalves delivers compelling dispatches from events both real and imaginary. "King Sugar" recounts the end of the sugarcane export which shaped the Caribbean, reminding us that today's extraction economies may not last forever. "Karachi Burning" is a first-hand account of the fiery expressions of grief after Pakistan's prime minister **Benazir Bhutto** was assassinated. "Smokestacks and Steeples" is a remarkable overview of the forces that shaped much of modern mankind - ingeniously crammed into a 3-minute pop song!

Kobo Town is a vehicle for taking Gonsalves' penetrating calypso journalism to the dance floor but, on "Galleons", another, more spiritual, side of the affable front man is also on display. "Before the Day Star" sees Gonsalves deliver a moving tribute to the human spirit, and the hushed final track "As They Sleep" paints an scene of perfection, serenity and gratitude as the singer watches his children sleep. The exquisite album closer is made all the more arresting as the very last note of the record is one of ambiguity and uncertainty. As if to say, don't take anything for granted. Enjoy it all while there's still time. www.kobotown.com