

ENTERTAINING IDEAS

Have A Marvelous Musical Evening

(NAPSA)—When it comes to having fun with friends, adding a few new twists to an old idea can make your party a hit...a musical hit, that is, if you consider hosting a sing-along party.

Here are a few tips that can help:

- You can rent a karaoke machine or just make your own music, singing old and new favorites around the piano or along with vinyl on a turntable, CDs or computer downloads—or just go a cappella and lift your voices in song.
- Get a few songbooks in different genres. (You may want to take a good look at some of the words before you all start singing them.) You'll probably want to avoid rap or patter songs, which can be complicated to sing. Consider show tunes, country songs, American standards, pop tunes and the long popular calypso. It's always been "in" on Caribbean islands, and in the United States, "Calypso" was not only the first million-seller album in the 1950s, the genre can still be found today in more kinds of entertainment than many people realize.

In fact, the man known as the Father of Modern Calypso, Irving Burgie, is still playing and singing in the genre at the age of 93.

Although Burgie was born in Brooklyn, New York, his mother was from Barbados and he authored that country's national anthem in the 1960s. He's probably best known, however, for such songs as "Day-O," "Jamaica Farewell," "Yellow Bird," "Island in the Sun" and dozens more.

You can get a 36-tune collection of his music scored for piano and a CD of many of his most popular hits—all of them a delight to sing along with—at Amazon and Barnes & Noble and on his website, www.irvingburgie.com. There, you can also find Burgie's autobiography, so you can read up on the man and the music.



Dinner guests singing along with the calypso hit "Day-O" was a popular part of the movie "Beetlejuice."

- Consider a singing competition. Divide your guests into groups and see which can sing louder, softer or most dramatically. Try singing songs but leaving out a common word such as "love" or "you." Compete over who can create the funniest pastiche in the shortest time. Or have the groups sing rounds or call and response.
- Record yourselves on tape or film. Playing it back during the party can be a lot of fun.
- Serve light snacks and noncarbonated drinks. You don't want the food to interfere with the singing. When it comes to deciding whether to serve beer, wine or liquor, think about your guests and determine whether the alcohol will make their singing better or worse—and which you'd rather.

Finally, just have a singing good time.