I. ARTICLES

ASPECTS OF SLAVE LIFE IN BARBADOS: MUSIC AND ITS CULTURAL CONTEXT

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I. Introduction

This article[1] describes the musical and dance forms and activities found among Barbados slaves, delineates the sociocultural contexts in which these occurred, and indicates the African and European cultural influences, as well as changes, in musical and dance traditions from the middle of the seventeenth century to the Emancipation period.

Sidney Mintz has recently summarized a view that is becoming increasingly prevalent among students of Afro-American culture history, and with which we readily agree:

> The ancestors of Afro-Americans could not transfer their cultures to the New World intact.... [but] The daily job of living did not end with enslavement, and the slaves could and did create viable patterns of life, for which their pasts were pools of available symbolic and material resources. (Mintz 1970: 7-8.)

Although Caribbean scholarship has not, in general, devoted a great deal of effort to detailed investigations of these "patterns of life," there is abundant evidence that slave cultures existed in all of the West Indies, and some studies have provided considerable documentation on various aspects of these (e.g. Handler 1971a; Mintz and Hall 1960; Patterson 1767).

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[1] This a modified version of a paper first presented at the Third Conference of Caribbean Historians, held at the University of Guyana, April 15-17, 1971. Information from primary sources was gathered while Handler held research grants from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the American Philosophical Society (Johnson Fund), and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The sources are described in J. S. Handler, *A Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627-1834* (Carbondale, 1971).

Yet, in a recent book on Barbados, an anthropologist states, as a major thesis, that

> Under the conditions of the slave plantation, [slaves] were able neither to re-establish African culture *nor to develop new independent patterns*. With emancipation, they could have had no choice but to accept the [English] culture that already existed in the island (Greenfield 1966: 171; our italics).

Commenting upon this thesis and the general approach to Barbadian sociocultural history taken by its author, Handler has written:

> Greenfield's account gives the impression that under slavery the mass of Africans and their descendants pursued their daily plantation tasks and not much of anything else; upon being emancipated they developed a culture. But Africans did not arrive on the shores of the New World with blank minds onto which were impressed seventeenth-century English culture patterns in the 1830s. Although the social system of the slave society was harsh and highly restrictive, slaves developed a complex of behavioral patterns that by any anthropological characterization was cultural. (Handler 1969: 337).

The present paper affords a glimpse into one area of slave cultural life. We do not pretend that this paper, in and of itself, constitutes a refutation of Greenfield's thesis, but we are confident that the materials offered provide ample illustration of its untenability.

Musical forms and expression, including songs, dances, and instruments, comprised one of the more prominent complexes that can be identified in Barbadian slave culture. "The fondness of the Negroes for music," wrote William Dickson (who had lived in Barbados in the late eighteenth century) "is too well known to need support" (Dickson 1789: 74; see note 9) and the great value that slaves attached to music was consistently noted by both earlier and later observers of island life. In general, evidence for music and dance as integral parts of slave culture occurs throughout the period of slavery and from as early as the middle of the seventeenth century. Their existence from such an early period, as well as their clear identification with African patterns, must be interpreted as reflecting the prominence of music and dance in the African cultures from which the slaves came.

An occasional European observer responded positively to some stylistic elements in slave music, but most responded negatively. This is not surprising in view of the inferior status that Western Europeans generally accorded the artistic and intellectual capacities and behaviors of Africans (and their descendants) as well as their tendency to react adversely to non-European musical forms in particular. "It is important to remember," Ralph Ellison has written in commenting on early observations by whites of slave music in the United States, "that they

saw and understood only that which they were prepared to accept" (quoted in Mintz 1970: 3. In general, the racist and ethnocentric attitudes expressed in our sources pose a number of problems in extracting information on Barbados slave musical life. Since all of our information is provided by Europeans, it suffers an array of cultural bias, naive judgement, and superficial description that is characteristic of most contemporary writings concerning the way of life, values, and behavior of slaves.

Although our sources span the period of slavery from the middle of the seventeenth century to the 1830s, they are of highly variable quality and the information on music and dance is fragmentary and scattered. The specific limitations of the sources with respect to ethnomusicological data will be delineated below. At present it can be noted that despite the consistency with which the sources directly state or allude to the importance of music and dance in slave life, they rarely provide sufficient detail to permit a comprehensive description of the various forms of musical expression and the wider contexts in which they occurred.

II. Laws and the Sociocultural Context of Music

Before considering in detail the nature of slave musical life and its sociocultural contexts, we discuss those portions of the island's slave code which specifically treated or had direct bearing upon musical expression.

"The leading idea in the Negro system of jurisprudence," stressed an essay on the West Indian slave codes in the late 1780s, "is that, which was the first in the minds of those most interested in its formation; namely, that Negroes were Property, and a species of property that needed a rigorous and vigilant Regulation" (Parliamentary Papers 1789b). Among other activities, legislation regulated the slaves' dances and their use of musical instruments. The laws did not prevent, as the essayist noted, "slaves assembling for their amusement. [But] these restrictions proceeded from the experience, that rebellions had often been concerted at dances and nightly meetings of slaves from different plantations." This was a common pattern in the West Indies (Schuler 1970: 21-22), and although the essay uses the Jamaican slave code as a specific illustration, the comments can be applied to Barbados as well.

The ever-present fear of slave revolts among the island's whites, especially in the seventeenth century, was reflected in the anxieties they showed when slaves gathered in large groups and/or travelled away from their plantations. Concerns such as these, as well as the discovery of actual plots, were reflected in the second clause of a 1688 law which

prohibited slaves, except under certain specified conditions, from leaving their plantations "at any time, especially *Saturday*-nights, *Sundays*, or other *Holidays*," and also penalized masters who permitted their slaves "at any time to beat drums, blow horns, or use any other loud instruments," and/or who "shall not cause his Negro-houses once every week to be diligently searched, and such instruments if any be found, cause to be burned;" masters were also prohibited from allowing "any public meetings, or feasting of strange Negroes, or other slaves in their plantations" (Hall 1764: 113-114).

Thus, dances were not forbidden, but the law's intent was to frustrate communication among slaves from different plantations as well as to prohibit the musical devices "which may call together, or give sign or notice to one another, of their wicked designs and purposes" (Hall 1764: 113). The use of musical instruments for communication in revolts is noted in an account of a thwarted slave plot, "hatched by the Cormantee or Gold-Coast Negro's" in 1675, which mentions that "trumpets... and Gourdes [were] to be sounded on several hills, to give notice of their general rising" (Anon 1676: 9-10). Although we have no direct evidence for West African horn and/or drum signalling being used in conjunction with revolts, the 1688 ban on drums would seem to imply such usage. Or, it may have been that the ban on drums was enacted because of the possibility, rather than the actuality, of their use. Sloane, for example, noted that in late seventeenth century Jamaica, a similar prohibition on the use of drums was a result of the slaves' "making use of these in their wars at home in Africa, [and thus] it was thought too much inciting them to rebellion, and so they were prohibited by the customs of the island" (Sloane 1707: lii). (In a comprehensive recent article on slave revolts in the West Indies, Schuler does not mention, one way or the other, the role of musical instruments in rallying the slaves; Schuler 1970).

In any event, the 1688 Barbados law had limited effect; slaves not only continued to leave their plantations, often with the intent of attending dances, but also drums, of one kind or another, were employed for many years during the slave period (see section III). Nonetheless, the restrictions of the 1688 law remained in force until the mid-1820s, when they were modified by the island's "Slave Consolidation Act."

Passed by the legislature in 1826, the "Slave Consolidation Act" (Parliamentary Papers 1826-1827: 205-230) attempted to make the island's slave code more relevant to contemporary conditions and meet the ameliorative demands of the British government. It repealed former laws, modified dormant ones, removed inconsistencies, and introduced new measures. Among the numerous clauses of this law were a few that specifically treated musical activities.

Clauses 9 and 10 implicitly acknowledged the importance of slave dances, as did the 1688 law, but attempted to control more rigorously the conditions under which they took place. Fines were levied against plantation managers or owners who "shall suffer any slaves to assemble together... to beat drums, or blow horns, or shells, or to use any loud instruments." However, the law specifically permitted plantation managements to allow their own slaves to gather, and slaves "not their own to assemble with them, ... for dancing and diverting themselves in the mill yard" or elsewhere on the plantation. A dance, however, could only take place if plantation management personnel were present during "and for two full hours after" its termination, insured that it ended by nine o'clock in the evening, and prohibited the slaves, after the dance was over, from reassembling to continue their activities in their houses, settlements, or elsewhere on the plantation. In addition to the regulations governing plantation dances, persons who owned or occupied houses in the towns were prohibited from allowing "slaves to assemble and dance" on their properties "without having previously obtained the sanction of some justice of the peace."

The above regulations were drafted in the early and mid-1820s, at a time when there was an almost continual apprehension among the island's whites that a slave revolt might break out. In addition, whites had not forgotten a major revolt which had erupted on the night of Easter Sunday in 1816; during the months before the event some of its planning was formulated at the dances (Barbados Assembly 1818: 26, 36, 53). In general, it is clear that whites felt groupings of slaves, especially in times of stress, could be potentially dangerous. In fact, clause 11 of the 1826 "Slave Consolidation Act" provided that the Governor or Commander-in-Chief could, by proclamation and for whatever reason and length of time, prohibit slave owners from allowing their slaves "to assemble together and dance" — an obvious contingency in the event of a threatened revolt.

The laws reveal more about white fears than they do about actual slave behavior, but they nonetheless point to a number of features of musical life and allude to the importance of musical expression.

In 1814, Browne reported that "After labor was over for the day, [the slaves] would assemble together in groups on the plantations, or about the town and spend the hours, well nigh into midnight, singing and dancing to the music of their rude instruments" (Browne 1926: 112-113; see also Dickson 1814: 361-362). In general, although few sources specifically mention dances during the work week, it appears, from the context of references to music, that not only dancing, but singing and the playing of musical instruments took place under a variety of conditions and that musical activity was an on-going feature

of daily life. However, the major forms of organized musical activity occurred on Sundays and other holidays, and it is references to these days that appear most frequently in the sources.

It was not until 1826 that Barbadian law specified that slaves should be released from work demands from Saturday night to early Monday morning. Popularly known as the "Sunday and Marriage Act," this law was passed as part of a general attempt to reform the island's slave laws, and specifically to facilitate the Christian education of slaves (Parliamentary Papers 1826-1827: 277-278). But release from plantation labor on Sundays had been established in custom at least by the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1647-1650, Richard Ligon noted that on Sundays plantation slaves "have the whole day at their pleasure; and the most of them use it as a day of rest and pleasure" (Ligon 1657: 48), and his observation is repeated, in one form or another, by others during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (e.g. Alleyne 1741; Godwyn 1680: 145; Handler 1967: 67; Holt 1729).

In the earlier periods, plantation managements were far from universal in their adherence to this customary norm, and throughout the slave period there were deviations from it, but the practice became sufficiently well established, and by the middle of the eighteenth century it was firmly entrenched in island life. In addition, slaves were generally released from labor on holidays such as Christmas day, Easter Monday, and Good Friday, and occasionally on special days of thanksgiving to commemorate deliverance from events such as hurricanes or epidemics. Also, depending upon work demands associated with sugar production and the inclinations of individual managements, plantation slaves were sometimes released from work on Saturday afternoons (Barbados Council 1824: 108-109, 116; Barbados Council 1889: 219; Berg 1818; Dickson 1789: 11; Dickson 1814: 433; Parliamentary Papers 1789a: 26; Parliamentary Papers 1789b; Parliamentary Papers 1790: 331-332; Pinckard 1806: 290; Wharton 1768).

What this amounted to was a number of days when slaves (especially plantation field laborers) were more or less free to follow their own inclinations, and engage in organized musical activities. William Dickson, confirming the observations of a late eighteenth century Barbados planter, reported that with Sundays and holidays, plantation slaves in general had about 55 days off during the year (Dickson 1814: 433). This estimate is independently confirmed by our calculations from the daily work logs of two plantations in the year 1796-1797; on one of these plantations, the slaves had a total of 54 days off, while on the other, they were released for at *least* 56 days (Newton Estate).

In addition to Sundays and Christian holidays, by the second decade or so of the nineteenth century, other types of holidays were given by

some plantation managements. The most important of these, the "Harvest Home," was based on an old English custom of the same name and general function (Chambers 1899: 376-380; Leach 1949: 484); the festival was held to celebrate the termination of the sugar cane harvest. The earliest reference to the "Harvest Home" in Barbados deals with the Codrington plantations, owned by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. In 1819, an ameliorative policy in slave management and treatment was implemented on these plantations and around this time "A new holiday was instituted ... in the merry 'harvest home'" (Bennett 1958: 103, 110-111). By the early 1820s, the festival was a regular feature of the plantations' operations:

> At the end of the crop, a day is given up entirely to festivity; [the slaves] have a dance in the [plantation] yard, which the chaplain, attorney, and others, invited for the occasion, witness; and a comfortable dinner is provided for them. (Anon 1823: 408).

It is difficult to establish if the "Harvest Home" was widely observed, but it definitely was not restricted to the Codrington plantations (See Barbados Council 1824: 113; Jordan 1824: 8; Lowther Plantation); in post emancipation times it came to be known as "crop-over" (Collymore 1957: 28).

In addition to the "Harvest Home," and other "festivals" given by the plantations on holidays such as Christmas, slaves occasionally may have been given a holiday in celebration of an event in the life of a plantation owner or member of his family. Rolph, in 1833, mentions being invited by a plantation owner to "witness a festival amongst his Negroes, called Joan and John"[2] which was "held on the occasion of the birthday" of the owner's daughter (Rolph 1836: 21). This is the only reference we have to a festival commemorating such an event; since it relates to such a late period we assume that festivals of this kind were not only uncommon, but of a very limited temporal distribution during the slave period.

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[2] It is difficult to be certain if the "Joan and John" was the name of a festival and/or a specific kind of dance. The latter is suggested by Alexander who in 1831 observed a crowd gathering around a group of musicians — "those who wished to dance the Joan-Johnny stepped forward." See J. E. Alexander, *Transatlantic Sketches*, Vol. I (London, 1833), p. 158. In our only other primary source reference to this name, a stipendary magistrate in 1836 reported on societal changes "within the last few years:" among these were "The Sabbath day is now respected: no Sunday markets, no Joans and Johnnies on that day." See J. B. Colthurst, "Journal as a Special Magistrate in the Islands of Barbados and St. Vincent, July 1835-August 1838." (Boston Public Library, M.S.U.1.2.), pp. 24-25. Collymore mentions the "Jo and Johnny. A dance which used to be performed by labourers on the sugar plantations at crop-over (Harvest home)." See F. A. Collymore, *Notes for a Glossary of Words and Phrases of Barbadian Dialect* (Barbados, 1957), p. 49. If, indeed, this was a type of dance, during the slave period its performance was clearly not restricted to harvest festivals.

In general, then, no holidays for slaves were legally established until, as noted, an 1826 law specified exemption from labor on Sundays. But the anticipation of holidays and weekends, as well as the temporary relief they actually brought from the tedium and oppressiveness of daily life, was extremely important to the island's slaves. As the Rev. Thomas Wharton remarked in 1768, the slaves

> Have not only their days of recreation, and *for any purpose* deny them these intervals of their diversion, and you cannot take a more effectual step to break their hearts. Sundays in particular they claim to themselves, and to be deprived on that day... would be a task to them more abundantly cruel than the labour of a week (Wharton 1768, italics in original; see also Pinckard 1806: 263-264).

The importance that slaves attached to Sundays and holidays is reflected not only in direct observations, such as that quoted above, but also in the value they attached to their dances and other activities on these days, and the efforts they made to dress more elaborately, especially when attending the dances. It is not necessary here to detail the manner in which slaves were clothed; suffice to note that plantation managements provided minimal clothing allowances, and that slaves frequently attempted, by a variety of means, to augment these allowances. However they were able to increase their limited wardrobes, the distinction they made between Sunday and weekday dress appears early in the sources; for example, in 1654, Antoine Biet reported "The slaves go around almost entirely naked, except on Sundays when they put on some worthless canvas breeches and a shirt" (Handler 1967: 66). Later observers confirm this general pattern, although the dress became more elaborate towards the end of the slave period (see below). In general, then, there is much evidence to warrant the assumption that the value slaves attached to free time over the weekends and holidays was much greater than that perceived by even the more liberal Europeans who commented on their way of life.

It is, of course, extremely difficult to penetrate the consciousness of the slaves and assess in detail what their holidays meant to them in personal terms. Certainly these days provided a *degree* of freedom which contrasted sharply with the drabness and regimentation of every-day life; thus holidays (along with the various activities pursued on these days) temporarily reduced the severity of the system for the slave, and by so doing helped to perpetuate the slave-system itself. This point is forcefully made by Frederick Douglass when, in his celebrated autobiography, he reflects upon the slave system he had personally experienced in the American South; in general terms, we feel his observations are equally applicable to Barbados:

> I believe those holidays were among the most effective means in the hands of slaveholders of keeping down the spirit of insurrection

> among the slaves. To enslave men successfully and safely it is necessary to keep their minds occupied with thoughts and aspirations short of the liberty of which they are deprived. A certain degree of attainable good must be kept before them. These holidays served the purpose of keeping the minds of the slaves occupied with prospective pleasure within the limits of slavery.... Before the holidays there were pleasures in prospect; after the holidays they were pleasures of memory, and they served to keep out thoughts and wishes of a more dangerous character. These holidays were also used as conductors or safety-valves to carry off the explosive elements inseparable from the human mind when reduced to the condition of slavery....
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> Thus they became a part and parcel of the gross wrongs and inhumanity of slavery. Ostensibly they were institutions of benevolence designed to mitigate the rigors of slave-life, but practically they were a fraud instituted by human selfishness, the better to secure the ends of injustice and oppression. Not the slave's happiness but the master's safety was the end sought. It was not from a generous unconcern for the slave's labor, but from a prudent regard for the slave system. (Douglass 1962: 147-148.)

In effect, Douglass points to how holidays functioned as social control devices for the plantocracy; they helped, along with the state apparatus and a variety of *other mechanisms*, to keep the socio-political system stabile in the face of a potentially threatening population. During holidays slaves were permitted a variety of activities of their own choosing which alleviated the oppressiveness of the system; even with the legal restrictions placed upon some of these activities, they functioned to minimize recalcitrance and encourage compliance with the authority structure.[3]

These activities ranged from those directly related to their material welfare (such as cultivating their small garden plots, trading and marketing in the countryside and towns, making and repairing their houses and household furnishings) to those which were more purely recreational, such as visiting and sexual courtship, idle gossip and relaxation, drinking, and gambling. Many of these activities could, and did, take place in association with what was perhaps one of the most important organized social diversions for slaves throughout most of the slave period — the weekend and holiday dance.

Although, as noted previously, there is evidence that slave dances were held during the week, the major ones took place on weekends and holidays, both in the plantation areas and the towns. In fact, much

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[3] We are aware that slaves developed a variety of devices by which they reacted to, and sometimes directly challenged, authority, and that acquiesence and compliance were often not as the planters would have wished; but here, it must be emphasized, we are only concerned with suggesting how holidays, and their associated activities functioned as *one* of the mechanisms that helped maintain the slave system.

of the information available on slave music in general implicitly or directly emphasizes its occurrence on these days, especially within the context of the dance. There is some evidence that plantation managements would sometimes forbid Sunday dancing (Parliamentary Papers 1789a: 26), but, in general, the consistency with which weekend and holiday dances are reported from earliest times, indicates that prohibitions were not very common and that dances played a central role in the slaves' cultural life.

"On Sundaies in the afternoon," Richard Ligon observed, "their musick plaies, and to dancing they go" (Ligon 1657: 50; see also Handler 1967: 62; Oldmixon 1741: 134-135). In the late eighteenth century, Dickson reported:

> On Sundays and holidays it is common to see many hundreds of Negroes and mulattoes dancing and making merry.... in the environs of the towns.... if not too hardly treated, they enjoy the dance and the song on the plantations, where I have seen very large companies of field-people making merry. (Dickson 1789: 93-94).

Over subsequent decades others also recorded the popularity of the weekend dances (e.g. Barbados Assembly 1818: 46, 49, 51; Brunner 1823; Shrewsbury and Nelson 1821).

The weekend and holiday dances were fundamentally recreational, but musical expression was also an integral part of the slaves' system of religious beliefs and practices. While ethnographic interpretations given in the sources must be viewed with caution, the descriptions clearly associate dance behavior and music with religion and, as will be discussed later, point to the fundamentally African nature of the more essential features of slave musical life. For example, a Swiss doctor, who visited the island in 1661, reported that "the slaves perform their idolatrous ceremonies and customs in honor of their God.... These ceremonies consist of particular dances" (Gunkel and Handler 1969: 7; see also Godwyn 1680: 33). Close to seventy years later, an Anglican minister described his frustrations in converting slaves to Christianity. He felt their adherence to their own set of beliefs and practices was a major impediment; in particular he wished that

> sufficient care was taken to restrain the Negroes of this island ... from what they call their plays (frequently performed on the Lords days) in which with their various instruments of horrid music howling and dancing about the graves of the dead, they [give] victuals and strong liquor to the souls of the deceased to keep them (as they pretend) from appearing to hurt them. (Holt 1729.)

Griffith Hughes, describing slave funerals in the 1730s and 1740s, reported that "most young people sing and dance, and make a loud noise with rattles, as they attend the corpse to its interrment" (Hughes 1750: 15).

Funeral processions and burial ceremonies, including the musical activities associated with them, were a long-standing feature of slave life and they continued to be of fundamental importance throughout the slave period (e.g. Dickson 1814: 159; Pinckard 1806: 270-273; Rolph 1836: 38). In addition, we have concrete evidence for the continuance of grave-site rituals (which could also take place on Sundays and holidays), in one form or another, to propitiate the spirits of the dead. For example, Orderson, a white Barbadian creole, in his novel *Creoleana,* which contains many observations on social customs at the end of the eighteenth century, writes "it was no unusual thing to see, as each Sunday returned, hundreds — nay, thousands of these poor deluded creatures 'throwing victuals', and with drumming, dancing and riot practising frenzied incantations over the graves of their deceased relatives and friends!" (Orderson 1842: 37-38; see also Colthurst: 48; Dickson 1814: 159; Maddin: 22). The importance of musical expression in religious practices associated with the dead, is also reflected in the ninth clause of the 1826 "Slave Consolidation Act"; this forbade plantation managements from permitting "the funeral of any slave within such plantation ... after the hour of seven o'clock at night, or any heathenish or idolatrous music, singing, or ceremonies on any such occasion" (Parliamentary Papers 1826-27: 210).

A third major area in which music, particularly singing, occurred was while individuals or groups pursued their tasks on sugar plantations or in other labor contexts. "Many of the Negroes," the Rev. B. Porteus wrote, "are frequently heard to sing in their rude and artless way at their work" (Porteus 1807: 182). A British army officer stationed on the island testified in 1823 that the slaves sing "when off their, and even when at, labour" (Barbados Council 1824: 91). And Benjamin Browne described the scene one moonlit evening in 1814 at the careenage in Bridgetown: "Boats were plying about in every direction, and the rude, but not unpleasing songs of the sable oarsmen fell softly on the ear"; in general, he found that "The Negroes sing when they are about any occupation, and when their labor is over" (Browne 1926: 92-93). Work songs among plantation field gangs are also noted in a manuscript transcription of "An African song or chant": "A single Negro (while at work with the rest of the gang) leads the song," and each verse is followed by the "chorus of labouring Negroes as they proceed in their work" [Plate IIa; note 9].

In summary, music, in one form or another, occurred within the recreational context of group activities on weekends and holidays, mid-week evening and night-time entertainments, and plantation festivals; it was probably also associated with moments of solitary leisure. In addition, music formed part of the slaves' system of religious practices, primarily in funerals and grave-site rituals, and often occurred in conjunction with the performance of labor demands both on and off the plantations.

III. Instruments, Vocal Music, and Dance

Instruments

The sources allow some concrete identification and discussion of musical instruments, but the information is generally very brief and superficial. There are few comments on instrument manufacture, performance techniques, and the musical contexts of instrument usage.

Instruments may have been played on a solo basis for personal entertainment, but our evidence indicates that in most cases they were played within a group, such as a band, wherein several types were played simultaneously. The bands themselves were usually small, varying in size from two to four musicians (Alexander 1833: 158; Dyott 1907: 94-95; Gunkel and Handler 1969: 7; Hughes 1750: 16-17; Oldmixon 1741: 135; Pinckard 1806: 264-265; Rolph 1836: 21; Plate I), although, as Pinckard remarked, "On great occasions the band is increased by an additional number" (Pinckard 1806: 265). Some instrumental groups or bands may have been created on an *ad hoc* basis for specific occasions, while others may have been more formally organized; in later periods, at least, band leaders were recognized (see below), but we have no information on the particulars of this role. In addition, there is no information illuminating details such as age, occupation, training or social status of musicians. An illustration in Waller's book (Waller 1820; Plate I) shows both females and males playing instruments, but direct references or implicit statements in the sources lead us to suspect that most musicians were males (Alexander 1833: 158; Ligon 1657: 48-49; Parliamentary Papers 1789b; Pinckard 1806: 264-265; Rolph 1836: 21).[4]

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[4] "As in all African and African-derived cultures," Herskovits has noted, "drumming is for men." See M. J. Herskovits, "Drums and Drummers in Afrobrazilian Cult Life," in F. S. Herskovits, ed., *The New World Negro: Selected Papers in Afroamerican Studies* (Bloomington, 1966), p. 193. In Barbados slave culture, there is suggestive evidence that proficiency in drumming was recognized in nicknames. In a 1741 list of Codrington plantation slaves, see S. Smirk, "A List of Negroes that are Baptized and not

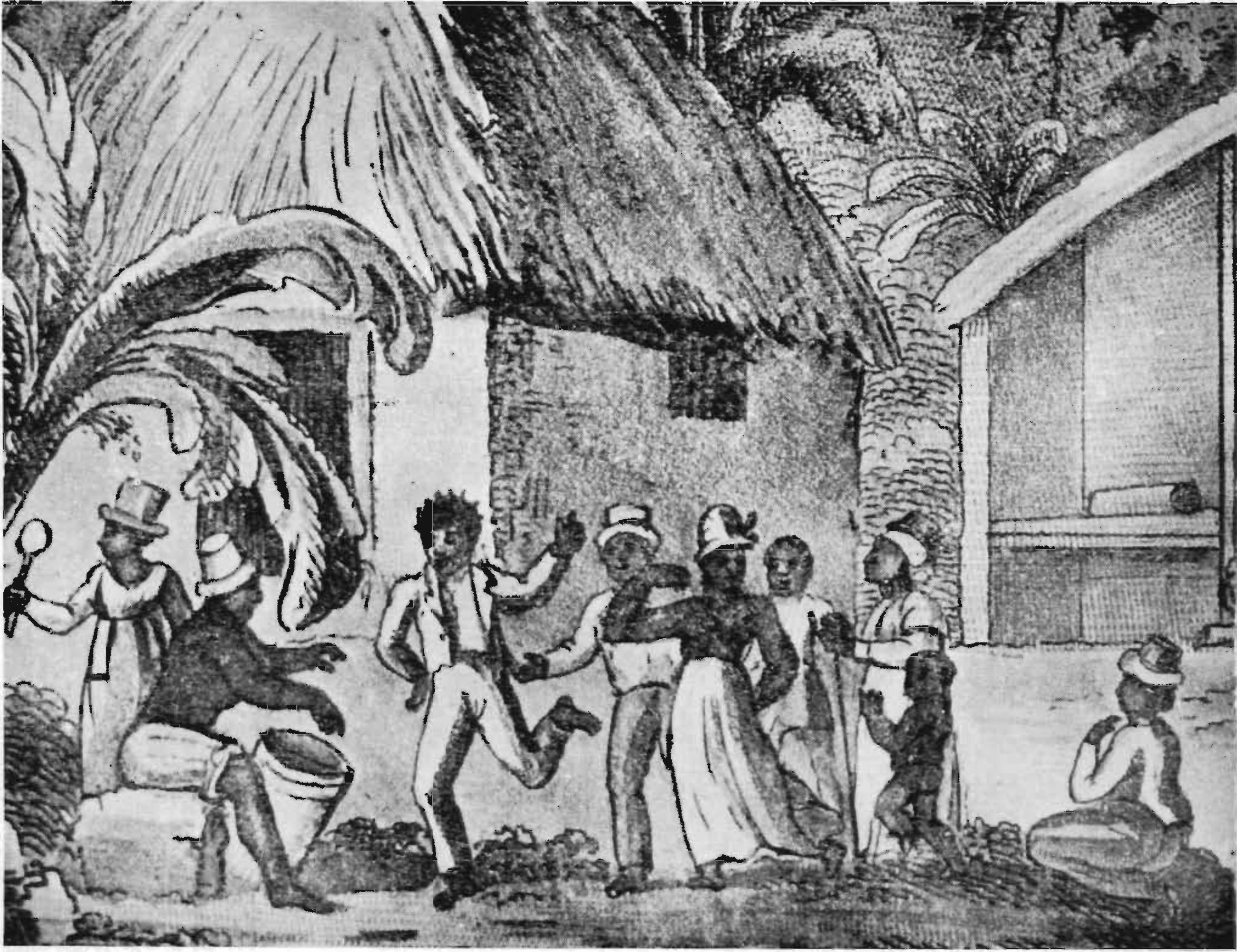

PLATE I: Enlarged section of illustration "Slaves in Barbadoes" [Waller 1820, facing p. 20]

An African Song or Chant, – taken down in Notes by G. S. from the information of Dr. Wm Dickson, who lived several years in the West Indies, & was Secretary to a Governor of Barbadoes. A Single Negro (while at Work with the rest of the Gang) leads the Song, and the others join in Chorus at the end of every verse. (Generally in a minor Key – suppose E with minor 3d.)

(Key Note) Massa buy me he won't killa me Oh – Massa buy me he won't kill a me Oh Massa

buy me he won't kill a me Oh 'for he kill me he ship me regulaw ⊕

Chorus of Labouring Negroes as they proceed in their work.
NB a is sounded by them like the french ai or English a

a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a a

'For+ I live with a bad Man oh la – 'for I live with a bad Man Obudda-bo ×

2 For I live with a bad man oh la – 'for I woud go to the River side Regulaw ⊕

Chorus a a a a a a a a O &c

An-té Nanny, Open da door, Pa-ter want da

sour-sop soup, An-té Nanny, open da door,

Pa-ter want da sour-sop soup, Run, Mr. Cunningham,

run for you life, run Mr. Cunningham,

run for you life, run Mr. Cunningham,

run for you life, Pater da come wid a o-pen knife.

PLATE II: a. "An African Song or Chant".—b. "Anté Nanny", see note 9

The classification system generally accepted as the most useful for describing musical instruments is that of Hornbostel and Sachs (1961), wherein, on the basis of acoustic principles, musical instruments are separated into four major categories: idiophones, membranophones, chordophones, and aerophones. All four of these categories are represented by Barbadian slave instruments, and in the following descriptions we present whatever information is available on name, construction, and manner of playing these instruments.

Idiophones

Idiophones are instruments whose bodies vibrate to produce sound. Those reported include rattles, various types of drums, shell and possibly stone clappers, rasps, the xylophone, and tambourines; in addition, various parts of the human body were used as idiophones.

Rattles appear to have been one of the most common slave instruments. Constructed from either calabash or gourd shells which were hollowed out and partially filled with small pebbles, seeds and/or reeds before being mounted on a stick handle (Alexander 1833: 158; Browne 1926: 112-113; Pinckard 1806: 264-265; Rolph 1836: 21), they were held in the hand and shaken "with great force of arm" (Pinckard 1806: 264; see also Alexander 1833: 158; Plate I).

Idiophone drums: Slit log drums which are highly characteristic of West Africa and were also present in Jamaican slave culture (e.g. Beckwith 1929: 212; Herzog 1964; Nketia 1963; Patterson 1967: 234-235), are not reported for Barbados. However, Pinckard indicates that the idiophonic possibilities of the membranophone drum were sometimes realized. He describes the drum as consisting of "a long hollow piece of wood, with a dried sheep skin tied over the end;" one player "sitting across the body of the drum, as it lies lengthwise upon the ground beats and kicks the sheep skin at the end ... with his hands and heels" and another player "sitting upon the ground at the other end, behind the man upon the drum beats upon the wooden sides of it with two sticks" (Pinckard 1806: 264-265). (Howard attributes an African origin to the method of playing a drum by straddling it so that its head protrudes from between the legs of the player [Howard 1967: 4]). An idiophone drum was reported in 1796 by Dyott; he observed music being played

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Baptized on the Codrington Plantation ... 6 April 1741" (London: United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Archives) Letter Books, Vol. B8, No. 55, one of the baptized men has the Christian name John, and the "plantation name" of "Drummer"; one of the baptized "boys" bears the same two names (although he may have been the former's son — it was not uncommon for children to have the same name, often in dimunitive form, of one of their parents, e.g., Little Mary).

by using "the head of a cask or tub on which they beat with something like a drum stick" (Dyott 1907: 94-95).

Pottery vessels were also employed as idiophone drums: Oldmixon reports "a Jinkgoving, which is a way of clapping their hands on the mouth of two jars" (Oldmixon 1741: 135); later in the eighteenth century, Dickson noted that "the black musicians, ... have substituted [for the banned "Coromantin drum"] ... a common earthen jar, on beating the aperture of which, with the extended palms of their hands, it emits a hollow sound, resembling the more animating note of the drum" (Dickson 1789: 74). This instrument, spelled Jenkoving, was also reported for early eighteenth century Jamaica (Cassidy and Le Page 1967: 245), and indicated, but not named, by Sloane in the late seventeenth century (Sloane 1707: xlix).

Clappers: In 1661, Sporri reported slaves "making clapping noises by knocking two rocks together" at their dances (Gunkel and Handler 1969: 7). There is the possibility that these were rock gongs which are known from parts of West Africa, as well as Western Europe, including England (Merriam 1964: 282-283). Studies of Jamaican folk culture (e.g. Beckwith 1929: 83, 147-148) consider the use of such stones (employed during wakes and for the summoning of spirits) as African survivals. In the late eighteenth century Dyott observed the use "of two cocoanut shells, which they strike together in time with the tambourine" (Dyott 1907: 94-95).

Rasp: Oldmixon mentions "the Rookaw, which is two sticks jagged" (Oldmixon 1741: 135; see Cassidy and Le Page 1967: 385); no other information is available, but the sticks were undoubtedly rubbed together.

Xylophone: The presence of the log xylophone, which is typically West African (Hornbostel 1933: 285) was reported by Ligon in the middle of the seventeenth century (Ligon 1657: 48). Although he provides a relatively detailed description of the manufacture of this instrument by a slave he knew, we have located no other references that explicitly mention or allude to the xylophone. Because of the relative complexity and ready visibility of the instrument, we assume it would have at least been mentioned in other sources, and thus tentatively conclude that, for whatever reason, the xylophone was not a characteristic feature of Barbados slave culture.[5]

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[5] Recently Oliver has commented on the absence of the xylophone, or *balafon* in the United States; he suggests that it may have been intentionally suppressed "through the suspicion that, like the drums, it could be used as a means of communication and therefore as incitement to insurrection ... But it seems more likely that the instrument declined in North America because it was not encouraged and neither the making nor the use had the sanction of the slave-owners." See P. Oliver, *Savannah Syncopators: African Retentions in the Blues* (New York, 1970), p. 56.

Tambourine: Dyott (1907: 94-95) and Chapman (1833: 73) simply mention the tambourine, and Rolph observed a man "playing an instrument like a tambourine" (1836: 21); no other details are available.

Finally, the *human body* must not be overlooked as an idiophone; the evidence suggests that frequent hand clapping, foot stamping, and slapping parts of the body in time with music and dance were fundamental to slave music in general (e.g. Alexander 1833: 158; Ligon 1657: 50; Pinckard 1806: 264-267; see p. 26-32, dance).

MEMBRANOPHONES

Membranophones, or instruments containing a membrane capable of vibrating, are represented by drums. Although the lack of detail in the sources makes an itemized classification difficult, it is clear that the slaves employed single-headed, hollow log drums of various sizes, and played them in various ways.

The most frequently mentioned hollow log drum is one which was played vertically. Hughes describes it "which they likewise call a pump," (we have been unable to identify this word) as "made of an hollow trunk of a tree, about two feet high, and about a foot in diameter.... This is covered over with a goat's or sheep's skin," the skin serving as the vibrating membrane (Hughes 1750: 16-17; see also Gunkel and Handler 1969: 7). From all indications, the "Coromantin" drum, described by Dickson as "a most ear piercing instrument" (Dickson 1789: 74) was a hollow log, single-headed drum played in a vertical position; referring to the 1770s and 1780s, he noted that it is "strictly prohibited by law [but] I have once or twice heard it beaten, for a short time, in Barbadoes" (Dickson 1814: 364). While Dickson does not describe the "Coromantin" drum, it appears to resemble one noted for Jamaica which was also prohibited on that island because of its possible use in rallying slaves to revolt (Sloane 1707: lii).

The "Coromantin" drum may have been similar to at least one type of talking drum found in West Africa, i.e., the membranophone variety, rather than the slit log idiophone signal drum. The Akan-speaking peoples of Ghana used the drums to give signals, relay texts of oral traditions, and convey messages (Nketia 1963: 103). Among the various uses of the Ashanti talking drums was the "summons to take up arms on declaration of war" (Rattray 1923: 257).

Although we have no direct information on the construction, size variation, or method of head attachment of hollow log drums, there is some information on performance technique. Hughes observed that the drum he calls "a pump.... is always played upon with a stick, or the fingers" (Hughes 1750: 17), and in Plate I a drum is shown held between the knees and legs so that the head points away from the body. In the

latter case, the drummer is playing the instrument with both hands, a technique which Howard considers to be of African origin (Howard 1967: 12).

Information from Ligon and a statement by Oldmixon suggest that some of the single-headed drums that were played in a vertical position consisted of closed vessel bodies. Both authors label this drum a "kettle drum," noting that it was played in groups consisting of different sizes; neither offers any information on construction. According to Ligon, the slaves'

> Musicke.... is of kettle drums, and those of severall sises; upon the smallest the best musitian playes, and the other come in as chorasses: the drum all men know has but one tone; and therefore varietie of tunes have little to do in this musick; and yet so strangely they varie their time, as tis a pleasure to the most curious eares, and it was to me one of the strangest noyses that ever I heard made of one tone. (Ligon 1657: 48.)

Oldmixon simply notes "They have two musical instruments, like kettle-drums, for each company of dancers" (Oldmixon 1741: 135), but Ligon's observations clearly indicate that the antiphonal, call-and-response pattern so typical of West African music in general, and characteristic of Barbados slave singing as well (see p. 23-26), was also utilized in the production of instrumental sounds; one drummer would begin by himself, and then be answered by others in the group. The rhythmic patterns remain unclear, but judging from Ligon's reaction, it is obvious that their variety and combination, with the resultant rhythmic polyphony, produced an over-all effect that was foreign to someone accustomed to the sounds of European music.

As noted in our discussion of idiophone drums, Pinckard provides evidence which suggests that hollow log drums were sometimes played horizontally rather than vertically, and that these drums simultaneously functioned as membranophones and idiophones. While Pinckard is the only one to mention a drum of this type, the drum which Hughes terms a "gambay" and contrasts with the "pump" (referred to earlier) may have been a similar form (Hughes 1750: 16). Hughes provides no details on the "gambay," but judging from an eighteenth century description of the Jamaican slave "goombah,"[6] the Barbadian "gambay" may also have been a single-headed membranophone-idiophone which was played horizontally.

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[6] Quoted in F. G. Cassidy and R. B. Le Page, *Dictionary of Jamaican English* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 202, who also record spellings such as "gamby," "gombay," "goombah." They also note that "goombah" refers to a drum, but that "various types have borne the name."

CHORDOPHONES

Chordophones are instruments that contain vibrating strings; in Barbados they included banjo or lute-like instruments, and the violin or fiddle. No information is available on the latter instruments: Dickson mentions "the nocturnal dancing, fiddling ... of the town Negroes" (Dickson 1814: 361); a visitor in 1830 saw a "slave festival ... [with] fiddling and dancing" (Anon 1830: 6), and in 1831 Alexander observed an instrumental group which included "two Negro fiddlers" (Alexander 1833: 158). From such references it is apparent that these instruments were used in conjunction with others in the accompaniment of singing and/or dancing, and we assume they were of European derivation.

The name for the other string instrument is spelled in a variety of ways, but the sources provide very few details on it. Oldmixon reported the "bangil, not much unlike our lute in anything, but the musick" (Oldmixon 1741: 135), Hughes simply notes that one of the slave instruments was the "Banjau" (Hughes 1750: 16), and Dickson found the "banjay" to be "a rude kind of guitar" (Dickson 1814: 364); for Pinckard, "their ever-delighting Banjar.... [is] a coarse and rough kind of guitar" (Pinckard 1806: 264-265), and Chapman refers to "The deep-toned banjoe" (Chapman 1833: 73). The generality of these references prevents a detailed discussion although the wider contexts in which they occur suggest that the banjo was fundamentally an African instrument (see Oliver 1970: 21, 22; Sachs 1965: 205); it may also have resembled one or more lute-like instruments reported for Jamaican slave culture in the 17th and 18th centuries.[7] The general function of the banjo was similar to that of the fiddle, that is, as a member of an instrumental group which accompanied singing and dancing.

AEROPHONES

Aerophones are wind instruments that enclose a column of air which is vibrated to produce sound. The slave instruments in this category are rather indeterminate; there are few references to them, and none of our sources in general indicates their use in musical

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[7] For example, Sloane wrote "They have several sorts of instruments in imitation of lutes, made of small gourds fitted with necks, strung with horse hairs, or the peeled stalks of climbing plants or withs. These instruments are sometimes made of hollow'd timber covered with parchment or other skin wetted, having a bow for its neck, the strings ty'd longer or shorter, as they would alter their sounds." See H. Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands Madera, Barbados, Nievis, S. Christophers and Jamaica* (London, 1707), pp. xlviii-xlix. See also Cassidy and Le Page, *Dictionary of Jamaican English* p. 26.

contexts. Hughes describes the conch shell trumpet being employed "instead of sounding-horns or bells, to call out the slaves to their work in the morning" (Hughes 1750: 275-276). A 1675 slave plot included the intention of using "trumpets ... and gourdes" to rally the insurrectionists (Anon 1676: 9-10), and for such reasons a 1688 law prohibited the use of "horns" (Hall 1764: 113) and one in 1826 confirmed the ban against blowing "horns or shells" (Parliamentary Papers 1789a: 210). Chapman, in his poetic description of a slave dance, mentions "The sound of flutes" (Chapman 1833: 72), and although there is ample evidence for the existence of these instruments in Jamaican slave culture (Beckwith 1929: 210-211; Cassidy and Le Page 1967: 132), in general our impression is that to whatever degree they were present in Barbados, they played an insignificant role in musical activities.[8]

Combination of Instruments and the Instrumental Group

As we noted earlier, there probably were occasions when solo instruments were played, but all evidence indicates that most instruments were used within the context of a group, such as a band. Although instrumental groups rarely included aerophones, there may have been some composed entirely of drums, and in certain contexts, such as funeral processions, a number of rattles were probably used without other instruments. However, groups were usually composed of instruments representing several of our major categories. Drums, of one kind or another, are reported so consistently in the sources that one must conclude they were the *sine qua non* of slave instrumental groups. Along with the drum was found one of the idiophones, usually the rattle, and often a chordophone, most frequently some type of banjo or lute-like instrument. These instruments, it can reasonably be conjectured, comprised the ideal or "typical" slave instrumental group found playing at major musical activities, such as the Sunday and holiday dances.

Although there are few details about performance techniques, the evidence for rhythmic polyphony and the call-and-response pattern among the "kettle drums," as well as that relating to other areas of musical life (see p. 23-26) suggests that complex rhythmic interaction was generally characteristic of instrumental groups. In addition, as indicated by the reactions of early writers, the sounds resulting from individual instruments, as well as the overall complexity of the sound combinations, were foreign to Europeans.

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[8] Chester, who visited Barbados in the late 1860s, reported that "large shells are used by the Negroes of the present day ... as trumpets," but provides no further details. See G. J. Chester, "The Shell Implements and Other Antiquities of Barbados," *Archaeological Journal* 27 (1870): 46.

There is also very little information on the instrumentalists themselves. However, while some sources indicate separate identities for instrumentalists, vocalists, and dancers, others refer to instrumentalists who simultaneously sang or danced. This concurrent involvement in other musical activities was probably related to situational context as well as momentary mood or compulsion.

Vocal Music

As for other areas of musical life, the information on vocal music is generally sparse and ethnocentric. Vocal music, as we have indicated, was part of an on-going musical tradition which had significance in recreational, labor, and religious contexts. There is no concrete evidence that sex was important in differentiating vocalists in these contexts. Instruments usually accompanied singing in recreational and religious activities, such as dances and processions, but unaccompanied song was probably more typical in work situations. Instrumentalists sometimes sang as they played, and there is suggestive evidence that, depending upon the context, vocalists also simultaneously danced, or at least engaged in active and expressive body movement, such as swaying, hand clapping, and foot stamping. Vocal music undoubtedly occurred in solo form, but the sources emphasize group sound production; although we have no estimates on the size of vocal groups, the number of singers appears to have been flexible, responding to factors such as situational context and individual mood.

In view of the ethnocentrism and limitations of the sources, any attempt to describe the stylistic features of Barbadian slave vocal music must be cursory. The sources occasionally refer to harmony, melody, rhythm, volume, structure, and vocal effects, but the information is generally very scant, and there is none on stylistic features such as range, intervals, and tonal systems. Two musical transcriptions are available, but both must be viewed with caution.[9] In addition, there

[9] Aside from the inherent dangers of transcribing sounds, especially if they are generally alien to the transcriber, we are uncertain about the conditions under which one of the transcriptions was made and the musical training of both transcribers. In the Sharp manuscript, it is noted that the song was "taken down in notes by G. S. [Granville Sharp] from the information of Dr. Wm. Dickson." See G. Sharpe "An African Song or Chant," Hardwicke Court Manuscripts (England: Gloucester Record Office), Plate IIa. Dickson arrived in Barbados in 1772 and lived on the island for about thirteen years. He was a critic of slavery, see W. Dickson, *Letters on Slavery* (London, 1789), and *Mitigation of Slavery in Two Parts* (London, 1814); he apparently came in contact with Sharp after his return to England. By the late 1780s, Sharp was one of the leaders in the British abolitionist movement. Since Dickson left Barbados in 1785 or 1786 and Sharp died in 1814, we assume the manuscript dates from sometime within this period (the song itself,

are, of course, no musical recordings of the slave period, and we have no information on contemporary Barbadian folk musical forms which might help to elucidate the information in our sources.

With these major limitations in mind, one can observe that European commentators on slave singing were responding to stylistic features that were generally alien to their ears and consequently, we must assume, of fundamentally African derivation. For example, Sporri described slave singing as "terrifying shrieks" (Gunkel and Hadler 1969: 7), Oldmixon reported that instrumental playing was "accompanied with voices, in a most terribly harmonious manner," (Oldmixon 1741: 135; see also Ligon 1657: 52); for Pinckard, slave songs were "very simple, but harsh and wholly deficient in softness and melody," and sung "with all possible force of lungs" (Pinckard 1806: 264-265). Although Browne found that "some of their airs are exceedingly plaintive," at the dances instruments kept "time to their wild songs" (Browne 1926: 92-93, 112-113). In a relatively charitable vein, Dickson wrote that the slaves' "taste for melody and harmony, if it does not demonstrate their rationality, ought, at least, to be admitted as an argument in proving their humanity" (Dickson 1789: 74).

On the basis of the above, similar comments, the wider contexts in which they occurred, and the available musical transcriptions, a few limited remarks about stylistic features can be made. The sound of slave melodies [10] was essentially non-European; group singing was loud,

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of course, would date from, at least, Dickson's residence in Barbados). However, we do not know if Dickson recorded the musical notation *in situ* in Barbados and later transmitted it in writing to Sharp, or if Sharp made the transcription from information Dickson recalled; furthermore, if based upon recall, we do not know if the information was communicated to Sharp verbally, and then transcribed by him, or communicated directly in writing.

Wentworth's transcription was published in his descriptive account of the West Indies. See T. Wentworth, *The West India Sketch Book*, Vol. II (London, 1834); Plate IIb. He arrived in the islands in the early 1820s, and lived there for "several years." Although he visited Barbados, he appears to have spent little time there, and his observations are generally superficial and discursive. All he says about the song he transcribes is that it was sung by a "pretty mulatto wench who was whiling away time at her needle, and singing.... at the door of Miss Betsy Austin's hostelry.... All the information we could gain was, that Mr. Cunningham was a hero of other days who had been immortalized in song, ... we prevailed on Miss Julia to sing again, that we might commit piracy upon the compositon." See Wentworth, *The West India Sketch Book*, p. 282.

[10] Detailed analysis of our two musical transcriptions suggests that melodies (which were both major and minor) began on tones other than the tonic, and moved stepwise, especially in verse sections. Melodic range was wide, and interval skips emphasized the interval of a fourth. Phrases had variable contours, and were short, often following a structural pattern of A,B,A,B or a variant of it. Chorus sections were distinct from verses in range, contour, emphasized scale tones, and note types. The structural plan was strophic, i.e., the same music was used for each stanza.

and usually included spontaneous vocal effects, such as cries and yells. Melodies were based on clearly discernable short phrases or strophes, a pattern that Lomax would a tribute to Western European influence (Lomax 1970: 197). Structurally, verses usually alternated with choruses. Part singing was apparently rare, at least until the end of the slave period; however, occasional harmonies would have been produced by overlapping different structural sections and using the call-and- response pattern (see below; see Merriam 1962: 72-73 and Waterman 1952 for discussions about the role of harmony in African and African-derived music).

Ligon, in his description of slave drumming noted that "so strangely they varie their time, as tis a pleasure to the most curious eares, and it was to me one of the strangest noyses that ever I heard ...; if they had the varietie of tune, ... as they have of time, they would do wonders in that art" (Ligon 1657: 48). His remark, as well as information about dance steps and body movements, indicate that the fundamental rhythmic patterns of Barbados slave music consisted primarily in the simultaneous interaction of several different rhythms (or, rhythmic polyphony). The sources suggest that such patterns were also present in vocalizations, and that, in general, these patterns were unfamiliar to Westerners. Although the two musical transcriptions provide no direct information on rhythmic polyphony, both illustrate rhythmic flexibility at certain structural points.

Structurally, our evidence indicates that slave songs, especially those sung by a group, frequently utilized the call-and-response pattern. Commenting on songs in general, Browne wrote that "the words appear to be extemporaneous, and are sung by one or two voices, the whole gang taking up the chorus" (Browne 1926: 92-93). In a funeral he observed, Pinckard noticed that while the corpse was being buried "an old Negro woman chanted an African air, and the multitude joined her in chorus. It was not in the strain of a hymn, or solemn requiem, but was loud and lively" (Pinckard 1806: 271-273). The same pattern is apparent in the Sharp manuscript: "A single Negro (while at work with the rest of the gang) leads the song, and the others join in chorus, at the end of every verse" (Plate IIa). There were undoubtedly other structural features apparent in solo singing, but evidently in most cases of group singing the antiphonal call-and-response pattern was frequently followed; in this, one or several people started the song and developed it musically and textually through short phrases, while the group provided relief in a repetitive, recurring refrain that was positioned between verses or phrases.

The two texts shown in Plate II are structurally clear; each consists of a verse composed of four musical and textual phrases, a chorus,

another verse, and another chorus. We are uncertain about the full meaning of the texts. At a minimum, the Sharp manuscript appears to reflect concern with the master-slave relationship and ill treatment. Although the song reported by Wentworth may have been sung by a slave, the "Mulatto" woman, "Miss Julia," referred to was probably a free person. The song itself may be satirizing a sexual relationship with a white man — a not uncommon relationship during the slave period (Handler and Sio).

Four other texts from the same period are available: two are reported by Browne in 1814 (Browne 1926: 78-79); one by St. Clair in 1806-1807 (St. Clair 1834: 373-374); and one by Marryat in his novel *Peter Simple* (Marryat 1834: 275-276). These texts share features characteristic of the others, such as short phrases and clear rhyme schemes, but are textually through-composed, without chorus refrains, despite occasional repetitive phrases. The texts also appear to be satirical commentaries on local events, a pattern that was apparently common in Jamaican slave culture (Patterson 1967: 158, 254).

In summary, the direct information we have on slave vocal music only permits some limited generalizations. Singing occurred under a variety of conditions and in a number of cultural contexts. Songs could be sung individually or in groups, with or without instrumental accompaniment, by both male and female singers who could simultaneously play instruments or dance. Thus, the general contextual pattern of vocalization seems to have been highly flexible. Musically and textually, the strophic songs were structurally clear, and the antiphonal call-and-response pattern (which is of certain African derivation) seems to have been the predominant organizational force behind group singing. Stylistically, group sounds were characteristically loud and expressive and contained rhythmic, harmonic, and vocal effects which European observers generally found alien to their own musical traditions.

Dance

"The slaves," Pinckard observed in 1796, "are passionately fond of dancing" (Pinckard 1806: 263), and, as we noted earlier, all evidence confirms the fundamental importance of dancing and dances in slave cultural life. Dancing was not only an integral feature of religious rituals and activities, night-time and midweek entertainments, and plantation festivals, but also the weekend and holiday dance was probably the most important organized social activity throughout most of the slave period. Although the evidence permits a delineation of some of the organizational and contextual features of the dances, the sources are generally deficient on dancing *per se;* few descriptions are

of sufficient order to allow a detailed analysis of dance movements, and none permits a reconstruction of particular steps or dance figures.

In discussing some of the organizational features and general atmosphere of the slave dance, we emphasize those held on weekends or holidays. They were the most important in terms of the numbers of persons involved and are most consistently reported in the sources. For the dances, the sources convey the impression of often large throngs of people gathering and milling about, coming and going, some dancing and playing instruments, others looking on, chatting among themselves and engaging in other forms of social interaction. Speaking of the dances, Pinckard noted that the slaves "assemble, in crowds, upon the open green, or in any square or corner of the town" (Pinckard 1806: 264; see also Browne 1926: 112-113; Rolph 1836: 21, 32), and Dickson observed how "On Sundays and holidays it is common to see many hundreds of Negroes and mulattoes dancing and making merry;" these "scenes," he found, were common in the towns, and in the plantation areas "I have seen very large companies of field-people making merry" (Dickson 1789: 93-94; see also Shrewsbury and Nelson). There may have been favored and regular dance areas in the towns, and on the plantations dances could be held in the mill-yards or the slave villages themselves.

The special nature of dance days was reflected in, among other areas, the general animation and the dress of those attending. Although pro-slavery sources, in particular, undoubtedly exaggerate the nature and quality of slave dress on such occasions, they do point to the efforts slaves made to elaborate their dress and body ornamentation when attending the dances. For example, a plantation manager reported that at "dances and feasts ... [slaves] were well (and some expensively) dressed;" another noted that at their "parties and dances on Saturday and Sunday evenings ... they were most gaily attired" (Barbados Assembly 1818: 49, 51). "They display a great fondness for dress," Rolph observed, "and come to the dance with a profusion of ornaments and trinkets" (Rolph 1836: 32; see also Chapman 1833: 72-73; Parliamentary Papers 1790: 252). Many years earlier, Hughes had emphasized that regardless of ethnic origin, "all [slaves] agree in this one universal custom of adorning their bodies, by wearing strings of beads of various colours.... in great numbers twined around their arms, necks, and legs;" in particular, a lotion made from a local root plant was employed by "the Coramantee Negroes [to] annoint their skin by way of perfume, especially when they are to go to their merry-meetings, or public dances" (Hughes 1750: 16, 240). Sometimes status distinctions among slaves attending dances could be observed in their dress. The Rev. Thomas Rees, who was in Barbados for "five or six weeks" in early 1783 attended a Sunday dance; he "found a difference in those that

were dancing; some appearing better dressed than others.... They told me that those that were well dressed were domestic servants, and the others field slaves" (Parliamentary Papers 1790: 252).

Aside from the variety of social interaction that characterized the crowds, there were other activities at the dance not directly connected to musical expression. Wrestling is reported for earlier years,[11] there is some evidence for gambling which was a "very prevailing passion among the blacks" (Pinckard 1806: 269-270; see also Poyer 1801: 22-24), and although dances were probably not quite the "lively picture of Saturnalia" depicted by Chapman in his idyllic poem (Chapman 1833: 72-73, 105-106), there are many indications that drinking alcoholic beverages was far from uncommon — as, indeed, was the case in white creole culture.[12]

Although drinking apparently occurred at dances from the earliest

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[11] Ligon notes that "when they have danc'd an houre or two, the men fall to wrastle (the musick playing all the while).... And thus two or three couples of them are engaged at once, ... the women looking on: for when the men begin to wrastle, the women leave of their dancing and come to be spectators of their sport." See R. Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (London, 1657), p. 50. Oldmixon, reporting on conditions some fifty years later, confirmed that wrestling was associated with the dance. See J. Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America*, Vol. II (London, 1741), pp. 134-135. In our many references to slave dances and other recreational activities these are the only two that mention formalized wrestling between males, and the practice may have disappeared by the eighteenth century. In the 1720s in Jamaica, it might be noted, "wrestling was the most popular sport among [the slaves], in addition ... to the usual vigorous dancing." See O. Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery* (London, 1967), p. 232.

[12] A number of sources directly or indirectly point to the prominence of hard liquor, primarily rum, not only in purely recreational activities, but also in funerals, burial wakes, and grave-site rituals to propitiate the spirits of the dead. See W. Dickson, *Mitigation of Slavery in Two Parts* (London, 1814), pp. 361-62; R. Hall, *A General Account of the First Settlement and of the Trade and Constitution of the Island of Barbados, Written in the Year 1755*, E. M. Shillstone, ed. (Barbados, 1924), p. 13; J. S. Handler, "Father Antoine Biet's Visit to Barbados in 1654," *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* 32 (1967): 67; A. Holt, "Letter to Bishop Gordon, Barbados, 7 March 1729," Lambeth Palace Library, London, Fulham Papers, Vol. 15, folios 266-67; G. Hughes, *The Natural History of Barbados* (London, 1750), pp. 15, 36; P. Maddin, "Account of His Journey to the West Indies with Thomas Colley, 1779," Society of Friends Library, London, Miscellaneous manuscripts, Box W, p. 22; J. Ogilby, *America: Being the Latest and Most Accurate Description of the New World* (London, 1671), p. 380; T. Rolph, *A Brief Account, Together with Observations Made During a Visit in the West Indies, and a Tour Through the United States of America, in Parts of the Years 1832-33* (Dundas, Upper Canada, 1836), pp. 21, 36. This practice continued, despite laws, passed in 1692 and 1783, prohibiting the sale of "rum, or other strong liquors" to slaves or to free persons for the use of slaves. See S. Moore, *The Public Acts in Force; Passed by the Legislature of Barbados* (London, 1801), p. 239; W. Rawlin, *The Laws of Barbados* (London, 1699), p. 189.

times, we do not know of any regularized patterns governing the provision of alcohol and assume individuals brought what they could, however they acquired it. In later years, the intimate association of drink and food in cultural activities such as funerals, wakes, and grave-site rituals was apparently extended into the organization of, at least, some types of dances and the patterns governing the provision of refreshments became more formalized. By the early 1830s, Rolph, who had personally observed slave dances on several different occasions, pointed out how "They invariably make a collection for the president of their feast, who provides cake, wine, noyeau, and other refreshments; they certainly enjoy their dances in the fullest spirit of enjoyment" (Rolph 1836: 32).

It was customary for special foods to be distributed by managements at plantation sponsored festival-dances such as the "Harvest Home." However, only Rolph specifies that refreshments were distributed by some type of leader from among the slaves and implies that refreshments formed an integral part of the dance organization. Lacking other evidence, it is difficult to specify who this "president" was, how he was chosen or his role defined, and his role, if any, in organizing the dance itself. It is tempting to speculate that the "president" was a sort of sponsor or organizer of the dance, responsible for arranging refreshments and music; it may be that by this period some dances were organized by individuals who then expected and received financial compensation from the dance participants.

Payment to musicians, however, seems to have been a relatively long-standing practice. In the late 1780s, the island's governor reported that some Free Negro males were making a living as musicians (Parliamentary Papers 1789b), and it is difficult to assume that they did not play for slave audiences. More concretely, Pinckard, in a detailed description of a slave dance he observed in 1796, noted that of those persons actually dancing, each made "a small contribution to the band at the time of stepping into the circle" (Pinckard 1806: 266-267). And, in 1831, Alexander reported the same practice; one evening, near Bridgetown, he observed a small group of musicians around which "The crowd formed a ring, and those who wished to dance the Joan-Johnny stepped forward [and] presented the leader of the band with a bit" (Alexander 1833: 158).

What Alexander observed was apparently an *ad hoc* gathering; although dancing under such circumstances may have lasted for quite a while, it is much clearer that the weekend and holiday dances were of relatively extensive duration. In general, the sources give the impression that these dances would continue for many hours without interruption and throughout the day on Sundays and holidays, and also would last well into the late night and early morning hours (e.g. Browne

1926: 112-113; Dickson 1789: 93-94; Gunkel and Handler 1969: 7; Ligon 1657: 50; Oldmixon 1741: 134-135; Pinckard 1806: 264-267; Zippel 1834). In fact the 1826 "Slave Consolidation Act" specifically prohibited slave dances from continuing past nine o'clock in the evening, thus implicitly confirming that it was customary for them to extend beyond that time.

Rees observed that field and domestic slaves "danced in different companies" (Parliamentary Papers 1790: 252), but we have no other evidence, one way or the other, that such status distinctions markedly affected the organization of the dance and the involvement of its participants. With respect to status differences based upon sex, Ligon noted "On Sundaies ... to dancing they go, the men by themselves, and the women by themselves, no mixt dancing" (Ligon 1657: 50); however, by the time of Oldmixon's writing, some fifty years later, it was emphasized that this sexual division no longer existed (Oldmixon 1741: 134-135). In either event, dances were attended by both sexes, and the sources do not suggest that one or the other predominated.

The number of people at a dance could be quite large and many within the crowds probably moved their bodies in accompaniment to the rhythm of the music, but the number of people formally dancing at any given moment was apparently limited. Although early sources yield some information on dance movements, only the later ones convey an idea of the number of dancers and dance formations. For example, (Pinckard 1806: 264; Dyott 1907: 94-95; and Alexander 1833: 158) indicate that within the crowds it was customary to form a ring or circle around the musicians and those persons wishing to dance would step into this ring; as the dancers tired, they left the ring and were replaced by others, thus enabling the dancing to continue without interruption. (This pattern of replacement is also reported for Jamaican slave dancing, Patterson 1967: 234). Pinckard provides the most detailed and vivid description of dancing, and for this reason we quote it at length:

> forming a ring in the centre of the throng [the slaves] dance to the sound of their beloved music.... The dance consists of stamping of the feet, twistings of the body, and a number of strange indecent attitudes. It is a severe body exertion ... for the limbs have little to do in it. The head is held erect, or occasionally, inclined a little forward — the hands nearly meet before — the elbows are fixed, pointing from the sides — and the lower extremeties being held rigid, the whole person is moved without lifting the feet from the ground. Making the head and limbs fixed points, they writhe and turn the body on its own axis, slowly advancing towards each other, or retreating to the outer parts of the ring. Their approaches, with the figure of the dance, and the attitudes and inflexions in which they are made, are highly indecent: but of this they seem to be wholly unconscious, for the gravity — I might say the solemnity of countenance ... is peculiarly striking.... not a smile — not a significant glance,

> nor an immodest look escapes from either sex.... Occasionally they change the figure by stamping upon the feet, or making a more general movement of the person, but these are only temporary variations; the twistings of the body seeming to constitute the supreme excellence of the dance.
>
> For the most part only two enter the ring at a time, but, occasionally, as many as three or four! ... They circle, violently, together until one is tired, and when this escapes from the circle another assumes the place, thus continuing to follow, one by one, in succession, so as frequently to keep up in the dance, without any interval, for several hours. Both musicians and dancers seem, equally, to delight in the amusement. They exert themselves until their naked skins pour off copious streams. The band seem to be quite insensible to fatigue, for ... they increase their efforts, raising their voices, and beating the drum and the rattle, with additional violence. (Pinckard 1806: 264-267.)

Neither Pinckard's description nor statements given in other sources permit a meaningful discussion of sequential movements or dance patterns, but most sources (despite frequent ethnocentric evaluative comments) stress the bodily flexibility, rhythmic precision, and physical expressiveness with which movements and steps were executed. "These slaves," Hughes reported, "in some of their rude dances to music still ruder, use gesticulations very unseemly and wanton; at other times, they have a sort of Pyrrhic or Martial dance in which their bodies are strongly agitated by skipping, leaping, and turning round" (Hughes 1750: 16-17). Dyott, for whom the slave "dance is a kind of reel performed by two or three of each sex," found it "astonishing with what very exact movements they keep time, ... they display wonderful agility in their motions, [but] still there is so great an appearance of lasciviousness in the whole dance" (Dyott 1907: 94-95). "The motions of the dancers," Browne wrote, "were very graceful, and their attitudes picturesque, but generally they seemed to me, to be of a lascivious character" (Browne 1926: 112-113). Alexander reported how a dancing "couple would twist their bodies, thump the ground with their heels, and circle round one another" (Alexander 1833: 158), and Rolph's observations emphasized "dancing with the greatest agility, animation, and ... exhibiting ... great elegance and precision in their steps ... The extreme accuracy with which they preserve the time in the dance — their intense devotion to music — their extraordinary vehemence — the violence of their gesticulations are eminently characteristic" (Rolph 1836: 21, 32).

In summary, slave dancing was characterized by movements which utilized the entire body as an instrument of dance; the motions were active, and sometimes seemingly explosive in their use of actions such as stomping, leaping, and twisting. At all times the movements were agile and rhythmically precise, and constantly reflected coordination with instrumental and vocal music.

Although we feel comfortable in making some statements about dance movements, the sources do not provide sufficient detail to identify specific types of dances. As quoted above, Hughes implies two basic varieties, but his comment is too vague to be of much use; the same is the case with Dyott's observation that the "dance is a kind of reel" (Dyott 1907: 94-95). The "Joan and John" may have been a type of dance (see note 2), but extensive research has failed to yield any further information on it. Thus, although there may have been a number of specific types of dances, our sources do not permit their identification; if, indeed, there were a variety of types, it remains apparent that the basic bodily movements, delineated above, occurred in the performance of all of them.

The descriptions of dance motions, and data presented earlier regarding vocal and instrumental music, indicate the intimate relationship between instruments, voice, and dance in Barbados slave culture. Dances, in particular, involved concurrent vocal and instrumental sounds. The instruments, in combination with each other, produced a steady rhythmic beat and created several different levels of rhythmic patterns. The voices achieved overlapping harmonies, and provided sound contrasts in volume, harmony, textual sections, and vocal rhythm, which were further enhanced by simultaneous body actions such as hand clapping. The dancers added additional levels of complexity to the whole scene; they responded to the numerous sound levels of rhythmic interaction by a multiplicity of body movements which punctuated as well as elaborated the musical sounds. The end result, then, of the close relationship and interaction between instrumentalists, vocalists, and dancers was a highly complex musical scene which was understandably alien and often incomprehensible to Europeans.

IV. African Influences and Change

As we have frequently indicated in the preceeding discussion, there is abundant evidence to show that the most fundamental elements of Barbados slave musical life were African in form and origin. This conclusion is readily apparent even if one judges solely by the alien and exotic qualities that European observers, over a wide period of time, found in slave music; in one way or another, and by the very nature of their ethnocentricity, their comments indicate that what was being observed bore faint resemblance to the sounds, stylistic features, and dance movements of European traditions. For example, in 1796, Dyott found that "the Negro dances are most curious, and their music still more so" (Dyott 1907: 94), and in the same year Pinckard concluded his lengthy description of a Sunday dance with the observation that

in the "*tout ensemble* of the scene, a spectator would require only a slight aid from fancy to transport him to the savage wilds of Africa" (Pinckard 1806: 265). Their "dances were exceedingly laborious," wrote an American who lived in Barbados for six months in 1814, "I suppose of African origin" (Browne 1926: 112-113). As late as 1833, a Moravian missionary reported "a wild heathenish dance ... which continued all night" in the neighborhood of his mission station (Zippel 1834: 290), and during the same year an island visitor observed one of the musicians in an instrumental group "singing with contortions an African air" (Alexander 1833: 158).

A century earlier, Hughes had stressed the strength of African traditions in slave life:

> Our slaves, in their mirth and diversions, differ according to the several customs of so many nations intermixed.... The Negroes in general are very tenaciously addicted to the rites, ceremonies, and superstitions of their own countries, particularly in their plays, dances, music, marriages, and burials. And even such as are born and bred up here, cannot be entirely weaned from these customs. (Hughes 1750: 15-16.)

The general tenacity of African traditions was directly or indirectly emphasized by both earlier and later writers, and was particularly discomfitting to church personnel and others interested in, or commenting upon, the missionizing of plantation slaves (Brunner 1823; Holt 1729; Moody 1803; Parliamentary Papers 1789b; Porteus 1807: 174-175).

With the above comments in mind, the nature and degree of African influences on Barbados slave musical life can be delineated with more specificity. Numerous ethnomusicological studies conducted in Africa over the past decades have contributed a considerable amount of information on the "varied and composite" picture of music on the continent (Thieme 1963: 267). There are a number of characteristics which are widely distributed and shared by African cultures; a few of the more prominent ones can be noted here.

In terms of its general role, music, according to Alan Merriam, "is integrated into daily life," functions in a variety of social contexts, and is "performed and enjoyed by large numbers of people within" any given society; "the separation of the 'artist' from the 'audience' is not an African pattern — although specialists are always present, music is participative. Almost everyone can and does sing; many people play musical instruments; most people are competent in at least one type of musical expression" (Merriam 1962: 56). Rhythm is of fundamental importance; "in fact," Merriam writes, "it bulks so large that African music could perhaps be set off as a musical culture area dominated by this concept" (Merriam 1962: 64-65; see also Herskovits 1941: 21).

Rhythm is complex and is often "expressed by the simultaneous use of two or more meters" (Merriam 1962: 65) — for example, hand clapping is carried out on one level and is steady while drumming is done on another level and the patterns are constantly changing. In addition, "An intimate and often intricate relationship between the melody and its acompanying rhythm — carried on by drums, rattles, sticks beaten one against the other, hand-clapping or short non-musical cries — is also ubiquitous" (Herskovits 1941: 21).

Drums and drumming are extremely prominent, but there is a great variety of musical instruments representing all of the major instrumental categories. In general, however, "African music depends upon percussive effect, whether that music is sung, played upon wind or stringed instruments, or drummed" (Merriam 1962: 56, 65). Accompanied song appears to be of greater importance than solo instrumental music, and the dominant structural form of song is the overlapping between the phrases of the leader and chorus, that is the antiphonal call-and-response pattern. The most common antiphonal form is one in which the chorus line identifies the song and remains basically unchanged throughout the performance and the solo line changes through frequent improvisation. This form often leads "to the singing of two melodic lines simultaneously" (Merriam 1962: 67-68; see also Herskovits 1941: 21; Lomax 1970: 186, 188, 189).

African dancing is intimately associated with other musical forms and a variety of cultural contexts. It is complex and physically expressive; "There is no straitjacket of schools and styles — motion surges spontaneously from the innermost core of the dancers" (Vašut in Darbois 1962: 10). "In a world survey of dance," Lomax has recently written, "we have found that African cultures lead all the rest in emphasis on bodily polyrhythm, where the shoulders and the pelvis erotically rotate and twist, often to two separate and conflicting meters" (Lomax 1970: 193). As in all areas of musical life, rhythm is of crucial importance to the dance; it is a determinant of movements and repeated rhythmic patterns in dance forms are very characteristic (Vašut in Darbois 1962: 9).

The above features and a number of others are widespread on the continent, including West Africa, the ancestral region of most Afro-American populations in the West Indies. Although this region manifests considerable cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, the differences among its peoples are "less significant for an understanding of Afro-American cultural history than are the underlying similarities which unite them" (Hammond 1970: 196). Sharing its major musical characteristics with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, West Africa, however, is "distinguished by a strong emphasis on percussion

instruments and especially by the use of 'hot' rhythm. . . . and the consistent use of drums in a majority of types of music" (Merriam 1962: 78-79).[13]

It should be noted that the agreement among ethnomusicologists on the characteristic features of African music derives from field studies carried out during the twentieth century. Thus the data from contemporary Africa are projected back in time and are assumed to be relevant to Africa (and Barbados) of another epoch. Although this assumption raises some methodological problems with respect to a variety of cultural attributes, Merriam, for example, has (albeit tentatively) concluded that "no ... sharp differences exist between past and present music sound systems in Africa" (Merriam 1967: 89). Of more significance, however, is that "music is carried below the level of consciousness and therefore is particularly resistent to change" (Merriam 1967: 107; see also Herskovits 1941: 19; Frisbie); "This does not mean that music does not change," Merriam adds, "but ... barring unusual exceptions, we can expect music over a period of time to retain its general characteristics. This is borne out in studies of New World Negro cultures whose music differs from the original African but retains the characterizing traits of African music" (Merriam 1967: 107-108).

Not only is cultural conservatism evident in musical forms *per se,* but also in the motor behaviors associated with musical expression. Following Herskovits, Mintz has recently written:

> It is of interest that these seemingly minor behavioral patterns are. . . . closely tied to the expressive media, such as music, dance, drama, voice, and the like, and that it is in these aesthetic spheres. . . . [that] it is reasonable to view these expressions as continuities with the African past, and as some evidence of the success of Afro-Americans in conserving cultural materials that could not be conserved in other aspects of life. Patterns of socially learned motor behavior are probably not readily destroyed, even by extremely repressive conditions; and the aesthetic and creative possibilities implicit in these traditional patterns and their cognitive accompaniments may have been among those cultural traditions most readily maintained under slavery. (Mintz 1970: 5.)

Thus, largely as a result of their manifestation in contemporary Afro-American cultures (as well as studies of the slave period), the musical characteristics delineated above are considered by ethnomusicologists to have been imported into the Americas by enslaved Africans (e.g. Lomax

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[13] "Hot Rhythm," as defined by Waterman, is "compelling" and "exciting"; its components include "percussion polyrhythms," offbeat phrasing of melodies, emphasis on percussion instruments and their rhythms, and emphasis on dance. See R. A. Waterman, "'Hot' Rhythm in Negro Music," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 1 (1948).

1970; Oliver 1970; Waterman 1952). The similarities in fundamental West African musical forms and expressions (and the sociocultural contexts in which they were found) provided a common basis for interaction among persons coming from different cultural backgrounds and a foundation upon which a shared musical tradition was established and perpetuated in New World societies.[14]

The above comments, we feel, are supported by our historical evidence and are directly relevant to understanding the instrumental, vocal, and dance traditions of Barbadian slaves. For example, among their primary instruments, the hollow log drums, banjo-like chordophones, and idiophonic rasps, rattles and pottery jars, were typically African; equally characteristic was the use of the human body as an idiophone in clapping, stomping, and slapping actions. Drum performance techniques, such as the manner of sound production and the position in which drums were held, may be considered as African. The utilization of drums in groups, wherein a call-and-response pattern, creating rhythmic polyphony, was played among the drummers was typically African. The call-and-response pattern also characterized slave vocal music which, as well, reflected African influences in vocal effects, such as cries or yells, rhythmic polyphony, and simultaneous body movements with singing. Judging by the overall reactions of European observers and the descriptive statements they provide, dance, particularly in the spirit of its performance, bodily movements, physical expressiveness, agility, and rhythmic precision, was clearly African in origin and form. Equally African was the intimate relationship that existed among instrumental and vocal sounds and dance movements, their simultaneous interaction, and their primary expression within group, rather than solo, contexts.

In sum, as a cultural complex, comprised of a number of specific behavioral and material elements, and intimately linked with other highly valued complexes such as recreation and religion, the musical traditions of Barbados slaves were those of Africa in their most essential and characteristic features.

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[14] We find this position more agreeable in examining slave culture, at least with respect to the topics of this paper, than that expressed recently by Mintz: "The cultural heterogenity of any slave group normally meant that what was shared culturally was likely to be minimal. It was not, after all, some single 'African culture' that was available for transfer, *nor even some generalized African cultural sub-stratum*" (our italics). See S. W. Mintz, "Foreword" in N. E. Whitten and J. F. Szwed, eds., *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives* (New York, 1970), p. 8. However, to some extent we can accept his statement, without feeling it contradictory, that ultimately Afro-American cultures "depended upon creativity and innovation, far more than upon the indelibility of particular culture contents." See Mintz, "Foreword," p. 9.

We believe this conclusion is generally true for the two centuries of African slavery on the island despite limitations in our evidence which prevent exploring in detail how, and in what ways, Africans contributed to the *development* of the slave musical tradition over time. It appears that by the beginning of the eighteenth century, if not earlier, this musical tradition was firmly established. Modifications may have been introduced by later slave arrivals, but these, we suggest, did not fundamentally alter the basic contours that were established in earlier years. Although it is difficult to delineate the manner in which African and/or creole slaves were agents of change in musical life, changes did occur and we have some evidence of those resulting from European musical influences and as well as from social and legal changes in wider Barbadian society.

In considering European influences, it is relevant to keep in mind Merriam's observation:

> "The probability of acculturation is enhanced by structural factors in the two musical systems themselves.... when the structures in two systems are similar, the potential for blending is much greater than when the structures are dissimilar.... it is clear that the two systems [African and Western European] are compatible and that exchange between them therefore is almost inevitable if the opportunity for contact is established." (Merriam 1962: 80-81.)

By the end of the eighteenth century, some European instruments such as the fiddle (or violin) and tambourine were added to the instrumental repertoire although, it must be noted, the evidence for these instruments and the dates of their introduction is not unequivocal. Whatever European instruments became incorporated, African instrumental patterns were apparently retained along with the traditional close relationship between instrumental music, vocal music, and dance.

Stylistic features of vocal music present a similar picture of African patterns although as Protestant missionaries became more influential in the nineteenth century, and particularly as the Church of England increased its missionary efforts in the 1820s (Handler and Sio), European influences on vocal music grew stronger. As part of the process of Christian education, hymns were taught and these were also a feature of church services. In 1833, for example, Rolph attended a Moravian church in which "there were a vast number of Negroes present.... The service consists, principally, in singing hymns, a very acceptable mode of worship to the Negroes who are so passionately fond of music" (Rolph 1836: 46-47). Not only were slaves formally taught hymns (e.g. Society for Conversion.... 1827: 58; Society for Conversion.... 1833: 57, 59; Zippel 1834: 290), but some undoubtedly learned them informally from their peers and/or by attending church services. In the Anglican churches,

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slaves (and freedmen) were segregated, but they could still learn the hymns by listening to whites.

In his novel, *Peter Simple,* Frederick Marryat (who, around 1813, had visited Barbados as an officer in the British navy) describes, albeit in ethnocentric and racist terms, a Methodist meeting in Bridgetown comprised of "black and coloured people": "The hymn.... was sung by the whole congregation in most delightful discord — for everyone chose his own key" (Marryat 1834: 452-453). Although Marryat's observation need not be taken literally, it is suggestive of a transition that could have occurred as African-like vocal patterns were adapted to European ones. By the Apprenticeship period, however, a number of persons apparently had made the transition and the sounds appeared less alien to European ears. For example, Thome and Kimball, who visited Barbados in 1837 (and, it should be noted, were critics of slavery and sympathetic to the plight of the apprentices) visited a Sunday service in one of the Anglican churches, and reported "The choir was composed entirely of blacks, and sung with characteristic excellence" (Thome and Kimball 1838: 58). Of a similar anti-slavery disposition, Sturge and Harvey in the same year visited a Methodist service largely attended by apprentices and were "much struck with the ... harmony of the singing, which was led by two or three black men" (Sturge and Harvey 1838: 2).

Dance movements apparently changed little in their fundamental African contours of bodily flexibility, rhythmic precision, and physical expressiveness. As in Jamaica (Patterson 1967: 231-232, 235-236), European type dances may have been adopted in more than isolated instances towards the end of the slave period, but the Barbados evidence is limited, indirect and prohibits definitive statements. In 1796, Dyott, for example, reported that the "dance is a kind of reel" (Dyott 1907: 94-95), and the "Joan and John" may have been a European-type dance, but we have been unable to identify it [see note 2]. One day, in 1807, a British army officer stationed on the island, noticed

> about fifty black women [walking] ... through the streets [of Bridgetown] in procession, all dressed in gowns of the same large pattern. They had flags with ships painted on them. It appears they were washerwomen to the fleet going to have a dance and inviting the gentlemen to join. (Wyvill 1814: 392.) [15]

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[15] Collymore describes the landship: "A sort of friendly society which frequently holds organized parades of its members all dressed in naval uniform. The landship societies seem to have enjoyed brief periods of intense activity separated by long periods of comparative dormancy. From the middle, and probably earlier, years of the last [i.e., nineteenth] century, the white-uniformed, gold-tasseled parades have been a familiar sight." See Collymore, *Notes for a Glossary...*, p. 51.

Although many, if not all, of these women may have been free, it is quite likely that they had been born slaves (Handler and Sio), and equally likely that the dancing they were to engage in with the British sailors was of a European character. European-type dancing also occurred in the "Dignity" or "Quality Balls" that were sponsored by the freedwomen proprietresses of Bridgetown hotel-taverns. These formally organized supper-dances were attended by "colored" or "mulatto" females and white men; slave women who worked at the taverns, and often functioned as prostitutes, also may have participated in them.

Although the evidence, once again, is limited, there are indications that traditional slave dances changed in some of their organizational features. For example, by the early eighteenth century mixed sexual dancing apparently became common (Oldmixon 1741: 134-135), and by the first few decades of the nineteenth, monetary payments to bands, the formal association of food and drink, and possibly a dance leader or organizer, were not infrequent occurrences. Plantation festivals, such as the "Holiday Home" were introduced in the 1820s, and involved dancing as a crucial feature. However, a change which probably had more far-reaching implications for the subsequent development of Barbadian folk music was the decline of the traditional weekend dance.

As we have discussed previously, the weekend dance was a fundamental social and musical complex of slave life, and the evidence clearly shows that it did not begin to wane until the mid to late 1820s. In 1828, the island's eleven parish rectors were generally affirmative in replying to the query "Is the Sabbath-day more religiously observed, and are all open profanations of the day prohibited or discountenanced?" (Society for the Conversion.... 1829: Appendix). A few of them specifically referred to the Sunday dances: One, for example, noted "the cessation of the Sunday dances amongst the Negroes (none of which have come to my knowledge during the year)"; another reported "there is still dancing occasionally amongst the slaves on estates on the evening of the Sabbath;" while a third wrote "The Sunday dancing still continues," he clearly implied it was not as common as in former years, an implication that is apparent in the tone of other responses that do not specifically mention the dances.

All of the ministers attributed changes in Sunday activities to stricter enforcement of the 1826 "Sunday and Marriage Act," regulatory clauses in the 1826 "Slave Consolidation Act," and wider societal changes. Briefly, these changes were a result of pressures from the emancipationist movement upon the British government which, in turn, was calling for slave amelioration and ultimate emancipation. The reformist trend involved an increased effort to expose the slaves to Christian education — a trend that was facilitated as more planters accepted the view that

"The Negroes converted to Christianity are by far the most honest, tractable, and moral of their colour" (Seaforth 1802), and became convinced that "The religion of Christ meddles not with [slavery] ... as a civil institution" (Eliot 1833: 144).

At any rate, by 1832, the Bishop of Barbados reported "The disorderly and demoralizing dances on the Lord's day, formerly so common in this colony, are at present of comparatively rare occurrence" (Eliot 1833: 84-87; see also Society for the Conversion.... 1834: 52), and in 1836 the stipendary magistrate of St. Michael wrote in his journal "The Sabbath day is now respected; no Sunday markets, no Joans and Johnnies on that day" (Colthurst: 24-25; see also note 2).

Although we are not prepared to argue this here, the decline of the weekend dances may have been instrumental in precipitating the decline of other cultural features, both musical and non-musical, with which they were associated. In the same manner, the accelerated Christianization of the slaves may have brought in its wake a reduction of African features in religious beliefs and practices which, in turn, affected the musical forms associated with them.

In conclusion, throughout the slave period, basically African musical instruments, stylistic features of vocal and instrumental sound, and dance movements were retained and expressed in cultural contexts such as recreation and religion. In later times, generally speaking, European influences were found in some instrumental types, vocal elements associated with Christian hymn singing, and, perhaps, dance types. The sources also indicate changes in organizational features of traditional dances. We surmise that the decline, towards Emancipation, of the weekend dance (which in its widest organizational context comprised a host of musical and non-musical activities) perhaps had profound implications for the wane of African elements in the post-Emancipation period. However, even towards the end of slavery, and despite the influence of European cultural traditions and institutional efforts to inhibit certain areas of musical life, music retained a position of central importance and, as a cultural complex, strongly reflected the African traditions from which it ultimately derived.

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