

Recorded and Produced by CAROL and TRAVIS JENKINS



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4031
STEREO

Traditional Music of **THE GARIFUNA** (Black Carib) **OF BELIZE**



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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STEREO

**Traditional Music of
THE GARIFUNA
(Black Carib)
OF BELIZE**

Side 1.

- Band 1. Chumba 2:30
- Band 2. Hunguhungu 4:00
- Band 3. Hunguhungu 3:20
- Band 4. Berusu 2:50
- Band 5. Oremu egi 2:00
- Band 6. Oremu egi 2:10
- Band 7. PARANDA 2:45
- Band 8. Wanaragua 1:53
- Band 9. Abaimahani 3:05
- Band 10. Punta 2:15
- Band 11. Punta 1:30

Side 2.

- Band 1. Punta 2:50
- Band 2. Sambai 1:45
- Band 3. Paranda 2:10
- Band 4. Gunjai 2:25
- Band 5. Punta 3:19
- Band 6. Arumahani 1:56
- Band 7. Chumba 3:30
- Band 8. Hunguhungu 3:30
- Band 9. Arumahani 4:11
- Band 10. Punta 1:30

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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RECORDED AND PRODUCED BY CAROL AND TRAVIS JENKINS, with Nagra stereo equipment on loan from American Folklife Center, Library of Congress and support from Illinois State University. Translations with the aid of Sally Diego; editing assistance by Don White.

The music of the Garifuna or Black Carib is the music of one of the most unique cultures to emerge in the New World during the Era of Discovery. The Garifuna are an Afro-Indian people whose culture developed on the island of St. Vincent in the Lesser Antilles during the 17th and 18th centuries. Their ethno-history reaches back to Amazonia through Arawak and Carib cultural phases and was altered during the last three centuries by a large infusion of Africanity. Garifuna music today retains both African and Amerindian stylistic features, as well as more recent European influences.

When Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, the Greater Antilles were largely occupied by Arawak peoples who had expanded into the islands from the Orinoco River region of South America at the beginning of the Christian Era. Later, at about 1200 A.D., Carib-speaking Indians from the Guyana lowlands spread into the Lesser Antilles. Over the centuries, they repeatedly raided their Ara-

wak neighbors for wives and acquired a reputation as fierce man-eaters. Columbus heard these tales and coined the word "cannibal" to designate them as potential slaves for the Spanish crown. After about a century of contact, the Arawak peoples of the Greater Antilles had been destroyed, Africans had been introduced as slaves, and the French and British had replaced the Spanish as colonizers of the Caribbean area. In the Lesser Antilles, the Island Caribs were reduced to a few small populations concentrated on Dominica and St. Vincent.

During the 1600's, several slaveships wrecked near St. Vincent. The surviving Africans took refuge in the island's mountainous interior. Throughout the following century, runaway slaves, mostly from Barbados, joined them to form St. Vincent's unique maroon society. With the custom of polygyny and having few women, they took Island Carib women as wives and soon adopted numerous features of Amerindian culture. They learned to speak the Island Carib language, a tongue which incorporated a male Carib dialect (Kariña) and a female Arawakan dialect (Lokono). By the 1600's, the Arawak speech prevailed (Taylor, 1977). St. Vincent's maroons marked their free status by taking on the Island Carib mode of body decoration, infant head deformation, manioc technology, and

many aspects of shamanism, foodways, song, and dance. In an effort to defeat and drive out English settlers on their island, the few remaining unmixed Caribs joined forces with the maroons. Led by their chief, Satuye, they fought with guerrilla tactics and French military aid. When St. Lucia, their main source of supplies, was captured by the British, they were finally overcome and defeated. In 1797, the British exiled them and transported a group of about 5000 to Roatan, one of the Bay Islands off the coast of Honduras.

From Roatan, the Garifuna people or Black Caribs, as they came to be known, crossed to the Central American mainland. There they prospered and their villages spread along the Caribbean coast from Cape Gracias a Dios near Nicaragua into the territory of British Honduras (Belize) to the north. In Honduras, they learned to speak Spanish and converted to Catholicism. Under Hispanic influence, they adopted the guitar, hymn singing, Hispanic surnames, and the pageantry of Hispanic Catholic celebrations. They were also exposed to the cultures of other Caribbean Creole peoples, such as Haitians, Miskitos, and Cayman Islanders.

In Belize, Garifuna life developed along somewhat different lines. Situated on the coast, bounded by Guatemala on the south and west and by Mexico on the north, Belize forms a British enclave in Spanish Central America. First used as a source of dyewood, and later for mahogany and other hardwoods, the territory differed from other British holdings in the Caribbean in that plantation agriculture was lacking. Slaves were imported for logging, but were very expensive, always armed, and under less intensive regimentation than in the sugar economies of the islands. When the Garifuna began spreading into Belize in the early 1800's, their free status, dark skins, and recent wars against the British on St. Vincent led to restrictions on their movement. Finally, with Emancipation in 1833, the Garifuna established secure settlements in Belize, stretching along the southern coast to Dangriga, their largest and northernmost community today.

Migration and wage labor have profoundly influenced Garifuna life. Traditional subsistence patterns in which men fish, clear gardens, and occasionally hunt while women plant manioc and

other root crops, tend fruit trees and gather shellfish have been gradually replaced by wage labor. Earlier, Garifuna men joined logging crews, worked on banana plantations, and sold their skills as seamen, leaving their villages for short periods of time and returning with cash and trade goods for their families. Since World War II, economic patterns have changed and an increasing number of both men and women emigrate from their Central American homelands more or less permanently. Although accurate statistics are unknown, it may be estimated that at least 15,000 Garifuna now reside in the United States, mainly in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles (Gonzales, 1979). These changing demographic patterns have had greater influence on the retention of traditional musical forms than has exposure to commercial styles of music.

During nearly two centuries in Central America, Garifuna musical heritage has selectively combined English Creole and Hispanic musical elements with an Afro-Indian tradition already developed on St. Vincent. European instruments have been tried, but with the exception of the guitar, have not found a lasting place in Garifuna music. Above all, Garifuna music today retains a strong Africanity, expressed in drumming, drum lore, and the relationship between drummers, dancers, and their audiences. But their American roots have not been lost. By a process of compartmentalization, specific song styles related to manioc technology, healing, and ancestor worship have been retained.

Oremu (song) dominates the Garifuna musical domain. In their language, a generic term for music does not exist. When speaking English, "music" denotes the sounds produced by European instruments, which may be used without vocal accompaniment in the context of English quadrille dances. Traditional Garifuna song is accompanied by drums alone. These drums are constructed of a hardwood, such as mahogany, tubrus, or mayflower. The log is hollowed out with fire, water, and gouges and fitted with a single skin head of peccary, deer, or goat. The head is sewn to a rim made of a beach vine, fitted against a second rim and laced on with rope through holes drilled at the bottom of the drum. About 8 or 10 short sticks are inserted into the lacings and can be twisted to tighten the cord and raise the pitch. Garifuna drums are equipped with snares of guitar strings, wire, or thin cords stretched across the skin to yield a buzzing tone. Bass or segundo drums may reach 2 feet in diameter and 3 feet in

height. Treble or primero drums are generally smaller. All are played without sticks of any sort. Skilled drummers are highly regarded and young children are encouraged to beat the drum even before they can walk. By the age of 6, many are capable of beating simple polyrhythms.

Over a dozen different types of song are delineated by the Garifuna. Names of dance beats and song types are generally synonymous. Reflecting the basic egalitarian ethos of Garifuna society, all songs are voiced in unison and leadership is ephemeral. Although the call-and-response pattern is common, the caller is rapidly drowned out by a chorus of loosely blended voices. A striking feature of Garifuna singing is an almost total lack of pauses or silent spaces. Chorus and leader overlap to create an almost constant stream of sound. Solo singing is a secondary performance mode, usually accompanied by guitar, drum, or both. In secular music, drum beats are simple polyrhythms in duple or triple meter, but in sacred music, the drums are played in unison and triple meter. One type of song, uyanú, is semi-sacred in nature and sung a capella in irregular meter. Uyanú is differentiated into male and female sub-types. Other song types are also usually composed by either men or women and may be created through dreams. A cantometric profile reveals the retention of both African and Amerindian stylistic elements (Jenkins and Jenkins, 1982).

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Photo 1. The Chumba, danced by Eulalia Ramirez of Barranco.

Side 1. Band 1. CHUMBA. Primero:Isawel Flores, Segundo:Isawel Nolberto. Vocals:Bernadette Arzu,Pearl Arzu, Carlota Palacio, Gene Martinez. Recorded in Barranco.

One of the oldest dance forms known today, the chumba requires subtle communication between drummers and dancers. Solo dancers come before the drums, saluting them with staccato movements which often descend by stages to a level where the dancers' backs are on the floor. The words to this simple litany are either nonsense syllables or have lost their meaning through time. Performances of Garifuna music are generally long and only come to an end when the dancers indicate they are tired.

Side 1. Band 2. HUNGUHUNGU. Primero:Nicho Flores, Segundo:John Castillo. Vocal:Paulino "Young Man" Castillo. Recorded in Hopkins.

The hunguhungu is a favorite type of song for processions, especially on such occasions as Carib Settlement Day (November 19), a national ethnic celebration held yearly in Belize and maintained by American Garifuna today. The text of this song expresses one of the central themes of Garifuna life - the loss of kinsmen and the expectation of joining them after death. Both the dancing and the drum beat of hunguhungu are secularized versions of sacred hugulendu music.

Side 1. Band 3. HUNGUHUNGU. Primero:Isawel Flores, Segundo:Isawel Nolberto. Vocals:Mili Martinez, Bernadette Arzu, Eulalia Ramirez, Carlota Palacio. Recorded in Barranco.

This song was learned from women of Livingston, Guatemala. The words translate as:

These are the words she left for us.

Take care of your children. Take care of your children, my dear, for yourself when you get sick. If you're lucky, you will rock with your grandchild. You will drink beer, mother of Dominica, if you are fortunate.

Side 1. Band 4. BERUSU. Vocal and guitar; Junior Aranda. Recorded in Dangriga.

Berusu are usually sung solo and accompanied by guitar with a listening, instead of a dancing, audience. As a type of song used for general entertainment on social occasions, they are frequently played at wakes. The composer states: I have dreamed God, and goes on to ask the meaning of the message which predicts his death. The last verse is:

My children are getting old. When I look at us, there are many things lacking. That's what makes me sing.

Side 1. Band 5. OREMU EGI (GRATING SONG), Vocals: Hortensia Norales, Suzanne Guzman, Dora Williams. Recorded in Seine Bight.

The Caribbean historian, Bartolomew de Las Casas, reports that Island Arawak women would lighten the work of grating bitter manioc by singing a special type of grating song. Today, Garifuna women continue to compose and sing these songs, beating the rhythm against the wooden grater (fitted with chert teeth) with a manioc root. In this song a woman pleads with her son to feel sorry for her and take her to Limon (Honduras). She says: You won't starve,

I've got plenty of work, son. Let's go.

Come on, baby. You will leave me at Limon.

Side 1. Band 6. OREMU EGI (GRATING SONG). Vocals:Eulalia Ramirez, Bernadette Arzu, Mili Martinez, Isabella Mejia, who also beats time with a piece of wood. Recorded in Barranco

In typical Amerindian style, grating songs use frequent exclamatory vocables and repetition. Vocal tone is highly nasal. In this song, the composer refers to her farm, Merina: Sitting,

only sitting, oh no, my goodness, plenty of it, they say, hey, is the only way to succeed here on Merina. Hey-yo, this is when I make the song.

Side 1. Band 7. PARANDA. Composed by Gabaga Williams. Guitar and lead vocal: Andy Palacio. Primero: Eric Arzu, Segundo: Isawel Nolberto. Vocals: Isabella Mejia, Gene Martinez, Bernadette Arzu. Recorded in Barranco.

Paranda is a type of party song, likened to a serenade and usually composed by men. Apparently developed under Hispanic influence, this paranda has a particularly Hispanic sound since the people of Barranco maintain close and regular relations with their Guatemalan and Honduran kinsmen. The song's romantic text states: Sister, don't you know that it's because I love you that I'm with you.

Beulah, take me and throw me on Barrio side so I can find the way to our house. My shirt, is here; my pants are here. You are my partner. I'll be buried here.



Photo 2. Wanaragua or John Canoe dancers.

Side 1. Band 8. WANARAGUA. Primero: Isawel Flores, Segundo: Albert "Amigo" Lucas. Vocals: Josephine Lambey, Marcia Chamorro, Patricia Nicasio, Monaco Martinez. Recorded in Dangriga.

Wanaragua or John Canoe, the most spectacular Garifuna dance, is the domain of men. Men compose the songs and appear at Christmas as either male or female masked dancers. Costumes consist of macaw feather and crepe paper crowns, cowrie-shell kneebands, and whiteface masks made of molded and painted metal screen. Dancers, drummers, and accompanying female

singers form troupes and, with the aid of a flagman, make house-visits every Christmas, scaring the children along the way. For each performance, they collect tasty rewards, rum, and coins. John Canoe performances were once found in several Caribbean islands and date to slave days, when reveling troupes took the Christmastime opportunity to express mock, and sometimes real, hostility toward their masters. The Garifuna version is traditionally opened with the arrival of the Warrine, an Amerindian figure dressed in plaitain leaves.

Side 1. Band 9. ABAIMAHANI. Composed by Alfonsa Casimiro. Vocals: Valentina Nunez and Marcella Lewis. Recorded in Hopkins.

Abaimahani is the female type of yanu, a semi-sacred gestured song which was once commonly used to serenade a sick person or performed for fun at house parties. While most women continue to know many abaimahani, they perform them less frequently today, and mainly at sacred occasions. As a class of song, abaimahani are characterized by heavy use of glissando, some glottal shake, and other ornamentation. Clearly of Amerindian derivation, many abaimahani are composed at times of deep personal distress, and often through dreams. In this one, the composer says: It is a sad faraway Christmas. In my home there is a feast today. Oh Juana, I call you, my dear sister. I have shed tears on account of death. I keep walking about because of my troubles. The curse of death keeps me walking about, trying to cool my heart.

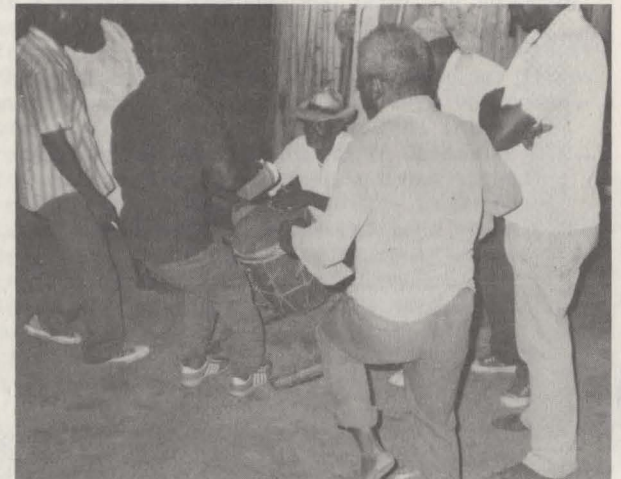


Photo 3. Punta dancing at beluria.

Side 1. Bands 10 and 11. Recorded at a beluria in Dangriga.

The Garifuna beluria takes place 9 nights after a death. A tent is set up in the house-yard and guests are served rum, pinule (a drink of parched corn), bread, coffee, conch soup, or other traditional foods. Inside the house, a mass is held while people outside sing hymns of the Sankey variety. Under the tent some people are gambling, others listen to Anansi stories, while another group sings and dances punta before the drums. Most of these features are optional, but punta dancing is a must and usually goes on till dawn.

The punta is the dance that expresses Garifuna sexual politics best of all. Variations on a stylized cock-and-hen mating dance like the punta are found throughout Latin America and the Caribbean wherever Afro-American communities predominate. Two women may also exhibit their skills at mock combat through punta. The humor in both the dance and the song's lyrics is usually ribald and often scandalous. Punta songs are composed by women and men but are the women's favorite mode of social comment. Personal affairs are exposed and unacceptable behavior is ridiculed. Band 10 records the sounds of Sankey hymns sung on one side of a stairway and punta being performed on the other side. Hysterical laughter punctuates the expressive interactions of the dancers and drummers in both Bands 10 and 11. Isawel Flores plays the primero drum and, in Band 11, Christian Diego leads the singing. The song on Band 10 was composed by Simona Enriquez and addresses her daughter with this message: It is hard to raise a fatherless child. I see it in myself, my sister. I should go and look for a homeland with you all. My children's father says he went and got married because I drove him to it. No matter if you do good to a man, if he isn't yours, you have a sad time with him,

Side 2. Band 1. PUNTA. Primero: Joe Diego, Segundo: Richard Moreira. Vocals: Hortense Miranda, Isadora and Martina Rodriguez. Recorded in Dangriga.

This punta is reputed to be from Honduras: The Blues won't kill me, the kind that men give. Only my sickness can toss me about. Listen to what the stranger says. Listen to what he tells me, "Stay here,

have a good time". I am looking to go to Siripia side.

Side 2. Band 2. SAMBAI. Primero: Isawel Flores, Segundo: Amigo Lucas. Vocals: Josephine Lambey, Marcia Chamorro, Patricia Nicasio. Recorded in Dangriga.

The sambai is rarely performed today. Its beat seems related to wanaragua, but it is danced with a stomping step by both men and women. The song is a simple call-and-response litany with words in English Creole which say: You da one hell of a woman. Look how she walk. Dis a me time, dis a me time, lover. Black Sambo gal look for man Monday before day.

Side 2. Band 3. PARANDA. Vocal and guitar: Coro "Blue Monday" Velasquez. Segundo: Richard Moreira. Recorded in Dangriga.

Paranda is the vehicle men use when composing songs of social criticism. This one tells the tale of a fellow who repeatedly sneaked into someone's parked truck with a woman. Two trucks named Whip and Watusi were involved. The story goes: Come out of my Whip, the Creole says. Come out of my truck, the black man says. Move from there. Mind, he might beat you away from your children. You are used to that kind of thing. That's what you did in Watusi the other day. There is (woman's name) with her panties standing around waiting for her man.



Photo 4. Ben Moreira, drummer of Seine Bight, and segundo drum with snares.

Side 2. Band 4. GUNJAI. Same personnel as Band 2. Recorded in Dangriga.

The gunjai is a partner dance staged in a circle in which partners switch at the call of "Sarse". Loose vocal blend marks Garifuna singing even in a chorus which, like this one, has sung together for a long time. Individual voices can always be heard, but vocal rhythmic coordination is very tight. The words tell about a man, Liboryai Laure, who drinks rum till he can't stand up.

Side 2. Band 5. PUNTA. Composed by Beads Nunez. Vocal: Cora Castillo. Primero: Nicho "Thin Skin" Flores, Segundo: Henry Nunez. Recorded in Hopkins.

Belize achieved independence from Britain in September, 1981. While the politicians worried about the long-standing border dispute with Guatemala, many citizens were more concerned with the lack of jobs and the high cost of food.

This song expresses their anxiety about Independence about a month before it became official. The lyrics translate as: Our people are worried about Independence. It is coming. Our people are anxious about Independence. It's on the way. Don't sit down there, my son. Get up and work, Papa's grandson, to get past poverty. Not even sugar can we buy. How about flour? It costs high. Don't just sit there, my son. Get up and work, my grandson's papa, to get past your poverty.

Garifuna speakers enjoy word play, especially with kinship terms, and often invert them in amusing ways, as in this song. Many Garifuna singers use a loud and driving style in response to energetic drummers, such as these.

Side 2. Band 6. ARUMAHANI. Vocals: Roman Palacio and Fabiana Alvarez. Recorded in Barranco.

Arumahani is the man's type of yanu, analogous to abaimahani. But unlike the women's variety, arumahani seems to be dying out. Few groups of men ever perform these songs today in the gestured knee-bending chorus-line style they call for. Instead, one may hear an older man accompanied by a woman or female chorus. The words to arumahani songs are typically serious as in this one, which says: Papa has kept me away from school, Oh yes, I am filled with shame. Oh, I should have been a general with my diploma in my arms. Don't be ashamed of

me. I am like this because I didn't go to school. That's what Uncle Alcalde told me one evening. Oh yes, I get frightened of the strict commander, my brother, oh yes. I should have been a general with my diploma in my arms.

Side 2. Band 7. CHUMBA. Primero: Isawel Flores, Segundo: Isawel Nolberto. Vocals: Gene Martinez Carlota Palacio, Bernadette Arzu, Eulalia Ramirez, Pearl Arzu. Recorded in Barranco.

This chumba song is an old favorite and tells of a man named Lambey who is dancing at the temple while the fowl are crowing in the house of the ancestors. The song refers to the major ancestral feast known as dugu and can sometimes be heard sung at these ceremonies in a different rhythmic pattern.

Side 2. Band 8. HUNGUHUNGU. Primero: Isawel Flores, Segundo: Isawel Nolberto. Vocals: Paula Nolberto and Fabiana Alvarez. Recorded in Barranco.

The words to this song are given in English as: There is a piece of the world that could have been my home, hi-yea, hi-yea. The murderer's land now belongs to someone else. Play your drum for us so we can dance, hi-yea, hi-yea. Christmas has come, we are going to play. My sickness has caused me to be cursed, hi-yea, hi-yea. What happened to Sylvia is already forgotten.

Side 2. and Band 9. ARUMAHANI. Vocals: William Estrada, Ben Moreira, Victoria Moreira, P.C. Garcia. Recorded in Seine Bight.

Seine Bight sits on a small spit of land surrounded by sea and lagoon. Jobs are scarce in the area and farmland is located at a considerable distance. Hence, most young men and women of Seine Bight emigrate, leaving the village to the elders and numerous children who are looked after by their grandparents or other remaining kin. The senior citizens of Seine Bight continue to enjoy uyan songs and sing this rousing version of an arumahani, translated as:

Oh, who will be my messenger in this world?
Oh, I could keep sobbing, my companion in nursing. Oh, let's go and visit the Owner of the World. Oh, she has gossiped about me, my child. Oh, look at her, she keeps lying around. Ah, she throws words around about me, my child, like ashes of yeruge wood.



Photo 5. Henry and Bobsy Nunez, children at the drums.

Side 2. Band 10. PUNTA. Primero: Henry Nunez, Segundo, Bobsy Nunez. Vocals: Henry, Bobsy, and Lena Nunez. Recorded in Hopkins.

Punta is usually the first beat youngsters learn. Children compose their own songs, often in mixed Creole and Garifuna. Despite an increasing loss of the Garifuna language, youngsters such as this 6-year old primero drummer and his 8-year old sister, continue to keep Garifuna drum styles alive. They are singing: When the teacher speaks, I don't like it. Hey, Dandi (Mountain Cow or Tapir), walking away. Hey, Tiligad's sister is walking away.

Other album by Carol and Travis Jenkins

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4032
STEREO

DABUYABARUGU: INSIDE THE TEMPLE Sacred Music of the Garifuna of Belize

Recorded and Produced by CAROL and TRAVIS JENKINS

Side 1.

- Band 1. ABELAGUDAHANI 4:00
- Band 2. ABELAGUDAHANI 5:40
- Band 3. HUGULENDU with shakers 1:20
- Band 4. HUGULENDU 3:15
- Band 5. Sacrifice of fowl 2:30
- Band 6. SAUSUBEY 2:58
- Band 7. ABAIMAHANI—lirun P. 2:38

Side 2. DABUYABARUGU

- Band 1. ARUMAHANI Au suna 1:40
- Band 2. ARUMAHANI 1:27
- Band 3. AMALIHANI (Part 1) 4:16
- Band 4. AMALIHANI (Part 2) 10:36
- Band 5. ABAIMAHANI (Ida) 2:37
- Band 6. ABAIMAHANI Aume 2:45
- Band 7. HUGULENDU 1:37
- Band 8. SHAMAN'S SONG (A) 1:50

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