

SARACA — FUNERARY MUSIC OF CARRIACOU

- 1. I Have a Sword in My Hand** (1:42) Edith Hector and chorus
- 2. Near the Cross** (1:45) chorus
- 3. Timi, Timi, Zewon** (2:45) Newton Joseph and chorus
- 4. Mbadi-o, Dem Dei-o** (2:19) (Charlie Bristol and chorus
- 5. I Promise the Lord** (2:04) Martha Dick and chorus
- 6. Gone to Nineveh** (2:44) chorus
- 7. Be on Time** (2:05) chorus
- 8. Yard-o, Yard-o** (3:18) Charlie Bristol and chorus
- 9. Humble-o** (6:12) Daniel Aikens, singer and storyteller
- 10. Ring Down Below** (3:39) Charlie Bristol and chorus
- 11. O, the Angels** (2:31) Martha Dick and chorus
- 12. Cromanti** (2:09) Sugar Adams, cot drum; Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John, boula drums
- 13. Juba** (2:46) Sugar Adams, cot drum; Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John , boula drums
- 14. Quilbe** (3:06) Sugar Adams, cot drum; Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John, boula drums
- 15. Juba noel / Juba-lo (Bongo)** (3:08) Jemima Joseph, May Fortune and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 16. Mmwe malade ayo (Gwa bèlé)** (4:01) Jemima Joseph, May Fortune and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 17. Anansi-o-e (Cromanti)** (4:30) Jemina Joseph and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 18. Anti-o, coro, coro (Kongo)** (2:36) Jemina Joseph and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 19. Maiwaz-o (Old People's Bongo)** (3:55) Jemina Joseph and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 20. Di ye mwe 'rivé (Old People's Kalenda)** (4:09) Jemina Joseph and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 21. Djerika-o (Arada)** (2:07) May Fortune and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 22. Neg-la-rivé, oué a Kende (Cromanti)** (1:24) May Fortune and chorus, with drum accompaniment
- 23. Jean, ay, Jean, kay-mwen bwoule** (1:52) Newton Joseph and chorus
- 24. Saraca (Interview)** (9:58) May Fortune

Recorded by Alan Lomax

Notes by Donald R. Hill and Lorna McDaniel

Remastered to 20-bit digital from the original field recordings.
Contains previously unreleased recordings.

Saraca: Funerary Music of Carriacou

Sankeys and anthems, Nancy story songs; chanteys; and Big Drum songs from Carriacou, that tiny island in the Grenadines that has produced a cornucopia of heartfelt music. With roots in Africa and Europe, this is music for the “Old Parents,” ancestors, performed at wakes and prayer meetings for the Dead.

Caribbean Voyage

Released for the first time, here are Alan Lomax’s legendary 1962 recordings of the rich and many-stranded musical traditions of the Lesser Antilles and Eastern Caribbean: work songs, pass-play and story songs, calypso, East Indian *chaupai*, and steel band music, reflecting the Central and West African, French, English, Celtic, Spanish, and East Indian contributions to Caribbean culture.

The Alan Lomax Collection

The Alan Lomax Collection gathers together the American, European, and Caribbean field recordings, world music compilations, and ballad operas of writer, folklorist, and ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax.

CARIBBEAN VOYAGE

Everywhere I found tidal pools and freshets of indigenous music and dance styles reflecting both the particular qualities of local life and the mainstream Creole performance style that plainly stemmed from West Africa. . . . Each island had a treasure of such melodies, potentially unlimited because still growing. I believed that all of this music could become a national resource for a federated West Indies. —Alan Lomax

In the spring of 1962, Alan Lomax went to the Lesser Antilles, the chain of islands that forms the southeastern edge of the Caribbean Sea. The West Indies that he stepped into were charged with excitement and anticipation. Most of the islands he visited that were part of the British Empire were making plans for coming independence. The local governments of Trinidad and Jamaica had been promoting a West Indian Federation, and Lomax saw his musical research as a way of finding cultural commonalities that would support the dream of postcolonial Caribbean unity.

The Rockefeller Foundation funded the expedition, and local authorities, scholars, and enthusiasts were eager to cooperate and assist. Lomax worked through the offices of the University of the West Indies and its associates throughout the area, enabling him to quickly establish good relations everywhere he went. Even more than usual, his recording gear was his calling card:

I wanted to test the effect of playing back to the village singers the recordings I would make: I called the notion "cultural feedback." There were no pocket-portable speakers at that time, and I hauled onto the plane two huge loudspeakers that stood three feet high and required high-voltage power so as to display even adequately the stereo sound that I tested out in my fieldwork Wherever we recorded, we played back the music to its makers, filling mountain hamlets and village streets with the thunder of the speakers, while whole neighborhoods danced in delight.

Lomax's plans for this music were to return it, in scholarly and commercial forms, to the communities from which it came. Copies of the tapes were deposited at the University of the West Indies, where they became an important local resource. Lomax made the University a partner in the venture by giving it a portion of the publishing rights. He also tried repeatedly to release on disc the full breadth of what he had recorded. This has had to wait till now.

This was to be the first systematic study of the region's music, especially of that of the smaller islands in the Lesser Antilles. Commercial recording of Caribbean music had begun in the early 1900s leading to the successes of Trinidadian calypso and Martinican beguine, but these recordings barely hinted at the richness of Caribbean music. Pioneering fieldwork by Harold Courlander, Melville Herskovits, Andrew Pearse, J. D. Elder, Laura Boulton, Lisa Lekis, Daniel Crowley, and others had opened the way; Lomax himself had recorded in the Bahamas in 1935 and in Haiti in 1937, but the music of the region was still relatively unknown.

Lomax was also renewing a search, begun with his father in the 1930s, for the sources and varieties of Afro-American music, its links to Africa, and its relation to European music. He was also eager to apply his nascent "Cantometric" theories on musical style and culture to this rich and diverse

area, where folk music reflected West and Central African, English, French, Spanish, Dutch, North American, and East Indian influences, among others. Having recorded the traditional music of several Western European countries and having begun an intensive study of world music, Lomax was as interested in the East Indian and European components of the region's music as in its African side.

The encounter between Europe and Africa had happened everywhere in the Caribbean, giving birth to a staggering profusion of musical forms. Underlying much of this extraordinary variety was what Lomax felt to be a "common creole style," akin to the underlying commonalities of creole languages, that was rhythmically complex, polyphonic, responsorial, textually repetitive, and concomitantly highly integrated, group-oriented, and participatory. In sub-Saharan African performance styles and their New World descendants, dancers/listeners surround musicians, who play off of their participant-audiences. This way of making music characterizes many creole genres throughout the region.

These recordings reveal that within a common process of creolization several other major unifying strands link the islands. Moving from place to place, Lomax noted the ubiquitous presence of village bands. Genres such as *bélé* and *kalinda* form musical subfamilies that cut across the region. Creolized versions of European figured dances such as the quadrille and lancers, brought in by French and English settlers, are found almost everywhere. Jigs and reels from the British Isles were transformed in an almost identical fashion on different islands through contact with African musical practices, as were the Afro-Protestant songs, in the same process that gave rise to black American gospel music. Folk instruments such as the *cocoa lute* (mouth bow) and local versions of the banjo also form a line of connection that runs from North America through the Caribbean to Brazil. Groups of schoolchildren on different islands, unbeknownst to one another other, have long been performing variants of the same game songs.¹ And in the many varieties of French Creole language and culture widespread throughout the region, Lomax found yet another of the unifying elements he sought.

Lomax was interested in how such elements reflected a set of creole music styles linked both to Africa and to Europe. But while intrigued by such connections, he was appreciative of the broader diversity of the region's musical cultures. He sought out and recorded medieval French ballads in St. Barthélemy, for example. In Trinidad he responded with particular enthusiasm and energy to the music of that island's East Indian community. Indeed, among ethnographers, Lomax was ahead of his time in recognizing that creole culture was not the only culture in the West Indies. Lomax's longtime colleague Dr. J. D. Elder, folklore scholar, activist, and former Minister of Culture in Trinidad and Tobago, recalls the project in the following light:

In terms of detail, authenticity and quality, the materials Lomax recorded have proved since to be of the highest fidelity and scientific documentation. Under the colonial system of education, peasant and African music, dance, theater, tales and legends had not been recognized as culture. The cooperation and enthusiasm shown by villagers who had never been exposed to such an inquiry encouraged the collectors to work all the more diligently.

¹ This material would later find a home in the book, *Brown Girl In the Ring*, a collaboration between Alan Lomax, J.D. Elder and Bess Lomax Hawes, (New York: Pantheon, 1997 and Rounder Records, CD).

The villagers welcomed us as friends who recognized them and their lore as valuable to the outside world. Most of them had never heard their voices recorded and played back to friends and admirers. . . . Hard fieldwork was not the only highlight of this exacting undertaking. Working with organizations such as village councils, youth groups, friendly societies, occasional gatherings, “limes” of fishermen straight from the sea, and religious groups gathered in temples and churches made the project a humanistic enterprise.

Many of the traditional styles recorded on this trip have disappeared. Some, infrequently performed, struggle to survive, while others live on in the urban popular styles that have drawn upon folk traditions throughout the Caribbean. This collection affords a wide panorama of the musical complexity of the region both in its diversity and its unifying elements, at that watershed time in Caribbean history. —**Kenneth Bilby, Ph.D., and Morton Marks, Ph.D.**

ALAN LOMAX, AN APPRECIATION —*by Winston Fleary, Director, Folklife Institute of Grenada*

When my book *The Synchro Spiritual Dynamics of Africa and Carriacou* is published, Alan Lomax will receive the highest special mention in the acknowledgements section. And the thirteen-square-mile territory of the State of Grenada shall always bless that day in 1962 when their most meaningful drum-and-fiddle music was ably recorded for them and their posterity by that indomitable, vivacious, perceptive, dynamic, persistent, scholarly, and very responsible humanitarian, the worthy Alan Lomax. And quite conversely to the phonetics of his name (“Low Maks”), the good people of Carriacou have rated the work of Mr. Lomax with “High Marks.”

Alan’s work in 1962 meant nothing to me until 1975, when the Big Drum Nation Dance was introduced to the American Museum of Natural History and at the Albermarle Theater by Dr. Donald R. Hill. Drummer Sugar Adams (then 85 years old), lead dancer Lucian Duncan, fiddle player Canute Caliste, Professor Annette McDonald (who also recorded Carriacouan music) — as well as Pete Seeger — were all in attendance. This exercise, ably supported by Lomax, inaugurated the staging of authentic Afro-Caribbean folklife in the United States. Before I knew it, Alan was all over me, changing my perception of cultural heritage and influencing my decision to abandon medical school in favor of setting up a folklife program in the West Indies for the Big Drum Nation Dance and the music of the people of Carriacou.

Our program was widely and popularly received, not only by Caribbean communities but also by Black and Anglo-Saxon America. Presentations were made at St. Patrick’s Cathedral; Avery Fisher Hall and Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center; the Smithsonian Institution’s Folklife Festival and Renwick Gallery; the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Lewisham Town Hall, the Commonwealth Institute, and the Dominion Theatre in London; the Birmingham Odeon; the Weymouth Festival; the Edinburgh Festival; as well as at numerous college campuses, churches, parks, and schools.

Alan was instrumental in helping me obtain funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Geographic Society, the New York State Council for the Arts, and the Bilalian Businessmen’s Association. Live broadcasts of Big Drum music were played over the Voice of America, WLIB, WBLS, the BBC, and local radio and television stations. Lomax went even further in encouraging me to write a folk drama, *A Year in the Life of “Say Baba,”* which was

successfully staged at Symphony Space in New York, Mahalia Jackson High School, Medgar Evers College, the Brooklyn borough president's art gallery, the Renwick Gallery, and Oneonta State College.

As a result of this exposure, the Big Drum Nation Dance figures prominently in the discourse on significant African retentions in the Western Hemisphere. Thanks and praise are indeed owed to the die-hard Alan Lomax. His Cantometrics/Choreometrics project, and his encouragement of my work pushed the Drum culture into the right channels so that blacks the world over could be justly proud. I and my Folklife Institute of the Big Drum Nation wholeheartedly salute Alan Lomax. Long live his contributions to Carriacouans everywhere! —*August 22, 1997, Carriacou, Grenada*

SARACA: FUNERARY MUSIC OF CARRIACOU —*By Donald R. Hill, with Big Drum texts, figures, and comments by Lorna McDaniel*

Carriacou is a little place, a bead in a string of islands called the Grenadines, just north of the bigger island of Grenada, the seat of government. It's a big place for music though, especially the Big Drum dance, the linchpin of Carriacou's African heritage. In 1962 Alan Lomax spent a week on Carriacou recording nearly eight hours of music, folktales, and conversation, much of it associated with customs honoring the Dead, customs that in Carriacou, as in many other countries, are of paramount importance in maintaining and strengthening cultural continuity between the generations. Both this CD and its companion release, *Tombstone Feast*, document music and stories associated with these extended funerary rites.²

Carriacouan funeral music and ritual are part of a complex belief system centering on reverence for the "Old Parents," the eighteenth-century African founders of Carriacouan society, and on obtaining guidance for the living from the more recent Dead. The funerary rites are meant to move the deceased from this world to the next, where the recent Dead and the Old Parents ("Long Time People") influence the day-to-day activities of the living. The Dead appear in dreams and request special food, *Saraca* (a "Table" or feast); or entertainment, the Big Drum dance, Nancy stories (folktales), hymns, and other types of music and dance; and give instructions on how to effect a cure or carry out a plan.

Carriacouan's beliefs enfold them in an enduring and caring social order that has withstood the traumas of capture, enslavement, and colonialism, and has sustained them through the trials and vicissitudes associated with the wage-labor migration on which they have depended since 1838. Big Drum songs, hymns, and Nancy stories bind people to their beliefs about the Old Parents. They provide a sense of family, belonging, and identity at home and in the turbulent outside world, which at some point during their lifetime nearly all Carriacouan men and many of its women enter to seek employment.

Up until the 1970s, most Carriacouans could trace their ancestry to specific African regions and ethnic groups: Cromanti, Manding, Igbo, and others. Their performances of special Big Drum

² For a brief description of Carriacou's culture and its people, see *Carriacou Calaloo: The 1962 Carriacou Field Recordings of Alan Lomax*, Rounder Records.

music, whose rhythms and dances identified each ethnic group or “nation,” were arguably the most important way the living entertained the Dead. Mythic identification with an African nation tied groups of families or lineages together in a common ancestry, and this sense of a continuous African identity served as the glue that held the society together. Elders communicated with the Old Parents through messages received in dreams from the Dead. The living then acted on their ancestors’ wishes in carrying out rituals centering on the life cycle (birth and baptism, marriage, and death), seasonal events, crises, and new ventures. Funerary rites included the wake, the burial, prayer meetings (held either three, nine, or forty days after the death), annual prayer meetings, and the Tombstone Feast, in which the spirit of the Dead is finally laid to rest when a marble stone is set on the grave. The whole process lasted from one to ten years or more. During these rituals, participants sang hymns or played drums, depending on the wealth of the believers and on what the Dead requested in their dream messages. This CD of music associated with funerary rites (along with its companion release, which is entirely dedicated to the Tombstone Feast) vividly conveys the essence of Carriacouans’ respect for their ancestors, expressed through music, folktales, and talk. Our thanks to Alan Lomax, who was able to help us — Carriacouans and foreigners alike — to preserve traditions that make life worth living and death worth dying.

In an interview made nine years after Lomax’s visit, the artist and musician Canute Caliste explained what happened when someone died on Carriacou:

Well, the first thing that they do — they make contract to bury the Dead [i.e., hire gravediggers]. And then they moan. They cry, you know. They announce it by call, send a few parties. Ring the news over the island and say that Mr. Harry is dead and will bury at four o’clock today. In English they say, “Who hear, tell the others — Sa ki tann, pale lòt.”

Well, in the wake they gather a crowd. Seat them. Pray. Tell Nancy stories. They talk about. And then they have all their drink. And then they get up. And after that they break bell. Yes, they make a Parents’ Plate [special food for the deceased]. Kill beasts and cook food and put on the Table [Saraca]. And then they sing [hymns]. After that person dead today, the next day they will get ready. And they will go and bury them at the same hour, which — they say — which — is four o’clock. Now they’re on their way, going to the cemetery. Now to go and have burial.³

When Caliste made these comments, the customs Lomax had documented in 1962 were still in force; and Carriacouans like Caliste, who recalled participating in Lomax’s recording sessions, were quite willing to explain them to visitors. The following account of a burial and Nine Night wake, drawn from Donald Hill’s 1971 research, provides a background and context for the music, stories, and interviews on this CD, recorded a decade earlier.⁴

Before the burial, the body remained at home overnight. The family stayed inside the house near the dead person, while neighbors stood around outside commenting on the life of the deceased, their talk punctuated all the while by the mourners’ characteristic wail, “Hele, helé.”

The neighbors would speculate about the cause of death. For example, it was said that one day a

³ As told to Donald Hill, July 9, 1971.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, the following descriptions of Carriacouan funerary customs are from Donald Hill’s unpublished anthropological field notes made in the 1970s.

convalescing alcoholic walked away from his hospital bed into the bush. Someone reportedly saw him wandering down the hospital road and heard him say he was going to walk — presumably across the water — to Grenada to see his mother. Several days later he was found dead on a trace (or path) not far from the hospital. “The Dead killed him,” some said. They believed that special caution would be necessary in burying him so that his spirit would not become angry, since he had had a “troubled” death. Others thought this was nonsense; he had actually died of liver disease. Although people understood that there are medical explanations for death, some attributed it to other causes as well. A person died because “the Dead killed him,” they might say, or “he troubled by too many women,” or “he must pay his debt,” or “he’s having trouble with his relations.”

Burial at family grave sites was steeped in tradition. Sometimes, a brief service, with the priest in attendance, was held in the house on the morning of the burial, while family and friends prayed and sang hymns. Assisted by family members and friends of the deceased, the grave digger used his special *grave stick* to measure the length and width of the coffin in order to determine the dimensions of the grave before digging.

Drummer Sugar Adams, one of the most important Carriacouan musicians that Lomax recorded, was a grave digger. He always carried his favorite *bo'tic* (walking stick), but used his six-foot-one-inch grave stick, said to have magical powers, for measuring the depth of a grave. While they worked, the grave digger and his helpers drank rum, had tea, and told stories about the dead person. Their reminiscences and “old talk” amount to a review of the life of the deceased and of those present.

At rural family grave sites (there was less ritual at the government cemetery in Hillsborough), the grave digger would wet the ground with rum in an African-style libation for the ancestors before digging and before resting. He also wet the grave when he himself took a drink, as a sign of respect for the Dead. When the grave was prepared and everyone was ready, the procession started out from the house to the grave. In most cases senior men acted as pallbearers, each one also carrying a chair on which to rest the casket now and then as they proceeded to the cemetery. Behind the pallbearers (or, in some cases, behind a taxi bearing the coffin in its trunk) a row of black-clad men and a row of women in white would slowly walk, singing somber hymns.

At the grave site a priest or his representative read the service while the grave diggers lowered the coffin by a rope looped through its four corners. The mourners sang hymns as the grave diggers filled in the hole and wet the ground again. When the priest had finished, most people would leave, the gravediggers remaining behind to completely cover the spot. At this time they would “leave a mark” — that is, place one branch at the head and another smaller branch at the foot of the grave. Within a few days, a wooden marker would be placed next to or in place of the larger branch, to indicate where the tombstone was to go. Thus no tombstone was erected at the time of burial. That would have to wait for another time, perhaps several years later, when the money for an expensive stone to be imported from Trinidad, could be found, and when the scattered family returned from England or the United States.

There are three designated times — the ‘Third Night, Nine Night, and Fortieth Night (or third, ninth, and fortieth nights after the death) — when the spouse or close relatives are “bound” or obliged to make a *Saraca* for the Dead in the bedroom where he or she slept. On at least one of

these evenings they must also “make” a prayer meeting (by the 1970s prayer meetings were the most widespread funeral rite. Formerly, Big Drum dances were more common). According to Sugar Adams:

*On the Third Night, or on the Nine Night, they have prayer meeting. Forty Night prayer meeting, too — is general prayer meeting — that’s the last prayer meeting. Because we [our] Old Parents [say], if you don’t give the Nine Night, you give the Forty Night. When my wife die [in 1941], I give Third Night. I do Nine Night. That was me day of strength. I have me money. I give a Forty Night. I make three prayer meetings for me wife.*⁵

May Fortune told Alan Lomax (see track 24) that the Parents’ Plate is “set for the people who dead.... Certain times they have to visit their family.... They are coming to partake, but we cannot see them. But in your slumber ... they generally come and speaks” to request a Parents’ Plate, consisting of “all different quality of meat — you have chicken, then you have mutton, and you have pork. Then you have rice, you have cocoo [cooked rice], then you have vegetables and all those different ‘ceteras.” At the start of the event, a libation of rum would be spilled on the ground.

Alvin Cummings, speaking after the Nine Night for the wealthy and respected elder Glassin John from Bunswick, maintained that one could either

*wet the ground for the Old Parents in general, or for a specific individual. ... Now, if you know who was dead, like Glassin John, and you know him very well, you say, “Well now, look, Glassin boy. Here we decided to have a little thing tonight. I sorry you were dead, but you will watch us, and you will take your feast [the Plate].”*⁶

The choice of the of when to hold the prayer meeting (or the decision to observe all three) depended upon whether money was available, when relatives would arrive from abroad, who was available to help, and the time of year (most prayer meetings are held in the dry season, between January and April). The most popular time for a prayer meeting is the ninth night after the death. On a Nine Night people sing hymns in the yard. Relatives sit by the entrance to the dead person’s room where the Plate has been prepared. On the bed where the Dead once slept, the finest clothes are laid out for his or her spirit to wear when it returns to the house to observe the goings-on and, as May Fortune says, “to partake.” Sometimes family affairs are settled at a Nine Night, and the will, if there is one, is read. Otherwise the elders of the family decide upon the disposition of his or her family property — that is, the agricultural land.

In 1962 Alan Lomax described a Carriacouan prayer meeting this way:

We found the neighbors gathered round a long table, singing hymns. There were three or four leaders who dominated the singing. They enjoyed us and our machine. After a good deal of conversation, it turned out they knew many spirituals, which they called anthems — seldom sung

⁵ Sugar Adams to Donald Hill, September 4, 1971.

⁶ Alvin Cummings to Donald Hill, June 24, 1971.

*in church, but often at informal gatherings such as a Nine Night wakes. When we left them at 2 A.M. they were still drinking coffee and starting the hymns again.*⁷

In 1971 hundreds of people might attend the Nine Night held for Glassin John, who sang in some of the choruses on this CD. He had been the leader of the Six Roads/Dumfries Maroon (an annual fête to ask the Old Parents to help bring on the rainy season for planting) and the owner of a shop and dance hall where quadrille and lancers dances had often been held.⁸ Old Heads like Glassin John and his cohorts were bound together by their common experience of migration to Aruba during World War II and the years immediately thereafter. They were admired because they had been able to save money during their overseas labor and acquire shops, houses, and cement cisterns (so necessary in Carriacou, where there are no year-round streams or rivers to supply water). When Glassin John died, people knew that his Nine Night would be a Big Time — an occasion not-to-be-forgotten.

By 7:30 P. M. some 175 mourners were assembled at Mr. John's house, where the morning sacrifice of chickens and the preparation of the Saraca had taken place. For much of the evening Glassin John's adopted son acted as the Guardian of the Plate. This was placed in Glassin John's bedroom and contained the usual items in ample quantities. The prayer meeting had already begun. In the yard people gathered around a table covered with sail or tarp. Hymns requested by the family were sung first, then the meeting was thrown open to the public and anyone could request a hymn. A person would call out, "Mr. Chairman, [Hymn no.] Two-oh-two!" "Two-oh-two!" the chairman would repeat, and those with hymnbooks turned to the appropriate hymn. Sometimes an elderly lady started by singing the first line and the others would join in. For those without hymnals, the chairman lined out the song (that is, spoke each line before it was sung).

As participants paused every half hour or so for rounds of "jack" rum (180 proof), chased with glasses of water, the prayer meeting grew quite raucous, Women and children — particularly teenage girls (who did not join in drinking rum) — stayed around the table. Others *limed* (stood around) in the yard, talking, drinking, and playing dominoes or cards, or visited the mourners in the hall or public room of the house, and admired the Saraca. There was a brother who had returned from Grenada and other friends and relatives of the dead person who had come from Aruba and more distant places and who met again in the hall for the first time in many years.

Downstairs, food was being distributed to the visitors, whose number had swelled to some 330 people. By this time the crowd was singing *anthems*, lively hymns borrowed from the Spiritual Baptists. At a Big Time like this, when the crowd is at its peak, the groupings in Carriacouan society would be evident. Older family members stayed inside the house. Old women and teenage girls were gathered at the prayer meeting table, along with a few old men, one of whom acted as chairman. Teenage boys limed on the road nearby. Middle-aged men played dominoes in the yard. Women served food from the kitchen and the ground-level room below the main hall of the house. Yet even in this sexually segregated social order, a boy and girl could find time to get together at a prayer meeting without being noticed.

⁷ Handwritten comment to Lomax Archive tape C 136–137–138, "Recorded at a 9th nine [sic] wake," undated (Alan Lomax Archive, New York City).

⁸ Documented by Donald Hill, "'England I Want to Go: The Impact of Migration on a Caribbean Community," (Ph.D. Diss., Indiana University at Bloomington, 1973): 765–70.

Traditionally at about 11 P.M., the telling of Nancy stories would begin in a location to the side of the house away from the yard. Nancy stories were becoming rare when Lomax visited the island and would have been absent at Glassin John's Nine Night had Charlie Bristol not graciously told some — to the delight of the children — at the request of visitors. Glassin John's Nine Night prayer meeting lasted until morning.

The least common of the three types of funerary prayer meetings is the Forty Night, which assumes particular importance when the family has not been able to collect sufficient money for the Third or Nine Night, or when relatives have arrived late from abroad. (When it is not possible to make a Forty Night, mourners may simply make a Parents' Plate, sing a few hymns at the house, or hold a Mass).

After the Forty Night the family must continue to honor the dead person with a Parents' Plate, Mass, prayer meeting, or Big Drum dance held every year in the month in which the person died until entombment can take place — sometimes years later. People may receive dream messages from the departed specifying what kind of commemorative activity to sponsor. Relatives who are abroad may send money to pay for masses at home. (Before Vatican II, these Masses would have been in Latin, but today the hymns sung in the church on these occasions are the same as those sung at domestic prayer meetings, performed perhaps with less exuberance and without the fortification of jack rum.)

The final mandatory rite for an adult who has died is the Stone, or Tombstone Feast, held from one to nine or more years after the death (see track 23, and see also the companion CD *Tombstone Feast*, which is entirely dedicated to this custom).

On this CD we hear hymns, chanteys, a *cantique*, Big Drum songs, Nancy songs, and a story. Many of the **hymns** derive from Anglican, Catholic, or other nineteenth-century hymnals, especially those compiled by P. P. Bliss, D. L. Moody, and Ira Sankey, known as *Sankeys* (see track 2, "Near the Cross"). Others are West Indian *anthems*, a folk song genre similar to African-American spirituals. Both Sankeys and anthems are staples of the Spiritual Baptist Church, a sect thought to have developed in nearby St. Vincent that spread throughout the Grenadines and Trinidad in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Spiritual Baptist Church services owe as much to West African (especially Yoruba) rituals as to Protestant Christianity; its congregation's lively anthems are full of vocalizations called *trumping*. Anthems have become favorites in Carriacou, even though the Carriacouan prayer meeting for the Dead is not a Spiritual Baptist service. Examples are: "I Have a Sword in My Hand" (track 1), "I Promise the Lord" (track 5), "Gone to Nineveh" (track 6), "Be on Time" (track 7), and "O, the Angels" (track 11). *Cantiques* are French hymns usually sung for Christmas, but also at prayer meetings, wakes, and Tombstone Feasts (see track 23). There are two cantiques on *Carriacou Calaloo* in the *Caribbean Voyage* series in the Alan Lomax Collection on Rounder Records.

Together with some of the Big Drum songs, **Nancy stories**, formerly commonly told at wakes and prayer meetings, are among the oldest examples of folklore found on Carriacou. Thought to be of Afro-French origin, they are named for the creator god Anansi, known throughout the Caribbean as the trickster spider, and the hero of many folktales. They are told in the "Krik-krak"

performance style found throughout the French Caribbean (Haiti, Martinique, and elsewhere). Nancy stories begin with a song in French Creole or Patois, the lyrics of which are difficult to discern (and are sometimes not understood by the performers themselves, who have become English speakers). The storyteller then shouts out “Krik!” to which his audience must respond “Kraak!” and the narration begins. From time to time he will again yell “Krik” or sing the song, in which the audience frequently joins. This aids the narrative flow and ensures that the audience is actively listening. “Humble-o” (track 9) is a classic. “Timi, Timi, Zewon” and “Mbadi-o, Dem de-o” (tracks 3 and 4) are examples of songs that accompany the Nancy stories.

Usually associated with sailing activities such as boat launchings and raising sails, or sung for amusement during long voyages, **chanteys** were sung at funerary rites for dead sailors as well. They were also sung as part of a curious custom called **Breaking the Barrel** (see track 8) that was performed at wakes, prayer meetings, and Tombstone Feasts. [DNS JAY: NOTE CANUTE’S PAINTING “BREAKING THE BARREL.”] Scottish in origin, Breaking the Barrel was an adult play in which men played at turning a windlass while exchanging banter and singing chanteys. They would lash two crossed sticks to a third stick and poke them into an empty rum barrel. They then held the ends of one of the crossed sticks and moved counterclockwise, singing chanteys and pounding the other stick onto the sides and bottom of the barrel. From time to time there was a break in the singing while the “sailors” asked for passage on the boat, and one of the men, the “captain,” would either refuse or allow them to come aboard. There was much drinking and singing, and the Breaking of the Barrel could become loud and chaotic, much to the objection of the people who gathered around a nearby table to sing hymns, until eventually the barrel would be smashed to bits. (On one occasion, however, a fifty-five-gallon oil drum was used, and the “sailors” could not even make a dent in it.)

Tracks 12–22 are devoted to the **Big Drum**, the most prestigious and remarkable music in Carriacou. Performed for a variety of purposes, especially funeral rites, Big Drum songs may be classified into the following groups:⁹

Figure 1. The Big Drum Dances

[DNS TO JAY: SET AS ILLUSTRATION]

<i>Nation</i>	<i>Creole</i>	<i>Frivolous</i>
Cromanti	Old People’s Bongo	Chattam
Arada	Hallecord	Lora
Chamba	Bèlé Kawé	Cariso
Manding	Gwa Bélé	Chirrup
Kongo	Juba	Piké
Banda	Old Kalenda	Chiffoné
Ibo, Jib-Ibo and Scotch Ibo	Quilbe	Man Bongo
Temne		Trinidad Kalinda
Moko Yégéyéyé and Moko Bangé		

⁹ First noted by Pearse in 1956, updated by Lorna McDaniel.

Nation dances are thought to have originated with specific West African ethnic groups, with the exception of Scotch Ibo, which, as May Fortune told Alan Lomax, is “The Scotch onto the Ibo.” The other dances have African components but were created in the Caribbean.

The drum ensemble of the Big Drum consists of a *cut* (solo) drum (also called *cutter* or *cot*) and two *boulas*. All are open-bottomed barrel drums, approximately 18 inches high, but the cut is constructed slightly shorter than the boulas and emits a higher-pitched sound. A snare (a string knotted with pins) is strung over the drumhead, giving its voice a distinctive rasp. The boulas play continuing cycles of the nation code before entrance of the cut.

Big Drum songs commence with a vocal introduction by the *chantwell* (lead singer), followed by the entrance of the chorus, the introduction of the reiterative nation beat, and finally the entry of the cut drum with improvised statements. The *chac-chac* (maraca) may enter at any point in this progression of entrances. An instrument called the *old hoe* (or *bottle and spoon*, sometimes also called the *bell gong*) is heard only in the deeply spiritual *Beg Pardon* songs, which call or dismiss the ancestors. With all musical lines in motion, the dancer enters the ring to dance directly in front of the cut drummer, conducting his drum statements with her danced rhythms. It is she who also dictates the end of the song by touching the cutter drumhead with the hem of her wide skirt. This additive entrance design suggests the staggered exposition in fugal forms. The progression, evident in each Big Drum song is illustrated in Figure 2. [DNS “The outer circle represents the vocal entry, the next coil the boula entry, and the third turn the cut entrance.” Caption for diagram CYCLEPHONIC DIAGRAM, FIG. 2. PUT IN HERE.]

My Dream About Sugar Adams —*Donald Hill*

Last December I had a dream about Sugar Adams in his captain’s hat. I saw him and several other people in a city. At the end of my dream I went with people I know but cannot name to the home of Sugar Adams’ “son” (he looked like Sugar Adams’ daughter, whom I once met). His house looked like a typical Carriacouan two-room “board” house, like the one in Bellvue South, Carriacou, that Sugar and May Fortune used to live in. We met Sugar’s son in the yard, just outside the front door. He pointed to a captain’s hat, whose bill was poking out of the dirt in the yard. It was one of Sugar’s hats. There is a picture hanging outside my office door in Oneonta, New York, of Sugar Adams wearing a plain but similar black hat. The one in my dream was more official, with gold braid crisscrossing the black bill. As he gestured to me and my friends to pick up the hat, Sugar Adams’s son was transformed into Sugar Adams. I leaned down to pick it up and awoke.

This dream was doubtless triggered by all the thinking I’ve been doing lately about Carriacou and by the photograph of Sugar that hangs outside my office door. Then again, it could have been the sort of dream that May Fortune describes in her wonderful dialogue with Alan Lomax about the Saraca (track 24), a dream in which one of the Old Parents (Sugar Adams) appears to give instructions to the living. Winston Fleary thinks it may mean that Sugar Adams wanted the hat to be taken off the ground and put on someone’s head — a passing on of his office, or in a wider sense a passing on of his knowledge.¹⁰ Sugar may have been telling us to do our best job on these CDs of Carriacouan music, which are, after all, a gift from the Old Parents to the current generation. As

¹⁰ Personal communication.

May Fortune said of the Old Parents, “We cannot see them, but in your slumber ... they generally come and speaks.... They may not come to you in persons, but they may tell it to somebody to tell you that you must done certain duty.” Sugar may be telling us that these Carriacou CDs are a trust that “must done” — Carriacou’s music must be given to the world.

The Performers

Ferguson “Sugar Tamarind” Adams and **May Fortune** were Carriacou’s premier musical couple. Their recordings date from the early 1950s, and both have shared their deep repository of knowledge about Big Drum songs with many scholars. Adams was born in Carriacou in about 1890. “My race is Igbo race,” he once told me.¹¹ He began to learn how to play drums when he was twelve years old under the legendary master drummer Elisha George, who, according to Sugar, had a “goatskin hand, born for the purpose.” Since then Sugar “beat the drum in Petit Martinique, all in Union, in Grenada, me Sugar.” During Carnival in 1970 Sugar Adams had a stroke that made his hand “heavy,” after which he rarely “beat drum.”

As a drummer and grave digger, Sugar Adams had special status in Carriacouan society. As a grave digger he took care of the corporeal remains of the Dead, and as a drummer he contacted those same Old Parents through his music. These things were outside the understanding of ordinary people, who stood in awe of and sometimes feared the supernatural power of musicians and grave diggers. Yet because they were the first among the living to contact the Dead, musicians were greatly admired.

In 1975, Sugar Adams, Caddy John, Lucien Duncan, Canute Caliste, and several others received a proclamation of achievement and a cash award from the Big Drum Nation Dance Company of New York and the American Museum of Natural History for their contribution to Caribbean culture. Sugar Adams died in October 1983.

Sugar Adams had great affection for his common-law wife, **Mary “May” Fortune**. Actually, he referred to her as his “keeper” since they were never formally married. “I could marry to May now,” said Sugar in 1971,

but I don’t want to marry. I could marry to May how many years gone because she husband die before me wife. But I wouldn’t marry twice, and she wouldn’t marry twice.... She’s stubborn ... but she is a very nice ’oman, you know, a very nice ’oman. She is my keeper, going on thirty years. She husband wasn’t a drummer; he used to work in Trinidad in the cane field. She lay mark [grave stone for him]. And they burn cane the whole day. Burn fire in the cane straw after they cut — and the heat of the fire, and they wet them plenty. And he catch a cold, and he died with something now.

May Fortune was one of the most accomplished singers of her generation and the primary instructor of the next generation of Big Drum vocalists. On some of the Big Drum recordings you can hear her, always the teacher, directing the chorus and the drummers to take up their parts. May Fortune died in 1973.

Daniel Aikens was another premier Carriacouan drummer, as well as a fine singer. According to

¹¹ Sugar Adams to Donald Hill, September 4, 1971.

Winston Fleary, himself a master drummer, Aikens had no peer in playing kalindas and bongos on the cut drum.

Accomplished drummer **Caddy Lazarus John**, now also deceased, continued to delight both Carriacouans and foreigners for many years after he was recorded in 1962.

Shipwright, house builder, instrument maker, fiddle player, and painter, **Canute Caliste** is a renaissance man who expresses himself with his hands. He was 34 when Alan Lomax recorded him playing at a quadrille dance, and today he is still a vital working artist. He lives in L'Esterre, a "French" village (where into the 1970s speakers of French Creole could still be found), known for its shipwrights and musicians. A longtime woodworker, he took up painting in the late 1960s, encouraged by the sisters of the Madonna House, a lay Catholic ministry in Carriacou, who provided him with painting materials. Highly skilled and with a style all their own, Caliste and his students have put Carriacou on the map as a place rich in painters who are not formally trained. Donald Hill once commissioned a set of paintings from him, which he knocked out in a couple of hours. He works on pressed board, using a method of mass production; he first paints the background — earth and sky — and then individual scenes—a wedding, a Big Drum dance, a wake, and so on. When urged to shed light on some of the topics of his paintings, Caliste, a rare nontalker in an island of talkers, dryly replied, "This is a wedding; this is a Big Drum; this is a wake."

Sailor **Charlie Bristol** had a well-deserved reputation as the best chantey man between the Virgin Islands and the Spanish Main. He's a darn good storyteller, too, and a master of French Creole. **Sonnel Allert**, seaman, 32 at the time of these recordings, and **Gorin Joseph**, 51, a laborer, continued playing with Canute Caliste for many years. **William "Willie" Alexander**, 80, also a sailor, lived well into his nineties. Even after he stopped playing, his tambourine continued to be used in quadrille dances for more than a decade.

One of the singers in the Big Drum choruses is **Lucien Duncan** of Top Hill. A young woman when these recordings were made, she became Carriacou's best Big Drum dancer and singer following the death of May Fortune. A strong, proud, handsome woman with a clear dark brown face, Lucien Duncan, like Sugar Adams, Canute Caliste, and May Fortune, has worked with many scholars over the years, including Annette MacDonald, Lorna McDaniel, Donald Hill, and Winston Fleary. In both Carriacou and Brooklyn, she continues to teach the next generation of girls in the ways of the Big Drum.

Glassin John, the Old Head whose wake was described above, is heard in the chorus on some of these recordings. He was from Six Roads and was one of the most prominent people in Carriacou.

Many other performers sang in choruses recorded by Alan Lomax. It is impossible to identify them all, but we do know that the performers recorded in Bellvue village on July 30, 1962, included May Fortune, Jemina Joseph, Mrs. Silvina, Manny James, Beatrice Lazarus, Matilda Noel, Larena Clement, Tida Lazarus, Newton Joseph, and Daniel Aikens. In L'Esterre on July 31, Lomax recorded Charlie Bristol, Newton Joseph, Sidney Joseph, Sonnel Allert, Gorin Joseph, William Alexander, Canute Caliste, Lenus George, Matteson Joseph, Avoide Sylvester, Conrad Joseph, Clyde Anjou, and Kingston Joseph.

On August 2 in La Resource he recorded singers Virginia Sylvester, Beatrice Dick, Derrick Lejen, Sheref Joseph, Faith Lawrence, Sweet Honey Duncan, Prince Lawrence, Martha Dick, Lucien Duncan, Daniel Aikens, and Edith Hector. Joining in later were Margaret Henry, Virginia Joseph, Millicent Duncan, Charlie Bristol, Newton Joseph, and Sugar Adams. The storytellers were Daniel Aiken and Derrick Lejean.

Note on the Song Texts

Transcriptions are provided for every original line of text but not for all repetitions. Translations are provided when possible. Transcriptions and translations of songs in call-and-response form (leader and chorus) suggest all variations but do not include all repetitions. Transliteration of Creole is controversial. We have used a simplified orthography to reflect changes in pronunciation, which is becoming progressively less nasal and more anglicized.

1. I Have a Sword in my Hand

Sung by Mrs. Edith Hector and chorus. Recorded on July 28, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

Recorded at a wake, this anthem features the rhythmic inhaling known as *trumping* or *doption*, designed to bring on a trance in the Spiritual Baptist church (but not at a prayer meeting).

*I have a sword in my hand, in my hand,
Help me to use it now.
I have a sword in my hand, in my hand,
Help me to use it now.*

*I'm going away to watch and pray,
In that great Judgment Day.*

*I have a sword in my hand, in my hand,
Lord, help me to use it now.*

*I'm going away, eh eh eh, eh eh eh eh,
Help me to use it now.*

*I have a book in my hand, in my hand, Lord,
Help me to use it now.*

*I'm going away to watch and pray,
In that great Judgment Day.*

*I have a sword in my hand, in my hand,
Help me to use it now.*

*I have a book in my hand, oh Lord,
Help me to use it now.*

[trumping begins]

*I'm going away to watch and pray,
Until that great Judgment Day.*

*I has a sword in my hand,
Help me to use it now.*

2. Near the Cross

Sung by a chorus of unidentified women. Recorded on July 28, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

This is an example of a Sankey (so called from the name of the hymnal editor). The lyrics (not exactly as sung) are from Hymn 45, Bliss and Sankey (1875), by Fanny J. Crosby and W. H. Doane.

*Jesus, keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain,
Free to all, a healing stream,
Flows from Calvary's mountain.*

Chorus:

*In the Cross, in the Cross,
Be my glory ever,
'Til my raptured soul shall find
Rest beyond the river.*

*Near the Cross, a trembling soul,
Love and mercy found me;
There the bright and morning star
Shed its beams around me. [Chorus]*

*Near the Cross! O Lamb of God,
Bring its scenes before me.
Help me walk from day to day,
With its shadows o'er me [Chorus]*

*Near the Cross I'll watch and wait,
Hoping, trusting ever,
Till I reach the golden strand,
Just beyond the river. [Chorus]*

3. Timi, Timi, Zewon

Sung by Newton Joseph, lead vocal, with a chorus of six men, including Daniel Aikens. Recorded on July 30, 1962, in L'Esterre, Carriacou.

This song was used to accompany the telling of a Nancy story at a wake.

*Timi-timi zewon
Timi-timi zewon
Bonjou louwa
Se mwen . . .?
Se konsa mwen ye.
Krik!*

Translation:

[?]

Hello [...]

It's me [...]

That's how I am.

Krik!

Lomax: *What — what does that song say? Do you know what the words mean?*

Joseph: *A story.*

Lomax: *That's a conte? [i.e., a tale]*

Joseph: *Yes.*

Lomax: *Is that from a — what story is that? What's the story?*

Joseph: *Well, when the old people and them dead, we go to keep a pleasure.*

Lomax: *Oh, that's for a wake song?*

Joseph: *A wake, yes.*

Lomax: *A wake song.*

4. Mbadi-o, Dem dei-o

Sung by Charlie Bristol (lead vocal) and with a chorus of six men, including Daniel Aikens.
Recorded on July 30, 1962, in L'Esterre, Carriacou.

Another Anansi or Nancy story song.

Mbadi-o dem dei-o!

Mbadi luk dem dei.

Bay di faya dem dei.

Translation:

Someone is there oh!

Someone is there.

By the fire is where they are.

5. I Promise the Lord

Sung by Martha Dick and chorus. Recorded on August 2, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

This anthem is a variation of “Jesus Walked with a Golden Cane,” a spiritual also found in New Orleans and elsewhere in the United States.

[...] *walk in the narrow way,*

Believers, walk in the narrow way,

Believers, walk in the narrow way,

Believers, walk in the narrow way.

All my sins are taken away,

All my sins are taken away,

Praise the Lord!

I promise the Lord I'm not going back. [etc., as above]

Believers walk in the narrow way. / I see a boy that I really love. / Believers walk in the narrow way. / I see a boy that I really love.

6. Gone to Nineveh

Sung by a chorus of unidentified women. Recorded on July 28, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

This is an extraordinary multilinear, harmonized performance of an anthem, with trumping set as rhythmic motifs behind the call-and-response phrases: “Where Jonah gone?”/ “Gone to Nineveh.” / “Where Jonah gone?” / “Jonah never gone.”/ “Jonah run away.”

Chorus:

Gone to Nineveh [repeated every other line]

Alternating lines:

Where Jonah gone? / Jonah never gone. / Jonah run away.

7. Be on Time

Sung by a chorus of unidentified women. Recorded on July 28, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

This is another example of an anthem recorded, like the others, at a wake.

*Like the falling of a leaf,
Like the pining of a sheep,
Be on time.*

*Be in time, be in time,
When the voice of Jesus call you,
Be on time.*

8. Yard-o, Yard-o

Sung by Charlie Bristol and a chorus of unidentified men. Recorded on July 30, 1962, in L’Esterre, Carriacou.

This sea chantey, originally a boat-launching song, was one of those sung during Breaking the Barrel, a mini-play often performed at wakes, in which men impersonate a captain and sailors and pretend to be turning a windlass. Ron Kephart thinks that this song may refer to a funeral: “Without money they couldn’t pay someone to wash and prepare the body for burial, so (they) had to do it themselves.”¹²

*Yard-o, yard-o,
Bell a ring a yard-o.*

Chorus:

*Hey, hey, hey,
Bell a ring a yard-o!*

If you want to see the monkey dance,

¹² Personal communication.

Break a pepper in his tail. [Etc., as above]

*Masa ded no liv no moni,
Misiz av tu wach i peni*

*Mi sista dou liv no moni,
So a av tu wach i peni.*

[Men talking in background as if doing the little skit]

Translation of last four lines:

*Master died leaving no money,
Missus has to watch her pennies.*

*My sister didn't leave any money,
So I have to wash her pennies [genitals].*

9. Humble-o

Performed by Daniel Aikens, singer and storyteller. Recorded on August 2, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

“Humble-o,” is a Nancy story about the mythical origin of the people of Petit Martinique, a little island with a population of less than 500 about a mile from Windward Village, Carriacou. The inhabitants are thought to be descended from Afro-Scottish and Afro-French boat builders and sailors, and to this day they have a reputation as fine seamen. But in the Carriacouan sense of the word, they are considered “selfish” and standoffish: they are averse to people visiting their island and even object to the police to removing troublemakers, preferring to handle matters themselves.

Carriacouans told stories about their fiercely independent neighbors. For instance there was one about a murder that took place in the '60s on a sloop plying between Carriacou and Grenada with three Petit Martinican sailors on board. A fight broke out between two of them and one fell overboard. The third sailor tried to help him clamber back on board, but his assailant, still in a passion, pushed him back and he drowned. After arriving in Grenada, the alleged murderer was detained. People said he got a good lawyer who had him released on bail. It was rumored that the bail money involved some *bobul* (bribe). He returned to Petit Martinique, but the other crewman, feeling he should stand trial for murder, was able to get the case reopened. A Grenadian policeman stationed in Carriacou was sent to Petit Martinique to bring the accused back to St. George's, Grenada, for trial. When the policeman arrived at the Petit Martinique jetty, he noticed people nearby digging. When he asked them what they were doing, they said they were digging a grave for him if he stepped off the boat. The policeman turned back and told his superiors in Carriacou that he could not pick the man up. They said that if he did not, he would be fired. He refused, was fired, and eventually migrated to England. When no one could be found to bring in the accused, the case was dropped.

In a second version of this story, the accused sailor was released because his family put up bail legitimately. Subsequently, several policemen were asked to pick him up. Not wanting to go to Petit Martinique, they cooked up a story that there was mail awaiting him in Hillsborough, Carriacou. When he came to get his mail, he was captured and taken to Grenada for trial. Again, his family made bail, and he returned to Petit Martinique. But this time when the police tried to

take him off the island they were met by residents toting shotguns and pistols and the police had to retreat emptyhanded. The police decided to have the matter, rather than themselves, laid to rest.¹³

For what it is worth, I found the Petit Martinicans to be quite friendly. Furthermore, Petit Martinicans do quite well when they migrate. One district officer (the “mayor”) in Carriacou was from Petit Martinique, as was Carriacou’s most prominent resident in Brooklyn, a medical doctor whose daughter was briefly a television actress.

“Humble-o” explains how Petit Martinicans acquired their singular character. A psychiatrist would have a field day interpreting it. It tells of a pregnant but unmarried girl from Petit Martinique and her babies, a twin girl and boy, who in turn were the progenitors of all subsequent Petit Martinican people. The Church teaching that unmarried women should not have children is reinforced when the girl is refused confirmation in Carriacou, while all the other children from Petit Martinique are eaten by Job Lutins (the devil)! Such stories, told with tongue in cheek, are meant as lessons for children.

Beginning song :

Humble-o, kou ye?

Humble-o, kou i o?

Vitman, pou nou ale, vitman! [Listeners keep repeating this line].

Nou ka-ale.

Nou vle ale.

Nou ka-ale.

Nou ka-ale.

Translation:

Humble oh, where is she?

Quick, we have to go, quick!

We’re going.

We want to go. [Etc.]

Spoken: *Krik*

Audience: *Krak!*)

*Well that was a lady have a daughter,
And confirmation will be taking place;
That lady live in Petit Martinique, Carriacou;
And that confirmation will be taking place in Carriacou
Because Petit Martinique have no church in those time.*

*Well, that poor lady leave the daughter home
And come down to make right to sew a-clothes*

¹³ Donald Hill, “‘England I Want To Go:’ The Impact of Migration on a Caribbean Community.” Ph.D. Diss.: 545–48.

*There was no seamstress in, um — (Listeners: Petit Martinique!)
Petit Martinique. Let me one talk!*

*And when she come now the day appear
That all children will come down from Petit Martinique
To come to Carriacou to land in Jean-Pierre Bay
To go down town to receive confirmation
In the Roman Catholic Church.*

*Well, the first boat arrive; the daughter did not come.
She wait for the second boat; the daughter did not come.*

(Song)

Spoken: *Krik!*

Listeners: *Krak!*

*At that time that girl prove in family way
And you can't confirm if you conceive with a child.
She can't come.*

*The poor mother don't know;
The poor mother don't know if she conceive;
But she go and make all preparations before,
And then expecting her with the boat.*

*So when the last boat come,
And she ain't see the daughter,
She take off her kerchief round she head,
And tie she waist and she start to bawl.*

(Song)

Spoken: *Krik!*

Listeners: *Krak!*

*Well in those time — in that time,
The daughter did not come on that direction at all.
She ain't come with the boat,
Because she know that she conceive with a baby.*

*Well, the last boat come;
The lady did not see.*

*Well you know, at those time
We don't have car in Carriacou to take them to town —
They have to walk.
All the candidates form together
And stepping downtown.*

Well, when they meet they going down,

*They going and pass Belvedere Cross,
Going downtown,
Going to the Roman Catholic Church
To get confirmation.
Bishop is there waiting.*

*Well, when they going to cross.
You know the road was by Noblaki [?] Bay
And crossing there,
There have a salt-pond there.*

*There is a man there will take away all —
Will swallow all the children,
All, everybody that pass.*

*Look here!
As soon as they go to cross
That lagoon
(Listener: Salt pond!)
— salt pond,
All gone!
They take away all!*

*And is only that one girl,
That stay in Petit Martinique;
And that girl come,
And she bring a twin,
A boy and a girl.*

*That is the onliest people
That remain in Petit Martinique.*

*And all the people that leave
To go and see confirmation,
All was swallow by the —
By that man — I forget that man name.*

Listeners: *He name is Djabloten — The Devil!*

*Well, all right, no confirmation.
Nobody in Petit Martinique did not confirm
On that day because they all gone,
They did not reach town.*

*And that girl remain in Petit Martinique.
She make twin, and
They grow up in Petit Martinique.
And you see,
Petit Martinique is one family.*

Because if anything wrong in Petit Martinique,

*You go there you get dead, because —
And if you get dead there,
No one would not say:
“Well, me kill this man,”
Because they all is one.
You stranger have to keep off.*

You see?

*That is why, you see,
If you have a daughter, she going to confirm
And she conceive,
She can never go to the Bishop to confirm,
Because she conceive with baby.*

*Not so you know,
But in the way going —
She was a candidate
In the way going to confirm,
She get the baby.
And then she remain there.*

Is thanks of she that make Petit Martinique green up today.

Krik! Krak!

Alan Lomax: *Good. Wonderful.*

Anna Lomax: *Very nice.*

10. Ring Down Below

Sung by Charlie Bristol and chorus. Recorded on July 3, 1962, in L’Esterre, Carriacou.

Another sea chantey for Breaking the Barrel.

Chorus: *Ring down below.*

Lead singer: *Ring down below.*

Ring down, ring down everybody!

Etc., as above:

As I (As we) Oh, going down,

We (I) meet (up) the devil.

Yes, we meet the devil, with a hell of a Bible!

Ring down, ring down, I tell you.

Yes, the devil tell me he’s praying for sinners.

Oh ring me there, ring me down there girl

[Sounds of talking, as if breaking the barrel]

Oh going down, going down there, girl.

If I tell you, I meet the devil.

Lomax: *Oh boy, that's great!*

11. O, the Angels

Sung by Martha Dick and chorus. Recorded on July 28, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

An anthem recorded at a wake.

Lomax [spoken]: *All right, again.*

Sung:

O, the angels send me for you (boy).

Chorus:

O, the angels send me for you.

Leader: *I does known what you do, but they send me for you. / They done tell me what you do, but they send me for you. / O, the son(s) of the Dead, they waiting for you.*

12. Cromanti

Performed by Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

A Cromanti Big Drum with instrumental accompaniment.

13. Juba

Performed by Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums) with an unidentified vocalist. Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

The juba rhythm, played at first by the boulas, dominates this instrumental opening. A juba song is sung faintly in the background, probably by a drummer.

14. Quilbe

Performed by Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

The Quilbe, along with several other Creole dances, was borrowed from Union Island to become one of the 26 types of Big Drum dances.

15. Ju Noel / Juba-lo (Bongo)

Sung by Jemima Joseph (lead vocal), May Fortune (second lead), and a chorus of unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

This juba is sung with many textual variations. Gawe is a village in Grenada.

Juba we will dance in Gawe.

Ju noel nu kai dance kawé [ka vl'é] ["On Christmas day we will dance as we please"].

16. Mmwe malade ayo (Gwa bèlé)

Sung by Jemima Joseph (lead vocal), May Fortune (second lead), and a chorus of unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum); and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

The text of this song speaks of illness and the doctor's presence before death appears.

*Mmwe malade ayo,
Mwe bagaille — ai-ai-i,
Maladie mwe.
Mwê se a ke docteur aye,
Docteur bam ka rivé,
Avant la mort prend mwe.*

17. Anancy-o-e (Cromanti)

Sung by Jemina Joseph and a chorus of six unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

The words of this Cromanti Big Drum dance invoke the trickster god Anansi, hero of many folktales.

The translation of *sari baba* is difficult, but among the several possible language sources, Lorna McDaniel suggests it may have originated from Hausa *tsari baba* (“protective father”).

*Anancy-o, sari baba,
Anancy-o-e,
Anancy-o, sari baba.*

Anancy-o, sari baba. [Etc.]

18. Anti-o, coro, coro (Kongo)

Sung by Jemina Joseph and a chorus of six unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

The words of Kongo Big Drum dance songs, sung in a mixture of English Creole and French Creole, hold clues to the history of nation integration on Carriacou. The use of English suggests a late Kongo entry into Carriacou. *Anti* may be the abbreviation for Cromanti, *you no yeri* is “you no hear,” and *coro* may be Patois for “run.”¹⁴

*Anti-o, you no yeri-o,
Coro, coro,
Anti, coro, you no yeri-o,
Coro, coro.*

¹⁴ Ron Kephart notes that the archaic *yeri* (hear) is still found in Jamaican Maroon Spirit Language and in the Surinam Creoles.

*Coro, coro,
Thunder roll, you no yeri-o,
Coro, coro.
Lightning flash, you no yeri-o,
Coro, coro.*

19. Maiwaz-o (Old People's Bongo)

Sung by May Fortune and a chorus of six unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

This poignant performance of an Old People's Bongo of Consolation refers to a sad incident recorded in "Plewé mwe, plewé," another Big Drum song. It tells about the dispersal of an enslaved family, who call out the names of their children: Mary Rose (Maiwaz), Lydia (Lidé), Zabette, and Walter, who were left behind when their parents were shipped to Haiti. Generated by the same incident, this lament tells of the consolation offered by neighbors: "Come see me, I will help you cry. I will not speak."

*Maiwaz-o-o,
Maiwaz-o, ai, Lidé-o!
Maiwaz-o, ai, Maiwaz,
Vini oué mwe.*

*Maiwaz mwe winde plewé
Ba ka parle.
Maiwaz-o mwe winde plewé-o,
Ba ka parle-ho.*

Translation:

*Mary Rose-o-o,
Mary Rose-o, ai, Lydia!
Mary Rose-o, ai, Mary Rose,
Come see me.*

*Mary Rose, I will help you cry,
And not speak.
Mary Rose, I will help you cry,
And not speak.*

20. Di ye mwe 'rivé (Kalenda)

Sung by Jemima Joseph and a chorus of six unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

An Old People's Big Drum kalenda of migration, in which the protagonist announces his return, but is warned against the metaphoric thorns that will prick him at his return.

*Di ye mwe rivé,
Di ye mwe rivé,*

*Di ye mwe rivé, Mama,
Piké, piké mwe.*

Translation:

*Tell them I have arrived,
Tell them I have arrived.
Tell them I have arrived, Mama,
Take care of the thorns that will prick.*

21. Djerika-o (Arada)

Sung by May Fortune (lead vocal) and a chorus of six unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

This text of this Arada Big Drum song appears very old, with recondite phrases such as *wa ko*, which is not yet understood. *Djerika mwe tuvé* means “I find Djerika.” In other versions of this song, *gwa bois* (the woods) is mentioned.

*Djerika-o,
Djerika,
Djerika-o,
Djerika wa ko (oyo) Dahomey.*

*Djerika ai, bon bon
(Djerika mi mwe)
Djerika, ai, Mama,
(C'est Djerika mwe tuvé)
Djerika-o,
Djerika wa ko Dahomey.*

22. Neg-la rivé, oué a Kende (Cromanti)

Sung by May Fortune (lead vocal) and a chorus of six unidentified women; with Sugar Adams (cot drum) and Daniel Aikens and Caddy Lazarus John (boula drums). Recorded on July 30, 1962, in Bellvue, Carriacou.

A Cromanti Big Drum.

*Neg la rivé
Oué a Kende,
Don don-o,
Neg la rivé
Oué a Kende.*

*Ai — Mama,
Neg la ba ke,
Oué a Kende.*

Translation:

He has returned.

*See Kende,
Don don-o.
He has returned.*

23. Jean, ay, Jean, kay-mwen bwoule

Sung by Newton Joseph and a chorus of unidentified men. Recorded on August 2, 1962, in La Resource, Carriacou.

This is an example of a *cantique*, or hymn of French origin, and was recorded at a Tombstone Feast. More music for the Tombstone Feast can be heard on the CD *Tombstone Feast*, the companion release to this one.

*Jean, ay, Jean,
Kay-mwen bwoule.
Poor me, poor Jean,
Kay-mwen bwoule*

24. Saraca (Interview)

May Fortune, interviewed by Alan Lomax, with comments by Sugar Adams. Recorded on August 2, 1962, in L'Esterre, Carriacou.

According to Alan Lomax's handwritten note to his summary, this interview took place "at 5 A.M. at end of Dead Feast."

May Fortune: *Ancient Time People, the slavery people — that's what they used to do before.*

Alan Lomax: *What?*

Fortune: *The Saraca. This very Saraca taken now we have.*

Lomax: *What's on there, yes.*

Fortune: *Yes?*

Lomax: *What do you have there?*

Fortune: *What do you have — all different quality of meat, you have chicken, then you have mutton, and you have pork. Then you have rice, you have cocoo [steamed rice balls], then you have vegetables, and all those different 'ceteras.*

Lomax: *Tell me who is this table set for, and what is it called?*

Fortune: *It's set for the people who dead, the people who dead! That is to say, certain times, they have to visit their family. And there be certain times in a year — of course it's not every year— but whenever you could be able to shove your hand in your pocket, you will behold something — have to do this. Because all of this cost money. All of this is expense — plenty money — laying here. So that is anytime you have — you feel you could be able to spend some money to do this — do that!*

Lomax: *And this table is laid out for the, for the —*

Fortune: *Souls who die.*

Lomax: *It's called the what — "Table"?*

Fortune: *Saraca.*

Lomax: *Saraca?*

Fortune: *Old Parents— Parents' Plate. Who call those Parents' Plate — the Old Parents.*

Lomax: *Whose parents are they?*

Fortune: *Everybody parents.*

Lomax: *Oh? And not just yours, and not hers?*

Fortune: *No. Everyone who died. Because we all in the world is one family — come from one God.*

Lomax: *Um-hum —*

Fortune: *You thought there is a distinction between us? Of course we really have to make an addition to that, for we cannot know, and we may not be able to know.*

Sugar Adams: *No. Can't know.*

Fortune: *But just as we make this —this gone — we have to follow until the time come when we gone. Those little settlers [?] coming have to remember what we's do. They have to do the same.*

Adams: *For everybody.*

Fortune: *So we call it now Parents' Plate.*

Lomax: *Um-hum. And the Parents — do they come and partake?*

Fortune: *But, of course, yes!*

Adams: *[They] partake.*

Fortune: *They are coming to partake, but we cannot see them but in your slumber — you call that “a vision” [dream] — they generally come and speaks. They may not come to you in persons, but they may tell it to somebody to tell you that you must done certain duty, otherwise you are going to get dead just the same. [Sounds of yelping as someone steps on the tail of a dog. Interestingly, some Carriacouans say that when dogs go about during a Big Drum ceremony it is a sign that the ancestors are present.] So just to save a life you have to do this in order to please them.*

Lomax: *And if you don't do it?*

Fortune: *You will dead.*

Lomax: *You'll dead, huh?*

Fortune: *Yes, sir! You're going to dead.*

Lomax: *And if you do do it, do they, ah —?*

Fortune: *You will live.*

Lomax: *Do they bring you blessings?*

Fortune: *You will still live until the time come.*

Lomax: *Um-hum.*

Fortune: *Yes. But if you had placed it necked against it, you did not do that in order to please those who gone, you will — you — your head will be press. You will dead.*

Lomax: *Um-hum.*

Fortune: *Yes.*

Lomax: *But do the Parents bring you blessings as well?*

Fortune: *Plenty!*

Lomax: *Tell me how.*

Fortune: *Well, very oft times, you may wake up in the morning — and you slept last night, and this is morning.*

Lomax: *Um-hum.*

Fortune: *Well, you did not — independent of — to — in as much as to buy a one pound of sugar to get some tea to drink. But at the same time by doing this little necessary concern — it coming to meet you — you doesn't know how.*

Adams: *Yes.*

Fortune: *This hand never remain empty. By doing this duty, you always have something to —*

Adams: *That's correct, that's right!*

Fortune: *— keep.*

Lomax: *And you believe that these Parents are everybody's parents, not just —*

Fortune: *Not only.*

Lomax: *— just for the people in Carriacou?*

Fortune: *No. It's so ev — you — you also, because you come from abroad. Well, God guide you — and also the Good Souls — guide you to come here. And also diligently you'se praying that they may bring you back to your home safe.*

Adams: *Safely!*

Lomax: *Um-hum.*

Fortune: *Hence, the reason why we have to do all of that. [It] come from the old African people.*

Lomax: *Um hum. And that — this whole thing comes down to you from — from people from Africa.*

Adams: *Sure, sure, sure.*

Fortune: *But of course, yes.*

Adams: *From Africa.*

Fortune: *From Africa.*

Adams: *The African people.*

Fortune: *That's the African people duty.*

Lomax: *And you're proud of being African?*

Fortune: *Oh, yes. Inasmuch as I understand. I did not know, but at the same time I trying to keep the covenant in [my] thoughts.*

Lomax: *Mmm. 'Cause there is some people who are not proud of being African, as you know.*

Fortune: *No, but of course, as life concern, you know, to every individual use their own discretion, yes?*

What I may able to take and do, you may not take and do the same like me. For everyone of us have our own mind. Their mind may lead you to something that is good. I would merely pass, cross you, and go and lead you to something that is bad! Hence, the reason why you in the world is good and bad. You is working with good and bad. There is — there, the devil, who had tempted you to a evil thing, which you — you could look at a man and shot him. And there is day, God intrude into your heart to do godly duty, since like everything

Lomax [getting very relaxed and sleepy]: *Tell me, how did you learn all the songs that you know, Mrs. Adams? How many do you know, do you suppose? How many songs?*

Fortune: *Well, I really couldn't tell you. Inasmuch as I've — what I knew, of course — daily every day. Things always get into somebody's, if they had really put their touch up on some things. It's always intruding into you.*

Lomax: *Did you learn them from your parents?*

Fortune: *No, I didn't. During the time that my parents was living I was quite a kid because when my parents die I really didn't know them.*

Lomax: *Um-hum.*

Fortune: *Mother and father die, I was quite a kid.*

Lomax: *I see. And you were raised by whom?*

Fortune: *I were home. My sister had take care of me until I becomes a marriage child.*

Lomax: *But from a little child you were always in these Saracas?*

Fortune: *No, sir! As — of course yes, seeing my parents was doing that.*

Lomax: *Um-hum.*

Fortune: *Ours children grows up daily and seeing whenever the time has come when they have to lay this. Have the assembling as we assemble here from last night up to this morning.*

Lomax: *But you've been always in Saracas all your life.*

Fortune: *But of course, yes.*

Lomax: *And how did you get to be a leader?*

Fortune: *Well, ha!*

Adams: *By her good brain!*

Fortune: *Ha, ha, ha.*

Adams: *Her good brain!*

Fortune: *Up to now, I wouldn't of —*

Adams: *By her good brain — what it hear from the Old Parents — and they keep it here. So she be preferred to it. You know, by she good brain that she have. And she keep those Old Parents songs in she brain, and she can control it up to now. And when she have leaves tomorrow, who behind her must learn by she. As a control again to the youngest one again behind —*

Lomax: *Do you think they will keep it?*

Adams: *If the money [?] was [. . .]*

Fortune: *Yes, whoever care to.*

Adams: *Whosoever care must try to keep it.*

Lomax: *You'll teach anybody who comes to you to ask?*

Fortune: *Yes, sir. People come from Africa, wish I could name them to you. People come from the States, from Jamaica, Trinidad. And come that I give them this very music like you taking it now.*

Lomax: *Do you think that it is the best music in the world?*

Fortune: *Well, I do believe to my heart. Of course, there is plenty, but you know — Of course, what — what mine — what is to my desire, it may not be to your own.*

Lomax: *Hum.*

Fortune: *As you know, that you did not know where you 'se christen'. You knew that you go to a church, you recognize yourself whether you are a Roman Catholic, or an Anglican or a Wesleyan, or Adventist, or Jehovah Witness, or so. You mus' know that you will have to some church, some religion, whatsoever.*

Lomax: *And this —*

Fortune: *And you must cling to what is yours.*

Lomax: *This Saraca doesn't make you less a Christian?*

Fortune: *Oh, no.*

Adams: *No.*

Lomax: *This is part of being Christian.*

Fortune: *Oh, yes.*

Lomax: *Do you belong, you belong to a church as well?*

Fortune: *Oh, yes, Roman Catholic.*

Lomax: *I see. And the priest doesn't care whether you do this, or he —*

Fortune: *Oh, no. He always appreciate that just the same. For he really have an idea of it for his own self.*

Adams: *For he own self.*

Lomax: *Um-huh.*

Fortune: *Um-hum. He always have an idea of it.*

Lomax: *Now, um, I must —*

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[DNS: JAY, THIS IS A CAPTION FOR CALISTE'S PAINTING OF FUNERAL:]

"That is the funeral procession of it, with the banner in front and the priest, going to receive."—*Canute Caliste*

Credits:

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Every effort has been made to make these historic recordings sound as good as when Alan Lomax made them in the field. All transfers were made wherever possible from the original source material, using the Prism 20-Bit A to D converters and the Prism 20-Bit Noise Shaping System.