

Music & Storytelling



Ector Roebuck of St. Thomas delights local children with anansi stories at the remounting of the Virgin Islands Festival program at Estate Love on St. Croix.

Watch the videotapes and listen to the audio tapes of storytelling and music, and read accompanying explanations. See the Festival Program Book for more information.

TEACHER PREPARATION

After listening to the audio tape, viewing selected photographs, engaging in discussion and completing related activities, students should be able to:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- List several examples of musical forms in the Virgin Islands and Senegal and discuss their origins
- Understand the traditional nature of storytelling in both places, and name several types of stories told in each place
- Recognize the relationship between storytelling and music in the Virgin Islands and Senegal



Camille Macedon, a Crucian calypsonian known as "King Derby," demonstrates how the legendary musician, "Siple," played a tin can on his shoulder.

LESSON ONE: STORYTELLING

STUDENT EXPLANATION

You are about to see a videotape from the Virgin Islands and listen to a recording of a story from Senegal. You will also read stories from Senegal and the Virgin Islands. Listen carefully to the stories and read the descriptions. Be ready to discuss the stories with the class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name the different types of stories on the tape. On what occasions would each type of story be told? Who would the teller be, and who would the audience be?
2. Do you think the stories would be more interesting to an audience who had heard them before, or to an audience that had never heard them? Why?
3. Did you ever hear any stories like these? Where and when?
4. Do you know any stories like these? Where did you learn them?
5. Are some people better storytellers than others? Do women and men tell the same kind of stories? How are they different? Does everyone tell the same story the same way?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: STORYTELLING

In the Virgin Islands people still remember when family members and neighbors would gather in the evenings under the tamarind tree to tell stories. Stories often began: “Once upon a time, in very hard times, monkey chewed tobacco and spit white lime.” They would then close with: “and the wheel bends, and the story ends.”

Storytelling has always been an important way to teach children by example and humor how to behave with parents and other people, and among themselves. The most favorite are Anansi and “Just So” stories which come out of West African folktale traditions. Anansi or Bru Nansi stories, as they are called in the Virgin Islands, are about a spider character called Bru Nansi, who is very clever and plays tricks on people. The “Just So” stories explain how things in nature come to be.

Stories about significant events or local heroes, like the legend about Tampo in the 1990 Festival Program Book, teach us about the history of our community.

Following is a story about greedy Bru Nansi playing a trick on Bru Tukuma (a goat character) and a story about why dogs bark at animals larger than themselves.

Bru Tukuma and Bru Nansi were friends for a very long time. One day as they were strolling through the woods they found a keg of salt butter. Now this was a great delicacy, as it was used to season food as well as butter bread. They hid the butter in the bushes and decided that they would come back soon and divide it equally between them. They promised to say nothing to anyone in the village.

Several weeks passed, and finally Nansi said to Bru Tukuma: “Bru, some friends in the next village have invited me to a christening. I will be

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS STORYTELLING

BRU NANSI, BRU TUKUMA AND THE BUTTER

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gone for a few days." Nansi packed and pretended to be going on a journey. As soon as he was out of sight of the village, he hurried to the place where he and Tukuma had hidden the butter. He took the top off and ate a quarter of the butter. Then he returned to the village.

When he arrived, Tukuma said to him, "What is the name of the child?"

"Top off," replied Bru Nansi.

Several days later he told Bru Tukuma, "I am invited to another christening. I will be back soon." Bru Nansi repeated the same maneuver. This time he ate to the halfway mark of the butter.

When he returned to the village, Tukuma asked him, "What is the name of the baby this time?"

"Half gone," replied Nansi.

Some days later he said to Tukuma, "I don't know what is going on, but I have a third christening to go to."

"Well, you are a very popular fellow. Enjoy yourself," Tukuma returned.

Nansi went and ate all of the butter. When he returned, Tukuma asked him, "How is the child called this time?"

"Licked clean," replied Nansi.

A couple of weeks later Tukuma suggested that they go and divide the butter. Nansi agreed. He had his wife cook up some pea soup with cattle tongue dumplings. They walked all morning without a rest. When they got to the place where the butter was hidden, Nansi said that they should eat first because they had been traveling all morning. They ate, and the heavy meal plus the weariness from walking soon had Tukuma snoring.

As he slept, Nansi went to the barrel and scraped the remnants of the

butter and smeared them on Tukuma's mouth and hands. Then he climbed a tree and started one big outcry. He shouted so long and so hard that pretty soon the entire village had turned out to see what the problem was.

"Look!" Bru Nansi shouted, "Tukuma is so greedy that he ate the whole keg of butter that we found, by himself. If you don't believe me, check his mouth and hands."

The villagers did so and cried shame on Tukuma. Poor Tukuma was startled from sleep, and unaware of what was going on, found himself being berated and beaten on all sides. When he collected his senses, he took off for parts unknown, vowing vengeance on Bru Nansi. Bru Nansi had a hearty laugh but he remembered what Bru Tukuma said about repaying him. So he stayed up in the tree, and he is there to this day.

(Collected by Dr. Lezmore E. Emanuel)

And there was once the one about the animal had a dance. And um, they invited all horned animals — only the horned animals were supposed to go. They had this party. Bru Cat and Bru Dog say, "Man, what we gonna do? They got nice food in there, but we no got no horn! What we could do?" So, Bru Cat say, "Well, you bigger than me. We gonna look for two bone and tie on your head; and you sa go in, and when you go in, you bring some for me!" Now, the animals that kept this party made provision so that no one else but horned animals could come in. Uh, when the horned animals came in, they told them something — they gave them a secret — like a password. Bru Cat and Bru Dog didn't know. Bru Cat was outside and Bru Dog went in. So, one of

THE DANCE GIVEN BY THE HORNED ANIMALS

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the horned animal told the master of the feast, "They got somebody in here that isn't a real horned animal! We gonna find out who he be!" So, the owner of the feast said, "Wait, I gonna do something. I got a trap door. I gon'set it up." And he went and told all the horned animals that — told everybody, "When you hear the music playing, dance a middle, no dance a corner!" The dog, not understanding their language, didn't know what they were saying. So, the music began. And everybody said, "Dance a middle, no dance a corner, dance a middle, no dance a corner." And everybody was dancing. The dog didn't know better, and he went right and started dancing in the middle, and the trap door open, he fell right down. When the trap door open then, the other animals found out that was the dog that was in there, without real horns, and they beat him sick. And that is why dogs barking after all animals they see, that are bigger than themselves.

(Story told by Eulalie Rivera, recorded in "Virgin Island Voices: Old Time, Long Time Radio Program" produced by Mary Jane Soule.)

SENEGALESE STORYTELLING

The story of Coumba-with-a-mother and Coumba-without-a-mother (*Coumba-am-ndey ag Coumba-amul-ndey*) is one of the best known tales in the Wolof language. Many Senegalese children have learned one version or another of this story from their grandparents. It is a story about how it pays to be polite.

Storytelling sessions, enjoyed by people of all ages, usually take place at night when everyone is relaxing after the day's work. Traditional storytelling in Senegal, as well as in the Virgin Islands, is a performance that actively involves both the storyteller and the audience. From the very beginning of the story, listeners are expected to participate by answer-

ing the storyteller's call, "*Léébóón!*" with "*Lipoón!*" The storyteller says, "*Amoon na fi!*" ("It used to happen here!"); the audience replies, "*Daan na am!*" ("It has happened many times!"). Sometimes, when poems and songs are part of a story, people join in, offering commentary, encouragement and accompaniment. In former times, stories like the one below were passed from one person to another only by word of mouth. Now readers can find some tales written down; sometimes by folklore researchers who transcribe the performances of traditional storytellers and sometimes by writers, like the Senegalese author Birago Diop, who retell the stories in their own words.

In some cities, towns and country villages, watching television is replacing participation in traditional storytelling performances as entertainment for families and communities. Can you think of some of the similarities and differences between these two kinds of entertainment?

Léébóón!
Lipoón!
Amoon na fi!
Daan na am!

THE TWO COUMBAS A SENEGALESE FOLKTALE

Once there were two young girls with the same father but different mothers. Both were named Coumba, and they lived in the same house. The mother of one of the Coumbas was dead, so the girl became known as Coumba-without-a-mother. Her sister, whose mother was still living, was called Coumba-with-a-mother.

Coumba-without-a-mother was given all the housework to do. She prepared the meals, washed the dishes and cleaned the house without complaint. Her sister was allowed to grow up without doing any work. Her father was so afraid of his wife that he didn't say or change a thing. In her daily chores one day Coumba-without-a-mother forgot to wash a spoon. For this, her stepmother angrily threw her out of the house. She told Coumba not to come back until the girl had washed the spoon in the Dékidanaan Lake. Now, no one had ever returned from the Dékidanaan Lake, and the evil stepmother — who wanted everything for

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her daughter alone — thought this would be an easy way to get rid of Coumba-without-a-mother.

Coumba-without-a-mother tearfully left to do as she was told. She walked and walked. After two days and two nights of traveling on foot to find the Dékidanaan Lake she came upon a jujube tree using a stick to harvest its own fruit. Coumba-without-a-mother was a well brought up young girl. She knew better than to remark out loud upon strangeness in others. As she had been taught by her mother, she knelt down on one knee and greeted the tree respectfully.

The jujube tree asked her, “What are you doing here, polite young lady, so far away from the village?”

The orphan Coumba replied, “My stepmother sent me to wash this spoon in the Dékidanaan Lake.”

The jujube tree said, “Just follow the road straight on and you’ll get to the Dékidanaan Lake.” The tree gave her some of its fruit to eat, wished her good luck and sent her on her way. Coumba-without-a-mother thanked the jujube tree and walked on.

As she walked, she became very thirsty. After a time, she came to a pool of water that would lift itself up in the air and then sink down to earth again. Coumba-without-a-mother knelt down on one knee and greeted the water politely.

The water asked, “Where are you going so far from home polite young lady?”

Coumba replied, “My stepmother sent me to wash this spoon in the Dékidanaan Lake.”

The water said, “Continue on this road, but first let me give you something to quench your thirst.” The water lowered itself so that Coumba the orphan could take a drink. The water wished her well, and after drinking and expressing her gratitude Coumba-without-a-mother continued on her way.

She walked and walked and walked some more until she came to the tiny house of a very old woman. The woman, who had only one leg, one arm, one eye, one ear and one finger, was preparing her dinner. Coumba the orphan knelt on one knee and greeted the old woman.

“My granddaughter, so respectful, where are you going?” asked the woman.

Coumba replied, “Grandmother, my stepmother sent me to wash this spoon in the Dékidanaan Lake.”

“The Lake of Dékidanaan is not far but now it is almost nightfall,” the old woman said. “Stay the night with me and I will show you the way in the morning.”

Coumba offered to help the woman cook dinner. The old woman handed her a millet stalk that didn’t have a single grain of millet on it.

“Here,” she said, “pound the millet in my mortar and pestle.”

Coumba had often pounded millet at home, but never a bare stalk. However, she did as she was asked, and to her surprise, as she pounded, grains of millet filled the mortar to overflowing!

The old woman gave Coumba a clean bone to put in the stew pot. As the girl dropped the bone into the pot it filled up with delicious, savory meat.

As they finished eating the tasty meal, the old woman said to the girl, “Listen carefully granddaughter. My children are wild beasts of the forest. They will eat you if they find you here sleeping on the bed. Take this *rabb* (a pointed stick used to part hair for braiding) and hide under the bed. Every few minutes jab them with it. They will think there are too many bed bugs, and they will leave early to go back into the forest.”

The beasts came home and greeted their mother.

Bouki, the Hyena said, “Mother, I smell human flesh.”

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The old woman replied, "The only human flesh here is mine. Are you going to eat me, your own mother?"

Bouki's brother Gaindé, the Lion, cuffed Hyena with his paw. "Stop bothering our mother and go to sleep," he growled.

As the two brothers slept, Coumba stuck them with her *rabb* from underneath the bed. The two animals were so uncomfortable that they got up and left for the forest long before the first cock crowed.

In the morning, after Coumba and the old woman had eaten breakfast, the woman pointed behind the house. "There is Dékidanaan. Go and wash my dishes and your spoon and come back to me."

Coumba found the lake, washed all of the dishes and the spoon and returned to the old woman's house.

"Granddaughter, since you are so well-mannered and kind I want to give you something to take with you back to your village." With those words, the woman gave the orphan Coumba two small gourds. She explained, "The first gourd, called 'kasing-kasing,' makes the sound of a rattle with little seeds inside. Break it open when you reach the middle of the forest. The second gourd makes the sound of a drum when you shake it, 'duk-duk.' Break it open when you reach the entrance of the village. May good luck travel with you."

Coumba-without-a-mother thanked the old woman and set out for her village. In the middle of the forest she broke the first gourd, kasing-kasing. Out of it marched a great army of warriors and a troop of servants bearing gold, silver and precious stones, fine cloths and many other fabulous things. They swore allegiance to Coumba-without-a-mother and formed a procession behind her as their queen. At the entrance of the village the girl broke the second gourd, duk-duk. Out of the gourd came all manner of beasts — cattle and livestock as well as wild animals. The soldiers shot all of the dangerous animals and led the domestic animals into the village to the house of Coumba-without-a-mother.

When the stepmother saw Coumba-without-a-mother return in such a glorious entourage, she was not happy at her good fortune. She was

overcome with jealousy. She could hardly restrain her impatience as Coumba the orphan told the story of her travels and how she had gained such wealth.

Enraged, the stepmother went to her own daughter and scolded, "Aren't you ashamed? Why wasn't it you who brought such honor to the family?"

The mother took a spoon and covered it with food and sent Coumba-with-a-mother to the Dékidanaan Lake.

Coumba-with-a-mother saw the jujube tree using a stick to harvest its own fruit and doubled over with laughter. "Well, look at that," she bel-lowed. "Whoever heard of a tree picking its own fruit?" With that she grabbed what fruit she could and continued on her way.

The jujube tree shouted after her, "May ill luck follow you, impolite girl that you are!"

Coumba continued on the road until she came to the pool of water that rose from the earth and sank down again. "I'm thirsty; give me a drink," she demanded. She caught a palm-full of water as it reached her level.

"Where are you off to, ill-mannered one?" inquired the water.

Coumba-with-a-mother answered, "It's not any business of yours. I'm going to the Dékidanaan Lake to wash a spoon."

The water said, "Well, just keep following the same path and you'll get your reward."

Just before nightfall, Coumba came to the house of the old woman, who was preparing dinner. Coumba laughed at the lady with one eye, one ear, one arm, one leg and one finger.

"What do you want, insolent young girl?" asked the grandmother.

"I want to wash this spoon in the Dékidanaan Lake. I have to stay here

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tonight because now it's too late to reach the Lake."

Coumba-with-a-mother sat and watched while the old woman prepared the food all by herself. The old woman invited Coumba to eat and warned her to stay under the bed because the woman's children — who were beasts of the forest — would soon come home. The old woman gave her the *rabb* to stick the animals so that they would leave early. Coumba-with-a-mother hid under the bed.

When Bouki the Hyena and Gaindé the Lion came home, Gaindé said, "I smell human flesh."

His mother said, "The only human flesh here is my own, will you eat me?"

Coumba-with-a-mother stabbed the animals so hard with the pointed stick that they bled and got out of bed soon after they lay down.

"The bed bugs are very bad tonight," they said.

In the morning the old woman showed Coumba-with-a-mother the way to Dékidanaan Lake and gave her the two gourds: kasing-kasing, to break in the forest and duk-duk, to break at the entrance of the village.

Coumba-with-a-mother was so impatient to get the gifts her sister had received that she barely took time to thank the old woman. She did not go as far as the lake. As soon as the girl reached the forest she cracked open both gourds at once. Wild beasts alone rushed out and tore her to pieces. An eagle swooped down, grabbed her head and flew with it back to the village where it fell right at the door of her mother's house.

(Told by Gorgui N'Diaye and Modu Tall and
translated by Diana N'Diaye)

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #7

STORY CHARACTERS

Do any of the characters in the stories on the audio or videotape remind you of characters you are familiar with? Does Bru Nansi, for instance, remind you of Bugs Bunny, or does Tampo (in the Festival Program Book article "Were There Giants?") remind you of your favorite superhero?

Pick one of the written stories or one from the audio or videotape and describe each main character. Now, compare these characters to characters you are familiar with from stories that you have heard; characters from television, movies or comics; or people in your own family or community.

Next, either write your own story, or collect a story (preferably using a tape recorder) from someone in your family or from a friend. Think about the following questions as you write or collect your story:

- Who are the main characters?
- Why are these characters interesting?
- Do the characters remind you of any of the ones in the stories on the audio or videotape?
- Why is it important to have interesting characters in a story?



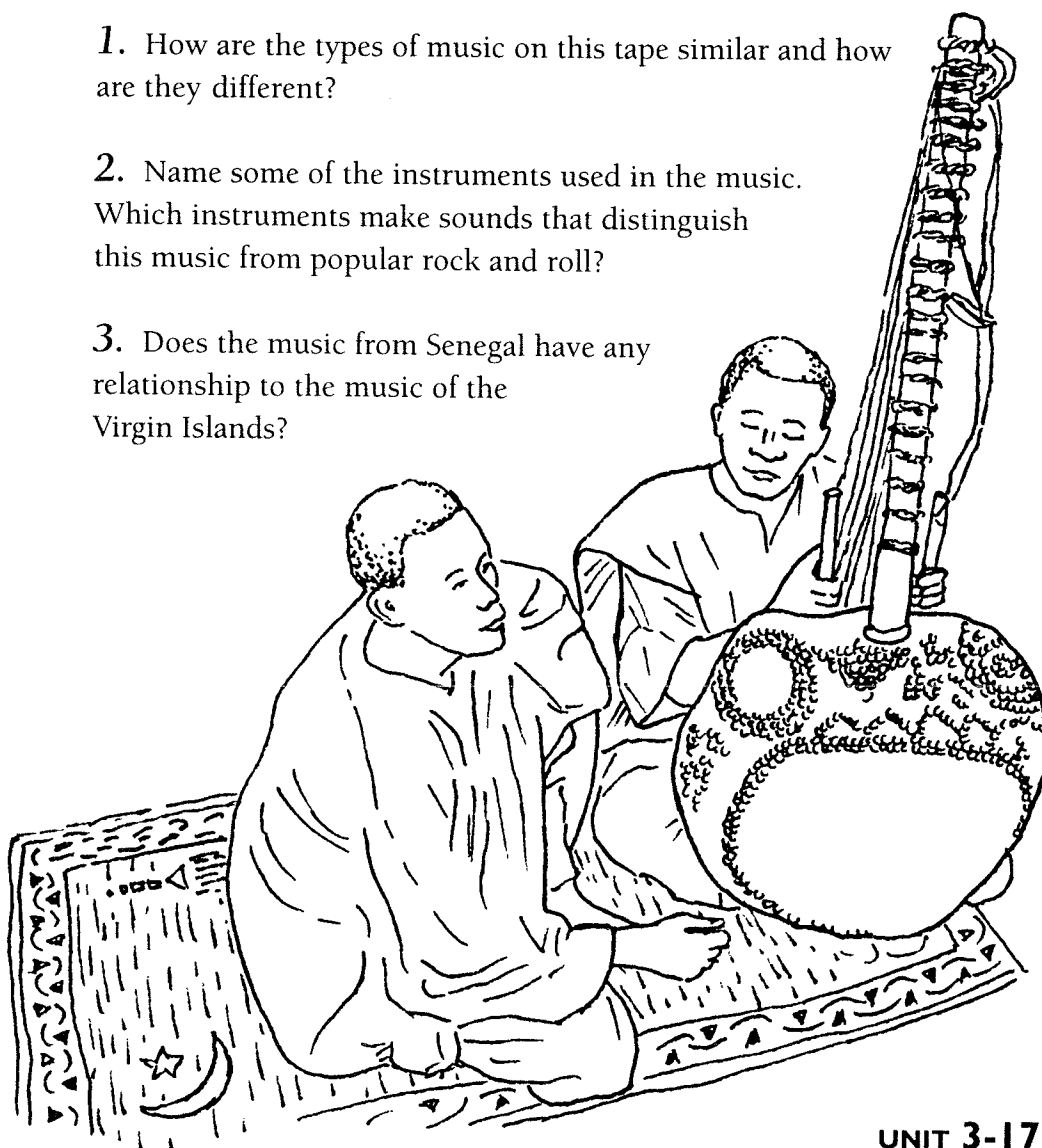
LESSON TWO: MUSIC

You are about to listen to an audio tape of some examples of traditional music from the Virgin Islands, and to hear a program on Senegalese music. Listen carefully to the music and read the explanations. Also, look at the photographs of musicians. Be ready to discuss the music with the class.

STUDENT EXPLANATION

1. How are the types of music on this tape similar and how are they different?
2. Name some of the instruments used in the music.
Which instruments make sounds that distinguish this music from popular rock and roll?
3. Does the music from Senegal have any relationship to the music of the Virgin Islands?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Mame Yaye Kanouté and his cousin Ibrahima Diabaté, playing the musical instrument called the *kora*, sing songs about the history of the Manding people of Senegal.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: MUSIC

MUSIC OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

The many different groups that came to the Virgin Islands during its history have created many types of music. Music can praise, boast, tease and tell a story. It can provide rhythm for dancing and carnival parades or celebrate a holiday. Many of the singing traditions have incorporated a “call and response” pattern (a lead group sings a verse and answers with a chorus) that has African roots. Immigrants from other islands have brought their own style of music. For instance, the Puerto Ricans who now live on St. Croix play *plena* and mountain or *jibaro* music.

Spirituals (religious songs) have been an important part of a child's education and reflect the influence of European missionaries who were the early educators on the islands. Spirituals have also been influenced by West African “call and response” song patterns as demonstrated in the following example:

Sister whe u bin so long
When the Saviour was passing by?
Sister whe u bin so long
When the Saviour was passing by?

Oh the Savior bin ya Praise de Lord,
Saviour bin ya, Blessed be his name.

Sister bin ya, yes he bin ya, and he
bless my soul and he gone.

Saviour bin ya, yes he bin ya
And he bless my soul and he gone.

(Transcribed by Eulalie Rivera, *Growing up on St. Croix*, p. 54)

Cariso, also known as kaiso on other Caribbean islands, is an old form of commentary song. Cariso singing may be accompanied by guitar or drums. Everyday life inspires these songs that comment on current events and individuals, voice complaints and take sides on controversies. A Crucian cariso singer explains: “When you did anything wrong, they look at you from head to foot — and they compose a song about you. And that lasts forever. Even though you die, somebody remembers the song.” With time, some carisos have become historical. Mary Thomas, a canefield worker and one of the leaders of the famous 1878 “Fire Burn” labor riots (when recently freed slaves revolted over the conditions of their contracts), is praised for her courage in a cariso called “Queen Mary”:

Queen Mary - ‘tis where you going to burn-
 Queen Mary - ‘tis where you going to burn-
 Don’t tell me nothing t’all
 Just fetch the match and oil
 Bassin (Christiansted) jailhouse, ‘tis where
 I’m going to burn.

On an everyday subject such as food, a Cruzan may sing this cariso to boast to other islanders, and in particular to St. Thomians:

You talk about your peas and rice, you like your fish and stew,
 But there ain’t no grubs as sweet and nice like the Crucian
 kallaloo.

It is good, we all like it, the babies like it too.
 We eat every bit and it keeps us fit, Crucian kallaloo.

Some like corn pork, big dumplings, lik that mixture too.
 Some like fried fish with onion in, but please give me kallaloo.

It is good, we all like it, the babies like it too.
 We eat every bit and it keeps us fit, Crucian kallaloo.

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It is good, we all like it, the babies like it too.
We eat every bit and it keeps us fit, Crucian kallaloo.

(Collected by Mary Jane Soule from Marie Richards, St. Croix)

Calypso is related to cariso and also tells a story while it comments on everyday events, but the upbeat rhythm of the music makes it a popular dance music as well. Like cariso, calypso lyrics are often in creole language. Hurricane Hugo became a popular theme for masqueraders, floats, and calypso songs for Carnival on St. Thomas and Three Kings' Day on St. Croix in 1990. Following are some lines from the calypso "Hugo Gi Go" by Sound Effex Band:

It was the seventeenth of September 1989
Hugo take over
Hey, that hurricane was a big surprise,
When he hit St. Croix from the southeast side.
Hey rantanantantan man the roof fall down.
Rantanantantan galvanize around.

Hey what a experience for the people of St. Croix
What a disaster in the Virgin Islands...
No water, no power, no telephone a ring.
We people we dead; there's nothing for to drink.
People never had pants. Hugo gi yo.
People never had shirt. Hugo gi yo.
People never had fridge. Hugo gi yo.
And people never had stove. Hugo gi yo.
Watch out for Hugo!

Hugo have no mercy on nobody.
He even hit the dead in the cemetery.
Over 200 miles the wind was blowing.
House to house galvanize flying.
Rantanantantan the roof fall down.
Rantanantantan galvanize around.

Hugo take from the rich, give to the poor.
They getting vexed, they can't save us no more.

(Sound Effex, 1989. "Hugo Gi You" record album)

Scratch band music, also known as fungi band music, is played for dances, Carnival and for quadrille dancing. Taking its name from fungi, a traditional dish combining various available ingredients with corn-meal, the fungi band brings together a variety of instruments at hand including a squash gourd rasp, flute, drums, banjo ukulele, guitar, triangle and saxophone. Traditionally, it included a bass instrument called an "ass pipe," made from the tubing of sugar refinery equipment. It is now more commonly called a scratch band because of the squash gourd which is scraped for percussion. Scratch bands accompanied earlier carnival masquerades and perform today at dance halls, restaurants, and for social occasions. Their repertoire includes traditional songs known as quelbé and quadrille music.

The quadrille dance was introduced in the 19th century by European planters. Led by a caller, or "floor master," people dance sets which consist of seven separate pieces of music, each with its own characteristic steps, known as figures. Distinctive quadrille styles have developed on St. Croix and St. Thomas.

"Sly Mongoose" is a popular scratch band tune in both sung and instrumental versions:

Sly mongoose, all the dog them know your name,
Oh, yes, Sly mongoose, all the dog them a know your name.
You went into the mistress' kitchen,
Take out one of she fattest chicken,
Put it in your waiscoat pocket,
Sly mongoose. (Repeat)

(Sylvester "Blinkie" McIntosh, Sr. with Joe Parris Hot Shots,
St. Croix, July 27, 1979. "Zoop Zoop Zoop" record album)

Brass band music has become very popular on the islands and is played

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for Carnival, dances, funerals and other social occasions. The brass band was first started on the islands by musicians who joined the U.S. Navy and experienced the music from around the world. Like the scratch bands, they play traditional tunes but they also capture the Latin rhythms of *salsa*, *merengue* and *cumbia*. Scratch bands are also now playing Latin music.

MUSIC OF SENEGAL

The people of Senegal enjoy a wide range of music and dance traditions, developed within the context of a history which brought together diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Each group contributed unique styles of performance, song and musical instruments. The *sabar* of the Wolof people, the Serer *serouba* and the Diola *bougarabou* are a few of the distinctive drumming and dance styles that are a part of weddings, baptisms, and other celebrations in Senegal.

Dances accompanied by drumming are by no means Senegal's only performance traditions. Song and dance to the accompaniment of stringed instruments, such as the *riti* music of the Peul, the *kora* music of the Manding and the Toucouleur, and the *halam* music of the Wolof are all important and rich aspects of Senegalese cultural heritage as are the Balante *balafon*, a xylophone-like instrument, and the unaccompanied singing of the Serer.

What is shared by all ethnic groups of Senegal is the central role of music, song and dance within the social and ritual life of communities. Praise singing and the musical recitation of family history greet the newborn infant. Song and dance bid farewell to an elder of the community, who is believed to be returning to the invisible world of the ancestors. Between the beginning and end of life, music and dance play a role in, among other events, traditional healing, celebration and worship.

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #8

INSTRUMENTS AT HAND

Look closely at the photographs of the Virgin Islands “scratch band” and the Senegalese Toucouleur women’s music group. You will notice that both musical groups use gourds as instruments. Listen to the examples of these groups on the audio tape and see if you can hear the sound of the gourds. (Hint: in both cases, the gourds keep the rhythm of the music.)

Answer these questions:

- What is a gourd and where does it come from? What names are used for gourds? Why would people use gourds as musical



A scratch band performs traditional quelbé music, indigenous to the Virgin Islands. From left to right the instruments are: squash (scratch), guitar, claves, rhythm pipe (*ass pipe*), and ukulele.



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instruments? How would they prepare the gourds to be used as musical instruments?

- Do you notice any other materials that are not usually considered musical instruments being used by these groups?

Now, experiment with your own “instruments at hand.” Find something in the classroom, or at home, that is not usually considered a musical instrument, and try to make some music with it. Will you hit it, blow into it, pluck it? Can you make “notes” or will this be a “percussion” instrument (one that keeps time, like a drum)?

Form a “band” with your classmates, using your “instruments at hand.”

Can you think of other examples of things that people make from the materials at hand?



Bija-Balante musicians Bourama Mambena Mane and Ibrahima Pita Mane perform on the balafon in Diattacounda, Senegal.

LESSON THREE:

THE STORIES IN THE MUSIC AND THE MUSIC IN THE STORIES

As you may have noticed already, the storytelling and the music of the Virgin Islands and Senegal tell us a lot about the two cultures. In some cases, the music tells a story. In other cases, the stories use music in them, or have the rhythm of music in their presentation. This lesson will help you make the connections between the music and the stories of these two cultures.

STUDENT EXPLANATION

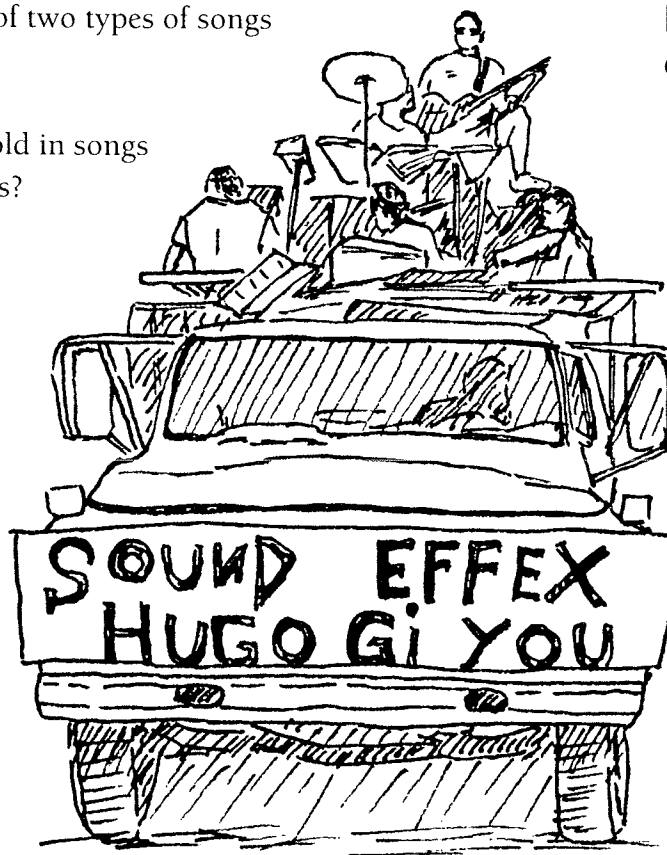
1. What are the names of two types of songs that contain stories?

2. How do the stories told in songs differ from spoken stories?

3. Can a spoken story contain a song? Do you know any stories that have songs?

4. What does the term “extemporize” mean? How can “extemporizing” change the story in a song?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Hurricane Hugo became a popular theme for masqueraders, floats and calypso songs during the celebration of the Three Kings' Day parade on St. Croix. The Sound Effex band parades on a float performing its hurricane Hugo theme song.

STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET #9

CREATE YOUR OWN CARISO OR CALYPSO

Cariso and calypso are kinds of songs that tell stories. The people who write and sing this music use many different sources for their stories in song. Some are funny, poking fun at friends or government officials. Some are sad, telling of love affairs that did not go too well. Some tell important stories of historic happenings. And, some are commentary on the latest news. Below are the words to a cariso and a calypso:

Cariso

You talk about your peas and rice, you like your fish and stew,
But there ain't no grubs as sweet and nice like the Crucian
kallaloo.

It is good, we all like it, the babies like it too.
We eat every bit and it keeps us fit, Crucian kallaloo.

Calypso

It was the seventeenth of September 1989
Hugo take over
Hey, that hurricane was a big surprise,
When he hit St. Croix from the southeast side.
Hey rantanantantan man the roof fall down.
Rantanantantan galvanize around.

Notice the form of the cariso versus the calypso.

