

## The music of survival

Music was important to enslaved people. It enabled them to express their African heritage, their spirituality and communal strength. Work songs and spirituals were a fusion of African and European influences. The songs of the Maroons – communities of escaped slaves and their descendents – demonstrate the traditions of their African ancestors.

## Button 1

### Track 1

This work song illustrates the widespread African musical feature of call-and-response. Sung by Alphonse Daudettouna, Kervon Grant & Nathan Ng. Recorded by A Daudettouna & N Ng. A beneaththebed production 2007.

### Track 2

'I told you people judgment coming', is an example of a spiritual from The Bahamas. Sung by Sam Green & Group from 'The Real Bahamas in Music and Song'. Recorded by P K Seigel and J Stecher in 1965. Re-released 2003 on Nonesuch Explorer Series 79725-2

## Button 2

### Track 1

'Jo Leh' is a Maroon song that is sung to evoke the spirit of an Igbo ancestor. The Igbo are West African peoples from Nigeria.

### Track 2

'Shedo' is a combination of chant with speech-like drumming. This is similar to music used in ceremonies of the Akan-speaking peoples of Ghana, particularly the Fante. From Drums of Defiance: Maroon Music from the Earliest Free Black Communities of Jamaica. Originally recorded & produced by K Bilby in 1978. Re-released on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings 1992. SFW40412

## Button 3

Musical instruments were also used as tools of communication.

### Track 1

This is a recording of an 'Abeng'; an instrument made from the horn of a cow used by the Maroon military for signalling. A network of 'Abeng-men' were posted around the settlements to warn of surprise attacks.

### Track 2

'Prenting' drums ('Oprenteng' from the Twi, an Akan language of Ghana) can be used to send complex signals based on high and low tones. The drummer or 'prenting-man' can use this drum-language to announce the start of a ceremony or to invoke and communicate with the spirit of African ancestors. From Drums of Defiance: Maroon Music from the Earliest Free Black Communities of Jamaica. Originally recorded & produced by K Bilby in 1978. Re-released on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings 1992. SFW40412w