

Music

Have you ever seen a band in Edmonton's Carifest parade that uses large oil drums to make music? That instrument is known as the steel pan or steel drums. Steel pan originated in the Caribbean. In this module, you will learn about music that originated in Africa and the Caribbean and has since migrated all over the world. Do you know any other types of music that have roots in Africa or the Caribbean that are famous in North America now?

Here is a list of activities you will work on:

- KWL Chart
- Reading
- Listening/Video
- Map Activity
- Summary
- Optional video

KWL Chart

K	W	L
What I know about African and Caribbean music	What I want to know about African and Caribbean music	What I learned about African and Caribbean music

Reading

Steel Drums¹

Steel drum or steel pan is a musical instrument originally developed in Trinidad, that is played by hammering raised and tuned portions of the bottom of an oil drum. It was the only new percussion (possibly the only acoustic) instrument invented in the 20th Century.

Drumming was used as a form of communication among the enslaved Africans and was subsequently outlawed by the British colonial government in 1783. African slaves also performed during Mardi Gras celebrations, joining the French, who had brought the tradition to the island. The steelpan evolved from a communication device to the musical instrument it is used as today.

The first instruments developed in the evolution of steelpan were Tamboo-Bamboos, tunable sticks made of bamboo wood. These were hit onto the ground and with other sticks in order to produce sound. In the 1930s, rhythm bands of young men paraded the streets during Carnival and other celebrations pounding hollow bamboo drums and later metal objects like garbage can lids, automobile parts, pots and pans, and biscuit tins. These became known as 'steel bands'.

The 55-gallon oil drum was used to make lead steelpans from around 1947. The Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra (TASPO), formed to attend the Festival of Britain in 1951, was the first steelband whose instruments were all made from oil drums. Members of TASPO included Ellie Mannette and Winston "Spree" Simon.

Following the TASPO's example, the National Steel Band of Trinidad & Tobago performed at the Commonwealth Arts Festival in England. The Esso Tripoli Steel Band, who played at the World's Fair in Montreal, Canada, later toured with Liberace and were featured in an album with him.

Now there are more than one thousand steel bands in dozens of countries including the USA (240), the United Kingdom (300), Switzerland (130) and of course Trinidad (190). Steel orchestras have played such prestigious venues as

¹ https://h2g2.com/edited_entry/A1297721

London's Royal Albert Hall and New York's Carnegie Hall. We also have a steel pan band in Edmonton, known as the Trinican Steel Orchestra.

Trinican Steel Orchestra

The Trinican Steel Orchestra was formed as a non-profit organization in Edmonton in 1982. The founder, Cecil George, is from the twin islands of Trinidad & Tobago - the birthplace of pan. The orchestra's passion lies in sharing this musical artform with others through public and private performances across Western Canada. Trinican often performs during Edmonton's Cariwest Parade.

Nyabingi and Reggae ²

Nyabingi is the oldest of the Mansions of Rastafari, one of the groups of the Rastafari movement. These Rastafari are the strictest out of the six or so major groups. They pledge "love to all human beings", and do not believe in violence. The group is named after Nyabingi, a legendary Ugandan/Rwandan tribe queen, who was said to have possessed a Ugandan woman named Muhumusa in the 19th century. Muhumusa inspired a movement, rebelling against African colonial authorities. Although she was captured in 1913, alleged possessions by Nyabingi continued (mostly afflicting women). Bloodline of the true Nyabingi warriors rightfully settled in the heart of Dzimba dze Mabwe now known as Zimbabwe. This story goes to show how interlinked black cultures and histories are across Africa and the Caribbean. As we will see below, this Nyabingi resistance in Uganda inspired Jamaican culture and filtered into reggae music which has now travelled the world and is listened to worldwide.

The Nyabingi resistance inspired a number of Jamaican Rastas, who incorporated what are known as Nyabingi chants (binghi) into their celebrations. The rhythms of these chants were an influence on popular ska, rocksteady and reggae music. Three kinds of drums are used in Nyabingi music: bass, funde and kete.

Reggae originated in Jamaica in the late 1960s. A 1968 single by Toots and the Maytals, "Do the Reggay" was the first popular song to use the word "reggae", effectively naming the genre and introducing it to a global audience.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mansions_of_Rastafari

Reggae music has been merged with many different genres all over the world.

Asia

Japanese reggae: The first reggae band to perform in Japan was The Pioneers who toured in 1975. However, it was not until 1979, when Jamaican singer Bob Marley visited Japan on holiday, that reggae would gain momentum.

Australia and New Zealand:

New Zealand reggae was heavily inspired by Bob Marley's 1979 tour of the country. The seven-piece band, Fat Freddy's Drop, was formed in the late 1990s. They combine reggae with dub, techno, soul jazz and rhythm & blues. They have toured all over the world and have released four albums: Based on a True Story (2005), Dr Boondigga and the Big BW (2009), Blackbird (2013) and Bays (2015).

Africa

Reggae in Africa was much boosted by the visit of Bob Marley to Zimbabwe on Independence Day April 18, 1980. Lucky Dube (1964 - 2007) was a South African reggae musician and Rastafarian. He fused reggae with [Mbaqanga](#). He recorded 22 albums in Zulu, English and Afrikaans in a 25-year period and was South Africa's biggest-selling reggae artist.³

North America

Tasman Jude is a reggae band that was formed in Grande Prairie, here in Alberta. The band was formed at an open mic night in 2013. They were named the #1 reggae band in Canada. They performed at the 2016 Edmonton Folk Music Festival. They name Damian Marley and Bob Marley as their main influences.

As you can see, Bob Marley was instrumental in the migration of reggae music all over the world. He died on May 11, 1981, but has remained influential, and continues to gain recognition. For example, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994; in December 1999, his 1977 album "Exodus" was named Album of the Century by Time Magazine and his song "One Love" has been designated Song of the Millennium by the BBC.

"Live for yourself and you will live in vain. Live for others, and you will live again"

Bob Marley

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucky_Dube

Map Activity

Locate the following places on a map of the world

- The country where tribe Queen Nyabingi was from (there are 2 answers)
- The country where the bloodline of Nyabingi settled
- The country in which Bob Marley was born
- Three countries that Bob Marley visited

Listening/Video

Watch a video of Trinican playing Ed Sheeran's Shape of you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYiZPrLwLI8>

Lucky Dube Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPY0Seo-dWA>

Bob Marley: this song was named song of the millennium by BBC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdB-8eLEW8g>

Summary

It is clear from this module that it is not only black people that have migrated across the world. Black ideas, cultures and music have moved from country to country and continent to continent, influencing musical styles as they travelled. Some of the music that we hear on our radios and at festivals in Canada today such as Cariwest, has deep Caribbean and African roots, dating long before black migration to Canada officially started.

Optional Video

In 2016, there was a great deal of controversy surrounding Drake's hit One Dance and his use of Jamaican patois in the song. People debated whether or not it was cultural appropriation. Watch this video that briefly explains why Drake, A Canadian with American and Jewish parents, speaks and sings in Jamaican Patois.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3-GJB2htE4>

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