Adams Institute Is Repository, Distributor for Alan Lomax's 1962 Caribbean Fieldwork

"WITH GREAT RELIEF and tremendous pride," Anna Lomax Wood symbolically placed the Caribbean archives of her father, folklorist and musicologist Alan Lomax, into the care of the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute, a branch of the Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago.

Alan Lomax always had felt that his field notes should be returned to each of the locations where he created them, and Anna Wood is working to achieve his goal. Noting that the Caribbean distribution thrilled her, she declared that she never expected his dream to be realized "so completely."

The presentation took place in November 2005 at the Marriott Frenchman's Reef Resort on St. Thomas during a program attended by residents and invited visitors. Ms. Wood made the formal presentation to Dr. Rosita Sands, director of both AMRI and CBMR.

Dr. Sands said she was "profoundly honored to be the recipient," adding that the collection of materials will be named the "Alan and Anna Lomax Collection of Caribbean Music."

AMRI is the only Caribbean-based research agency to hold the entire set of materials from Lomax's Caribbean project, and it is designated as the distributor of copies of the fieldwork to each of the twelve countries Alan Lomax visited. The distribution of materials from St. Kitts and Nevis was made to the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society, immediately following the St. Thomas event (see article on page 3).

Alan Lomax spent much of his working life traveling the world to collect the sound, words, and history of folk music. Traveling with a three-foot speaker, recording equipment that present-day musicologists would find primitive, and pen and paper, he spent three months in 1962 visiting twelve Caribbeanlocations (continued on 2)

**Left to right:** Dr. Warrick L. Carter, Columbia College Chicago president; Dr. Rosita M. Sands, AMRI and CBMR director; Anna Lomax Wood; and Dr. Samuel A. Floyd, CBMR director emeritus
Lomax (continued from 1)

countries, collecting eighteen hundred interviews, and generating hours and hours of tapes of his interviews and music. Some of the music has been released commercially by Rounder Records in its “Caribbean Voyage” series.

Outstanding personalities accompanied him during his fieldwork. Zora Neale Hurston joined his Florida investigations, and J. D. Elder, Roger Abraham, and Derek Walcott assisted him in the eastern Caribbean travels.

The originals of the Caribbean fieldwork—some sixty hours of recordings—are archived in Washington, D.C., where Lomax and his father, John, cofounded the Library of Congress’s Archive of American Folk Song and where Alan Lomax worked from 1932 until 1950 between his field trips. According to Wood, Lomax was so impressed by the “genuinely original contribution by Caribbean children” during his fieldwork that he named his 1997 anthology of song games from the eastern Caribbean, created together with Elder and Bess Lomax Hawes, Brown Girl in the Ring. The book, unfortunately out of print, is available for study at AMRI’s resource center.

Digitized copies of the fieldwork will be housed at AMRI, where the material will be available on computer via a relational database. Ms. Wood demonstrated audio clips and photographic stills, showing how the database will serve music and photographic and video clips as the catalog is searched.

Remarks on behalf of the Virgin Islands community were made by Mr. Alton A. Adams Jr., adviser to AMRI; Mr. Myron Jackson, director of the VI State Historic Preservation Office; and Dr. Orville Kean, retired president of the University of the Virgin Islands. Dr. Kean praised Alan Lomax’s belief that everyone’s music should have equal time in the classroom and in the community.

Remarks on behalf of CBMR were made by Dr. Warrick L. Carter, president of Columbia College Chicago, and Dr. Samuel A. Floyd Jr., founder and for nineteen years director of CBMR. Dr. Floyd declared that Alan Lomax contributed more to American vernacular music than anyone. His work, Floyd noted, “corrects the false assumptions about the Diaspora and, second, it has altered how we perceive Caribbean and African music.” Quoting Rex Nettleford of Jamaica, Floyd stated that it is time “for the United States to recognize that it is part of the Americas.” “Lomax understood this,” Floyd said.

The final portion of the program punctuated the words with music, as the Lockhart School Cultural Dancers, led by Sandra Reed, performed the Trinidad version of “Brown Girl in the Ring.” The dancers were accompanied by mistress of ceremonies Dr. Lois Hassell-Habtes on guitar and vocals. Koko and the Sunshine Band, who performed during an ensuing reception, began their presentation with “Sly Mongoose.”

Reference

Alan Lomax’s Caribbean Voyage

Nevis Historical and Conservation Society Receives 1962 Recordings Made in St. Kitts and Nevis

BY LORNETTE HANLEY, NEVIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Nevis Historical and Conservation Society was selected as the recipient in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis to receive copies of Alan Lomax’s 1962 collection of Caribbean music field recordings that are specific to the Federation.

On November 8, a televised interview with Spencer Howell, local associate of Alan Lomax and the individual who accompanied Lomax during his 1962 fieldwork, was viewed by the Nevisian population. During the interview, Mr. Howell reflected on Lomax’s arrival and the status of Nevis during the 1960s, especially in light of the project.

The handing-over ceremony took place on Monday, November 14, at the Nevis Cultural Centre. The presentation was a joint venture between the Alan Lomax Archive, New York, the Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) of Columbia College Chicago, and the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute (AMRI), St. Thomas. Dr. Anna Lomax Wood, director of the Alan Lomax Archive, and Dr. Rosita Sands, executive director of CBMR and AMRI, were on hand to make the presentations.

Also at the ceremony were seven “living icons” from 1962, who were not only thrilled at the prospect of their music being kept alive but also to receive copies of and remunerations for their work. Additionally, family members of the deceased were invited to share in the excitement of their family’s musical legacy.

The Nevisian society wishes to thank the Alan Lomax Archives and the CBMR for preserving our musical heritage and for sharing it with us. This is a legacy that will long remain with us, as we see today’s diverse technology dominating the time and talents of our youth. Many of our ancestors have passed on and so have their talents; this music will remain with us as a witness of our vibrant heritage.

“If music be the food of love, play on.”

St. Thomas-Born Composer Presents Score of “Virgin Islands Christmas” to AMRI

The Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute has received a most welcome archival item from St. Thomas-born composer Yvette Fleming Brandy, now living in California. She presented AMRI with the score of “Virgin Islands Christmas,” a four-part choral work commissioned by the Caribbean Chorale. The chorale, currently led by conductor Kirsten Kienberger and president Charlotte Banks, is a long-standing organization of community singers.

In addition, Ms. Brandy presented a CD containing an instrumental version of this work. Copies were also provided to AMRI’s parent agency, the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College Chicago. Both score and CD are available for research use.

The work was premiered as part of a Caribbean Chorale concert held in late 2005 at Christchurch Methodist in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. The composer flew in for the occasion and visited in the Virgin Islands for some weeks.

Ms. Brandy graduated from Ivanna Eudora Kean High School on St. Thomas in 1985 and has composed about thirty songs in a variety of genres, including calypso, reggae, pop, jazz, and gospel.
Students Learn V.I. Music from Master Musicians

BY NEOMIE TOUSSAINT-WILLIAMS

I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED that it is crucial to teach children about the accomplishments of their people, their history, and their culture so that they realize that they too can create and be a part of their own history. To know, appreciate, be a part of, and present an accurate account of one's own history is important. Thus, the Gladys A. Abraham Elementary School (formerly, Michael J. Kirwan Elementary School) embarked on the project “Folk Music of the Virgin Islands.”

The project includes two videorecorded workshops held at the school, as well as a professionally recorded CD featuring the school's choir and a local folk music band Jamesie and the All Star Band. The recording will contain eight of the folk songs from Bill and Joyce La Motta's (1980) Virgin Islands Folk Songs. The songs were arranged by the late Bill LaMotta, who was a local composer.

Workshops at the school were conducted on Tuesday, November 29, 2005, and Friday, February 10, 2006, in the school's cafeteria. Students, teachers, parents, and community leaders were present. Featured culture bearers for the first workshop were Mr. James “Jamesie” Brewster and Mr. Camille “King Derby” Macedon, both of Jamesie and the All Star Band, Mr. Irvin “Brownie” Brown of WSTA Radio, and Mr. Alphonse Wade, a local farmer.

Mr. Brewster and his band have been producing and playing Virgin Islands folk music as early as when the washboard, tin pan, calabash, and shack shack were considered bona fide musical instruments. He has proven that “necessity is the mother of invention.” Most of the instruments were made from scratch, hence the term scratch band. He has traveled all over the world with his band promoting folk music of the Virgin Islands. And he would also tell you that the term quelbe has nothing to do with the origin of the music. It was added later.

Mr. Macedon, “King Derby,” was once a member of the band Bully and the Kafooners and has been playing our cultural folk music since he was eight years old. He has won eleven calypso crowns, seven of which were consecutively earned. Today, he teaches banjo and calypso and is a member of the Weed and Seed organization at the Eulalie Rivera Elementary School on St. Croix.

Both Jamesie and King Derby still make their instruments from scratch. During this workshop, they spoke about the history of our music and the instruments that were, and are still being, used. They also demonstrated how to play these instruments as they broke out in song with Mr. Brown on conga, Mr. Wade on squash, and our honorable Senator Shawn-Michael Malone on the grater.

Mr. Brown, a radio personality on WSTA, brought along his conga and showed the students how he makes it “sing” by playing a melody on the conga. With his infectious laugh, jokes, and vast knowledge of our musical history, he kept the children's interest and left them wanting to hear more.

Our very special guest, Mr. Alphonse Wade,
member of the La Motta Brothers Orchestra. While living on the island of St. Croix, the boys played at many social events and were eventually discovered by the late Eddie Duchin, a well-known musician of the time, who came to St. Croix to recuperate from an illness. Mr. Duchin heard the boys and signed them up. The young boys moved to New York's Waldorf Astoria, where they played for numerous events and recorded with RCA Records. It was a delight to have Mr. La Motta with us. I couldn't help but dance as he played a recording of the different styles of music that the brothers had performed. The school choir also sang one of Bill La Motta's compositions, "Come Back to the Virgin Isles."

Mr. Davis is a member of the Social Studies Department at the Ivanna Eudora Kean High School in St. Thomas. He teaches Virgin Islands and Caribbean history classes, as well as a cultural heritage class. A promoter of Virgin Islands' cultural heritage, he is a folklorist, storyteller, calypsonian, choir director, composer, guitarist, guitar instructor, and culinary artist specializing in native cuisine. It was a pleasure to have him share with us his expertise in preserving our culture through music and storytelling.

The audience was spellbound as they listened to Mr. Davis's folk tale about children who told lies and ended up in a monster's house. As part of the story, the audience learned a short song about lying that they repeated intermittently throughout the tale. By the end of the workshop, it seemed that every child, and some adults, was walking through the door singing: "Ah say something that wasn't true. Now ah sorry for what I do."

Also on display for the young people to see was Edney Freeman's Quelbe Traveling Exhibit (see article, page 7).

(continued on 6)
The Abakuá society of Cuba is possibly the best example of African transmission to the Western Hemisphere, proclaimed cultural historian Dr. Ivor Miller, opening his lecture on November 12, 2005, at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) on St. Thomas. His studies, he explained, serve to refute the idea that Africans coming through the Middle Passage had no knowledge of their history.

Dr. Miller, the Rockefeller Scholar in Residence at the Adams Music Research Institute from September to December 2005, has been researching the Abakuá in Cuba and in the Calabari region of Nigeria for more than ten years. His topic for the November lecture was “Orthodoxy within Adaptability: Leopard Society Music, Language, and Aesthetics in West Africa, Western Cuba, and New York City.” His talk included commentary on aspects of his fellowship project documenting the little-known history of the Cuban Abakuá, a society derived from the Cross River region of Nigeria, and the musical culture associated with it.

The Cuban secret society was founded in Havana in the 1830s by enslaved leaders of Cross River villages. According to Dr. Miller (2005), it prospered as a means of maintaining national identity of the displaced men. Dr. Miller supported his opening statement by citing dances, drumming, costumes, and objects used in the society rites to show how the rites survived despite history and displacement. While the structure of men’s costuming is parallel between locales, the ceremonial cloth—which he showed in a video presentation—did not survive in the Caribbean. The use of the vertical stick affirmed national identity, and the drum was regarded as a symbol of authority. In both locales, the drum was sometime seen and not heard, as well as sometimes heard and not seen.

Dr. Miller’s (2005) article “Cuban Abakuá Chants” describes Cuban songs in Spanish with African themes and details his methodology of recording Abakuá chants with Cuban elders and then interpreting them with the aid of west African speakers. The uses of Cuban and Yoruban languages were “not conversing, but sharing glossaries,” Dr. Miller said; the conversing took place through body language, with the ritual dance as secret language. Many Cuban musicians, he remarked, may have been Abakuá members, noting that Cuban author Alejo Carpentier used an Abakuá theme in his first novel. Aspects of this culture were transmitted to New York City, including a song honoring the “supreme being.” In addition, Abakuá iconographs grace the entrance to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City as part of an homage to Langston Hughes, who is buried beneath the entrance.

The question period that followed the lecture featured lively discussions with UVI professors Dr. Ededet Iniama, a native of the Calabari region, and Dr. Robert Nicholls, who has studied and written on African dance. The program was supported in part by Rockefeller Foundation funding.

Reference

Students Learn (continued from 5)
We are now looking forward to the release of our CD Folk Music of the Virgin Islands. The video recording of the workshops will be available in our school library, and a copy will be made available to the public library. The CD will be available in August 2006.

This project was funded in part by grants from the Humanities Council of the Virgin Islands, the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts, and the fund-raising efforts of Gladys Abraham Elementary School.

Reference
The Quelbe Traveling Exhibit

Quelbe (kwelbe)n/StVn. Tbhjo: A set of songs, drum-rhythms and dances performed by females, and thought to be of Congo origin (Allsopp 1996, 460).

“Quelbe” takes another peculiar etymological turn. “Quelque” is the French adjective for “some.” It is not unlikely that the slaves distorted and adopted this word to mean “some music,” since the French also owned St. Croix at one time (La Motta and La Motta 1980).

In September and October 2005, I was requested by Edney Freeman, visual arts educator at the Charlotte Amalie High School in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, to participate in a project he was planning about quelbe music. Freeman mentioned that this exhibit was inspired by and developed during the “Passing on the Culture: A Teacher Workshop on Integrating Virgin Islands Culture into the Education Curriculum,” sponsored during summer 2005 by the Alton Augustus Adams Music Research Institute, the Center for Black Music Research, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, the ICC Prosser Foundation, and the Virgin Islands Humanities Council. The influences and antecedents of this traditional music of the Virgin Islands, recently named the official music of the U.S. Virgin Islands through legislative approval, were still being debated within the Virgin Islands community. Freeman put together a Quelbe Traveling Exhibit and Colloquium, so that musicians and panel participants could discuss and explore such topics as the social status of quelbe, the instrumental derivation and corruption of the pipe, acoustic versus amplification of the quelbe or “fungi” band, the presence of females in a quelbe band, and strategies to preserve quelbe, among other aspects of this indigenous music. The program was funded in part by the Virgin Islands Humanities Council and sponsored by the Association of Virgin Islands Visual Art Educators.

Colloquium participants had a number of outlets to invite the public to the event. Mr. Addie Ottley, host of the popular Face to Face program on WTJX, the Virgin Islands Public Television Station, offered two opportunities for project director, moderator, panelists, and musicians to explain what the Quelbe Traveling Exhibit Colloquium was all about. In addition, members of the colloquium also discussed the project on radio station 1000, with host Raul (continued on 8)
Exhibit (continued from 7)

Carrillo, on the program The Afternoon Mix. These occasions helped spread the word throughout the community and allowed for many experiences, activities, and documents to be added to the exhibit. They also provided for ongoing discussions and participation regarding the community’s involvement in the project.

The colloquium’s main program took place at the Caribbean Museum Center in Frederiksted, St. Croix, on Sunday, November 6, 2005, following much anticipation. To a full house, moderator Willard John of Jumbie Productions began the first part of the program by introducing special guests, including senators, commissioners, directors, and musicians, and then introducing the panelists.

The second part brought quelbe musician and historian Dimitri Copemann to the floor with his presentation “Quelbe Influences and Antecedents,” which was followed by responses by the panelists. Many of the panelists spoke about the cultural influences that quelbe music had in their lives and its impact in their society. Glenn “Kwabena” Davis took one of the songs that was put on the drumhead about Miss Mary and discussed the social implications as well as the moral discipline and value it had of encouraging women to carry themselves with freedom and dignity. Stanley Jacobs, leader of Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights, a popular quelbe band from St. Croix, discussed his experiences as a quelbe musician, including the difficulties and joys of keeping his band going through the years. He also discussed his Apprenticeship Project in the schools on St. Croix.

My focus during the topics and discussions was on the role that females, past and present, have played in quelbe music, giving particular credit to our cariso musicians, especially the work done by Mrs. Leona Watson and by the La Motta brothers in performing and preserving quelbe music for generations to come. I presented a number of definitions of quelbe to demonstrate that quelbe is considered not only a “set of songs” but also “drum-rhythms and dances performed by females” (Allsopp 1996, 460).

The discussions were lively, and many community participants asked questions and
joined in the discussion and the singing of “LaBega Carousel,” played by Stanley’s Six Pack during the third part of the program. I was honored to be singing with the group.

Music and light refreshments concluded the program, which was enjoyed by all, as audience members had a chance to view the exhibit of archival images presented in the exhibit hall. A repeat of the program took place on St. Thomas at Bethania Hall of the Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church on November 26, 2005. For this presentation, I brought music scores and accompanied our scratch band on piano, while Glen “Kwabena” Davis played guitar, Elvino “Sifu” George and Dimitri Copemann played drums, and the audience sang, clapped, and danced along. I was not present for the program on St. John on December 3 but recommended Georgia Francis, music educator at the Charlotte Amalie High School. The program, hosted by the St. John School of the Arts, was as well received as the programs presented on St. Croix and St. Thomas, with the very popular Koko and the Sunshine Band.

Out of the discussions from the Quelbe Traveling Exhibit and Colloquium came recommendations that we should teach these cultural components in our schools and that our young people need to be educated in many of these aspects about themselves and their people. Many people also stated that we must acknowledge this music at our institutions of higher learning, by providing at least one or two classes on Virgin Islands music. Most important, as our moderator, Willard John, stated at the conclusion of the program: “The best way to preserve our Virgin Islands culture is to live it.” Let us all continue to live and enjoy our Virgin Islands cultural and musical traditions!

**References**


Lois Hassell-Habtes is an Advisory Member for AMRI. Formerly the music supervisor and state coordinator of arts and culture for the Virgin Islands Department of Education, she is presently the assistant principal of the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School.
Letter (continued from 14)

How should this history be documented? What community resources should be committed to ensuring the continued vibrancy and progression of this musical history? In short, how best can we honor your musical heritage as a vital component of human history?

We can ask these questions of all Caribbean music traditions. During my field work, I was lucky to meet and be helped by people in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Martinique who pose these kinds of questions and who are active in performance, research, and teaching, as well as in government, to pursue appropriate answers. The research we undertook together, though, focused on far more modest questions.

My research is based on a desire to explore how we might discern different cultural identities through a careful analysis of musical timing and the relationship of dance movement to music. Between individual personality and culture, is there a way in which each Dominican, or Haitian, or Martinian dances that is more like others of the same locale or nationality than like foreigners? What is it in the way dancers relate their movements to the musical beat that tells us, “Hey, he’s not from here, is he?”

Answers to such questions require a precise and systematic research methodology. My research objective was to see if digital motion capture recordings could provide the type of empirical evidence needed to formulate concrete descriptions of music and dance movement. Such precise descriptions can facilitate the kinds of comparisons between dance music traditions needed to shed light on such questions of music, dance, and identity.

Thanks to funding from the Rockefeller Foundation through the Center for Black Music and the enthusiastic assistance of a great number of people (including paid research assistants who gathered good dancers from different walks of life, folks who donated performance space for the recordings, musicians who performed and offered demonstrations, and most important, the dancers who volunteered themselves for this experiment), we recorded over eight hours of dance repertoire in five cities: Santo Domingo and Santiago, Dominican Republic, Pétionville and Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and Schoelcher, Martinique. These recordings will be

1. Collaborators are listed at the end of this letter.
duplicated and made available at the CBMR in Chicago and at the Adams Music Research Institute in St. Thomas, USVI.

My original research design was simply to record one couple in each nation’s capital city dancing to the same three konpa, merengue, and zouk tunes. But once I arrived in each place, the participants wanted to explore far more. As a result, ten couples and one soloist were recorded. In addition, the recordings include not only one konpa, merengue, and zouk tune to which all the couples danced but also additional popular dance tunes from each locale, including some subgenres and historically related genres, like merengue típico, chivo florete, and pripri from the Dominican Republic; meringue, mizik rasin (“roots music”), and mizik kanaval (“carnival music”) from Haiti; and zouk love, biguine, and mazouk (“mazurka”) from Martinique.

Dancers first dressed in snug-fitting, flexible black exercise clothing; we then carefully affixed reflective markers over the same twenty-four joints and vertebrae on each dancer’s body. Each couple’s dance performance was then recorded simultaneously on six digital video cameras.

Once I arrived back at AMRI in St. Thomas, I selected portions of the dance performances to analyze using the Peak-Motus digital motion capture software. Using images of a calibration frame I had recorded in the field before each of the dance performances,

(continued on page 12)
An example of an output generated with the Peak-Motus software. To the right are two diagrams showing stick figures of a female dancing kompa. The computer has constructed these stick figures from the reflective markers that were affixed to the dancer's body during the recording session. The three diagrams to the left show the trajectory of just one of the markers (the left hip) as viewed from the side, from directly overhead, and from the front.

An example of how the three-dimensional rendering of the dances can be viewed from multiple perspectives simultaneously. These two stick figure diagrams show the exact same moment in a performance of merengue. In the top left diagram, we are viewing the dance from behind the male dancer, while in the lower left diagram, we are viewing the dance from an elevated vantage point, looking down over the female dancer’s right shoulder.

**Letter (continued from 11)**

the Peak-Motus software reconstructs the exact three-dimensional space in which the dancers performed. The software also synchronizes the six camera views by matching up the synchronization signals recorded on each of the six video tapes. Working successively through the six different camera views of the same dance segment, the software helps me detect and follow where each reflective marker is going from frame to frame.

In short, to reconstruct an accurate three-dimensional, digital representation of fifteen seconds of dance, the Peak-Motus software and I will look at more than 259,000 frames of video footage! That’s a lot of work, but once the data is accurately digitized, I can then use other analytical features of the software to investigate things like the exact timing of when a foot touches the floor or the exact moment when a dancer’s weight shifts. The timing of such movements can then be related to musical rhythms in a systematic way. Furthermore, I can learn about changes in the speed and direction of movement. And because the software can accurately trace and measure the range of
motion of a dancer's hip and pelvis movements, I can compare characteristic patterns of movement, as well as the flexibility of dancers within and across cultures. This three-dimensional computer rendering of the dance provides a rare opportunity to view and hear repeatedly the same performance from different perspectives.

Based on the preliminary analyses I have conducted so far, it appears that the three-dimensional digital images produced in this research project provide more accurate and richly nuanced ethnographic descriptions than what has previously been available. I can envision that using such digital research tools can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how dancers' movements reflect their cultural knowledge, learning, and perception of music as embodied motion. This capacity for comparative work also holds promise for more extensive surveys of relations between African diaspora traditions in the circum-Caribbean region.

As wonderful as this technology is as a tool, however, it is insufficient for coming to meaningful conclusions about music, movement, and identity. Rather, it can only add to a foundation of knowledge that must originate from those people who practice these traditions and give meaning to them. That kind of knowledge is still best gathered not by fancy technology but by people who are “in the know” (in other words, people who know who to talk to, people who have the curiosity to ask questions, listen, discuss, and learn). Such a person might be a “professional” researcher; but it is likely that person might be you, or a person in your community who just needs a little encouragement from you. If you recognize yourself as such a person, then as I close this letter, let me say that AMRI has been an enormous support to the research I have undertaken, and I believe it can be a valuable resource for you as well.

Bon courage!

Rebecca Sager
Rockefeller Fellow 2004-05

Research Collaborators

**Dominican Republic**
Research assistant, Irka Mateo

**Santo Domingo**
Dancers
- Ilya Apoute and Isabel Spencer
- Juan Antonio Zapata and Manuela Feliz
Drummers and interviews
- River Almengod, tambourista
- Kuki, tambourista, and Irene Nuñez “Jenny,” güiro
Recording space
- Victor and Mercedes Ramirez of Ballet Roto

**Santiago**
Dancers
- Yudith Fernández and Martin Almanzar
- Maribel Sánchez and Freddy Brens
Recording space
- Mr. Almanzar, director, Casa des Artes

**Haiti**
Research assistant, Ulrich Tulme (with Haddamard)

**Petionville**
Dancers
- Johane Germain and Laurent Menahem
- Sheila Adolphe and Augustin Mackenson
- Robin Natacha and Gary Joseph
Recording space
- Rockefeller Pierre of TEMPO PLUS
Drummer, dancer interviews
- Rockefeller Pierre
- Ruddy Nau

**Port-au-Prince**
Dancer and recording space
- Vivianne Gauthier (with Jean Eddyhio)
Drummer, konpa musician, and dancer interviews
- Laurent Michelet (for Vivianne Gauthier)
- Vivianne Gauthier
- “MC Jr.” Bonheure, Mickael Guirand, and St. Louis Philipsson

**Martinique, France**
Research assistant, Maria Vicente
(with David Alexandre)

**Fort de France**
Dancers
- Myriam Lombard and David Moses
- Myrian Zephir and David Alexandre Fatna
- Maryse Bolnet and Alain Bolnet
Recording space
- home of Maryse and Alain Bolnet
Musician interviews
- Daniel Georges Bardury
- “Erik” Gernet Jean-Pierre

Rebecca Sager works as an independent scholar in Tallahassee, Florida, undertaking collaborative research projects to explore new ethnomusicological theories and research methodologies for studying rhythm and entrainment—processes of rhythmic synchronization—in African and European diasporic music cultures.
Letter from a CBMR Resident Rockefeller Fellow

BY DR. REBECCA SAGER

Dear friends of St. John and St. Thomas, USVI,

I’m writing this letter to you (1) to share my excitement for research I did in 2005 at the Alton Adams Music Research Institute (AMRI) and (2) to encourage you to act on the love and curiosity for your own dance and music traditions so evident at the Summit on St. John Music Traditions held on March 5, 2005.

I hope that in telling you about my recent research experience, you will understand why I feel the most important component of our musics is the curiosity of the people most closely connected to those traditions. It is true that occasionally, professional researchers might come into your communities, gathering and systematizing knowledge about your music and dance traditions. But the key players in documenting your living traditions are, I believe, you.

Whether you are a daughter or son, teacher or student, child, young parent, or retired person, musician or music appreciator, you can honor, support, and encourage the continual development of your traditions by recording musicians, personal histories, interviews, and performances. The research I conducted recently as a Rockefeller Fellow was not “my research”; rather, it was the research of people like yourselves, who, in each place I visited, took advantage of my project, training, and technological resources to document and explore the traditions they love and the questions they wanted to pursue. Just as the musicians and dancers who helped me in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Martinique used the resources I brought with me, I encourage you to take advantage of the resources available to you at AMRI that can help focus and organize your own cultural knowledge.

At my lecture on March 5, 2005, at the St. John School of the Arts, some in the audience expressed interest in similar questions I pursued in my research. Most interesting to me were those who indicated that they recognized themselves and their own traditions in the video footage I showed of Haitians dancing konpa, Dominicans dancing merengue, and Martinicans dancing mazouk (“mazurka”).

After local musicians and musical mentors spoke and performed at the summit, the chairs were pushed aside, and the room filled with live music and dancing. How interesting it was to see how you danced, how your movements and musical rhythms felt to me so much like other Caribbean dances and musics, and yet how the texture of your movement communicated your own local identities. Clearly, this music and these dances matter. While struck by the richness of this musical event, I felt disbelief that so little is heard about your traditional music and dance abroad. What should be known about your musical history abroad? What should be part of formal education in your local grammar schools and university?

(continued on 10)