

JAMAICA PLAY

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Dawn Eaton Muir

Beatin' Path Publications, LLC BPP-DMJP



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The people of Jamaica have had a long and diverse cultural heritage, predominated by a combination of Western European and African influences. Jamaica was first colonized by the Spanish after Christopher Columbus arrived in 1494. It was taken over in 1655 by the British, who brought slaves from West Africa to labour on their plantations until the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1808.

The slaves were able to sustain much of their African culture under their indifferent owner's eyes. Gradually the two cultures merged as slaves took many popular European songs and dances learned from their masters and integrated them with their own rhythms, melodies and dances. Later, indentured labourers arrived from India, Ireland and China from the 17th to early 20th centuries, as well as smaller immigrant groups from Britain, Lebanon and Germany. This made Jamaica a highly multicultural society at the time of its Independence in 1962, although educated urban culture was predominantly based on British systems of government, language, religion, law and education. Rural culture most often remained a blend of European and African heritage.

After Independence, there was a sustained interest amongst educated Jamaicans and political leaders to investigate and celebrate indigenous Jamaican culture, and to preserve it in annual cultural festivals and national celebrations. Amongst others, pioneering work was done by Rt Hon Edward Seaga (later Prime Minister of Jamaica), Dr. Olive Lewin (*Rock It Come Over: The Folk Music of Jamaica*) and Marjorie Whyllie. Seaga recorded folk and popular music in the early days of recording studios and wrote on the origins of Jamaican popular music. Together, Lewin and Whyllie gathered many hours of interviews and recordings of traditional culture bearers in the rural parts of Jamaica. This work has proved to be invaluable since many of these traditions are dying out as modern popular alternatives are increasingly adopted via mass media. In recent years there has been growing indifference amongst political leaders to continue research and preservation of these traditional practices. Of particular interest to me as a music educator were the recordings of a popular children's television show, *Ring Ding* (1969-1980), hosted by the beloved cultural icon Louise Bennet Coverley ("Miss Lou"), which featured many traditional children's songs and games. The master tapes were accidentally thrown out from the archives of the Jamaica School of Music and no successful attempt has been made to search for other existing recordings to replace them.

It was in this climate that I became eager to collect and publish as many traditional children's songs and games from Jamaica as I could, for the sake of posterity. I turned to Marjorie Whyllie, the highly respected ethnomusicologist, jazz musician and master drummer, with her incomparable breadth of performance skills, and wealth of knowledge about Jamaica's cultural heritage. Most fortunately, she was also the musical director of the *Ring Ding* production, with its large repertoire of children's songs, rhymes, games and ringplays, so she was able to pass on this immense treasure trove of material. The bulk of this collection consists of ringplays, which are songs performed with movements and games in a circle formation. The adult equivalent is called a social song, which was an important part of village events for providing entertainment, news, social commentary, and community. Over time, several of these were modified to become children's ringplays.

I had the privilege of taking private conga drumming lessons with Marjorie and to record over 24 hours of her musical and cultural mastery, during which time she sang most of the songs in this volume from memory and demonstrated the movement and drumming that accompanied these and many other songs in a variety of genres and Caribbean styles. A great debt is owed to Ms. Whyllie, not only by me but by all friends of Jamaica who value its unique and rich culture.

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Enjoy your preview of Jamaica Play! Find more singing games, songs, hand games, and at:

<https://bppub.net/SingingGames>

BLACKBUD A EAT PUPPA CORN

$\text{♩} = 50$ Jamaican Traditional - Lullaby

Black-bud a eat Pup-pa corn o. Black-bud a eat Pup-pa corn o.

Come go da moun-tain go drive 'im. Black-bud a keep Pup - pa corn.

Translation

blackbud blackbird

puppa (pooh-pah) Papa

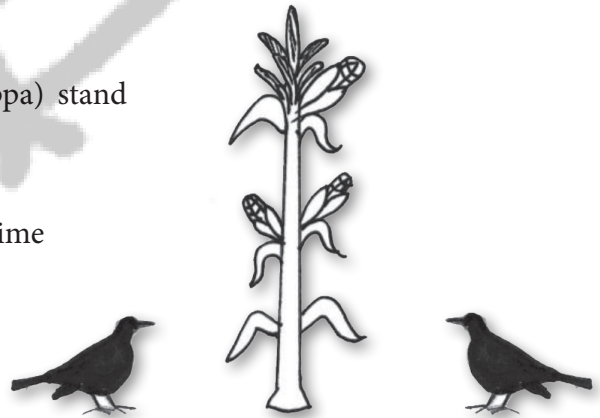
Directions

Version 1

- * Teach song.
- * Players mime actions to go with lyrics.
- * Two groups: Birds (Blackbud) and Farmers (Puppa) stand scattered throughout the space.
- * Perform song and actions.
 - * “Blackbud a eat Puppa corn oh” – blackbirds mime eating corn from their hands or stalks
 - * “Come go da mountain” – Farmers walk amongst blackbirds, pretending to shoo them with appropriate hand movements (no touching).
 - * At end of song, farmers chase and tag all blackbirds.
 - * Switch groups and repeat.

Version 2

- * Farmers stand side by side in a circle; blackbirds stand in the center. If risers or steps available, blackbirds stand on them as if on the “mountain”.



GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK

$\text{♩} = 120$ Jamaican/British Traditional - Social Song

D **A**

Oh the Grand Old Duke of York He had ten thousand men He

D **G** **A** **D**

marched them up to the top of the hill then marched them down a-gain. Oh and

A

when you're up you're up and when you're down you're down but

D **G** **A** **D**

when you're on - ly half way up you're nei-ther up nor down.

Conga
Tone
Bass

On May 4, 1494, Christopher Columbus landed in Jamaica on his second voyage to the West Indies and claimed it for King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. In 1655 it was captured by England and remained an English colony until its Independence in 1962. Over the centuries people arrived from West Africa, India, China, Asia and the Middle East as landowners, slaves, indentured servants or economic migrants. However, the predominant cultural influence was the fusion of Britain and West Africa, as preserved in this originally English song, which Jamaicans consider to be one of their own traditional folk songs. It remains a marching song, with the flavour of Caribbean syncopation in some of its phrases and in drum accompaniment.





Directions

- * Players stand side by side in a circle or scattered around the space or in a line, facing the leader.
- * Perform song with actions while marching.
 - * “Oh the Grand Old Duke of York: – march on the spot or follow behind the leader.
 - * “He marched them up to the top of the hill” – reach hands high, march on tiptoes
 - * “then marched them down again” – hands down low, march in crouch
 - * “when you’re up you’re up” – reach hands high, on tiptoes
 - * “when you’re down you’re down” – hands down low, crouch
 - * “when you’re only halfway up” – hands out front, stand halfway up.
 - * “up nor down” – tiptoe on “up”, crouch on “down”



Each song has full instructions and teaching suggestions plus a full color visual, an audio track and the spoken text in the free supplemental materials.





IN AND OUT THE WINDOW

$\text{♩} = 80$ Jamaican Traditional - Ring Play

F C

Go in and out the win-dow, in a-gain. In and out the

F B♭ C

win-dow, in a-gain. In and out the win-dow to see a rose a -

F F C

gain. And then you dip be-fore your part-ner, you dip a-gain. Dip be-fore your

F C

part-ner, you dip a-gain. You dip be-fore your part-ner to see a rose a -

F F C

gain. And then you waltz and take your part-ner Then you waltz and take your

F B♭ F

part-ner Then you waltz and take your part-ner to see a rose a - gain.

Very few Jamaican homes have glass in the windows. Instead, they have wire grates, often very ornamental to keep intruders out and let the breeze in. They also usually have wooden slatted shutters or metal blinds to keep out bad weather.





SEÑORITA

♩ = 130

Jamaican Traditional - Ring Play

F Bb C

I was go-ing to the cir-cus, I was go-ing to the fair. I met a se-ño-ri-ta with a
I met a se-ñor with a

F Bb

flo- wer in her hair. Shake it, Se - ño - ri - ta. Shake it once a - gain. Shake
fea- ther in his cap. Shake it, shake it Se-ñor. Shake it once a - gain. Shake

C F

it, Se - ño - ri - ta and you shake it once a - gain. And you wind it to the bot - tom and you
it, shake it Se-ñor and you shake it once a - gain.

Bb C F

wind to the top. Wind to the bot - tom and you wind to the top. You

Bb

wind to the bot - tom and you wind to the top. You

C F

turn a - round and turn a - round un - til you make a stop. Full stop, bag - gy drop!

Translation

- * Senorita – young lady
- * Baggy - baggy pants or underwear.

Directions

- * Players stand side by side in a circle with one “Señorita” in the center.
- * Players in circle sing and clap the beat.
- * “I was going to the circus... flower in her hair.” - “Señorita” dances in center.
- * “Shake it, seniorita” - “Seniorita” incorporates shaking movements in dance



RHYMES TO RHYTHMS

Jamaican Traditional - Rhymes

① Tip Tone Bass

L R R R L R R R L R L R L L R L R L

Cy - ril picks ticks. Cy-ril picks ticks. Cy - ril picks ticks out-ta cow back bone. Cy-

② Tip Tone Bass

R R L R R R L R R R L R L L R R L R

Mos-qui-to one Mos-qui-to two Mos - qui-to jump in - na hot call-a-loo.

③ Tip Tone Bass

R L R L R L R R L L R R L R L R

I love cof-fee, I love tea. I love de boy and de boy love me.

Tip Tone Bass

R L R L R R L R R L R R L R L R R L R

I love de girl and de girl love me. An' me seh Bap-sy kai si ko pin-da shell. Me seh

Tip Tone Bass

R L R L R R L R R L R R L R L R R L R

Bap - sy kai si ko pin - da shell. Meseh Bap - sy kai si ko pin - da shell.

④ Tip Tone Bass

R R R R R R R R R R

Doom ta doom doom ta Doom ta doom doom ta.

⑤ Tip Tone Bass

R R L L L R L R L R L L L R

Chang chi nang chang chi wa o - pan - a - di - doon ya di wa.

Alternating hands

Tip Tone Bass

Chang chi nang chang chi wa o - pan - a - di - doon ya di wa.



Full Color visuals and audio tracks of each song are included with each purchase.

JAMAICA PLAY

BY DAWN EATON MUIR

Ring Plays, Hand Plays,
Rhymes and Rhythms From Jamaica!

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Cover Art by Kevin Eaton
Editor - Aimee Curtis Pfltzner
Associate Editor - Karen Holl

Printed and distributed by Beatin' Path Publications, LLC
302 East College Street, Bridgewater, VA 22812
www.beatinpathpublications.com
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jamaica play
Dawn Eaton Muir
Beatin' Path Publications, LLC BPP-DJIP

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BLACKBUD A EAT PUPPA CORN

Blackbud a eat Puppa corn o
Blackbud a eat Puppa corn o
Come go da mountain go drive 'im
Blackbud a eat Puppa corn

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SEÑORITA

I was going to the circus, I was going to the fair.
I met a Señorita with a flower in her hair.
Shake it, Señorita*, shake it once again.
Shake it, Señorita, and you shake it once again.
And you wind it to the bottom and you wind it to the top.
Wind it to the bottom and you wind it to the top.
You wind it to the bottom and you wind it to the top.
You turn around and turn around until you make a stop.
Full stop, baggy drop!



*Shake it, shake it, Señor

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Rhymes to Rhythms

1

**Cyril picks ticks.
Cyril picks ticks.
Cyril picks ticks
outta cow backbone.**



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**Printed and Distributed by
Beatin' Path Publications, LLC**

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