



# Traditional Music and Dance

by Gerard Langlais

Songs were used for ceremonies to appease spirits, both good and bad. For instance, the Tawouana tamourou song was for a bad spirit, the grand father vulture—a pyai man song. A good spirit song is the Touki song for warriors. Songs were also made for celebrations, to tell stories about survivals and successes.

Traditional musical instruments were used in ceremonies and to communicate with the spirits. The instruments were made mainly from local raw materials found in the environment.

**INSTRUMENT**

Drums  
Maracas  
Flute  
Stick

**SOURCE OF MATERIAL**

goat skin  
calabash and seeds  
Bamboo stick  
Conch shell

Dances have played a vital part in the culture of the Kalinago people. Some dances depict different elements of nature, such as the rain dance, wind dance, eclipse dance and moon dance. Many of the dances, such as the bird dance, would imitate animal movements. There were also dances which depicted the Kalinago way of life, such as cassava grating, fishing and hunting. In addition, dances were made for special purposes, such as the inauguration of a chief.

**DANCES**

Bird dance  
Snake dance  
Sisserou dance  
Moon dance  
Eclipse dance  
Marie Marie dance  
Cassava grating dance  
Harvest dance  
War dance  
Bow and Arrow dance  
Marouka dance  
Shack Shack dance  
Fan dance  
Kala kala dance  
Fishing dance

**PURPOSES**

Hunting (bird movements in flight)  
Ceremonial for guardian spirit (snake movements)  
Celebration (Sisserou movements in flight)  
Ceremonial (different phases of the moon)  
Ceremonial (appearing of spirits)  
Ceremonial (wedding)  
Stages of cassava preparation  
Stages of any crop production  
Ceremonial (preparation for war)  
Ceremonial (preparation for war)  
Dream dance  
Celebration (the use of Maracas a musical instrument)  
Celebration (the use of fans made from the Larouma reed)  
Celebration (the use of calabash)  
The demonstration of fishing movements