

# Making modernity in the hinterlands: new Maroon musics in the Black Atlantic

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## Introduction

Born in mortal opposition to the peculiarly modern forms of slavery that helped to usher in a new era of European world domination, the Maroon societies of the Americas have long provided theorists of identity operating in the realm that has come to be known as the Black Atlantic with a potent symbolic currency.<sup>1</sup> Nowhere has this currency acquired higher value than in the Caribbean region, where questions of identity are so fundamentally bound up with histories of plantation slavery.

The runaway slave has had a special place in the literature of the anglophone Caribbean; and francophone, hispanophone and Dutch-speaking Caribbean writers have all displayed a similar fascination with the Maroon epic.<sup>2</sup> In more recent times, popular music – a medium that has played a primary role in the constitution of a truly diasporic sense of identity spanning the Black Atlantic – has helped to carry consciousness of a heroic Maroon past across the globe. Both practitioners of Caribbean (or other Afro-American) popular musics and those who write about them continue to reference the Maroons of yore, often tracing the rebellious thrust of much of today's music to these original Black warriors, whose defiant spirit, it is felt, continues to inhabit and motivate the collective memory (Aly 1988, pp. 55–7, 65; Zips 1993, 1994; Leymarie 1994).<sup>3</sup>

In both literary and popular cultural productions, images of the Maroon usually serve an essentialising function. Not only do Maroons embody such positive values as defiance, resistance and autonomy, but they represent an original cultural authenticity never compromised by the experience of plantation slavery. In their remoteness, it is sometimes thought, these escaped slaves were able to preserve what elsewhere was lost. Because of their separatist mode of existence, they are imagined as having maintained a sacred, pre-modern cultural purity. From a certain anti-hegemonic perspective, the original Maroons stand for the survival and regeneration of all that was noble in the African character before this was corrupted by colonialism and slavery – qualities such as cultural integrity, social wisdom and an ability to live in harmony with the forces of nature. For some, this romantic image symbolises the very essence of a putative original African selfhood waiting to be reclaimed throughout the diaspora. This kind of essentialising imagery clearly shares something with the various Black nationalisms deconstructed by Paul Gilroy in *The Black Atlantic* (Gilroy 1993A) and other works. Like the latter, it glosses over complex and differentiated local histories and can lead toward cultural myopia, even as it points the way to social utopia.

But what of the Maroons of today? What of the actual, here-and-now Maroons, those whose forebears disappeared into the forests and swamps only to re-emerge victorious at a later point, with their hard-won freedom and separate identities intact? What of the direct descendants of those flesh-and-blood individuals whose historical struggles have been appropriated and enshrined within the larger collective consciousness? It is well known by now, particularly among students of the African diaspora, that in the Guianas, Jamaica, Colombia, Brazil and elsewhere, such living descendants of escaped slaves have maintained distinct Maroon communities, identities and cultural traditions up to the present (Price 1996). Less well known is the fact that, in each of these places, these contemporary Maroon peoples are rapidly being incorporated not only into the nation-states that have long enclosed their territories, but the global system of relationships and exchanges of which the Black Atlantic is an integral part. Whatever else can be said about Maroon peoples in the late twentieth century, it is no longer possible (if, indeed, it ever was) to characterise them as isolated enclaves cut off from the 'modern' world. Indeed, inhabitants of Maroon communities today – whether in Jamaica or Suriname, French Guiana or Colombia – are as caught up in the processes of modernisation, migration and globalisation claiming so much attention these days, as are their fellow countrymen living in urban centres.

In this paper, I briefly examine some of the ways in which the popular musics of the Black Atlantic are being appropriated by young Maroon musicians in different countries, and are being used by them to mediate and define their relationships to the globalising constructions of identity – and particularly, Black identity – so closely associated with the transnational spread of such musics. The new Maroon musics emerging from this process, I argue, clearly demonstrate how essentialist constructions of identity that depend on notions of cultural uniformity can meaningfully coexist with local specificity and inevitable cultural difference.

Although these young Maroons are hardly alone in using popular musics to harmonise apparent contradictions between local and global conceptions of identity, theirs would appear to be an especially significant case. For one thing, the privileged place occupied by their ancestors in the rhetoric and symbolism of Black nationalism provides them with a unique point of entry into popular discourses of Black resistance, and puts them in a special position to reach out and to speak with a certain authority to others within the African diaspora. At the same time, it must be remembered that these Maroon musicians come from societies that have long been known for secrecy and the exclusion of outsiders. To a large extent, present-day Maroons continue to abide by the principle of secrecy that protected their ancestors in past centuries from attempts to annihilate or re-enslave them. What this means is that even as Maroon musicians have begun to participate in transnational forms of popular culture that help to promote and define globalising identities in the broadest possible terms, they continue in their daily lives to take part in local cultural and religious systems that employ complex, protective codes of secrecy and evasion to exclude non-Maroons.<sup>4</sup> Because identity can exist on several levels, young Maroons who in certain contexts maintain rigid ethnic boundaries between themselves and non-Maroon people of African descent (who are classified, along with all other non-Maroons, as outsiders) may nonetheless find it possible in other contexts to join in heartfelt calls to international Black solidarity. Popular music provides an effective vehicle for both levels of identification, local and global.

### Wailing Aluku roots in French Guiana

I am French Guianese. More precisely, I am an Aluku, who are the people who, like my grandparents, were slaves, but escaped from the plantations in Suriname. They set themselves free, even before the abolition of slavery. My roots are very important to me, because it's *my* culture, *my* story. A tree without roots is nothing. Of course, Africa is also part of my culture, but from a long time ago. (Claudias Assabal, guitarist and singer with Wailing Roots, interviewed for American television at the Festival International de Louisiane, Lafayette, Louisiana, 1993)<sup>5</sup>

Deep in the Guianese rain forest, on the border of French Guiana and Suriname, lies the traditional territory of a Maroon people called the Aluku, also known as the Boni. Here, in the village of Maripasoula – more than two hundred miles from the nearest coastal town, in a region that remains reachable only by canoe or small aircraft – live the members of Wailing Roots, French Guiana's best-known Maroon reggae band.<sup>6</sup>

The Aluku are the direct descendants of enslaved Africans who escaped from coastal plantations in the Dutch colony of Suriname beginning in the early eighteenth century. Known in the literature of the time as the 'Cottica rebels', they fought a prolonged war against the Dutch colonists, continuing their attacks on the plantations well into the late eighteenth century, even after other Surinamese Maroon groups, such as the Ndyuka and Saramaka, had concluded peace treaties with the Dutch. One of the early leaders of the Aluku, a great warrior named Boni, lives on as a hero and a central symbol of Black resistance to this day, in both Suriname and French Guiana.

The early struggles of the Aluku were given literary immortality by the British mercenary and writer John Gabriel Stedman in his famous book, *Narrative of a Five-Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (Stedman 1971 [1796]). Because this stirring account has been published in many editions and translated into several languages, the achievements of the ancestors of the Aluku are widely recognised today by historians and students of resistance to slavery (see Hoogbergen 1990). But few are aware that the descendants of these warriors continue to exist as a distinct people, and that the culture and language they have maintained are, along with those of the five other surviving Guianese Maroon 'tribes' or ethnic groups (the Saramaka, Ndyuka, Paramaka, Matawai and Kwinti), the most African in the entire western hemisphere (Hurault 1961, 1970). Today, the Aluku number between 2–3,000. Their social organisation continues to be based on a series of matrilineal clans united under the rule of a paramount chief, known as *gaanman* (Givens 1984; Bilby 1990B). Like the other Guianese Maroon peoples, they speak a creole language which, though its vocabulary is derived largely from English, is not mutually intelligible with any of the Caribbean English-based creoles spoken outside of Suriname (such as Jamaican Creole or Guyanese Creole) (Hurault 1983). Linguists characterise these unique Guianese Maroon languages as 'radical creoles', because they differ more radically from the European languages that contributed to them than do any of the other creole languages spoken in the Black Atlantic (partly, some argue, because of a higher degree of African influence).

Although French Guiana has been an overseas department of France since the late 1940s, it was not until 1969, when the interior was politically integrated with the coastal area, that the traditional Aluku territory was fully incorporated into the French state. Since that time, the Aluku have been undergoing a rapid and profound process of transformation. Large-scale migration to coastal towns, an imposed econ-

omy of consumption, and French assimilationist policies are only the most prominent of a series of forces producing radical change in Aluku society (Bilby 1990B).

Growing up in a neocolonial French overseas department, young Alukus have been faced with the ongoing necessity of defining and redefining themselves in relation to both the encroaching French state and the dominant Creole society and culture of coastal French Guiana. Within this complex modern context, the cosmopolitan styles of Afro-Caribbean popular music imported from the coastal region in recent years have provided them with a ready-made vehicle for the negotiation of local versus broader notions of identity. It should come as no surprise that reggae, the Jamaican musical style that has blossomed into a major international medium of pan-Africanism over the last two decades, has come to play a particularly prominent role in the negotiation of identities in an Afro-Caribbean society such as French Guiana. Nor should it be surprising that one of the best reggae bands to come out of this French overseas department, Wailing Roots, should emerge among a Maroon people such as the Aluku.

The founding members of Wailing Roots – as the Jamaican-sounding name of the band implies – were inspired by the themes of Black redemption and social justice common to so many of the Rastafarian reggae songs of the 1970s. In the popular music of Black Jamaicans they saw their own historical experience closely mirrored – their ancestors' forced removal from Africa, their historical struggles against enslavement, and their determination to protect the freedom and cultural autonomy won with these ancestors' blood. In the words of keyboardist and singer



Figure 1. Wailing Roots, from the cover of their first album. Photo: Henri Griffit. Courtesy of Wailing Roots.

Wah Dada I. Rasc: 'In [Jamaican] reggae, so many of the things they sing about connect with us. Reggae has a little bit of Africa in it, because Jamaicans themselves are almost Africans. They were slaves, and they had their drums too.'<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the members of Wailing Roots also saw in this music an appealing, cosmopolitan world with all the signs of 'modernity'. Here, in these modern diasporic sounds, they detected not only the vibrations of an expanded sense of Black identity and power of truly global dimensions, but the possibility of a utopian internationalism transcending racial divisions. Says guitarist and singer Claudias: 'Reggae is one of those musics that puts forward what's currently happening in the world: war . . . and peace and love too. It tells all.'<sup>8</sup>

In one of their earlier songs, entitled 'Followers', they identified themselves explicitly with the international community of Rastafari, and voiced their support for the goals of the Rasta movement, which they had gleaned from imported Jamaican recordings – particularly the goal of Black unity in the face of racial oppression.<sup>9</sup>

CHORUS: I and I are the followers of Rasta (4 times)

Jah children must come together  
together as one  
Jah people must come together  
together as one  
to fight all over the world  
for our freedom  
Jah Jah put us here, in this world  
to survive  
Jah Jah put us here  
to make things right  
but they fight our love  
they want to take us apart<sup>10</sup>

On the same LP, they included a song called 'Black Aloukou', in which the question of identity is more narrowly focused. The stress in this song is on a more specific Black identity – their own Aluku identity, and the particular experience of marronage in which it is historically rooted. Whereas the first two verses contain images of a past that is shared by many others in the Black diaspora – the brutality of slavery, and forced separation from one's ancestral culture – the final verse recounts the heroic flight of the Aluku ancestors up the very river where their villages remain today. The rest of the verse reminds listeners that these Maroon ancestors (in implied contrast to the slave ancestors of the coastal Creole population) fought for and won their own freedom; and that it was *their* founding ancestor, the great warrior Boni, who led the way. By stressing the fact that their ancestors seized their own freedom, and claiming the heroic figure of Boni as their own, the authors of the song set themselves apart from the majority of people of African descent in French Guiana (i.e. the Creole population). In the French Guianese context, where Creoles have traditionally denigrated contemporary Maroons as 'uncivilised bush people', yet at the same time have glorified historical Maroons such as Boni as heroes of anticolonial resistance, the political significance of these lyrics is clear. Not only does the song make a powerful statement of ethnic pride, but it presents an unmistakable challenge to both Creole and French notions of cultural hegemony. To ensure that all those to whom the song is addressed understand its message, it is sung in French Creole, the closest thing to a lingua franca in French Guiana.<sup>11</sup>

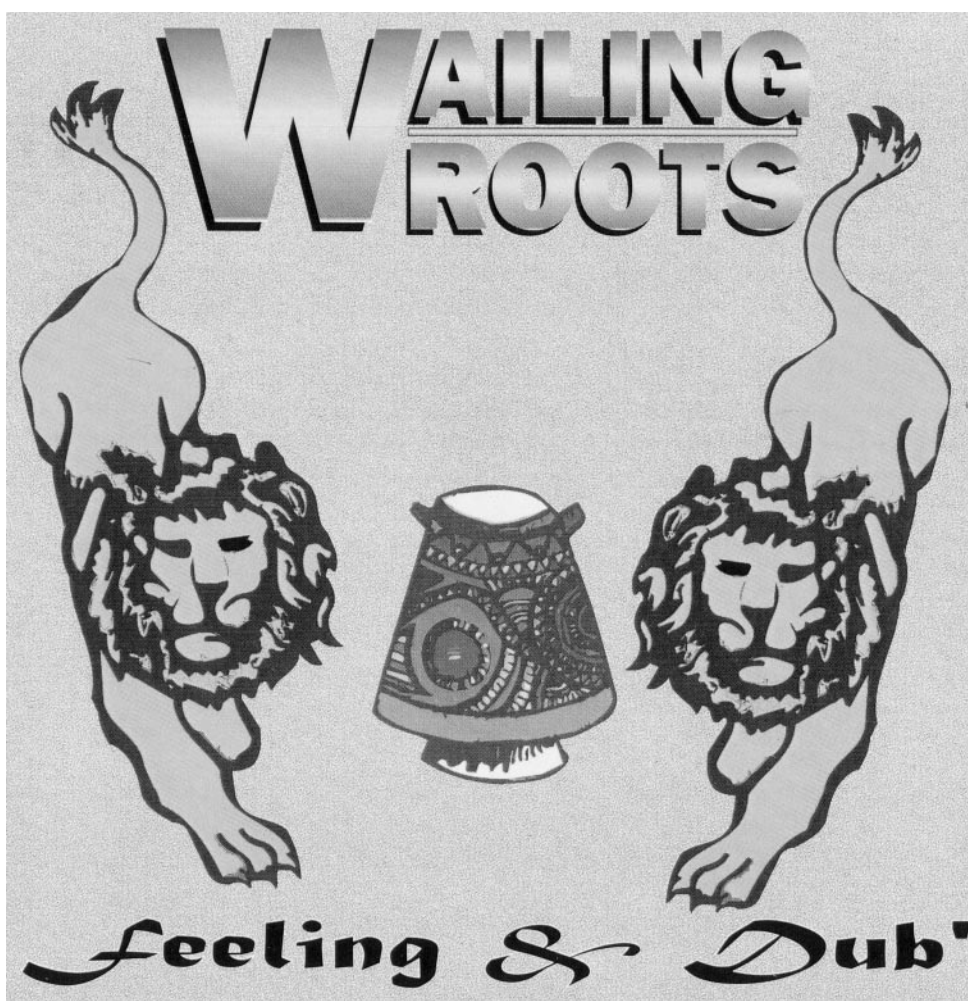


Figure 2. Cover of Wailing Roots' third album, *Feeling & Dub*. A traditional carved Aluku drum is flanked by two lions. The lions symbolise both the Rastafari movement and the Aluku warrior spirit. Courtesy of Wailing Roots.

CHORUS:

mwen sé an Black Aloukou  
I am a Black Aluku  
je suis un Black Aloukou

wi, mwen sé ti moun esklav  
tchè-a-mwen ka pléré mizè  
wi, mwen sé ti moun esklav  
disan ka koulé an zyé-mwen  
lapo-mwen sikatrizé

lè mwen ka sonjé a yè  
disan ka koulé an zyé-mwen  
rasin-a-nou rété dèyè  
nou pé pa retrouvè-y

I feel Black, oh lord, in my heart  
 monté la rot Maroni  
 nou kombat pou nou jwi lavi  
 Boni tiré nou di kaptivité  
 aprézan nou an libèté

I feel so Black in my heart<sup>12</sup>

(CHORUS:

I am a Black Aluku [in French Creole]  
 I am a Black Aluku [in English]  
 I am a Black Aluku [in French]

yes, I'm a child of slaves  
 my heart moans misery  
 yes, I'm a child of slaves  
 blood flows in my eyes<sup>13</sup>  
 my skin is scarred

when I remember the past  
 blood flows in my eyes  
 our root remained behind  
 we couldn't get it back

I feel Black, oh lord, in my heart [in English]

ascending the upper Maroni River  
 we fought to make the most of life  
 Boni rescued us from captivity  
 now we are free

I feel so Black in my heart [in English]<sup>14</sup>

For all its insistence on the singularity of the Aluku experience, the song also displays a cosmopolitan consciousness and an aesthetic that link it to the broader African diaspora. The singer emotes with a bluesy intonation meant to convey the suffering shared by his own ancestors and those of Black people elsewhere in the world, for whom the African-American blues has come to embody a diasporic sense of pathos. When he sings in English, 'I feel so Black in my heart', he is connecting with those who share this feeling, wherever they may be. And by singing the chorus in three languages, he makes a statement about the cosmopolitan nature of Blackness.<sup>15</sup>

In yet another song from the same LP, 'Séki I Chiking', the concern for diasporic Blackness recedes almost entirely out of view, as the focus shifts to a typical Aluku village setting – an evening dance backed by traditional Aluku song and drumming styles, such as *songe*, *susa* and *awasa*.<sup>16</sup> The lyrics, in the Aluku language, have a purely local resonance.

SPOKEN: disi na fu ala den lobi man fu a liba  
 den n'e sipan. . . soso lobi. . .

ee, Aluku Liba  
 san e pasa  
 na libi na wan  
 na dati wi wani  
 na dati na lobi

ee, Aluku uman  
 a lobi na yu

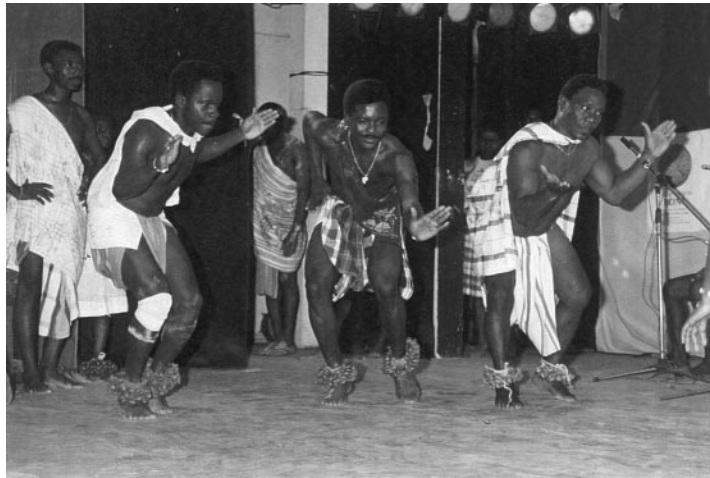


Figure 3. Aluku Maroon men dancing songe, 1989. Photo: Henri Griffit. Courtesy of Association Mi Wani Sabi.

a lobi na mi  
kon seki i sikin  
na dati wi lobi  
na dati den lobi

te i e kon na a dansi  
ala den man e bali  
yu na wan seksu lobi  
na dati den lobi  
na dati wi lobi  
kon seki i sikin

na dati wi lobi  
moi-moi songe  
na dati wi lobi  
aleke  
na dati wi lobi  
djompo susa  
na dati wi lobi  
paata awasa<sup>17</sup>

(SPOKEN: this is for all the lovers in the area [lit., on the river]  
they won't get tense. . . strictly love. . .

oh, Aluku River [i.e. the traditional Aluku territory]  
what's happening  
is that we're living as one  
that's what we want  
that's what love is

oh, Aluku woman  
love is you  
love is me  
come move your body  
that's what we like  
that's what they like  
when you come to the dance

all the men shout out [in appreciation]  
 you're a sexy lover  
 that's what they like  
 that's what we like  
 come move your body

that's what we like  
 beautiful songe  
 that's what we like  
 aleke  
 that's what we like  
 jumping susa  
 that's what we like  
 getting down with awasa)<sup>18</sup>

Here, the singer is clearly addressing his own people. The language is his own, and is intelligible only to Alukus, or to other Maroons from closely related ethnic groups such as the Paramaka and Ndyuka. The overt political commentary is gone, and the lyrics dwell on love, and the sensual and aesthetic pleasures of dancing – whether one moves one's body to the modern sound of reggae or to neo-African, drum-based Maroon styles such as songe, aleke, susa or awasa. As strongly local as this song's orientation is, it also displays cosmopolitan elements. As an example of a song performed in 'lover's rock' style, it belongs to a particular romantic genre of reggae that has been popular in Jamaica and Britain since the 1970s, and is now well established throughout the Black Atlantic. Interestingly enough, in the work of Wailing Roots, this romantic genre tends to be associated with those songs that are most narrowly focused – songs aiming specifically at an Aluku, or at least Maroon, audience.<sup>19</sup>

If there is a single Wailing Roots composition that most effectively unites assertions of local identity with cosmopolitan themes, it is probably 'Original Aloukou Soldiers', the title song of their second album. On the cover of this CD is a slightly doctored reproduction of the famous 1791 engraving of 'A Rebel Negro Armed & on His Guard', from Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (Stedman 1971 [1796]).<sup>20</sup> By featuring this dramatic eighteenth-century depiction of a Maroon warrior – one of the most commonly reproduced illustrations in books and articles about Maroons in the Caribbean – above the words 'Original Aloukou Soldiers', the band makes apparent exactly whose ancestors the courageous fighters made famous by Stedman's account are. The title song itself suggests an unbroken continuity between the historical struggles of these 'first-time' Maroon warriors and the efforts of their descendants – the 'original Aluku soldiers' and 'freedom fighters' of today – to counteract ongoing threats to their own social and cultural survival, and by extension, those of Black people and other oppressed peoples elsewhere in the world.<sup>21</sup>

SPOKEN: all original Aluku soldiers

now I dedicate this one to all freedom fighters  
 whether you Black or White  
 live in east, west, north, and south  
 most of all  
 Luther Martin King  
 Malcolm X  
 Bob Marley

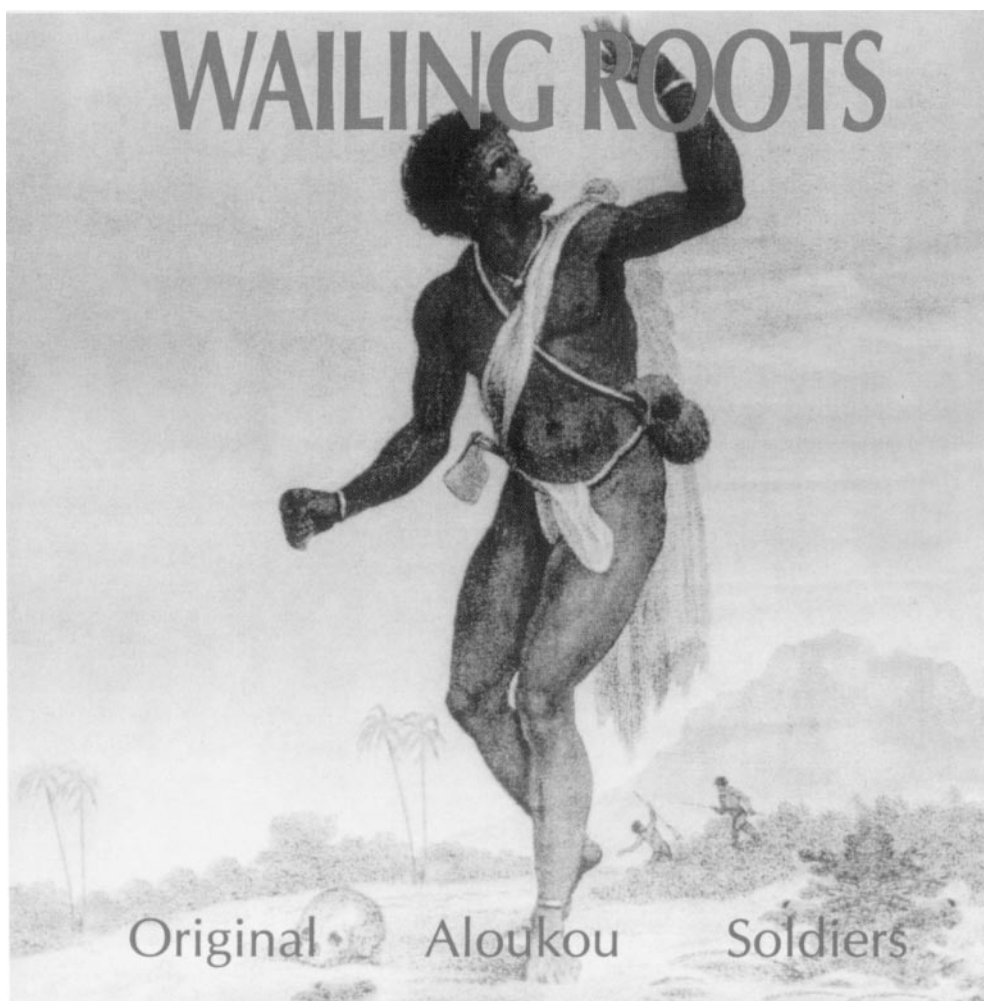


Figure 4. Cover of Wailing Roots' second album, *Original Aloukou Soldiers*, based on an engraving by Francesco Bartolozzi that appeared in *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam (1796)*, by John Gabriel Stedman. Courtesy of Wailing Roots.

Boni  
Kwaku  
respect due!

SUNG: ain't no men to stop us now  
ain't no power to stop us now  
original Aluku soldiers  
we all are freedom fighters

we no need no M 16  
we no need atomic energy  
original Aluku soldiers  
we all are freedom fighters

TOASTING: original, original  
original soldiers [fighters]  
me raggamuffin and me fight for survival

me raggamuffin and me international  
me raggamuffin and me fight against apartheid

I'm a rebel, yes  
yes, I'm terrible  
don't you know I'm a freedom fighter

Ku Klux Klan can't stop me now  
nobody can't come touch me

hear this:  
booyaka, booyaka!  
I going shoot them down  
booyaka, booyaka!  
freedom for Black man!

SPOKEN: a *me* a de original soldier<sup>22</sup>

The multiple levels of identity to which young Alukus can lay claim in the 1990s are deftly interwoven in this anthem to Black resistance. The central theme of the song is the continuity of Aluku identity, which remains firmly rooted in the local historical struggles of the ancestors and the specific cultural traditions passed down from them. As the closing line of the last section declares (in Jamaican Creole): 'it is *me* (i.e. an Aluku Maroon descendant) who is the original soldier'. At the same time, these claims to a special place in the annals of Black freedom-fighting are situated within an explicitly cosmopolitan context. The song is backed by a militant reggae sound that has been updated with elements from the newer Jamaican dancehall, or 'raggamuffin', style – a youth-oriented genre that now rubs shoulders with other transnational popular styles in Kingston, Port of Spain, New York, London and Paris.<sup>23</sup> The singer uses a pan-Caribbean English influenced by both Jamaican Creole and Guyanese Creole, identifying himself as 'international', and a 'raggamuffin' – an exponent of the pop culture style that has spread in recent times from urban Jamaica to disenfranchised or disaffected youth in other parts of the world. (Like young popular musicians in many other places, Wailing Roots routinely employ Jamaican Creole or other Caribbeanised forms of English in song lyrics as a gesture of cosmopolitanism and a means of identifying with a larger Black identity, even though they do not speak them in everyday life.)<sup>24</sup>

In fact, throughout the song, there is a back-and-forth movement between local and diasporic images and references. The dedication at the beginning progresses through a succession of international icons of Black resistance, such as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Bob Marley, ending up with the singer's own ancestor, Boni, and finally, the mythic Surinamese slave hero, Kwaku.<sup>25</sup> Later in the song, the singer employs an international symbol of White supremacist ideology, the KKK, to create an esoteric Aluku subtext. When he asserts that the 'Ku Klux Klan can't stop me, nobody can't come touch me', going on to boast that if they should try, he will 'shoot them down', he is making an indirect reference to the protection provided by the ancestral powers of the *kumanti* cult. The African-derived powers of *kumanti* were used by the eighteenth-century Aluku warriors – a fact confirmed both by oral tradition and in Stedman's account (Stedman 1971 [1796]) – to deflect the bullets of Dutch soldiers, and are still used by their descendants today for purposes of healing and protection. The song reminds young Alukus and their Maroon counterparts in Suriname that these powers, if need be, can still be called forth to aid the fight for 'freedom for Black man'.<sup>26</sup>



Figure 5. Aluku men using machetes to demonstrate the protective powers of kumanti during a performance in Cayenne, French Guiana, 1989. Photo: Henri Griffit. Courtesy of Association Mi Wani Sabi.

The process of indigenisation exemplified in the foregoing songs has led to yet other new musical developments among the Aluku. In Maripasoula, the same village in the rain forest that Wailing Roots calls home, some young Maroon musicians recently came together to form a band of another kind – an aleke band – called Oudou Loutou.<sup>27</sup> Aleke is a neo-traditional Maroon music that combines elements from several older styles with newer influences; instrumentation in this youth-oriented style, as in most traditional Aluku musical styles, is generally limited to drums and percussion.<sup>28</sup> Oudou Loutou, like other Aluku and Ndyuka aleke bands, have brought reggae music – a genre that has done more than anything else to help young Maroons envision themselves as part of a larger African diaspora – even closer to home than have electric pop bands such as Wailing Roots. On a recent cassette release, Oudou Loutou includes a song called ‘Regae’ [*sic*], backed by a new style of Maroon drumming created by stripping the reggae ‘beat’ down to its rhythmic essentials; this new reggae-inflected Maroon rhythm, played on the aleke drums, resembles nothing so much as the traditional nyabinghi rhythm of Jamaican Rastafarians, which itself was an important influence in the original development of reggae during the 1960s.<sup>29</sup> Over this stripped-down reggae rhythm, the members of Oudou Loutou repeatedly chant the English words ‘reggae every time’.<sup>30</sup> (At one point, one of the singers intones the words ‘Dja Lastafalai!’ – an Aluku rendition of ‘Jah Rastafari!’) Recordings such as this provide proof that young Maroon musicians have succeeded in making reggae truly their own. Both Maroon reggae bands such as Wailing Roots and neo-traditional aleke bands such as Oudou Loutou have discovered that the communicative potential of this imported pan-African/Caribbean musical style can be as fine-tuned to local realities, or as broadly calibrated to diasporic concerns, as need be.

### **Hard Ndyuka sounds from Suriname**

Across the river from the Aluku, in the interior of Suriname, is the traditional territory of the Ndyuka Maroons – along with the Saramaka, one of the two largest



Figure 6. Drummers from Aluku Maroon *aleke* band, Oudou Loutou, Maripasoula, French Guiana, 1991. Photo: K. Bilby.

Surinamese Maroon peoples. The ancestors of the Ndyuka, like those of the Aluku, fled from coastal plantations starting in the early eighteenth century. In 1760, after several decades of war, they made a treaty with the Dutch, which recognised their freedom and their right to govern themselves. Since then they have maintained a distinct culture, language and political system (Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering 1988). Numbering roughly 20,000 today, they continue, like the Aluku, to be governed by a paramount chief, or *gaanman*, and their society is still organised in matrilineal clans and lineages, some of which go back to the eighteenth century. Their language, called Ndyuka, is very close to that of the Aluku (Huttar and Huttar 1994).

Over the last two decades, increasing numbers of young Ndyukas have been migrating to coastal towns in search of employment opportunities. During the 1980s, when war broke out in the interior, this stream of migrants grew into a flood, as Ndyuka refugees sought shelter in urban areas (Thoden van Velzen 1990). By the early 1990s, a large percentage of the Ndyuka population was living in the capital of Paramaribo. The majority of these Ndyuka city dwellers were young. Within this new urban context, these young Ndyukas, along with their peers from other Maroon groups such as the Saramaka, soon began to play a prominent role in the burgeoning local popular music industry (Bilby 1999).

The contemporary popular music of Suriname is far too rich and varied to attempt a summary here, embracing as it does numerous styles, sub-styles and trends. Even a brief description of trends associated specifically with young urban Maroon musicians would require more space than we have here.<sup>31</sup> But a representative glimpse can be got by focusing on the work of the Excós, one of many young Ndyuka bands based in the capital city today.

The Excós have mastered a cosmopolitan variety of urban popular styles,



*Figure 7. Ndyuka Maroon drummers, Paramaribo, Suriname, 1991. Courtesy of Kifoko.*

ranging from Jamaican reggae and dancehall to Central African soukous and the national popular style of Suriname, kaseko. What interests us here is the way they balance these diverse elements with others drawn from their own ancestral traditions, juxtaposing local and cosmopolitan references in such a way as to make statements about themselves and their modern condition. Like their Aluku counterparts, Wailing Roots, the Excós make music that is both ethnically specific in orientation and international in outlook – music in which different levels of identity coexist harmoniously. Two brief examples should suffice.

In their reggae song ‘Can’t Control Me’, the Excós project an image of street-wise toughness and aggressive self-assurance, using the rhetoric of the Jamaican ‘rude boy’ or ‘raggamuffin’ to voice urban themes that resonate with their own Ndyuka warrior past. (In keeping with this militant past, they refer to themselves, on their cassette labels and in performances, as ‘the hardest’, and their music as the ‘hardest sound’.) ‘Can’t Control Me’ actually is loosely based on a Jamaican dancehall hit, ‘Hot This Year’, originally recorded by the late Jamaican DJ known as Dirtsman (Patrick Thompson).<sup>32</sup> The song’s derivation helps to explain the language in which it is performed (an approximation of Jamaican Creole). But the Excós remake the song into something entirely new.<sup>33</sup> Not only do they add verbal and musical flourishes of their own to the original lyrics, but they throw in elements from their own Ndyuka language, peppering their performance with local references.

SPOKEN:

special dedicate to all dem gangster like me  
request, request

to all bad boy, all rude boy  
nuff respect deh, nuff respect to all:  
Ramgoe posse, Flora posse, Menken posse  
step up young life

SUNG: send, you send, send another one come  
one an one, I gonna slow dem down  
me seh me bad dis years  
now weh dem a go do fi hold me?  
now posse come, I wicked dis years  
no way, no one to control me  
everyone, I come rough dis years  
now weh dem a go do fi hold me?

and me seh one a dem come  
dem cyaan hold me  
ma na two a dem try  
dem cyaan hold me  
ma na three a dem come  
dem cyaan hold me  
ma na four a dem try  
dem cyaan hold me

me seh me rough  
an you no rougher dan me  
but you wicked  
an you no wicked dan me  
I seh you tough  
an you no tougher dan me  
but you rough  
an you no rougher dan me

me got to tell dem, all de raggamuffin  
big up de dance  
you know, de raggamuffin keep on skank ina dance  
all rude boy, all bad boy  
step up ina life, seen<sup>34</sup>

From the opening dedication – in which the vocalist greets by name a number of dancehall ‘posses’ associated with particular Paramaribo neighbourhoods (Ramgoe, Flora, Menken) where large numbers of young Ndyukas live – to the final invitation to ‘all de raggamuffin’ to join in the dance, it is clear who the intended audience is. The Excós are addressing young urban Maroons, especially Ndyukas, who, like themselves, are struggling to survive their precarious new condition as proletarians on the periphery of Suriname’s capital city. But the language they use to do so is one that is common to marginalised youth – particularly Black urban youth – in many other parts of the world. In this way, they identify with a globalising Black popular culture even as they interact with a local, primarily Ndyuka audience that shares many of their daily experiences, their language, and a sense of common Maroon origins.

References to these specific Maroon origins are interspersed through much of the Excós’ music. Take, for instance, the following excerpt from a song called ‘Sa Moitia’. This song, which appears on the same cassette as ‘Can’t Control Me’, is sung in the Ndyuka language, and performed in a more locally oriented style of popular music called kaseko.

## CHORUS:

tjai mi go a Ndyuka (3 times)  
mi e go sete a libi na anda

tjai mi go a Saamaka  
tjai mi go a Kotika  
tjai mi go a Ndyuka  
mi e go sete a libi na anda<sup>35</sup>

(CHORUS: take me to the Ndyuka territory  
I'm going to make a life there

take me to the Saramaka territory  
take me to the Cottica Ndyuka territory  
take me to the Ndyuka territory  
I'm going to make a life there)<sup>36</sup>

Here, the singer gives voice to the desire of many young urbanised Maroons – whether Ndyukas, Saramakas, Alukus or Paramakas – to return one day to their ancestral villages in the forest so as to start a new life away from the confusion and frustrations of life on the urban fringe. In the music of the Excos and many other young Surinamese Maroon bands, such ethnically specific themes and sentiments regularly mingle with the transnational sounds and concerns of the Black Atlantic, of which all Maroons, no matter how deep in the forest they may live, are now a part.

### Palenquero swing from Colombia

In the northern part of Colombia, not far inland from Cartagena – a Caribbean port city that was once at the centre of the Spanish trade in African slaves – lies one of the oldest Maroon communities in the Americas, Palenque de San Basilio. The ancestors of the Palenqueros began escaping from coastal plantations during the late seventeenth century, and by 1713 had persuaded the King of Spain to recognise their freedom and their right to a territory of their own. Today the Maroons of Palenque retain many distinctive cultural characteristics stemming from their Maroon past, including a unique Spanish-lexicon creole language that sets them apart from other Colombians (Bickerton and Escalante 1970; Friedemann and Patiño Rosselli 1983; Schwegler 1996).

Like young Maroons in the Guianas, large numbers of Palenqueros have in recent years joined the increasing flow of rural people toward urban centres, where work is more easily had. Among the cities that have acted as magnets for Palenquero migrants are Barranquilla, Santa Marta and, especially, Cartagena; some Palenqueros can even be found as far afield as Venezuela. Today, Palenquero vendors are a common sight along the tourist-packed beaches of Cartagena, where they hawk everything from sunglasses to hair-braiding services; and Palenquero market-women are a conspicuous fixture of the city's main marketplace.

The northern coastal region of Colombia, in which Palenque de San Basilio is located, has long been absorbing influences from popular musics originating in other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean (Wade 1998, pp. 9–14).<sup>37</sup> In past decades, Afro-Cuban and other Spanish Caribbean styles loomed particularly large, although a diverse smattering of other cosmopolitan musics, such as North American jazz, Argentinian tango, and a variety of Brazilian styles, were also present; more recently, the region has opened up to an amazingly eclectic array of foreign

musics ranging from reggae and salsa to Congolese soukous and South African township jive (known locally as 'Soweto' – a term which has since been extended by some musicians to cover all of the imported urban African genres that have become popular in Colombia, from the juju music of Nigeria to the mbaqanga of South Africa).<sup>38</sup> This new, cosmopolitan mix of styles is succinctly described by the Colombian ethnomusicologist Egberto Bermúdez (1994, p. 231): 'As a recent phenomenon, in the marginal areas of cities like Cartagena, Barranquilla, and the island of San Andrés, young people dance to what they call *terapia* and *champeta*, in both cases a mixture of elements of rap, reggae, and bits and pieces of African *juju*, *soukus* [*sic*], and other elements taken from new Caribbean musical styles from all over the English and French Antilles, and from Latin music from the United States, Panamá and Venezuela.'<sup>39</sup> The availability of imported records in these styles – as well as locally licensed and pirated foreign recordings – has played a large part in spreading their popularity.

The primary medium through which these imported musics have reached the coastal Colombian public is the local institution known as *picó* (from English, 'pick-up') – a kind of high-powered homegrown sound system used to spin the latest hits at crowded dances (Bermúdez 1994, p. 232).<sup>40</sup> This *picó* tradition, centred in the strip of Caribbean coastline that runs from Cartagena to Barranquilla, goes back at least three decades; in certain respects, it parallels the much better known sound system culture of urban Jamaica (Leymarie 1998, p. 47). Palenqueros have long been exposed to the wide variety of Afro-Caribbean and African popular musics that routinely find their way onto the turntables of the *picoteros* (sound system operators). Indeed, according to a recent piece of investigative reporting, many of the *picoteros* of Cartagena hail 'from the nearby African Maroon enclave of Palenque de San Basilio' (McLane 1993, p. 64).<sup>41</sup>

It was only a matter of time before this multiplicity of diasporic sounds made its way into locally recorded music. Not surprisingly, one of the first local bands to reflect this stylistic eclecticism in its recordings, Anne Zwing, was founded by a Palenquero Maroon named Viviano Torres, and included several other Palenqueros.<sup>42</sup> Based in Cartagena, Anne Zwing has emerged in the 1990s as one of the most popular bands in coastal Colombia. (The name of the band, meaning 'they swing', combines the Bantu-derived Palenquero third person plural subject pronoun, *ané*, with the English word 'swing'.)<sup>43</sup>

There are few popular musical ensembles in the world that surpass the musical eclecticism of this band.<sup>44</sup> Most albums by Anne Zwing feature songs in a variety of languages (such as Spanish, Palenquero, English, and several variants of French Antillean Creole, as well as lyrics in a number of different African languages copied off imported recordings) and a broad variety of Caribbean and African musical genres (ranging from reggae, zouk, soca and merengue, to soukous and mbaqanga). Although it would be possible to find songs in any of these styles to illustrate the way in which Anne Zwing, like Maroon musicians in the Guianas, use diasporic musics to identify with the larger Black world, the reggae song 'To Ane A Kele' provides a particularly clear example.

suto a miní di Afrika  
suto a kitá ri aí

si Kolombia tené  
hende ki kandá reggae. . .

Mamá Afrika ta kuchá?  
 ke suto ta kandá  
 pa mahaná bení  
 si Kolombia tené  
 hendi k' kandá reggae. . .<sup>45</sup>  
 (we came from Africa  
 we were dragged away from there  
 if Colombia had  
 people who sang reggae. . .  
 Mama Africa, are you listening?  
 we are singing  
 so that the youths will come  
 if Colombia had  
 people who sang reggae. . .)<sup>46</sup>

It is apparent that the lyrics of this song, since they are sung in the Palenquero language, serve to position the Maroon members of Anne Zwing as a special people within Colombia and the larger African diaspora, with claims to a distinct Maroon culture and language.<sup>47</sup> But the primary emphasis, as in a number of other songs by Anne Zwing, is on common African roots and a shared history of forced removal from the motherland. Indeed, the members express the hope that by drawing on the modern, pan-African appeal of reggae, as they do in this song, they will draw other Afro-Colombians, and particularly the young, toward a remembrance of their shared African past – a past that links them with African descendants not just in Colombia, but throughout the diaspora.<sup>48</sup>

Some of Anne Zwing's music, in contrast, projects a more specifically Palenquero orientation. This is sometimes done in a calculated manner, as an expression of pride. When interviewed by a foreign musician and writer who paid him a visit in Cartagena a few years ago, Viviano Torres communicated the depth of his pride in his Maroon ancestral roots as follows:

He [Viviano] starts telling me about his home town, Palenque, a name that lies at the heart of black culture on the north coast. He talks about the founding of Palenque, Palenque culture and traditions, the Bantu [*sic*] language of Palenque, illustrious sons of Palenque (three world-title boxers), music and dance of Palenque. Palenque was founded as a maroon camp in the seventeenth century amid swamps an hour by car from Cartagena. The colonial authorities never discovered the tortuous path to the camp. The settlement remained a centre of fervent Africanism. Even today some of its inhabitants still speak Bantu [*sic*].<sup>49</sup> Viviano had taken the traditional music of Palenque, the *terapia* [*sic*] dance, and added it to his repertoire, dressing it up for a wider audience.<sup>50</sup> (Shukman 1992, p. 229)

There are numerous strategies used by the members of Anne Zwing to bring Palenquero identity to the fore in their music. The emphasis in song texts, for example, sometimes shifts from broader diasporic concerns to purely local matters. In some songs, outsiders are left to puzzle over highly esoteric lyrics whose only significance, to them, is the confirmation they offer of Palenquero cultural distinctiveness. An excellent example is 'Zamba Urile', which sets the text of a sacred Palenquero *lumbalú* song to a Trinidadian soca beat. Even in Palenque itself, only specialists in *lumbalú* – a funerary tradition with Central African cultural roots, practised nowhere else in Colombia – possess more than the most superficial knowledge of esoteric songs such as this.<sup>51</sup>

samba urile (di) ma nkis'e  
 kalunga lunga<sup>52</sup>



Figure 8. Viviano Torres, Palenquero Maroon leader of Anne Zwing (from cover of the LP *El Rey del Caribe*). Courtesy of Codiscos.



Figure 9. Palenquero Maroons performing lumbalú, Palenque de San Basilio, Colombia, 1991. Photo: K. Bilby.

By combining this cryptic sacred text with the popular soca beat, the Palenquero members of Anne Zwing encourage their fellow Afro-Colombians – and perhaps even people of African descent elsewhere in the world – to dance along to an affirmation of Palenquero uniqueness.

## Conclusion

The preeminence of music within the diverse black communities of the Atlantic diaspora is itself an important element in their essential connectedness. (Gilroy 1991, p. 127)

Much of Paul Gilroy's work, and in particular *The Black Atlantic*, is concerned with tensions that seem to inhere in the modern condition of those who make up the African diaspora. How can those who occupy this continually shifting space avoid the 'easy essentialism' of racialised forms of nationalism without losing sight of the very real, yet sometimes elusive, commonalities connecting people across this space? Or, as Gilroy (1993b, p. 198) himself puts it, 'can there be a global blackness that connects, articulates and synchronises experiences and histories across the radically local forms of black being that diaspora space now accommodates?'

Black vernacular music of the diaspora provides some answers to this question, for, as Gilroy (1993a, p. 36) argues, 'this musical culture offers a means to get beyond the related oppositions between essentialists and pseudo-pluralists on the one hand and between totalising conceptions of tradition, modernity, and post-modernity on the other'.<sup>53</sup> What makes this transcending of oppositions possible is the very real common aesthetic that continues to underlie the almost infinite variety of musical expression throughout the African diaspora – an aesthetic based on a general way of making, feeling and thinking about music that goes back, ultimately, to Africa. What Gilroy (1993a, p. 81) refers to as the 'common sensibilities [of people in the Black diaspora] residually inherited from Africa' are perhaps more clearly revealed in music than in any other cultural sphere.<sup>54</sup>

This shared musical aesthetic is evident not only in older, traditional musical practice, but in the new popular or vernacular styles that have arisen out of the encounter with imported 'modern' genres (Bilby 1990a). For what Ernest Brown (1994, p. 93) terms 'musical pan-Africanism' – 'a recognition of the resonance in musical style and/or content among the peoples of Africa and the African diaspora' – continues to guide the processes of musical development and exchange throughout the Black Atlantic. A prime example of such musical pan-Africanism is that of Jamaican reggae – a genre that has penetrated virtually all parts of the African diaspora (including, as we have seen, Maroon enclaves), not to mention the African continent itself (Bilby 1983; Savishinsky 1993; Zylbersztajn 1995), receiving fresh infusions of local elements as it spreads.<sup>55</sup> The phenomenal appeal of reggae all across the Black Atlantic cannot be explained by politically potent, pan-Africanist song texts alone; deeply-felt musical resonance has certainly played a part as well.<sup>56</sup>

The proposition that reggae shares certain 'essential' features with African music – as well as with African-influenced musics elsewhere in the world – has gained wide acceptance. But few have described the common aesthetic that links reggae with these cognate musical traditions as elegantly as does Alan Waters in the following passage focusing on the rhythmic dimension:

The meaning of the reggae rhythm lies in the creation and management of rhythmic tension. This constant orientation toward rhythmic tension is behind the deep aesthetic affinity between reggae music and African cultures; it enables reggae to serve as a kind of container into which musicians from vastly different styles and traditions throughout Africa can put their own indigenous music. (Waters 1994, p. 8)

Precisely because of its capacity to 'contain' such stylistic diversity without erasing it, reggae – like other globalising styles of Black popular music – provides an attractive means of bridging and mediating the local and the global; within its sound may be encoded a truly pan-African musical 'essence' – as, for example, in Bahia, Brazil, where 'the people understand the *beat* of reggae as significant of black consciousness' (Browning 1995, p. 132) – and at the same time a sense of difference rooted in

local realities.<sup>57</sup> By playing with this potential for multiple identification, both in music and song texts, popular musicians in the Black Atlantic are able, despite the high degree of cultural differentiation that characterises the far-flung peoples of the African diaspora, to participate in the modern 'global Blackness' of which Gilroy writes while remaining true to the specifics of their own lived experience.

The new musical varieties through which Maroons are defining their own modernity would seem to be a case in point. For these diasporic styles, claimed and refashioned by Maroons as their own, are being used by them to mediate their own unique form of 'double consciousness'. This uniquely Maroon variety of dual consciousness simultaneously opposes present-day Maroon peoples to, and unites them with, their non-Maroon counterparts in the Black Atlantic, who, as descendants of enslaved Africans who never escaped from bondage, share only a part (though a crucial part) of these Maroons' historical experience and cultural heritage as Afro-Americans (Bilby 1984, pp. 21–2).

In the new Maroon musics, these tensions are temporarily resolved. Because the popular styles of the diaspora allow flexible identification along multiple cultural axes, they provide a means of harmonising local conceptions of identity stemming from specific histories of marronage with the growing signs of a globalising Black Atlantic consciousness. In balancing these countervailing visions of their world, young Maroon musicians may be providing their own answer to what Gilroy (1993B, p. 46) deems one of 'the decisive political questions of our age' – namely, 'how do we act locally and yet think globally?'

## Endnotes

1. An earlier version of this article was read at the 20th International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Guadalajara, Mexico, 19 April 1997, in a session entitled, 'A Response to Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Transnational Culture Flows and the Creation of Modernity*'. The session was organised by Richard Shain. I would like to express my gratitude to Armin Schwegler for his generous help with the transcriptions and translations of Palenquero lyrics in the final section of the article, and to Thomas Morton for sharing with me some of his recordings of Palenquero popular music. I have made repeated attempts to track down copyright holders so as to request formal permissions to reproduce those song lyrics that appear in this article. In most cases, I was unable to locate copyright holders; when I did find names and locations of possible copyright holders, I attempted to communicate with them via letters, faxes and emails, but never received replies, despite several efforts. Should any such copyright holders see this article, they are invited to contact this journal if they wish formal resolution of this question.
2. For a recent analysis of the theme of marronage in Jamaican literature, see Lalla (1996).
3. Other discussions of Maroon images in Caribbean literary discourse can be found in Phaf (1990), Bansart (1993) and Fleischmann (1993). One particularly striking example of the degree to which the Maroon epic continues to inspire contemporary urban musicians comes from Brazil, where the *blocos afro* (drum corps) associated with carnival in Bahia (such as Olodum and Ilê Aiyê) have expended much effort on rehabilitating the memory of the great seventeenth-century Brazilian Maroon leader Zumbi. A recent article in the *New York Times* reports that on 18 May 1993, 'a mixed group of rural and urban black activists [including members of Olodum and Ilê Aiyê] arrived in Brasília, the capital. As the pounding of tall drums echoed off Government buildings, protesters chanted: "Quilombos, here we are; my only debt is to the quilombo; my only debt is to Zumbi".' (Brooke 1993) Interestingly enough, the influence of imported Rastafarian reggae – which, as we shall see, has become an important vehicle for Maroon popular musicians in French Guiana, Suriname and Colombia as well – has played an important role in this reclamation of the African (including Maroon) heritage in Brazil (Crook 1993).

4. For more on Maroon secrecy, see Price (1979; 1983, pp. 5–26) on the Saramaka Maroons of Suriname, and Bilby (1981, pp. 76–7) on the Windward Maroons of Jamaica.
5. Broadcast on the television programme 'International Jam', Louisiana Educational Television Authority, 1993.
6. For more on Wailing Roots and other Maroon reggae bands in French Guiana, see Bilby (1989b; 1991) and Anonymous (1988).
7. Interview with Wah Dada I. Rasc (Michel Dada), conducted by Kenneth Bilby, Maripasoula, French Guiana, 21 August 1990. Translation from Aluku by the author.
8. Interview with Claudias Assabal, conducted by Kenneth Bilby, Maripasoula, French Guiana, 21 August 1990. Translation from Aluku by the author.
9. The flexible way in which the members of Wailing Roots identify with the Rastafari movement illustrates both their cosmopolitan outlook and their respect for their own Aluku roots. Keyboardist Wah Dada I. Rasc, for instance, was led to his stage name by a book on Rastafari written in French. In this book, he says, he learned that 'Wah Dada' is an Ethiopian/Amharic expression meaning 'peace and love'. But the main reason he decided to adopt the name is that Dada is also a traditional Aluku name, and was his deceased father's name. While the band members support what they see as the goals of Rastafari, they do not claim to be Rastas themselves, pointing out that they are unwilling to forego their own African-based Aluku religion and to accept that Haile Selassie is God; nor do they follow a strict Ital diet; etc.
10. Wailing Roots, 'Followers', from the LP record *Feelings*, Cayenne, Wailing Roots, 1991. Rereleased on Wailing Roots' compact disc, *Feeling & Dub*, Paris, Mélodie, 1995. Transcription by the author.
11. Several varieties of French Creole are spoken in French Guiana. The language used in this song is actually not Guyanais (French Guianese Creole) – which is spoken primarily in coastal areas, and especially in the capital of Cayenne – but rather, a particular local variety of French Creole that is used as a second language in the Aluku territory. Although this local form is substantially different from coastal varieties, having been heavily influenced by St. Lucian French Creole (owing to ongoing migration by St. Lucian gold prospectors into the Aluku territory since the late nineteenth century), it remains intelligible to coastal speakers of Guyanais.
12. Wailing Roots, 'Black Aloukou', from the LP record *Feelings*, Cayenne, Wailing Roots, 1991. Rereleased on Wailing Roots' compact disc, *Feeling & Dub*, Paris, Mélodie ACP/CG 014, 1995. Transcription by the author.
13. My translation here is literal. An alternate translation could be 'I cry blood', which would unambiguously connect this lyric to a phrase and image ('cry blood') previously used in a number of Jamaican Rastafarian reggae songs.
14. English translation by the author.
15. To give some idea of just how cosmopolitan the members of Wailing Roots are in their tastes in popular music: among those they single out as 'international' Black artists whose music they listen to and enjoy are Third World, The Wailers, Peter Tosh, Gregory Isaacs, Prince, Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie. They are 'cosmopolitan' in other ways as well. For instance, the first Wailing Roots album was recorded in Paris (although their twelve-inch single and their second album were recorded and produced in Cayenne). Not only do they perform regularly in Cayenne and Paramaribo alongside local Creole reggae bands such as Universal Youth, but they appeared at the Festival International de Louisiane in Lafayette, Louisiana in 1993. (The photo of them on the back cover of their second album was taken in New Orleans.) More recently, their song 'I've Been Waiting' appeared on a widely distributed CD showcasing a variety of reggae artists from the French Caribbean (*Reggae DOM: The Best of Reggae French West Indies*, Paris, Déclit 50566-2, 1996). In 1996 and 1997 they embarked on tours of Europe, which included, among other countries, France and Germany.
16. For background on traditional Aluku music, see Bilby (1989a).
17. Wailing Roots, 'Séki I Chiking', from the LP record *Feelings*, Cayenne, Wailing Roots, 1991. Rereleased on Wailing Roots' compact disc, *Feeling & Dub*, Paris, Mélodie ACP/CG 014, 1995. Transcription by author.
18. English translation by the author. *Paata awasa*, which I translate as 'getting down with awasa', literally means 'flat(ten) awasa'; the phrase refers to a traditional movement used in awasa dancing, executed when the lead drummer signals the dancer to come forward and dance in a crouching posture, closer to the ground.
19. On their second album, *Original Aloukou Soldiers*, the band includes another lover's rock number, 'You anga Mi', similarly performed in their own language.
20. This engraving, first published on 1 December 1791, was done by Francesco Bartolozzi (see Price and Price 1988, p. xxxix).
21. Another sign of Wailing Roots' cosmopolitan-

- ism (and utopian inclinations) is the band's inclusion of White sympathisers (in the phrase 'whether you Black or White') in the opening dedication – a phrase that is also sometimes heard in Jamaican Rastafarian reggae songs calling for social justice.
22. 'O.A.S.' (Original Aloukou Soldiers) (by Claude Assabal, © BMG Music Publishing, France). Lyrics reproduced by permission of the publisher. From the compact disc *Original Aloukou Soldiers*, Paris, Déclic Communication 50364-2, 1994. (The publisher requests mention of the following: 'Paroles et Musique en vente chez votre marchand de Musique'.)
  23. For discussions of the recent rise of a new 'raggamuffin' subculture in Jamaica and its gradual internationalisation, see Bilby (1995B), Chude-Sokei (1994, 1997) and Varasse (1993).
  24. The songwriters of Wailing Roots have limited knowledge of English. Since the late 1980s, however, the band has had an anglophone member. The first drummer, Harley, came originally from Georgetown, Guyana. (After a stint playing in Paramaribo, he met the other members in Cayenne, where he was invited to join the band.) When Harley left the band, he was replaced by Smiley (Kenrick Shepherd), who is also originally from Guyana (former British Guiana). Both Harley and Smiley have helped the other members with English (or English creole) lyrics. (These two drummers are the only non-Aluku members Wailing Roots has had.)
  25. Kwaku (spelled 'Kwakoe' in Dutch) is the name that was given by the Creole population to a statue that was erected in a prominent location in downtown Paramaribo in 1963 to mark the centenary of the abolition of slavery in Suriname. Since the statue portrays an archetypal slave breaking free of his chains, it is sometimes thought to represent the act of marronage, and for some has come to serve as a more general symbol of anticolonial resistance.
  26. In fact, several of the important kumanti war obia of the Ndyuka and Aluku, passed down from the ancestors, were revived and used for protection against bullets by young Maroon guerrillas who went into battle against the National Army of Suriname when civil war broke out in that country in the 1980s (see Thoden van Velzen 1990, pp. 176–84).
  27. Oudou Loutou (Udu Lutu) can be translated as 'roots' (literally, 'tree roots'). The band members originally chose the name 'Boni Loutou' – meaning 'Boni's roots'. But after several elders complained that it was disrespectful to use the sacred name of this Aluku founding ancestor in connection with an ensemble playing youth-oriented recreational music, they changed the name to the more neutral 'Oudou Loutou'.
  28. For additional information on aleke music, see Bilby (1989A, B, 1995A).
  29. This nyabinghi-like sub-style of aleke drumming has existed since at least the early 1980s (Bilby 1989A) and is played by both Aluku and Ndyuka bands. Other commercial recordings with examples of the style include *Sapatia 91* by Sapatia (cassette, Disco Amigo, Paramaribo, 1991) and *Sapatia on the Move: Aleke* by Sapatia (compact disc, Sonoclar, Cayenne, 1995).
  30. Oudou Loutou, 'Regae', from the cassette *Gay Sound*, Oudou Loutou, Maripasoula, French Guiana, c. 1994.
  31. For a detailed description of urban Surinamese popular music, including much information on present-day Maroon musicians, see Bilby (1999) (see also Bilby 1995A). Background on the traditional music of the Ndyuka and other Surinamese Maroons may be found in Herskovits and Herskovits (1936) and Price and Price (1980, pp. 171–83; 1999). For a recent ethnomusicological study of traditional Saramaka Maroon drumming, see Agerkop (1991).
  32. Patrick Thompson (Dirtsman), 'Hot This Year', featured on the compact disc *Hot This Year: The Album*, Various Artists, Freeport, NY, Tan-Yah Records TYCD 002, 1992.
  33. Many of the changes in the lyrics no doubt occurred because the members of the Excos had difficulty understanding the words of the original version. For instance, Dirtsman's 'not even water cyaan cool me' became 'no way, no one to control me' in the hands of the Excos.
  34. Excos, 'Can't Control Me', from the cassette *Bari Nen Uma*, Disco Amigo, Paramaribo, 1995. Transcription by the author.
  35. Transcription by the author.
  36. Excos, 'Sa Moitia', from the cassette *Bari Nen Uma*, Paramaribo, Disco Amigo, 1995. English translation by the author.
  37. Although Palenque de San Basilio, like other Maroon communities, is often portrayed as an isolated bastion of 'pure' African culture, it has long been exposed to a broad variety of outside cultural and musical influences. In the early 1930s, Afro-Cuban music in particular began to have a major impact there. For more on the popularity of the Cuban son in Palenque, and the new musical fusions that resulted when Palenqueros began to play it, see Silva, Arria and Provansal (1998).
  38. One must agree with Deborah Pacini Hernandez (1993b, p. 66) in her opinion 'that coastal Colombia is in the vanguard rather than in the mainstream of regional musical developments, and that the transformations taking place there

- are simply foreshadowing new patterns of musical interactions that are just now becoming visible elsewhere'.
39. For more on the still-marginalised popular music scene that has produced this amazingly diverse and cosmopolitan *champeta/terapia* dance music in Colombia's Atlantic region, see Leymarie (1998) and Silva and Provansal (1998).
  40. For a detailed, scholarly look at the *picó* phenomenon, focusing specifically on the city of Cartagena, see Pacini Hernandez (1993A). For a vivid description of the *picó* scene, along with colour photographs, see Bob George's lively article, 'Picolandia!', on the World Wide Web at <http://www.arcmusic.org/html/ideas/pico.html/>
  41. I myself can vouch for the popularity in Palenque de San Basilio of the kinds of music played on these sound systems. When I visited Palenque in 1991, I encountered one such *picó* sound system right on the edge of the town. Local recordings in an indigenised Congolese *soukous* style could be heard blaring from the speakers of this system hour after hour.
  42. It should be noted that another of the earliest and most important local bands to record this kind of *champeta/terapia* music, Son Palenque, was also founded by a Palenquero Maroon, Justo Valdez, who named the band after Palenque de San Basilio. Kusima is yet another very popular Palenquero Maroon band producing this kind of music. In discussing this music's Maroon background, Leymarie (1998, p. 46) goes so far as to state that 'champeta was created by self-taught musicians who sing using both the typically African phrasing of the San Basilio palenque and the community's Bantu-based [*sic*] dialect'.
  43. Armin Schwegler ([n.d.]A, [n.d.]B) provides evidence of a probable Kikongo etymology for the Palenquero word *ané*.
  44. One observer of a live performance by Anne Zwing put it this way: 'The band's repertoire, composed by Viviano, is an ingenious synthesis of all Caribbean styles. In a single set they trot all round the sea, from Cuban salsa to Haitian *compas*, Dominican *merengue*, Antillean *zouk* and *soca*, Jamaican *reggae*, and *terapia* from Palenque' (Shukman 1992, p. 230). The ethnomusicologist Deborah Pacini Hernandez (1993B, p. 62) describes the pan-African/Caribbean eclecticism of Anne Zwing and other bands in this part of Colombia in similar fashion: 'On the north coast of Colombia, a region which is geographically as well as culturally Caribbean, self-consciously Afro-centric groups such as "Anne Zwing" have begun producing their own hybrid versions of *soca*, *reggae* and African *soukous*, as well as modernised versions of a locally-specific African-derived tradition, the *chandé*.' (See also Silva and Provansal 1998.)
  45. Anne Zwing, 'To Ane A Kele', from the LP record *El Rey del Caribe*, Cartagena, Codiscos 298 21316, 1989. Transcription by Armin Schwegler.
  46. English translation by Armin Schwegler.
  47. Other Palenquero popular musicians consciously employ their distinctive cultural heritage in similar ways. Justo Valdez of Son Palenque, for instance, states that sometimes, even when performing pieces in Congolese *soukous* style, 'I sing in our [Palenquero] language and keep many of Palenque's traditional elements' (Leymarie 1998, p. 46).
  48. The ways in which Anne Zwing use music internationally defined as 'Black' to identify with a cosmopolitan 'Blackness' may represent a recent development in Colombia, but this new sense of 'Blackness', linked to the larger African diaspora, also remains rooted in varying local conceptions of 'blackness' with long and complicated histories of their own. Peter Wade's (1995, 1998) discussions of the complex relationship between 'black' identity and music in Colombia will provide the reader with further insights into the local and broader fields, both political and cultural, within which Anne Zwing and their audience operate.
  49. 'Bantu' is a term sometimes used (erroneously) by non-Maroon Colombians to refer to Palenquero, the unique Spanish-lexicon creole spoken in Palenque (usually called simply 'lengua' by Palenqueros themselves). Although this language does contain a small number of words originally from Kikongo or other Central African languages, there is no justification for characterising it as a Bantu language (see Schwegler 1996).
  50. Contrary to what this passage suggests, *terapia* (Spanish for 'therapy') does not denote a 'traditional' Palenquero style of music or dance. Rather, it is used as a catch-all term for the various mixed Afro-Caribbean urban styles popular in coastal Colombia (such as those played by Anne Zwing). The term is applied figuratively to these dance musics because they are seen as having 'therapeutic' tension-releasing qualities (Pacini Hernandez 1993B, p. 67). *Terapia* (or *terapia criolla*) is used interchangeably with *champeta* (or *champeta criolla*) to designate this urban musical blend.
  51. The standard ethnographic texts on Palenque de San Basilio, such as Escalante (1979 [1954]) and de Friedemann (1987 [1979]), contain valuable information on the *lumbalú* tradition. For more in-depth background on this tradition,

- one should consult Schwegler (1996), which is the definitive study of lumbalú. Information specifically on the music of lumbalú may be found in Zapata Olivella (1962) and Cárdenas Duque (1986), as well as Schwegler (1996, pp. 88–98). See also Rouxel (1997) for a more general ethnomusicological study of Palenque. For background on the broader coastal Afro-Colombian traditional and popular music cultures in which Palenqueros have also long participated, see List (1980), Lemoine (1998) and Wade (1998, pp. 9–15).
52. Anne Zwing, 'Zamba Urile', from the LP record *El Rey del Caribe*, Cartagena, Codiscos 298 21316, 1989. Transcription by Armin Schwegler. For an excellent analysis of this same lumbalú song as performed in traditional settings, see Schwegler (1996, pp. 225–34). The term *kalunga* is from a Kikongo word meaning 'the sea, the ocean, land of the dead'. The term has survived in religious contexts in several other parts of the Americas as well, such as Brazil, Cuba and Jamaica. By the 1980s, only one or two elderly lumbalú singers in Palenque remembered its original meaning (see Schwegler 1996, pp. 283–97).
  53. Gilroy knows a great deal about contemporary Afro-Caribbean and African-American popular music – particularly in the British context – and has put this knowledge to good use in his earlier work (e.g. Gilroy 1991 [1987], pp. 114–222). It is unfortunate that in *The Black Atlantic* (Gilroy 1993A) he actually pays relatively little attention to vernacular music, choosing to focus almost exclusively on 'highbrow' literary production (although his chapter on 'Black Music and the Politics of Authenticity' [pp. 72–110] does contain some useful discussion of examples of popular music).
  54. There is no lack of objective evidence on this question. Technical musical analyses have confirmed the existence of such a common aesthetic again and again; indeed, there exists a venerable ethnomusicological literature on the subject, going back several decades; see, for instance, Waterman (1952), Schuller (1968, pp. 3–62), Lomax (1970), Pantaleoni (1979) and Kubik (1993).
  55. It might seem odd, given that most of the examples of new Maroon musical expression presented in this paper are reggae-based (and given that the author of this article has done extensive ethnographic work among Jamaican Maroons), that young Maroon musicians from *Jamaica* are not discussed here. The reason for this conspicuous absence is simple: to the best of my knowledge, Jamaican Maroon communities have not produced any reggae bands of their own – bands, that is, that perform popular music expressive of their members' separate identities as Maroons. There is not sufficient space here to discuss all the complexities of this question; but the explanation, I believe, lies partly in the fact that Jamaican Maroons, unlike Maroons in other countries, encounter reggae in its original homeland, where it is widely regarded as a national possession. Since the relationship between the semi-autonomous Jamaican Maroon communities and the nation-state within which their territories are located remains ambiguous, the use of reggae as a vehicle for the expression of a specific Maroon identity is problematic in Jamaica in ways that it is not elsewhere. The complex history of ethnogenesis that created divisions between Maroons and non-Maroons in Jamaica, and the tensions caused by this process, also come into play here (see Bilby 1984, 1994). Interestingly enough, more traditional Rastafarian music (in contrast to reggae) *has* had some impact in specifically Maroon musical contexts in Jamaica, particularly in the community of Accompong, where young Maroons have begun to perform Rasta nyabinghi chants to the accompaniment of their own traditional Maroon drums (Bilby 1992, p. 20).
  56. The important question of why reggae in particular has come to play such a prominent role in expressing pan-African identity cannot be discussed here, but its close association with Bob Marley and the Rastafari movement has clearly been crucial. This complex question receives some attention in Savishinsky (1994), Yawney (1995) and Zips (1994).
  57. For an interesting musical analysis of the *samba reggae* of Bahia, showing how the basic rhythmic structure of reggae has served as a 'container' into which elements of Brazilian samba have been placed, see Crook (1993, pp. 100–2); see also Browning (1995, pp. 132–3) on this question.

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