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REGGAE ROOTS

module 6. Reggae & Community



NAC+O
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Orchestra

nac-cna.ca/en/reggae-roots



A NOTE FOR EDUCATORS

In the previous modules, students have learned about the foundations of Black musical expression. These characteristics date back to the slave era, during which enslaved peoples had their instruments and cultural artifacts taken away. Creating music with each other required resourcefulness—making the most with what limited supplies allowed. In Module 6, students will learn more about Jamaican community music-making and **sound system culture**. Along the way, students will encounter the various community events that fuel these styles of music-making.

In Module 6, students will learn about some of the historical events that inspired these styles of music-making and will experience the beauty and resilience of Black communities and cultures. Closing the series, students will prepare their very own Bashment party! To do so, students will reinterpret the illustrations of Jamaican graphic artist **Mikheal Deans** (featured on the cover page of each module), create their own musical playlist, and prepare their own Jamaican food. At the end of Module 6, students will be able to:

1. **Describe what it is like to participate in one element of Jamaican culture: “the yard”**
2. **Participate in their own “bashment party”**
3. **Define “sound system culture”**

A downloadable slide presentation of Module 6 is available on the NAC Reggae Roots webpage. It is recommended that these materials be adapted to your teaching environment.

The various project-based activities included in Module 6 are structured around the following 21st-century competencies: *critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation*.

Lead Writer	Jah’Mila
Writing Team	kamilah apong, Shaun Brodie, Kathryn Patricia Cobbler, Sarah Howard, Matias Recharte, and Alanna Stuart
Featured Artists	Jah’Mila, Mikheal Deans, Bob Marley, Vincent Ford, and Sister Nancy
Editor	Ryan Drew
Illustrations	Mikheal Deans <i>Cover Page: “Sista Nancy” (2022)</i>



PART 1: THE “YARD”

Note to Instructor

Activity Time length: 20 Minutes

Intended for Grades 4-8

Preparation: Cue performances of “No Woman, No Cry” (27:26 - 30:20) and “Bam Bam” from the video series.

From Sound systems to Dance Music

In Jamaica, music is played through a **sound system**—a group of large speakers, usually stacked high on top of each other that form a giant wall of sound.

→ Listen First: “No Woman, No Cry” & “Bam Bam” ←

Written by **Bob Marley** and **Vincent Ford**, the song “No Woman, No Cry” is a musical description of life in a close-knit inner-city community of Jamaica during the 1970s. The song demonstrates resourcefulness, tenacity, and highlights the strengths of the community through the stories told in the song.

Written by **Sister Nancy**, the song “Bam Bam” highlights the birth of sound system culture in Jamaica and the important role of women in the dancehall movement that resulted. In 2020, Jamaican singer **Koffee** won a Grammy for Best Reggae Album! She was the first woman to ever receive this prestigious award!

**“Said, I remember when-a we used to sit
Inna government yard in Trenchtown”**

Bob Marley, “No Woman, No Cry”

Many people in Jamaica refer to their home as their “yard” (pronounced “yaahd”). In the lyrics to “No Woman, No Cry,” the “yard” refers to a place where people gather around the fire, make a meal, and remember friends who are no longer here.



Find a partner for Think-Pair-Share!

A “yard” can be a real or imagined place that makes you feel safe and at ease. It’s a space where you can go *physically* or *in your mind* when you need to get away from stress and confusion.

Read the following questions and then discuss your answers with a classmate.

- **Do you have a “yard?” Do you have a place where you feel safe and cared for?**
- **What does your yard look like? Is it indoors? Is it outdoors?**
- **What do you like to do in your yard?**
- **Make food or listen to music? Do you gather with others?**
- **How do you feel when you spend time in your yard? How would you describe the musical style of “No Woman, No Cry?”. If this song were in colours, what colours might it be?**

Take a moment to imagine your ideal yard! What does it look like?

1. **Draw this perfect space or create a list of the items you would want in this perfect space.**
Who would be there with you? Would you have food? What about musical instruments, plants, or pets?

PART 2: LISTENING ACTIVITY

Note to Instructor

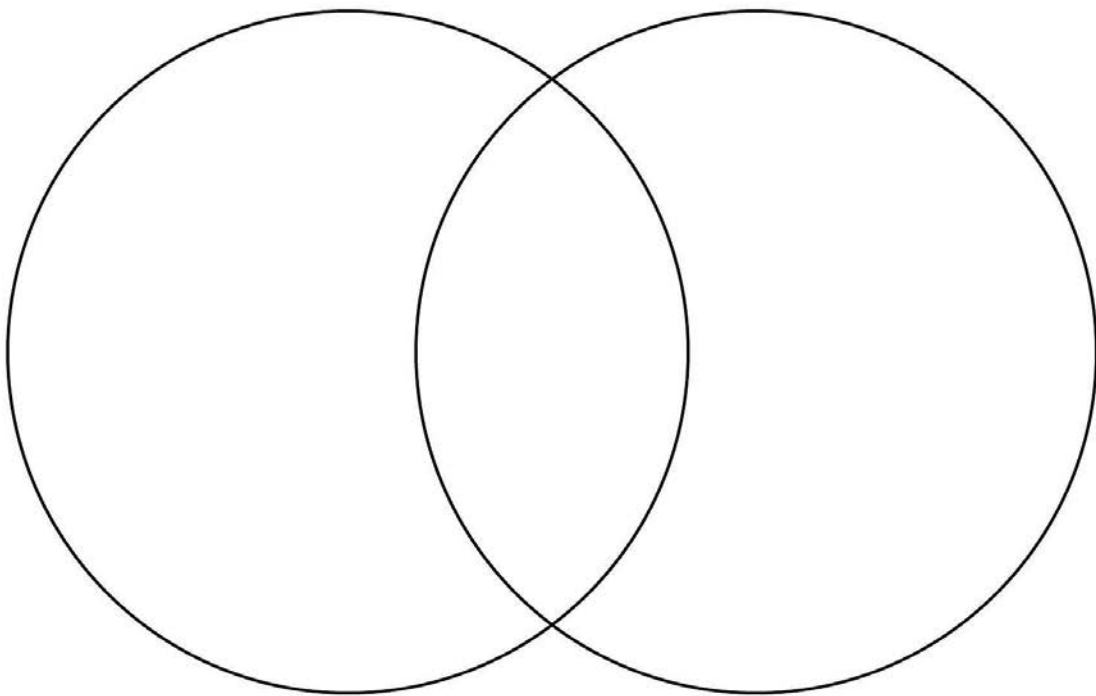
Activity Time length: 15 Minutes

Intended for Grades 4-8

Preparation: Cue performances of “No Woman, No Cry” (27:26 - 30:20) and “Bam Bam” from the video series.

By now, you will have already listened to the songs “No Woman, No Cry” and “Bam Bam!” As you can tell, these are two different songs created by two different artists. They have both been performed again and again by musicians throughout the years.

1. **Consider the following! How are these two songs different? And how are they the same? Use the Venn Diagram below to write or illustrate your thoughts.**



Are you stuck? Think back to the musical terms you learned about in previous modules to guide you (tempo, theme, dynamics, lyrics, rhythm, irie vibes, etc...)

PART 3: PARTY TIME!

Note to Instructor

Activity Time length: 60 Minutes

Intended for Grades 4-8

Preparation: Be prepared to assist students in creating a playlist for their Bashment Party.

Nearing the end of the Reggae Roots learning journey, your only goal for this activity is to have fun! And in having fun, we will learn all about Jamaican party culture!

1. First, learn the following terms and practice using them in conversation with a partner!

“Bashment”

Another word for a dance party!

“Vibes”

A feeling you can get from a sound or experience.

“Bruk out!”

Let loose! Be free!

In Jamaica, a **bashment** party is usually held outside in open-air spaces like a backyard, a parking lot, or on the beach. But what is even more important than *where* the party is held? The Music! It’s normal to hear Jamaican musicians say “music is life!”—but it’s also about vibes.

2. Create a playlist of your favourite Jamaican music. Include as many songs or tracks as you want! Think back to the songs you have heard throughout this Reggae Roots guide.

Songs in your Playlist	Musical Artist	Year Released
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Meet Mikheal Deans! The Jamaican-born, Kingston-based artist was born in Jamaica, 1994, and is based in Kingston. He is a Jamaican self-taught painter, illustrator, graphics designer, cartoonist, character designer, animator, author and entrepreneur who works primarily in graphic designing. He is a student at the Edna Manley College where he is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communications. His recent works, *God's Greatest Gift* (2022), *Barrel Come* (2022), *I Found my Heart* (2020), and *Irie Grade Pattern* (2018). He was a co-curator of the *Manifestations Student Exhibition* (2018) at the Edna Manley College. His works explore culture, identity, gender and self-portraits. His personal brand Kheal's covers graphic designs, illustration, animations, drawings, and web development. He is committed to excellent customer service, panache, and the creation of exquisite works.



Did you know? Mikheal Deans created the artwork on the front pages of each module.

Mikheal has provided the outlines of his artwork for you to reinterpret with your own artistic flair.

3. **Use the illustration handouts provided by your teacher to create colourful artwork.**

This artwork can be used as decorations for your Bashment party!

4. **Decide where you will hold your Bashment party! Set up the space and prepare your music playlist.**

Today is all about your party, your space, and your style. Show how Jamaican music has inspired you, and celebrate the beginning of your exploration through reggae music culture!

5. **Enjoy the vibes of your Bashment Party with friends. Feel the music!**

Bonus Activity!	What better way to have a Bashment Party than with delicious food?
Fried Breadfruit	www.caribbeangreenliving.com/fried-breadfruit-2/
Ackee & Saltfish	www.jamaicanfoodsandrecipes.com/jamaican-ackee-and-salt-fish-recipe/
Fried Plantain	www.africanbites.com/fried-plantains/



GLOSSARY

- **Bam Bam:** a song written by Sister Nancy. Released in 1982.
- **Bashment:** a term for a dance party.
- **Bob Marley:** a Jamaican singer-songwriter and pioneer of Reggae music. He lived from 1945 until 1981.
- **Bruk out:** Let loose! Be free!
- **No Woman, No Cry:** a reggae song written by Vincent Ford and Bob Marley. Released in 1974.
- **Sister Nancy:** a Jamaican Dancehall DJ and Singer. She was born in 1962.
- **Skanking:** a rhythmic dance performed to reggae or ska music, characterized by bending forward and raising the knees and extending the hands.
- **Koffee:** a Jamaican singer, songwriter, and rapper who made history in 2020 as the first woman to win a Grammy for Best Reggae Album.
- **Vibe(s):** a feeling you get from a sound or experience. The term is shorthand for “vibrations.”
- **Vincent Ford:** a Jamaican songwriter who received credit for helping write No Woman, No Cry.



LYRICS: NO WOMAN, NO CRY (1974)

(Oooh)

No, woman, no cry
No, woman, no cry

I remember when we used to sit
Inna government yard in Trench Town
Oba-observing the hypocrites
As they would mingle with the good
people we meet
Good friends we've had and good friends
we've lost
Along the way (way)
In this great future, you can't forget your past
So dry your tears, I say
No, woman, no cry
No, woman, no cry
'Ere, little darlin', don't you shed no tears
No, woman, no cry

Je me souviens quand on s'assoyait
dans les cours des logements à Trench Town

Et puis Georgie a fait brûler un feu,
Une bûche qui brûle dans la nuit.
Then we would cook cornmeal porridge, yeah
Of which I'll share with you (you)
My feet is my only courage
And so I've got to push on through
But while I'm gone say

Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right
Everything's gonna be all right

So no woman, no cry
No woman, no cry



LYRICS: BAM BAM (1982)

In comes the thing called a Bam Bam
Wid a different style and a different pattern
Respect goes to all Jamaican

A one ting Nancy cyaan understand
One ting Nancy cyaan understand
Wah mek dem a talk bout mi ambition?
Wah mek dem a talk bout mi ambition?
Some a dem a aks mi weh mi get it from
Some of them ask mi where me get it from
Chu dem nuh know it's from creation
Chu dem nuh know it's from creation
Ah bam bam, ey

Say what a bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
An me say what a bam bam, an me say what a bam bam

This woman never trouble no one
I'm a lady, I'm not a man
MC is my ambition
I come fi nice up Jamaica

Wid bam bam, say what a bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
An me say what a bam bam, an me say what a bam bam

Tell 'em, me tell 'em, me tell 'em
Say me born and mi grow down a Queenston 6
I Nancy write all the crissest lyrics
When yuh hear dem it sound like Crissy biscuit
Come inna di place, an me say well, well sick

Wid bam bam, 'ey say what a bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
Say what a bam bam, say what a bam bam

Caa some of dem a seh mi a come mash up di plan,
A chuu dem nuh know mi a wan business woman,
Sister Nancy, she a one inna three million,
Sister Nancy, she a one inna three million.

Wid a bam bam, what a bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
An me say what a bam bam, an me say what a bam bam

Seh go, Sister Nancy, yu fi go
Ah tell yuh say fi go Sister Nancy, yu fi go
Know it from yuh head straight down to yuh toe
A tee-taa-toe, Sister Nancy, yu fi go
Some a dem a ask Nancy make you bad so
Some a dem a ask Nancy make you bad so
Love yuh from yuh head straight down to yuh toe
Oh say a bam bam, what a bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
An me say what a bam bam, an me say what a bam bam

This woman never trouble no one
I'm a lady, I'm not a man
MC is my ambition
I come fi nice up Jamaica

Wid bam bam, say what a bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
Bam bam billam, bam bam
What a bam bam!