



# Ibagari: Portraits of Garifuna Lifecycle in Song: Song Reference

*Leonard Cayetano, Joycelin Palacio-Cayetano*

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As descendants of the exiled Garifuna People, impelled to action by a visit to our ancestral homeland 200 years after the 1797 exile from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to Roatan, Honduras, the Ibagari recording and song reference are genuine efforts to make a modest contribution to preserve the treasure trove of Garifuna songs. Customarily, the oral communication tradition is the primary mode for learning Garifuna songs. Maintaining the rich culture for over two centuries despite the far-reaching impacts of exile is commendable. The challenge to sustain our Garifuna heritage is amplified by the waning level of proficiency in speaking the Garifuna language. One of the manifestations of this challenge is the inability of a significantly large number of Garifuna People to sing previously commonly known songs in their entirety. Knowing fragments of a Garifuna song is more the norm for a significant number of natives. This project is attempting to reverse the trend by expanding learning options for several Garifuna classics. Seizing the opportunity to leverage technology to transcribe the lyrics of Garifuna songs as completely as possible and translate into musical notations for posterity, we utilized our backgrounds in information technology and instructional technology to begin the process of digital musical transcriptions. Garifuna history written via the prism of a Garifuna perspective by Garifuna for Garifuna and Friends of Garifuna is imperative for the self-preservation of a culture deemed a masterpiece of humanity by UNESCO yet considered highly endangered for survival as quintessentially known. The tension between preservation and elimination must be acknowledged and addressed now so that the Garifuna culture gets passed on to the next generation as obtained from our progenitors who endured and survived ethnic cleansing in 1797 in Baliceaux, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As a preservation effort, to address the language needs of Garinagu in the Diaspora, the lyrics of songs in Garifuna are translated to both English and Spanish.

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