

What is Dinki Mini and Gerreh

Both dances are of African origin of the wake tradition usually performed after the death of a person, and up until the ninth night after the death. These sessions are usually held to cheer the bereaved.

Dinki Mini originates from the Congolese word 'ndingi' which means lamentation or funeral song. Dinkies are celebratory occasions. Although associated with death, the music is lively, joyous and exciting, intending to cheer the family and friends of the dead person. Dinki Mini was practised openly throughout slavery but is now done mainly during Jamaica's annual Festival activities. Dinki Mini is performed mainly in the parishes of St. Mary, St. Ann, St. Andrew and Portland and Gerreh is found in Hanover, Westmoreland and St. James. The Dinki Mini dance focuses on the pelvic region as it is performed in defiance of the death that has occurred. The dancers, male and female, make suggestive rotations with the pelvis in an attempt to prove that they are stronger than death, as they have the means to reproduce. Instruments associated with the Dinki Mini are shakas, katta sticks, condensed milk tins, grater, the tamboo (a cylinder I shaped drum) and the benta. The benta is an ancient stringed instrument made of bamboo and a gourd resonator. The lyrics of the songs associated with the Gerreh are also suggestive. Gerreh has another dimension, however, called the bamboo dance. This is dancing on elevated bamboo poles and between four bamboo poles brought together and pulled back by four crouching players.

Photo courtesy JCDC