

Compas

Compas (Con-Pah) is the modern popular music of Haiti. Haiti was the first Caribbean state to gain its independence (from the French, in 1804) and its nation-language, a mixture of African and French languages, which is known as the **Creole** language. Creole plays an important part in the creation and performance of the lyrics of Compas songs.

In common with other Caribbean states, Haiti's culture has African and European influences, which have been combined to produce a unique musical tradition.

Features of Compas

- Rhythms come from Merengue
- Influences by pop music from Zaire, Africa
- Songs are accompanied by guitars, bass guitar and percussion
- Uses drum ostinato
- Has a regular bass pulse emphasising the last beat of every bar

Task

1. Where does Compas come from?
2. What language are many of the songs in?
3. In your own words, what is Compas?
4. What instruments are used

Extension Task

Haiti is also famous for its Voodoo music in which drumming and chanting are used to call the spirits to earth. The spirits are believed to be related to Christian Saints.

Find out more about this and either write a letter to a friend describing the Voodoo music or make up a news report to present.