

## **Ring Shout**

The shout or ring shout is a counter-clockwise movement by a group of people who have formed a circle. It typically involves shuffling, stomping, singing, and clapping. Shouting is sometimes present, though this is not an essential element. Etymologists speculate that “shout” may derive from the Arabic word *shawt*, rather than from English.

The ring shout is of African origin and was incorporated into the Christian practices of Africans brought as slaves to the West Indies and North America. It occurred in connection with prayer meetings or worship (often, of necessity, held in secret). Call-and-response singing was often included, and the activity sometimes led to ecstatic experience. Its continued use in the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic parts of what is now the United States led to its spread and modification by others and influenced numerous genres of African-American music.