CHAPTER 3

THE IMPACT OF JAMAICAN MUSIC IN BRITAIN

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The popularization of Jamaican musicianship has been felt for a long time, going back to the 1930s with the development of Jazz in Britain. A significant number of musicians from the Caribbean came to Britain to establish themselves in a peculiar enterprise called the music industry. Racism, without overemphasizing the point, characterized the victimized status of Caribbean peoples, and music was one of the rare professions where an individual could attain some level of marksmanship and prominence in spite of its visceral and brutal existence. This chapter examines the role of Jamaican musical ideas specifically as they impinge, impose and impress upon all areas of British popular life, whether in music itself, or television, or speech or lifestyle.

Music in a Toilet

The conceptual base of British mythographers was a mental separation between the so-called West Indian and themselves. This mythogram was constructed around ideas of primitivism and a continuously refined British modernity: thus a successful rebellion which ultimately led to the early nineteenth century overthrow of French enslavement in Haiti by the shapers of Haiti themselves led to an outcry of barbarism. This example can be replicated in the consequences of the Morant Bay Rebellion. Civilized reaction was modernized during the second major European war in which volunteers from Africa and the Caribbean were characterized and projected as rapists. Again, in the realm of culture in a period of vulnerable humanism, early Jamaican popular music was characterized in Britain by DJ Tony Blackburne (a successful R&B jock for the then highly popular Capital Radio) as "music recorded in a toilet". Blackburne, in the twentieth century, carries reverberations of the British cleric and landowner James Phillippo, whose conception of eighteenth-century Jamaican music was equally pejorative and ignorant: "discordant sounds", and "the most hideous yells from the whole party by way of chorus" (1969, 242–43). One can also compare the then critical reaction to Beethoven's work in early nineteenth century Vienna. Sidney Finkelstein expresses it as follows: "As is always the way with reactionary critics, who recognize the cultural threat to their patrons, they try to destroy the new realism by accusing the work of poor craft, bad taste, ignorance of the correct rules, vulgarity" (1976, 56).

In reconstructing the prism through which these statements were made, one can see a modernist continuity of the Haitian and Jamaican examples alongside the development in recording studio techniques and technology in which many successful recordings in the United States of America and Britain were recorded in the toilet of a one, two and four track studio. At no time in the history of Jamaican popular music was there a great disparity between the recording standards of Britain and Jamaica. The difference in time was no more than twelve months. By the early 1960s, many of the successful songs by African Americans, as well as British and American pop and other genres of music, were recorded on mono, then stereo in two, four and later eight track studios.

To paraphrase Ernst Fischer, one can, a posteriori, apply a theoretical structure to the assigned role of the Jamaican artist in British society: the

illumination of social relationships in society, the enlightening of the racist in an opaque society, of assisting the dominant to recognize and change social reality, and finally, to dramatize the notion that social contradictions cannot be passed off as the rational process of mythologizing (1971, 14). The Jamaican artist set standards in refashioning the sonic properties of instrumentation and moved the boundaries of limited lyrical content. By so doing, in his Jamaican stubbornness and nationalism, he was attackingly transforming the genetically limited DNA of the British sound environment from mythogram to a new sensoform.

I have already indicated that African-Caribbean musicians were significant voices in the development of jazz in Britain. I would, however, like to add that they also played a powerful role in transforming British military music from as early as the eighteenth century, and those who have always suspected that the drumming in European military music had its roots outside Europe, would be correct.

A Personal Note

Before 1965 I had met one Jamaican, an athlete in Trinidad. On the boat to Britain I encountered a Jamaican brother who ate daily at the table with us and shared cabins with six women. I also met an ambassadorial postee to Africa, a very tolerant and patient man. My supervisor on my second job was a Jamaican lady who became a fast friend. My first introduction to Jamaican music was in the same year at the home of a now deceased Trinidadian social worker, Norton McClean, who was playing "Put It On" by the Wailers. This was my first encounter with Jamaican music, very different from kaiso and other black musics I already knew. Because of the numerical superiority of Jamaicans within the Caribbean populations in Britain, and their characteristic stubbornness in the pursuit of their music, as well as its widespread popularity in all areas of Caribbean entertainment, whether in the nightclub or at a party, I became more and more drawn to not only appreciating and loving the music but also to writing and reflecting on it.

My younger brother was convinced that his love, Alton Ellis, was much greater than my own, Ken Boothe. I came to appreciate and admire Ellis as a very special and gifted singer and his *Sunday Coming* album as a standard

in popular music. Many years later, in interviewing him, I was to understand why that album was so special not only to my brother and me but to Ellis himself. I am interjecting this testimonial to confirm the extent of my interest in things Caribbean and, in particular, Jamaican popular music. Interestingly, the people who were writing intelligently about the music in the late 1960s and early 1970s were non-Jamaicans: Patrick Griffith, now dead, Trinidadian; Imruh Caesar (now Bakari), Kittian; and myself. Jamaican Carl Gayle was not yet publishing. We constituted an intellectual defence of Jamaican music against the barrage and excesses of the rantings and ravings of the dominant society. In so doing, we were authenticating our Caribbean culture regardless of source or location.

Iconic Appropriators/Cultural Influence

Curiously, simultaneous with the reactionary tide were the early appropriations of the music's rhythm by the most iconic of the British pop groups. "Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da" by the Beatles is a case in point. Another curious sight was the *David Frost Show* on London Television in which each commercial break was introduced by Frost pointing his finger and saying, "Soon come." For those who are not aware, Frost was a Cambridge man and quite upper crust in his speech and demeanour. But he was obviously very socialized, as he was once engaged to a Jamaican lady. The word "crucial" became widely used even in radio news programmes. Today, the most middle-class of British speakers use the phrase "nuff respect" or simply "respect" in everyday application. This is an imitation of their former yard boy, now canonized.

With the coming of Channel 4 television in 1985, African-Caribbean led campaigns and position papers resulting in contracts being given, for the first time, to African-Caribbean directors and producers. The Jamaican accent, as well as others of the Caribbean, became a weekly cultural disseminator until they were progressively axed. When David Rodigan hosted a deep roots reggae programme on Capitol Radio, the language of Jamaica was weekly being inserted into the consciousness of British listeners with words like "dress back", "wicked", "I man", "Yes, roots/natty", "inna yard", "forward" and so on.

These examples are important because they represent the most prestigious icons in British entertainment: the Beatles were undoubtedly the

3.1 Alton Ellis, a very special and gifted singer, was among the pioneers in popularizing reggae in Britain. Courtesy of the Gleaner Company.

biggest band in British popular music history and Frost was the definitive interviewer of the cream of British and international personalities. These examples also portentously indicated, in an almost subtle, surreal and subterranean way, that the normative imperviousness of British society was being secreted and impregnated with a new set of genetic cultural markers which already heralded the profound cultural alterity that British society was destined to experience.

3.2 David Rodigan hosted a deep roots reggae programme on Capitol Radio which he used to sensitize British listeners to the Jamaican language with words like “dress back”, “wicked”, “I man”, “forward” and so on. Publicity photo.

C.L.R. James liked to say that African captives brought themselves to the New World. In so doing they brought a civilization, and in the brutal circumstances of plantation slavery there was an inevitable mediation of adjustment or accommodation. This is not unique to conquered peoples, but to all those who have experienced migration. Jamaicans are no different in this regard. Just like Jamaica itself, where the pioneers and entrepreneurs of the Jamaican sound were cane cutters and other low-paid workers, so too in Britain did the Jamaican working class constitute the pioneers and activators of the music. The importation of Jamaican recorded music was first conducted by Jamaicans themselves; the avenues through which this music was played were located in flats, illegal clubs (commonly called “shebeens”) and other nightclubs. An entrance fee was paid and one was regaled with the latest sounds, food and drink.

Entrepreneurial Firsts: Jews and Jamaican

Here the question of entrepreneurship comes into play: the marginalized Jew, who may be characterized as vulturous in his relationship to African-created sounds, has to be acknowledged as sharing a history of oppression and marginalization. Thus the Jew’s understanding of a publicly unacknowledged identification with the circumstances of the African-Caribbean migrant, as

well as the vision of a limited business opportunity, saw him as a pioneer in bringing the music before British and, by extension, European audiences.

Thus, as early as 1946, Emile Shalet, who later collaborated with Siggy Jackson, both eastern European Jews, founded the Melodisc label specifically to fill the gap of imported jazz records from the United States, but later entered the arena of kaiso in 1951 and, still later, African continental music. This final type constituted, as export, one third of all the sales of their records. Two of the first recordings of Jamaican vinyl on Melodisc were "Worried over You" by Keith and Enid and a song performed by Byron Lee, reputedly Jamaican versions of African-American rhythm and blues. It was stated that sales could reach three hundred thousand to five hundred thousand singles for a hit of any of the genres delineated above, and interestingly one-third of these sales were based on the export markets in West Africa and the Caribbean. This was not only phenomenal but of comparative mainstream achievement for sales in any genre from that time.

Finkelstein, writing about the foundational element of European popular music, says that both Europe and America exploited Africa and Asia through colonialism and robbery and in the last five hundred years they made an indelible contribution to popular music which drew heavily upon Asian and African music: "The folk music of eastern, central and southwestern Europe, which infused the (European) classic musical creations of the last five centuries, was itself built on a heritage of Asian and African music" (1976, 15). How does this influence begin? It begins with imitation, characterized by both awe and contempt: the former because of the brilliant, innovative traditions inherited and ingeniously adapted, and the latter because of the position of servility of the innovators. This, naturally, led to large-scale rip offs, claiming music that they did not write, receiving unwarranted praise, and the indignity of performance segregation in America, while in Britain it was confinement to small clubs and a ban from radio and television.

Melodisc, Blue Beat and Ska

The marketing of the early music, inevitably and predictably, encountered obstacles and resistance, particularly from BBC radio and television producers. Jackson describes the experience of Melodisc and Blue Beat labels: "Wherever I went, all our records were played [in the discos] but we had a hell of a battle to get them played on the BBC. They didn't want to know.

Our records sold more than other hits in the charts, and yet we couldn't get into the charts. Nor could we get the plug. There was terrific prejudice against black music" (Clarke 1980, 140).

Melodisc later formed a specialist label, Blue Beat, for Jamaican music and ska when it came into being, this appellation serving the music upon which the label was issued. The major mechanism through which Jamaican rhythm and blues and later ska records was popularized in Britain was through the sound man. Just as in the Jamaican context, the innovation, after new trends in popular music in the United States in the early 1960s became fixed in the American preoccupation with rock 'n' roll, was channelled through the sound man. It was the sound man who popularized the early nascent acetates and later vinyl that incubated in the masterful musicianship which ska axiomized. The concealment of label and artist identity was deliberately executed and exclusivity was the norm. Parties or clubs would have two sound men battling it out with the secret weapons of new sounds.

Early Pioneers

Sonny Roberts, a Jamaican carpenter, and Lloyd Harvey, a record enthusiast, formed Planitone Records in 1961, fulfilling the same thirst for rhythm and blues. With an ambition to own his own record label and studio, Roberts rented premises on the Edgware Road, established a one track studio and bought his own disc cutting equipment. Distribution was through friends, parties and clubs. Among those recorded were Dandy Livingstone, Tito Simon and saxophonist Mike Elliot. Chris Blackwell, after initial involvement in Jamaica with the R&B phase, came to London and visited Roberts. He listened attentively to his experience and then also visited Melodisc Records and the distributor Lugtons where he met Dave Betteridge, who later became a limited shareholder in Island Records and later the managing director of CBS Records in the early 1980s. Roberts introduced Blackwell to Lee Goptal, a Jamaican accountant of Indian heritage. Roberts moved offices from the Edgware Road to Cambridge Road in Kilburn, now renting from Goptal with whom Blackwell was now a tenant. Blackwell offered to distribute and promote Roberts's records. Blackwell, like Jackson and Shalet, was the pioneering Jamaican Jew, whose bold approach to understanding the

Jamaican music business in London, led him to form temporary liaisons with fellow Jamaicans. Now that Blackwell had control of distribution and promotion, the competition for Roberts became disadvantageous. Blackwell, instead of recording in London, focused on licensing record masters from Jamaica. While Planitone floundered and eventually went out of business temporarily, Blackwell's Island Records made ascending strides in controlling the Jamaican music market.

It can be clearly seen that the impetus for Island Records' intervention in the British Jamaican music business was a direct result of Blackwell first interrogating Roberts and then distributing his product. In this way Blackwell could test the market without financial risk. A similar strategy was to be employed by Virgin Records in the late 1970s. Another by-product of the fated meeting of Roberts and fellow Jamaican Goptal was that the latter, originally distrustful and hesitant about Roberts's quest for success with his label, collaborated with Blackwell to form Trojan Records in 1968, Blackwell later selling out his interest to Goptal. By the middle 1960s Blackwell had already expanded his financial horizons beyond Jamaican music to include rhythm and blues and soul and later rock, a strategy Goptal was to emulate with great success but also tragic consequences.

Blackwell's cadre of artists included Owen Grey, Laurel Aitken, Kenrick Patrick, the Blues Busters, Derrick and Patsy, Jimmy Cliff, and Jackie Edwards, among others. Blackwell also created management, concert promotion, and publishing companies, so that he was making money from all angles of the business. Jamaican music provided the bedrock upon which his music industry experience was built. From there he successfully launched Island as an important label for the new rock music as well as British imports and British versions of rhythm and blues. Blackwell's management of Millie Small resulted in her number one hit in the British charts, "My Boy Lollipop" (the arranger being seminal guitarist Ernest Ranglin) in 1964. Along with the Spencer Davis Group, he licensed both of their music to more mainstream and successful labels. An offshoot of the Spencer Davis Group was Steve Winword's rendition of Jackie Edwards's composition, "Keep on Running", which became a Top Ten hit. Thus, Jamaican music provided the bedrock upon which his music industry experience was built.

Prince Buster's Breakthrough

Jamaican popular music, confined to parties, shebeens and small Caribbean-owned clubs, simultaneous with supplying the British Jamaican population with sonic cultural insurgency, was also radiating out onto the larger British population in peculiar ways. Prince Buster, an early sound man, business man (who owned a shop and label), and proactive articulator of early Black Power, became a British and European sensation with his "Madness" single which sold over half a million records. The new British post-war generation, searching beyond the skiffle groups that abounded in Britain, was looking for new and exciting avenues of expression. With Prince Buster they found a master, and Buster had a cult following among the Mods, who were, paradoxically, the arrow-head of racist behaviour, abuse and violence on people of colour. This is, however, no different from the meeting and incorporation of mixed cultures that abounded in Britain.

Racism, Incorporation and Culture

It is interesting to note that in most circumstances in which racism flourishes there is an interdependent relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. There are sizeable racial minorities in Germany and France – and just as the politics of the National Front are constitutionally racist, so too in these nations. But there is an element of incorporation by these dominant societies by their genuine friendship with some mixed-race Germans, French or British. Le Pen in France is a good example: his best spokesperson was African Caribbean and they (meaning mixed-race Germans, French or British) are successfully turned into racist and fascist elements. Their mixed-race colour was never seen but that of the object of their hostility.

A brief note should be inserted here. Outward racial discrimination functions in a society in which legislation is almost absent and politicians aggravate the chasm between contending groups in order to ensure their election. In this context, whether racial differences were exploited by politicians and others before World War I or after World War II – and between – the undeniable fact was that racial division also promoted racial attraction and cultural magnetism in terms of the seemingly weaker culture,

enduring the weight of social discrimination, while paradoxically influencing the dominant society. This meant that social relations were forged in the dens of the shebeens, illegal parties and dingy nightclubs where Jamaican music and culture drew a cross-section of the British class system. It was not only the youth who were influenced by the subaltern culture, but men and women in unequalled pyramidal social occupancy. Ackee and saltfish, rice and peas, Guinness punch, spliff smoking (introduced by Noel Coward, a British expatriate to Jamaica, and his coterie), language and the penchant for colourful clothes, all had an indelible impact on the British consciousness. The "rivers of blood" surrealistic nightmare that Enoch Powell foresaw, and the later cultural "swamping" xenophobia of Margaret Thatcher, both reflected the groundswell of the continuing births of the children of immigrants and their expressed dissatisfaction with their condition of racism in the classroom, in the work place and the limited opportunities opened for self-expansion.

Thus when the Lord Profumo scandal burst on the tabloid press in the mid-1960s, exposing the illicit exotica of relationships between the lord and the serf, the serf and the "slave" – Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice Davies being the modern serfs and Lucky Gordon the modern "slave" – the exposure merely unearthed a trend that had moved from the master's plantation in the Caribbean to his urban centre of the metropolis. A popular unknown sexual proclivity was characterized by the late Lord Mountbatten's wife, who hired working-class Caribbean men for sexual copulation. Another is the now published thirty-year romance between Grenadian balladeer Hutchinson and the late Princess Margaret, the sister of Queen Elizabeth II. Yet another is the jailing of a Trinidadian for living off immoral earnings while having a relationship with the queen's cousin, who later had a girl child with him. For the middle and upper class, power and exotica had been the bilateral ingredients of cohabitation in both geographical localities. The European working-class had also enjoyed this position of cohabitation – normatively characteristic for men but taboo for women. The war years, however, intoxicated with American swing music and the African-American GI, as well as his Caribbean counterpart, showed that the woman was no longer nailed to Mary's cross, but bit, with relish, into the black apple in gardens of Jamaican musical culture.

It was this climate which produced the readiness with which people gravitated to Jamaican music. In personal relationships between the British and the Jamaican, there has been, and continues to be, the spectacle of complete

mastery of the Jamaican language by some British people, and not always young people. I know instances in which after the relationship had ended between a Jamaican and British person, the latter continued to live, work and socialize among Jamaicans and other Caribbean people. Sometimes the mastery of the language does produce astonishment: one such being a cockney speaker having a conversation with a Jamaican nation-language speaker and both articulating themselves in their own languages with total mutual comprehension. I, a Caribbean national, had to struggle to understand the Jamaican. In this culturally burgeoning context, the independent Jamaican record entrepreneur continued his assault on British music culture in order to create a standardized platform for the acceptance of a black face in the record business.

Trojan Records and Small Labels

Because of deregulation in radio application licences, there was increasing sales competition between the majors, which operated a closed-shop policy and the small, independent labels that were previously excluded from competition. Listen to Jamaican Chips Richards, a former sales manager of Trojan Records who later became a business partner with Miss P (Sonia Pottinger) through her label High Note:

> I was pushing a record called "Everything I Own" by Ken Boothe, which finally became No. 1 [on the British pop charts], and I was in the BBC offices when it was being played over the radio by Tony Blackburn. Then halfway through playing the record, he stopped it and said something like: 'Oh, utter rubbish! How can anyone in his right mind go out and buy something like this, after listening to the David Gates real version? . . . I no longer used the soft smiling attitude. I began to demand. I used to compile scrap books showing them the demand for Reggae. I wrote letters showing them that our records were in the breakers of the British Market Research Board, and that our records used to outsell a lot of pop records. (Clarke 1980, 152)

It was common practice, according to Richards, that when pluggers of reggae records (sales reps seeking airplay and television exposure for said records) delivered copies to the BBC, the rock or soul records would be taken by the radio producers while the reggae ones would be dropped in the rubbish bins. It should also be noted that the few sincere British pluggers also experienced

the same racist treatment meted out by the BBC. Capitol Radio reversed that, and the fortunes and visibility of reggae slowly began to make an impact, one that was feared and resented by the majors.

British Market Research Board's Control of Hit Music

From the 1950s, the British Market Research Board was the official organization that monitored record sales from a selected list of shops they called "chart returns". This simply meant that a number of mainstream shops were selected on the high roads of major cities throughout Britain and sales returns were calibrated from them. There have always been, however, alternative markets or shops outside the mainstream considered non-chart return. Because of the problem of distribution and radio play from the African-derived companies, the mainstream shops would not stock records which were not played on radio or featured on television. So records that became popular in the discos or nightclubs sold in sometimes large quantities, but these sales were outside the jurisdiction of the industry's monitoring body. They sometimes outsold highly charted records without the benefit of a single airplay or sales achieved from a chart return shop.

Pirate Radio: The Change of Fortunes

By the late 1960s, with the deregulation of the methods of radio licence application, there was a plethora of pirate as well as legitimate radio stations. By far the biggest and most successful was Capital Radio. I have stated that BBC radio, monopolizing what should or should not be heard, operating a clearly racist policy, was now challenged by this successful new station. More importantly, Caribbean-owned companies, including Lee Goptal's Trojan, grasped the opportunity of buying time on radio, just as advertisers bought time. This released a Pandora's Box of competition among the majors characterized by increasingly bold attempts to undermine Capital Radio by making representations to parliamentarians to institute a new set of regulations that would make it illegal. This finally became a success and reggae's success or failure was now in the hands of the majors.

Desmond Dekker and Skinheads

In 1968 Desmond Dekker had a number one hit with "The Israelites" on the Trojan label; previously in 1967 he reached number sixteen with "007/ Shanty Town". It is interesting that "The Israelites", though largely difficult to understand lyrically, received massive airplay on the radio as well as significant television exposure. This may well have to do with the extent to which Jews themselves were important cogs in the wheel of the different aspects of the recording and entertainment industry.[1] It also became number one in Israel, which caused Israel to become attached to the reggae phenomenon. It should be mentioned here that Tony Cousins and Bruce White, two English music agency operators with a company called Creole, recognized a hole in the loop and filled this by combining touring and record releases while achieving several hits. They toured the Ethiopians with their Top Twenty hit, "Train to Skaville", and brought over Desmond Dekker, who now signed to and had six Top Twenty hits on the Creole label. Dekker became a sensation, like Prince Buster before him, with his sartorial splendour: tight pants cut four inches above the ankle, closely trimmed hair and spectacular dancing moves. Dekker's model precipitated the skinhead movement, again, like the Mods, a colour-bashing, beer swilling, unemployed youth sector that apotheosized Dekker and reggae while espousing racist diatribes.

Turning New Fortunes

It would not be until the late 1970s, after years of African-Caribbean organizational structures to combat racism, several modern "slave" uprisings in the modern British urban centres throughout the country, the growing exposure of this experience in small magazines and journals, the rise of Bob Marley and the Wailers, the increasing visibility of reggae, its new-found model for relaunching recumbent careers as with Eric Clapton's Bob Marley–penned song, "I Shot the Sherrif", that British youth, already rebelling against the staid social *mores* of British life, now moved, visibly, to form structures such as Rock Against Racism and the Anti-Nazi League. Linton Kwesi Johnson, the dubsonic poet, whose career took him to Virgin Records as an advertising writer, was the first to benefit from the activities of British youth campaigning

and university as well as college circuit rallies and events.

Interestingly, Virgin Records, which saw the export market as a distinct source of revenue, soon saw Richard Branson, by 1978, in Jamaica offering big contracts to Jamaican artists. An astute business man who was known and convicted for criminal activities in the record business, he recognized the disparity between paying in the British pound and the Jamaican

3.3 Desmond Dekker became a sensation with his tight pants (cut four inches above the ankle), closely trimmed hair and spectacular dancing moves. Ironically, his model precipitated the skinhead movement, who apotheosized Dekker and reggae while espousing racist diatribes. Courtesy of the Gleaner Company.

3.4 Linton Kwesi Johnson, the dubsonic poet, whose career took him to Virgin Records as an advertising writer, was the first to benefit from the activities of British youth campaigning and university as well as college circuit rallies and events. In 2005 he was awarded the Institute of Jamaica's Silver Musgrave Medal for poetry. Courtesy of the Gleaner Company.

dollar. He offered contracts to Jamaican artists based on the declining Jamaican dollar and had the facility to elude the limited exchange rate of the mainstream banking system by buying through specialized foreign currency companies. He was winning on both fronts, but when Nigeria, its biggest export market, closed its doors to imports, Virgin dropped the flaming chalice and bolted out of the reggae business as though pursued, as Chris Blackwell was by the machete-wielding Peter Tosh. Just as Blackwell kicked the recording business bucket to pursue the hotel-hospitality business with £200 million in his back pocket, so Branson pulled out, selling his record company for £600 million to EMI, having outwitted his American introducer (who later died) of Atlantic Airlines, he formed the highly profitable Virgin Airlines. Branson is now a multibillionaire.

The fortunes of waning careers in the pop business were revived by the utilization of reggae as the basis for exploration. Paul Simon is the best American example with "Mother and Child Reunion" in 1971. He later said, having asked the Jamaican session musicians what they wanted, that he paid them ten pounds per track. The Police, which featured Sting as lead singer and bass player, featured reggae rhythms in almost all of their successive hits worldwide. Lee Perry's ingenious experimentation with technology, gadgets and the science of recording techniques produced amazing soundscapes that ricocheted profoundly in the pop world. The list of international artists who openly acknowledge the influence of the Perry sound is best characterized

3.5 Richard Branson of Virgin Records saw the export market as a distinct source of revenue, and offered big contracts to Jamaican artists. Branson is here picture with Amanda Wills, managing director of Virgin Holidays, at the official opening of the Branson Centre of Entrepreneurship. Photo by Janet Silvera; courtesy of the Gleaner Company.

by Madonna, who brilliantly imitated his methods on her album *Ray of Light*. Anti-racism activities produced the climate for the synthesizing of sounds: the punk rock movement, centred in London, was revived by the utilization of reggae as the basis for exploration. The 2 Tone movement, based in the north of England, best expressed this mixture. The Clash's Joe Strummer was keenly aware of the Jamaican musical sound and successfully experimented with it in the production

3.6 Chris Blackwell focused on licensing record masters from Jamaica, and his label Island Records made ascending strides in controlling the Jamaican music market. Photo by Carlington Wilmot; courtesy of the Gleaner Company.

3.7 The Birmingham-based UB40 became an international institution after their initial success with the Neil Diamond composition "Red, Red Wine". Courtesy of the Gleaner Company.

of the Clash's first album. He included a version of Junior Murvin's Lee Perry produced "Police and Thieves" and later versioned Toots Hibbert's 1968 scorcher, "Pressure Drop". But it was Don Letts, an Anglo-Jamaican reggae DJ and later pioneer in the video business, who gave exposure to punk and reggae in his Harlesden residency at the Roxy in northwest London. The Specials, a Coventry-based group, was an opening act for the Clash and their preoccupation was revival ska. The group spawned a massive trend and had enormous success, not only with their own music, but also with other bands they produced. Their leader, Jerry Dammers, was an art college graduate, just as many of the British pop stars of the 1960s including John Lennon and Paul McCartney of the Beatles, Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, and Ray Davies of the Kinks. With art as a background, and with an understanding of European art history,

and its many Africa-centred movements, they were conscious, cross-cultural insurgents.

On the other side of the nation, the Birmingham-based UB40, an appellation derived from the unemployed card one was given to sign on at the dole on a weekly basis, became an international institution after their initial success with the Neil Diamond composition, "Red, Red Wine", which appears to me to be an imitation of the Jamaican version. UB40 was the only British band that generated a following in Jamaica itself and, with a profound love for Jamaica, attempted to build a house and studio in Jamaica. Their leader, however, relegating the responsibility to one of his spars, experienced the Brer Nansi duplicity that many foreign-based Jamaicans have experienced – even with family members – the loss of serious money.

Conclusion

The journey is long and detailed and seemingly inexhaustive, but we must not lose sight of the major thesis of this work: the Jamaican working class, a class beaten, jailed, killed, shut away in mental asylums, maligned and denigrated by the Jamaican ruling class, is now in the United Kingdom confronting racism but having the opportunity, in whatever limited area, to make cultural and material progress. As they bore the brunt for being stubbornly nationalistic to their African-Jamaican origins, ancestors who were bodily buried in the earth with their heads bathed in molasses and ants feeding off them; who, pregnant with babies, were whipped mercilessly; who were subjected to massa's lustful eyes and the power to enforce his wishes; who washed massa's clothes and entertained him although receiving his verbal abuse; who abandoned the plantation to work for himself, and has been no betrayer of his history. After Emancipation did the African not abandon the plantation and forge a living for himself, and is this not in keeping with the independent line he developed, to be freed of the white slavemaster, as can be seen with the many higglers today, as well as the philosophy of the Bobo Shanti to work for himself? All these philosophical orientations were reinforced by the Universal Negro Improvement Association's and Marcus Garvey's espousal of the black man's desire to forge an independent economy despite the pressures of colonial

and post-colonial governments to assign him or her to the margins of society, in a dependency syndrome and self-destructive through state-sponsored violence.

It is these men and women who are responsible for the international acclaim of Jamaican popular music. It is their lives that were sacrificed to creating, out of this complex, complicated and ambiguous road to so-called independence, the cultural powers that are searingly represented by the radically altering paths to restating riffs, developing rhythmic patterns, melodies and harmonies, and using technologically engineered imaged soundscapes, all of which axiomize Jamaican popular music.

Note

1. David Betteridge, former Island co-owner and former CEO of CBS Britain is Jewish, Chris Blackwell is Jewish, Emile Shalet was Jewish, Lew Grade, founder of London Weekend Television was Jewish. This is not an attack but a description that has its own validity for Jewish involvement with black music having themselves been historically and contemporarily persecuted.

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