How ‘Reggae in the Sun’ concert went down in Nairobi for Kenyan reggae fans

How ‘Reggae in the Sun’ concert went down in Nairobi

Reggae fans had an afternoon to remember on Saturday during the 8th edition of the ‘Reggae in the Sun’ concert which went down at the Godown Arts Center in Nairobi under the tagline *My Style is Rasta Style.*

The event attracted almost 700 fans with the likes of Kare, Fidempa and Lavosti, all performing on stage with a full live band.

And what’s a reggae concert without MC’s on stage? MC Phillipo and MC Junior Dread hyped each of the DJ sets to all of the music played.

The reggae gig is a brainchild of three huge fans of the music and also industry heavyweights consisting of John Amollo aka Johnnie Be Good, MC Phillipo and Musical Sheriff.

The three have created a platform for Kenyan reggae fans to go somewhere to enjoy our very own blend of reggae music.

The event is showcased for the appreciation and promotion of local homegrown reggae music.

“It’s a day to night event with nothing but pure reggae music to bring out the best of our reggae artistes by offering a

platform for them to showcase their music and grow their fan base," said John Amollo.

By Francis NderituMay 5th, 2019 1 min read
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Julian Marley, son of reggae pioneer Bob Marley, at Norwalk's Wall Street Theater

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https://www.thehour.com/entertainment/article/Julian-Marley-son-of-reggae-pioneer-Bob-Marley-13826821.php

ulian Marley, son of reggae legend Bob Marley and Barbados-born Lucy Pounder, is wrapping up his most recent tour with shows at Norwalk's Wall Street Theater Saturday, May 18, and at Hartford's Infinity Music Hall on Sunday, May 19.

The Grammy-nominated performer, backed by The Uprising Band, is on the road to support his top Billboard charting "As I Am" album, featuring such hits as "Are You The One," "Straighter

Roads" and "Hey Jack." Subatomic Sound System opens both dates.

In the same tradition as his father, Julian "Ju Ju" Marley is a devout Rastafarian whose music is inspired by life and spirituality, the venues note on their websites.

Wall Street Theater, 71 Wall St., Norwalk. $45-$15. 203-831-5004. Infinity Musical Hall, 32 Front St., Hartford. $44-$29. 866-666-6306.

Barbados Reggae Festival Featuring Buju Banton, Busy Signal and Sizzla Kolanji Bridgetown, Barbados, April 27 to 30

By Erin Lowers
Published May 03, 2019
From http://exclaim.ca/music/article/barbados_reggae_festival_featuring_buju_banton_busy_signal_and_sizzla_kolanji-bridgetown_barbados_april_27_to_30

While Toronto and other parts of Canada were experiencing the final bouts of winter to close out April, hundreds of people escaped their respective cities to Bridgetown, Barbados for their 15th annual Barbados Reggae Festival.

The three-day festival, which took place between Pirates Cove

and Kensington Oval, highlighted reggae and dancehall through the eras. From basement jams to freedom songs, it was an eclectic lineup of both old and new artists who provided performances for all generations. This year's Barbados Reggae Festival also marked a special event – the return of Buju Banton (pictured).

Taking place on Saturday (April 27) at Kensington Oval, Buju Banton was warmly welcomed back to the island by a sold-out crowd for his first performance since 2006.

Banton, who was released from prison in 2018 after seven years for drug-related charges, performed in Jamaica for the first time this past March and followed up with performances in the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago shortly thereafter. Albeit his past, Banton, who is in the midst of his "Long Walk to Freedom" tour, has been praised for his socio-political, religious and spiritual music for over 25 years and has served as an agent of change for the West Indies at large.

Before touching the stage, Bajan-born Buggy Nhakente, Wayne Wonder, Agent Sasco and Spragga Benz shared the stage – the latter of whom performed his own major hits, such as "Hunting," "We Nuh Like" and "Movin' Up the Line." But it was "Hills and Valleys" artist Banton, who started his performance at 1:30 a.m., that immediately took the crowd aback. It even brought out hometown hero Rihanna, who casually posted on social media from backstage.

Coming out to "Our Father in Zion" wearing a blue-collared shirt and with his locs flowing freely, the crowd screamed and cried as Banton appeared on stage. For over 90 minutes, Banton took fans through his catalogue, performing songs such as "Not An Easy Road," "Give I Strength," "Hills and Valleys," "Driver," "Psalm 23," "Wanna Be Loved" and even brought Wayne Wonder back on for "Forever Young." Banton took a minute to thank fans for their support, and reminded them

that he once performed to a club of 100 people nearby, not the thousands that were in front of him. More importantly, he also paid tribute to those before him: Bob Marley and Beres Hammond, respectively.

The celebration that took place at Kensington Oval was one of life, music and legacy, but just the first night of the Barbados Reggae Festival. While day one was historic for the country's music scene, day two would prove to be just as satisfying.

Though the event started early in the day, performances kicked off at 8 p.m., starting with the likes of Just D, Hollabak, Stiffy and Marzville. Despite the thousands of people in attendance, the crowd was relaxed and perceptive to the newer acts who warmed them up for what was to come: veteran artist Busy Signal and headliner Sizzla Kolanji.

Similar to Buju Banton, Busy Signal also made his first return to the island in over a decade. Performing songs such as "Unknown Number," "One More Night," "Sweet Love" and crowd favourite "Stay So," Signal marched back and forth the stage in a Versace shirt, engaging with the eager crowd. The hour-long set went by quickly, leaving fans energized and satisfied for the next act.

Coming onto the stage with the 1998 hit "Like Mountains," Sizzla Kalonji immediately grabbed the crowd's attention. With a career spanning over 25 years (similarly to Banton), Kalonji wasn't short of hits to perform. "Got It Right Here," "Holding Firm" and "Be Strong" were immediate crowd-pleasers, but he went the extra mile and called the previous night's performers (Agent Sasco, Wayne Wonder and Spragga Benz) to perform with him. Nearing the end of his hour-long set, he performed a medley so that, if you hadn't heard your favourite song yet, you wouldn't walk away disappointed.

The Barbados Reggae Festival closed out with a Vintage Reggae

that featured the likes of Admiral Tibet, George Nooks and the legendary Barrington Levy, which as we were told, was for the "older folks who don't business with young people."

From start to finish, the Barbados Reggae Festival reflected some of the most important cultural icons in Caribbean music history. Taking over 40 years of music history and packing it into three days is no small feat; however, the 15-year-old festival did just that – paying tribute to the old, re-celebrated the classics and made space for the new. While it's unsure what next year's festival will hold, for the attendees that flew from one side of the world to the other and everywhere in between, this year's festival will be hard to top, and for that, we're thankful.

'Original raggamuffin' Jah Stitch, pioneering reggae vocalist, dies aged 69

Sound system toaster, DJ and selector, known for his understated delivery and immaculate dress died in Kingston

David Katz

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Jah Stitch on Princess Street, downtown Kingston in 2011. Photograph: Mark Read

The Jamaican reggae vocalist Jah Stitch died in Kingston on Sunday aged 69, following a brief illness. Although not necessarily a household name abroad, the “original raggamuffin” was a sound system toaster and DJ who scored significant hits in the 70s, later working as an actor and appearing in an ad campaign for Clarks shoes.

Born Melbourne James in Kingston in 1949, he grew up with an aunt in a rural village in St Mary, northern Jamaica, since his teenage mother lacked the financial means to care for him. He later joined her in bustling Papine, east Kingston, but conflict with his father-in-law led him to join a community of outcasts living in a tenement yard in the heart of the capital’s downtown – territory aligned with the People’s National party and controlled by the notorious Spanglers gang, which James became affiliated with aged 11.

As ska and rock steady gave way to the new reggae style on the nascent Kingston music scene, young James became a regular fixture of sound system dances. He drew his biggest inspiration from the Studio One selections presented by Prince Rough on Sir George the Atomic, based in Jones Town, and the microphone skills of Dennis Alcapone on El Paso, based further west at Waltham Park Road.

In his teens, James began selecting records on a new sound system called Fingertone, initially a small community sound system established by a man known as Finger. Later, the sound was renamed Tippertone and became one of the most popular sound systems in Jamaica. Tippertone had a reputation for

exclusive dub plates, especially from the Studio One catalogue, and Stitch was renowned as a selector of great skill, with exquisite sequencing and timing. Female fans gave him the nickname Stitch because he was always immaculately dressed, which morphed to Jah Stitch for his Rastafari orientation.

In the early 70s, Tippertone launched the careers of fellow toasters Big Youth and Doctor Alimantado, and Stitch and Big Youth began toasting together on the sound and elsewhere, both employing an understated delivery and Rastafarian focus, with Stitch's rhymes delivered in a gruff baritone. However, financial disputes caused Stitch to quit Tippertone and shift to the new Black Harmony set, established by a friend on Ninth Street in Greenwich Farm. Big Youth was already making a strong impact as a recording artist and when Stitch was ready to begin his recording career in 1975, he started things off with a bang, voicing two hit songs on the same day: Danger Zone was made for the bassist and vocalist Errol "Flabba" Holt and the Killer for hit-making producer Bunny "Striker" Lee, with whom he enjoyed a long and fruitful association. Placing Stitch atop hit rhythms previously voiced by Horace Andy, Cornell Campbell and Johnny Clarke, Lee produced popular Stitch tunes such as Greedy Girl and Give Jah the Glory, while Strictly Rockers and Judgement were issued by visionary associate Yabby You.

Stitch's career seemed on an inexorable rise, but trouble arose in April 1976 when an ill-fated plan was hatched for a sound clash between Black Harmony and Tippertone. Black Harmony had relocated to a rough patch of slum ground called Fletcher's Land, where some residents were aligned with the Jamaica Labour party, drawing indignation from some of Stitch's former Tippertone associates. One afternoon near Chancery Lane, a Spanglers member demanded that Stitch abandon Black Harmony and when he refused, the man tried to stab him with a knife; rebuffed after a brief scuffle, he soon

reappeared with a gun. Stitch was cornered in a bar behind the Wailers' record shop on King Street and shot through the mouth, managing to survive when the bullet somehow ricocheted and exited.

Hospitalised for four months, he emerged with a contorted oral cavity and a fearsome hunger to record, reportedly voicing 19 songs for Bunny Lee in less than an hour. His 1976 debut album, No Dread Can't Dead, celebrated his survival and elevated his profile in Britain; Watch Your Step Youthman (1977) and Moving Away (1979) consolidated his reputation, the former having strong commentary on Jamaica's volatile political situation on songs such as Dread Inna Jamdown, The Rod of Correction and Under Heavy Manners, the latter proclaiming his individuality on Different Fashion and Moving Awayfrom the Rest of the Field.

Read more
Jah Stitch toured Britain in 1977, notably appearing at the Hammersmith Palais with John Holt and Johnnie Clarke, backed by the band Black Slate. His recorded output dwindled in the early 80s, shortly before he became the chief selector on Sugar Minott's Youth Promotion sound system under the moniker Major Stitch, mentoring Yami Bolo, Nitty Gritty, Tenor Saw and Daddy Freddy.

UK label Blood and Fire's retrospective album Original Raggamuffin introduced Jah Stitch's work to a new audience in 1996, taking him to Austria to perform at the Steirischer Herbst arts festival. The following year, he appeared in Don Letts' and Rick Elgood's film Dancehall Queen, playing an incidental street tough; Elgood also cast him in the 2009 television drama, Mi and Mi Kru. In 2015, he appeared in a Clarks shoes campaign, organised to correspond with the publication of One Love Books' Clarks in Jamaica.

In recent years, Jah Stitch coached upcoming talent at Song Embassy, near Papine, where I was fortunate to interview him

in 2017. He kept in touch thereafter, regularly updating me on developments in Kingston’s ever-changing music scene. One of reggae’s ultimate survivors, it is truly hard to fathom that he’s gone.