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### The Congos reverberate with Jamdown

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**Howard Campbell, Gleaner Writer**

**Jamdown, a reggae film produced 30 years ago by French filmmaker Emmanuel Bonn, was recently re-released on DVD in the United States and Britain.**

The 70-minute [film](#) is based largely on the rise of roots-reggae group The Congos and their outstanding 1977 [album](#), **Heart Of The Congos**, which was produced by Lee 'Scratch' Perry. It also features Toots and The Maytals.

The revived **Jamdown** was released by Reggae Films UK. It was originally released in France and parts of Africa by CBS France.

Cedric Myton, an original member of The Congos, said filming for **Jamdown** took place in 1979. During an interview with **The Gleaner** last week, he described it as a "beautiful movie" which captures the trio at the peak of their powers.

"At the time, **Fisherman** was big in France, everybody was talking 'bout Congos there," he explained.

**Fisherman** is one of the songs from **Heart Of The Congos** which was recorded in the late 1970s by Myton, [Ashanti](#) Roy (Roydel Johnson) and Watty Burnett at the eccentric Perry's Black Ark studio in Washington Gardens, Kingston.

### **Powerful statement**

Though it never gained substantial distribution, **Heart Of The Congos** was such a powerful statement that it created a stir when it was reissued in the 1990s by British independent company Blood and Fire Records.

In addition to **Fisherman**, **Solid Foundation**, **The Wrong Thing**, **Can't Come In** and **Congoman** are other powerful tracks from a set which is regarded by reggae buffs as one of the music's finest efforts.

According to Myton, Bonn and his crew filmed them during recording sessions at the Aquarius in Kingston. They also captured operations at the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation [radio station](#) where disc jockeys friendly to roots-reggae, like Errol Thompson and Michael 'Mikey Dread' Campbell, worked.

Jamdown is one of several reggae films done in the 1970s. Others include **Rockers** and [Roots Rock Reggae](#).

Myton and Johnson formed The Congos in the early 1970s when reggae was taking off internationally. A cousin of former Jamaica Olympic distance runner, Neville Myton, the former was previously a member of The Royal Rasses vocal group, while Johnson had done sessions with Perry.

While recording with Perry, Burnett joined the group at the insistence of the producer. Their solid harmonies are captured on **Heart Of The Congos**.

After an acrimonious split in the early 1990s, the group reformed as a quartet and tours regularly. The fourth member is Kenroy Fyffe, father of deejay Lady G.

The Congos are currently touring Europe.

'Though it never gained substantial distribution, 'Heart Of The Congos' was such a powerful statement that it created a stir when it was reissued in the 1990s'

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 **Pete** 5 days ago

Wonderful to hear of this great film reviving this amazing music, the Congos in my opinion where just as powerful a band as the wailers at the time Heart of the Congos was made yet they never had the same distribution but they album later had much recognition via Blood+Fire in the UK, this album is what i see as the best reggae album ever made, if yo dont know it then buy a copy, you won't be disapointed...

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