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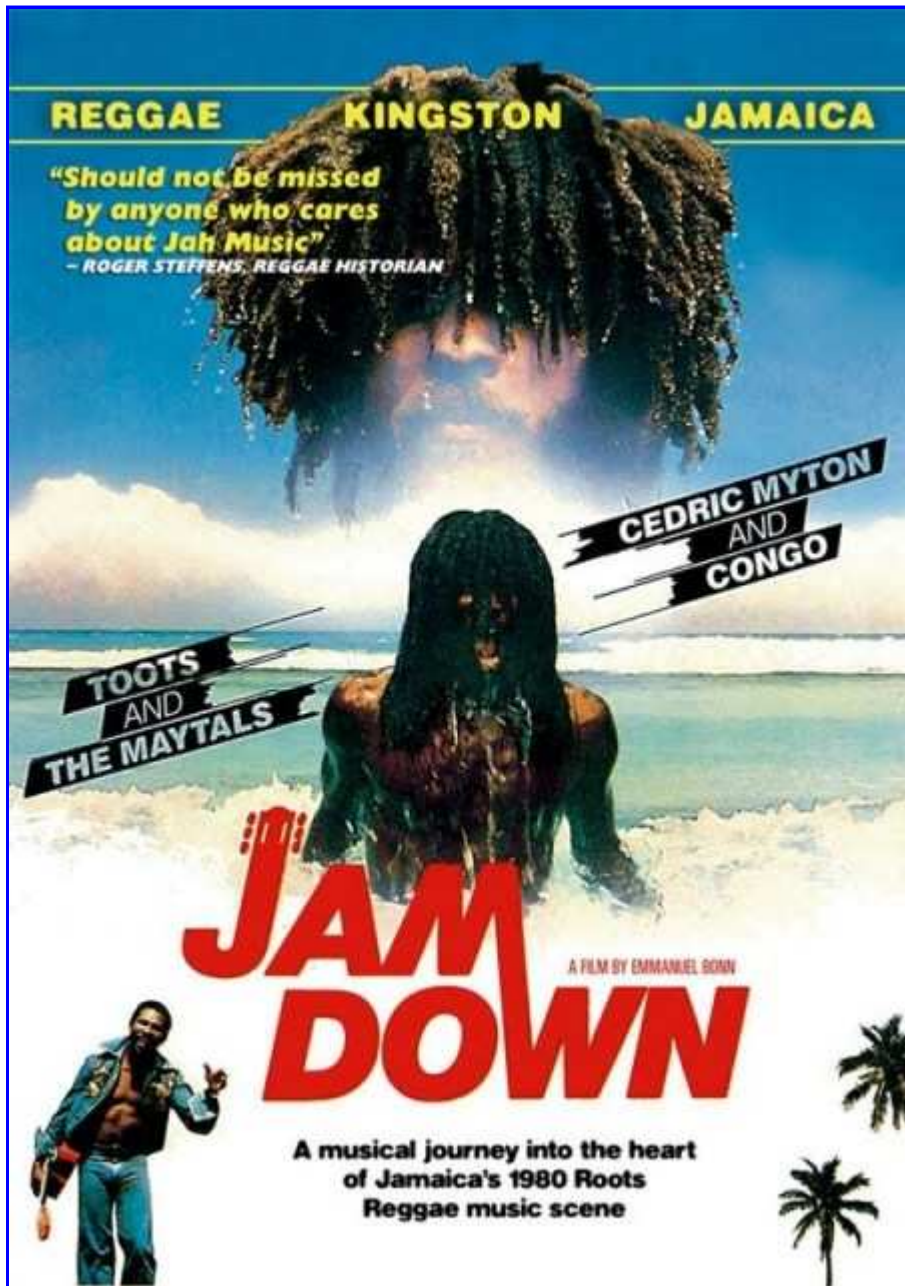
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JAMDOWN, Manifesto Jamaica

September 20, 2010
by jamediapro

JAMDOWN– MUSICAL JOURNEY TO THE 1980s



Another Jamaican reggae film has surfaced to welcome appreciation from reggae lovers worldwide. This is **JAMDOWN**, described as a ‘musical journey to the 1980s’ that highlights the music of **The Congos** – a much-praised but nearly-forgotten group that emerged when reggae made its first international breakthrough. The Congos were 1970s recording artists signed to Island Records whose first album ‘Heart of the Congos’ has been hailed as one of reggae’s greatest musical collections. Some say the excellence of the Congos music caused Blackwell to sideline them and their musical output, fearing they would overtake Marley’s popularity. Sad to say, the Congos’ international success came late, but better late than never.

Now the release of “JAMDOWN” a documentary film about the Congos revives the history and music of this original roots reggae group and re-introduces them to a new and welcoming audience. “JAMDOWN” takes viewers on a journey back to 1980, straight into the heart of the Jamaican reggae scene, following legendary Reggae artists **Toots Hibbert** and The Congo’s. Shot in 1980, the film had a limited release in France and therefore remained undiscovered by the rest of the world. Since

it's initial release almost 30 years ago 'JAMDOWN' has become what reggae footage collectors often refer to as "the holy grail of reggae films" due to it's rarity and difficulty in finding an original copy of the film.



For the first time in almost 30 years this film has now been made available to own on DVD by Reggae Films UK, the online marketplace and archive of reggae films. The film contains some of the only known early footage of The Congos, performing tracks from their legendary 'Heart Of The Congo's' LP produced by Lee 'Scratch' Perry at the Black Ark studios at the height of their career. JAMDOWN contains some of the most electrifying live reggae footage to have ever been captured on film, and viewers are sure to enjoy this legendary film as much as we do.

Roger Steffens, Reggae historian, says of 'JAMDOWN': *"...a melodic time machine that transports us magically to a time of massive creativity as reggae was emerging to the outside world. We see some of its most rootical exponents at the height of their powers. The film's re-emergence after three decades is almost miraculous, and it should not be missed by anyone who cares about Jah Music."*

MANIFESTO JAMAICA



MANIFESTO JAMAICA: Lesley Ann Welsh
& Donisha Prendergast

Manifesto JA is a non-profit organization dedicated to youth empowerment and nation building through the Arts and Culture. The executive board of vibrant young people includes film maker **Donisha Marley Prendergast** and entertainment planner **Lesley Ann Welsh**, and combines the energies of an active group of young Jamaicans – all below 30-years-old – making it what they describe as a truly 'for youth, by youth' initiative.

The Manifesto Jamaica group decided that the best help they could give to empowering youth was to encourage their talents as performing artists and provide performance space for them, as well as providing the music industry with a new, younger crew of talented artists.

Since its inception, Manifesto Jamaica has been providing interesting opportunities for exposure for performing artists in theatre, music, dance, culinary, visual, spiritual, martial and literary arts. Their objective is to empower the youth and expose them to the arts as an option, instead of crime to earn a living. Targeting the inner city communities, they have held workshops in Greenwich Town and August Town and hope to take the programme further afield to the countryside.

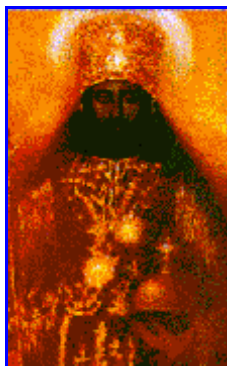


Jabalance & Donisha

Recently they held three performance evenings on Friday nights at the popular Bookophilia uptown bookshop at which a number of artists have pleased the attending crowd with interesting performances. These have included unknown artists hoping to 'buss', as well as up-coming stars such as **Protoje**, the **Nomadz** band, and **Kariuki**. Most interesting performance on the final Friday came from St. Ann roots reggae artist **Jabalance**, who introduced Donisha Prendergast onstage to sing a duet with him. The song received such loud applause, that the two went into the studio a few days later and recorded it for future release.

This project by Manifesto Jamaica is commendable, as it provides new ways for would-be artists to try out their performance skills and make new fans. Hopefully the ambitious objectives will bear fruit for the many performers taking advantage of this unique opportunity. The music industry needs this breath of fresh air.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:



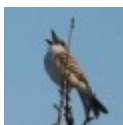
The acts by which We live and the attitudes by which We act must be clear beyond question. Let us be true to what We believe, that Our beliefs may serve and honour us.

H.I.M. Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia

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1.

[Emma Lewis](#) [permalink](#)

September 21, 2010 3:43 am

Wonderful quote from Haile Selassie, and very interesting blog on some great, neglected reggae artists.

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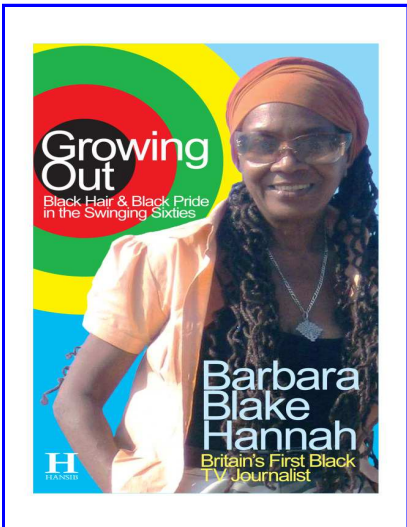
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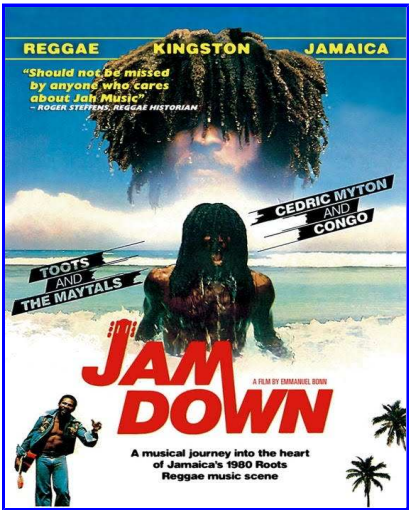
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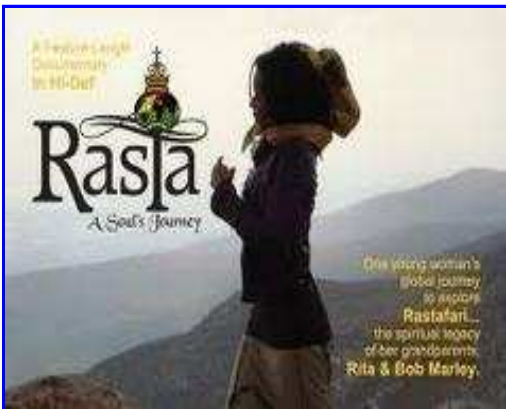
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- [@dustinbrownja](#) congrats. Aubyn Hill says he is meeting with you next week. Hope it all finally works out for you to play for Jamaica [5 days ago](#)
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