

MAIN/NEWS[Archives](#)**DVD REVIEWS**[Horror](#)
[Anime](#)
[Animation](#)
[Asian Cinema](#)
[Disney](#)
[Movies](#)
[Television](#)
[Special Interest](#)
[Easter Eggs](#)**BluRay****UMD****GAME REVIEWS**[Playstation 2](#)
[Playstation 3](#)
[PSP](#)
[GameCube](#)
[Nintendo Wii](#)
[Nintendo DS](#)
[Gameboy Advance](#)
[Xbox](#)
[Xbox 360](#)
[iPod](#)
[PC](#)
[Codes / FAQs](#)**MUSIC REVIEWS**[Anime OSTs](#)
[Game OSTs](#)
[Movie OSTs](#)
[Misc Music](#)**MANGA**[By Author](#)
[By Title](#)**MISCELLANEOUS**[Books](#)
[Gadgets](#)
[Statues / Figurines](#)
[Interviews](#)**CONTACT / MEDIA**[Advertising](#)
[Contact Info](#)

Jam Down

1981

[Reggae Films UK](#)

Buy It Now

[PriceGrabber.com](#)

The Best Place to Buy Your DVD's

Jamaica will conjure up thoughts of tropical beaches and reggae music . . . okay, there might be a select group of people that immediately think of marijuana, but that's not really what this review is concerning. There's little doubt however that what started as nothing more than a localized form of music became a huge, international sensation that not only transcended cultures but has also become influential in creating new fusions of the music.

Jam Down is a 1981 documentary from director Emmanuel Bonn which I gather was meant to explore reggae and its humble origins. This is an assumption however as Bonn isn't exactly a master at trying to get the point of his film across which may be why IMDB only lists this and one other film in his resume, and the second one is a short. Unless you're very involved in reggae I think that most people will immediately think of Bob Marley and there's no denial that what he did for the genre was nothing short of spectacular, but this isn't another documentary that focuses on Marley, his career, and his unfortunate death but instead looks at two other artists which might not be known to some.

Toots and the Maytals is the group fronted by Frederick "Toots" Hibbert and Cedric Myton and Congo are the two acts that are focused on in the documentary. Most won't realize it, but chances are good that you have heard their music before as some of their songs have been covered by other artists or the original tracks have been incorporated into soundtracks for movies and video games. The interviews with either of them aren't terribly informative in terms of their career. Often it's just short stories, sometimes a focus on the origins of reggae music minus a great amount of detail, and always with thick Jamaican accents which at times can be a little trying to make out everything they are trying to get across.

Instead of going into the history of reggae Bonn spends more time covering the artists in the studio. While this portion I often found to be impressive and fascinating, especially some of the more improvisational pieces, I don't feel that this will be something that appeals to very many who watch *Jam Down*. Those who are new to reggae or don't know much about it outside of what is classified as the more "mainstream" artists, will find precious little to really inform them on the music. The occasional interview with fans comes across as being what you might expect; very little true substance, nothing in regarding the history, and based solely on opinion minus facts.

Although Bonn adds in many scenes of the conditions in Jamaica, at least during the early 80's (though I doubt much has really changed) the picture quality of the film leaves much to be desired. It's often too dark as far as the hues go to really bring it to life. It has more of a feeling of watching an old, very worn, 8 millimeter movie played on a projector that's on its last legs. *Jam Down* really could have benefited from having the picture cleaned up and digitally remastered. The film also lacks special features of any kind, something that would have been extremely easy to add if the focus would have been on the artists that appear in the film.

Jam Down doesn't just fall short of having potential, it lacks it completely. Turning your directing attentions of bands in the studio or out in the street singing and playing doesn't constitute a musical while just letting them ramble on without trying to add much vital information doesn't make for a good documentary. Instead *Jam Down* often comes across as a very amateurish presentation where Bonn probably had a really good idea in mind, he just didn't know how to correctly get it across on film.

-mike-

Directed by:
Emmanuel Bonn

Featuring:
Toots and the Maytals
Cedric Myton and Congo

DVD Features
Aspect Ratio: 1.33:1
Audio: English Dolby Stereo 2.0

© 2002-2010 [Underland Online Reviews](#), All Rights Reserved | [Underland Online™](#) is a trademark of Underland Inc.
All movie titles, pictures, character names & etc. are registered trademarks and/or copyrights of their respective holders.

All material used within the boundaries of the Fair Use Law.