

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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– *The untold half of how Jamaican music conquered the world.*



**KINGSTON, JA. JAN 16, 2020:** The Ministry of Culture, Gender and Sports, the National Gallery of Jamaica (NGJ) and the Jamaican Music Museum in association with La Philharmonie de Paris are pleased to present the exhibition *Jamaica, Jamaica!*, which opens on February 2, 2020 at 11:00am and closes on June 28, 2020.

Initially launched at Philharmonie de Paris in 2017 and titled after the eponymous 1985 hit song by Brigadier “The General” Jerry, *Jamaica, Jamaica!* examines how the tiny Caribbean island of Jamaica has become an extraordinary force in the world heritage and history of music.

*Jamaica, Jamaica!* brings together rare memorabilia, photographs, visual art, audio recordings and footage unearthed from Jamaica's best museums and most elusive collectors and studios, while collaborating with legendary local visual artists to convey the essence of a true Jamaican music experience.

Teeming with creativity and innovation, Jamaica has produced some of the major musical currents in today's popular music landscape; yet, its rich history and diversity is often overshadowed by its most famous icon, reggae superstar Bob Marley. This exhibition aims at showcasing a broader vision that has allowed the world to know the island's music, by digging deep into its past and present in search for the roots of "rebel music", beyond the cliché and the postcard.

The most ambitious exhibition ever staged on the topic, *Jamaica, Jamaica!* celebrates the musical innovations born on the island in its specific historic and social contexts, unveiling the story behind the musical genres of kumina, revival, mento, ska, rocksteady, reggae, dub and dancehall - as well as the impact of the local sound system culture, street culture, and visual arts on today's global pop culture.

"What about the half/that's never been told?", Jamaican singer Dennis Brown wondered. Complete with interactive installations, events and panels throughout its tenure, *Jamaica, Jamaica!* seeks to address and pay homage to the untold half, thus explaining how and why, born from a tiny island scarred by slavery and colonialism, Jamaica's music has been able to conquer the world.



*Caption: Papa Screw -  
Black Scorpio Headquarters 1985  
Image: Beth Lesser*

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

- Interactive installations, an "operate it yourself" sound system and touch-screen riddim navigator.
- Dedicated web radio and app, "Radio Jamaica".
- A true multimediuem exhibition, *Jamaica, Jamaica!* mixes classic fine arts (Mallica "Kapo" Reynolds, Everaldo Brown, Sydney McLaren), contemporary art (Ebony Patterson, Matthew McCarthy, Leasho Johnson.), mural art ("Bones" Williams, Errol "Gideon" Reid, Ras Lava), photographs (Peter Dean Rickards, Beth Lesser, Arthur Gorson, Kookie Kinkhead, Peter Simon), audio, video and musical artifacts - including equipment from Studio One, King Jammy's and Randy's studios, Peter Tosh's M16 guitar, Count Ossie's percussions, drum kits from the Skatalites and Sly and Robbie, and Hedley Jones' guitar.

## PROGRAMMES

- There will be a full range of programming, including film screenings, and artist and curator talks.

- The regular National Gallery *Last Sunday* programme on the last Sunday of every month continues. Each one will explore a different aspect of the exhibition.
- **Special Language Group Tours.** Free German, French, Japanese and Jamaican Language tours available by appointment.
- **Children’s Musical Programming** on Saturdays.

## SECTIONS

The exhibition is articulated in six sections, each section focusing on a key moment or a specific aspect of Jamaican music.

*All photos from an original exhibition presented at the Musée de la Musique - La Philharmonie de Paris.*



*Caption: Exhibition view featuring the Skatalites Drum set*

### INTRODUCTION: Seeing Sounds, Hearing Images

A prelude and a synthesis, this introductory section juxtaposes two elements that have made Jamaican music unique: its secular aspect and its ritual aspect - by showcasing together iconic items of sound system culture (equipment, photographs, video), and spiritual musical instruments. This section will also feature a monumental series of portraits of Jamaican iconic music makers from all eras and musical styles - courtesy of downtown legends, mural artists Ras Lava, "Bones" Williams and Errol "Gideon" Reid.

#### 1— Freedom Sounds

The musical heritages born from slavery are showcased in this historical room: from revival, kumina, and the maroons, all the way to Count Ossie's drummers and nyabinghi music. This section incidentally examines how these ritual genres mixed up with local folk and (seemingly) more innocuous mento drew the blueprint of Jamaica's own "rebel music."

#### 2— Voices of Independence



*Caption: Wooden sign from the music hall of the Alpha Boys School*

When founding members of The Skatalites met at Alpha Boys School, a revolution happened: for the first time, the music "from the streets" entered the musical spectrum. From a Jamaican blend of jazz to ska and its next embodiment, rock steady, these new sounds preceded reggae throughout the 1960s, echoing the island's physical independence from England.

### 3— Studios: The Echo Chamber



As ska entered the picture, Jamaica's music industry became a crucial part of daily life, intertwining music and social issues – as a subsection about cult movie "The Harder They Come" reminisces. This section is a voyage through Jamaica's top studios over the years: from Studio One to the synthetic sounds of Sly and Robbie, via Lee "Scratch" Perry's Black Ark, Randy's, and King Jammys.

*Caption: Ska Authentic Presenting the original Ska-talites from Jamaica- Studio 1, 1967*

### 4— Get up, Stand up

At the beginning of the 1970s, Rasta philosophy seeped through the whole music fraternity, gathering more and more steam beyond the strict nyabingi drummer circles. From then on, why would the freshly born reggae, also known as "roots music", call on to Jamaican Pan African visionary Marcus Garvey and Ethiopian Emperor Hailé Sélassié? This section details who these two often-quoted figures are, and their everlasting presence in Jamaica's popular music.

### 5 — Trench Town to the World



A social experiment of communal living eventually scarred by political violence, Trenchtown's tenement yards contributed to the musical destiny of Jamaica. Honouring Trenchtown's greatest, this section explains how Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer brought reggae to the world from

their humble beginnings in this West Kingston neighbourhood.

Caption: Bob Marley



by: Adrian Booth

## 6 — Dancehall Stylee

Following Bob Marley's passing in 1981, Jamaica once again invented a new musical paradigm – a new genre called dancehall. Dancehall felt as if the country wanted to talk to itself again – by celebrating the sound system culture it created and had perfected over decades, and its bubbling visual, linguistic and graphic creativity. From the early days of dancehall culture to its most contemporary icons and movements, this last section showcases the visionary pioneer spirit born in Jamaica that global pop music has been tapping into – without always crediting its origins.

Dance Hall  
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### About the Curators

**Sebastien Carayol, Independent Curator.** Born and raised in France, Sebastien Carayol initially discovered Jamaican music through the power of Jamaican-English sound systems in London and developed his passion from this initial experience. His quest led him to interview key characters in reggae's history for music magazines such as *Wax Poetics*, *Natty Dread*, *Riddim*, *Vibrations*. He directed the acclaimed 10-episode documentary series *Sound System* for the ARTE channel (France/Germany) in 2017. As a curator, he has developed exhibitions on the topic in Paris, France (*Jamaica, Jamaica!*, Philharmonie de Paris, 2017; *Say Watt, le Culte du Sound System*, La Gaîté Lyrique, 2013) and Los Angeles (*Hometown Hifi*, Sonos Studios, 2015).

**Herbie Miller, Jamaica Music Museum.** Herbie Miller is a cultural historian specializing in slave culture, Black identity and ethnomusicology. He is the Director/Curator of the Jamaica Music Museum where he introduced the popular Grounation series. Miller managed reggae stars The Skatalites, Toots & the Maytals, Third World and Peter Tosh. In a career that spans over 40-years, he has produced exhibitions, concerts and recordings of ska, reggae and jazz, locally and internationally. He also composed and produced the critically acclaimed "Aluta Continua" done by reggae artist Big Youth. Two of his songs, "Feel It" and "Survival Plan" were used in major Hollywood movies *Something Wild* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. A prolific writer, Herbie Miller has had his essays published in journals, magazines and as book chapters.

**O'Neil Lawrence, National Gallery of Jamaica.** O'Neil Lawrence is the Chief Curator of the National Gallery of Jamaica, and also has curatorial oversight for their western branch National Gallery West. He was the lead curator on the exhibitions *Seven Women Artists* (2015), *Masculinities* (2015), *I Shall Return Again* (2018) and *Beyond Fashion* (2018). Lawrence is an artist whose photography and video work has been included in several international exhibitions. His research interests include race, gender and sexuality in Caribbean and African Diasporal art and visual culture; memory, identity and hidden archives; photography as a medium and a social vehicle; Caribbean and general art history and

museums and other public cultural institutions. He has contributed essays to publications on Caribbean art most recently *Histórias Afro-Atlânticas Vol 2 Antologia* (MASP 2018). In 2018 he served on the Board of the *Davidoff Art Initiative* and he is currently on the Advisory Council of the *Caribbean Art Initiative*.

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### ***About the National Gallery of Jamaica***

The National Gallery of Jamaica, established in 1974, is the oldest and largest public art gallery in the Anglophone Caribbean. It has a comprehensive collection of early, modern and contemporary art from Jamaica along with smaller Caribbean and international holdings. A significant part of its collections is on permanent view. The NGJ has an active exhibition programme, which includes retrospectives of work by major Jamaican artists, thematic exhibitions, guest-curated exhibitions, touring exhibitions that originate outside of the island, and, its two recurrent national exhibitions, the Kingston Biennial and the NGJ Summer Exhibition. The NGJ offers a range of educational services, including guided tours, lectures and panel discussions, and children's art programmes and also operates a gift shop and coffee shop.

The National Gallery of Jamaica is a Division of the Institute of Jamaica, an Agency of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport.

#### **Contacts:**

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#### **Opening hours:**

Tuesdays to Thursdays: 10 am - 4:30 pm | Fridays: 10 am - 4 pm | Saturdays: 10 am - 3 pm.

**Last Sundays:** the NGJ is open every last Sunday of the month, 11 am to 4 pm

#### **Fees:**

Adults: JMD\$400

Senior Citizens and Teachers accompanying student groups: JMD\$200

Children and Students with ID: free

Guided tours: JMD\$3,000 (general); JMD\$2,000 (schools) – by appointment only

#### **Online:**

Website: [www.natgalja.org.jm](http://www.natgalja.org.jm)

Blog: [nationalgalleryofjamaica.wordpress.com](http://nationalgalleryofjamaica.wordpress.com)

Instagram: nationalgalleryofjamaica

Twitter: natgalleryja

Fb page: National Gallery of Jamaica

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