

# Introduction

As the world evolves and things within our realm changes every day, we have to adapt to the reality that the only constant thing in life are changes. In this technological era that we now live, there has to be ways to recapture the past, archive it and preserve it for the future. If we don't know our past, we can't deal with the present and we definitely will not be prepared to deal with the future

*In the 80s Dancehall - Reggae Recall*, is focused on the sub-genre of Reggae music known as *DANCEHALL*. This book is a positive recollection of the entertainment aspect of the music in the 1980s throughout Jamaica West Indies and its connection to foreign countries.

*Dancehall*, as outlined in this book, focuses on the way we know it as "*a way of life*." It is a culture that was created to fulfill the need for entertainment among the minority and the poorer class of Jamaicans. Rooted in the ghetto, dancehall has emerged to become an Industry spanning several Continents around the globe.

The 1980s era was the decade referred to by many older dancehall fans and entertainers as the time "*when dancehall was nice*." It was also the years of some of the most significant changes in the dancehall. For example: Sound Systems which is the heartbeat of the *Dancehall*, became more equipped from the transformation to the new digital age and computerized rhythms began appearing on turntables.

As Dancehall became more recognized as a culture, we saw the massive acceptance of the music into society. More ghetto youths with vocal abilities found something tangible to cling to for a chance of survival, and also for the hope of stardom. Dancehall also brought hope for many in the form of entrepreneurship. This once discredited form of social life has evolved into a lucrative industry for entertainers, promoters and everyone else who had an interest in the music.

With appreciation and respect to all mentioned, we present this book as a formal piece of the history of dancehall. It does *not* focus on any one individual entertainer, but on the collective contribution of all who were involved in spreading the "*dancehall vibes*." No one is intentionally omitted and this written piece serves as a *tribute to all those* who have paved the way for this worldwide phenomenon.

In reference to the writing style used, most words in italic quotations (""") are slang and lyrics, while most "*bolded*" phrases in quotations used in the articles are actual titles of recordings that were done by entertainers of the 80s. All slangs and lyrics presented in each article are written in a conscious, humorous and very respectful manner. In doing so, some may find some of the grammar to be a little "*quasi*" like, but this was the real deal *DANCEHALL* as was seen. A dancehall Dictionary is also included to explain some of the terms, slangs and lingo used

## How you string a sound inna the lawn

**"Red pon Red and Black pon Black"**



***"Yow Brethren, back-up de truck inna de lawn,  
Because dance afi gwaan.***

***Crew, tek off the speaker boxes and lay dem out  
People from East, West, North and South.***

***Engineer, string up the sound,  
Big sound inna de lawn and big dance in a town"***

**F**or most sound system fanatics and dancehall fans, the sweet music playing in the dancehall comes as a result of the electronics: the *amplifiers, speaker boxes,*

---

it could possibly carry, would then roll up in fine style. The sound system would then be strung up and for the 80s dancehall fans this was another opportunity to repeat what they did best, which was to enjoy a 80s dance/party at the time when “*Dancehall was nice.*”

*“IT WAS DANCEHALL TIME”*



**Big pot of Soup,  
Small pot of Curry Goat  
and a medium pot of white rice.**

**“DANCEHALL NICE”**

# The GateMan

**Tek yuh**



**out a my**



**Gimme back me \$18 change !!!**

**"leo mi hand Gateman mek me come in"  
"lego mi shut before you get a gun butt."**

These are the words of one of the greatest dancehall duo of the 80s - *the Colonel Josey Wales* and *the Principal Charlie Chaplin*.

When dancehall was nice in the better years of the 80s, one of the hardest work-ing yet less respected worker was the "*Gateman*." The Gateman is the person who collected the admission fee at the entrance to the dancehall.

## "Memories don't live like *People* do"

*The legends in our lives are those who we reflect on daily. These individuals that have made significant contributions through their talents and hard work, and by their aspirations they have shaped the way we do things in the present.*

*Life while being unequal at times has given some of us our due share of respect and honor during our lifetime. Yet, for others, what they have contributed is not recognized until they have crossed over into the after-life.*

*Some people are born with fame because of the family to which they are conceived. Some *too* become famous as a result of their associations with others. Legends on the other hand achieve their recognition from the tireless work that they put into whatever they have done. As a result of their work, they have helped to shape our lives and have made our world a better place.*

*As the saying goes "Memories don't live like people do." Throughout the Dancehall business, there are those persons who have passed on that we will always remember by their contribution to the industry. While some have contributed more than others, we respectfully pay tribute to all; no one has been intentionally omitted.*

*So to all Dancehall entertainers that have left us we pay our gratitude forever. In Dancehall terminology we say **"BIG RESPECT."***

1. **Barry Brown.** The late great Barry Brown made his transition in the year 2004. He did not leave to go into the "*two house department*," but to "*enter the kingdom of Zion*." Without his abundant talent and love dancehall could not have been the same. "*Selah*." For more **Barry Brown** see *Dancehall Singers in Action*.

2. **Billy Boyo.** He was one of the deejays who were considered to be "*young soldiers*" on big sound system during the great dancehall decade. *Billy Boyo* was a member of one of the best sound system line-up of the early 80s, *The Volcano crew*.

3. **Bobby Melody.** Although Bobby Melody had to "*try so hard*," he never gave up until he brought "*roots man music*" to the forefront of dancehall. Known as the "*original melody*," Bobby was not a singer that was "*too fussy fussy*." He was frequently seen at the dancehall on the *Black Scorpio* sound system using his melody to "*ram the session*." Anytime he held the microphone, dancehall fans