



FROM JAMAICA TO THE WORLD: REGGAE ON FILM

Inna de Yard

While recording a collaborative album in Stony Hill, Jamaica, and preparing for a concert in Paris, a group of reggae veterans including Cedric Myton, Ken Boothe, Judy Mowatt and Lloyd Parks discuss life, music and philosophy. Each offers personal cultural histories that add richness and depth to this frank and open documentary.

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Inna de Yard, a genial documentary account of Jamaican reggae luminaries reuniting after many years, opens with a tuning-up of sorts. We are in a hushed lane in the verdant hills above Kingston, the only music for now the chatter of birds. A grizzled local arrives on site to inspect a beaten-up old piano; tweaking its innards, he explains that the sound has to be just so to pass muster. As the film goes on to introduce its seasoned collaborators, who have come together to record an acoustic album in their old stomping ground of Stony Hill, there's a similar sense of cobwebs being banished. Then again, it doesn't take very long for this crew to get back into shape, as witnessed from leisurely, convivial recording sessions and in euphoric snapshots from a triumphant concert at Paris's Olympia theatre.

Director Peter Webber is better known for ornately mounted but airless period pieces such as *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (2003) and *Hannibal Rising* (2007), but he has prior form with the music doc, having made television profiles of Richard Wagner and Franz Schubert earlier in his career. *Inna de Yard* sees him loosen up considerably – it's an unfussy, sometimes sketchy and scrappy portrait that nevertheless evinces a deep affection for its subject. In focusing on an indigenous musical heritage and the revitalised veterans thereof, it inevitably recalls Wim Wenders's *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999), which also foregrounded an album's momentous creation. That film made a seismic cultural impact in vaunting its under-the-radar Cuban musicians, yet the artists here – including Ken Boothe, Winston McAnuff, Judy Mowatt and Horace Andy – already possess a hefty measure of international renown. Lesser known are the rising Kingston stars who join the recordings – including Derajah, Jah9 and Var – representing the passing of the torch to a new generation.

The album sessions are held at a magnificently lived-in compound above town, its nooks and crannies crammed with vintage vinyl, instruments and recording gear. In between observing the artists at work, Webber delves into their individual histories. Boothe, his honeyed voice having lost none of its quality over the years, recalls how he was catapulted to stardom at an early age with the smash hit 'Everything I Own'; it's subsequently evident that he's enjoyed fame and fortune on a higher level than some of his contemporaries. Kiddus I, who initially struggles a little getting back up to speed with the delivery of his silky baritone, laments the lasting damage done to his career when he was deported from the US at the peak of his popularity. McAnuff, whose enthusiasm for music is infectious, has a sadder tale to tell – his son Matthew, himself a performer, was killed during an altercation on the Kingston streets. Meanwhile, Mowatt speaks of her drive and determination to gain respect as a female reggae artist within a male-dominated scene. Mowatt also

supplies a concise primer of Jamaica's history of anti-colonial rebellion, relating how reggae burst forth from the densely forested hills, which the white slavers were unequipped to conquer. Perhaps the most enigmatic figure among the group is Cedric Myton, formerly of The Congos, whose lilting falsetto is spoken of with awe by his peers.

Despite the tranquil environs of the recording hangout, the various veterans haven't forgotten the difficulties in their pasts, and the poverty and dangers associated with the inner-city streets they escaped. Webber doesn't go into too much detail here, but it's clear that this remains an issue for the next generation of musicians, who dedicate one soulful number to McAnuff's late son. As the posse step out on to the Olympia stage to wild adulation, what finally emerges from the film is a touching sense of positivity and pride, with talents of past and present cementing an illustrious legacy.

Matthew Taylor, *Sight & Sound*, September 2019

INNA DE YARD

Directed by: Peter Webber

Production Companies: Borsalino Productions, WAG Productions, Wagram Films, Charades, Valdés, Le Pacte, SofiTVciné 5

With the participation of: Région Île-de-France,

Société des Auteurs Compositeurs et Editeurs de Musique,

Le Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée

Developed in association with: Devtvine4

Presented by: Borsalino Productions

Produced by: Laurent Baudens, Laurent Flahault, Gaël Nouaille

Written by: Peter Webber

Director of Photography: Bernard Benant

Editor: Giles Gardner

Sound Recordist: Delroy Johnson

Jamaica 2019

99 mins

This season is presented by **African Odysseys**, which celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2022



FROM JAMAICA TO THE WORLD: REGGAE ON FILM

Seniors' Free Archive Matinee: Inna de Yard + discussion

Mon 1 Aug 14:00

Rockers

Thu 4 Aug 20:40; Sat 13 Aug 14:45

No Place Like Home: Redux

Fri 5 Aug 21:00; Fri 19 Aug 18:40

Riddim Moves – A Dancehall Day Event

Sat 6 Aug 13:00-18:00

Dancehall Queen

Sat 6 Aug 18:40; Tue 9 Aug 18:20

Steppin' Razor: Red X

Sun 7 Aug 18:00; Sat 20 Aug 14:45

Rudeboy: The Story of Trojan Records

Fri 12 Aug 18:20; Sun 28 Aug 18:30

Better Mus' Come

Sat 13 Aug 18:15; Sat 27 Aug 20:45

Sprinter

Sat 13 Aug 20:40; Fri 26 Aug 18:10

African Redemption: The Life and Legacy of Marcus Garvey

Mon 15 Aug 20:40; Sun 28 Aug 14:50

Reggae Futures

Sat 20 Aug 17:30

Lion of Judah, War in Ethiopia, 1935-1936 + discussion

Tue 23 Aug 18:20

Bob Marley: The Making of a Legend + Q&A with directors Esther

Anderson and Gian Godoy

Tue 30 Aug 18:10

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