

“Kingston Be Wise”: Jamaica’s Reggae Revival, Musical Livivity, and Troubling Temporality in the Modern Global Music Industry

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Kingston, Jamaica’s capital city, is home to a cohort of creative and music industry workers organizing for creative industrial development and social uplift. This article uses interviews and textual analysis to historicize and contextualize one group, Manifesto Jamaica, and situates its work alongside close readings of new music written by political Jamaican artists organizing alongside Manifesto under the umbrella of the “Reggae Revival.” The groups’ media are characterized by two themes: (1) a cross-textual referencing practice connected to the Rastafari folk religion’s concept of *livivity*, or collectivity; and (2) an intentional troubling of temporal order, which connects the politics and people of the 1970s reggae golden age to today through the use of *riddims*, or backing tracks. Together, Manifesto Jamaica and the Reggae Revival represent creative industries development and cultural production in a specific neocolonial and Afro-diasporic global context that is worthy of study for its connection to previous histories and its impact today.

Keywords: Jamaica, reggae, Rastafari, music industry, creative industries development, neocolonialism, global communication, development

This article examines the cultural productions of a largely Kingston, Jamaica-based group of politically conscious reggae musicians and music industry professionals. Named the “Reggae Revival” by Jamaican intellectual and participant Gavin “Dutty Bookman” Hutchinson (Bookman, 2011, 2015), the group coalesced around a combination of interrelated forces: a shared experience of perceived global consciousness-raising among members of the African diaspora; a connection to other movements such as Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring; a desire to create empowerment programming for urban Kingston youth; and a commitment to issues of social justice, broadly organized around addressing the historically White supremacist structures of globally unequal systems, or what their forebear Bob Marley called a “Babylon System.”¹ The combination of these forces, along with the island’s already rich musical history, created a cultural space for the popularization of a return to conscious roots reggae recalling the genre’s

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¹ “Babylon” is a Rastafari stand-in for the decadence of the modern/Western world. It is a floating signifier that can refer to the era of trans-Atlantic slavery, the neocolonial epistemological position of Jamaica in the global economy, and the music-industrial organization against which many of the Reggae Revival artists have positioned themselves.

political and popular apotheosis in the 1970s, complete with live bands and lyrical themes that ran contra to much of the dancehall music that had taken the lead in Jamaican music at the turn of the 21st century.²

Some might say this is both a new and an old moment for reggae. Two generations after Bob Marley's creative work popularized the genre the world over, his messages inspired by Rastafari ideology, his anticapital critique, and his belief in pan-African unity are echoed, coming in new songs from the mouths of contemporary Jamaicans still battling the same forces. This new group of artists—headlined by musicians such as Chronixx, Protoje, Kabaka Pyramid, and Jah9 and supported by a group of intellectuals known as Manifesto Jamaica—is once more sharing a progressive political message using the past as present rather than mere prologue. Jamaica's reggae past lives in the musical culture of its present. The mission of such groups as the Reggae Revival is sustaining and nurturing Black diasporic consciousness in the face of disadvantage birthed by the historical conjuncture of colonialism and its ongoing aftereffects. With this past in mind, this is research about the present and the past, and how the past is present in the present. It is an article about how the musical and ideological histories of the past reverberate across time and space. What kind of cultural and political work is the marshalling of this collective community knowledge doing?

This project asks a series of research questions to explore the historical past's influence on cultural production in the present. How is the Reggae Revival inflected by larger histories—of race, diasporization, colonialism—and by the golden age of reggae? Where did the renewal come from? How do the musicians of the present relate to the past and to each other? And what do the creative industries workers of the Reggae Revival see as their broader social goals?

I address these questions in a multimethod approach that combines interviews, media discourse analysis, and close reading of the musical output of the Reggae Revival artists. In addition to its historical work, telling the story of the Reggae Revival's rise, this article makes two interlocking claims about the Revival and its musical and intellectual expression. First, collective development is central to the Reggae Revival's ethos, and the specific idea of collectivity extends historically and diasporically, expanding the bounds of how collectivity might be understood. Revival members evoke the Rastafari concept of *livity*, or the life force flowing through all living things. The music and politics of the Reggae Revival suggest what we might call a kind of *musical livity*, or a oneness throughout their musical expression. This article explores what that means and why it is an important ideological and identity-based formation for Afro-diasporic citizenship.

Second, and closely attuned to *livity*, a pattern that emerges among the artists and intellectuals of the movement illustrates a complication of linear time and history. By that, this work suggests that the past is never far from the present in the cultural output of the Reggae Revival, and the Revival's cultural production unites the 1970s with the contemporary moment. This kind of teleological collapse—also

² This is not intended as a slight to dancehall, particularly given Western media's propensity to orientalize the genre and overemphasize its connections to violence and homophobia under the umbrella term *slackness*, but the Reggae Revival artists' look backward notably excludes many of the most notable dancehall influences of its 1990s high period. See J. Brown, 1999; Cooper, 2004; Hope, 2001, 2004; Stanley Niaah, 2004, 2005; Stolzoff, 2000, among others for further nuancing of this interplay.

grounded at least in part in Rastafari—does political work. The artists suggest that they too are neocolonial diasporic subjects and that the slavery-era past continues to impact their position today. The artists turn backward so often because the colonial past is never far from their epistemological and ontological present. And their vision of the contemporary collective makes space for events, sounds, and people of the past.

A Brief Contextual History of Jamaica

First, we should briefly contextualize the big-picture terms—colonialism, global White supremacy, Babylon—that the artists of the Revival (and this article) are attempting to address.³ The island's indigenous Arawak population was colonized by Columbus and the Spaniards in the late 15th century; they held the island until 1655, when English troops took the island and ignited the Anglo-Spanish War. Seizing on the turmoil, many African slaves brought to the island by the Spanish used this moment to break free, uniting with the remaining Arawaks and setting up Maroon communities in the island's mountains. It is to these communities that many Jamaican's music-making and cultural practice can be traced (Bilby, 1992, 2002).

By the early 20th century, a printer's apprentice named Marcus Mosiah Garvey had founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association, which elaborated the concept of pan-Africanism, suggesting that the slave trade had created a shared ideology among Black people globally and that this common ground should be a place of solidarity for the oppressed and their progeny (Jacques-Garvey, 2009). Garvey advocated for a return to the African continent and a global Black nationalism that would develop educational, financial, and mercantile institutions independent from the system that had created Blacks' subjugation.

By the mid-20th century, Jamaica was transitioning to national independence, with the founding of its two major political parties, the conservative Jamaica Labor Party and the democratic socialist People's National Party. A ceremonial flag-raising ceremony was held on August 6, 1962 (see Alleyne, 1963; Lent, 1975). The new nation would join the International Monetary Fund one year later and become subject to structural adjustment and austerity measures dictated by their international benefactors. Around this time, thousands of poor farmers from the island's rural interior began to move into its cities; the population of Kingston swelled with tens of thousands of new migrants looking for work and housing, including a young Bob Marley (Gray, 2004).

Although musical genres of the Caribbean are syncretic, Trench Town is identified as the birthplace of reggae, which drew its roots from ska, rocksteady, and other indigenous musics. It was in this setting where Marley learned to play guitar, composed songs such as "No Woman, No Cry," and founded his group The Wailers. He was also taught Rastafari, the Afrocentric religious practice popularized in the wake of Garvey's principles. Rastafari suggests a singular God figure (Jah) who resides in every living being on earth; by virtue of that, all people (especially Afro-diasporic people) share an interconnectedness (i.e., livity). Rastafari suggests that Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie I was Jah incarnate, creating a homeland

³ There are copious secondary histories of Jamaica, starting with Long (1774/2003) and Gardner (1873) and continuing onward. See, for instance, Alleyne, 1988; Baxter, 1970; Brathwaite, 1971; Clarke, 1975; Davis, 1992; Nettleford, 2003; Patterson, 1967; and Thomas, 2004, among others.

for the Garveyites' return in Africa. Perhaps most germane to Manifesto, it also argues that the White European nations are "Babylon," a name drawn from the Biblical civilization that conquered the Hebrews and exiled them, creating the first major diasporization. H. Campbell (1987) suggests that one of Rastafari's greatest successes was the degree to which this naming—of modern global society as "Babylon"—cohered and informed Caribbean revolutionary intellectualism. This gives Rastas the frame for their counterhistory. Babylon informs a "spirit of resistance" traced by Chevannes (1994) in his important history of the movement's roots and impact. Erskine (2005) emphasizes diasporic contextuality of Rastafari: "The central question the Rastas pose for us," he writes, "is where we stand in relation to Africa" (p. 5).

We should understand Rastafari as more than mere metaphor or academic-theoretical frame: When you connect the dots between slavery, colonialism, and contemporary structural adjustment and austerity policies put into place by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that have hamstrung the nation into the 21st century, sufferation remains for many on the island and self-determination is not realized in any deep and durable way (see Lewis, 1994; Murrell, Spencer, & McFarlane, 1998).⁴ Instead, the island's complex neocolonial condition is manifest today in its television programming (Gordon, 2009), copyright (Toynbee, 2010), street dance and dancehall space (Bakare-Yusuf, 2005; Kingston Mann, 2016), and music and media-production technologies. The very foundations of the island's modern media systems themselves have their roots in the island's British imperial history (Dunn, 2014; see also A. Brown, 1976, 1981a, 2001; Cuthbert, 1976, 1977; and Gordon, 2009, among others). And the artists connect their subjectivity to a long history of Afro-diasporic creative work and political thought.⁵

The Roots of the Revival

This was the context in which the Reggae Revival emerged in the early aughts, with a group of intellectuals and backline creative industries workers including managers, publicists, and community activists. According to my interviews with Revival cofounders Dutty Bookman, Lesley-Anne Welsh, and Kareece Lawrence, they sought to engage youth throughout Kingston in the arts. Most of the founders met in high school and began working in the music business after graduation: Welsh as an assistant to the Marley family, Lawrence as an event planner, and Bookman as a tour guide at the Bob Marley Museum and organizer of the Ignite the Americas youth arts policy forum. Beginning with *reasonings* (a Rastafari term for sustained discussion) in 2009, the group, which also included Natalie Reid and Rita and Bob Marley's granddaughter Donisha Prendergast, organized under the banner Manifesto Jamaica, a nongovernmental organization-style program to "educate, expose, and empower" Kingston's urban youth through the arts ("Manifesto Jamaica: Educating, Exposing, & Empowering," 2011). They began to plan workshops, seminars, and healing activities, along with an annual Festival of ART'ical Empowerment. Creative practice and creative industries work, they said in their Indiegogo fundraising materials, could serve as "an agent of personal, community and national empowerment" ("Manifesto Jamaica: Educating, Exposing, & Empowering," 2011, para. 1). The

⁴ Much work has been done to show how, industrially, other nations continue to limit Jamaicans' ability to grow through trade deals and international regulation. See Bernal, 1984; A. Brown, 1981b; Harrigan, 1998; and Stephanie Black's incredible documentary film *Life and Debt* (2001).

⁵ For more sustained discussion of Rastafari in the contemporary case, see the extensive volume by Barnett and Nettleford (2012).

group began to cultivate international partnerships with a Canadian organization, Manifesto (there is a large Jamaican diasporic community in Toronto, Manifesto's home city), and after less than a year, they had acquired sponsorship from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, a funding apparatus of the Canadian government that, under special circumstances, grants money to groups, like Manifesto, outside Canada. They also received some money from the Jamaican Social Development Commission to help sponsor the first festival.

The first event was held August 19, 2010, at Kingston's Bookophilia bookstore and was covered in the city's longstanding newspaper the *Jamaica Gleaner* ("ART'ical Provides Intimate Entertainment," 2010). It began with a traditional Afro-diasporic ritual called *libation*, which traces its roots to West African Igbo and Akan culture. Practitioners frame this gesture as a ritual of heritage in which the performance practice connects the actor to their ancestors—in spirit if not explicitly in the form of religious transubstantiation (see Nehusi, 2015). Poetry readings and musical performances from local artists followed. Meanwhile, artists also gathered at Jamnesia, a surf camp and performing arts space 10 miles east of Kingston, for weekly jam sessions on Saturday evenings. Jamnesia's full array of instruments for the musicians to use helped foster the live-band emphasis that would continue as the Revival grew. Their events began to receive extensive coverage and near-universal praise in the *Gleaner* (Beckford, 2010; Cooke, 2010; Hansen, 2010; Henry, 2010; "Manifesto Jamaica Receives," 2010; "Women Fuse Sight, Sound," 2010; and more). Moved by the broad agenda and programming, including more performances, art demonstrations, vocational film training, and other arts-based events that supported the narrative of Jamaica's musical and creative significance, Kingston began to take notice.

Other events quickly followed, including a weekly radio show on Kingston's Roots FM. The performers involved included those who went on to become a who's who of Reggae Revival musicians. Protoje (then still known as Oje, his birth name) and Jah9 (née Janine Cunningham) headlined the August 27, 2010, Roots Rock event; Kabaka Pyramid performed on September 10.

"Empowerment" appears throughout the Revival's cultural production and is something of a vague goal. Thus, writing about the early cultural work of the Manifesto group means engaging with some of these abstractions. But throughout the press coverage, certain themes emerge, among them the belief that giving the youth of the city a creative outlet might work in opposition to gang influences and violence that were present in the political climate and musical subtexts of the dancehall aughts. "Manifesto Jamaica is all about education, exposure and empowering the youth and letting them know that art is an option," Kareece Lawrence told the *Gleaner* (Henry, 2010, p. D6):

Instead of having countless youth turning to crime they know that they have other options. We believe the arts can unify Jamaica's youth by opening up new channels of communication, creating opportunities for sharing and collaboration and strengthening networks and community ties. (Henry, 2010, p. D6)

A career guide published in 2012 (funded by the European Union and the Jamaica Social Investment Fund) outlines their growing ambition:

Manifesto Jamaica envisions a society that recognizes, respects, and values the contributions of creative industries as much as it does the contributions of traditional industries and corporate structures. Hence, the mission of the organization is not only to work with youth but also to advocate for the necessary actions to make the creative industries cornerstones of the Jamaican economy. ("The ART'ical Career Guide," 2012, p. 2)

Hesmondhalgh (2013) argues for a tripartite conception of the role of creative labor:

The importance of the cultural industries in modern societies rests on three related elements: their ability to make and circulate products that influence our knowledge, understanding and experience (texts); their role as systems for the management of creativity and knowledge; and their effects as agents of economic, social and cultural change. (p. 4)

This research engages with the role, standing, and productions of Manifesto Jamaica and the Reggae Revival as a set of relations that have the potential to impact the Jamaican creative economy. It suggests that the texts of the Revival—principally its songs, but also its visual art and other creative endeavors—are media texts that circulate globally through Internet and social media technologies as well as digital streaming services such as Spotify. And furthermore, following Hesmondhalgh and in line with the beliefs of the Manifesto Jamaica workers themselves, this is a cultural industries project oriented toward economic and social change.

The intersection of creative industries and urban development work has been taken up within scholarly literature, most notably in the work of Richard Florida (2002), whose *The Rise of the Creative Class* argues that in a postindustrial world, a newly emergent class of workers could become economic drivers in a global economy that was emphasizing the importance of idiosyncratic creative production. But that literature (and its many detractors) largely elide the colonial and neocolonial condition that would be faced by creatives in Kingston.

The second of Hesmondhalgh's (2013) elements—the creative industries' "role as systems for the management of creativity and knowledge" (p. 4)—in this case must consider creative industries as products of a colonial episteme, which means they face particular challenges. Born and Hesmondhalgh (2000) appropriately address this in the introduction to a volume titled *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* that argues for a specific critical orientation for this type of music-and-media scholarship. Postcolonial analysis, then, they write,

sets a fruitful example for music studies in that it pays meticulous attention to textual detail, but always sees such analysis as subsidiary to the larger project of thinking through the implications of cultural expression for understanding asymmetrical power relations and concomitant processes of marginalization and denigration. (p. 5)

This takes on a double meaning for this research, which explores the cultural productions of a group interested in addressing postcolonial, neocolonial, and racial inequity and is, at the same time, invested in and indebted to anticolonial work (see also Saha, 2018).

Furthermore, in line with the recent work of McRobbie (2015, 2016), we should also address the difficulty of an anticolonial project in a moment when state and entrepreneurial discourse turns creative labor (what McRobbie calls "passionate work") toward a neoliberalizing framework whereby these workers' precarity is supposedly offset by the satisfaction (and in this case, we might argue, perceived cultural import) of the work (see Curtin & Sanson, 2016). Or, more succinctly, are the Manifesto workers being insufficiently compensated for their creative labor, and is this a form of neocolonialism? Ultimately, although it is important that these structuring forces be identified, it is worthwhile to suggest that the labor of these workers is tactical and agential and that their community-based vision of development is resistant to neoliberalizing tendencies. Creative cultural labor in the city is undoubtedly influenced by its specific historical and geopolitical condition (see Luckman, 2012; Pratt, 2010), a condition the Manifesto workers understand and address in their programming.

Development in Action

I first came to know the term *Reggae Revival* after being recruited to assist with freelance transcription and research for a *Vogue* magazine article about the Revival in January 2015. Protoje's "Kingston Be Wise" had been featured on the *Grand Theft Auto V* (2013) video game, the American electronic music trio Major Lazer had featured Chronixx on a mixtape (2012), and many of the artists had navigated the complicated travel visa requirements that make it especially hard for Jamaican musicians to tour the United States. At the same time, other movements—the Arab Spring and Black Lives Matter—had added to the discourse of consciousness and truth-to-power activism from which the organizers and artists were drawing inspiration.

The Revival is understood to be an "uptown" movement, in that many of its members are university-educated and/or the progeny of successful artists from the prior generation. This often leads to opportunities for studio time, well-known producers, and opening slots for more high-profile acts, such as the Marley family, that are not available to their contemporaries. Following Hope (2013), it is fair to suggest that the Revival's visibility has, to some extent, sidelined the contributions of early-aughts artists such as Sizzla Kalonji, Fantan Mojah, and I-Wayne (Hope calls them the First Wave) who were performing conscious reggae within more classed and dancehall-adjacent spaces than the current Revival group (see also Page, 2017). It is thus ultimately worthwhile (but not delegitimizing) to acknowledge this privilege insofar as it explains the Revival's perceived legitimacy and international legibility where other groups have achieved less acclaim.

Due to this confluence of factors, by 2015, the Revival was crossing over; *Vogue* was planning to run a feature-length article on their website, video, and a package of supplementary information (Aguirre, 2015). After hours of interviews with the musicians who had made their names at Manifesto events and were now experiencing their first taste of widespread attention, a coherent set of beliefs emerged, modeling those of Manifesto—that the repopularization of conscious reggae was the result of a broader global moment of consciousness-raising; that it was important to grow an arts-engaged community sustainably and organically in Kingston; that playing live, full-band reggae was politically and culturally meaningful.

Manifesto and the associated parties have a wide imprint in Kingston's cultural industries ecosystem.⁶ Its members manage and promote Revival groups, using each other for booking and collaboration. Its social media channels advertise summer camps and open-mic nights that provide social networking and performance opportunities for professionals and newcomers. Its artists make appearances at the Sunday night parties held for tourists and industry workers alike at the home of selector Gabre Selassie and still often perform at the twice-monthly jam sessions at Jamnesia.

Manifesto and its collaborators (Joan Webley, the founder of Kingston creative industries incubator Nanook, and Kwasi Bonsu, a U.S.-based attorney and the director of Mighty Mizizi Music, a publishing company, among others) also organize a yearly conference music industry conference (the Jamaica Music Conference).⁷ The Jamaica Music Conference is a professional instantiation of many of the themes the musicians have addressed, emphasizing market preparedness, copyright management tools, and other industry strategies. Lawyers, industry professionals, and well-known artists provide panel discussions, workshops, and performances for management, early-career reggae artists, and fans at locations throughout Kingston, including the University of the West Indies and JAMPRO, a government agency aimed at promoting business growth.

Despite the success of the Revival's most popular musicians, the Manifesto team continues to preach self-sufficiency, and, at the time of writing, none of the artists have signed with major international labels, instead creating their own labels and promotional apparatuses through Manifesto's networks. "Self-determination is the whole vibe of the movement," Dutty Bookman told me over Skype:

If you look at what the artists are doing, for instance, some of them have signed to major labels but many have started their own companies to control their content and the way they put stuff out. The whole vibe of self-determination is a vibe for our generation; we've seen previous ones that have kind of gotten the short end of the stick. (D. Bookman, personal communication, March 1, 2017)

⁶ Kingston was designated a UNESCO Creative City in 2015, suggesting that the work of groups such as Manifesto and many others has not gone unnoticed; the UNESCO site emphasizes that "Kingston considers music as a lever for social inclusion" and that "many of the music-related events have resulted from joint cooperation between the public and the private sectors, joining forces to offer ever-wider participation to cultural life" ("Kingston," 2017, para. 2).

⁷ Manifesto is not the only group interested in creative industries working in Kingston. The city's critical creative industries scaffolding has benefited immensely from the Reggae Studies Unit within the University of the West Indies' Institute of Caribbean Studies, which includes music-industrial study of the genre among its foci. The unit was launched in 1994, led by Carolyn Cooper, who spearheaded the school's first Reggae Conference in 2008. The conference continues biennially, with the most recent coming in 2017. Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sports Olivia "Babsy" Grange gave a 2017 talk as part of the Jamaica 55 celebrations titled "Jamaica 55: Jamaica's Creative Economy." The Caribbean Development Bank recently established a Creative Industries Innovation Fund to spur innovation (W. Campbell, 2017). This is both a proper context for the Revival's beginning as well as proof of the city's creatives' hard work.

He mentioned many musicians of the previous generation who, despite their contributions to the island's musical history, were stuck living in poverty, connecting their struggle to the longstanding plight of Blacks disadvantaged by global capitalist organizations. "Especially as Africans worldwide [Jamaica is, in Bookman's words "a mostly African nation"], we have come a long way since the scourge of slavery," he said.

But we are still way behind—there are so many people out there that are taking advantage of the music industry and we are trying to use our cultural capital to create new wealth. Culture is the last stand. When everything else fades away—the economic system and the political system—and things start to crumble, the last thing we have is the strength of our culture. Self-determination is key to make sure that culture stands strong. (D. Bookman, personal communication, March 1, 2017)

The scars of colonialism and modernity deeply mark the epistemological condition of many Jamaicans like Bookman. His comments—echoed throughout the discourse—suggest a concern borne from centuries of operating in an oppressive system and a group-wide belief among Manifesto Jamaica members that they must be the stewards of the island's musical future to avoid further abuse. As their land's bauxite and other natural resources are processed by other nations' more-advanced technologies, culture emerges as the place where ideological self-determination begins.

Furthermore, the artists and cultural workers are quick and willing to frame their difficulties within this systemic perspective, connecting the dots across time and space. This outlook also informs cultural production, so much of which is inflected by an acknowledgment of the interlocking historical phenomena of trans-Atlantic slavery and colonialism that brought their ancestors to the island and continue to leave them underdeveloped.

Revival members echoed what they had said in the *Gleaner*, citing the feeling of global consciousness-raising that they experienced. They expressed a desire to work toward a more righteous path that would improve the standings of their fellow Jamaicans and, like Garvey before them, other descendants of Africa around the world. They cited other movements such as Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, and Black Lives Matter, suggesting that an unseen force made the world ready for protest at this time. They also connected other changes in culture such as the locavore movement—Rastas practice an all-organic diet called *ital*—to this broader change where the world is, somehow, being inspired by Rastafari principles, even indirectly.

This is also a kind of praxis: By speaking their belief about a kind of atmospheric, affective experience of awakening into existence, they made it so. This was epitomized by Bookman's November 2011 decision to deploy the name Reggae Revival for the first time in a blog post on his website, *Duttyism*. The naming served a pair of purposes, he said: It united the musical arm of the movement under a name that emphasized its connection to the longer history of the reggae genre, and it got a "head start" (his words) on non-Jamaican journalists and others who, he worried, might look to frame the narrative in potentially less useful ways. Prioritizing self-determination extended even to how the history of Manifesto and the Revival should be told.⁸

⁸ This also evokes the concept of Dread Talk or Rastafari language and its broader influence. See Pollard, 2000.

"Vibration," Bookman explained to me, "is something that is unseen. There's a thing in the universe that influences [other] things and it makes its way to the earth that influences—and maybe even dictates—what humanity is doing" (D. Bookman, personal communication, March 1, 2017). He described vibration as a kind of moral pendulum whose movements are manifestations of a swing toward righteousness. "We attack injustice through our art and our music—it is our cultural weaponry" (D. Bookman, personal communication, March 1, 2017; see also Scott, 1987).

Music represents perhaps the best hope for this intervention because of the island's reputation and its place in a wider cultural memory. As *Manifesto* continues to develop more programming, Welsh explains what she had hoped to manifest all those years ago as she sat around the fire with her friends and colleagues: "a pack of touring artists who would travel the world together as a collective representing Jamaica and Rastafari, or one-ness" (L. Welsh, personal communication, March 25, 2017), she says, echoing Garvey's Black Star Line and recontextualizing it within a creative industries framework:

There would be this big plane that we would all charter and travel the world in, sharing this message and representing Jamaica. But we would also have other revenue streams besides the music—pooling resources to build businesses to develop people around us and to make a space to nurture young people who might want to explore the idea of making a career as, say, a drummer. We'd become a force of influence at national and international levels because of our capacity to reach people. (L. Welsh, personal communication, March 25, 2017)

Musical Making

The subsequent sections explore how these strategies and logics are present in the output of the Reggae Revival itself. Chronixx told Aguirre (2015),

All the music that we have been releasing, I look at all of those songs as one song. A progressive song. Just different verses. Different lines. My songs are just merely lines in that greater song. (para. 33)

The Jamaican national motto is "Out of Many, One People," a poignant suggestion when considering histories of racial diasporization. The same might be said, however, of music's place in any culture: Music-making and performing do not happen in a vacuum. Instead, *musicking*, the term elaborated by Christopher Small (1998), gives us a way to talk about the collective cultural place of taking part in a dipartite process: the cultural production of music and the musical production of culture. The two go hand-in-hand.

Small (1998) writes, "To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing) or by dancing" (p. 9). Although he has many of the bases covered, what the work of the Reggae Revival and the broader Jamaican cultural relationship to the diaspora and world systems suggest is that cultural context itself is playing a role in the "providing material" part of his definition. The histories, religions, folk stories, and contexts all play a role in the broader cultural musicking of Jamaican musicians

and cultural producers. This follows the Rastafari concept of livity, or the oneness of all living beings. The "One Love" expressed in the famous 1977 Bob Marley song is drawn from this concept; some have suggested that that term itself comes from Garvey (Roskind & Roskind, 2001).

Banding together was important to the Manifesto/Revival team because they believed individual financial success would not lead to the cultural and collective uplift that they sought. "When you live in a developing nation, it's hard to deny that collective security is imperative," Welsh says, taking things even further. "It is more feasible for five people to come together than struggling to figure it out independently. It's in how we are forced to live" (L. Welsh, personal communication, March 25, 2017).

So, despite the financial challenges (it is significantly more expensive to tour as a full band than as a single act), reggae bands such as Raging Fyah, No-Maddz, and Pentateuch began to grow in popularity. This emphasis on collectivity extended beyond the band and into how Chronixx saw the industrial arrangement of working musicians in contemporary Jamaica. Playing together, he said, was a more holistic approach.

It started more with the content and our approach to music. We tried to make holistic music, even on our computers, you know? But whenever we performed, we wanted real guitars, real drums, real everything. (Aguirre, 2015, para. 27)

This "esprit de band" also manifests in other interesting ways. Many, for instance, point to Chronixx's performance on *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon* on July 22, 2014, as the Revival's coming-out party. The singer, whose real name is Jamar McNaughton, begins the performance with a traditional Rastafari welcome before addressing the diaspora, which he calls "Africans scattered at home and abroad." Backed by four musicians playing live instruments, Chronixx passionately delivers a performance of "Here Comes Trouble," a call-to-action for Rasta youth. "But Chronixx cyaa⁹ do it alone!" he laments.

Fittingly, as Chronixx finishes the second chorus, "reinforcements" of sorts arrive in the form of other songs: The band continues its instrumental as Chronixx begins to sing lines taken directly from his compatriot Jesse Royal's song "Modern Day Judas." From there, he picks up another Reggae Revival tune, singing a few lines from Jah9's "Reverence." When asked about the moment, Jah9 recalled it vividly and positively to Aguirre (2015): "We all felt like we were there. In a moment like that, it is not even about, 'It's Chronixx.' It's like, 'WE are going to be on Jimmy Fallon'" (para. 20).

The Sonic Past Made Present

Like "Babylon System," "Redemption Song," another of Marley's most popular tunes, epitomizes the Rastafari politics after which many Revival artists would model their messages. Singing along to his acoustic guitar, that son of a British-born Marine and a Black Jamaican farmer's daughter connects himself across history to his enslaved forebears. It begins, "Old pirates yes they rob I / Sold I to the merchant ships." The song's most well-known lines—"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery / None but ourselves

⁹ "Can't," in Patois.

can free our minds"—are drawn almost word-for-word from a speech Garvey delivered on October 1, 1937, in Nova Scotia (Hill & Garvey, 1990, p. 791). This kind of intertextual and intercontextual referencing is not unique to Marley; in fact, it plays out often in the musics of Jamaica. There are many lyrical connections to the colonial and slave past throughout reggae lyrics, from Peter Tosh's "400 Years" (1973) and Sugar Minott's "Africa Is a Black Man Home" (1980) all the way up to Chezidek's "Who Start" (2009).

Notably, a collapsing of temporal order also occurs through the use of *riddims*, or instrumental musical tracks. Riddim is more than the Patois pronunciation of rhythm: In musics of the Caribbean such as calypso, soca, dancehall, reggaeton, dub, ragga, bouyon, and reggae, a riddim is the instrumental accompaniment to a song. Often (although not always) it takes the form of a repeated up-stroked guitar chord on the off-beats (2 and 4) that is doubled by the piano and accompanied by a walking bass line. This is the quintessential reggae sound found in songs such as Culture's "Why Am I a Rastaman" and Musical Youth's "Pass the Dutchie" among countless others; its lilt and relaxed pace are some of the genre's extradiegetic connotations of beaches and resorts.

Many riddims were recorded instrumentally with studio bands at places such as Studio One, the island's most notable studio during the Golden Age. Their significance comes from the fact that they can be used interchangeably, with new singers and new lyrics over recurring riddims recorded years or decades prior. Such websites as Riddibase.org and Riddimguide.com illustrate their flexibility and repetition; Dodd's "Answer/Never Let Go Riddim," for instance, appears on more than 300 distinct tunes, according to one database. Riddims are an interesting contextual cultural production because of a class-based component of their use: They helped many poor early-career singers who could not afford a band of their own. Singing over a riddim gave them that kind of connection to the collective musical experience.

We see many riddims used by artists of the Reggae Revival. Jah 9's "Steamers a Bubble" uses the 1982 Roots Radics Apartment riddim. Protoje's "Resist Not Evil" uses another called Militancy riddim. A lesser-known artist, Kaya Digital, citing a frustration with the growing popularity of foreign reggae, created Rasta riddim, whose purpose was to give Jamaican artists a backing track that came from the island itself. And Chronixx, the revival's most popular artist, took up a very popular riddim called Tenement Yard for his 2015 release "News Carrying Dread."

The music video for "News Carrying Dread" begins in a fictionalized 1975 Kingston scene, where an older woman cautions a young dreadlocked boy against speaking out or "creating problems" in Patois. Jacob Miller and Inner Circle's "Tenement Yard" plays in the background; the song—a 1970s hit—is a subtle critique of the state's response to Rastafari. "Dreadlocks can't live in a tenement yard," Miller sings, referring to the government housing projects erected in mid-20th century in Trench Town and the surrounding area. This is where Chronixx comes in, picking up the Tenement Yard riddim and advancing its critique into the present. Now, the riddim serves as a symbolic metaphor for a contemporary critique of technology and its deleterious effect on communal experience. In addition, Chronixx is using the old riddim, but he makes sure to bring his elders—Inner Circle, who recorded the original riddim—along with him. The video is a kind of metaperformance of what a riddim does: It unites the musical past and present, allowing them to coexist in concert.

"All of this kind of happened already in the Seventies. You coming to interview me: It happened already in the Seventies. You know what I mean? It's just kind of a relapse. Like us reliving these things," Chronixx explained, referencing the droves of international reporters who flocked to the island to interview Marley and the other golden age icons (Aguirre, 2015, para. 28). Chronixx continued, "'Here Comes Trouble' [follows] Ini Kamoze's 'Here Comes the Hotstepper.' It's his bass line . . . the whole *riddim* is his. Protoje says, 'Kingston Be Wise;' Ini Kamoze said, 'England Be Nice'" (Aguirre, 2015, para. 30).

"So what's new, then?" he asks. "I don't glorify new-ness. And what people call 'originality.' I don't glorify in that. I glorify in continuity. Progress. Because progress don't mean new. And continuity don't mean new" (Aguirre, 2015, para. 31). What riddims show us is that what is new is often also old, too, in the Jamaican context. That means wrestling with a long colonial history in which the problems of the past are the problems of the present—namely, a music industry in which it is still too hard to profit from cultural production, the problems of structural adjustment leave the island's urban poor facing long odds for progress, and the legacy of White supremacy looms large. Using the riddim as a sonic connector, the past and the present coexist in the cultural context of Jamaican music. What that context is deserves further study.

The Revival blurs temporality in more ways than riddims. For instance, Protoje's most recent album *Ancient Future* (2015) continues the work of bringing the past into the forefront of the present. In interviews, he speaks to a desire to bring reggae of the 1970s into his music, using his work to tell an alternative history of Jamaica. "*Ancient Future* is an attempt to bridge the gap between the past and the present, but also to push things forward," one critic concluded from an interview with him (MacLeod, 2015, para. 3). This pairing of *ancient* and *future* does destabilizing work to trouble the teleology of progress. If the future is the inexorable move of becoming more modern, or at least a progress toward something, the idea of an ancient future emphasizes the premodern as resonating in the present and future. His work thus contains messages of destabilizing entrenched narratives.

Notably, in the song "Criminal," Protoje positions himself as a victim of a modern system by performing the past. The song draws on the September 11, 1987, murder of Peter Tosh, a core Wailer who was critical of the Jamaican establishment and Marley's political party unification efforts during the One Love Peace Concert in 1978. Although the murder was purportedly financially rather than politically motivated, Protoje draws a connection here, suggesting in an explanatory video that such a revolutionary station still has not emerged. He also makes mention of Leonard Howell, one of the founders of Rastafari, who was jailed for exhibiting a picture of Haile Selassie; Walter Rodney, the Guyanese political historian assassinated by his government, who authored the important works *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) and *The Groundings With My Brothers* (1975)¹⁰; and Dutty Boukman, a Jamaican-born slave who catalyzed the 18th-century Haitian revolution and from whom the intellectual draws his name. The song makes the case that these men were all framed as criminals by the state for the purpose of delegitimizing their critique. But

¹⁰ Rodney's important critiques of the Caribbean middle class while he was lecturing at the University of the West Indies in the mid-1960s led the Jamaican government to ban him from returning to the country while traveling. This keyed off a series of revolutionary actions by students on the university campus, resulting in the deaths of two students (see Payne, 1983).

Protoje uses the song to flip the script, suggesting that, instead, those who persecuted his historical forebears are the criminals, and now he is the latest in a line of political victims: In the music video, Protoje is kidnapped and shown pictures of Howell and Marcus Garvey during an interrogation.

Protoje's work draws on subaltern knowledge in the form of these types of historical narratives marshalled to impact the present context. By bringing the historical past to bear on the present, he forwards a vision of an "ancient future" that troubles the taken-for-granted progress of modern totalities, making him an ideal case study here. As one of the most famous faces of the Reggae Revival, he has set up a model for other musicians to follow as the revival grows.

Extramusically, Gavin "Dutty Bookman" Hutchinson writes of a spiritual and temporal collapse in *Tried & True: Revelations of a Rebellious Youth*, his recollection of the genesis of the Revival. He describes an evening smoking marijuana with friends, including Jah9, and a moment when, in his words, a random thought "flew into [his mind]": "I am Dutty Bookman. The same man who started the Haitian Revolution is me" (Bookman, 2011, p. 110). In a subsequent conversation, Bookman walks back that claim, suggesting instead that it was inspirational rather than literal; this is the kind of discursive spiritual environment Rastafari affords the Revival artists. "I definitely observe symbols you can attach from the past in a bygone era—I observe the similarities to now," Welsh remarks in regard to Bookman's transubstantiation experience (L. Welsh, personal communication, March 25, 2017):

As opposed to regarding them as certain people coming forward again in a certain place or form, it's more of an energy. We're more like characters in a scene than specific personalities. It's a script that repeats itself and who plays the characters is up to life and time. (L. Welsh, personal communication, March 25, 2017)

Conclusion

Manifesto Jamaica and the Reggae Revival are important factors in the ongoing cultural industries climate in contemporary Kingston. Their programming has created a professional network from which many of the island's most popular artists of the moment are getting the chance to bring conscious, full-band-playing reggae music to the island and the world, connecting themselves to the African diaspora across time and space through the vernacular and practice of Rastafari. Difficulties, of course, persist: Visas remain elusive for many artists perceived to be less appealing than the privileged Revival cohort; the ideological importance of full-band touring comes at an extreme expense; and as Chronixx's popularity continues to explode, one might say it risks coming at the expense of other artists in the movement such as Jah9, the Revival's leading female voice. In a Babylon System, these artists and intellectuals will continue to face challenges in realizing their vision of collective uplift for a wider cross-section of Jamaicans and other, less privileged creative industries workers.

In the framing outlined in their cultural production, the Revival artists destabilize teleologies of progress that might be termed "modern," and by questioning these notions, the Revival artists also challenge many taken-for-granted epistemologies and logics of colonial legacies, global White supremacy, and capitalist accumulation. In conclusion, a point made by another revivalist, Jesse Royal, during a recent

episode of the Viceland television show *Noisey*, sums up the Manifesto position: "Jamaica is not the third world," he says. "It is the first world" (Capper, Moses, & Silmsler, 2016). The matter-of-factness of this declaration, in which the concepts of "first" and "third" are reorganized in a way that inverts their political definitions and challenges the primacy of industrial "progress," is the quintessence of reggae's critique of the Babylon System. The past is manifestly present in Jamaican culture, coproduced by artists and the island's continued subjugation. The same problems manifest, and the politically minded will be addressing them precisely because they remain unresolved.

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