

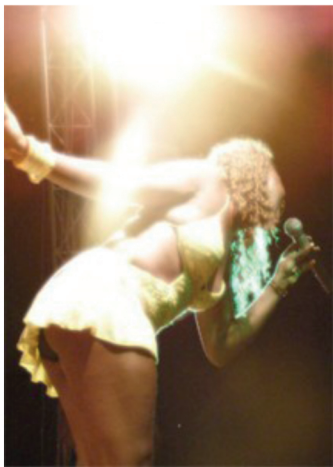
CBFF Closes 2009 With Film Club

The Canadian Black Film Festival concluded its first year in operation with two great documentaries screened for its December Film Club; JAB! THE BLUE DEVILS OF PARAMIN and QUEENS OF SOUND. The program was held at the National Film Board office down town Toronto, where the audience loved both films, and provided great reviews.

The program was hosted by Carrie Mullings (Canadian Ambassador to Reggae Music) of Rebel Vibes on CHRY radio. On the panel was Canadian reggae singers Tanya Mullings and Ammoye along with the producer of JAB! Elizabeth Topp.

Tanya Mullings award winning music can be found on Myspace. Canada's upcoming, Ammoye, nicknamed "Canada's best kept secret", can also be found on Myspace. Elizabeth Topp, Trinidadian born film producer can be contacted through CBFF. We look forward to her next film.

QUEENS OF SOUND



Reggae and Dancehall music, the sounds grown and developed in the streets of Jamaica have always been dominated by men. For example the two genres of music has been spread to all corners of earth by superstars like Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Beenie Man and Vybz Kartel, yet of the global Billion dollar industry, less than 12% of people involved are women. QUEENS OF SOUND documents the experiences of women, and their social histories in the rather new genre of Reggae and Dancehall music, which is a culture of its own. The visual document begins with the difference between reggae and dancehall music. Dancehall is usually fast pace dance or party music with elements of rap and is typically based on a simple syncopated base rhythm. It is generally associated with

crass, slackness and violent lyrics. Reggae is the antithesis to Dancehall. Reggae is much slower than dancehall usually based on the classic 'one drop beat' with sung lyrics rather than rapping and are typically based on love or a social consciousness which educates its listeners on world corruption and poverty. Although there is no concrete rule separating the two, both genres were born out of Jamaica and often share elements of other.

Austrian director Sandra Krampelhuber interviews almost every Jamaican female reggae and dancehall artists to gain their perspective and their experiences on the industry. Everyone from Marcia Griffiths and Tanya Stephens to Queen Omega, Queen Ifrica, Lady G and Lady Saw share their stories. She also covers the perspectives of music video director Nordia Rose, Jade Lee of the Jamaican Artist Development Enterprise, entertainment lawyer and President of Jafa (Jamaican Association of Female Artists) Sandra Alcott and social studies professor and author at the University of the West Indies Carolyn Cooper. QUEENS OF SOUND covers a lot of ground and places Jamaican music as a central figure in Jamaican Culture.



Artists like Chevelle Franklyn who performed in, arguably, Jamaica's most popular film DANCEHALL QUEEN, with Beenie Man at the height her career also voices her opinion on the industry. The popularity of the film set off both their careers in 1997. Just as Chevelle was about to reap the benefits of performing in a hit film, she made the life altering decision to end her secular career and use her musical talent in church. She has since continued to record and perform Christian reggae music. She states that dancehall music was not doing anything for her spiritually and that the culture was destroying the youth. She goes on to explain with examples of young women spending valuable time and money to indulge in the dancehall culture yet cannot afford to lift their lives above the poverty line.

Artist Ce'Cile addresses the sexual explicit lyrical content which seems to be a staple of dancehall culture. After recording so many songs about sex, she feels it's her duty to record one about safe sex. The crew follows her to a Big Yard studio, Kingston Jamaica to record it. Recording artist Sasha describes her music as 'sexy yet sweet, hardcore but discrete' and continues to explain that her latest album 'Sexy Body Sasha' was named by her record label as she laughs



and shrugs it off. Other artists discuss the pressures that record labels place on female singers to dress sexy in little to no clothing in order to sell records. Sex Sells. Queen Ifrica and Lady Saw put into plain words that men will see a pretty face before they see talent and market sex before music. Carolyn Cooper addresses the female sexual dichotomy by stating that "the only thing worse than being a sexual object rather than a person, is not be being a sexual object".

Tanya Stephens, arguably Jamaica's most popular and successful reggae and dancehall singer, claims that she finds it insulting when people tell her she is pretty good for a women, and that she sees herself as a Jamaican musical artist rather than a Female Jamaican musical artist.

The audience found the film very informative. A member of the audience described the film as 'a breath of fresh air. I have never seen anything like this.' Due its over whelming response, the Canadian Black Film Festival plans to screen QUEENS OF SOUND again prior to Toronto's annual Caribana festival in 2010.