

Reggae Month celebrations to hit high note

The organisers of Reggae Month are pushing to make the 2010 event its best yet. Several live events are planned as well as the launch of a Walk of Fame at Emancipation Park in New Kingston.

Reggae Month is observed during February, but its third staging officially gets under way on January 31 with a reception at Jamaica House, hosted by Prime Minister Bruce Golding.

Charles Campbell, chairman of the Reggae Month committee and a director at the Jamaica Reggae Industry Association (JARIA), says maximum effort is being made to lift its profile.

"From a personal perspective, it is a bit too low-key. What we intend to do is broaden the programme," Campbell said.

That "broadening" will include establishing a Walk of Fame at Emancipation Park, a popular spot in New Kingston for joggers and weddings. Campbell says his committee is currently discussing induction placement with the National Housing Trust, owners of Emancipation Park.

New feature

Events highlighting the evolution of Jamaican music is another new feature. Each week, there will be a day dedicated to sounds that helped put Jamaica's popular culture on the map.

The first segment will be dedicated to mento and maroon drumming, followed by dub poetry and dub, rocksteady and reggae, and finally, dancehall and alternative beats which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s.

Reggae Month will also pay homage to the dancehall as a social force by examining the role it plays as an employer among other things. Passa Passa in west Kingston is one of the dances to be acknowledged.

The historic Boys' Town community, where reggae legend Bob Marley and rocksteady great Alton Ellis once lived, will also get its due. Boys' Town alumni and music industry veteran Junior Lincoln will host a visit to the complex on February 8.

Organisers have retained some of the features of Reggae Month '08 and '09. Among them is Dennis Brown Day on February 1 and Bob Marley Day which takes place five days later on what would have been the reggae legend's 65th birthday.