

## 2010: A year of Drama

Drama outweighed substance as far as the local music scene went in 2010.

There was not much to write home about musically, but, true to form, dancehall performers provided endless incidents.

A reggae icon got the ultimate honour from the rock community, while one of contemporary reggae's biggest stars languished in jail for nearly one year. Entertainment also bade a final farewell to several stalwarts.

Here is a look back at some key moments in Jamaican popular music 2010.

### Newsmakers

Jimmy Cliff was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March. The star of the classic 1972 film, *The Harder They Come*, became only the second reggae act to be recognised with this award, Bob Marley being the first in 1994. *The Harder They Come* and its soundtrack, which featured several of Cliff's biggest hit songs, have had a major impact on rock music.

Buju Banton: Freedom or a lengthy prison sentence still hangs in the balance for the 37-year-old singjay who was arrested and charged by Federal agents for drug possession in South Florida in December 2009. His initial trial ended in a hung jury, and a new trial has been set for February. Banton, who is out on bail, released a new album in the summer, which has been nominated for a Grammy Award.

Gyptian: He was the silver lining in a cloudy year. His song, *Hold Yuh*, with Trinidad-born rapper Nicki Minaj made the Billboard pop and R&B chart and earned him Best Reggae Artist at the Soul Train Awards. Gyptian toured consistently on the strength of *Hold Yuh* and could be the Jamaican artiste to watch in 2011.

### Endurance

Again went to Bob Marley. The reggae superstar's legend continued to grow with *Legend* – the compilation album released in 1984 – remaining one of Billboard's top catalogue performers with worldwide sales of over 25 million units. Three books looking at different aspects of his life were also released.

### Dancehall

There were no new albums by any of the genre's heavyweights, namely Beenie Man, Bounty Killer, Vybz Kartel and Mavado. Beenie Man, Bounty Killer and Mavado's biggest headlines came after it was announced their United States visas had been taken away, but there were hits aplenty from the quartet and their younger counterparts. While North American record companies avoided erratic dancehall acts like the plague, local media and corporate Jamaica continued to embrace them. Damian 'Junior Gong' Marley had the largest profile of any dancehall performer through *Distant Relatives*, his much-publicised album with rapper Nas.

### Comeback kids

Cham (Stronger) and Mr G (Swagarific), dancehall veterans who showed the importance of the hook to pop music.

### Encouraging

The number of live shows, especially in Kingston, increased and got musicians in tune again. Trombonist Nambo Robinson, the Uprising and Dubtonic bands and guitarist Earl "Chinna" Smith's Inna The Yard, all maintained a steady schedule of dates at intimate venues.

### Deaths

Lynn Taitt, the prolific Trinidadian guitarist of the rocksteady era; singers Lincoln "Sugar Minott" Minott, Gregory Isaacs and Keith Stewart, music producer Sonia Pottinger and musician Glen Adams.

Source: Jamaica Gleaner