

Who will win EME's Reggae Artiste Of The Decade?

Will It Be Shaggy, Beenie Man, Jr. Gong, Wayne Wonder, Sean Paul, Lady Saw Or Bounty Killer?

Fourteen of the most sought after reggae acts of the past decade, including current frontrunners Shaggy, Sean Paul, Damian Marley, Beeniemann, Marcia Griffiths, Lady Saw, Bounty Killer and Wayne Wonder will do battle for the prestigious 'Artiste of the Decade' (2001-2010) award at the Excellence in Music and Entertainment (EME) Awards, set to take place on Saturday, March 12, 2011 at The East Lawn of the historical Devon House site, Hope Road in Kingston, Jamaica.

The very competitive category was established this year to honour the reggae artiste who had the biggest impact as a hit maker, performer and as a touring act, event founder and CEO Richard "Richie B" Burgess said.

Platinum artiste Shaggy stormed out to an early lead in the online voting (www.emeawards.com). Shaggy's biggest success came at the turn of the millennium with singles It Wasn't Me and Angel. The subsequent album Hotshot was not only certified diamond by the RIAA but soared to the top spot on the Billboard 200 and UK album chart. He scored again with Lucky Day which went Gold in 2002 and his 2008 album Intoxication, which earned a nomination for Best Reggae Album at the Grammy Awards.

Beside his on stage accolades, Shaggy has championed many philanthropic initiatives including raising funds for the Bustamante Children's Home in Kingston. He also teamed with his peers on a tribute song titled Rise Again, which became the anthem in Haiti after the recent earthquake. In 2007, Shaggy's musical accomplishment was recognised by the Government of Jamaica when he was awarded the Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander (CD).

Another frontrunner for the Artiste of the Decade award is Beenie Man. He may not have the international record sales of Damian, Shaggy or Sean Paul, however, he has the streets locked and is arguably the most seasoned and accomplished entertainer in the industry. His album on Virgin Records, Art and Life was certified gold and won him the Grammy for Reggae Album of the Year in 2001. On stage the 'Doctor' has enjoyed many exceptional live performances including his memorable set at Reggae Sumfest 2008 in Montego Bay, Jamaica, that some say, firmly established him as the "King of the Dancehall". On the local charts, Beeniemann has had an impressive catalogue of hits including his current chart banger Rum and Red Bull and he continues to have a major presence at all the major reggae festivals around the world. Wayne Wonder, born Von Wayne Charles, recorded Bonafide Love (Movie Star) with Buju Banton, and wrote several early hits for the cultural DJ early in his career. In 2000, Wonder launched his own record label, Singso, and collaborated with international artistes, Foxy Brown, and Lisa 'Left Eye' Lopes. His career achieved internationally success in 2003 with his Atlantic Records single No Letting Go. The single reached #11 in the US and #3 in the UK and was a major success on urban radio stations in the US. Sean Paul, who enjoyed unprecedented album sales with his debut album, Stage One in 2000, has had a string of successes including his song Gimme the Light that was a huge hit, and the multi-platinum album, Dutty Rock (2002), which earned him a Grammy award. Paul followed up with The Trinity in 2005, which also went platinum and won the American Music Award for Favourite Pop/Rock Male Artiste in 2006. Jr Gong Marley created mayhem in 2006 with his monster hit Welcome to Jamrock. The song sat atop charts in Jamaica, Europe, and Canada and created just as much fever state side, enjoying multiple spins on urban radio stations and cable channels like BET, MTV and VH1 TV. When the album was released in September 2005, it shot to #7 on the sales charts, making it the biggest opening for a reggae artiste in history. Two days after the 61st anniversary of his father's birth, Gong claimed another first when he became the first Jamaican artiste to win two Grammy awards at the same show — the Best Reggae Album and Best Urban/Alternative Performance in the R&B category. One only has to hear the punch line from monster tracks like -- She Loves Me Now, Step Aside, Tempted To Touch, Rockaway, Double Trouble, Putting Up Resistance or One Step Ahead to know that the "boss," Beres Hammond is in the house. On stage, whether it is at home in Jamaica or major markets like New York, Florida or London, Beres is in a class by himself. The name Marcia Griffiths has always been associated with excellence. Dubbed the Queen of reggae music, Marcia has in the past decade, established herself as an Ambassador of Jamaican music. An original member of Bob Marley's legendary harmony singers, Marcia is credited with recording a number of big hits songs including Dreamland, I Shall Sing and the perennial favourite Electric Boogie. For the past 10 years, Grammy-nominated Bounty Killer has made a career of bussing young artistes such as Vybz Kartel, Mavado, Elephant Man and several members of his Alliance crew. He is a fearless performer who has waged numerous on-stage battles with his arch nemesis Beeniemann. On the international scene, Bounty made his biggest mark in 2001 with a successful collaboration with No Doubt on the single Hey Baby. He also enjoys solo successes with albums such as Ghetto Dictionary Volume I: Art of War and Ghetto Dictionary Volume II: Mystery, the latter receiving a Grammy nomination. Dancehall Queen Lady Saw is an accomplished international star who has the distinction of being the first female deejay to win a Grammy Award. Her international exploits also includes a gold certification for the single Smile with Vitamin C, a triple-platinum certification for Underneath It All for her 2003 collaboration with No Doubt. She has also earned a well-deserved Grammy Award for Best Performance by a Duo or Group for her featured performance on No Doubt's single Underneath It All, which reached number #3 on the US Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Other nominees for the Artiste of the Decade category includes Capleton, Elephant Man, Sizzla, Luciano and Buju Banton.