

Dennis Brown celebrations put on hold

The biggest free, one-night concert in the world has been postponed.

The concert, which would have ended a weekend of celebration of the achievements of The Crown Prince of Reggae, Dennis Emanuel Brown, was precursed with a wreath-laying ceremony at his graveside at the National Heroes Park yesterday on the anniversary of his birth. The celebrations were to have continued tomorrow but 11th-hour sponsorship cancellations have put a damper on that. Initially, a Dennis Brown Symposium was planned for Liberty Hall, 76 King Street, with close associates and family of the late Crown Prince, Mutabaruka and Julian 'Jingles' Reynolds. That will not happen. The symposium, along with the concert later in the day, would have cost somewhere in the region of \$4 million. Reynolds, the chairman of Sounds and Pressure, which organises the annual concerts along with the Jamaica Reggae Industry Association (JaRIA), the Dennis Brown Trust, and Leggo Records, was almost inconsolable about having to make the announcement late last evening. "Sponsorships that were expected were not fulfilled up until this morning," said Jingles. Some sponsorship did come in but the figure, to be received in cash and kind, would only have amounted to approximately a quarter of what was needed. "As chairman of Sounds and Pressure, and on behalf of the other organising members, I would like to apologise to the thousands of Dennis Brown fans," said Reynolds. "Those who have visited the country, and to the media who are here just for the event, some persons even stayed over from Jazz for this, I must especially say sorry." Hope still abounds But even in the middle of what could be seen as a disaster for the Dennis Brown celebrations, hope still abounds. "If the sponsorship we were expecting does happen to come in, we are hopeful that we may still be able to do it this month - Reggae Month," said Reynolds, who went on to thank the sponsors who were able to still fulfil commitments they had made. Hosting the event in downtown Kingston has been a deliberate move by the organisers of the Dennis Brown celebrations, and according to Jingles, this is not likely to change. "Sounds and Pressure's commitment to the idea of downtown Kingston being the centre of Jamaica's culture and entertainment remains," said Jingles. In the meantime, Reggae Month activities, including the start of the Grounation series at The Institute of Jamaica tomorrow, continue. In fact, Reggae Month activities, which began yesterday, is being streamed live over the Internet. The availability of the stream, which can be found at www.jarajamaica.com, was announced in a press release from JaRIA. Jamaica Gleaner