

Classy Dancehall Night

I-Octane, arguably dancehall's hottest property at this time, justified the decision to have him close Thursday night's Dancehall Night segment of Reggae Sumfest 2013 when he delivered a blazing performance, which would have made many seasoned veterans proud.

With the vast majority of the crowd holding their ground at the Catherine Hall Entertainment Centre, Montego Bay, expectations were high when the classy lyricist hit centre stage at 5:53 a.m. He proceeded to rule supreme, stamping his authority on songs like, Mama You Alone, Lose A Friend, Love The Vibe and Real Talk, which were delivered against a backdrop of booming firecrackers. The performance was given an extra burst of energy when Bounty Killer, who many felt gave the performance of the night in his own set, joined him on stage and together they delivered the songs, Bad Mind, Caa Test The General and Double Trouble. However, it became a cloud nine experience when he belted out crowd-favourites, Gal A Gimme Bun and Missing You, which had the large crowd in screaming frenzy. Unlike his recent performance at Western Consciousness, where he was relaxed and jovial, Bounty Killer was cross, angry and miserable when he took the stage. He lashed out against the proposal to send artistes to prison for gun lyrics and blasted the subtle invasion of homosexuality on the Jamaican culture. After openly inviting Education Minister Ronald Thwaites to visit YouTube and listen the lyrics in his song, Book, Book, Book, for which he said he got very little or no credit, the dancehall giant proceeded to dazzle with songs like, Nah Stray, Warlord Nuh Business, Amazing, a new song talking about the state of the economy; Look Into My Eyes and Originality. The interest of the fans peaked when De One, an English-based artiste of Indian descent, who flew in from England to do the 'collab' he recorded with Bounty Killer, took the stage and created quite an impact, both in terms of belting out the lyrics in the song entitled, Running, as well as showing off his prowess on the drums. The veteran Beenie Man and the increasingly popular Aidonia, who performed in the late slot alongside I-Octane and Bounty Killer, also did themselves proud with fairly decent sets. As usual, Beenie Man delivered for the girls while Aidonia really enjoyed himself as in between dancing up a storm with an English woman, he was in fine fettle on songs like, Tan Tuddy and Tip Pon Yu Toe. Tommy Lee Home town boy Tommy Lee Sparta showed much maturity and lyrical creativity in delivering a polished performance, which naturally went down well with the fans. His predominantly black outfit, which was completed with a mask and a cape, added much sparkle to his performance, which was ably supported by several female singers. The lanky Gaza man, who has reportedly become the favourite 'son' of the incarcerated Vybz Kartel, was at his dazzling best on songs like, Money Maker, Body Mechanic, Psycho, Angels, Crazy, Shoot and the colourful song, Tommy Lee, in which he had the crowd substituting for the children, who sang the punch line in the recorded version of the song. The female dancehall stars were not to be outdone in the mix, especially the veteran Lady Saw, who claimed it would be her last Dancehall Night performance at Reggae Sumfest due to her decision to answer God's call to move away from secular to gospel music. After allowing Rosie, whose recent hilarious television interview was transformed into a catchy song, a few minutes of fame, the compelling Lady Saw, seductively clad in a silver and purple 'get up' and sporting a rebellious-look hairstyle with the words 'Queen' and 'Muma' shaved on both sides of her head, took centre stage by storm. With her dancehall compatriot Macka Diamond and her former live-in lover John John in her lyrical cross-hairs, Lady Saw gave her fans the kind of lyrical send-off they are unlikely to forget in a hurry. Songs like, It's Raining, Eh Em, This Good, Beat Dem Already and A Wha Do Some Gal, Two Men In My Life and Chat To Me Back, all figured in the tongue-lashing she delivered. As usual, she was quite provocative with the musicians and all but went overboard with a white male visitor, who she invited on staged and proceeded to, Love With My Heels On, in the most sultry style - much to the delight of the fans, who kept urging her along. Spice, the dancehall heir apparent to the departing Lady Saw; and Macka Diamond both played impressive sets, showing that women are quite capable of matching the men lyrically. While Spice was most creative, rolling out to centrestage in a giant-size balloon, dazzlingly clad in a silver outfit, which matched her 13-inch high heel shoes; Macka Diamond was a picture of vigour, bubbling her way into the heart of the fans. Spice's performance all but brought the house down when a Vybz Kartel look-alike was led on stage in handcuffs and proceeded to do the provocative, Rompin Shop, song with her. It would appear that some of the fans thought the man was really Kartel as they went delirious with excitement. Among the other acts that excelled were, the humorous Kip Rich, who was ably matched in a tantalising lyric duel with a uniformed policeman; the cultural I Wayne, the lyrically smooth QQ, the exciting RDX, a mature sounding Bugle, the astute Assassin, the very composed Blade Screamer, all gave excellent performances, especially QQ and Assassin. Acts such as Mikey Ranks, Alkaline, Payne, Baby Tash and DI (Danielle), who performed in the early stages when the venue was not yet jam-packed; all did well, generating solid responses and adding significantly to their performance resumes. Jamaica Star