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**Hall of Jamaican History and Culture: Post Emancipation**

We believe that background or accompaniment music to this exhibition will greatly enhance guests’ experiences, as well as their education, at our museum. Through this, guests will be able to comprehend and engage with the physical materials or readings in front of them. This should allow them to actively participate with information that they have perhaps not encountered before considerably more than they may otherwise have been able to. The music will aid visitors in really being able to engage with their experience at the museum while also being able to better retain the information of the exhibit.

Our main goal is to represent Jamaica’s culture and history through music. We hand-picked certain genres of music from Jamaican culture to help tell the story of their nation’s history and the progression of their culture through time. With this, we hope and expect everybody who walks through the exhibit to subconsciously feel what it was like to be immersed in the Jamaican culture from the early 1960’s to the present day. Each period of time within the history of Jamaica as an independent nation will be represented with a different sub-genre of Jamaican music. These include ska, dancehall, and the most popular being reggaeton. With that in mind, we are going to strive to not only represent the Jamaican culture to the best of our abilities but also make the person walking through the exhibit feel what it is like to be in that culture. The music will not be very loud as to take away from the wide variety of different artifacts and pieces of history, but to add to the story. That is the main goal, and we will strive to make this exhibit the best representation of Jamaica that we can.

In the exhibit the music is paired with the time period to immerse the visitors' understanding. For each of the segments of the exhibition, the music that would play would match the time period that the person is walking through. The section for 1962 (post emancipation) would have Ska music playing, in the section for the late 1960’s, it would have Dub and Rocksteady music playing, and for the 1970’s it would have Reggae music playing. Starting with the first time period, 1962, Ska would be playing in the background while the exhibit would cover aspects of Jamaican culture regarding its founding. In this section there would be a part of the exhibit covering Ska music, and it would contain a vast amount of information about the history of Ska and how it was used post emancipation of Jamaica. Ska, which is a blend of rhythm and blues, much like the Rhythm and Blues that was produced in New Orleans, Louisiana. Most of Ska is done orally, however the Ska chop is claimed to be invented by guitarist Ernie Ranglin. Some of the songs that might play in the background of this section of the exhibit would be “Ska Ska Ska” by The Skatalites, “Blazing Fire” by Derrick Morgan, or “My boy Lollypop” by Millie Small. In the next section, based on the late 1960’s to early 1970’s, Dub and Rocksteady music would be playing. While not much is known about Dub, it is evident that it was founded in Jamaica in the early 1970’s. Dub owes its lifeline to the existence of different innovations within recording technologies, one of which is two-track recording, which left a spare track to record vocals, or another solo instrument. The rhythm track from these two-track records would then be taken and recycled, which created the reggae tradition of having the same backing track for both the Dub and DJ toasting version. In regard to Rocksteady, it had Ska roots and the musicians who developed Rocksteady were those who already started to play Ska music. The difference between Ska and Rocksteady, however, is that the tempo of the music is slowed down for Rocksteady, while still playing the same core Ska rhythms. This was the precursor to Reggae, as well as paving a way for Dub to flourish. Some of the musicians either stuck with Rocksteady, transitioned over to Reggae or Dub, or emigrated to the United States and Canada, bringing Jamaican music with them. Some of the music that would be playing in the background of this section of the exhibit would be “Blackboard Jungle Dub” by Lee Perry and the Upsetters, “Pick a Dub” by Keith Hudson, “Get in the Groove” by the Heptones, or “Queen Majesty” by the Techniques. The last section of the exhibit would be for the mid 1970’s to present day, where Reggae rose to popularity. Reggae is driven by a heavy four-beat rhythm, bass guitar, electric guitar, and a “scraper”, which is a corrugated stick that is rubbed by a plain stick. Reggae started to take on a new shape whenever the lyrics of many of the songs focused on the social and economic injustices, in which Reggae joined forces with the Rastafarian Movement, spearheaded by artists/bands like Toots and the Maytals, Wailers, Bob Marley, and many others. The music that would be heard in this section of the exhibit would be songs like “One Love” by Bob Marley and the Wailers, “The Tide is High” by the Paragons, and “Hold me Tight” by Johnny Nash. All the different sections of the exhibit work together to provide the best possible experience for the people viewing these exhibits, linking the music that is playing to the time period in Jamaican culture.

Our main objective with the addition of Jamaican music to our new exhibit is to connect the museum visitors with the history displayed. Music is a universal language. It can speak to and connect everyone in special ways. “And music offers a way of expressing ourselves and connecting with others… Music can offer new points of view and new interpretations.” (Richardson *Music and the museum – how can exhibits inspire musical creativity?*) In today’s world, everybody creates a playlist for a specific event to help them get ready for what they’re going to do. We are hoping that when we create a playlist for our new exhibit, it will help the visitor engage with the exhibit. For example, the most popular music in Jamaica is Reggae. Reggae employs a heavy rhythm driven by drums, bass, guitar and the scraper. Reggae was popularized during the 1960s and 1970s, around the time Jamaica gained its independence. Becoming the “theme” music of Jamaica, it is often considered the voice of oppression in Jamaica, especially during the Rastafari Movement. The idea is to play Reggae music during this time frame so we can really get the museum visitors to understand and grasp what it was like during that time.

As this exhibit will hopefully show, every music culture has a vast, complex, and deeply interesting history to it, making it difficult to focus on just one or even to cover only one culture, as many are so deeply influenced by one another. We hope to curate comprehensive background music that complements the specific area of the exhibit that it will be played in. A “historic” playlist for this new exhibit will be shown, one that will help guests to comprehend the recent history of Jamaica through its various musical eras and to also better show how these eras connect and tie together. With our knowledge of this history, we will be able to build the perfect musical compliment to the history that is displayed in the newest addition to our museum. For example, reggae, perhaps the most famous genre of Jamaican music, takes influence from its predecessors in Jamaican music, rocksteady and ska. However, it also has some roots in traditional Caribbean *mento* music (which in turn gained a lot of influence from Trinidadian calypso music) as well as some American jazz, rhythm, and blues tracks. We hope that with this background addition to the exhibit that people will be able to read about these influences and be able to listen to how these genres connect as well. Music cultures are almost indiscernibly interconnected with each other, with cultural influences going back dozens of years to a culture that many people may not have even known existed. We hope that with the creation of this exhibit and its accompanying playlist that more people will have the opportunity to learn and be educated about a culture outside of their own and that people who are a part of that culture will be able to see a part of their history told and represented accurately.

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