1970s

The Roxy Club, Covent Garden, 41-43 Neal Street , London WC2 H9PJ

100 Club, 100 Oxford St, Fitzrovia, London W1D 1L

Sex, 430 King's Road, London between 1974 and 1976.

The Lyceum, Wellington Street, London, WC 2 – Bob Marley and the Wailers recorded their famous live album here on 18-19 July 1975.

Victoria Park, London – 30 April 1978 Rock against Racism Carnival, London, United Kingdom E3 5TB

Brockwell Park, London – 24 September 1978 Rock against Racism Carnival

Africa Centre, 38 King Street, Convent Garden, London WC2. Opened in 1960 moved to Southwark in 2013.

ABC Music 7 The Broadway, Southall  
Southall, UB1 1JR- bhangra specialist and record label

**Honest Jon's**  
278 Portobello Road, London W10 5TE, 020-8969 9822 record shop – first to sell punk and reggae together , established in 1974 – now a world music label.

Third World Record Shop, Third World Records (113 Stoke Newington Road N16) – reggae, dub specialist

Tops Record Shop (120 Acre Lane, SW2) – specialist reggae and dub

**1980s**

Sterns African Record Centre, Whitfield Street

In spring 1983 an ‘outdooring’ ceremony was held in a quiet back street off London’s Tottenham Court Road. The occasion, at which drums were played and libations were offered to the ancestors, was the opening of Sterns African Record Centre, a retail outlet, which has since grown into the largest distributor of African records outside Paris, with a catalogue of 3,000 titles, including 100 on their own labels (Sterns and Earthworks), and customers across the globe.

By 1983 the name of Sterns was already synonymous with African music in London. For 30 years, a small electrical shop of that name had given over its back room to a modest display of African discs.

Situated near Warren Street underground station, the old Sterns Electrical had been the only place for African students and visitors to hunt down the popular music of their continent. Behind the short wave radios, electrical fans and kettles could be found, if not the latest, then fairly recent releases by the big names of the 1960s and 1970s, like Franco’s OK Jazz, Prince Nico Mbarga, Ebenezer Obey, the African Brothers and Les Bantous.

When the shop’s lease ran out and the proprietor chose retirement, the African music boom in Britain was just beginning. The King of Juju, Sunny Ade had been signed by Island Records; local labels like Earthworks had begun to release sub-Saharan pop, while discotheques and radio stations were slipping in the odd soukous, highlife or Afrobeat. Yet with the closure of the rickety old appliance shop there was nowhere to buy the records.

Several loose alliances were formed with the aim of setting up a specialist shop; at one stage there were at least three plans to open African record stores in London. But one group seized the initiative by taking over the old name. Their timing was good and they were also in the right place: in Whitfield Street, directly behind the old Sterns Electrical.

The new owners of the name, and the concept of an African record ‘centre’, were Don Bayramian, a naturalised Armenian, Robert Urbanus from Holland and Charles Easmon from Ghana. Easmon was not only the sole African; he was also the only one of the three with music business experience.

A client base had been established thanks to a useful mailing list of customers around the world, inherited from the old Sterns, and several contacts with West African importers. A friendly Lagos entrepreneur aided the influx of Nigerian releases while vital connections were established with Paris-based distributors of francophone records, which have always outsold those from anglophone countries.

On opening their shop, Sterns announced their intentions of making available music from the whole continent; of establishing an international distribution network; and of inaugurating a label to launch new bands and license commercially attractive productions. They succeeded on all three counts.

As the most viable aspect of Sterns, the shop itself was an early success. African customers from across the continent mixed with the growing number of European enthusiasts. On a typically busy day during the mid-80s, visiting stars, local musicians, journalists and disc-jockeys joined regular customers to clog the shop as they scoured the racks for the latest imports from Zaire, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon and other countries. Although certain eagerly awaited releases can still take months to arrive from European distributors, there is a constant recharge of titles.

Hammersmith Palais, 242 Shepherd's Bush Road London [W](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W_postcode_area)6 7NL – Bhangra event New Years Eve 1992

The Fridge, Town Hall Parade London SW2 1RJ

Reggae Sunsplash began in Jamaica in 1979 with Bob Marley headlining. First London Reggae Sunsplash 1984 Selhurst Park (Crystal Palace Football ground) , London. 1987 on Clapham Common, London

Capital Radio sponsored the first London Sunsplash at Selhurst Park in 1984, but the event outgrew itself fast. A quarter of a million people were at Clapham Common in 1987, helping Maxi Priest and Freddie McGregor celebrate 25 years of Jamaican independence and the centenary of Marcus Garvey's birth.

"It was the biggest event in Britain that year," says the veteran promoter Junior Lincoln. "There was no trouble, the police report on the event made me very proud, but it was difficult to get a regular outdoor venue for an event of that size. People were wary of us. We tried for three or four years, then we had to give up."

Sunsplash returns today with a licence for 50,000 people. The bill reflects the influence reggae has had on a wide range of modern musical styles - with Wyclef Jean and Asian Dub Foundation appearing alongside roots performers like Isaacs.

The Electric Ballroom, 184 Camden High St, Camden Town, London NW1 8QP

The Wag Club, 35 Wardour Street, Soho, London

In November 1982, the Wag Club hosted the first ever hip-hop club event in the UK, The Roxy Road Show – featuring 25 artists who flew in from New York, including Afrika Bambaataa, [Grand Wizard Theodore](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2011/jun/13/grand-wizard-invents-scratching)(who invented scratching), Jazzy Jay and [Fab 5 Freddy](http://fab5freddy.com/), rope skipping stars the Double Dutch Girls and legendary breakdancers the Rock Steady Crew. It was complete and utter mayhem, but in a good way. The club was absolutely packed when, at my behest, then unknown graffiti artist Futura 2000 did his live spray-can art on stage and more or less asphyxiated everyone. The Wag later made a name for ourselves by booking all the major rap acts – De La Soul, Jungle Brothers, Queen Latifah, Eric B and Rakim, Kool Moe Dee, Grandmaster Flash, Doug E Fresh. It’s been said that we were responsible for breaking hip-hop in the UK but, for me, it made sense in every way: the acts had never played London before, and it was relatively cheap to bring them over. All it took was two or three discounted flights and a couple of nights in a friend’s dad’s hotel in Bloomsbury. Simple economics.

Sistermatic, Brixton Women’s Centre

Kiss FM pirate radio station established in 7 October 1985 djs included Jazzie B. One Golden Square, London, W1F 9DJ

Wembley Stadium, Wembley London 11 June 1988, Mandela Day

The Jazz Café, 5 Parkway, London NW1 7PG opened in 1980s in Stoke Newington moved to Camden in 1990. 5 Parkway,London,NW1 7PG

Blacker Dread Music Store in Brixton, 406 Coldharbour Ln, Brixton, London SW9 8LF opened in 1993