

July 6, 2015

“I Favour More Local Music on Radio”

The Observer published an article on Friday July 3, 2015 titled "Jamming for More Reggae". Reference was made to a call by Danny Browne, Chairman of the Jamaica Music Society (JAMMS), for a mandated quota of Jamaican content on local radio. Browne also reportedly said that only local content should be played on radio during reggae month. The article then said that the Executive Director of the Broadcasting Commission was not in favour of Browne's call.

I was not present when Danny spoke and neither did I reference him in my remarks. In fact, I was unaware that he had made the reported statements. As it turned out, we were saying similar things. In my presentation, I said that one hundred percent (100%) local music should be played during reggae month in February and also on international reggae day, July 1.

However, I went on to observe that playing reggae music would include songs recorded by many overseas artistes such as Africa's Lucky Dube and Alpha Blondie. I also spoke about foreign labels which owned some of our most treasured musical catalogues, including Universal Music Group which owns the rights to Marley songs such as "One Love." Accordingly, I cautioned against the notion that a quota system would reverse the imbalance in copyright payments which favour overseas rights holders.

I also made the point that we should play our own music because we value it and not because it is mandated. In any event, technology has so liberated people that the efficacy of quotas is questionable in the digital age. For these reasons, I suggested that there should be dialogue between the music and broadcasting industries about how we should, by consensus, voluntarily do better to honour Jamaican music. The Broadcasting Commission, I said, was willing to be a part of that process and had already begun to play its part by pushing for the criminalisation of payola and financial sanctions of \$5 million dollars. In addition, the Commission had launched a media campaign against payola.

Perhaps my argument was not fully grasped because I spoke for only five (5) of the allocated twenty (20) minutes. I did so because my presentation which was scheduled for 12:00 pm did not get underway until about 4:00 pm.

Cordel Green
Executive Director