

Jamaican Canadian Music in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s:

A Preliminary History

by

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ABSTRACT

Starting in the early 1960s, Jamaican musicians migrated to Toronto in large numbers, and for almost fifty years, Toronto has had a vibrant Jamaican musical community. There was a surge in musical activity in the 1970s and 1980s, including the establishment of several Jamaican-owned nightclubs, record stores and recording studios, some of which still exist today. A large community of musicians created a wide range of music, from Jamaican style roots reggae to reggae fusion. Despite the racial, social and cultural obstacles that these musicians faced, Jamaican Canadian music was and is unique, varied and distinct.

Jamaican Canadian music is a largely overlooked and under-researched area of Canadian music history, even though there are currently at least 231,000 Jamaicans in Canada, with Toronto being one of the most populous Jamaican diasporic communities in the world. To date there has been very little written on Jamaican Canadian music. In this study, I examine the history of Jamaican Canadian music, including biases against the music and black musicians in general. I also look at the many distinctive aspects of Jamaican Canadian music and the pioneering musicians whose years of hard work helped create this rich and multifaceted music scene.

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INTRODUCTION

1. MY BACKGROUND

My first encounter with Jamaican music was Millie Small's "My Boy Lollipop," a song I used to listen and dance to as a child, long before I knew anything about Jamaica. I became seriously interested in Jamaican music when I was about fourteen years old, through Bob Marley, the musician that initially attracts many white boys to reggae. Around this time my dad loaned me the four-disc box set *The Story of Jamaican Music*, a collection that has been (and continues to be) the soundtrack to countless parties at my house. Around this time I realized that most of my friends knew little about Jamaican music beyond Marley and I became something of a reggae aficionado, without even knowing it. Today reggae music is a huge part of my life and that of my family's. Jamaican music is as much a part of my sonic memory of our family's cottage in the Ottawa Valley as the sound of loons and laughter.

When I started the Master of Arts program at Carleton University in September 2010, I knew that I wanted to write about Jamaican music, but I didn't know what area to focus on. That year I discovered the 2006 *Light in the Attic* compilation *Jamaica to Toronto: Soul, Funk and Reggae 1967-1974*. As I read the liner notes I began to realize that there is a whole world of Jamaican music right here in Canada that I knew nothing about. As I searched, I found more and more great music, and I became hooked. I've always been proud to be Canadian and from the earliest days I listened to a lot of Canadian rock and pop music, so finding this music was serendipitous: I am a fan of Jamaican music and a fan of Canadian music, and finding that a combination of the two existed was elating. To top it off, many of my favourite Jamaican musicians lived in

Toronto for years! I already knew their work, but now I became interested in learning about it in a whole new way: within the context of their lives in Canada. The fact that there is very little written on this subject made it all the more attractive as I would be delving into relatively unknown territory.

I can't explain succinctly what I find so compelling about Jamaican music, but there are aspects I can articulate. I enjoy the heavy bass, the grooves, the Jamaican patois and the percussion. I feel cool and relaxed listening to this music and it makes me want to smile and nod my head to the rhythms. I have visited Jamaica five times since 2008 so that in addition to the music, I have also come to love Jamaican people, culture and food. These days I still act as a reggae aficionado, although my mission now is to let people hear all the varieties of Jamaican Canadian music from the last fifty years. The story of Jamaican Canadian music remains relatively unknown, but I think this thesis is a step towards changing that.

2. PRELIMINARY BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON JAMAICAN MUSIC

Today all Jamaican musical genres tend to fall under the umbrella term 'reggae,' despite the fact that there are wide varieties of distinct subgenres of Jamaican music, including ska, rocksteady, dub, dancehall and ragga. Amon Saba Saakana writes that "[the word reggae is] used to define all areas of Jamaican popular musical expression" (1981, 96). Using reggae as a general term to describe all Jamaican music is admittedly an oversimplification, but it is used in this way by all the major texts and in everyday conversation about the music. I will use the term in reference to Jamaican music, but when I'm referring to specific styles like dub or dub poetry, I will be more specific.

When Jamaica gained its independence from Britain in 1962, a new form of indigenous music was emerging: ska. This is also around the time when music became one of the most important expressions of a distinct Jamaican culture. Jamaican historian Rex Nettleford writes that

[t]here is in music, for example, the tremendously rich output since the late 1950s of original genres in the popular mode which has given rise to a wide cross-section of the Jamaican people and especially the general masses, *a sense of positive achievement and identity* through indigenous creative action. (1979, 22, italics mine)

Music is arguably Jamaica's number one (legal) export,¹ and when you visit that country you hear and (literally) feel it everywhere. Although Jamaicans listen to all kinds of music from other countries, indigenous Jamaican music is the most popular. There is such a high level of national pride associated with Jamaican music that it's almost palpable.

Before delving into the history of Jamaican music in Canada, it is essential to first briefly look at the various musical genres and subgenres created in Jamaica in order to understand what Jamaican music is all about. It is widely agreed that the first indigenous Jamaican music is ska, which started in the late 1950s/early 1960s. Ska generally has a quick tempo and features horn solos, while the offbeat is emphasized by piano, guitar and horns, creating a 'bouncy' feel. Around 1966, rocksteady emerged with its slower tempo and its melodic bass, while in 1968, reggae was the new style. Lover's rock is a form of reggae with love song lyrics, also from the late 1960s. Dub music started in the late 1960s

¹ It's difficult to estimate the amount of money that the music industry brings to Jamaica, since music is both a tangible and intangible commercial good. Musical tourism, illegal copies and downloads of songs, and international tours by Jamaican musicians make the value of the Jamaican music industry difficult to estimate.

as well and is a remix version of rocksteady and reggae, usually with a focus on drums and bass with delay, echo and reverb effects. The producer is the most important figure in dub as it is this person who mixes an existing song to create a new dub song. Dancehall, featuring DJs who sing and talk over computerized or recycled rhythms, emerged in the early 1980s, while ragga, which is essentially reggae with digital instrumentation, started in the 1990s. All of these genres are commonly referred to as reggae, or Jamaican music. In Canada, all of these Jamaican genres are recorded and performed, but there are also many fusions of reggae with North American popular genres such as rock, pop and R&B, reflecting Jamaican and North American musical influences. Roots reggae and reggae fusion are the main styles I discuss in relation to Jamaican Canadian music, but it is important to note that these styles exist on a spectrum of music, from traditional roots reggae to reggae fusion, with many varieties in between.

In addition to outlining the subgenres of reggae and their emergence, it is important to describe some of the major sonic markers of Jamaican reggae. Bass guitar is generally thought of as the most important instrument in reggae as it plays a melodic lead line and is almost always placed very prominently in the mix. Bass lines are often syncopated with rests or silence between notes, meaning that bass lines are not too busy. An electric guitar with a clean tone that doubles the bass line, or plays something similar to it, is also common. The bass drum often emphasizes beats two and four, which is the opposite of most North American popular genres in which the bass drum emphasizes beats one and three while the snare drum emphasizes beats two and four. The hi hat cymbal is usually placed very prominently in the mix and plays complex and syncopated rhythms. Besides the drum kit, other percussion is also common in reggae, particularly

hand drums that play syncopated rhythms, often similar to Nyabingi drumming.² Drum intros are very common in reggae, in which a drum will play a syncopated yet fairly simple march-like drum roll to lead all the other instruments into the song. Organ, piano and a second electric guitar generally accent the offbeat and typically emphasize rhythm as much as harmony. These three instruments may also play solos or other melodic lines at various points in a song. Reggae guitar solos are most often done with a clean tone or with a wah wah pedal. Horns including saxophone, trombone and trumpet are common as solo instruments as well. Vocals are found in almost all Jamaican music except for instrumental versions of songs and in dub remixes; vocalists may sing solo or be accompanied by one or more backup singers. The use of Jamaican patois and a Jamaican accent are also important sonic markers of reggae, and can be found in varying degrees, from a very thick use of patois to just a slight accent.³ Aside from the musical and textual features listed here, production aesthetics are important markers of ‘authenticity’⁴ in Jamaican music, and will be discussed in chapter 3.

² Nyabingi drumming groups feature three main hand drums: the fundeh, the repeater and the bass drum (Edmonds 2003, 102). Their rhythms are syncopated yet repetitive and can be described as hypnotic. They are used in Rastafarian religious ceremonies and these groups can play for hours on end. The focus of Nyabingi groups is on syncopated drum rhythms, which has had a direct influence on Jamaican popular music, with the earliest example being the Folkes Brothers’ “Oh Carolina” featuring Count Ossie (1960).

³ It is important to note that there are several varieties of Jamaican patois, and that none are recognized as a legitimate language, but rather as lower-class dialects; in Jamaican schools, children only learn to read and write the ‘Queen’s English.’ This rejection of Jamaican patois, the language of the people, is an inherently racist and elitist move that stems from the days of colonialism, so when people proudly use Jamaican patois in literature, theatre or music, it becomes a symbol of Jamaican identity (Bartley 1988, 17). One of the first people to use Jamaican patois as a literary language was writer and actress Louise Bennett (Miss Lou) in the 1940s (Cooper 1999, 3). Bennett, who now lives in Canada, and reggae musicians of the 1970s, were responsible for Jamaican patois becoming recognized as a distinct part of Jamaican culture.

⁴ This is a loaded term, and many people have written entire books on the idea of musical authenticity (see for example, Raymond Leppard’s *Authenticity in Music* (1988), Joli Jensen’s *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization and Country Music* (1998) and Hugh Barker’s *Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music* (2007)). I will not go into the specific arguments for and against musical authenticity, but I will describe some production aesthetics of Jamaican reggae that are generally thought of as markers of authenticity. In addition, the place of origin of this music is directly connected to notions of authenticity in this repertoire.

An important aspect of Jamaican music is its connection with Rastafarianism.

Rastafarianism is a religion that started in the 1930s in Jamaica but has since spread to almost all areas of the world (Edmonds 2003, 3). The origins of Rastafarianism centre around the crowning of Ras Tafari as Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia on November 1, 1930. It is widely believed that Marcus Garvey, another important figure in Rastafarianism, prophesized about a black king in Africa, and Selassie was seen as a fulfillment of this prophecy (Chevannes 1994, 102). Rastafarianism has no formal creed or doctrine; rather it is a fluid movement, consisting of a variety of individuals who share some core beliefs (Edmonds 2003, 67). Many Rastafarians believe that the true home of all black people is Africa, with the ultimate goal, whether literal or spiritual, being repatriation (Erskine 2005, 38). Dreadlocks, a salt- and meat-free diet (known as ital food⁵), and the use of marijuana for spiritual purposes are also common. Since the 1960s, Rastafarianism has become a “ubiquitous presence in Jamaica’s popular culture,” most notably through the lyrics and rhythms of reggae (Edmonds 2003, 97-9). In fact, Rastafarianism’s worldwide spread is due at least in part to its presence in reggae music (Erskine 2005, 169). Rastafarianism in reggae is most evident in the lyrics or themes of songs, and in the visual imagery of many Jamaican musicians and album artwork, including Rastafarian symbols such as dreadlocks and the red, green and gold tricolours. Although I will not go into much detail regarding Rastafarianism in this thesis, it is important to mention because Rastafarian themes and ideals are evident in some music and it is associated with reggae.

⁵ Ital food is common all over Jamaica and is the Rastafarian way of saying ‘vital’ food. Rastafarians often replace the first syllable of a word with ‘I’ as seen here. Other examples include ‘Iration’ (creation) and ‘Iself’ (myself).

Jamaican Canadian Jackie Mittoo arguably has the most concise definition of reggae: “It’s music with a mixed beat – the sort that makes you want to keep time by nodding your head rather than by tapping your foot – a cross between calypso and jazz” (Meredith 1971, 17). Mittoo’s description is apt, and if you go to a concert of Jamaican music, you might notice the way people nod their heads to the music in a laid back style. Reggae is more than simply dance music however; it can be powerful message music. In addition to references to Rastafarian ideals, ‘conscious’ lyrics dealing with black politics are common, especially in relation to historical figures like Marcus Garvey. Reggae has become one of the most popular types of music for oppressed people worldwide, although people from almost all walks of life may listen to this music (Jahn and Weber 1998, 47).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

I’ve searched through all the main Jamaican music texts, including books, CD liner notes, journal and magazine articles, newspaper articles, online sources and interviews looking for references to Canada or sections about Jamaican musicians who lived in Canada. Despite the fact that there are dozens of books on Jamaican music, there are none dedicated specifically to Jamaican Canadian music.

The three main sources that examine Jamaican music, according to level of detail, are Steve Barrow and Peter Dalton’s *The Rough Guide to Reggae* (2004), Lloyd Bradley’s *This is Reggae Music* (2000)⁶ and Kevin O’Brien Chang and Wayne Chen’s

⁶ Also published in the same year as Lloyd Bradley’s *Bass Culture: When Reggae Was King* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 2000).

Reggae Roots: The Story of Jamaican Music (1998). All three books cover the same general material, and each has its strengths and weaknesses: Barrow and Dalton's work is the most comprehensive, as there are chapters on reggae in the UK, the US and a small one on Africa; Bradley's text covers much of the same material, but it is written as a narrative, rather than in sections; and Chang and Chen's book is a shorter, less detailed, and therefore more accessible version of Jamaican musical history. One thing that unites all three texts is that they each give scant mention to Canada's reggae history; in all three books together, there is not even a full paragraph about Jamaican music in Canada. There is quite a bit of detail on the many Jamaican musicians who later moved to Canada, but the focus is always on their work in Jamaica; their lives in Canada, if discussed at all, are mentioned only in passing.

There are, of course, other texts on reggae, including Stephen Davis and Peter Simon's *Reggae Bloodlines* (1977) and *Reggae International* (1982). Both are great history texts, but they are sadly dated and are therefore limited in usefulness (although the many great photos make them worth looking at). Neither text discusses Canada in any detail beyond mentioning that a few Jamaican musicians moved to Canada. Other important texts, according to level of detail, include Chuck Foster's *Roots Rock Reggae* (1999), David Katz's *Solid Foundation: An Oral History of Reggae* (2003), and Amon Saba Saakana's (formerly known as Sebastian Clarke) *Jah Music: The Evolution of the Popular Jamaican Song* (1981). Foster's text includes two paragraphs on Canadian reggae, which is more than any other major text. All of these texts are useful overviews of Jamaican music, although Saakana's *Jah Music* is a bit dated.

Two other texts are identified as reggae encyclopedias: Colin Larkin's *The Virgin Encyclopedia of Reggae Music* (1998) and David Vlado Mosokowitz' *Caribbean Popular Music: An Encyclopedia of Reggae, Mento, Ska, Rock Steady, and Dancehall* (2006). Larkin's book is superficial and contains several biographical errors and omissions, especially in terms of Canadian content, and I do not recommend this work at all; there is simply too much missing information for it to be useful, especially when there are excellent works like *The Rough Guide to Reggae*. Mosokowitz' volume is a bit more thorough although not in terms of Canadian content. For example, the entry on Leroy Sibbles does not mention that he lived in Toronto for over twenty years, and the dub poetry section does not mention Canada at all. There is however a short biography on the Jamaican Canadian reggae band Messenjah that is well researched.

John Gray's *Jamaican Popular Music: From Mento to Dancehall Reggae, A Bibliographic Guide* (2011) is essential for anyone studying Jamaican music. There is a section called "Jamaican Music Abroad," under which there are thirteen Canadian entries. In addition there is a section that lists sources on individuals and the countries where they lived and worked. This section is not complete, as entries on Stranger Cole, Noel Ellis and King Jammy (among others) make no mention of their time in Canada. This is an understandable oversight, as there really is so little written on Jamaican Canadian music that it would be easy to miss this information. In preparing this thesis, however, I now have more than one hundred bibliographic entries – mainly journal and magazine articles – that could be added to this book.

So what *is* written specifically on Jamaican Canadian music? Klive Walker's *Dubwise: Reasoning From the Reggae Underground* (2005) contains one twenty-two-

page chapter (including photos) on Jamaican music in Canada, with a focus on dub poetry and a brief overview of the Canadian scene. Kevin Howes has written a series of six liner notes for Seattle-based record label Light In the Attic's Jamaica to Toronto reissue series. Both Walker and Howes have interviewed many musicians and their works are very well researched. These are useful albeit brief sources; if only there were more of them. Interestingly, there are several books written on dub poetry, most of which discuss dub poetry in Canada. Christian Habekost is one of the leading writers in this area, having written several books, chapters and articles on dub poetry.

Other sources on Jamaican Canadian music include various newspapers, music journals and the music trade press, most of which are stored in archives. In the 1970s and 1980s there were no magazines or journals dedicated to Jamaican Canadian music or Canadian reggae,⁷ but there were several music trade press publications that included articles about Jamaican Canadian music such as *Canadian Composer*, *Cheer* and *Reggae Quarterly*. Some key authors whose work I have drawn on include Daniel Caudeiron (*Cheer*), Jim Dooley (various publications), Isobel Harry (*Canadian Composer*), Beth Lesser and David Kingston (*Reggae Quarterly*), Greg Quill (*Toronto Star*) and Carter Van Pelt (*Reggae Report* and *The Beat*). These journalists and writers were some of the main people writing about Jamaican Canadian music in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁷ Since the early 2000s, the Toronto-based quarterly publication *ReggaeXclusive* has been the only magazine dedicated to reggae in Canada.

4. METHODOLOGY

In addition to reading all the major Jamaican music texts, research for this thesis has consisted of three main areas: locating obscure sources, conducting interviews and visiting the 'Little Jamaica' area in Toronto. I have found hundreds of obscure journal articles through online databases and libraries from all over Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. The vast majority of these are not listed in major bibliographies, such as Gray's *Jamaican Popular Music Bibliography*, nor are they found on standard journal article search engines. For some journals, such as *Canadian Composer* and *Cheer*, I simply had to look through every page of every issue, searching for any reference to Jamaica or reggae. Finding one article can lead to finding several others, sometimes by searching the article's bibliography, or through searching other issues of that journal or other articles by the same author. I've looked through hundreds of issues of journals from the 1960s to the present, including *The Beat*, *Black Music*, *Canadian Musician*, *Dub Catcher*, *The Record*, *The Reggae and African Beat*, *Reggae Quarterly*, *Reggae Report*, *Rockers*, *Small Axe* and *Spear*. I've also searched the databases of several newspapers from the 1960s to the present, including *Contrast* (Toronto), *The Globe and Mail*, *The Montreal Gazette*, *Now* (Toronto), *The Ottawa Citizen* and *The Toronto Star*. I have been extremely thorough and methodical during this process, but I know that I haven't found every single article on Jamaican Canadian music between the 1960s and 1990. Due to the lack of a comprehensive database, I could spend years continuing this line of research.

The second aspect of my research has involved conducting interviews, primarily with Jamaican Canadian musicians. In doing this I have found so much great information,

have heard some interesting stories, and have met and talked with some amazing musicians. The interviews took place between October 2011 and February 2012, and most of them were via telephone, including those with Ras Lee, Rupert Harvey, Willi Williams, Lloyd Delpratt and Fergus Hambleton. Since the vast majority of Jamaican Canadian musicians live in and around Toronto, telephone was the most convenient means of communication. In addition, many of these musicians are still actively performing and some tour regularly, making it difficult to schedule an in-person meeting. My interview with Leroy Sibbles was through email, as he lives in Jamaica and tours regularly. On a trip to Toronto in January 2012, I was able to meet and talk with a few people including Jo Jo Bennett, Fergus Hambleton and Jason Wilson. As with searching through journal articles, there has been a snowball effect throughout the interview process. Initially it was difficult to get interviews, but I found that after I had interviewed a few well-respected musicians, such as Leroy Sibbles, others were more likely to speak with me. Also, some people were helpful in giving me emails or phone numbers of other musicians. Interviews have been crucial for this process and have provided me with information that is not available in the many obscure journal and magazine articles. I also made extensive use of interviews by Jim Dooley and Peter I, both of whom have interviewed many Jamaican Canadian musicians. As with the bibliographic searches, I could spend years and years interviewing all the great Jamaican Canadian musicians. Both areas of research have provided me with a considerable amount of original material.

The third aspect of my research involved two trips to Toronto in January and March 2012. In addition to meeting several Jamaican Canadian musicians, I also got the chance to explore the area of Toronto known as 'Little Jamaica,' which is located on

Eglinton Avenue West between Dufferin Street and Keele Street. This was a great opportunity to experience first hand the area that could be described as the heart of the Jamaican community in Canada. I feel it was essential that I visit this area as there are dozens of Jamaican restaurants, hair salons, record shops and grocery stores, and this area generally feels like a taste of Jamaica in Canada. Many people speak in thick Jamaican patois and you can hear reggae music and smell Jamaican food, like curried oxtail, all of which makes Eglinton Avenue West feel very much like Jamaica. Outside of Jamaica, I've never experienced any place like 'Little Jamaica' and there may not be another place like this in all of Canada.

It is important to outline the scope of this thesis: I'm writing about music made by Jamaicans in Canada, specifically Toronto, and although I'm focusing on reggae music, I'll also look at dub and dub poetry. Jamaican musicians were also making music other than reggae and related Jamaican styles, such as R&B and funk, which I will touch on briefly. During the time period I'm concentrating on, the 1970s and 1980s, there were no serious non-Jamaican reggae bands in Canada, but if there were, they would not be a focus, since I'm primarily concerned with Jamaican genres played by Jamaican Canadians in Toronto.

The reason I chose to focus on the years up to 1990 is because there is so much material to cover in the 1970s and 1980s that I would not be able to do justice to the 1990s and 2000s in the space of this thesis. A cutoff date of 1990 is somewhat arbitrary, but as historical surveys by decade are common, this is what I chose. At the same time, dancehall became the big Jamaican genre in Canada around this time, so 1990 can be thought of as a year that roughly separates eras of Jamaican Canadian music. The reason

that I only briefly look at the 1960s is because in this first phase of Jamaican music in Canada, musicians played more American popular music genres than Jamaican genres. Jamaican Canadian music in the 1960s and from the 1990s to the present could easily take up many years worth of study. Rather than look at everything in less detail, I decided to focus on two decades in greater detail, two decades where there was a surge of activity in Jamaican Canadian music.

The near exclusion of women from this work is highly regrettable and does not reflect women's varied roles in the Jamaican Canadian music scene in the 1970s and 1980s. I recognize that many written histories, musical and otherwise, are male-dominated, and it was not my intent for this historical survey to follow this pattern. There are several reasons why women are not more fully represented in this thesis: the first has to do with interviewees. I attempted to contact several women involved in this music scene, including musicians Lillian Allen and Carlene Davis and writer/photographer Isobel Harry, but was unable to speak with any of them; if I had, this work would be more thorough. In addition to being musicians and writers, women have had many other roles in this music scene including record shop owner, radio DJ and publisher of reggae magazines. Another reason for the underrepresentation of women is my very basic discussion of dub poetry; a focus on dub poetry would have undoubtedly meant a focus on women, as there are many female dub poets in Canada. Aside from my own shortcomings, there are some misogynistic aspects of Jamaican music and culture that can partly explain why this field is male-dominated; women have limited roles in Jamaican music generally and this continues in Canada. Future studies of Jamaican

Canadian music, and reggae more generally, would benefit from more research and attention to women roles and positions in this music culture.

5. OUTLINE AND THESIS STATEMENT

The first chapter of this thesis consists of an overview of musical ethnicities, diaspora studies and transnationalism in Jamaican Canadian music. I also examine several texts dealing with being black in Canada and the racial hardships these people had to face. All of these are central issues relating to Jamaican music and culture in Canada and I will refer to the information in this chapter throughout this thesis.

In the second chapter I present an early history of Jamaicans in Canada. I also give some contextual information on immigration and population statistics and trends for the Jamaican community in Canada. This is part of setting the stage for an overview of the infrastructure of Jamaican music in Toronto, which includes nightclubs, record labels, recording studios and record stores. This infrastructure and the pioneers who helped create it were absolutely vital in the development and surge of Jamaican music in Canada, and allowed for Jamaican musicians to work as musicians in Canada, both as live performers and recording artists. Without this infrastructure, many of these musicians may have been forced to take jobs on the side, thus taking away from the vitality of the Jamaican Canadian music scene.

The third chapter is concerned with defining the Jamaican Canadian sound. Here I outline several distinct aspects of Jamaican Canadian music, including the fusion of styles, racially integrated bands, *bands* as the norm and the rise of dub poetry. Jamaican Canadian reggae is often unfavourably compared to Jamaican-recorded reggae, and in

this chapter I look at some reasons why this might be. Finally, I look at racial biases in Canada towards music made by Jamaicans and black people in general.

The fourth chapter presents biographical information on the main figures in the Jamaican Canadian musical scene. This information is not readily available and is the result of locating hundreds of obscure, out-of-print sources, and through conducting many interviews. As stated earlier, the work of Jamaican musicians in Canada is virtually ignored by all the main reggae history texts, even the work of major reggae figures such as Jackie Mittoo and Leroy Sibbles. These texts will often go into great detail about their work in Jamaica, and then in passing say something about them having lived in Canada for twenty years. Very little of the biographical information I present is derivative, except for very basic background information, especially relating to time spent in Jamaica. I do this only for context, but the focus is on time spent in Canada. This chapter is important in determining the roles these musicians had in establishing a Jamaican Canadian music scene in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s. These musicians played a variety of styles and sounds and influenced one another and many other musicians.

The fifth and final chapter features an examination of nine Jamaican Canadian songs in which I look at lyrics, themes, musical sounds and production aesthetics. From Jamaican style roots reggae, to multiple types of reggae fusion, to dub poetry, with a whole spectrum of sounds in between, the songs in this chapter were selected to demonstrate the wide variety of Jamaican Canadian music.

The fact that there is so much music and information that is largely unknown outside of the Jamaican Canadian community is the driving force behind this work. Ultimately, this thesis will allow me to uncover the 'hidden' history of Jamaican

Canadian music. Starting in the mid-1960s, a vibrant Jamaican musical community has existed in Toronto, with a surge in activity from the 1970s to the 1980s. The transplantation of Jamaican musicians into Toronto – and their negotiation of that city's obstacles and various cultural influences – had a direct impact on the music they played. During this time, a wide variety of musical styles were created, including the fusion of Jamaican and Canadian music, and the re-creation of Jamaican roots reggae in Canada. Jamaican Canadian music is an important yet neglected part of Canadian musical history, and is a unique blend of styles and various cultural influences in Toronto.

CHAPTER 1. CULTURAL THEORIES

The goal of this chapter is to outline some theoretical concepts and issues, and to define key terms in the context of Jamaican Canadian culture that I can then draw upon throughout this thesis. In the first section I outline the idea of musical ethnicities or ‘a society with a music.’ This is often discounted as an essentialist way of thinking, but since this whole thesis is based around the music of a cultural group, it is necessary to examine this model of thought. This thesis is also about finding aspects of music that can be described as ‘Jamaican’ or ‘Canadian’ and others that are a hybrid of the two. This section will help to sort out the problems in labeling music in terms of nationality.

A second key concept I explore in this chapter is diaspora. Since Jamaicans in Canada are part of an international diaspora, a connection to Jamaica as a homeland can help to create a shared identity and commonalities between Jamaicans in Canada. Music in diasporic communities takes on great importance, perhaps more so for Jamaicans who may have nationalistic and cultural pride associated with reggae. Both the re-creation of old sounds from the homeland and new fusion sounds are created in the diaspora. The hyphenated identity is another aspect of diaspora, one that adds to the feeling among Jamaican Canadians of not quite belonging. Related to diaspora is transnationalism, which is useful in describing the flow of people and cultural products, especially music, between Jamaica and Canada. These countries are connected in many ways, and the fusion music created by Jamaican Canadians in Toronto is a prime example of a transnational music: Jamaican music is shaped in a new context, creating new musical styles.

Finally, I outline a brief history of racism and being black in Canada. This is important background information because one of the main reasons Jamaican music in Canada has been under-acknowledged is due to racism on many levels. Many Jamaican musicians have been pressured at one time or another to play genres of music associated with black Americans, and the hardships faced by black people in Canada are addressed in the lyrics of several Jamaican Canadian songs.

1. MUSICAL ETHNICITIES

Thinking about music in terms of ethnicities or cultures is a typical, but problematic, way of organizing music and people. In this section I will look at this way of thinking and show how it can be both useful and limiting at the same time.

Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl describes a common assumption shared by many people, which is that

a society has a music, or at least a principal music, that consists of a set of rules and principles that govern ideas about music, musical behaviour and musical sound [...] There is Italian music, Chinese music, Arapaho music and Ewe music. The congruence of society and music is certainly an oversimplification and readily subject to criticism from several perspectives, but it is a point of departure. (Nettl 1995, 87)

In response to this quote, Tina K. Ramnarine asks “[w]hat does the world look like if we do not take this model as our point of departure?” (2007a, 30). Humans seem to feel compelled to classify things, and music and cultures are no exception. I agree that this model is an oversimplification, but how else do we productively discuss music in relation to cultures? The idea of ‘a people with a music’ is problematic, but Jamaican musicians with whom I have spoken, and those I’ve read about suggest that reggae music is

distinctly *Jamaican*. Of course there are Jamaican musicians who do not play reggae at all, but reggae is so intertwined with the idea of Jamaicanness that it can be practical to describe reggae as the music that represents Jamaica. In this case a society (Jamaica) with a music (reggae) may not be so problematic.

I want to be careful when discussing Jamaican Canadian music, lest I come across as essentializing an entire group of people. I'm not looking at or referring to the music of *all* Jamaican Canadians (that would be impossible), but rather, a select group of influential musicians, their music and the infrastructure around it. The title and thesis of this work depend on a clear definition of Jamaican Canadian music, so it is important to set the parameters of this work. As discussed in the introduction, this thesis is about music made by Jamaicans in Canada, specifically Toronto, with a focus on reggae and other Jamaican styles, such as roots reggae, reggae fusion and dub poetry.

Musical ethnicity is generally an essentialist way of thinking because in reality, people from a variety of backgrounds make a variety of music, with a great deal of overlap. In Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s, there were non-Jamaican, Caribbean-born people, and even white, Canadian-born people making reggae music, but Jamaicans made the vast majority of reggae at this time, both live and in recordings. The musical ethnicities approach can thus be useful as it at least partially describes what happened in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s: a group (in this case, Jamaicans) makes 'their' music (reggae).

Nettl's approach to musical ethnicities is not so useful, however, when it comes to describing the reggae fusion music made by Jamaican Canadians in the 1970s and 1980s. This music brings together a wide variety of stylistic influences, such as rock, pop, R&B

and blues mixed with reggae. Thus, the musical ethnicities model does not adequately describe what is happening with fusion music, because in this case, Jamaican Canadians make multiple forms of music, mixing reggae features with a variety of other musical and cultural influences.

The idea of 'a society with a music' is common in ethnomusicology, and traditionally, music has been studied in a specific cultural and geographic space. Migration, multicultural societies and transnationalism disrupt this neat package, and expand the study of Jamaican music to include the many Jamaican diasporas (Ramnarine 2007b, 1-3). Because of these factors, reggae music and related Jamaican genres are not just to be studied in Jamaica but in the many Jamaican diasporas and beyond. Jamaicans primarily migrated to one of three countries: Canada, England and the United States. In these countries there are concentrations of Jamaicans in Toronto and Montreal, London, and New York City. Other areas with significant Jamaican populations include other Caribbean islands and Central America. The Jamaican diaspora is large and spread across several nations, with the total Jamaican diasporic population totaling well over two million people (Metzger 2011). For comparison sake, as of 2011 the population of Jamaica was almost three million people (Karlin and Kaminski 2011, 248); this distribution of people who identify as Jamaican illustrates the extensive transplantation of people, and their cultural and musical practices, outside of Jamaica.

2. DIASPORA STUDIES

The vibrant Jamaican Canadian musical community in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s is a diasporic community: people are relocated away from their homeland, yet

retain a connection with Jamaica, and have created a distinct community in their new home. For this reason, it is essential to discuss some meanings around the word 'diaspora,' including my uses of the term, and some connections between diasporic communities and the arts, especially music. There are several ways that I use diaspora throughout this thesis, including the idea of a hyphenated identity; for example, a Jamaican Canadian person may identify as both Jamaican and Canadian. Diaspora is also useful as a way to invent a shared identity, with music being a strong symbol of Jamaicanness. Another way I use diaspora is in relation to the idea of a diasporic longing for the homeland. Ethnomusicologist Heidi Carolyn Feldman writes, "in order for a diasporic consciousness to remain alive, a group of people must actively maintain collective memory, diasporic longing, and a myth of return to the homeland. Without these elements, descendants of the diaspora tend to no longer identify as diasporic subjects [...]" (2006, 51). In particular I use the idea of diasporic longing to describe the Jamaican Canadian preference for reggae music from Jamaica over Canadian-recorded reggae, as detailed in chapter 3. Before moving on, however, it is important to define the term diaspora, which has many different meanings and uses (Slobin 2003, 284).

Diaspora is a complex term although it is often used loosely and incorrectly as a synonym for migration (Gowricharn 2006, 2). Although this is part of the definition, diaspora means much more than simply the physical migration of people, and can be defined as a group of people with a "shared origin" living in a different geographic location (Cohen 2008, 165). Steven Vertovec, a scholar of diaspora and transnationalism gives three meanings of diaspora that are commonly used: "(a) the *process* of becoming scattered, (b) the *community* living in foreign parts, or (c) the *place* or *geographic space*

in which the dispersed groups live” (2009, 130, italics in original). All three meanings are useful here and in chapter 2 I go into detail about how and why Jamaicans came to Canada; who and what the community consists of, especially musically; and where it is located, musically (i.e. nightclubs, record stores).

Diasporic groups are often described as “globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups” (Vertovec 2009, 4). As discussed in the previous section, Jamaican Canadians – and other Jamaican diasporic communities – cannot be lumped into one homogenous group, as there may be varying levels of collective self-identification. In addition, it is simplistic and essentialist to describe all Jamaicans in Canada in one way since there are a wide range of differences within the population, including racial, economic, religious, social and cultural distinctions. Despite this, the term “diaspora group” is often used as a synonym for “ethnic group” or is at least defined in terms of ethnicity (Ramnarine 2007b, 5). This is another oversimplification, which ignores the wide variety of people who may identify as part of a diasporic group. More specifically, the Jamaican diaspora is generally described as a group of people born in Jamaica of African descent. Ethnomusicologist Annemarie Gallagher points out that “[t]he concept of the Caribbean diaspora has largely focused on black/African descended people,” (1994, 362) meaning that the popular notion of a Caribbean diaspora typically excludes Caribbean people of Chinese, East Indian, Middle Eastern, and European descent. This multiplicity of identities means that there can be no “essential meaning of Caribbean diaspora as there can be no single, essential diasporic identity” (Gallagher 1994, 363). Because there is no uniform diasporic identity, this study could never claim to be definitive, complete or applicable to the experience of all Jamaican Canadians.

Despite all the possible differences, however, a shared ancestral home can create a strong bond among people, with music being a representation and symbol of their common roots.

Related to the idea of a diasporic group is a hyphenated identity, which is marked by dual or multiple identifications (Vertovec 2009, 6). One of the problems with hyphenated identities is that they “reduce the tangle of experiences to the straitjackets of ethnicity and nationalism,” as if there were no other important or defining aspect of a person’s identity (Ramnarine 2007b, 10). For example, the label ‘Jamaican Canadian’ (with or without the hyphen)⁸ ignores religion, gender and sexuality, and as mentioned above, race, since ‘Jamaican’ is an identity assumed to be black. As with the hyphenated identity, “diaspora has been seen as a space of non-belonging, of being away from a place called ‘home’” (Ramnarine 2007a, 3). A diasporic consciousness implies that home is not in the diaspora, but in the ‘homeland;’ this marks Jamaican Canadians as not-quite Canadian, and may be a reason why Jamaican Canadian music has not been historicized in Canada: it is not a part of what is typically thought of as *Canadian*.⁹

Even with all the potential differences within a diasporic group, diaspora can be seen as “a strategy for inventing identity” (Gallaughier 1994, 365) as it creates a feeling of community and a shared sense of identity. All Jamaican Canadians share a common ancestral home (Jamaica) and present day home (Canada), but in some cases, the

⁸ Throughout this thesis I will not use a hyphen with ‘Jamaican Canadian.’ The concept of a hyphenated identity does not need an actual hyphen to be applied and it may be more inclusive without a hyphen because then someone can be both Jamaican and Canadian, rather than Jamaican-Canadian, which may be neither. In addition, cultural organizations like the Toronto-based Jamaican Canadian Association do not use a hyphen.

⁹ It’s possible that the exclusion of Jamaican Canadian music from histories of Canadian music is not political; no one has written about it yet. At the same time, there are dozens of books on Canadian popular music, most of which only briefly, if at all, mention Jamaican Canadian music.

commonalities end there. This is where Jamaican Canadian music can function as a way to celebrate a common, diasporic identity. Although there are many differences between Jamaican Canadians, music can unite this group.

Music in particular is often very important to many diasporic communities, but why and how? Tina K. Ramnarine, an ethnomusicologist who examines music in diasporas, writes that “[t]he capacity of music to travel around the world, to cross boundaries but still evoke places, to provide sonic windows into the past but exist in contemporary soundscapes, gives it a special role in maintaining diasporic sensibilities, creating new homes, and revealing complex histories of creative interactions” (2007a, 13). With the development of various music technologies, musical sounds can be recreated fairly easily anywhere in the world. Music has the potential to function as an emotional connection to the homeland. In addition, all cultures make some sort of music, and with the global varieties in styles and genres, music is an effective way to express one’s culture.

Diaspora is both historical and “new;” we can look at musical memory and the preservation of musical traditions, but also new musical creations and sounds within the diaspora (Ramnarine 2007b, 2). Drawing on ideas from Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic*, Ramnarine writes, “expressive and performative arts are profoundly political and central to the theorisation of diaspora” (2007a, 21-2). The sheer variety of musical expressions in the diaspora is more proof that there is no single diasporic identity. Rinaldo Walcott, one of the leading scholars of black Canadian studies, writes that “[m]usic remains one of the most complex and significant expressive cultural forms of the black diaspora” (2003, 145). For these reasons, studying Jamaican Canadian music is an excellent way to learn

about Jamaican Canadian culture. Since there are no major, previous studies of music in the Jamaican diaspora in Canada, examining this music scene and its development is essential in comprehensively historicizing Jamaican contributions to Canadian culture in Toronto and beyond.

3. TRANSNATIONALISM

Transnationalism can be defined as “sustained cross-border relationships, patterns of exchange, affiliations and social formations spanning nation-states” (Vertovec 2009, 2). Studies in transnationalism focus on a variety of areas including “capital flows, trade, corporations [and] politics,” but also “social networks, families, migration circuits, [and] identities” (Vertovec 2009, 3); this movement of people and cultural products includes music. Transnationalism, like diaspora, “generally refers to populations that live in different geographical spaces, feel related in one way or another, and maintain social relations with each other” (Gowricharn 2006, 5); this is similar to the idea of diaspora described above. Paul Gilroy describes the African diaspora as a “network of relationships and cultural possibilities” (1993a, 7), pointing to the idea that African diasporic cultures, because they are spread out among so many nation states, are transnational (Gilroy 1993b, 80). The Jamaican diaspora functions in a similar way as it is spread among several nations. All Jamaican music made outside of Jamaica is in some way transnational, but for my purposes, transnationalism is most useful in describing and theorizing the movement of the music and the musicians themselves between Jamaica and Canada.

Jenny Burman, a scholar of Jamaican Canadian transnationalism, describes Toronto and Jamaica as “intertwined globalized locales” due to “tourism, migration, foreign aid projects, and deportation, as well as through the traffic of goods, money, music and mass media representations” (2010, 14-5). There are many “sustained cross-border relationships” between Jamaica and Toronto in terms of music: for example, there are several Jamaican record stores in Toronto, some of which get weekly shipments of the latest 45 rpm records from Jamaica. From the early 1970s up until the present day, someone living in Toronto can stay up to date with the latest songs from Jamaica, just like someone living in Jamaica. In chapter 2, I look in more detail at this transnational flow of music between Toronto and Jamaica.

Another example of transnationalism in Jamaican Canadian music is the physical movement of musicians across national borders. For example, singer and bassist Leroy Sibbles lived in Toronto for over twenty years, but has since moved back to Jamaica. He still functions as an artist in both countries due to his business ties to Canada, which is where his CDs are distributed from and where his agent is located. Another example of a transnational artist is Jackie Mittoo, who also lived in Toronto for twenty years but during this time also recorded frequently in Jamaica and England. Thus, his career as a musician is spread out between several countries. Transnationalism as a concept is useful for my purposes, primarily as a way to discuss the flow of people and culture, particularly music, between Canada and Jamaica.

4. RACISM AND THE 'OTHER' IN CANADA

To grasp the specifics of how racism has influenced Jamaican Canadian culture, it is first necessary to take a brief look at the history of racism in Canada and the history of black people in Canada. Racism has affected Jamaican Canadian musicians in several ways, including imposed stylistic limitations and through song lyrics. The ideals of Canadianness, along with the virtual exclusion of black people from the common Canadian historical narrative, are among the reasons why the history of Jamaican Canadian music is largely unacknowledged in the mainstream of Canadian music history. One of the most obvious aims of this thesis is to uncover this hidden history.

Canada is not a racism-free utopia and there is a long history of racism in Canada. Although slavery is not a commonly acknowledged part of Canadian history,¹⁰ it did exist between the 1600s and the 1800s. Due to the Canadian climate, there was no large plantation system like those found in the Caribbean and in the United States; as a result the total number of slaves was much smaller, and their roles were mainly as indentured domestic servants (Tulloch 1975, 94). This trend of black people working for white people continues today with a large number of women from the Caribbean working as paid domestic servants in Canada, and large numbers of migrant workers coming to Canada to assist in seasonal employment on farms. Even though black people have been a part of Canada since the 1600s, they are largely under-acknowledged.

¹⁰ In Ontario high school history classes, there was and continues to be an emphasis placed on the Underground Railroad, while slavery was discussed as something outside of Canada, primarily in the United States. The Heritage Minutes commercial about the Underground Railroad perpetuates the idea that Canada was a haven for escaped American slaves ("Underground Railroad" 2012). Although this may be true, it is one-sided and ignores the history of slavery in Canada. Tulloch (1975) writes about slaves who had escaped to Canada only to be illegally captured and resold in Canada to ships bound for the Caribbean.

Rinaldo Walcott writes about “three different black configurations of potential belonging” in Canada: the first and oldest dates back to the founding of the colony; the second is the “discontinuous and continuous Caribbean presence since the early 1800s,” mainly freed slaves, domestic servants and seasonal migrant workers; while the third and most recent are migrants from continental Africa, many of whom were refugees (2001, 130). Despite the fact that black people have lived in Canada for centuries, first as slaves and now as members of a culturally oppressed minority group, the idea of Canadianness remains Eurocentric. Walcott writes that “[t]he founding narratives of Canada leave little, if any room for imagining Blackness as constitutive of Canadianness” (2000, 7).

Elsewhere Walcott writes that, “[i]n Canada, black identities must be rooted elsewhere and that elsewhere is always outside Canada” (2003, 105). This outsider status and the feeling of never quite belonging are important aspects of what it might be like to live as a black person in Canada. Jamaican Canadian music and especially Jamaican Canadian reggae, is an outsider genre in Canada, never fully accepted by the mainstream. In chapters 2 and 3 I outline some of the issues around how and perhaps why Jamaican Canadian music is treated in this way.

Racism affects Jamaican Canadian musicians in many ways, some of which could be experienced by any black musician. Many Jamaican musicians that I have spoken with and those who I’ve read about say that throughout their careers in Canada, they have been expected to play so-called ‘black’ genres of music, such as R&B and funk. Race thus limits these musicians stylistically as to what music they can play. Mainstream radio and the Juno awards are two other places where black Canadians are underrepresented, both of which will be detailed in chapter 2. The effects of racism are also evident in the lyrics

of many Jamaican Canadian songs in which musicians comment on being oppressed because they are immigrants or because they are black.

It must be emphasized that unless a person actually is black, it isn't possible to fully understand the reality of living as a black person in a hegemonically white society, such as Canada. There are however several excellent books about life as a black person in Canada, which I will draw on.¹¹ Cecil Foster, another scholar of black Canadian studies, writes about many things black people in Canada have to deal with, such as discrimination and harassment due to their skin colour. Foster writes about being pulled over by police for no apparent reason, something he refers to as "DWBBs – Driving While Being Black violations" (1996, 5). Although the acronym is intended to be humorous, he is dead serious; there is a lot of evidence that the police harass black people more than any other ethnic/racial group in Canada. While only 29% of all Torontonians say they have personally experienced discrimination, that number rises dramatically for ethnic and visible minorities, with 62% of black Torontonians having experienced discrimination (Foster 2007, 434). Black musicians are not exempt from such stereotyping and experience racism in the form of an expectation as to what genres of music they will play, lack of recognition at music awards shows and limited representation on mainstream radio.

Racism comes in many forms, ranging from systemic discrimination in the workplace to generalized forms of everyday racism. As part of systemic racism, Henry refers to a "race ceiling" which functions in a similar way as the glass ceiling that women encounter, in which jobs at the top executive levels, such as a chief operating officer, are

¹¹ See works by Frances Henry (1994), Rinaldo Walcott (2000, 2001, 2003) and Cecil Foster (1996, 2005, 2007).

virtually unobtainable for black people and women (1994, 275). The “race ceiling” is relevant to black musicians in Canada who have achieved far less mainstream success compared with white musicians. From the exclusion of black musical genres at the Juno Awards to the whitewashing of mainstream Canadian radio, Jamaican Canadian musicians have faced racism on every level. I will discuss these ideas in great detail in chapters 2 and 3, where I explore the obstacles black musicians have had to face in Canada. In theory, multiculturalism should have made it easier for black musicians to succeed in Canada, but the reality is quite different from that ideal.

Related to racism is the concept of multiculturalism, which is important to this thesis as a political construct and reality. Multiculturalism, an ideology that recognizes multiple cultural groups in a single society, was officially added to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by the Canadian government in 1982. Prior to official multiculturalism the myth of the two founding nations was widespread, erasing the existence of Native Canadians and various immigrant groups; this all made Canada’s history appear relatively simple. This “denial of a much more messy history” is pervasive in all settler colonies (Walcott 2001, 131), as the idea of a homogenous Canada is easier for historians to deal with than the waves of migration to Canada from all over the world. Another effect of multiculturalism is that it perpetuates the idea that people of British or French descent are the predominant culture in Canada, and that everyone else is a ‘not-quite-citizen,’ thus dividing people along ethnic/racial lines. This marks Jamaican Canadians, or any group aside from Canadians of British or French descent, as outsiders, or the ‘other’ within Canada. This marginalization extends to the history of Jamaican Canadian music, as will be described in chapters 2 and 3. Jamaican Canadian history is a

part of Canadian history and as multicultural Canada is about celebrating diversity, Jamaican Canadian music therefore warrants study.

* * * * *

The various theoretical concepts and issues described in this chapter are all useful for this thesis, and I will apply them to my exploration of the history and development of Jamaican music in Toronto. The idea of musical ethnicities is helpful in describing what I mean by Jamaican Canadian music, and helps to sort out the problems with labeling music in terms of nationalities. I want to emphasize that arts are important to diasporic communities, and that music in particular is important to many Jamaican Canadians. Transnationalism, meanwhile, can be useful to describe the flow of people and music in both directions between Jamaica and Canada. I included an exploration of racism because this is key in understanding the obstacles faced by all black musicians in Canada, and influences the lyrical themes of many Jamaican Canadian songs.

CHAPTER 2. SETTING THE STAGE: INFRASTRUCTURE

This chapter contains a wide range of contextual information about Jamaican Canadian music, and the term infrastructure, which ties this chapter together, is used broadly. The first section outlines Jamaican Canadian immigration trends, both historically and contemporarily, and explains some of the reasons why Jamaicans came to Toronto in such large numbers; specifically, I look at why so many Jamaican musicians immigrated to Toronto. Next I examine public Jamaican celebrations in Toronto including the largest and most visible expression of Jamaican and pan-Caribbean culture in Canada: Caribana. Following that, I briefly examine the early history of Jamaican music in Toronto. The subsequent sections are specifically about music infrastructure: nightclubs and other places where live music is heard; record labels and recording studios involved with Jamaican Canadian music; radio and TV stations and their mostly ambivalent position towards this music; sound systems as an important Jamaican expression of musical culture; Jamaican record stores in Toronto; and finally, musical awards ceremonies. In a variety of ways this infrastructure demonstrates the commitment to – and in a few cases the ambivalence towards – Jamaican Canadian music and musicians, by everyone involved. The infrastructure created by individual Jamaican Canadian people helped to build a vibrant Jamaican diasporic community in Toronto. The origins of Jamaican music are not in Canada, but the role of these pioneers and advocates in setting up this infrastructure helped to create a new transnational community. The surge in Jamaican Canadian music in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s is much more than just music: the infrastructure around this music is as important as the music itself.

Without it, the music would have no outlets and therefore may not have existed in the way that it did.

1. IMMIGRATION TRENDS

The purpose of this section is to outline the history of black Caribbean and, more specifically, Jamaican people in Canada, including reasons for immigration, and population statistics. The first Jamaican people to come to Canada were the Maroons in 1796, and although the British deported them from Jamaica, they arrived in Nova Scotia as free settlers.¹² Following this early migration, things slowed down; between the early 1800s and 1962, immigration from the Caribbean to Canada amounted to a mere “trickle of female domestic help for well-to-do Canadian homes” (Tulloch 1975, 181). The first official Caribbean Domestic Scheme in Canada brought 100 women from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe to Quebec in 1910-11 (Burman 2010, 86-7). Women coming to Canada with the Caribbean Domestic Scheme were generally given one- or two-year contracts based on Canadian government quotas of between 1000 and 2000 Caribbean domestic workers per year. These policies were racially biased and did not apply to white people from the Caribbean, who were allowed to enter Canada as they wished.

Approximately 12,000 Caribbean people immigrated to Canada between 1961 and 1966, mostly domestic workers, who were generally not given citizenship (Henry 1994, 27).¹³ Immigration reforms in 1967 quickly resulted in a doubling of this number (Anderson

¹² The Maroons were the free people of African descent who had escaped from British slave-owners and lived in the mountains of Jamaica.

¹³ There are no statistics specifically about the number of Jamaicans who migrated to Canada prior to the 1970s.

and Grant 1987, 11) and since the late 1960s Canada has been the number two destination for Jamaican migrants after the United States. Between 3000 and 11,000 Jamaicans migrated to Canada each year in the 1970s, and 3000 to 5500 migrated each year in the 1980s (Thomas-Hope 1992, 60). Total figures are inaccurate, however, as will be described below.

Violence and a lack of employment opportunities are the main reasons Jamaicans emigrated in large numbers between the 1960s and 1980s. Especially in the 1970s and 1980s, Jamaicans emigrated because they were anxious to escape the political violence and economic uncertainty at this time in their native country.¹⁴ There were 351 political murders in Jamaica in 1979 and 889 political murders in 1980 (Iton 2008, 385 n.65). Emigration from Jamaica peaked between the years 1975 and 1984 when people from all social and economic classes “fled from political upheaval and economic decline due to rising inflation and falling wages” (Burman 2010, 72).

There are a variety of reasons why Jamaicans came to Canada in particular in such large numbers beginning in the late 1960s. The first is the result of both Canadian and British immigration reforms and the demand for workers and labourers. From the end of World War II until the early 1960s, the UK government was quite liberal in welcoming immigrants from all over the Commonwealth – and was active in pursuing them – principally to fill low paying jobs that the white British population didn’t want (Henry 1994, 18, 27). In the early 1960s, right around the time that immigration laws in the UK became more restrictive, immigration laws in Canada started to loosen. This meant that Jamaican people who might otherwise have migrated to the UK came to Canada instead.

¹⁴ After Jamaica’s first agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1977, the cost of living rose dramatically with inflation, while wages fell (Burman 2010, 72).

In 1962, Canada changed its laws and five years later established the point system of immigration, based on education, language and other (explicitly) non-racial criteria in which an applicant needed 50/100 points to be eligible (Henry 1994, 27). This eliminated the earlier laws that discriminated against non-white people, although these changes were not necessarily made out of a desire for equality; Canadian immigration policies “have selectively encouraged and restricted Caribbean migration since the turn of the last century,” (Burman 2010, 14) generally coinciding with a need for workers. A non-racially based immigration policy was however, a giant step away from the ideals of earlier Prime Ministers including Wilfred Laurier (1896-1911), Robert Borden (1911-1920) and Mackenzie King (1935-1948), all of whom envisioned Canada as a white nation (Foster 2005, 42).

In addition to these immigration policy reforms, another reason for the influx of Jamaicans to Canada during the 1970s and 1980s was to join family members who had already immigrated to Canada. Between 1968 and 1973 people who were admitted as visitors to Canada could apply for landed-immigrant status while in the country, which meant that many people who were visiting family members could then choose to stay.

Another reason many Jamaicans chose Canada during this period was because the other main destination country, the United States, was involved in a war with Vietnam and immigrants to the United States were required to fight in this controversial war, which lasted until 1975. In addition, people in Jamaica were aware of how black people were treated in the southern US. Jamaican Canadian musician Lloyd Delpratt says, “a lot of people don’t really want to go to a country where [black] people are not human beings yet, you know?” (Delpratt 2012).

Jamaican musicians emigrated for the same reasons as the general Jamaican population: to escape political violence and because of a lack of employment opportunities. Jamaican singer Ernie Smith moved to Canada after learning of a death threat made against him because of the lyrics in one of his songs (Johnson 1978, 1); politically motivated death threats are not taken lightly in Jamaica. Another singer, Johnny Osbourne, who also moved to Toronto from Kingston says, “I got away from all that political violence. My mother wanted me to be out of it” (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4).

The reason so many Jamaican musicians chose to come to Canada, and Toronto in particular, is because of the abundance of employment opportunities and the so-called wave effect. Delpratt says that in the 1960s in Jamaica, it was well known that there were several Jamaican clubs in Toronto where musicians could work fulltime (Delpratt 2012). Some of the top Jamaican musicians made the trip, which influenced younger musicians to follow. Delpratt says, “it’s not hard for younger musicians to emulate these guys moving abroad. Like if Miles Davis moved to France, then [you’re] gonna go to France too if you’re a top jazz musician. Something’s gotta be there for Miles Davis to be there” (Delpratt 2012). Most musicians in Jamaica at this time were lucky to work one or two days a week; unemployment was simply too high for all the talented musicians to be working as much as they’d like. In Toronto, on the other hand, working musicians could and did perform up to six days each week (Delpratt 2012). Delpratt says that “[m]usicians who really want to improve their skills would come up [to Toronto] because it’s wider, it’s bigger here than little Kingston there, you know?” (Delpratt 2012).

The population statistics for Jamaicans in Canada is muddy at best, however various trends are evident in migration patterns. The Jamaican population in Canada grew

steadily from the 1960s to the 1980s, but unfortunately, statistics are unreliable; in addition to other variables,¹⁵ census data includes several categories that a Jamaican person could fall under, including 'Jamaican,' 'West Indian,' 'Caribbean' and 'Black.' In 1970, there were approximately 45,000 people from the Caribbean living in Canada (Howes 2004), at least 30,000 of whom were Jamaican (Howes 2006a). In 1978, this number jumped to 130,000 people from the Caribbean in Toronto alone (Caudeiron 1978, 44). By 1991, there were 250,000 people from the Caribbean living in Toronto and Montreal, the two Canadian cities with the highest populations of people of Caribbean descent (Morgan 1991, 7).

The latest census data from 2006¹⁶ does little to clarify matters; it is still difficult to estimate total numbers, as there are more than 783,000 Canadians who identify as 'Black,' and more than 578,000 identifying as 'Caribbean.' There are more than 231,000 people that identify as 'Jamaican' and another 58,000 that identify as 'West Indian.' This means that we can say for certain that there are at least 231,000 people of Jamaican descent in Canada, although that number is in reality much higher. In Toronto specifically, the Jamaican population is more than 150,000 people, representing about 71% of the total Jamaican Canadian population (Lindsay 2007, 10).

¹⁵ There are several reasons for the inaccuracy of census data. The first reason is the unknown number of Jamaicans living in Canada who were not residents, and therefore, were not counted in censuses. This includes people with temporary, visitor or student visas who may stay in Canada, with or without applying for citizenship (Thomas-Hope 1992, 59). Another reason that statistics are unreliable is that in the 1960s when Jamaicans emigrated from England to Canada, they were at times counted in censuses as 'British' (Henry 1994, 28). Census numbers also may not include children of immigrants, and subsequent generations of Jamaican Canadian people. Finally, return migration affects census data. Return migrants in this case are Jamaican Canadians who migrate back to Jamaica; these numbers are subtracted from the number of Jamaican migrants to Canada. For example, if x number of Jamaicans migrate to Canada in one year, and y number of Jamaican Canadians migrate back to Jamaica, the total number of Jamaican migrants to Canada in that year is $x - y$, lowering the total net migration numbers (Thomas-Hope 1992, 60).

¹⁶ Data from this area of the 2011 census is not yet available.

2. CARIBANA AND OTHER JAMAICAN-INSPIRED FESTIVALS IN TORONTO

With such large numbers of Jamaican and other Caribbean Canadians, it follows that this population would have a major public cultural celebration of some sort. Since the most sizeable concentration of people of Caribbean descent in Canada is in Toronto, it makes sense that a pan-Caribbean celebration would take place in that city. Caribana is the largest Caribbean cultural celebration in North America, and since the very beginning Jamaican Canadians have been involved in all aspects of this festival. There are also three other specifically Jamaican festivals held annually in the city of Toronto.

In 1967, the Caribbean Cultural Committee, spearheaded by Trinidadian Canadian Charles Roach, organized the first Caribana festival as part of Canada's centennial celebrations (Gallaugher 1992, 220); Caribana was created as a gift from the Caribbean Canadian community to the rest of the country. Jamaican Canadian Karl Mullings helped to organize the first Caribana when he was co-manager of the band the Sheiks, and their song "Centennial Swing" was written about Canada's centennial (Howes 2006a). This festival, which is spread out over six weeks in July and August each year, now attracts around 1.2 million people and is the largest Carnival celebration outside of the Caribbean ("Caribana Success" 2010).

Carnival, which is an annual festival held in the springtime before the Christian Lent, is popular in many countries in the world, but especially in the Caribbean and Latin America; Carnival festivals are the model upon which Caribana was based. The reason Caribana does not take place during the spring is because of the cold weather: in Toronto, July and August are more conducive to an outdoor festival than March or April. Caribana was primarily inspired by Carnival in Trinidad, but it is also similar to the Carnival

celebrations in Brazil and Nottinghill (London), as well as the Labour Day celebrations in New York City (Gallaugher 1994, 362). Ramnarine writes, “Carnivals are the biggest musical spectacles found in the Caribbean diaspora,” (2007a, 183) and Caribana was started in Canada as a pan-Caribbean celebration.¹⁷ In the 1980s, cultural groups from Africa and Central and South America were included in Caribana as well. Cecil Foster writes that “[n]othing is so beneficial to the psyche of black and Caribbean people in this country [as Caribana]. [...] it is an outstanding symbol of black and Caribbean pride” (1996, 249).

Initially, Jamaican culture was one of the most visible aspects of Caribana, but in recent years, Trinidadian people have become dominant as both organizers and in the various forms of artistic expression in the festival, such as the steel pan competitions and the elaborate costumes featured during the Caribana parade. Jamaican Canadian musician Lloyd Delpratt says that Caribana was started by a group of people who were mainly Jamaican, but at some point “the Trinidadian [people] capture it and take it” (Delpratt 2012). Despite Jamaican culture not being the primary focus, Jamaican music, food and dance can still be found throughout the celebration, from the parade to the numerous parties held all over Toronto. Caribana is the time of year when Jamaican Canadian music and culture is most visible in the city of Toronto.

Although Caribana is the largest celebration of Caribbean culture in Toronto and Canada, there are three specifically Jamaican celebrations held in Toronto each year

¹⁷ In addition to its impact in Canada, Caribana has also influenced cultural activities in Jamaica. There was no Carnival-type celebration in Jamaica prior to the creation of Caribana, but in 1990, Jamaica held its first Carnival festival, which was modeled on and inspired by Toronto’s Caribana (Foster 1995, 21; Burman 2010, 133). This is another example of the transnational flow of culture between Jamaica and Canada.

(Burman 2010, 94-7). The first takes place every August 1st, when the Toronto City Hall raises the Jamaican flag in honour of Jamaican Independence Day.¹⁸ The second Jamaican Torontonians celebration is the annual Jamaica Day picnic at Keele Park, just west of Keele Street near the 'Little Jamaica' area of Toronto. Both of these events are primarily attended by and marketed to Jamaican Canadians. The third event, which is marketed and attended by a broader group, and has taken place every July since 1996, is Jamaica Day; this event is staged jointly by the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and the Jamaican Tourist Board at the Eglinton West subway station, and features concerts and performances of Jamaican music and dance.

Clearly, all of these celebrations are important festivals for the city of Toronto and for Jamaican Canadians. The celebration of Jamaican history and culture not only allows Jamaicans to be proud of their heritage, it allows non-Jamaicans to experience and learn about Jamaican culture. Most of the time, Caribbean culture is not a part of the mainstream culture in Toronto, but for several weeks each year, this changes. Caribana and the three Jamaican festivals in Toronto are important public and visible expressions of Jamaican and Caribbean culture.

¹⁸ In Jamaica, this celebration is held on August 6th, although August 1, 1834 was the date that the British abolished slavery, making it a pan-Caribbean date of celebration. August 1st is also known Emancipation Day (or African Liberation Day); this was the first black cultural celebration in Canada and is a way to mark the end of slavery in the western hemisphere in major cities across Canada (Foster 1995, 24).

3. THE FIRST INFLUX OF MUSICIANS AND THE EARLY JAMAICAN MUSIC SCENE IN

TORONTO

As outlined in the above timeline of when Jamaicans started coming to Canada, large numbers of Jamaicans immigrated to Canada in the early 1960s and this is when they began to bring their music with them. This section is about the Jamaican Canadian music scene in Toronto in the 1960s, which I refer to as the early history, due to the focus of this thesis on the 1970s and 1980s. Here I outline some of the under-acknowledged pioneering individuals that set the stage for the creation of a Jamaican music community in Toronto.

In the early 1960s, Jamaican musicians were being 'drafted' to Canada to perform at Jamaican nightclubs in Toronto. As mentioned earlier, many Jamaican musicians were aware of the emerging Jamaican music scene in Toronto. People such as Karl Mullings, who was a well-known and respected talent scout in both Canada and Jamaica, was a huge part of this process. He and others would travel to Jamaica to recruit musicians to play at the various Jamaican clubs in Toronto.

The earliest Jamaican bands to come to Canada were the Rivals, the Sheiks, the Cougars and the Cavaliers (Caudeiron 1992, 1118). The Sheiks, whose early members include Eddie Spencer and Jackie Mittoo, came to Canada for a tour in 1964 and some band members ended up staying (Howes 2006a).¹⁹ They were the first group from the Caribbean to settle in Canada and they were the house band at Club Jamaica on Yonge Street. The Sheiks were primarily a live band and their only Canadian single is "Eternal Love" recorded in 1967 (Howes 2006a). The Cougars formed in 1966 and included Jay

¹⁹ Jackie Mittoo did not stay in Canada at this time, but migrated a few years later. See chapter 4 for more on Jackie Mittoo.

Douglas and a few musicians from the Sheiks and the Cavaliers (Howes 2006a). They played every Friday and Saturday at the West Indian Federation (WIF) Club as the house band and during the late 1960s, and they toured around Ontario and Quebec; the Cougars are also featured on the *Caribana '67* LP.

In the 1960s in Toronto, Jamaican bands mainly played R&B and other genres associated with black Americans. Jay Douglas says that the music scene in Toronto in the 1960s was great but that he missed ska and rocksteady. He says, “[i]f we wanted to hear Jamaican music we’d go to a house party. You also had Club Tropics, Club Trinidad and Club Jamaica not far behind” (Howes 2006a). Lloyd Delpratt said playing reggae music was not the hip thing to do when he first came to Toronto, because no one knew what it was. He played country and western, calypso, blues, jazz, and basically every other popular music, although he did like to throw in a few reggae tunes every now and then (Delpratt 2012).

These music pioneers of the 1960s paved the way for the surge in Jamaican Canadian music in the following decades and for reggae in Canada in general. Although they generally weren’t playing reggae music, they helped to establish a Jamaican music scene in Toronto, which led to more and more Jamaican musicians choosing to migrate to Toronto in the next few years. These 1960s bands are linked together as they all played a blend of genres associated with black Americans, with the odd reggae or calypso tune, and mainly performed at restaurants and clubs dedicated to Caribbean audiences; these venues are the focus of the next section.

4. NIGHTCLUBS

During the 1960s and 1970s in particular, Jamaican nightclubs were a central gathering place for Jamaican Canadians in Toronto. The first Jamaican-owned nightclub in Toronto was the West Indian Federation Club, known affectionately as the WIF Club (pronounced 'whiff'). This club/restaurant/musical hall which opened in 1962 on Brunswick Street near College Street, was owned and managed by a group of Jamaican Canadians including Harry Gairey, Chinese Jamaican Canadian brothers Kingsley and Kermit Lyn, and later on, Karl Mullings, who owned and operated the upstairs, music hall section of the club. In addition to local Jamaican bands who played a mix of American popular genres and the odd Jamaican song, Jamaican and Trinidadian musicians were brought in to perform at the club, catering to the Caribbean Canadian population's desire for music from back home (Gallaughier 1994, 367). The WIF Club closed in 1967 when it burned down due to an accidental fire in a shoe store below the club (Gairey 1981, 39-40).

There were several other Jamaican-owned clubs in the 1960s and 1970s including Roy Williams' Caribana Club. Club Trinidad was another venue, and despite the name, it had an almost exclusively Jamaican staff, since there weren't yet enough Trinidadian people in Toronto to fill these positions (Delpratt 2012). Another venue was Mullings' and Fitz Riley's Club Jamaica at 248 Yonge Street, near the present-day Eaton's Centre. With such a central location, Club Jamaica was one of the main hangouts for Jamaican musicians in Toronto in the early 1970s, including Willi Williams and Jackie Mittoo (Harvey 2011). By 1978, there were several other Toronto clubs that featured reggae music including Club 813, Room at the Top (Bloor Street West and Lansdowne Avenue),

Samantha's, Macedonian Hall, Sun Yat Sen Hall, La Rinascente, Ukrainian Hall and Jane & # Club [sic] (Caudeiron 1978, 40). By the late 1970s, Jamaican and Jamaican Canadian bands were playing in clubs that did not have Caribbean owners, and did not cater exclusively to Caribbean audiences. Since this time, people from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds attend concerts of Jamaican Canadian music in Toronto.

A club circuit in Toronto in the 1980s included the Soul Palace, Karib Tavern, Pirate's Cove, BamBoo and the Silver Dollar (Caudeiron 1992, 1119). The BamBoo Club, located at 312 Queen Street West was Leroy Sibbles' favourite club in Toronto, "because the people are nice and there's a good atmosphere there" (Quill 1986, 12). By 1986, there were over 15 nightclubs in Toronto "devoted to reggae" (Davis 1986, N21). Jamaican restaurants like the Real Jerk Pit were known as reggae music venues as well. Except for the Silver Dollar and the Real Jerk Pit, all of the clubs listed above have closed. These days live reggae concerts in Toronto are dispersed among various clubs and halls in the city and surrounding area, and there is no club devoted exclusively to reggae music. Institutions such as the Jamaican Canadian Association hold concerts that feature Jamaican and Jamaican Canadian musicians and DJs exclusively, and the Orbit Room on College Street West has a weekly reggae showcase featuring various members of the Sattalites and other Jamaican Canadian musicians.

These nightclubs were the main venues where live reggae was performed and consumed. Without these venues, the Jamaican Canadian music scene in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s likely would not have been as vibrant as it was. Live performances of reggae at nightclubs and other venues were and still are a great way for people unfamiliar with the genre to fall in love with the music.

5. RECORD LABELS

In addition to live concerts, another way that reggae has spread around Canada and the world is through recordings. Record labels are necessary to promote and distribute recordings to a large and diverse audience; music that is not promoted in this way may fall into obscurity and is unlikely to be heard by a wider audience.²⁰ There has never been a major record label in Canada devoted to reggae music, and major Canadian record labels have released very few Jamaican Canadian reggae albums over the years. In Jamaica, where reggae is the dominant style, all the record labels promote that music. Outside of Jamaica in the 1960s, there were two major record labels in England owned by British Jamaicans that featured reggae music: Lee Gopthal's Trojan Records and Chris Blackwell's Island Records. In addition, Richard Branson's Virgin Records signed several major reggae acts starting in 1973. Island Records promoted Jamaican British reggae bands like Steel Pulse and it was instrumental in helping them achieve international success. In Canada, there was and still is no such comparable record label infrastructure.

A variety of small and medium sized Canadian record labels have sporadically released reggae music in Canada since the early 1970s. Howard Cable's Summus Records was one of the first Canadian record labels to promote reggae, having released Jackie Mittoo's *Wishbone* album in 1971. Stewart Ravenhill, a white Brit, was the Toronto representative for Island Records, the biggest distributor of reggae in the 1970s, until Island Records sold its Canadian distribution rights to RCA (Johnson, B. 1978, 5). In 1978 Ravenhill said that "[n]either Island nor RCA has done much to sell reggae in

²⁰ In the last ten years or so, the internet has changed the way that the music business works, but in order to achieve sizeable sales and a wide audience, major record labels are almost always necessary.

Canada, despite the size of Toronto's Jamaican population" (Johnson, B. 1978, 5). The record company GRT (General Recorded Tape of California) established a base in London, Ontario where they distributed several foreign labels' music, including Island Records. The GRT label lasted from 1969 to 1979 and in the mid-1970s signed Ishan People²¹ (Green 2011). Unfortunately, they did very little to promote reggae music. Another label, this one devoted to reggae music, was Boss/Pioneer, an independent, black-owned music label started in London, England, but with a base in Toronto in the late 1970s. The proprietors, Sidney Crooks and Winston Hewitt, later founded the Canadian Reggae Music Awards in 1985 (Caudeiron 1978, 42-3). Summer Records and Half Moon Records, the two main Jamaican Canadian record labels of the late 1970s and 1980s will be discussed in the next section as they were also recording studios. These were the two major Jamaican-owned recording studios in Toronto at this time, which were extremely influential in creating a unique sound. None of the labels listed here had the power or money to promote reggae music as much as it was promoted in England or Jamaica. Rupert Harvey of Messenjah says that the "reggae talent in Toronto is amazing. If the groups in that city had the chance that some of the British groups have had, and the money behind them, there would be no stopping them" (Harry 1984, 16).

Despite the fact that there has never been a medium sized or major label devoted to reggae music in Canada, there have been dozens of small labels over the years, many of which still exist today. This is in part because so few major labels were willing to sign reggae musicians. In addition, there is a long history of musicians being exploited by producers in Jamaica, which explains why there are so many small labels in Jamaican

²¹ As with many Jamaican and Rastafarian words, I is pronounced 'eye;' thus, Ishan People is pronounced "Eye-shan People."

music. Almost all Jamaican musicians have their own record labels and Jamaicans in Canada are no exception. Lillian Allen's Verse to Vinyl, Jo Jo Bennett's Bungo Music, Willi Williams' Drum Street and Leroy Sibbles' Eppic Music are just a few examples.

Another interesting, yet almost completely undocumented aspect of the reggae recording industry in Toronto, is the phenomenon of underground reggae covers. George Lewis has had a record store in the basement of Monica's Beauty Supply shop since the early 1970s, and he used to record reggae versions of American hit songs. He would round up Toronto-based reggae musicians including Jay Douglas and Fergus Hambleton for a recording session where he would record several of these songs. Lewis would cut and press the records in Toronto and then drive to New York City with his car's trunk full of 45 rpm records. The idea was to record a reggae version of a big American hit while the original was still popular, and he was very successful in doing this due to the critical mass of Jamaicans in New York and Toronto who were eager to buy these records (Hambleton 2012). With limited major label support, the 'do it yourself' approach to both distribution and record labels was and is common in Jamaican Canadian music.

6. RECORDING STUDIOS

Directly related to the infrastructure of record labels are recording studios, which were important to the creation of Jamaican music in Toronto. Jamaican-owned and operated studios play a major role in recording music that sounds authentically Jamaican. Jamaican music is primarily a recorded music, and with the importance of the right *sound*, the early Jamaican-owned recording studios in Toronto were a huge step forward for Jamaican Canadian music in the 1970s and 1980s. In this section I look at the

importance of Summer Sound, Half Moon Records and a few other recording studios where reggae was recorded in these years: without these studios, much of the great Jamaican Canadian music from this era might not have been recorded.

Summer Sound was the first black-owned recording studio in Canada, and it was owned and operated by Jamaican Canadian Keith 'Jerry' Brown out of the basement of his Malton, Ontario home, on the outskirts of Toronto. Along with Jamaican friend Oswald Creary who owned recording equipment, they started recording music in their spare time, as both had fulltime jobs unrelated to music. It wasn't until 1974, when Brown and his family moved to 7081 Landen Court in Malton, however, that Summer Sound started making records for distribution. Summer Sound filled a niche for recording reggae and Brown says that, "[t]here was a lot of rhythm and blues, calypso, and soul music [being recorded in Toronto], but we decided we wanted to make *hardcore reggae*" (Howes 2007). A Jamaican-run recording studio meant a lot to the Jamaican community in Toronto and whenever new Jamaican musicians moved to Toronto, word spread fast. Brown says that "when you coming to Toronto, everybody know that you just come. People phone people, 'yunno who come?' Right away you know and we all get together. [...] If somebody come [from Jamaica], they wanna know where the studio at" (Howes 2007). Touring Jamaican musicians like Sugar Minott, Ken Boothe and U Roy recorded at Summer Sound, as did Jamaican Canadians Jackie Mittoo, Stranger Cole and Leroy Sibbles.

Adrian "Homer" Miller, a member of Summer Sound's house band Earth, Roots and Water, describes a typical session at Summer Sound:

It was always in good fun and spirit. There was no funny vibe about anything, just music and love and music and more music. We'd cook, lay some rhythm tracks, take a break, have some food, have a spliff, chit chat for a bit, take your mind off the grind and when you go back again, things sound fresh. At some point we'd have a cut off because people got to get up and go to work the next day. But sometimes, we'd be there till dawn. (Howes 2008)

Brown ran Summer Sound as a part time studio and label; because of this, new releases came out infrequently, basically whenever there was sufficient money to finance a pressing.

In 1974, Brown put out the first single from Summer Records called "Sun Rise" b/w²² "Love Makes the World Go Round" by Johnny Osbourne. Three hundred copies were pressed and even though it didn't sell very well, Summer Records continued to put out more reggae singles. Around this time Jamaican producer King (then Prince) Jammy started working with Brown at Summer Sound which caused some conflict and resulted in Oswald Creary taking his equipment and starting his own label, Half Moon Records. The top-selling release from Summer Records was "Rocking Universally" by Noel Ellis as DJ and sung by Willi Williams, which sold thousands of copies, rather than the usual hundreds.

Summer Records had no real distribution network, save for Jerry Brown bringing freshly pressed records to various stores in Toronto, or occasionally to Lloyd Barnes' (aka Bullwackie's) record store in New York City (Howes 2007). An even less conventional approach involved selling records door-to-door across Canada, including the West Coast, Prairies and the Maritimes, a strategy that actually worked to a certain

²² The abbreviation 'b/w' stands for 'backed with' and refers to songs released as singles, generally on 45 rpm records. The first song is the single and it is 'backed with' the B-side track.

extent (Howes 2007).²³ The release schedule of Summer Records was sporadic since Brown couldn't always afford to press a record, and in 1988 the studio and label closed down for good (Howes 2007).

In 1975, Oswald Creary opened Half Moon Records, the second black-owned and operated recording studio in Canada (Howes 2006c). To date there is only one commercially available CD compilation of Half Moon releases, but it is packed with tunes from many Jamaican Canadian greats including Stranger Cole, Leroy Sibbles and Jonny Osbourne. The house band at Half Moon Records was known as the Super 8 Corporation. Leroy Sibbles used to hang out at Half Moon and says, "that was like our family house. That was our clubhouse" (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4). Creary had similar distribution difficulties as Brown, and ended up distributing more than half his stock in Jamaica and New York (Johnson, B. 1978, 2).

Other Toronto-area recording studios that recorded reggae in the 1970s and 1980s included Kensington Sound, Phillip Grant's Natural Jamm Recording Studio and Eastern Sound in downtown Toronto, where Mittoo's *Wishbone* was recorded (Howes 2006a). In 1978, Danish Canadian Fred Kinck Petersen's Kinck Sound Productions on Manville Road in Scarborough was rated the top reggae-recording studio in Toronto by Daniel Caudeiron (Caudeiron 1978, 41). The studio, which opened in 1974, hosted sessions with Chalawa, Leroy Sibbles, Stranger Cole and DJ/toaster I Roy.

If it weren't for the hard work and dedication of the pioneers at Summer Sound, Half Moon Records and other studios, much of the early Jamaican Canadian music would

²³ This information comes from Kevin Howes' liner notes "Summer Sound in Canada" (2007), and there is no further elaboration. I haven't found any more information on this so I don't know how this worked and whether or not certain homes, areas or cities were targeted.

likely not have been recorded. Kevin Howes writes that “Summer Records and their early contemporaries were the originators of reggae music in Canada” (Howes 2007). The atmosphere created at Summer Sound also allowed for a flow of creativity that would not have been possible at most non-Jamaican owned studios; this idea will be elaborated upon in chapter 3. Despite the plethora of Jamaican Canadian recordings from the 1970s and 1980s, dissemination was and still is a major problem. One of the reasons is that commercial radio stations in Canada simply do not regularly play reggae music.

7. RADIO STATIONS

With the exception of Bob Marley, reggae is very rarely if ever heard on mainstream radio stations in Canada, although the occasional Jamaican song has become a hit in Canada. Reggae songs by non-Jamaican artists, some of which are covers of Jamaican songs, however, are very common on mainstream Canadian radio. Several musicians have pointed to the possibility of two kinds of biases in Canadian radio: one is against black musicians generally, and the other is against Jamaican and Jamaican Canadian reggae. There is evidence that at least one Canadian radio DJ turned down music because the musicians were black (Dixon 2006, R4), while other anecdotes are less explicit, but point to the same bias. Jamaican Canadians have been crafty in getting around a reggae bias, but to this day, community radio stations, such as college and university stations, are the only real outlet for reggae music in Canada. Even Jamaican Canadian music – which qualifies as Canadian Content – is rarely heard on mainstream Canadian radio stations. In November 2011 Canada’s first black radio station, Toronto’s G98.7 FM, began broadcasting with a regular rotation of reggae music.

CHUM radio, with its base in Toronto, is one of the largest networks of radio stations in Canada, with their music stations playing mainly Top 40 and adult contemporary. CHUM radio's music charts are one of the most important in Canada. Over the years the odd song by a Jamaican artist became a hit in Canada and received regular airplay. For example, the first Canadian number one record by a Jamaican artist was Millie Small's "My Boy Lollipop" which charted for thirteen weeks in the summer of 1964, and in June 1969, Desmond Dekker and the Aces' "Israelites" took the top spot for two weeks. For the most part however, Jamaican hit songs in Canada were few and far between, with just as many chart successes going to non-Jamaican versions of reggae tunes.²⁴ Two examples are Eric Clapton's "I Shot the Sheriff" (#1 for four weeks on CHUM in 1974) and Johnny Nash's "I Can See Clearly Now" (#1 for three weeks on CHUM in 1972) (Hall 1984).

This trend continues today, with a prime example being Justin Bieber's hit reggae song "Mistletoe" from his 2011 Christmas album. While reggae songs can become hits in Canada, reggae musicians themselves aren't recognized, which Jamaican Canadian musician Willi Williams says is "backwards" (Williams 2011). Williams says that reggae music "is not recognized by the mainstream. [Reggae musicians] here don't get the same treatment as [people working in other] music genres, even though reggae is imitated by other genres" (Williams 2011). He says that, "Canada is one of the only places that does not recognize reggae for what it is," which he says is "pathetic" (Williams 2011).

²⁴ Non-Jamaican versions of reggae tunes include covers of Jamaican reggae songs by non-Jamaican artists ("I Shot the Sheriff" was originally done by Bob Marley) and songs recorded in a reggae style, often with a hired Jamaican backing band that was paid a one-time fee. The Wailers recorded the rhythm track for "I Can See Clearly Now" and the rest of Nash's album, but the song was credited to American Johnny Nash (Clarke 1981, 104).

One of the main excuses given by radio stations and their DJs for reggae's exclusion from mainstream radio in Canada is that there is no market for this music. In response to this, a frustrated Rupert Harvey said, "I hear it every day on the radio. I hear Sting playing reggae and Boy George. I hear UB40 and Paul Simon and Lionel Richie playing reggae, or at least using obvious reggae influences. And we can't get anywhere with radio in major Canadian cities. [...] [W]hen UB40 gets airplay and we don't, I have a hard time dealing with that" (Quill 1988, 1). Harvey is pointing towards a bias in Canadian radio, either towards reggae music as a whole, or towards black Canadian musicians in general. In the 1980s, Harvey was convinced that it's "not just reggae they keep off the air, it's Black music generally – except for Michael Jackson and Lionel Ritchie" (Harry 1984, 16), two of the biggest pop stars of the 1980s. These days there are plenty of black musicians and non-Jamaican reggae songs played on mainstream Canadian radio stations, but Jamaican musicians are still rarely heard.²⁵

Jamaican Canadian Bob Williams of the vocal duo Bob and Wisdom said he took their cover of Mac Davis' "I Believe in Music" to CHUM radio in Toronto in 1972, and the DJ wouldn't play it. Williams says the DJ told him it was the best version of the song, "but he wouldn't play it because we were black. Straight up" (Dixon 2006, R4). Clearly there were a lot of problems for black musicians, and especially black Canadian musicians, but sadly this continues today. The fact that there is only one Canadian radio station devoted to black music genres and artists adds credence to this view.

²⁵ Bruno Mars' "Lazy Song" is a recent example of a hit reggae song by a non-Jamaican and non-reggae artist. As mentioned earlier, Bob Marley is an exception, and his recordings are occasionally heard on a variety of mainstream stations.

While no Canadian radio stations were willing to play reggae in the early 1970s, at least one radio station just over the border in the United States presented a solution. Karl Mullings and Jackie Mittoo, who together owned the Record Nook record store, would drive to Buffalo, New York every Thursday because there was a DJ there named Smith (first name unknown) at WUFL, who would play their reggae records. Mullings says that in Toronto “at 11 o’clock on Saturday morning for half an hour you would see people going to the supermarket or whatever ... running back to their cars to tune on to the half hour” (Dooley 2003). This station was the only place to hear reggae on the radio in the Toronto/Buffalo area in the early 1970s, and Mullings’ story illustrates the extent to which a number of Jamaicans were committed to and loved Jamaican music.

Messenjah came up with another crafty solution to Canadian radio’s bias against reggae, and in advance of their third album, *Cool Operator* (1987), they started calling their music “upskanka,” referring to skanking, a word for, and a style of, Jamaican dance. Messenjah member Eric Walsh said, “[w]e invented upskanka. It describes the way music moves the people and the kind of vibes that come across” (Erskine 1987, F17). Although the album they were promoting, *Cool Operator*, is even more of a fusion, rock-oriented record than the two previous Messenjah albums, the new title also conveniently avoids the genre label of reggae. Walsh admits that the reason for the new name is because of radio airplay. “The general consensus running in commercial radio is that they are not playing reggae. [...] So what we are trying to do is get our foot in the door” (Erskine 1987, F17). This is definitely an admirable effort put forward by Messenjah, as it seems they tried a variety of tactics to gain the elusive commercial success for a reggae band in Canada.

Mainstream radio stations in Canada have never played much reggae, especially Canadian-made reggae, so the only place on the Canadian radio dial to consistently hear this music was and is on community stations. Many community radio stations play a wide variety of music from all over the world, which reflects the multicultural nature of Canadian society. Many college and university station in the country have some sort of weekly reggae program, but unfortunately, reggae is generally only heard for a few hours each week on each community station. The longest running reggae radio show in Canada is "Reggae in the Fields," hosted by Junior Smith on Carleton University's CKCU FM. Starting in 1977, it was also the first reggae radio show in Canada (Doran 1997). Smith has interviewed all the greats on his weekly show, including Bob Marley, and he continues to promote many Jamaican Canadian musicians. Another early Caribbean radio show was "The Caribbean Connection" which ran from 1978 until 2011 on Toronto's CHIN FM with host Jai Ojah-Maharaj. That almost every city in Canada with a college or university radio station has some sort of reggae radio show demonstrates that there is a market for the music.

Without airplay on major radio stations, it seems unlikely that a reggae band will ever gain mass acceptance and/or commercial success in Canada. In the mid-1980s, Harvey said that if Messenjah "had to depend on Canada for airplay or massive record sales, forget it. We'd be fooling ourselves. Right now, we're looking at a world market in countries where reggae sells like Holland, Germany, France, Australia. We're based in Canada, but we're not going to stay here to make miracles" (Harry 1984, 16). It's regretful that reggae music in Canada did not receive more support in the 1980s, since there was a surge in the music at that time, both in terms of the number of musicians and

bands, and the variety of musical ideas. Even though Messenjah released two albums with a major label in 1983 and 1984, there is still a lack of serious support for reggae music in Canada. Perhaps most importantly, there is no music label with a focus on reggae like Trojan Records and Island Records, both based in the UK.

Lack of radio play means that reggae in Canada is still an underground genre, which can have negative effects on the morale of Jamaican Canadian musicians. Rap Rose, manager of Joe Gibbs Record Centre said that the “majority of radio stations refuse to play [reggae]. Even the records that are produced locally and can be considered Canadian content are not played. [...] My music is my history, and by killing my music they are killing my culture. If it is denied to us, we are outcasts. And I was under the impression that we were supposed to be fighting for multiculturalism” (Johnson, B. 1978, 2). Of the wide variety of mainstream radio stations across Canada, it is surprising that only one plays reggae as part of its regular programming (Toronto’s G98.7 FM). Although Rose’s quote is from 1978, the problem persists, and the same criticism could be made today. The radio airwaves in Canada simply do accurately represent the multicultural makeup of Canadian society.

Canadian radio play was always a problem for the Sattalites, but in 1988 Richard Flohil wrote that “for the first time, a wide range of Canadian radio stations are playing the new record,” (1988, 12) indicating that the Sattalites’ music may have been heard on more than just college radio stations. Hambleton says, “we’ve certainly brought a lot of reggae music onto Canadian radio and into areas it may not have gone before. We’ve done that by covering old songs so people were able to hear them in a different way and go, ‘Oh yeah, okay, I can understand what this is about’” (Kastner 1996, 49).

Like the Sattalites, radio play did not elude Messenjah their whole career either, as it was reported that “Crazy,” the first single from their third LP, *Cool Operator*, was being played on “about 50 Canadian radio stations outside major markets” (Quill 1988, 1). This quote could be referring primarily to college and university stations, but it is likely that some mainstream stations played it as “Crazy” was also heard in the Hollywood film *Cocktail* (1988). This kind of international mainstream exposure may have helped convince mainstream Canadian radio stations to promote the song.

In 1990, when the last spot on Toronto’s radio dial was up for grabs, the CRTC gave it to a country music station, rather than one of four dance/black music applicants, two of whom would have included regular rotations of reggae in their programming (Gerard 1990, 33). This became something of a racial issue and The Committee For Dance Music Radio put out a song called “CRTC (Can’t Repress the Cause)” which featured Jamaican Canadian dub poet Lillian Allen. To date, there is no reggae radio station in Canada, even in Toronto where there is such a large Jamaican population. In November 2011, however, the first and only black-owned radio station in Canada, Toronto’s G98.7 FM, started broadcasting. The station is an “Urban Adult-Contemporary” format station, with ‘urban’ being the well-known code word for ‘black’ musical genres and styles. Despite this one mainstream example, reggae and other Caribbean musics remain marginalized on Canadian radio.

8. TELEVISION AND MUSIC VIDEOS

Canadian television is another major area where Caribbean voices are rarely heard. One exception was a half-hour Caribbean sitcom from the early 1990s called *Sandi's Place*, created and produced in Toronto. The show, which featured live reggae and other Caribbean styles of music, was a first in Canada and perhaps a first outside of the Caribbean (Andrews 1993, 31).

TV host Much Master T was another exception to the norm of Canadian reggae being ignored on TV. Master T said it was his goal and “mandate” to bring Caribbean music to a mass audience in Canada and he certainly achieved this (Young and Higgins 2002, 134). On his Much Music show, variously called *X-Tendamix* and *Da Mix*, Much Master T played music videos by Messenjah, the Sattalites and Snow, and between 1990 and 2001, he says, “I literally had every major reggae and soca artist perform or hang out with me on the show” (Young and Higgins 2002, 135-6). At one point, *X-Tendamix* was the only TV show in North America where people could see live performances by reggae and dancehall superstars (Young and Higgins 2002, 135). One of the most popular dancehall singers in the early 1990s was Jamaican Shabba Ranks, who appeared on Master T’s show. Ranks said that Master T was representing reggae music in Canada, which, coming from a Jamaican superstar, Master T took as a huge compliment (Young and Higgins 2002, 138). Much Master T and his Much Music shows played a big part in bringing reggae and especially Canadian reggae to a mass audience in Canada.

Perhaps because of a lack of outlets for their music videos, very few Canadian reggae bands have made them. The Sattalites are an exception and have made five music videos that got airplay on Much Music, including “Gimme Some Kind of Sign.” Over the

years Canadian radio and TV stations have done little to promote Jamaican Canadian music. At least in terms of music videos, this problem is likely in the past, since currently, TV music channels play very few music videos anyway; the primary mode of dissemination for music videos is now online, which may have its own set of problems for Jamaican Canadian artists. Caribbean voices remain marginalized on Canadian television, however.

9. SOUND SYSTEMS

One solution to the lack of promotion for Jamaican Canadian music is the Jamaican sound system culture, which has been successfully transplanted to Canada. This was and is an excellent way to disseminate Jamaican music in Canada. Traditionally, Jamaican studio owners operated sound systems to test out their records with an audience before releasing them for sale to the public. This practice continues today and serves two functions: first, the producer can tell which records will be popular and secondly, they can create hype around delaying a song's commercial release. A central aspect of a sound system is the selector who plays records and the DJ, who sing-talks or raps over reggae songs with the original vocals removed.²⁶ Promoting these DJs as recording artists in their own right yet is another function of the sound system. Note that the Jamaican terminology is the reverse of what is common in North America: a Jamaican DJ would be called a rapper or MC in North America, while the Jamaican selector, who plays and

²⁶ A reggae song without the vocals is known as the 'version' or a dub plate. Typically, Jamaican 45 rpm singles are released with the original song on one side and an instrumental version on the other; this is often referred to simply as a 'version.' The dub plate is essentially the same as a 'version' record but is generally exclusive to the sound system.

manipulates records, is what North American's refer to as the DJ. This is the standard Jamaican terminology, which I will use throughout this thesis.

Sound systems are essentially large, mobile stereo systems with record players and microphones, often with towering stacks of speakers big enough to fill a stadium with sound, even though they are usually found at beaches and other small outdoor areas. In Jamaica, sound systems are the main way that people hear what is referred to in that country as 'live' music. The definition of 'live' music in Jamaica is interesting, as sound systems are considered "live reggae music," even if there is only a selector playing records. When I was in Jamaica in December 2011, a local resident told me about a show that night, and when I asked if there was a live band, his response was, "no man, live reggae music," referring to the selector. Note that a sound system can refer to the equipment itself (the technology) or the DJs and selectors involved in the sound system (the performers).

In Canada, sound systems function in a similar way as in Jamaica, but on a smaller scale. Summer Records' founder Jerry Brown says, "I used to have a mini-sound, and we have the latest record[s]. Before we even hook up the set, the place is full, full of people and we don't even start to play yet. At the time [the late 1970s], people were hungry [for reggae music]" (Howes 2006c). This was a chance to play the latest records he had recorded, and to see if he should release them commercially. Black Zodiac was another local sound system that played the latest Summer Records releases (Howes 2007).

Leroy Sibbles also owned a sound system in Toronto, and says he did this because that's "where you could really get an authentic Jamaican music scene/vibe. I started the

sound system to bring more of that warm Jamaican vibe to Canada” (Sibbles 2011). His sound system has had a variety of titles including Papa Melody, Melody International and Melody One (the current name of his sound system in Jamaica). Two of his better-known selectors were Stamma Rank and Errol the Selector, although there were many more. In Toronto his sound system was a showcase for a variety of DJs and singers including Josie Wales, Charlie Chaplin, Horace Andy and many others (Sibbles 2011). Sibbles’ sound system played all over the Toronto area, “basically wherever we could rent halls at reasonable rates” (Sibbles 2011), and was primarily meant to promote DJs and singers rather than new records.

Another major sound system in Toronto in the 1970s was run by King (then Prince) Jammy, aka Lloyd James. After working with superstar producer King Tubby in Jamaica, Jammy came to Toronto in 1974 where he lived for six years (Lesser 2002, 125). His Toronto sound system was supplied with the latest records from Tubby in Kingston. Jammy also engineered recording sessions at Jerry Brown’s Summer Sound studio while in Canada, and Brown says that Jammy’s was the number one sound system in the city (Howes 2007).

The Jamaican sound system culture has been successfully transplanted to Canada and this trend continues to the present. The main difference between sound system culture in Jamaica and Canada is that in Canada, it takes place in doors for most of the year; this has an effect on the actual sound and the experience. There are more similarities than differences however, and sound systems in Canada play at parties and nightclubs, and in addition to promoting the sound system itself, they also promote new records and visiting or guest DJs and singers.

10. RECORD STORES

Jamaican-owned record stores were and are an important part of the Jamaican community in Toronto, where they have existed since the late 1960s and can still be found today. Aside from being a place to buy records and CDs, they serve as a meeting place for people to talk about music and it is where people can find out about upcoming shows and learn about new music. Since music plays such a central role in the life of many Jamaicans in Canada, these record stores are a real hub of activity.

Several Jamaican record shop-owners lay claim to being the first in Canada, making it difficult to know for certain who really was the first. The Record Nook at Vaughan Road and Bathurst Street – owned by Karl Mullings, and later Lord Tanamo and Jackie Mittoo is one of the earliest shops, having opened its doors in 1968 (Dooley 2003). George Lewis’s record shop opened on Eglinton Avenue West in 1969, several years before the boom in Caribbean record shops. Lewis’ shop was located just down the street from where it is now, in the basement of Monica’s Cosmetic Supplies Ltd. (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4), which is both a Caribbean record store (George the Record Man) and a cosmetics shop and beauty salon, located on Eglinton Avenue near Oakwood Avenue. The owner of Monica’s Cosmetic Supplies Ltd., Monica (last name unknown), also claims to be the first and says, “[w]hen I opened up in 1971, I was the only one” (McGrath 1981, F6).

In 1977, Sylvester ‘Son’ Walters opened S&W Soul King at St. Clair Avenue West and Vaughan Road (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4), while in 1978, Stranger Cole opened Roots Records at 58 Kensington Avenue in the Kensington Market area of Toronto (Lesser and Kingston 1982b, 23). Ronnie Bop, who played with the Wailers, had a record

shop across from Stranger Cole's in the Kensington Market. Both had huge speakers that would blare the latest Jamaican hits onto the street (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4), akin to the kind of vibe you might find in Jamaica.

Other early Jamaican record shops included Sir Charles Record Mart (167 Brunswick Avenue), Theo's on Bathurst Street, and Joe Gibbs Record Centre, which was a few doors down from Monica's, and was connected to Gibbs' record label in Jamaica, ensuring a supply of the latest releases. The year 1978 may have been a peak as there were more than 60 Caribbean record shops in Toronto at this time (Caudeiron 1978, 45). Many of these were centered around Eglinton Avenue West between Dufferin Street and Keele Street, an area referred to as the "reggae strip" by Caudeiron (1978, 43).

These days there are still quite a few Jamaican record shops along Eglinton Avenue West and on St. Clair Avenue West, but just as there are fewer record stores in Canada in general, so it is with Jamaican ones as well. If someone wanted to keep up to date with the latest tunes coming out of Kingston, however, they could easily do that in Toronto. Shipments of the latest Jamaican-pressed 45 rpm singles come into the city's stores every week.²⁷ Even though these record shops are open to anyone, these stores mostly cater to Jamaican and Caribbean Canadian people in Toronto. To the present, people hang around these shops, talking about music and listening to everything from old Jamaican hits to the latest tunes from Kingston, Jamaica and Toronto. Jamaican record stores remain a hub of Jamaican Canadian musical activity in Toronto.

²⁷ I spoke with the owner of Trea-Jah Isle Records on Eglinton Avenue West and he showed me their latest shipments of Jamaican 45 rpm records. Fergus Hambleton also told me that other stores in Toronto have similar supplies (Hambleton 2012).

11. AWARDS

Music awards are useful as a way to formally recognize the importance and value of music. Since 1971, the major music award in Canada is the Juno Award, but the institution that awards the Juno, the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) has shown very little support for 'black' music genres through the years. Initially black music categories were excluded altogether; then there was the ghettoization of black music through lumping them into two extremely broad categories (R&B/Soul and Reggae/Calypso); to this day, most of the awards for 'black' genres such as rap and reggae, are not awarded during the televised portion of the show. Messenjah's Eric Walsh says that not televising the black awards at the Junos proves that "[black Canadian music is] not taken seriously" (Erskine 1987, F17).²⁸ The virtual exclusion of non-white music and musicians from the Juno Awards is a form of cultural domination which "involves imposing the aesthetic standards of the dominant group, [and] creating the institutional framework for supporting art in ways that are consistent with securing the dominant group's hegemony" (Young 2006, 186). White musicians have and continue to be privileged at the Juno Awards.

Between 1971 and 1984, ethnic and racial minorities were almost completely excluded from the Junos, and in fact there were only two performances by black musicians during these years (Young 2006, 191-2). In 1985, for the first time in the history of the Juno Awards, black musicians were specifically honoured, with the

²⁸ This is not always the case, however, as Jamaican Canadian Lillian Allen's Juno win for her album *Revolutionary Tea Party* in 1987 was in fact televised (Walker 2005, 156). For three years, from 1985 when the first Juno for a 'black' music category was awarded, to 1987, black performers were featured on the televised portion of the Junos. Before and since these years, performances by black musicians on the televised portion of the Junos are much more sporadic (Young 2006, 204).

introduction of two new categories: Best R&B/Soul Recording and Best Reggae/Calypso Recording (Quill 1985, 18). Despite the inclusion of a reggae award at the Junos, the reggae/calypso category remained too broad for years. Greg Quill wrote in the *Toronto Star* that “[n]othing signifies this industrial ignorance [towards black music] more clearly than the ‘calypso/reggae’ category” (Quill, 1988, 1). Especially with such a large Jamaican Canadian population, this split category represents yet another example of the lack of support for reggae music in Canada. Messenjah’s Rupert Harvey agrees that reggae and calypso should never have been one category. In an interview he said, “[t]o heap reggae and calypso in one category, two different styles of music... First of all, reggae has already made a name for itself in the world. [...] Calypso is not yet a commercial type of music. So they have to separate that category because a calypso act will never win it – it’s an insult to all the people who play calypso. [...] So, the Juno is a token gift” (Collins 1988, C16). A calypso act (Jayson and Friends) did in fact win this shared award in 1991, but the fact that a single award is designated for two disparate styles of music shows a disrespect for the integrity of these musical genres. From 1985 until 1991, reggae/calypso was a hybrid award category; in 1992 and 1993, reggae was grouped into the World Beat category, and finally, in 1994, it was given its own distinct category.

An alternative awards program, explicitly designed to recognize black musicians in Canada, are the Canadian Black Music Awards (CBMA) founded by Daniel Caudeiron in 1979 (Harry 1983a, 16). For five years the CBMAs were the only musical awards explicitly meant for black Canadian musicians and black musical genres, including reggae; the year 1983 was the last time this awards ceremony was held. The CBMAs

were never televised and were not very well known nationally; unfortunately, there is very little information on this awards show, including why it shut down in 1983.

Winston Hewitt, co-owner of Boss/Pioneer Records and the label Corner Stone (Caudeiron 1978, 42), established the Canadian Reggae Music Awards (CRMA) in 1985 (Caudeiron 1992, 1119). Hewitt, who came to Canada from Jamaica in 1966 and is also a singer says the CRMAs are “not a black music awards, it’s for whoever does reggae” (Davis 1986, N21). Hewitt is proud that after the first CRMAs, the Junos immediately added a reggae category (Davis 1986, N21). The Grammys, which are the American equivalent of the Junos, also added a reggae award in 1985.

Musical awards shows are important to Jamaican Canadian music for many reasons. One is the potential for promotion, as a large number of Canadians watch major awards shows such as the Juno Awards. The exclusion of Jamaican Canadians from the televised portion of this show denies them exposure to new audiences. The second reason awards shows are important is because they give a level of prestige and respect to all of the musicians who are nominated. They can be a way for the Jamaican Canadian and the broader Canadian music industry to recognize important figures.

* * * * *

In this chapter I have outlined most of the infrastructure surrounding Jamaican Canadian music, as well as the history of Jamaicans in Canada and especially Jamaican musicians. From the necessary background information on immigration trends and reforms that started the wave of immigration from Jamaica to Canada, to all of the

various musical infrastructure that have been set up over the last fifty years, all of this is a part of the history of Jamaican Canadian music and culture. It is important because without this infrastructure, there would not have been a surge in Jamaican music in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s. There are several trends in the various levels of infrastructure including lack of mainstream support and even marginalization from the mainstream. The advocacy of a few pioneers – including nightclub, record label, recording studio and record store owners, radio and TV hosts, and awards show founders – was and is crucial to Jamaican Canadian music. In the next chapter I examine some of the issues surrounding this music, similar to some of the issues surrounding reggae radio play in Canada from this chapter. It is necessary to have an understanding of the history of Jamaicans in Canada and of the ways this music was disseminated in order to fully understand the issues surrounding this music.

CHAPTER 3. THE STATE OF THE ART: THE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF JAMAICAN CANADIAN MUSIC

The four goals of this chapter are to outline several distinctive characteristics of Jamaican Canadian music, including the genre of dub poetry; to look at how production aesthetics are connected to markers of authenticity;²⁹ to examine some biases against Jamaican Canadian music; and to survey some of the racial barriers faced by black Jamaican Canadian musicians in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s. In the first and second sections I look at distinctiveness in Jamaican Canadian music. The focus of the first section is on lyrical themes, melodies, racially mixed groups, musical fusions, and a *band* identity as opposed to a soloist. The focus of the second section is the rise of dub poetry as a Jamaican Canadian musical genre. Dub poetry is an important topic on its own, and is another distinctive part of this scene that will be discussed. These considerations highlight important aspects of Jamaican Canadian music while acknowledging some of the similarities and differences between these repertoires and music made in Jamaica.

Jamaican music made in the Jamaican diaspora is frequently compared with Jamaican music from the homeland, which is considered the gold standard to strive towards. Both listeners and musicians make this judgment and this type of comparison is the basis for the third section of this chapter. Here I discuss the idea of ‘authentic’ Jamaican-recorded music in terms of production aesthetics and recording techniques. From the mixer and the engineer to the studio, the experience and the atmosphere, there

²⁹ As mentioned in the introduction, ‘authenticity’ is a loaded word. The reason I’m using it here is because many of the musicians I interviewed used this term when discussing the sound of Jamaican and Jamaican Canadian music. They also referred to ‘real’ and ‘pure’ Jamaican music.

are a variety of opinions on how to achieve the ideal, 'authentic' sound. Musical features such as instrumentation and form are not explicitly discussed here, because these are mostly the same in Jamaican and Canadian roots reggae; rather the focus is on the production practices and aesthetics, which may differ between Jamaica and Canada. That Jamaican Canadian recordings do not sound *Jamaican* is a central criticism leveled by many people, and I will look at this and other biases against the music. I propose that it may not be the actual sounds, but rather the idea and ideal of the sound of 'real' Jamaican music that people prefer. Jamaican Canadians often want to hear reggae from Jamaica, which may be theorized as a diasporic longing for music from the homeland.

Finally, I look at various factors that compromised black musicians and especially Jamaican musicians in Canada, and impacted on their success in Canada. In addition to the infrastructural barriers discussed in chapter 2, there are other issues to explore such as the disproportionate amount of success that white reggae musicians have had in comparison with black musicians, and the stereotype that black musicians should play genres associated with black Americans such as R&B.

1. DISTINCTIVENESS IN JAMAICAN CANADIAN MUSIC

There are many aspects of Jamaican Canadian music that can be considered unique in comparison with Jamaican music. I'm not looking for distinctive aspects for its own sake; rather, I am addressing some possible distinctions pointed out by Daniel Caudeiron, and outlining a few musical and practical distinctions that I have noticed on my own, and others that I have heard about from musicians. Musically, there may be some lyrical and melodic differences, while a lot of Jamaican Canadian music is a fusion

of reggae and rock, pop or other styles; even Jamaican Canadian roots reggae often features lyrics about life in Toronto. Other distinct aspects include racially integrated bands, as there were several Jamaican Canadian reggae bands with white and black members, and the fact that there are so many *bands* as opposed to solo singers. All of these are defining characteristics of Jamaican Canadian music.

In the *Canadian Encyclopedia* entry on “reggae,” Daniel Caudeiron writes that “[o]ne hallmark of Canadian reggae has been the melodicism of, and relative absence of confrontation in, its songs, which is considered a legacy of the country’s conservatism and placid social ambience. Another is the rise of integrated bands, most prominently Chalawa, Bloodfire, [and] the Sattalites [...]” (1992, 1119). There are two things to consider in this quote from one of the experts on Jamaican Canadian music from the 1970s and 1980s. The first is the comment about the lyrics of Jamaican Canadian music; specifically, Caudeiron’s comment about an “absence of confrontation” may apply to Ernie Smith’s music, who says “[w]hen we started as a band here, some club owners would say that our reggae wasn’t militant enough, because they had only heard Marley or Tosh and thought that was reggae, period” (Harry 1980a, 12). While it may be true that there are fewer songs about Rastafarianism and black pride in Canada than in Jamaica, they still exist and there are some prominent examples.³⁰ Overall it is difficult to assess whether Jamaican Canadian reggae is in fact less confrontational than Jamaican reggae. For example, the subgenre of lover’s rock – a form of reggae with love song lyrics, rather than politically nuanced lyrics – is popular in both Jamaica and Canada.

³⁰ See for example, Ishan People’s “Sweet Chariot” (1977), Noel Ellis’ “Marcus Garvey” (1983) and Leroy Sibbles’ “South Africa” (1986).

Caudeiron also suggests that Canadian reggae is more melodic than Jamaican reggae. Lover's rock and other Jamaican reggae forms rely on strong melodies, but without doing an extensive melodic analysis of Jamaican and Canadian reggae it's difficult to judge if Canadian reggae is in fact more melodic. In my experience the two are equally melodic and rhythmic, but this point is likely too broad and tangential to move beyond speculation, and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The other main thing to consider in the Caudeiron quote above about the distinctiveness of Jamaican Canadian reggae is his remark about "the rise of integrated bands." In addition to those listed above, Earth, Roots and Water also had a white band member, so Caudeiron is correct: there were several reggae groups in Canada with white members. As far I know there are no integrated reggae bands in Jamaica; it is quite possible that they do exist, but if so this is not commonly known or documented. Although, Ishan People and Messenjah, two of the most influential Jamaican Canadian bands of the 1970s and 1980s respectively, were all black and Jamaican-born,³¹ Caudeiron's assertion is accurate, as the majority of bands were racially integrated.

One of the most important aspects of Jamaican Canadian music is the wide variety of genres and subgenres of music, which can fall anywhere on the spectrum between roots reggae and fusion. Jamaican Canadian roots reggae (reggae that is not fused with other genres) is aimed at existing reggae audiences, including Canadians of Jamaican and other heritages; this music is generally well received among reggae fans. Jamaican style roots reggae and dub are recorded in Toronto, but often with lyrics about

³¹ I have only read about one white Jamaican Canadian musician (Dick Smith), and aside from him, it is likely that the majority of white reggae musicians in Canada are not Jamaican ("Music from the Islands" 1971, no author).

life in Canada. These recordings are meant to sound like Jamaican roots recordings, and aside from the Canadian lyrical topics, I speculate that they sound like they could have been recorded in Jamaica. Use of Jamaican patois and Jamaican accents in these recordings varies, with the thicker patois/accents being a sonic marker of roots. Some examples of Jamaican Canadian roots recordings are Ishan People's "Tough, Tight and Dread," Noel Ellis' "Memories," and Stranger Cole's "No More Fussing and Fighting."

In addition to roots reggae, Jamaican Canadians record a wide variety of reggae fusion styles in Canada. Canadian fusion styles include the orchestral pop reggae, or the so-called 'elevator' or 'sweet' reggae, like the Canadian work of Jackie Mittoo; reggae with rock influences, like Messenjah; pop with subtle reggae influences, like Leroy Sibbles' *Evidence*; a medley of multiple genres, as found in the Truths and Rights' song "Metro's No. 1 Problem;" and reggae with pop influences as performed by the Sattalites. Reggae fusions are the result of a blending of cultures but there is also a commercial aim as well, which is to make music that might appeal to audiences unfamiliar with reggae. This audience is also commonly referred to as a 'crossover' audience (Harvey 2011); music and audiences are often defined in terms of genres, hence the need to 'crossover' to another audience, that is, a non-reggae audience. 'Americanized reggae' is a somewhat negative term for reggae fusion used by some Jamaican Canadian musicians, and shows a preference for roots; Jamaican Canadians generally prefer roots reggae to reggae fusion (Harvey 2011).

The earliest reggae fusion, which involved a combination of reggae and classical or orchestral pop, was made with the explicit goal of attracting an audience unfamiliar with reggae (Bradley 2000, 241). The practice of augmenting Jamaican rhythm tracks

with orchestral arrangements began in England and one of the first songs to receive this treatment was Jimmy Cliff's "Wonderful World, Beautiful People" from 1969. Reggae historian Lloyd Bradley writes that "rhythm tracks were sent over to be embellished with orchestral arrangements (it was the only way the BBC would play reggae records)" (Bradley and Morris 2002, 108). Adding orchestral arrangements to reggae songs "proved a necessity as far as pop success went because [British record label] Pama, which at this point rarely 'stringsed-up' anything it brought over, had proportionately far less mainstream accomplishment," than labels that added strings to their mixes (Bradley 2000, 243). A similar rationale likely lies behind the decision to add orchestral arrangements to Jackie Mittoo's Canadian recordings: certainly it achieves the goal of making it sound more mainstream and pop friendly for non-Jamaican listeners.³²

Is there anything distinct about the fusion of styles in Jamaican Canadian reggae? This is the question I posed to Rupert Harvey, leader of Messenjah, which was Canada's top reggae band throughout the 1980s. Speaking specifically about Messenjah, Rupert Harvey said:

Definitely. Some of the so-called purists or whatever might not like our arrangement, but what they have to understand is that we grew up here [in Canada] and we have a whole different mixture of influences in our music. If you listen to [British reggae groups] Steel Pulse or Aswad, it's the same thing. Yeah we are all Jamaicans but we grew up in another culture and we were exposed to other things. To me, it would be phony to totally disregard your environment, you know? A lot of guys I see trying to be totally Jamaican, but they can't fool real Jamaican people; they know they've been away. [...] Rather than try to lie about it we just incorporate our influences into our music, y'know? [...] You gotta be who you are, otherwise you're just being phony about it. (Harvey 2011)

³² An example of reggae and classical pop fusion will be discussed in chapter 5.

The incorporation of Jamaican and Canadian influences in the band's music, including rock guitar tones and pop music structures, is a reason why Messenjah are a uniquely Jamaican Canadian band.³³

Although this mingling of Jamaican and Canadian influences may occur naturally as a result of environment, there is also a practical reason behind it, as mentioned above. No professional musician in Canada has ever made it really big by playing roots reggae; commercial success seems to demand a fusion of genres. Some purists have criticized Messenjah for this but Harvey says, "[w]e aren't purists. To be a purist in reggae these days is to have a second job" (Quill 1988, 1). Although this quote is over twenty years old, it still holds true. Eric Walsh of Messenjah continues this thought:

What we're doing is an extension of reggae. It might take some getting used to if you're into the rootsy stuff but it just depends on what you're looking for in the music. For us, the music has to have an international appeal. It's fine to make music for the roots people but we're interested in making music for everyone. Playing reggae in Canada has made us aware of having a sound that will reach out to every people. (Stoute 1984, 40)

Aside from Messenjah, many Jamaican Canadian musicians made music with a wider audience in mind. Most of Leroy Sibbles' Canadian records are done in a Jamaican roots style, but *Evidence* is a major exception; the album is mainly pop with only subtle reggae influences, and features all Canadian musicians, including Bruce Cockburn and most of his band, among others. All of the fusion and roots reggae songs listed here are described in greater detail in chapter 5 and in the appendix.

Yet another distinctive aspect of Jamaican Canadian music in the 1970s and 1980s is the fact that there were many Jamaican Canadian reggae *bands*. In Jamaica, from

³³ See chapter 5 for specific song analyses of several Jamaican Canadian fusion songs.

the 1960s to the present, there are a lot of DJs, singers and vocal groups, whereas bands are mostly affiliated with studios; generally a studio will have a house band. Reggae bands in Jamaica do exist, but mostly as backing groups to a variety of vocalists, both live and in the studio; it is rare for these bands to perform on their own. In Canada, Ishan People, Messenjah, the Sattalites, Truths and Rights and 20th Century Rebels were all Jamaican Canadian reggae bands with an identity as a band; they all released albums or singles and toured as a band. Although there were also Canadian studio groups, such as Earth, Roots and Water³⁴ and the Super 8 Corporation, and singers who used a variety of backing groups, including Jackie Mittoo, Leroy Sibbles and Willi Williams, the performing reggae band was quite popular in Toronto. Like British reggae bands Aswad, Steel Pulse and UB40, Canadian reggae bands at this time had a group identity, similar to rock bands. This could be due to the differences in the music industries in Canada, England and the US, and Jamaica. In the former three countries, bands are the norm, whereas in Jamaica, the free agent singer is the norm. The reason Bob Marley and the Wailers were marketed as a *band* in North America and Europe was to align them with the norm for rock bands. In North America and Europe, solo singers are often linked to pop music, which is viewed by some as less serious; this is a pervasive value judgment and is part of the reason Chris Blackwell, former head of Island Records, marketed Bob Marley and the Wailers as a band.

Without an extensive survey of hundreds of songs, it is not possible to state definitively whether lyrics and melodies are unique in Canada, as suggested by Caudeiron. What is distinct is a mixing of Canadian and Jamaican cultures, which is a

³⁴ Although Earth, Roots and Water were the studio band at Summer Sound, where they backed up a variety of singers, they did release one LP as a group, *Innocent Youths* (1977).

key factor and influences the fusion sound, the ethnic makeup of reggae bands and the Canadian cultural norm of the *band* as opposed to the singer.

2. ANOTHER DISTINCTION IN JAMAICAN CANADIAN MUSIC: DUB POETRY

The final distinction in Jamaican Canadian music that I will discuss is the rise of dub poetry as a unique genre of music, one which has strong roots in the Jamaican community in Toronto. Although the focus of this thesis is on Jamaican Canadian reggae music made in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s, dub poetry is another important genre that merits detailed discussion. Dub poetry is distinct from, yet related to, reggae music in that dub poets make use of the musical rhythms of reggae in their songs and as an inspiration for the rhythms of their vocal delivery. Dub poetry is a fusion of reggae and spoken word poetry and has roots in Jamaica and in the Jamaican diaspora. One of the world's top dub poets, Jamaican Canadian Lillian Allen says, "[y]ou can't talk about reggae without (including) dub poetry" (Gayle 1989, 7). Since there are more dub poets in Canada than in Jamaica, England or the United States, dub poetry is an important and distinct part of Jamaican Canadian music (Allen 1987, 17). In particular, the city of Toronto has one of the world's highest concentrations of dub poets. Since the 1980s, dub poetry has been an important aspect of the Jamaican Canadian music scene (Walker 2005, 168).

Christian Habekost, one of the world's leading writers on dub poetry, describes dub poetry as neither a literary genre, nor a musical genre, but writes that "it is almost everything in between" (1993b, 1). Dub poetry can be experienced live – with or without musical accompaniment – in recorded form, or read in a book. Habekost writes that "[i]n

the wider context of cultural dynamics, dub poetry functions as a connecting link between ‘black’ oral traditions and the ‘white’ literary tradition” (1993b, 1). Despite dub poetry not being an exclusively musical art form, it is included in this study because it forms a large part of Jamaican Canadian musical culture, and, as dub poet Lillian Allen has won two Juno awards, it has clearly been recognized as music. Responses to her wins resulted in criticism from some other reggae artists, as they didn’t consider dub poetry to be reggae. This could be a jealous reaction to her win, because ongoing collaborations took place between dub poets and reggae musicians in Toronto (Walker 2005, 169), and they were and are part of the same Jamaican Canadian community. In fact, the reggae band Truths and Rights recorded the rhythm tracks for Allen’s group De Dub Poets’ eponymously titled debut; Allen in turn wrote lyrics for Truths and Rights.

Dub poetry is rooted in part in the Jamaican DJs and toasters of the late 1960s and early 1970s, including King Stitt, U Roy, I Roy, Big Youth and many others (Cooper 1999, 2). While ‘sing talking’ over instrumental rhythm tracks, DJs crafted words and rhythms to go along with pre-existing music, and would discuss anything, including taboo subjects. In contrast, the dub poet’s words come first, while the musical accompaniment is created specifically to go along with the dub poet’s words and rhythms (Walker 2005, 155). The use of a spoken Jamaican patois over music unites Jamaican DJs and dub poets. Another less obvious influence on dub poets is the 1960s African American “jazzoetry” group the Last Poets (Habekost 1992, 233), both because of their style of singing and speaking poetry over rhythms and because of the political themes in their work. Another important aspect of dub poetry is that it is almost always sung or

spoken in Jamaican patois, which can at times be undecipherable to people unfamiliar with this language.

Dub poetry as a distinct genre has its origins in the second half of the 1970s in Jamaica and especially in the Jamaican diasporas in England and Canada. Lillian Allen writes that dub poetry developed simultaneously inside and outside of Jamaica (1993, 16): “Dub poetry is something of a quintessential diasporic form, emerging in the 1970s almost simultaneously in Jamaica [...] and in Northern locales host to substantial Caribbean communities, such as London and Toronto” (Burman 2010, 103). Jamaican poet Oku Onuora coined the term ‘dub poetry,’ although Linton Kwesi Johnson is credited with having recorded the first dub poetry album in 1978 (*Dread Beat An’ Blood*), even before there was a name for the genre (Habekost 1993b, 16).

Caribbean people in Canada have contributed to virtually every type of art form including theatre, creative writing and music, but as Henry writes, “[n]owhere is this [contribution to artistic forms by Caribbean Canadians] more evident than in the growth of dub poetry” (1994, 246). In the 1980s, Toronto became one of the most important dub poetry cities along with London, England and Kingston, Jamaica (Habekost 1993b, 34). Central characteristics of Canadian dub poetry include the dominance of female poets (Habekost 1993b, 35), and lyrics that reflect life in Canada, including topics such as immigration, oppression and racism. Canadian dub poetry also features a wider range of musical styles, including rock and jazz in addition to reggae rhythms. Referring to the unique fusion of musical styles found in Canadian dub poetry, Antiguan Canadian dub poet Clifton Joseph says that “[i]f you consider all the elements that are used for backing dub, we’re producing a more authentic Toronto sound” (Henry 1999, 246). Dub poetry is

now a worldwide genre, although Toronto remains one of the most important cities for dub poetry (Habekost 1993b, 34).

Dub poetry is an important genre of Jamaican Canadian music, and even though it originates in Jamaica, it was being created around the same time in Toronto and London, England, making dub poetry a transnational genre. A unique aspect of dub poetry in Canada is that it is a fusion genre with musical influences from rock and jazz, as well as reggae (Habekost 1992, 237). Lyrically, many dub poetry songs deal with life in Canada, whether as an immigrant, a black person, a woman or all three.

3. AN 'AUTHENTIC' SOUND AND BIASES AGAINST JAMAICAN CANADIAN REGGAE

One of the most common criticisms of Jamaican music recorded in Canada is that it doesn't sound *Jamaican*. In this section I will look at various opinions on why this might be, including definitions of an 'authentic' Jamaican sound in terms of production aesthetics,³⁵ and in the second half, the biases against Jamaican Canadian music. I will address this criticism in relation to Jamaican Canadian roots reggae, as reggae fusion is not meant to sound exclusively Jamaican, and by its very nature is a hybrid product. Most Jamaican Canadian musicians feel there are some differences in Jamaican-recorded and Canadian-recorded roots reggae music, although there is little agreement in terms of naming those differences. Since Jamaican production aesthetics are generally thought of as the ideal to strive for in reggae music, there has been a conscious attempt by many

³⁵ In the introduction I outlined some key musical features of Jamaican reggae (such as instrumentation), but even if all of these are present in Jamaican Canadian roots reggae recordings, many Jamaican people will say it doesn't sound like Jamaica. The differences they are talking about have to do with production aesthetics, although geography, or a preference for music from Jamaica, also plays an important role.

Jamaican Canadian musicians and producers to replicate these ‘authentic’ Jamaican sounds in Canada and elsewhere in the Jamaican diaspora.³⁶ An ‘authentic’ sound is celebrated in Jamaican Canadian roots reggae, whether that sound comes from the mix,³⁷ the engineer, the studio itself, the experience or the atmosphere. Much anecdotal evidence, which I will present, suggests that Jamaican music made in the diaspora is not valued as highly by both listeners and musicians as music made in Jamaica, which is part of the bias against this music; the *idea* that something is Jamaican-made instead of Jamaican Canadian can hold a lot of sway and can influence people’s tastes.

In reference to Jamaican and Canadian reggae Rupert Harvey says, “there are going to be some differences, you know, I don’t know if it’s better or ... I mean there are some good Canadian artists that’s recorded songs that could stand up anywhere in the world. And the Jamaican guys have a sound too that’s wicked, y’know?” (Harvey 2011). Harvey couldn’t specifically name a difference, suggesting that the differences in sound may be ineffable. In most cases commonalities outnumber the differences as Jamaican Canadian reggae is still reggae, but with some possible subtle variations. In collectively examining a variety of musicians’ opinions on why Jamaican and Jamaican Canadian roots reggae sound different, we can piece together what some of these differences might be.

Jamaican Canadian singer Ras Lee says that reggae music made in Jamaica is mixed differently and generally has more bottom end (loud bass), which can be “too

³⁶ The goal of Jamaican-owned studios in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s such as Summer Sound and Half Moon was to record music that sounded Jamaican (Howes 2007).

³⁷ As described in the introduction, the bass guitar and hi hat cymbals are mixed very loudly in almost all forms of Jamaican-recorded music. These are the two most obvious ‘Jamaican’ production aesthetics although there are likely others that are more subtle.

much for Canadian speakers.” He said it’s a different sound in Canada and that “we can try to imitate the island sound” but that it’s never quite the same (Lee 2011). Rupert Harvey agrees, saying that the right sound is a product of the mixer, because that person puts everything together. Harvey says that “[i]f you bring [Jamaican dub mixer/producer] Scientist and put him anywhere in the world he’s gonna come up with a sound. I mean my friend brought him [to Toronto] to do some stuff for him and he ended up rewiring the whole studio just to get the sound the way he wanted it” (Harvey 2011).

Jamaican Canadian singer Leroy Brown on the other hand, says that the right engineer is crucial in obtaining a Jamaican-style sound. He says that most Canadian studios can’t handle the loud bass of Jamaican music and end up getting a sound that is too flat and does not “go into the red” (Peter I. 2011). “Going into the red” refers to the needle that measures the loudness of sounds in studios. Generally studios keep sound levels below the red line to prevent feedback or unwanted overdrive. In Jamaican music, however, going into the red is crucial in obtaining a loud, booming bass sound, and is a common practice. I’ve heard this comment from almost every Jamaican musician I’ve interviewed, most of whom are used to Jamaican studios that push the bass much louder than was common in most studios in Canada in the 1970s and 1980s.

Willi Williams says it’s neither the mixer nor the engineer that creates the right sound; rather it is “the experience, [and] where you are” (Williams 2011). This idea is even more abstract than saying the differences in sound come from the mixer or the engineer. Williams said that the rhythms recorded in Jamaica and Canada could be the same, with the same sound, but that the local influences will be different; he suggests that these local experiences create a difference in the recorded sound. He compared it to

cooking a meal: if you have the right ingredients, you can “cook the same meal here, in Jamaica, the UK, Newfoundland, and it’s the same” (Williams 2011). To expand on Williams’ analogy, it’s like cooking Jamaican jerk chicken in Canada: you can cook the exact same dish, but it will be slightly different because of local influences. Jerk chicken from a street vendor in Negril, Jamaica will taste different than the same dish at a restaurant on Eglinton Avenue West in Toronto. The difference may be ineffable in sound recordings, but Williams insists it exists nonetheless.

Lloyd Delpratt says that in the 1970s and 1980s there was a difference between Jamaican- and Canadian-recorded reggae music, although most people wouldn’t notice it. These days he says you can get the same sound anywhere because of digital recording techniques. But at the same time he says, “real recording with real people playing music, you can tell the difference” (Delpratt 2012). He says Jamaicans could tell the difference between reggae recorded in Canada and Jamaica, and compared it to speaking Jamaican English instead of standard English: it’s like “a Jamaican person speaking English grammar as opposed to a Jamaican person in Jamaica speaking [the] Jamaican language” (Delpratt 2012). This analogy makes it seem like Jamaican music made in Canada is still Jamaican, but that there are some Canadian influences that change it slightly. With certain fusion songs this is obvious, but does Jamaican-style roots reggae recorded in Toronto sound different than the same thing recorded in Jamaica? Delpratt says the sounds are very close, but that yes, there is a difference, even if he couldn’t say exactly what that difference was.

Another important aspect of getting the right sound is in the studio itself. Willi Williams says he prefers the smaller, non-professional studios – like Summer Sound and

Half Moon from the 1970s and 1980s – because they knew how to record Jamaican music; other professional studios would get a flat sound (Peter I. 2005). Willi Williams says that in Canada, Summer Sound “was *the* place. [... The sound] was big, robust, and the bass was heavy. His [Jerry Brown’s] sound was more what we were used to, the Jamaican sound” (Howes 2007). Bongo Gene, a friend of Jerry Brown’s, elaborates on the importance of a Jamaican-run studio: “Before we used to rent studios from other people, but we wasn’t getting the same sound. You couldn’t tell the engineer to push up the volume needle. As soon as it start bucking he pull it back down. Reggae music is not like that. The music have fe³⁸ [sic] go bucking and the needle have be like breaking off, you understand?” (Howes 2007). Both Williams and Bongo Gene’s comments are similar to the idea of “going into the red,” as mentioned earlier. Perhaps engineers and mixers at smaller studios were less controlling of the sound and let people record music as they liked. Obviously Jamaican-run studios like Summer Sound and Half Moon would simply understand the preferred aesthetic that Jamaican musicians wanted, so this setup was ideal.

Another aspect of getting the right sound in recording reggae is creating the right atmosphere, something most non-Jamaican studios lacked for a variety of reasons. From not being able to smoke in the studio, to costs making it too expensive to hang out for hours while writing and creating music, most non-Jamaican studios weren’t ideal places to record reggae. Bongo Gene says that a problem with most studios is that “[y]ou couldn’t smoke there either so you never get any vibes” (Howes 2007). Throughout the

³⁸ ‘Fe’ or ‘fi’ is a Jamaican patois word that means ‘for’ or in this case, ‘to.’

1960s at the famous Studio One³⁹ in Jamaica, the house band used to record Monday to Friday from nine to five. Many musicians and producers have said that they didn't record anything worth saving before noon because it took this long for a thick cloud of marijuana smoke to build up. This was essential in creating the proper atmosphere for a reggae song. Long sessions and the coming and going of people are also a part of this atmosphere, as is the community of musicians working together. All of this is unlikely to happen at a professional studio in Canada because rates are too high to wait around for the right "vibes;" home studios, where time is not measured in dollars, and where friends could stop by for fun, created an atmosphere that was similar to Jamaican recording studios.

Clearly there are a variety of opinions on how to get an authentic Jamaican production aesthetic. It could be the mixer, the engineer, the experience, the studio or the atmosphere, and in fact it's probably a combination of all of these. Almost everyone quoted above has done extensive recording in Canada and all are quite opinionated about musical sound. I think that Jamaican Canadian roots reggae *can* sound the same as Jamaican recorded roots reggae, if that is the goal. There may be some lyrical differences, such as local references, but musically, Canadian-recorded roots reggae sounds the same as Jamaican-recorded roots reggae.

Comparing Jamaican Canadian music to Jamaican music is inevitable, but in some cases, this comparison is marked by a bias from Jamaicans and other reggae music fans against Jamaican Canadian music. It may not even necessarily be the sound that

³⁹ The importance of Studio One to Jamaican music has been compared to Motown in Detroit and Stax in Memphis, both in terms of its influence on the music and the role of the house band in writing hit songs and creating a coherent and much imitated sound for the studio. Studio One was the number one studio in Jamaica during the 1960s and the songs recorded there are still used as the basis for new songs today.

people prefer, but maybe just the idea that if something is made in Jamaica, it is somehow better; in this way people hear a difference that may not be present in the music, but rather in the mind of the listener. Perhaps Jamaican Canadians prefer Jamaican reggae because it is a reminder of home, or even just the idea of home, as even people born in Canada of Jamaican heritage may have these feelings; either way there is something very attractive about Jamaican-recorded music for Jamaicans in Canada. The bias seems to be engrained in people, and could also be a result of a Canadian inferiority complex towards music made in Canada (Mitchell 2007, 153).

Reggae that was recorded at Summer Sound in Malton, Ontario has a very Jamaican roots reggae sound. That studio's house band, Earth, Roots and Water, never recorded as a group in Jamaica but they recorded roots reggae extensively in Canada. When asked about the reception of their Canadian recorded reggae, Earth, Roots and Water bassist Anthony Hibbert says:

If we had recorded those songs in Jamaica, they would have been hits. With the nostalgic feeling of longing for back home, people were more into hearing stuff coming directly outta Jamaica, regardless of what kind of quality. We had a disadvantage that way. If Jerry [Brown] mix a tune they would say 'It doesn't sound like Jamaica,' even if it sounded better. We had to live with that all the time. (Howes 2007)

This quote shows the Jamaican Canadian preference for the idea of Jamaican reggae, and is the kind of bias that many Jamaican Canadian musicians had to deal with. This bias was so pervasive in fact, that some musicians even felt this way about their own music. For example, speaking about his own Canadian recordings, Jamaican Canadian singer Noel Ellis is candid: "I tell you the truth. When I do those songs, they never sound like

Jamaican songs. They never sound like Channel One.⁴⁰ [...] Until a while now I play it back and listen to the quality of the work, I never realized what it was” (Howes 2006c). It seems that even Ellis himself had a bias against Canadian-made reggae, and didn’t realize that it could be of top quality. If musicians are feeling this way about their own music, it’s easy to imagine this kind of bias extending to listeners.

Writing about Jamaican Canadian music from the 1970s and 1980s, Kevin Howes says that even “[t]hough [Toronto’s] live reggae music scene was booming, the majority of Canadian recorded reggae product just sat on the shelves of local record shops collecting dust next to their more popular Kingston produced counterparts” (Howes 2008). In an attempt to solve this problem Jerry Brown had “Made in Jamaica” printed on a few of his Canadian-made releases. Brown says that “[r]ecord shops wouldn’t really buy our stuff unless it say ‘Jamaica.’ We did it to see if we sell more, but we never got any money off that one either” (Howes 2007). Even though this tactic failed, the fact that Brown tried it a few times shows that he considered the bias to be very real. Brown knew that people wanted music that came from Jamaica and he tried to accommodate that desire.

Another aspect of the bias against Jamaican Canadian music has nothing to do with whether the music is Jamaican or not, but simply the fact that it is Canadian. Just as Neil Young had to go to the United States to achieve fame, so too did Messenjah. Rupert Harvey says “the minute America adopted us, especially California, Southern California, you know, we became huge back here” (Harvey 2011). This is a familiar story of many

⁴⁰ Channel One was a major recording studio in Kingston, Jamaica throughout the 1970s.

Canadian musicians: moderate success in Canada, but only when they are celebrated in the United States, are they given full recognition in Canada.

Many of the biases presented in this section are from a Jamaican perspective; these musicians believe that the production aesthetic of Jamaican Canadian roots reggae recordings are different from Jamaican roots reggae recordings. There are a wide variety of opinions and named variables on how to achieve an 'authentic' Jamaican sound – a term used by musicians themselves. It may come down to a bias that many Jamaican Canadian people share and a preference for music that comes from Jamaica. The fact that a reggae singer, Noel Ellis, could feel this way about his own recordings shows how deep this bias is. Jerry Brown's attempt to counter this bias through printing "Made in Jamaica" on his Canadian-made records also illustrates the bias. The anecdotal evidence presented here certainly suggests that the bias against Canadian-recorded reggae music was and is very real and this bias has impacted the reception of many Jamaican Canadian artists and bands.

4. RACE ISSUES

In a hegemonically white country like Canada, there are many hurdles to success for non-white musicians. Despite the fact that Canada is officially a multicultural nation, marginalization and underrepresentation of visible minority Canadian musicians persists. As described in chapter 2, limited mainstream radio play, a lack of major awards recognition and limited support from major labels remain key obstacles. In this section I look at the frustration felt by many Jamaican musicians at seeing white groups make a living playing reggae-inspired music, while they struggle to make ends meet. There is

also a feeling that black American musicians were given opportunities that black Canadian musicians were denied. The stereotyping of black musicians is another problem as it was assumed by club owners that they would play R&B and funk, genres that are associated with black Americans, instead of reggae or whatever else they might want to play.

Some Jamaicans view the fact that several white groups have had success in playing reggae music as a problem. Leroy Sibbles said he was frustrated that white pop groups like the Police and mixed race groups like UB40 made lots of money in the 1980s playing reggae, while black musicians didn't succeed playing the same style of music. The fact that white people make money playing reggae may not be the root of the problem, but rather record companies who promote white musicians playing reggae at the expense of black musicians. UB40's massive worldwide hit version of "Red, Red Wine" was "done just the same way as it was done in Jamaica" by Tony Tribe, whose version was only a local hit (Howell 1991, 3). Howell says that "[a]s great as Bob Marley was, I think Peter Tosh was just as good, but he couldn't make it as big as Bob. Bob has a lighter complexion, so the record companies were able to promote him more, and he was accepted easier" (1991, 3). The disproportionate amount of success that white musicians had playing reggae music is a large issue,⁴¹ and one that frustrated many black artists.

Daniel Caudeiron says that black Jamaicans

used to get upset about white people picking up [reggae]. They think that the same thing always happens, as it did with jazz and blues: other people pick up on

⁴¹ Some areas to look at might be the many reggae hit songs by non-reggae artists; I've already mentioned Justin Bieber and Bruno Mars' hit reggae songs, but there are countless others. Another would be the way that reggae has been a subtle influence on so many successful white bands such as the Police, The Clash and Rancid. Another area would be the popularity of second and third wave ska groups such as The Specials and Sublime, all of whom clearly draw on Jamaican reggae, and even cover some Jamaican songs.

it and have more success than the original artists did. Like when Paul Simon comes down, takes the rhythm and makes a million bucks with it. It's getting better; when Bruce Cockburn used local reggae musicians for his record, credited them, and gave them a copy of the gold record, that helped a lot.⁴² (McGrath 1981, F6)

This is an example of a small gesture that was greatly appreciated by the Jamaican Canadian musicians involved in this session including bassist Larry Silvera and drummer Benbow, both members of the band Ishan People. Unfortunately, this sort of acknowledgement is rare; they are vastly outnumbered by the examples of black Jamaican musicians being exploited by white musicians, producers and record labels.⁴³ As detailed in several reggae history texts (Bradley, 2000; Barrow and Dalton, 2004), black Jamaican producers have also done much of the exploiting of poor Jamaican musicians, usually in the form of a flat fee for recording sessions rather than royalties, and little or no credit for songwriting or performing.

There were also some race problems specific to Canada. Drummer Everton 'Pablo' Paul expresses his frustration with being a black musician in Toronto saying, "we should have left Toronto and went to the U.S. We might have had a chance. I'm sure race played a part of it. Because in Toronto, they were bringing in American black [R&B and soul] groups. People were going to see them and buying their records. I said 'Why can't we be accepted in the same manner? Is it because we're black Jamaicans?'" (Dixon 2006, R4). In response to Paul, I would say that no, the discrimination was because they're

⁴² Bruce Cockburn's "Wondering Where the Lions Are" from *Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws* (1979) featured several Jamaican Canadian musicians. The song was a hit in Canada and was Cockburn's only Top 40 hit in the US. Cockburn also appeared on Leroy Sibbles' *Evidence* album from 1982.

⁴³ Paul Simon recorded the song "Mother and Child Reunion" (1972) in Jamaica with an all-Jamaican band who were paid a standard flat rate for the session. Johnny Nash's early reggae records were recorded in the same way. Both Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer of the Wailers say they were exploited by white British Jamaican producer Chris Blackwell (Tosh called Chris Blackwell 'Chris Whiteworst') (Bradley 2000, 82).

black *Canadian* Jamaicans, as black Canadians of another heritage would likely have faced comparable problems. As Paul states, many black *American* musicians had no problem with success in Canada; the problem is in the way black Canadians are treated. Being a reggae musician was also part of the reason for a lack of acceptance, but the main obstacle was race. The Juno Awards, which have featured very few black musicians over the years (Young 2006, 204), are a symbol of the way black Canadian musicians are ignored in Canada. Mainstream Canadian radio stations virtually ignore black Canadian musicians' work as well, while major label support for Jamaican Canadian music has been almost nonexistent.

Rupert Harvey expresses a similar feeling as Paul and said that black music was not supported in Canada unless it came from the United States (Collins 1988, C16). Leroy Sibbles agrees that there were some racial biases against him and says, “[c]oming here and being a black person, I know I’ve not been given a fair share in music” (Howell 1991, 3). This issue is much more than simply a Jamaican Canadian problem, as these biases likely could be felt by anyone who is not white, as evidenced by the Juno awards’ treatment of black music and musicians; still this issue affects everyone, even if indirectly.

On making music in Toronto in the 1970s, Ernie Smith says that black musicians needed to play black American music. He says, “[a]s a Black musician here, you have to fit into a certain bag, or you’ll never get anywhere” (Harry 1980a, 12). This is a reference to the stereotypical thinking that black musicians have to play a certain kind of music. Funk, soul, R&B and jazz were all ‘acceptable’ and well-known ‘black’ genres in the

1970s and 1980s in Toronto, whereas reggae was more obscure and unknown to the mainstream (Harry 1980a, 10).

The perception of a race bias was not shared by everyone, however, as Lloyd Delpratt shares another side of the story. When I asked him if he's faced any obstacles as a musician in Canada, he said, "no. [...] If there were obstacles, they are things I don't know about, against me" (Delpratt 2012). He said he was able to play anywhere he wanted and was even a member of the musician's union in Toronto for over thirty years. Delpratt said, "[o]ne man said to me 'Man, it doesn't matter how black you are or how white you are, if you make my cash register ring, that's what matters you know'" (Delpratt 2012). Delpratt did not record extensively in Canada however, so his experience refers to playing live.

Of course there are a variety of stories about discrimination, and this is only a small sample. People would be more likely to remember instances when they were discriminated against, more than times when they were not being discriminated against. People may rightfully expect equal treatment, and would only notice when they were not treated in this way. Nevertheless, according to Cecil Foster, black people have been discriminated against more so than any other visible minority group in Toronto (2007, 434),⁴⁴ while Jamaicans in particular have been discriminated against and "have been marked as the most violent and criminal among black immigrants in Canada" (Walcott 2003, 102). The disproportionate amount of success experienced by white reggae musicians continues today, as evidenced by mainstream Canadian radio: Jamaican and Jamaican Canadian reggae is almost never heard, while songs by white performers with

⁴⁴ Also see for example, Cecil Foster (1996, 2005, 2007), Rinaldo Walcott (2000, 2001, 2003) and Frances Henry (1994).

clear reggae influences regularly become hits.⁴⁵ Black musicians in Toronto today may be able to play genres other than those associated with black Americans, but if they do so, commercial success is still unlikely.

* * * * *

In this chapter I have outlined some of the major issues in Jamaican Canadian music. Several distinct aspects of this music were described, from the blend of Jamaican and Canadian influences, to racially integrated bands, to the format of the *band* as the norm, to the rise of dub poetry. The idea of a ‘real’ Jamaican recorded sound is prevalent and most Jamaican Canadians suggest that Jamaican Canadian music sounds different from Jamaican music, but exact differences remain unclear. From the mix and the engineer to the studio, the experience and the atmosphere, there are myriad opinions on how to achieve a ‘real’ Jamaican production aesthetic. The preference for Jamaican-recorded music may be explained as a diasporic longing for Jamaica, as opposed to musical or artistic ideals; many Jamaican people seem to simply prefer music that originates in Jamaica, regardless of whether or not Canadian-recorded reggae sounds the same as Jamaican-recorded reggae. As discussed in this chapter, there is a wide spectrum of Jamaican Canadian music, from the fusion of various genres with reggae, to the re-creation of Jamaican roots reggae, and the many styles in between.

⁴⁵ I have no specific stats to back this up, but over twenty years of listening to mainstream pop radio, I have never heard a Jamaican or Jamaican Canadian reggae song, with the only exception being Bob Marley. On the other hand, I constantly hear songs by white artists with very obvious reggae influences, many of whom I have listed throughout this thesis: Bruno Mars, Justin Bieber, the Police, Johnny Nash, Paul Simon, Blondie, etc.

Prejudices against Jamaican Canadian music are plentiful and are felt by the musicians themselves; this is indicative of the racist climate experienced by Jamaican musicians in Canada. Many of the racial barriers faced by Jamaican Canadian musicians were in terms of mainstream radio play, record labels and awards shows, although there were deeper problems unrelated to the musical infrastructure. Other race issues in Canada were likewise outlined to demonstrate some of the obstacles that these musicians faced. The next chapter features biographies of several well-known and influential pioneers of Jamaican Canadian music. Most of this material has not been compiled before and to understand Jamaican Canadian music in Toronto from the 1970s and 1980s, it is essential we look at the pioneers who helped to create this music scene.

CHAPTER 4: BIOGRAPHIES

The musicians who are the focus of this chapter were all instrumental in building the Jamaican Canadian music scene in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s, and their influence is felt up to the present. Toronto – which is one of the most important centers for Jamaican music (Walker 2005, 160) – was and still is a hotbed for Jamaican musical activity; this is in large part because of the hard work, dedication and persistence of these pioneers. Although they were all able to make a living playing reggae music, they faced many barriers, including mainstream exclusion and the relative obscurity of reggae.

The information in this chapter comes from a wide variety of sources. One was through interviews with Willi Williams, Leroy Sibbles, Rupert Harvey (of Messenjah) and Fergus Hambleton (of the Sattalites), all of whom provided me with information that cannot be found elsewhere. Interviews by Jim Dooley and Peter I were also used extensively. The following writers' work was also extremely useful: Daniel Caudeiron, Diane Collins, Richard Flohil, Isobel Harry, Peter Howell, Kevin Howes, Ray Hurford, Kara Kuryllowicz, Liam Lacey, Beth Lesser and David Kingston, Chris May, Nick McCabe-Lokos, Joan Meredith, Greg Quill, Norman 'Otis' Richmond, Patti Vipond, Carter Van Pelt and Klive Walker.

The chronology of the artists' biographies in this chapter are based on their first years of major activity in Canada, especially in terms of recording. This chapter features biographies of Jackie Mittoo, whose first major recording in Canada was in 1971; Johnny Osbourne, 1976; Willi Williams, 1978; Leroy Sibbles, 1980; and the bands Messenjah, 1982; the Sattalites, 1985; and dub poet Lillian Allen, 1986. Since the focus is on these

musicians' work in Canada, this chronology is apt as it privileges their work in Canada over their age or when they started working as musicians in Jamaica.

These musicians came to Canada for a variety of reasons: some needed to escape political violence in Kingston, others came seeking new experiences and some came to be with family members. One thing that unites all of these figures is their desire and passion to bring reggae music to new people and places. Even with this shared goal, these musicians play a wide variety of reggae or reggae fusion styles: Osbourne and Williams play roots reggae, while Mittoo, Messenjah and the Sattalites play various styles of reggae fusion. Sibbles plays mostly roots reggae but he recorded one fusion album in Canada as well. Allen is a dub poet and her work is in that genre, which is also a form of reggae fusion. These are some of the varieties of genres that fall on the spectrum of music between roots reggae and reggae fusion.

Mittoo, Osbourne, Williams and Sibbles have had extensive and influential careers in Jamaica, yet their work in Canada is ignored or dismissed in a sentence or two in every major reggae text. Likewise, in histories of Canadian popular music, the work of these four are not to be found, or if it is, it is in only the most superficial and incomplete manner. The work of Messenjah, the Sattalites and Lillian Allen is covered in some of these texts, however in very little detail. The biographies as presented here are the result of scouring hundreds of obscure journal, magazine and newspaper articles, and through interviews. Some sections may contain dozens of unique citations, which is the culmination of months of work in piecing these biographies together. The biographies of these musicians' work in Canada are sketchy at best, but here they are fuller and more complete.

Although there are many other important figures, the surge in Jamaican Canadian music in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s would not have happened if it weren't for the musicians discussed in this chapter. They were part of a Jamaican music community in Toronto and many of them helped each other in various ways, whether through mentorship or through playing shows together. These people created a network of reggae musicians in Toronto that continues to the present. All of these musicians are true pioneers of reggae and other Jamaican genres in Canada and they were and are some of the most important reggae ambassadors not just in Canada, but in the world.

1. JACKIE MITTOO

Jackie Mittoo is indisputably one of the leading figures in the history of Jamaican music, primarily as an organ and piano player. He was extremely influential as the composer and studio keyboardist at the prestigious Studio One in Kingston, Jamaica during the ska, rocksteady and reggae eras. Mittoo's approach and style, which he perfected at Studio One, continue to be used to this day by reggae musicians and the rhythm tracks⁴⁶ he created continue to be used by Jamaican DJs and dancehall stars. In over twenty years in Canada, Mittoo made great contributions to Jamaican Canadian music and was one of the first to record reggae in that country. In Canada, Mittoo released three reggae fusion albums, performed extensively, owned a record store,

⁴⁶ A rhythm track is a song with the original vocals removed and is also known as a 'version.' New vocals can then be added to the original rhythm track, creating a new song. This practice is very common in Jamaican music, especially with 1960s Studio One rhythms. Traditionally, Jamaican 45 rpm records feature the song on one side and the rhythm track without vocals – the 'version' – on the other side.

worked on the first musical theatre production with a reggae score, and was a mentor to many younger reggae musicians.

Donat Roy 'Jackie' Mittoo was born on March 3, 1948, in Brown's Town, Jamaica, and moved with his family to Kingston as a young teenager in about 1961 (Steffens 1993-4, 12). Under the tutelage of his grandmother (Meredith 1971, 18), Mittoo started playing classical music on the piano at the age of four, and could reportedly read music before printed words (Vipond 1975, 22). In 1962, by the age of fourteen, he was the organist for what is now considered the top ska group of all time, the Skattalites (Meredith 1971, 18). In the mid-to-late 1960s, he was the musical director, talent scout, bandleader, songwriter, arranger, composer, producer and organist at Clement 'Coxsone' Dodd's influential Studio One, where he had to record five songs each day, five days per week for years. Late in his life when asked how many songs he'd played on, he said he couldn't even guess (Steffens 1993-4, 12). Jason Wilson, a Scottish Canadian protégé of Mittoo's, acknowledges his mentor's influence; Wilson says that Mittoo "helped [to] popularize the idea that you could have multiple keyboard parts on a single song. For instance, he was big on clavinetts and string pads and then he'd have a rhythm organ and then, of course, he'd have a lead organ. So, you'd have five or six keyboard parts and he was a pioneer of this" (Nazareth 2008). This musical genius has backed up all the big names in Jamaican music including Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, the Heptones and Alton Ellis. Even those he didn't play with have almost certainly used one of the many rhythm tracks he recorded, at one time or another.

In 1967, Mittoo did a four-month tour of England with rocksteady/reggae band, the Soul Vendors, promoting his single "Ram Jam" which went to number four on the

BBC charts at a time when the BBC played almost no Jamaican music whatsoever (Meredith 1971, 18). In this same year, Jamaican Canadian manager and promoter extraordinaire Karl Mullings went to Jamaica to encourage Jackie Mittoo to come to Canada, and after Mullings spoke with Jackie's grandmother, the keyboardist was convinced (Dooley 2003). Even with steady work in Jamaica, Toronto was appealing to a young Mittoo because of the higher quality of living and the burgeoning music scene created by Jamaican musicians who had been migrating there since the early 1960s, such as Jay Douglas, Karl Mullings and Jo Jo Bennett.

In 1969, at the age of twenty-one, Mittoo moved to Toronto where he continued working as a full-time musician, although he still recorded frequently in Jamaica and England, making him something of a transnational artist. His first Canadian-recorded album, *Wishbone* (1971) was released on Howard Cable's Summus label, the first Canadian company to promote reggae music (Meredith 1971, 17). It was Cable's idea to use a thirty-two-piece orchestra – the Toronto Symphony Orchestra – on the album (Howes 2006b). The orchestra was recorded in a session separate from the reggae session, and Mittoo had no say in how this was done. His next two Canadian albums, *Reggae Magic* (1972) and *Let's Put It All Together* (1975), were released on the Canadian Talent Library label, a non-profit trust for Canadian recordings; both albums featured the same mix of reggae instrumentals with overdubbed orchestration. Another of Mittoo's protégés, Messenjah's Rupert Harvey, refers to these albums as “background, elevator reggae” (Harvey 2011). These were some of the first reggae recordings made in Canada, and they were a distinct fusion of reggae and classical pop; all of Mittoo's Canadian recordings were this kind of reggae fusion.

Speaking about his Canadian recordings, Mittoo said that music should be adapted to suit the area it is being played in. Mittoo had noticed that the average white Canadian seems to love peppy, fast music, rather than the slower, post-ska Caribbean beat, and in the 1970s liked a “sweetened” version of reggae with strings, horns and orchestral arrangements (Vipond 1975, 27).⁴⁷ In this way Mittoo’s Canadian recordings are a fusion of reggae and Canadian orchestral overdubs. Some have criticized Mittoo for not using black musicians on the ‘sweet’ overdubs, but he had no control over that aspect of the recordings, as the Canadian Talent Library record label chose the orchestral musicians (Vipond 1975, 27). Since he was also still able to record albums in Jamaica without strings, he might not have cared. He said, “I am not prepared to sacrifice my years of hard-earned music experience to project political aspects into focus” (Vipond 1975, 27-8).

Perhaps due to a lack of distribution channels, Mittoo’s Canadian albums were not commercially successful, although *Wishbone* did chart in Quebec (Howes 2006b). The ‘sweetening’ of his Canadian albums is the key difference between Mittoo’s recordings in Jamaica and Canada. If it were possible to remove the overdubbed strings, his Canadian recordings might have enjoyed the same critical success as his Jamaican-made recordings in Jamaica or other present-day major reggae markets.

As a live performer, Mittoo’s high stature in Jamaica was virtually unrecognized during his first few years in Canada. At this time he played at a wide variety of venues all

⁴⁷ ‘Sweet’ refers to orchestral overdubs added to reggae songs. These ‘sweet’ versions of reggae songs were common in Canada and England in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and were one of the first ways that reggae was altered for a broader, non-Jamaican audience. In many ways it was successful, especially in England, where a few ‘sweet’ versions of reggae songs became hits. This was outlined in chapter 3 and in chapter 5 I look in detail at one of Mittoo’s ‘sweet’ recordings.

over the Greater Toronto Area. One of these early gigs in the mid-1970s was at Fran's restaurant in downtown Toronto where he would play solo piano from 4pm to 6pm and then from 8pm-1am; that's seven hours of music, by himself!⁴⁸ He added a drummer shortly after and started playing at restaurants all over the city (Dooley 2003). Toronto music store owner Sam 'The Record Man' Sniderman arranged promotional tours for Mittoo and said he was "a mammoth fan of Mittoo's," comparing him to Elton John (Vipond 1975, 22). It seems that the endorsement of a huge Toronto music figure like Sam Sniderman did not help Mittoo in any major way, however.

In 1975, when Mittoo was on the upside of a lifetime battle with alcohol addiction (Vipond 1975, 28), he had established himself well enough to be able to choose which types of gigs to play. At the time Mittoo said, "I am not an ordinary musician who has to perform on a night-to-night basis just for a living. [...] I cannot afford to play dive gigs [...] You just get common and cannot demand anything financially substantial or prestigious in terms" (Vipond 1975, 21). In the mid-1970s, Mittoo was playing at some of the top hotels in Toronto including the Boulanger and Bristol Place where he had five-week engagements four times per year (Vipond 1975, 21). Since reggae music was almost unknown outside of Jamaica and Jamaican diasporic communities, his repertoire was a blend of R&B, calypso, funk and rock with a bit of reggae thrown in. Mittoo's protégé Rupert Harvey says that Mittoo was "a musical genius, actually. He was known for reggae but he could play anything. He was like an amazing jazz player, y'know? A top-notch musician; very well respected" (Harvey 2011). Mittoo never did a cross-

⁴⁸ I have not found out exactly what genres of music he played at these gigs, but as reggae was virtually unknown in Toronto at this time, it's safe to assume he played very little reggae. He likely played a mixture of jazz, R&B and 'lounge' music, as you might expect from a solo pianist in a restaurant.

Canada tour, but he played in countless venues in the Toronto area and many other cities in Ontario and Quebec.

In addition to making music while living in Canada, Mittoo was an ambassador for Jamaican music in other ways as well. In 1971, along with Karl Mullings and Lord Tanamo (also a former member of the Skattalites), he became co-owner of one of the first Caribbean record stores in Canada, Toronto's The Record Nook (Meredith 1971, 17). He also co-owned two Canadian distribution companies for his Jamaican-made recordings: Jackie and Stine-Jac (Caudeiron and Miller 1992, 865); these small labels were primarily created to distribute and receive royalties on his own work.

Mittoo also delved into another creative area with his work on the musical *Reggae* in 1980. He wrote music and lyrics and was the music director and orchestra leader for this production (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4). Originally scheduled for a 1977 opening as *Promised Land* featuring the music of Jamaican Max Romeo, the delay in opening this show was primarily due to financial problems. *Reggae* opened off-Broadway at the Biltmore Theatre in New York City on March 20, 1980, and was the first major musical with a real reggae score. This multi-million dollar show was produced by Michael Butler, producer of *Hair*, and featured several Jamaican Canadian musicians including bassist Audley Williams and percussionist Lord Tanamo ("Reggae on Broadway" 1980, 5). Even though the musical was by no means a success, it was a huge step in bringing reggae to a broader audience, proving that there was a potential for the music beyond Jamaican communities and reggae fans.

Mittoo was inducted into the Canadian Black Music Hall of Fame in 1981 along with Oscar Peterson; he was the first reggae musician inducted ("CAPAC" 1981, 22). He

was also inducted into the Black Music Association Canada Hall of Fame in 1985 (Caudeiron and Miller 1992, 865). During his twenty-plus years in Canada, Mittoo worked with virtually all reggae musicians including R. Zee Jackson, the Sattalites and Earth, Roots and Water. Shortly before his death he was working in Montreal with ska musicians he'd played with in the 1960s in Jamaica, Lynn Taitt and Roland Alphonso (Foster 1991, 58).

When Mittoo fell ill mid-tour in Japan in 1990, he came home to Toronto, and Mullings called in the Jamaican band the Skattalites who played one last show with Mittoo at Concert Hall in Toronto. A heavily medicated Mittoo was out of the hospital for a few hours for the show; he died three or four days later (Dooley 2003, 14). Mittoo passed away on December 16, 1990 in Toronto from lymph gland cancer, and was laid to rest in Montego Bay, Jamaica on January 3, 1991 (Caudeiron 1991, 6). Willi Williams says, "it was a full compliment and honor to work with someone like that, because I haven't seen anyone or heard anyone who has replaced Jackie Mittoo's importance in the music so far" (Van Pelt 2003, 47). Mittoo's partner Carol Brown, with whom he had six children in Toronto, was at one point working on a film documentary on Mittoo's life (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4).⁴⁹

As one of the first to record reggae in Canada, Mittoo was a true pioneer. His work in promoting reggae music in other avenues, including live performances, a musical, owning a record store and small record label and as a mentor to countless young musicians make him one of the most important figures in Jamaican Canadian music in the 1970s and 1980s. He paved the way for the next generation of reggae musicians by

⁴⁹ Nothing has been released as of yet, and I have been unable to find any new information about this project.

bringing the music to new places, introducing the music to new audiences through his reggae fusions, and by passing along his musical knowledge to others.

2. JOHNNY OSBOURNE

When a young Johnny Osbourne moved to Toronto, he was already an established but not very well known singer in Jamaica; he migrated to Canada to avoid the political violence in Kingston. Osbourne made two excellent albums while in Toronto as lead singer of the Jamaican Canadian reggae band Ishan People. This group was one of the first reggae bands to tour all over Canada, and they were the first Canadian reggae band signed to a major label; they were true pioneers in both respects. Rupert Harvey of Messenjah has nothing but respect and admiration for Ishan People, whom he calls the “torchbearers” for Jamaican music in Canada and the first significant Canadian reggae group (Harvey 2011). Osbourne’s major international breakthrough and best-known album, *Truths and Rights*, came upon his return to Jamaica in 1980.

Errol ‘Johnny’ Osbourne aka Bumpy Jones was born c.1948 in Kingston, Jamaica and went to the Alpha Boys School where he studied trumpet for four or five years (Katz 2003, 117). He started singing “round about 1965” with a band called the Wild Cats who recorded at Studio One, although nothing was released (May 1981, 12). In 1969, the 22-year-old singer moved to Toronto to join his mother, brothers and sisters (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4). He wanted to remain in Jamaica to further develop his musical career, but due to the guns and gangs, his mother wanted him out. Osbourne refused and says “my mother sent me the money from Canada for my passport eight times. And I spent it eight times, didn’t ever get the passport. The ninth time my grandmother went to the passport

office with me, she took the money herself, and got the passport” (May 1981, 12). On the day he left, he’d just finished recording an album in the morning and took the plane to Toronto in the afternoon (Lesser and Kingston 1983-4, 30). The photo on the cover of his *Come Back Darling* (1969) LP shows Osbourne on the steps of an Air Jamaica plane; this photo was not staged: Osbourne really did get on a plane that afternoon (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4).

Compared to Kingston, Toronto in 1969 was very quiet in terms of Jamaican music. Osbourne soon formed the R&B band Magic Circle with Carl Henry and Patrick Thompson (Lesser and Kingston 1983-4, 30) and they played popular funk covers by bands like the Stylistics and Earth, Wind and Fire to get gigs (Richmond 1982, E8). His biggest band in Canada however was Ishan People, with whom he was lead singer. Ishan People were one of the first reggae bands to tour all over North America. Osbourne says, “[w]e were the first band to take reggae all over North America in a big way. We played where reggae had never been taken before” (May 1981, 14). Ishan People toured all over Canada with jazz rock band Blood, Sweat and Tears (Richmond 1982, E8), and the group even played for then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his wife Margaret at the Ottawa Civic Centre (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4).

Ishan People were the first Canadian reggae band signed to a major label (GRT), as reported by Lesser and Kingston (1983-4, 30), although around this time, in 1983, Messenjah signed with the larger WEA; the general consensus now is that Messenjah were first. Regardless, Ishan People were signed to a large sized record label at a time when reggae was almost completely unknown in Canada. By the time Messenjah came

around, Ishan People had already paved the way for reggae bands to tour in North America.

After two superb albums in 1976 and 1977,⁵⁰ both produced by David Clayton-Thomas of Blood, Sweat and Tears, the band broke up in 1979 (Lesser and Kingston 1983-4, 30). Their first album was roots reggae while the second was more of a reggae fusion. Osbourne says, “Ishan People fell apart because we couldn’t agree on musical policy. Most of the band was into the crossover business, whereas just three of us were into roots. So we three left and called ourselves Ishan. We had a real roots thing going, but it was hard because the record company (GRT) was behind the other lot” (May 1981, 14). Osbourne says that “GRT didn’t know about reggae. They didn’t research reggae at all. I think it is a company that wasn’t really interested in reggae. David Clayton-Thomas was the one who was interested, because he was the one who heard us and signed us up” (Lesser and Kingston 1983-4, 30-1). It makes sense that a record label with no knowledge of reggae would want a reggae fusion group, since in theory, this can appeal to a wider ‘crossover’ audience. After some gigs with Ishan People in the Bahamas, Osbourne went back to Studio One in Jamaica to record the biggest record of his career, *Truths and Rights*.

Osbourne still occasionally plays in Canada, and in 1984, members of Ishan People backed him up on a return date to Toronto as the group Roots Tradition (Niester 1984, 19). He still likes Canada and when he returns he says, “I come like one of your hometown Torontonians, how they really treat me. Like I’m one of the boys. I was properly accepted – overwhelmingly. I can’t express it right now but it have a nice

⁵⁰ See chapter 5 for an analysis of the Ishan People song “Tough, Tight and Dread.”

feeling” (Lesser and Kingston 1983-4, 31). Recently Osbourne commented on his time in Toronto: “I figure if I was in Jamaica, maybe I could have done more for myself, musically. But I still don’t regret it” (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4). Osbourne currently lives in Kingston, Jamaica.

As the lead singer for the first major Jamaican reggae band in Canada, Osbourne’s contribution to Canadian reggae is huge. As stated in chapter 3, bands as opposed to soloists are the norm in Jamaican Canadian music, and this trend started with Ishan People. Ishan People’s first album came out almost eight years before the next Jamaican Canadian band’s major label album, which is Messenjah’s debut from 1983. Just as Mittoo helped bring reggae to new audiences in Toronto, Ishan People did the same for Canada and the United States. Ishan People were reggae pioneers, although their influence and importance has yet to be fully recognized in Canadian and reggae history.

3. WILLI WILLIAMS⁵¹

Willi Williams is a well-known Jamaican singer who has lived in Toronto since 1974. Unlike many other Jamaican musicians in Canada, Williams has had a purposeful and clear agenda from day one: to exclusively play roots reggae and to bring this music to new audiences. He played in shopping malls long before reggae was a well-known genre, and his music has appeared on several film soundtracks. Like Mittoo, Williams is a transnational artist and splits his time between Toronto and Kingston, Jamaica, in addition to frequent tours in North America, Europe and Japan. He is not into playing

⁵¹ His preferred spelling is Willi, but it has been spelt Willie and Willy in several articles and recordings.

fusion or hybrid versions of reggae, even if that means less financial gain, and he is known as a roots reggae singer and DJ.

Willi Williams was born c.1952 in rural Higgins Town, St. Ann's Parish, Jamaica and moved to Kingston when he was a child. He got his start as a singer in the music industry at the age of 14, recording "Calling" at Studio One in 1966 when he was still in school (Hurford and Moore 1986). Coincidentally, Jamaican Canadian Leroy Sibbles also played on this session (Williams 2011). Williams started running his own sound system, Tripletone at the age of fifteen (Van Pelt 2001), and produced artists such as Delroy Wilson and the Versatiles for his own small label called Soul Sounds (Hurford and Moore 1986).

In search of new experiences, Williams moved to Toronto in 1974 where he still lives, although he has always divided his time between Canada and Jamaica (Van Pelt 2003, 47). On moving to Toronto he says, "I wanted to travel for a long time, but I didn't make up my mind where I wanted to go. [...] I didn't want to go to the United States, because I didn't want to go into the army (laughs)!" (Peter I 2005). His first job in Canada was at an electronics company where he was a credit manager for about two years (Peter I 2005). His first gig in Canada was with Jo Jo and the Fugitives in the St. Lawrence market area of Toronto (Williams 2011), although he quickly met Jackie Mittoo who was performing all over; in fact they were neighbours and didn't even know it (Peter I 2005). This led to a working relationship in which Mittoo and Williams played together for a few years at a variety of places, basically getting what gigs they could, including hotels and clubs where they would play R&B and pop covers and a few reggae tunes. Williams says that they played everything, "ABC to the classics, meaning the great reggae music"

(Williams 2011) Williams says that in the 1970s, most of the Jamaican musicians in Canada were

still trying to impress by playing Americanized music. When I came here I wanted to introduce reggae music but it was very hard because most of the people here who came from Jamaica, right, they [...] wanted to play like Ohio Players or Blood Sweat & Tears or... the funk thing, y'know. And I came here with a burning desire to introduce reggae, and the only person who was really playing some kind of reggae was Jackie Mittoo. (Peter I 2005).

Williams did not take part in Mittoo's solo fusion recordings although they did start a small label, together with Tony Stines, called Stine-Jac (Hurford and Moore 2004). This label was created to distribute Williams' and Mittoo's own music, and shows an entrepreneurial side to both musicians.

Williams and Mittoo also formed an informal band with Joe Isaacs (drums) and Bryan Atkinson (bass) both founders of the Soul Vendors⁵² in Jamaica, and Lord Tanamo (percussion). This all-star group even played at a mall in Toronto where they startled shoppers who may have never heard reggae music (Peter I 2005). Williams says they took what gigs they could, because even a mall gig will help to spread reggae music (Williams 2011). Williams' passion for spreading the music of his homeland was and still is incredible; this is his legacy. Williams says that "[r]eggae was something that we were introducing, and [the scene] was very small. At the time you had like small basement parties, and things like that. [...] There was sound systems but not big, just for basement parties, y'know. [Gradually] it became bigger and bigger. And I'm still here trying to

⁵² The Soul Vendors was the name of one of the house bands at Studio One in Kingston. Sound Dimension and The Soul Brothers were two other names for the Studio One house band, although many of the members, including Mittoo, were in all three. The name of the band changed over the years primarily due to changes in membership.

work on it although it's a pain, in general" (Peter I 2005). Despite the difficulties in promoting reggae in Canada, Williams persists.

In 1979, Williams recorded the biggest hit of his career, "Armagideon Time." Although the song was recorded in Jamaica, this early dancehall record made Williams an even bigger star. The fact that the Clash covered this song also helped to spread the music, as some Clash fans may have looked for the original. "Armagideon Time" was also the first vocal version of the Studio One classic "Real Rock" (Hurford and Moore 2004).⁵³ For these reasons, "Armagideon Time" is considered a classic early dancehall record and it gave Williams more clout in his mission to spread reggae music.

Williams has worked on film projects in both Canada and the United States as a musician, and an extra ("Willi" 2011). He's also produced music videos for himself and others and his song "Armagideon Time" has appeared in several films including *Grosse Pointe Blank* (1997) and *Ghost Dog: Way of the Samurai* (1999). The song is about injustice and the most memorable line is, "a lot of people won't get no supper tonight/ A lot people going to suffer tonight." The well known "Real Rock" instrumental track makes it catchy while the lyrics are thought provoking yet simple enough to sing along with.

Over the years, Williams has worked with almost all of the major Jamaican Canadian musicians including Ronnie Bop Williams, guitarist from the Wailers who has been living in Canada since the early 1970s (Peter I 2005). Williams is not just a producer and performer, he is also a professional songwriter, and has written for

⁵³ "Real Rock" is a classic Studio One instrumental song, otherwise known as a 'rhythm,' and features Jackie Mittoo on organ. A vocal version is when the original track has vocals added to the instrumental track, and is then released as a new song. "Real Rock" is one of the most 'versioned' songs in Jamaican music history with over 250 songs using that backing track (Van Pelt 2003, 47).

Canadian rock group Big Sugar (Peter I 2005). In fact, Williams has known Jamaican Canadian Gary Lowe, Big Sugar's bass player, from their primary school days, and still likes to play with him (Van Pelt 2003, 48).⁵⁴ Williams has done some studio work and played a few gigs with Big Sugar as well (Williams 2011), promoting reggae in yet another way.

Williams has been relatively successful in bringing reggae to a broad audience and in 2000, his album *Thanks & Devotion* (1999) was nominated for a Juno Award. Although he has released at least eight albums since the late 1970s, this album was his first released in Canada in years because there "is not a big community here to support reggae on the whole. So most of my releases are in Europe or Jamaica" (Van Pelt 2001). Williams says that he "prefers rewards rather than awards," (Williams 2011) perhaps the biggest reward being fulfilling his goal of bringing roots reggae to new audiences, especially in Canada. Through extensive tours in large reggae markets like Japan and Europe but also North America, and indirectly through film soundtracks featuring his songs, he has been very successful in doing this. These days Williams lives in Toronto, but is always travelling to record and perform in Europe, Japan, Jamaica and the US.

4. LEROY SIBBLES

Like Mittoo, Leroy Sibbles is also one of the most influential figures in the history of Jamaican music. He worked for years at Studio One in Kingston and created a style of bass playing that has in many ways come to define reggae as a distinct style; he is

⁵⁴ Big Sugar is a Canadian blues-rock band, featuring Jamaican Canadian Lowe on bass. I hear the Jamaican influence in his playing which makes Big Sugar sound like a blues-rock-reggae band, due to the very heavy low end.

also well known as a singer. Sibbles lived in Toronto for over twenty years, where he released five solo albums and some singles, most of which was roots reggae, with the exception being *Evidence*, a pop reggae fusion album and his only major label release. This fusion album, intended for a 'crossover' audience is a focus of this section. He also performed constantly, and has played all over Canada and the United States, and he wrote and performed the score for several films in Canada. Like Mittoo, Sibbles was a Canadian reggae pioneer who paved the way for the next generation.

Leroy Sibbles was born on January 29, 1949, in Trenchtown, Jamaica and it is no exaggeration to suggest that, like Mittoo, he is one of the most important musicians in the history of Jamaican music. In 1963, at 14 years old, he became the leader of the vocal trio the Heptones (with Barry Llewellyn and Earl Morgan), one of the most influential rocksteady groups ever. At this time, Sibbles was also a songwriter, singer, bassist and arranger at the prestigious Studio One in Kingston (Bradley 2000, 217). Following Mittoo's departure for Toronto in 1969, Sibbles took his spot and became the talent scout, bandleader and musical director at Studio One (Bradley and Morris 2002, 50), a position he held for about five years (Lesser and Kingston 1984, 14). As a bassist, Sibbles was revolutionary to reggae music because he played the instrument in a new way that became the norm, and is still used today: playing the bass after the beat. Sibbles says, "[w]hen I started playing [bass] professionally, I created my style. I realized that most musicians start before the [down] beat or on the beat. So I created a thing after the beat. And that took off, and right now it makes me stand out in the history of reggae music as a bass man" (Van Pelt 2002, 31). Luke Ehrlich recognizes Sibbles' enduring influence:

It bears mention that a great number of the most seminal bass lines in Jamaican music are the work of one man, Leroy Sibbles. [...] For a number of years Sibbles composed the riddims that backed the most influential hits and artists in Jamaican music, equal in stature to Bob Marley. Whatever advances the Wailers have made for the vocal consciousness of reggae, Sibbles has done at least as much for the musical development of the music's most important instrument. [...] As one man, he is really a bridge between Afro-Jamaican and Afro-American musical values. (Ehrlich 1982, 53)

Ehrlich's high esteem for Sibbles is common, and his bass playing and beautiful singing may make him "the greatest all-round talent in reggae history" (Chang and Chen 1998, 181).

In 1973, after almost ten years in the Jamaican music business, Leroy Sibbles moved to Toronto at the age of 24. A central reason for moving to and subsequently staying in Toronto may have been the fact that his Jamaican girlfriend, who soon became his wife and mother of his children, had already moved to Canada (Dooley 1998, 13). He also simply liked the country and in 1983 said that, "Canada is like me. Relaxed, quiet. Living here has slowed down my aggression" (Harry 1983c, 12). His first job was driving a truck with a stationary company called the Printing House (Peter I. 2004, 4), although it wasn't too long before he was working again as a full-time musician (McCabe-Lokos 2003, 4).

Of the five solo albums and a few singles Sibbles recorded while living in Toronto, the majority are roots reggae. His Canadian work has been virtually ignored by reggae historians, although Carter Van Pelt calls *Strictly Roots* (1980) one of Sibbles' best albums (2002, 31). Most of Sibbles' Canadian music was released on medium-sized or major Canadian record labels that did not specialize in Jamaican music. This was a big problem because these labels didn't promote or market reggae in any serious way.

Speaking about these labels Sibbles says, “they don’t know what the hell to do with the reggae music when they’ve got it” (Dooley 1998, 16). As described in chapter 2, the problem of a lack of promotion has been a major reason that Jamaican music has seen limited commercial success in Canada.

Three of Sibbles’ solo Canadian-made LPs were produced by a friend from Jamaica also living in Toronto, Pete Weston, on Weston’s Micron label (Lesser and Kingston 1984, 16). Most of the backing tracks for Sibbles’ solo albums were recorded in Jamaica with the Roots Radics band because Sibbles wanted an authentic Jamaican sound. Sibbles says, “[t]here’s no place in the world to record reggae like in Jamaica” (Burman 1987, 12).

A major exception in Sibbles’ Canadian oeuvre is 1982’s *Evidence* LP,⁵⁵ which is a fusion record and is a clear attempt to appeal to the so-called ‘crossover’ audience; Sibbles himself has said that *Evidence* can be thought of as an “Americanized” version of reggae (Kurylłowicz 1982, 69). The album features all white, Canadian musicians playing a fusion of rock and pop with subtle reggae influences, although there are a few reggae songs on the album. Overall *Evidence* is a fusion of 1980s pop with reggae influences, which is what Sibbles means by “Americanized reggae.” Sibbles wanted financial success but he also wanted to bring reggae to new audiences. During the twenty-plus years he lived and worked in Canada, Sibbles was always optimistic that reggae music would catch on in North America, and clearly he tried everything to make it work. Sibbles says, “I’d like to regganize America. ... Maybe they wouldn’t accept reggae the way it was – the way I had it. Having this new music will be more

⁵⁵ There is an analysis of the song “Let Music” from *Evidence* in chapter 5.

acceptable.” Referring to *Evidence* Sibles adds, “but it’s not really reggae” (Kurylłowicz 1982, 69). Purist reggae fans may scoff at the idea of a crossover record from a Jamaican music legend, but it was, and remains, an unfortunate reality that to survive as a musician in Canada, you need to play more than just reggae.

Evidence was recorded entirely in Canada with a Canadian producer and Canadian musicians, and was released by A&M Records. On *Evidence* Sibles’ then-manager Stuart Raven-Hill helped recruit several well known Canadian musicians including Murray McLauchlan, Kathryn Moses, David Bendeth and Bruce Cockburn and most of Cockburn’s band (Kurylłowicz 1982, 69). When the album was released, Sibles said that *Evidence* was something he’d “always wanted to do: something that’s been in me a long time” (Dorsey 1981, 7-8). Commenting on his use of an all-white band in recording and promoting *Evidence* Sibles says that, “reggae is trying to bring together all the people, not just the black people” (Johnson 1982, 61).

Evidence was a hybrid product of Jamaican and Canadian styles and is unique example of a Jamaican Canadian musical fusion. I wanted to verify this with Sibles so I asked him via email if *Evidence* was an album that he couldn’t, or wouldn’t, have done if he’d been living in Jamaica and he said,

No I wouldn’t have done an album like that in Jamaica. The musicians on that album were mainly Canadian with an understanding of that kind of music. I also wouldn’t have worked with people like Bruce Cockburn if I hadn’t come to Canada. I played bass on [Cockburn’s] “Wondering Where The Lions Are” and did backup vocals on it. I wouldn’t have had the opportunity to do that without being in Canada as I wouldn’t have known any of those people. (Sibles 2011)

Evidence can be thus be thought of as a uniquely Jamaican Canadian record as it is a fusion of pop and reggae. Sibles was very excited about the album at the time of its

release, but with the album's lack of critical and financial success, this excitement has waned. In 2004, Sibbles said, "[i]t was some other people's idea and I went along with it to see what happened, 'cause you see with music you never know, y'know. [...] But if I was in control it wouldn't be like that" (Peter I. 2004, 4).⁵⁶ Aside from reviews from the time of the album's release, reggae critics and writers do not look favourably upon *Evidence*, and Sibbles himself generally dismisses this album. He says that if he had been in control, it likely would have been a reggae album with subtle rock and pop influences, rather than the other way around. In calling *Evidence* "Americanized reggae," Sibbles is dismissing it, because as we have seen, this is a derogatory term for reggae fusion.

Even if Sibbles is not enthusiastic about *Evidence* today, the album was initially well received. Before there was a category for reggae at the Juno Awards, and before black people were recognized at the Junos in any real way (Young 2006, 191), Sibbles was nominated for the Most Promising Male Vocalist award for *Evidence*. That same year, Sibbles won five Canadian Black Music Awards (CBMA), including album of the year (*Evidence*), Top Vocalist, Top Bass Player, and Performer of the Year and was inducted into the Canadian Black Music Hall of Fame (Harry 1983c, 10). Despite a lack of crossover commercial success for *Evidence*, the number of awards Sibbles won in 1983 is astonishing. Over the years Sibbles has won a dozen CBMAs, a dozen Canadian Reggae Music Awards and in 1987 won his only Juno Award for Best Reggae/Calypso Recording (*Mean While*) ("Leroy Sibbles Official" 2012).

⁵⁶ This quote comes from an interview with by Jamaican interviewer, Peter I. Jamaicans and critics who favour roots reggae seem to have particularly harsh thing to say about *Evidence*, including Peter I, so Sibbles may have felt the need to dismiss his work to this interviewer.

While in Canada, Sibbles also wrote and performed the soundtrack and score for several films. This is an indication of his diverse talent, but also points out a reality of the reggae music business in Canada: one cannot survive purely through playing reggae music. One of the films he worked on was the National Film Board production *Home Feelings: Struggle for a Community* (1983), directed by Jennifer Hodge. This documentary film centers on the Jane and Finch area of Toronto, one of the most densely populated communities in Canada. The West Indian population is the focus of the film, so it is appropriate that the music is reggae and dub. Sibbles was commissioned to do the music for the film and was provided with a version of the film without the music (Sibbles 2011). Sibbles says that he “sat down along with others and came up with music that matched what the movie was about. It was fun” (Sibbles 2011). Since the film industry in Jamaica is almost non-existent, this is the kind of opportunity that likely would not have been available to Sibbles in Jamaica.

In 1994, Sibbles moved back to Jamaica, and over the years he has said quite a bit about the pros and cons of being a musician in Canada. In 2002, after eight years away from Canada he said, “I think that [moving to Canada] was the worst thing that I ever did, because I just went so far and couldn’t go no further there. I was trying my best to keep up as much as I could, but I lost touch with what was happening in Jamaica” (Van Pelt 2002, 31). Sibbles is referring to the lack of awareness of reggae in Canada and the lack of support the music receives in the mainstream. I recently emailed Sibbles about this comment, and asked him if he still felt this way about moving to Canada. He told me that “[t]he comment is not a reflection on the country, rather it is a reflection on where the best place to be for reggae music is. Reggae was not well known in Canada in the ‘70s

and I had moved away from the centre of reggae which is Jamaica” (Sibbles 2011). From lack of distribution and radio play, to Canadian-made reggae music not being taken seriously, Sibbles’ quote about moving to Canada being the worst thing he ever did is a comment on the many obstacles for reggae musicians to succeed in Canada, even for a superstar in that genre like Leroy Sibbles. Jamaican culture has not become a part of mainstream culture in Canada, which means that Jamaican Canadian reggae is still an underground genre, mainly associated with and supported by the Jamaican diaspora.

During his 23 years in Canada, Sibbles worked with most of the reggae musicians living in and visiting Toronto. Despite having worked in Jamaica with Jackie Mittoo for years, Sibbles says they did not have a working relationship in Canada, although they remained friends until Mittoo’s death in 1990 (Sibbles 2011). I haven’t found an answer as to why Sibbles and Mittoo didn’t work together in Canada; they each had their own bands and were both recording in Canada and Jamaica, and, for Mittoo, England as well, so perhaps they did not have an opportunity to collaborate.

In 1991, Sibbles already had plans to move back to Jamaica (Howell 1991, 3), although he enjoyed his time in Toronto. An interviewer once asked Sibbles what he has given to Toronto, and he said, “[a] greater insight into reggae music and a chance to hear more of it.” Toronto, meanwhile, gave him “a nice place to live” (Quill 1986, 12). Sibbles certainly did bring reggae to Toronto in a major way, as he was one of the most important musicians in that city for years. Although reggae is not a major genre in Canada, Sibbles’ legacy in that country is as a reggae pioneer. Without his years of hard work, Canadian reggae might be completely unknown. Sibbles still comes to Toronto at least once a year, and plays other Canadian cities as well (including Edmonton and Calgary in December

2011) (Sibbles 2011). Sibbles still has business ties to Canada, which is where his manager lives and where his CDs are distributed from, making him a transnational artist. Currently Sibbles lives in Kingston, Jamaica where he is still an active performing and recording artist.

5. MESSENJAH

Messenjah are likely the most famous Jamaican Canadian reggae band of the 1980s, and all the members are Jamaican-born. The band released two albums with a major label and seven altogether, toured extensively across North America and even appeared in the major Hollywood film *Cocktail* (1988). Although their music is definitely reggae, there are also some obvious rock and pop elements in their music, making Messenjäh a fusion reggae band. Over the years, their albums became more and more fusion-oriented. After Ishan People, Messenjäh were the next major Jamaican Canadian reggae band. Messenjäh were huge in the 1980s and their influence is still felt today through all the younger musicians they inspired or helped in their career.

Messenjah are a Jamaican Canadian reggae group that formed in Kitchener, Ontario in 1980, but were later based out of Toronto. Most of the members grew up in Kitchener, which is why they started their career in that city. Only a few years after their formation, they were described as Canada's "best-known reggae band" ("Messenjah: Session" 1984, 30). Messenjäh are generally recognized as the first Canadian reggae band signed to a major label (WEA, 1983) (Harry 1984, 14), although Toronto's Ishan People were signed to medium-sized label GRT in 1976. The three founding members are Errol Blackwood (vocals, bass), Raymond Ruddock (drums) and Rupert "Ojiji" Harvey (guitar,

vocals, alto saxophone); two other early members were Eric Walsh (guitar) and Hal Duggan (keyboards). Since Harvey was the leader of this band for the longest time period, I will focus on the evolution of his career, including some of the Jamaican Canadian bands he was with prior to forming Messenjah.

Rupert Harvey, who was born in Clarendon Parish, Jamaica on February 9, 1955 and came to Kitchener, Ontario with his family at age 11, has been a musician since he was a teenager. When he was only 16, he played with Jamaican star Dennis Brown and others (Harvey 2011), as hiring local Jamaican bands was a standard practice for touring Jamaican singers. Harvey says it was a great learning experience, but that in those situations, “you better be good because these guys were not patient. [...] Lots of cussing going on” (Harvey 2011). His first permanent gig was playing guitar with one of the first R&B groups to tour in Canada, the Jamaican band the Cougars (“Rupert” 2011). The Cougars were playing at the Jolly Roger Hotel Bar in Thunder Bay in Northern Ontario, and when they fired their guitar player, they needed someone fast. Harvey, at 17, got a phone call to his house in Kitchener and when he asked when they wanted him to play, he was told, “tonight.” Harvey says, “I never heard a single one of the songs of course. I literally flew into town early and got together with Jackie Mittoo in his hotel room and just started scribbling down on a piece of paper, writing down all the chord changes and praying to God I wasn’t going to screw up and get fired!” (Harvey 2011). He says he learned twenty songs that day. All the members of the Cougars were Jamaican, so in addition to R&B covers, they played reggae versions of popular R&B songs by groups like the Stylistics and the O’Jays (Harvey 2011). Reggae legend Jackie Mittoo was a mentor to Harvey; he called Mittoo “my musical godfather” (Harvey 2011). Mittoo

taught Harvey about the music scene in Canada and brought him to his first recording session in the early 1970s, where Harvey recorded some rhythm guitar for Mittoo's solo projects (Harvey 2011). This kind of relationship is common in Jamaican Canadian music, as older musicians pass on their knowledge and connections to younger musicians. Mittoo had this kind of relationship with many musicians, as did Harvey, who shared his knowledge with the next generation, including keyboard player Jason Wilson.

Immediately after playing with the Cougars, at age 17, Harvey played with Toronto-based soul/funk/disco group Crack of Dawn, the first black band signed to a major label in Canada (Columbia) (Collins 1988, C16). This group's members were all Jamaican-born, including Rupert's brother Carl Harvey and Glen Ricketts (Waxman 1976, 24), so they also included some reggae in their sets (Harvey 2011).⁵⁷ Harvey was with the Cougars and Crack of Dawn in 1971 and 1972, before Bob Marley's international breakthrough in the mid-1970s, so for their non-Jamaican audiences it would likely have been the first time they heard reggae. Harvey says the crowd would be "totally shocked," although he notes that this was just on the brink of when R&B artists started moving into reggae territory, as Stevie Wonder came out with "Boogie On Reggae Woman" shortly afterward, in 1974 (Harvey 2011).

Another founder of Messenjah is Errol Blackwood who was born in Accompong, Jamaica c.1958 and moved to Kitchener, Ontario in 1974 at the age of 16 to be with his family members (Levesque 1995, D2). Blackwood learned to play bass in Canada and his first serious band was Messenjah. After leaving that band in 1986, Blackwood released a

⁵⁷ Crack of Dawn is planning a reunion tour for spring and summer 2012 (Harvey 2011).

few solo albums, and formed a band called Injah with former Messenjah drummer Ray Ruddock playing organ and piano.

The first Messenjah album, *Rock You High*, was released in 1982 and sold 4000 copies as an independent release (Lacey 1983, 6); it was then reissued by WEA in 1983.⁵⁸ *Rock You High* was recorded at Circle Sound in San Diego, California, because as Harvey says, “[w]e kind of figured things out that if you want to be more respected and recognized internationally man, you gotta leave your own [country]” (Harvey 2011). The band’s second album, *Jam Session* (1984) was recorded live in Toronto and features the addition of Tony King on percussion. Harvey refers to these first two albums as the original Messenjah sound (Harvey 2011). These two albums are a fusion of reggae with subtle rock influences, and are not overly pop-oriented. Their following albums were even more fusion-oriented and pop sounding, with the reggae influences becoming less obvious.

After releasing *Jam Session*, Messenjah left Canada to settle in San Diego for just over one year, where they became local favourites (Collins 1988, C15). Upon their return to Canada in 1985, Messenjah was based out of Toronto (Miller 1992, 850). In 1986, Harvey became bandleader when Blackwood left to pursue a solo career (Jackson 1994, 197); Blackwood was in fact more of a purist than the rest, as he wanted to play more roots reggae and less fusion, so it made sense for him to leave (Collins 1988, C16). After a few lineup changes over the next few years, the band’s sixth album, *Catch De Vibe* (1997), won a Juno Award for Best Reggae Recording in 1998.

⁵⁸ I do not have sales figures for the rerelease, but it was high enough for WEA to release a second Messenjah album. See chapter 5 for an analysis of a song from *Rock You High*.

Messenjah's sound is a distinct blend of reggae with some rock elements added, which results in a fusion. Harvey says, "[t]he bottom of our music is roots, but the overtones, melodically and in the arrangements, are progressive. It could be North American, or English – as opposed to the Jamaican pure roots sound" (Harry 1984, 16). In the mid-1980s, Harvey said it was the band's choice to play a more commercial, fusion style, and not due to pressure from their label, WEA (Harry 1984, 16). In 1988 however, after Messenjah was no longer signed to WEA, Harvey said that the label had in fact ask them "to be less political and more commercial. But," he says, "we reached a compromise and I must admit it wasn't painful for the band" (Quill 1988, 1). According to Harvey, the label never explicitly asked for them to change lyrics, but did pressure the band to come up with something radio-friendly in terms of lyrics and music (Harvey 2011). Essentially, this means a style of music that augments straight reggae by combining other styles and sounds. It seems this came naturally to the band anyway, as many of their songs are catchy and a fusion of genres. WEA did demonstrate a certain level of trust in the band, paying for them to fly to California to record, and allowing Harvey to self-produce their first two albums (Harvey 2011). This is likely because Harvey had previously produced two of his solo albums as well as a Crack of Dawn album, although with another label.

Messenjah has done several extensive tours across Canada and the United States, where they are "treated like an international band," which for reggae bands means a higher level of respect (Harry 1984, 16). Messenjah toured so much that they were considered a visiting band even in their hometown. Since reggae in North America is thought of as a genre that comes from elsewhere (Jamaica), local Canadian reggae bands,

even all-Jamaican ones, are not given the same respect as visiting bands; Messenjah were an exception, and were very well respected in North America. During Messenjah's peak in the mid-1980s, the band played a few shows in Kingston, Jamaica, including that country's number one reggae festival, Reggae Sunsplash in 1984 (Stoute 1984, 43) and 1985 (Miller 1992, 850). Harvey remembers an early show in Jamaica and says "we were threatened before we went on stage that we better be good! [...] After we do the set at this one place this guy comes up and apologized and says, 'man you play some wicked roots man!'" (Harvey 2011). Acceptance in Kingston, the reggae capital of the world, is always a positive thing for any reggae band.

Messenjah was an extremely busy and hard-working band for most of the 1980s; Harvey says they were a full-time band, that is, they practiced eight hours per day, five or six days per week (Harvey 2011). He says, "we were very disciplined; we weren't distracted by anything. That's what we wanted to do and that's what we did for years and years" (Harvey 2011). After the release of their first album, they were for the most part, away from the Toronto scene. "We didn't have too much time to hang out. ... We spent a lot of time on the road. Most of our time wasn't even in Canada; most of our time was on the West Coast, California, [and] between Seattle and Chicago. We used to call ourselves road hogs because we'd be out there for like months and months. I remember doing 45 cities in [...] 48 days" (Harvey 2011).

The band played with many popular Jamaican stars, including Burning Spear at the Music Hall in Toronto (Stoute 1984, 43). This gig in particular was a big opportunity to play for Toronto roots reggae fans who generally weren't the most supportive of the group because of their fusion style. Messenjah actually did a mini tour with Burning

Spear, playing in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City, as well as the Reggae on the River festival in California (Harvey 2011). In 1990, Messenjah played for Nelson Mandela at Queen's Park, Toronto, on his first visit to Canada after his release from prison. Harvey's most memorable performance however, was playing for Nelson Mandela at the then-Skydome (now Rogers Centre) in Toronto in 1998 (Harvey 2011). The band was requested to play because they had done some charity and fundraising work for the ANC (African National Congress) in North America. As one of the most famous black Canadian bands, Messenjah were interested in promoting a racism-free society, a topic they explore in the lyrics of several songs. The band was honoured to play for Nelson Mandela, because he was someone who represented anti-apartheid and respect for all people, regardless of race.

Another career highlight for Messenjah was performing in the film *Cocktail* (1988), starring Tom Cruise. Harvey says the band was "originally just cast to be extras, faking behind this guy named Leroy Gibbons, who they'd brought over from England" (Collins 1988, C16). After reading about Messenjah in the *Toronto Star*, however, director Roger Donaldson added the group and a live performance of one of their songs ("Crazy") to the film – a truly big break for any reggae band. Their scene was shot at Lee's Palace in Toronto (Collins 1988, C16). Playing in a Tom Cruise film gave the band a prestigious level of exposure, and likely introduced them to many new listeners.

Looking back on his career, Harvey feels that Messenjah were "pioneers" in getting reggae heard in new parts of Canada, and in opening up the market (Harvey 2011). He says that when they were in the middle of Canada, in places like Saskatchewan, locals would come out simply because they'd never seen people with

dreadlocks (Harvey 2011). After the initial fascination wore off, however, the band was still selling out shows all over the country and in the United States. He says they got a positive response all around, but interestingly, the most common question was about how to make dreadlocks. It seems that for some people, a group of black men with dreadlocks holds endless fascination, and may overshadow the music.

Currently, the first four Messenjah records are unavailable on CD because, as Harvey says, Warner Brothers are “giving us a hard time in acquiring the masters. They’re not being nice about it at all” (Harvey 2011). All Messenjah members are still active musicians and Harvey has a band called Roots Remedy with his brother Carl Harvey (former Studio One guitarist and guitarist for Toots and the Maytals for over 30 years), Messenjah drummer Odel Johnson and Sattalites saxophonist Rick Morrison (Harvey 2011).

Messenjah, which was active from the early 1980s to the early 2000s, will always be remembered and regarded as one of the top Jamaican Canadian reggae bands. With their blend of reggae and rock styles, Messenjah made fusion music that appealed to a wide audience. They brought reggae music to new places all over North America and showed that a Canadian reggae band can attract attention from a major record label and from Hollywood.

6. THE SATTALITES

The Sattalites are another Jamaican Canadian reggae band that formed in the 1980s, although they are unique as the first major interracial Canadian reggae band.⁵⁹ Some members are black, Jamaican-born, while others are white and Canadian-born; this blend of backgrounds can be heard in their music, which is a definite fusion of reggae and pop. The Sattalites had a goal, like many reggae groups in Canada, which was to bring reggae to a wider audience. The band achieved this by playing familiar cover songs in a reggae style, by writing original songs with catchy lyrics and melodies, through six albums and five music videos and through their reggae music school.

The formation of the Sattalites as a band is an interesting story: the first incarnation of the Sattalites was as a two-piece horn section called the Sattalite Horns, made up of Jamaican-born Jo Jo Bennett on flugelhorn and Torontonian Fergus Hambleton on saxophone. This duo played with a variety of touring Jamaican reggae groups and singers, as well as local acts such as Leroy Sibbles (Flohil 1988, 10). Soon after, Bennett and Hambleton formed the Sattalites as a band in their own right.

Sattalites' co-founder Jo Jo Bennett was born in 1940 in Kingston, Jamaica and studied the trumpet between the ages of 10 and 16 (Infantry 2003, 3) at the infamous Alpha Boys School in Jamaica, which was a training ground for many of the top brass players in the ska era. From there he played with Byron Lee and the Dragonaires in Jamaica for 6 years (Flohil 1988, 12), touring all over the Caribbean and North America in 1965 and 1966 (*The Sattalites* 2007). In 1967 they came to Montreal for Expo 67

⁵⁹ In the late 1970s, Earth, Roots and Water had one white member, but he was not lead vocalist like Hambleton, and he was the only non-Jamaican. Also, Earth Roots and Water was primarily the house band at Summer Sound rather than a touring group with multiple albums like the Sattalites.

(Howes 2006a), after which Bennett left the group and stayed in Canada permanently. He moved to Toronto and performed with the band the Cougars for less than a year, before forming his own group, Jo Jo and the Fugitives (Howes 2006a). Bennett, who had been a talent scout and operator of the small Jamaican music label, Fugitive, brought over several musicians from Montego Bay to join his band, including guitarist Wayne McGhie (Howes 2006a). Jo Jo and the Fugitives were the house band at the West Indian Federation (WIF) Club in Toronto in the late 1960s (Howes 2006c), although when Bennett briefly moved back to Jamaica in 1969 the band broke up (Howes 2006a). Bennett has been playing reggae music in Canada since the 1960s and is regarded as the “guru” of the Sattalites (Flohil 1988, 12), and the godfather of Canadian reggae, perhaps because he has been playing reggae in Canada for almost fifty years!

The other Sattalites co-founder is saxophonist, guitarist and singer Fergus Hambleton, who was born in 1950 in Toronto and is white. Hambleton started playing reggae relatively late, although he previously played with several rock bands in Toronto starting in 1967 (Flohil 1988, 10), including A Passing Fancy. Around this time he also released a few solo albums with Capitol Records (Hambleton 2012). Hambleton had several reggae gigs in the 1970s, first as a saxophonist with touring singers from Jamaica including the late Sugar Minott, and then as a guitar player for Leroy Sibbles’ band (Hambleton 2012). He later met Bennett and formed the Sattalite Horns (Flohil 1988, 10).

In 1980, Bennett, Hambleton and two other horn players, Nathan Breckenridge on trumpet and Symo (last name unknown) on trombone, started the Sattalite Music School, which was located at 1475 Eglinton Avenue West near Winona Drive in Toronto (“Sattalite Music” 1983-4, 11). The band’s name also comes from the music school,

which is a play on the name of the great Jamaican ska group, the Skattalites. Instead of 'Skatta,' they chose Satta, which according to Bennett means "just, chill out, you know" (Kastner 1996, 46). Another possible interpretation is that the Sattalites, who are based in Toronto, are part of the satellite community of Jamaicans and reggae musicians in that city.

The Sattalite Music School was created as a way to pass on knowledge of reggae music (Hambleton 2012). The passing on of knowledge is a common practice in Jamaica and with Jamaican musicians in Canada. Since the goal of many of these musicians is to introduce reggae music to new people, a reggae music school is a great way to achieve that goal. Hambleton says that, "Jamaican musicians believe in a hierarchy. Young players respect older ones and the older ones pass on their skills to the new players" (Flohil 1988, 12). Jo Jo Bennett was the main teacher at this music school, where professional musicians came to learn how to play in a reggae style, paying \$5 per lesson (Kastner 1996, 46), while kids took lessons for free. This setup, with a mix of children and professional non-reggae musicians as students, meant that it was rather informal. Students at this informal school, both adults and talented kids, got to perform at places like the Isabella Hotel (Flohil 1988, 12), and eventually, the Sattalites as a band were formed out of these sessions. Hambleton says that, "some of the players we had didn't cut it, but they all learned, and soon, almost by accident, we formed a regular, real, band" (Flohil 1988, 12). Sattalites members Neville Francis and Bruce Robinson both started at the Sattalite Music School (Kastner 1996, 46). After the band took off in the early 1980s, the music school closed, although in the mid-1990s it reopened with the same goal: to spread reggae knowledge (Kastner 1996, 46, 49).

Most of the band's first album, *Sattalites* (1985) was recorded in Kingston, Jamaica and features Jamaican musicians like Toots Hibbert (of Toots and the Maytals), Lloyd Parks, and some of the top reggae session musicians including Sly Dunbar (drums) and Robbie Shakespeare (bass). When a record company executive saw that the infamous duo Sly and Robbie had played on the album, his response was, "these guys are playing with everybody these days, aren't they?" (Lacey 1985, 5) Hambleton says this is a "really typical Canadian putdown. [...] You know how it works: Sly and Robbie play with Bob Dylan, Rolling Stones, Mick Jagger and Grace Jones. So if they're playing with a Canadian band, it couldn't possibly be because they also consider them good, could it? I can tell you one thing, it wasn't for the money. We paid Jamaican studio rates, which are embarrassingly low" (Lacey 1985, 5). All of these top Jamaican musicians played on the record simply because "Jo Jo asked them to, and they respect him, so they agreed" (Lacey 1985, 5). The album got a good review in Kingston, Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner* newspaper and the song "Wild" was released there as a single and played on the radio (Lacey 1985, 5).

The *Sattalites* were the first Canadian band to be invited to play at Reggae Sunsplash in Jamaica ("Sattalites Bio" 2011), which was a career highlight for Bennett (*The Sattalites* 2007). He says, "[a]s far as I am concerned, the best moment for me is when the *Sattalites* returned to Jamaica to perform at Reggae Sunsplash, 1990. That's the best moment for me as far as the *Sattalites* is concerned. It was fantastic, really; it was great. ... Returning back there with such a good band, coming from Canada, playing reggae music, you know, with white and blackie, dreadlocks, baldhead, mix up. The show was great, girl, fantastic" (*The Sattalites* 2007). Bennett says when he returns to

Jamaica people still ask him about the white man (Hambleton) who can sing reggae like the late Jamaican star Gregory Isaacs (*The Sattalites* 2007).

Hambleton says that the Sattalites' mix of Jamaican- and Canadian-born members was no problem and that "playing together, there were more commonalities than not. [...] [T]here was a commonality of a lot of songs we knew from the American Hit Parade, so yeah I think [the] song ["Understanding"] says more about the fact that we all shared many of the same things" (Hambleton 2012). The Sattalites are a blend of Jamaican and Canadian influences, although Hambleton couldn't put his finger on exactly what the mix might be. He suggests somewhat humourously, "Toronto Maple Leafs fans and [reggae] music fans at the same time" (Hambleton 2012). The blend of Jamaican and Canadian influences is also evident in their music, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

Over thirty-plus years together, the Sattalites have won many awards including two Juno Awards: Best Reggae/Calypso Recording in 1990 for "Too Late to Turn Back Now" (from *Miracles*) and Best Reggae Recording in 1996 for the album *Now and Forever*. Hambleton believes that the Sattalites' blend of reggae rhythms and melodic pop vocals could only have happened in Canada. "Without really thinking about it, we've achieved a genuine cross-cultural synthesis, something that's a reflection of Canada's ethnic mix" (Quill 1987b, 10). The Sattalites continue to make music together, although these days, much more sporadically. When asked about calling it quits, Bennett responded: "Retire? I want to die onstage" (*The Sattalites* 2007). These days Bennett, Hambleton and a rotating cast that includes several Sattalites members perform almost every Tuesday at the Orbit Room on College Street West in Toronto, where they continue

to play reggae for new audiences and old fans alike. With their blend of pop and reggae, the Sattalites have and continue to introduce reggae to many new listeners.

7. LILLIAN ALLEN

As one of the world's leading figures in dub poetry, Jamaican Canadian Lillian Allen was and is a pioneer in that medium, which is both a literary and musical genre. Since the early 1980s, Allen has published eleven books of poetry, released nine albums and has performed extensively in North America, the Caribbean and Europe (Habekost 1992, 236). Dub poetry forms a large part of Jamaican Canadian artistic culture, and Allen has won two Juno awards. Musically, Allen's dub poetry is a fusion of reggae and spoken word poetry with rock and pop elements, although her expressive half sung, half spoken vocal delivery is uniquely dub poetry. In Canada, and perhaps worldwide, Allen is the most prominent figure on the dub poetry scene (Habekost 1993b, 33).

Lillian Allen was born in Spanish Town, Jamaica on February 5, 1951 and after a brief stay in Kitchener, Ontario, moved to New York City for school in 1969 at age 17, where she lived for four years (Doran 1987, 30). In 1974 she moved permanently to Toronto where she has lived ever since. Influenced by pre-dub poet Oku Onuora after meeting him in Cuba in 1978, Allen consciously shifted her work towards the medium of dub poetry around this time (Dawes 2001, 150). She had always been interested in writing, but this gave her a focus in a medium that she helped to pioneer, and has worked in for over thirty years. In the early 1980s, Allen also co-wrote lyrics for the Jamaican Canadian reggae band Truths and Rights.

Allen, Clifton Joseph and Devon Haughton, working together under the name De Dub Poets, released a self-titled EP in 1983. De Dub Poets are members of the League of Canadian Poets, although they were initially denied membership after being told they were performers, and not poets (Dafoe 1988, 23). Their witty response was, “[w]hat do you think we perform, newspaper articles?” (Allen 1987, 14) There are several reasons for the initial hesitation in granting De Dub Poets membership, but Allen says one is that dub poetry “comes from outside the confines of ‘print-bound’ culture and cannot be assessed by traditional academic standards, nor by the values of white, middle-class academics” (1987, 14). This made their work difficult to classify, but the League finally agreed that dub poetry is poetry and gave them membership.

Allen’s first solo album, *Revolutionary Tea Party* won the 1986 Juno award in the reggae/calypso category. Produced by Parachute Club’s Billy Bryans, the album also features Bryans on drums, and that band’s guitarist Dave Gray and bassist Terry Lewis and Jamaican Canadian percussionist Quammie Williams (Walker 1987, 36). Allen raised \$25,000 –including \$7,000 of her personal savings – to record the album (Walker 1987, 36). Klive Walker wrote that *Revolutionary Tea Party* “is a marker that identifies the blossoming of dub poetry as a prominent component of the ‘80s reggae scene in Canada” (2005, 168). Her second album, *Conditions Critical* (1988) also won a Juno award, but despite the Juno awards and critical success, the albums found no major distributors, and the job was left to Allen herself (Walker 1987, 37). Both albums were released and distributed through Allen’s own label, Verse to Vinyl. As mentioned in chapter 3, initially there were some negative reactions to Allen’s Juno wins because some reggae

musicians didn't think of dub poetry as reggae. That seems to be in the past now, as dub poets and dub poetry are a definite part of the Jamaican Canadian music scene.

Allen's music is a fusion of Jamaican and Canadian influences and is overtly political, dealing with women's rights and racial and classist issues. Allen says, "as a black person, I refuse to accept that black people are inferior; as a woman, I refuse to accept that women are inferior; as a working person I refuse to accept that those who work are inferior to the people they work for. [...] I'm not happy with the world, and I'd like to see a change, but I don't think I'm just a protest poet" (Dafoe 1988, 23). Allen has written and sung about many social issues that affect visible minorities, women and immigrants and she is a major, active proponent of equal rights for all people.

Dub poetry is one of the most distinct forms of Jamaican Canadian music and literature and Lillian Allen is the most important and influential dub poet. Jamaican Canadian music writer Klive Walker wrote that "Lillian Allen will certainly go down in the annals of Canadian popular music as being a key figure in establishing a distinctly Canadian brand of reggae" (1987, 36). Clearly Lillian Allen and dub poetry are significant parts of the Jamaican Canadian music and literary scenes. Currently Allen is a tenured faculty member at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto where she teaches creative writing.

* * * * *

All of the artists featured in this chapter have made significant contributions to the Jamaican Canadian music scene in Toronto and they were all pioneers who helped to make Toronto a hotbed of Jamaican music. These musicians faced many obstacles in trying to promote a relatively unknown style of music, and they each had varying degrees of success. Some, like Willi Williams, were adamant about playing roots reggae music, while others changed the music to suit audiences in Toronto, through fusions of reggae with other genres. Others work in another fusion genre: dub poetry. Aside from recording, these musicians were important in other ways as well: some owned record stores or record labels, some worked in film and some taught reggae. One thing that is certain is that all of these musicians brought Jamaican music to places it had not been before, and their hard work is a major reason that Jamaican Canadian music is such a rich area to study.

CHAPTER 5. EXAMINING NINE JAMAICAN CANADIAN SONGS⁶⁰

There are several reasons for examining a selection of Jamaican Canadian songs from the 1970s and 1980s. This music is the basis for all of the issues, infrastructure and biographies in this thesis and in order to discuss music in a detailed way, one has to listen to it. By looking at the sounds, lyrics, themes and musical tropes of these songs, we can gain a greater understanding of Jamaican Canadian culture. This sample of songs will demonstrate the wide variety of styles to be found in Jamaican Canadian music. Some songs are recorded in a Jamaican roots reggae style, while others are a fusion of Jamaican and Canadian/North American musical styles and influences; these styles are not polar opposites and there is a whole spectrum of musics between them. Only through listening closely to these songs can these differences be illustrated. This analysis will demonstrate the variety and breadth of musical styles created by Jamaican Canadians, highlighting the contributions of the individuals involved in their creation. It is important to state that my musical and lyrical examinations of these songs are not the only possible interpretation; all of these songs are subject to other interpretations.

In this chapter I examine a wide variety of styles and genres of Jamaican Canadian songs from 1972 to 1986. The first three examples were recorded to sound like Jamaican recordings: there are two roots reggae examples (Ishan People's "Tough, Tight & Dread" and Stranger Cole's "No More Fussing and Fighting"); and one example of roots reggae/dub (Noel Ellis' "Memories"). The next five examples represent the wide variety of reggae fusion genres, including classical pop reggae (Jackie Mittoo's

⁶⁰ See Appendix for complete lyrics and/or structures of songs.

“Someday Soon”); a song that mixes reggae with several genres (Truths and Rights’ “Metro’s No. 1 Problem”); a pop song with subtle reggae influences (Leroy Sibbles’ “Let Music”); reggae rock (Messenjah’s “Arrested”); and reggae pop (the Sattalites’ “She Loves You”). The final song is an example of dub poetry (Lillian Allen’s “I Fight Back”), and although this genre is a type of reggae fusion, it is also a distinct genre, which takes influences from reggae and rock. Within these subdivisions, songs are presented in chronological order. I purposely chose these selections because each song highlights an aspect of the diversity of styles and influences, both musically and lyrically, of Jamaican Canadian music from the 1970s and 1980s.

Since I will refer to roots reggae, reggae fusion and dub poetry throughout this chapter, a reiteration of some musical features of each may be in order. Roots reggae features include a heavy, syncopated bass; an offbeat, clean, trebly guitar played in a very rhythmic way, almost like a drum accenting the offbeat; and a loud hi hat cymbal. In reggae music the bass drum typically plays on the second and fourth beats while in rock, R&B and other North American styles, the bass drum plays on the first and third beats while the snare plays on the second and fourth beats. This reversal is an important sonic marker of reggae. The structure or form of roots reggae songs is often quite simple with verses and choruses, often but not always, with the same chords throughout the song. Reggae fusions have characteristics from both reggae and whatever genre or style it is being fused with; generally there will be some recognizable elements from each. Finally, dub poetry, which is clearly related to reggae, is its own distinct fusion genre. Musically there are reggae, rock and pop influences, while the lyrics are sung or spoken in Jamaican patois with song topics often relating to local issues.

There are some lyrical elements that are common in reggae which appear in some of these songs. Rastafarians often use the word ‘I’ to replace ‘me,’ while ‘we’ becomes ‘I and I.’ As mentioned in the introduction, the syllable ‘I’ also often replaces other syllables, such as ‘Iration’ (creation), ‘Isel’ (myself) and ‘Ital food’ (vital). Other terms commonly used by Rastafarians and reggae musicians include Babylon, which can refer to systems and societies of oppression (Barrow and Dalton 2004, 145). Note that even non-Rastafarian reggae musicians use these terms and they have become lyrical reggae tropes. Messages of peace and unity are common themes in reggae, and they are found in several of these songs. Use of Jamaican patois is a sonic marker of roots reggae and thicker patois is generally considered more ‘roots.’

Almost none of these songs are commercially available: in many cases I had to find old records and copy them to MP3. Only one of these songs (Lillian Allen’s “I Fight Back”) has been analyzed in a publication (Habekost 1993b, 148-58), which I draw on to contextualize this examination; there are no other direct studies to draw on for these songs. From the roots reggae style, to the variety of reggae fusions, including dub poetry, these nine songs encapsulate most of the major trends and musicians in Jamaican Canadian music from the 1970s and 1980s.⁶¹

⁶¹ I could have easily chosen another twenty songs to look at, but because of the space constraints of this thesis, nine examples will have to suffice. Although these songs represent the stylistic variety to be found in this time and place, there are several musicians whose work I would have liked to showcase, including Willi Williams, Leroy Brown, Ernie Smith, Carlene Davis, Earth, Roots and Water, Wayne McGhie, Super 8 Corporation, Chalawa, 20th Century Rebels, Bloodfire, Kali and Dub, Horace Faith, R Zee Jackson, Lazo, Ras Lee and Roots Movement, Nana McLean, Adrian Miller, and solo work by Errol Blackwood, Rupert Harvey and Jo Jo Bennett.

1. ISHAN PEOPLE – “TOUGH, TIGHT & DREAD” FROM *ROOTS* (1976, GRT)

Ishan People were pioneers in bringing reggae music to a non-Jamaican audience in Canada, primarily through extensive touring and two mid-1970s LPs. Ishan People were the first major reggae band in Canada and were one of the first bands to record roots reggae in Canada, although with some Canadian references. Ishan People were part of a “generation of Caribbean-Canadian reggae performers with a different mentality embraced the approach of adapting reggae’s lyrical and rhythmic framework so that it took into account the musical environment and social issues confronting Blacks in Canada” (Walker 2005, 159). Songs about life in Canada began to emerge at this time, and “Tough, Tight & Dread” is an example of roots reggae with lyrical references to life as an immigrant in a new country.

This is the first track from the first Ishan People album, *Roots* (1976), and it starts out with thirty-five seconds of a few band members laughing and speaking in thick Jamaican patois; this would be mostly incomprehensible to people unfamiliar with Jamaican patois.⁶² For an album made and marketed in Canada, this may be an announcement to the country that Jamaicans, their culture and music are here to stay. Even the title of the song, “Tough, Tight & Dread,” suggests that Ishan People are the real deal, as ‘dread’ in a reggae song implies Jamaicanness and Rastafarianism to reggae fans or anyone who knows about Jamaican culture. The other definition of dread, fear or reluctance, also fits in with the themes of this song. ‘Tough’ could refer to a variety of things including their toughness as minorities in Canada or minorities in the music industry as both black people and reggae musicians. ‘Tight’ is a musical term of

⁶² I was able to transcribe most of it (See Appendix), but they don’t seem to be speaking about anything in particular. The purpose may be in the *sound* of their speech, which marks these musicians as Jamaican.

endearment, and if a band is tight, that means they are really good and in synch with one another. 'Tight' could also be used to encourage Jamaican Canadians to work together in the face of oppression in Toronto.

Musically, "Tough, Tight & Dread" is characteristic of the roots reggae genre and features a lineup of drums, bass guitar, guitar, two percussionists, organ, electric piano, and vocals. The bass drum accents beats two and four, while the bass guitar plays in a syncopated style with lots of space between notes. The electric guitar accents the offbeat while the percussionists with their two hand drums play syncopated rhythms reminiscent of Nyabinghi drumming, which is the traditional music of Rastafarians, and was described in the introduction section describing general features of reggae. Johnny Osbourne sings the vocals with a slight Jamaican accent, and there is a call and response between him and the rest of the group who sing harmony at some points. There is also some call and response between the vocals and the organ and electric piano both melodically and rhythmically; generally these instruments play minimally throughout the song. All of the instruments in "Tough, Tight & Dread" are played in a typical roots reggae fashion.

The lyrics of the song could refer to Jamaican or Caribbean life in Toronto, although they also apply to any new immigrant to Canada or elsewhere. "They promised us jobs/ So we can earn our bread/ Buy a place to lay our heads/ And keep our family fed" are lyrics from the first verse and refer to life as an immigrant in a new country. In this case, 'they' refers to a variety of things: one is Canada, or even the ideal that if you come to Canada you will find a job. 'They' may also refer to Jamaicans Canadians inviting Jamaicans to join them in Canada, with the promise of a better life. 'They' is also

somewhat ambiguous and could simply refer to Canadian expectations of a good, fulfilling life. These 'promises' were not fulfilled for many immigrants, which is who the song is about.

The chorus then describes the result of not having a job or money: "Them forcing innocent people/ In order to survive/ To go on out and steal." Society is referred to as Uncle Fester, the bad humoured, bald, and hunched over character with sunken eyes from *The Addams Family* TV series. He is a metaphor for oppressors in Canada, and a reference to him would be extremely unlikely in Jamaica. Although *The Addams Family* is an American TV series, in Canada, American TV dominates, so Jamaican Canadians would understand this kind of reference. Finally, in the second verse, the lyrics refer to the ideal life of a Jamaican immigrant unfulfilled: "They promised us a club/ Where we can wine and rub/ Yet no one skanking/ No one wine." Wine, rub, and skank are all words for, or types of Jamaican dance. These lines specifically refer to Jamaicans being unable to express themselves, and when read as lyrics from a Jamaican Canadian band, it is about Jamaican culture being stifled in Canada. Although there are no specific markers of Toronto in this song, the context of where this album was released and marketed (Canada) makes my interpretation valid.

"Tough, Tight & Dread" is an example of Jamaican style roots reggae but with lyrics about unfulfilled dreams in a new country. The rest of this album depicts other aspects of Jamaican life in the diaspora, including references to waiting for the subway (not train) and recordings of sounds from Toronto's streets. References to life in a new country, likely referring to Canada, combined with Jamaican style roots reggae is a great way to introduce reggae to new audiences, which was the goal of Ishan People.

2. STRANGER COLE – “NO MORE FUSSING AND FIGHTING” FROM *THE PATRIOT* (1982, STRANGER COLE RECORDS)

Stranger Cole was a major star singer in Jamaican before coming to Toronto and is a big figure in the Jamaican Canadian music scene. Cole moved to Toronto in 1973 and in 1978 he opened a record shop called Roots Records in the Kensington Market area of Toronto (*Rocksteady* 2010). He started his own record label, Stranger Cole Records, he recorded extensively, and was inducted into the Canadian Black Music Awards Hall of Fame in 1983 (Harry 1983a, 16).

“No More Fussing and Fighting” is about unity amongst Jamaican diasporic communities, but because the song is done in a roots reggae style, and because of lyrical references, it is clear that he is appealing specifically to the Jamaican population. As Cole lives and works in Toronto, it is likely he was thinking of the Jamaican diaspora in Toronto when singing this song, but because there are no specific references to Canada, the song could also refer to other Jamaican diasporic populations, a possible attempt to appeal to a non-country specific audience outside of Jamaica.

Musically, this song has all the features of a typical, Jamaican-recorded roots reggae song including a loud and syncopated bass line. There is a prominent organ part in the song, which plays around the vocal line, and a piano, which accents the offbeat with one of the electric guitars; the other plays short lead lines with a wah wah effect pedal, which is a common use of lead guitar in reggae. The hi hat cymbal is mixed very loudly and plays a steady sixteenth note pattern: as mentioned earlier, a loud hi hat is also common in reggae. Overall the song features an unvarying, hypnotic rhythm, which is the same between the verse and chorus, another common feature of roots reggae.

This song is a plea to stop the violence among the Jamaican diasporic community. In the first verse, Cole sings, “We must live in unity/ We’re far away from home/ Sweet home.” In the third verse, Cole repeats the following lines several times, indicating how meaningful they are to him: “Too much guns and too much bombs/ Too many people have to run/ Jamaica, Jamaica.” Cole points out that some of the problems that led people to leave Jamaica for Canada in the first place are being replicated in Canada. The fact that this set of lyrics is repeated four times throughout the song gives this verse extra significance; Cole sings this verse with so much emotion that it sounds like he is crying. Cole also sings with a Jamaican accent, which is a vocal marker of roots reggae.

“No More Fussing and Fighting” is a perfect example of a Canadian-recorded roots reggae song: it sounds like Jamaican style roots reggae, but the lyrics directly address the Jamaican diaspora in Canada and elsewhere. Unlike “Tough, Tight & Dread” which addresses an immigrant population generally, “No More Fussing and Fighting” is more focused on the Jamaican community. This song is an example of roots reggae music made by a Jamaican Canadian about the Jamaican diaspora.

3. NOEL ELLIS – “MEMORIES” FROM NOEL ELLIS (1983, SUMMER RECORDS/2005, LIGHT IN THE ATTIC RECORDS)

Noel Ellis is the son of the famous Jamaican singer Alton Ellis, who briefly lived in Toronto in the late 1960s. Noel Ellis came to Toronto in 1970 as a young teen and went to high school in that city. He recorded extensively with Summer Sound and other studios and currently lives in London, England. The first half of “Memories” is a roots reggae song and the second half is the remixed dub version, although there is no clear

transition, rather it is gradual, with dub effects throughout. Combining these styles is very common in Jamaican music, and this should not be considered a fusion; dub effects are also commonly included in reggae songs, even if it is not a specific dub version. Dub versions of reggae songs are almost always made, and sometimes even pasted onto the original to make one long song, as is the case here. The reason this song is included is because it is a wonderful example of Jamaican dub, but recorded in Canada. "Memories" is also an example of Jamaican style roots reggae but with lyrics about living away from home, in this case in Canada.

For this example, I will start with the lyrics because my description of the music refers back to the lyrics. Anthony 'Base' Hibbert wrote the lyrics to the last track from Noel Ellis' debut LP, "Memories," a song about leaving his friends in Jamaica to come to Canada. Hibbert explains: "That was part of me feeling all lonely in Canada. It was talking about all my friends that I left in Jamaica. It was tough, because, yunno, at 13 years old you come to a country and there wasn't that many blacks in Toronto. It was hard to deal with and to top it off, I came in the middle of the winter" (Howes 2006c). You can feel the pain in the lyrics of this song, both in what he says and in how he says it. Some lines sound like crying and the delivery is very emotional; clearly this topic meant a lot to Ellis as well. Significantly there are only two sets of lyrics: a chorus with the word 'memories' sung like a cry or a plea of anguish, and a verse. This repetition shows the importance of the lyrics. You can feel the loneliness in the words from the verse: "You know in how long/ Since haven't been back/ To the place where I come from/ Hardly even a letter/ Cause I-man don't talk too good on paper." Similarly, in the

chorus he sings the words, “memories, ohhhh/ singing memories,” in a long drawn out moan. Ellis sings with a thick Jamaican accent with some patois (“I-man”).

The music mirrors this feeling of loneliness and the most prominent aspect is a repeated riff played on the high keys of a piano. This is subjective, but I feel that the piano is haunting, and the slightly out-of-tune sound makes it feel lonely somehow, like a broken children’s piano playing the same few notes over and over. The drums, bass guitar, percussion and rhythm piano meanwhile, are played in a typical reggae style: the bass drum accent beats two and four, the bass is syncopated and especially loud, the percussion is syncopated, although sparse, and the rhythm piano accents the offbeat. Even before the dub section begins, there are dub effects added to the drums, most notably, an echo effect put on what sounds like the snare mixed with a wood block, making it ring out like a gun shot in a long echoing cave.

The second half of the song is a dub mix, which means that most of the instruments are taken out of the mix except for the drum and bass. Most of the vocals are removed as well and snatches of vocals and other instruments are given a treatment of echo and reverb. This begins at 3:56 in this song, although the transition to a dub mix is gradual and begins at 3:00, and there are elements of dub from the very beginning. Dub mixes are often credited to the producer who does the mix, because producing a dub mix is thought of as a form of composition. The second half of this song allows the producer, Jerry Brown, to shine. In the dub mix, both the snare drum and hi hat become very spacy with echoes, so that you can’t tell which is the beat, and which is the echo. This is a typical dub effect and it sounds like a Jamaican style dub song. At times there is a feeling of distance to the music, like you’re listening through a wall or from another room; this

muffling of sound is also typical in dub mixes, but in this song it also mimics the singer's inability to communicate well.

"Memories" is an example of both roots reggae and a dub record, both recorded in a Jamaican style in Canada. The lyrics are directly based on the life of a Jamaican in Canada, and highlight some of the emotional problems and hardships. At the same time, the lyrics are broad enough that they could apply to anyone who has been away from home for a long time, giving it a more universal appeal. This song is included here as both an example of roots reggae with Canadian lyrics and as an example of Canadian dub recorded in a Jamaican style.

4. JACKIE MITTOO – "SOMEDAY SOON" FROM *REGGAE MAGIC* (1972, CANADIAN TALENT LIBRARY)

"Someday Soon" is a typical example of one of Jackie Mittoo's Canadian-recorded instrumental reggae fusion tracks, which are augmented with orchestral pop arrangements; this is the first example of reggae fusion in this chapter. Mittoo's three 1970s Canadian-recorded albums all feature orchestral overdubs, while the recordings he made in Jamaica from this period lack the overdubs, but are otherwise similar. If it were possible to remove the orchestral overdubs from the mix, this song would easily fit in with one of the many Jamaican-recorded roots reggae style Mittoo compilations of similar material, none of which feature his Canadian recordings.⁶³ This makes sense because minus the overdubs the song features all Jamaican Canadian musicians selected

⁶³ Currently, only one of Mittoo's Canadian-recorded albums is commercially available (*Wishbone*), although this is not a compilation, but a full LP rereleased on CD.

by Mittoo. In this song, the bass guitar and hi hat cymbals are fairly loud in the mix, which is a typical feature of Jamaican reggae mixes. The overdubs, on the other hand – which Mittoo had nothing to do with and are very loud and at times dominate the song – are from a European classical pop background, recorded by members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. It is because of these overdubs that some refer to this material as ‘sweet’ or ‘elevator’ reggae, the former being a more derogatory term than fusion.

As described in chapter 3, the practice of adding orchestral arrangements to reggae songs began in England in 1969, but happened in Canada starting in 1970. This was done with the goal of making reggae more palatable for a white audience. The assumption about white audiences preferring ‘sweet’ reggae is significant and as a result of this assumption, all of Mittoo’s Canadian recordings are augmented with orchestral arrangements, to appeal to a ‘crossover’ audience.

The song begins with an eight-bar introduction featuring drums, guitar, bass, and piano, with some overdubbed strings playing a melody that is not found elsewhere in the song; during the last two bars of the introduction, overdubbed woodwinds respond to this melody. The strings change the feel of the song by playing a melody that is not found in the original, pre-overdub mix, while the woodwinds create a sound that merit Harvey’s description of this music as “elevator reggae” (Harvey 2011).

This song features three sections: an introduction, an A section and a B section. During the first A section of the song, Mittoo’s organ playing is allowed to shine, and he plays minimally yet beautifully. The strings play a countermelody in the back of the mix that harmonizes with Mittoo’s organ melody, while the woodwinds respond during the last two bars of each sixteen bar A section, creating a call and response between the

orchestral instruments. This section repeats, but in the repeat, the strings swell to a climax and move up an octave higher; the strings also become much louder during the repeat and begin to overshadow the organ.

Woodwinds and brass dominate the B section and play the melody, while the organ plays rather quietly. Although horns are common in reggae instrumentals, their use in this song is atypical. Generally a horn player will take a solo, usually played in a jazzy or funk/R&B style, but this is more of an orchestral horn arrangement. This is a subjective description, but none of the orchestral instrumentalists are playing in a funky style; rather they are more laid back and play in a classical pop style.

All of Mittoo's Canadian recordings are a fusion of reggae and classical pop, making "Someday Soon" a typical example of his Canadian recordings. This example of reggae fusion is a hybrid of Jamaican and classical musical styles: the Jamaican influence is the instrumental reggae track, while the classical influence is found in the orchestral overdubs. In these recordings the strings take away any "sharp edges" and create a radio-friendly melody (Bradley 2000, 243). This recording is representative of the kind of reggae fusion music Mittoo was recording in Toronto in the 1970s, which was an important first step in getting reggae heard by non-Jamaican Canadians.

5. TRUTHS AND RIGHTS – “METRO’S NO. 1 PROBLEM,” 12” SINGLE (1981, RHYTHM DISCS)

Truths and Rights formed in 1978 and are made up of two Jamaicans, four Trinidadians and two Guyanese.⁶⁴ Since the band is made up of people from several Caribbean nationalities, band member Terrance Paul says that Truths and Rights are not strictly a reggae band and that they play a variety of African derived music. Band member Ainsley Vaughan says that “[w]e are living in Canada, and we’re from different parts of the Caribbean, so we try to work on that and try to develop something we feel has a Canadian identity. We feel that we must reflect our life here, because we live here” (Harry 1980a, 16). The band won a Canadian Black Music Award for top single, “Metro’s No. 1 Problem” (1981), and also won the award for the top reggae band in 1980 and 1981 (“Taking Reggae” 1982, 24).

This single from Truths and Rights is an example of a medley of reggae and several genres typically associated with black Americans. “Metro’s No. 1 Problem” is a direct comment on racial tensions in Toronto in the 1980s, lyrically and musically, and in fact there is one direct lyrical reference to Toronto. For this song I will start with the lyrics because since the music mirrors the message in the lyrics, this will be most effective. As the lyrics in the chorus state, “Metro’s No. 1 Problem” is actually four problems: racial tension, racial war, culture shock, and lack of communication, although communication may be the main problem, as this word is sung very clearly and with no backup vocals. The second verse makes clear that they aren’t just talking about Jamaicans or even people from the Caribbean, but all people in Toronto: “The trouble down in

⁶⁴ Although Guyana is in South America, its proximity to the Caribbean means that culturally, it is a part of the Caribbean. Guyana is also a member of organizations for Caribbean nations (i.e. CARICOM), thus all members of Truths and Rights are Caribbean Canadian.

Rexdale/ Pakistani family battle.” The reference to Rexdale is Toronto-specific, and by mentioning families from Pakistan, Truths and Rights may be saying that the immigrant community in Toronto needs unity and communication in order to “create a better world,” as they sing in the third verse. The two lead vocalists sing and speak in two different Caribbean accents, pointing to their distinct heritages; you can hear unity in their different accents coming together. One of the singers has a thicker accent than the other and they often sing in a call and response style with one another.

Musically, “Metro’s No.1 Problem” is unique and I’ve never heard another song quite like it. This song is as interesting musically as it is lyrically, and it includes a loose introduction centered on the harmonica, a blues section, an R&B verse, reggae choruses and verses and a brief disco section. Like the lyrics, the music represents a plea for unity. The song begins with a harmonica wailing away, played in a way that clearly signifies blues music. A piano and organ join in with a blues rhythm and there is talking in the background, but the only audible words are “crucial situation.” Blues music is music that was originally created by oppressed black people in the southern US, so thematically this genre is linked to themes in this song. The blues section musically mirrors the lyrics, which are about racial tension in Toronto. When the drums kick in for the verse, it is not a reggae beat as may be expected, but an R&B rhythm. Stylistically, R&B came from blues and was extremely popular all over Jamaica in the 1940s and 1950s (Hebdige 1987, 45). The verses and choruses are reggae, clearly distinguished by the offbeat guitar, the heavy, melodic bass guitar and the bass drum accenting beats two and four. At the time of this song’s release reggae had become a major pan-Caribbean music, replacing the previous popularity of R&B. The sections following each chorus are disco; this is most

obviously heard in the four-on-the-floor drumming, which is when the bass drum accents each beat. Disco was created by black and Hispanic Americans and in 1981 when this song was released, disco was a popular genre in North America. Throughout the song there is also some flute thrown into the mix, which is uncommon in reggae and further points to the fusion of genres. In combining blues, R&B, reggae and disco – all traditionally ‘black’ genres – Truths and Rights are musically pointing to the idea of unity in the black community. These genres are also presented in chronological order of when they first appeared,⁶⁵ and this progression shows the changes in popular black musical genres and mirrors the lyrics, which hope for a progression in relations between all the people of Toronto. Lyrically and musically, themes of communication and unity are evident in “Metro’s No.1 Problem.” In many ways Truths and Rights embody these themes with their mix of heritages coming together in a Toronto-based band.

6. LEROY SIBBLES – “LET MUSIC” FROM *EVIDENCE* (1982, A&M RECORDS)

Leroy Sibbles recorded several albums and singles while living in Canada, most of which are roots reggae. Sibbles’ *Evidence* is a major exception in his recorded output, and is a great example of the fusion of Canadian pop and reggae. As a reggae ambassador, Sibbles tried everything to bring reggae to new audiences, and the reggae fusion album *Evidence* is the best example of this. There are hints at reggae throughout, but for the most part, the album is a pop reggae hybrid; “Let Music” in particular is a pop song with reggae influences. At the time of its release, Sibbles rightfully had high hopes

⁶⁵ Blues started around the end of the American Civil War in the 1860s; R&B started in the 1940s; reggae started in the 1960s; disco started in the 1970s.

for it: the major label A&M promoted it, and by having a Canadian backing band, it seemed like it could sell beyond the Jamaican Canadian community. Although the album won several awards at the time of its release, it is currently unavailable on CD, even though the rest of Sibbles' Canadian-recorded catalogue is commercially available.

"Let Music" features a guitar solo by Bruce Cockburn, while the rhythm track was recorded by most of Cockburn's band – including Bob Disalle and Dennis Pendrith – and other Canadian musicians. The structure of the song is typical for a pop song, with a verse, chorus, bridge and guitar solo. Musically the song has a 1980s pop feel because of the guitar and keyboard sounds. The drums in the bridge and chorus also signify pop music, as they are very punchy and tight. In addition to the dominant pop influences, there are some subtle reggae influences as well, especially in the verses, in which the bass drum accents the second and fourth beats, and the hi-hats are mixed quite loudly. These are less obvious reggae influences, but are distinct features of reggae nonetheless. The short horn riffs in the chorus are also reminiscent of reggae horn riffs.

Lyricaly the song is fairly simple and is about enjoying life: "let music lift you higher/ let music free your mind." Throughout, Sibbles' Jamaican accent is audible on certain words, such as pleasure and treasures ("pleadja" and "treadjas"); Sibbles' accent is a subtle sonic marker of reggae in this song. *Evidence* as an album is another example of a fusion of Jamaican and Canadian styles, although the Jamaican elements may be less obvious. For this reason, I refer to *Evidence* as a pop reggae fusion, with the implication that pop music is the dominant style; the album is also an attempt to cater to mainstream aesthetics. The structure of the song and sound of the drums, guitar and keyboard make this a pop song, but Sibbles' accent, the drums during the verse and the horn riffs during

the chorus show the subtle reggae influences; these may be less obvious to someone unfamiliar with reggae, however. Nonetheless, “Let Music” is another example of a Jamaican Canadian reggae fusion.

7. MESSEJAH – “ARRESTED” FROM *ROCK YOU HIGH* (1982/3, INDEPENDENT/WEA)

Messenjah was Canada’s top reggae band in the 1980s and this song is typical of their early work, which was a fusion of reggae with some rock elements. “Arrested” is the fourth track from Messenjah’s first album, and although the song is in the reggae genre, there are hints at pop and rock in the song, making it an example of reggae rock fusion. Messenjah’s Rupert Harvey recognized that roots reggae was unlikely to get any mainstream attention in Canada, which is why he was not a purist. Trying to play roots reggae in Canada would be tough, and for most musicians, it would not be possible to make a living. Messenjah wanted some mainstream success and to achieve that, their music was a blend of styles. Messenjah’s music “was not the imitation of Jamaican reggae, but the innovation of a different kind of reggae – a reggae that drew inspiration from a Jamaican framework, but whose music and lyrics found its distinct character in the musical environment and social conditions of the country in the which the diasporic reggae artist lived” (Walker 2005, 159-60). Musically the song is reggae with rock and pop touches, while lyrically the song is about discrimination by the police in North America; there are no city or country-specific references, giving it a more universal appeal.

Musically, “Arrested” features several reggae sounds, including a loud, melodic bass guitar with a guitar doubling that line, a piano accenting the offbeat, and an organ

that responds to the vocal melody. The song also features a lead guitar line that has quite a bit of distortion on it, making it sound like a rock guitar lead line. This plays briefly during the verses, chorus and the short, spoken interlude. Many Messenjah songs feature lead guitar lines with distortion, which signifies a rock style; reggae guitar lines on the other hand are often clean sounding or with a wah wah effect, but they are rarely distorted. This kind of a rock lead guitar in a reggae song first became popularized with Bob Marley's Island Records material, a conscious attempt to appeal to the so-called 'white rock audience.' The guitar also mimics the sound of two different kinds of sirens: the first is short and alternates between two notes, and the second is long and drawn out. The distorted guitar in this song is an example of the blend of musical styles found in Messenjah's music.

Lyricaly, the song is about being arrested, but there are hints at this arrest being racially motivated; this is significant in terms of the police's discrimination against black people and especially in Toronto, Jamaican people (Walcott 2003, 102). The lyrics are sung with a slight Jamaican accent and some portions of the song are spoken in a very thick Jamaican patois. The first verse begins with the lines: "Say Babylon/ Trying to conquer I/ So they lock I in the back/ Back of their police car." The reference to Babylon in a reggae song demonstrates a feeling of being oppressed, and "Trying to conquer I" shows that the motives of the police are suspect. Likewise, the use of "I" is a common lyrical practice in reggae; both "Babylon" and "I" are associated with Rastafarianism and by extension, reggae.

In the second verse the police officer asks the driver to step out of the car and asks if the driver has any marijuana, another nod towards Rastafarians, many of whom are

known to smoke marijuana. Black Canadian scholar Cecil Foster refers to the police and their racial discrimination of black people (1996, 5); these lyrics could be read as Foster's argument in song. In the third verse, they sing: "They lock you in a cage/ Make you uncivilized," which can be read as a comment on the prison system that does not aim to rehabilitate offenders and instead places them in a hostile and "uncivilized" environment.

Between the chorus and the third verse there is some talking in the background; the words are mostly drowned out by the music, but some words are audible. They are talking in thick Jamaican patois about being harassed by the police because they are Rastafarian. This is the only section of the song that explicitly states this; otherwise there are only hints, such as the use of Rastafarian lingo. Because this spoken section would likely be incomprehensible to most people, the song can be read as less politicized. Some may read it more broadly as a song about being arrested from the point of view of the criminal. The lyrical references to Rastafarianism make it clear that there is another level to the meaning of the words however.

"Arrested" is an example of a typical early Messenjah song, and is a hybrid of reggae with some rock influences. The lead guitar signifies rock, while the rest of the instruments play in a typical reggae style. Lyrically, the song addresses the concerns of black people, but especially Rastafarians, in a white society.

8. THE SATTALITES – "SHE LOVES YOU" FROM *SATTALITES* (1985, AXE RECORDS/2002, SOLID GOLD RECORDS)

One of the Sattalites' goals was to bring reggae music to a broader audience by playing reggae versions of well-known pop songs; this song is a perfect example of that

goal. The Sattalites do not have many overtly political or religious references in their songs, which was a conscious choice by the band (Flohil 1988, 12) and their music has been described as “apolitical, positive, relaxed music that’s designed for dancing” (“Sattalites: Miracles” 1989, 42). “She Loves You” is an example of how the Sattalites make reggae recognizable to people unfamiliar with the genre by playing a familiar song; this is yet another type of reggae pop fusion.

“She Loves You” is a cover, lyrically, not musically, of the classic Beatles song written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney and released as a single in 1963. This version features almost identical lyrics as the original, although musically it is reggae; the music was written by the Sattalites, even though the writing credit goes to Lennon and McCartney. White Canadian-born Fergus Hambleton sings the song, so it makes sense that he does not sing with a Jamaican accent; as mentioned earlier, Hambleton is known in Jamaica as the white man who can sing reggae like the late Jamaican singer Gregory Isaacs (*The Sattalites* 2007), so his vocal delivery draws on a reggae style.

“She Loves You” features a polished reggae sound, and was recorded in Jamaica and Canada with the Sattalites band and some of the top Jamaican session musicians of the 1980s. The clear reggae features are the piano that accents the offbeat, the melodic and loud bass guitar, the horn riffs and the subtle percussion. Some pop features include the drums, which play a pop backbeat, and the electric guitar. The electric guitar tone is trebly and slightly distorted and has the distinct sound of many 1980s pop songs. On the album *Sattalites* there is a dub version of the song, which showcases all the layers of sounds that may be lost behind Hambleton’s vocals and the subtle but beautiful backup vocals.

The idea in recording a pop reggae version of “She Loves You” was to attract people unfamiliar with reggae to the genre. The Beatles’ “She Loves You” is a very well known song and even with a reggae rhythm it would likely be recognizable to someone who knows the original; for someone who does not know much about reggae, this might be a good introduction to the genre. Throughout their career the Sattalites played many reggae covers of popular songs, with the goal of introducing reggae music to new audiences. Their music is a reggae pop fusion, which reflects the various backgrounds of the members of the Sattalites.

9. LILLIAN ALLEN – “I FIGHT BACK” FROM *REVOLUTIONARY TEA PARTY* (1986, VERSE TO VINYL)

“I Fight Back” is an example of dub poetry, the hybrid genre of spoken word poetry and reggae music created simultaneously in Jamaica and in the diaspora. A distinctly Canadian aspect of dub poetry is the use of rhythm tracks that are not based exclusively in a reggae style. “I Fight Back” features a backing track based in reggae and rock styles, while the lyrics are generally about Caribbean Canadians being mistreated and oppressed in many ways. Dub poetry is related to, yet distinct from reggae music, and this song is a fusion of influences. Jamaican Canadian Lillian Allen is one of the top dub poets in the world and this song is one of her better-known songs.

Since the words to dub poetry are created before the music, I will begin this discussion by looking at the lyrics. “I Fight Back” has been published in a book of poetry and has also been included as a song on record: both sets of lyrics are very close. The song/poem is written from the perspective of female Jamaican domestic workers living in

Canada. Women came to Canada from the Caribbean in large numbers starting in the 1950s to work in the houses of rich people, but their stories are often neglected. Allen brings up the many aspects of this life, including the many labels that these workers are given: “Immigrant, law-breaker, illegal, minimum wager/ Ah no, not mother, not worker, not fighter.” Despite the fact that these women work extremely hard, they do not have the same rights as Canadian citizens and can face deportation (Silvera 1989, vi-vii). Allen also looks at the sadness of being away from one’s own family: “Here I am in Canada/ Bringing up someone else’s child/ While someone else and me in absentee/ Bring up my own.” This shows that having domestic workers in Canada is also hard on their families back home. Allen’s vocal delivery is emotional and expressive, reflecting some of the most unfortunate aspects of the life of a domestic worker; at times she sings with a thick Jamaican accents, signifying reggae.

In contrast with the personal stories of individual people, Allen begins the song/poem by listing a few transnational conglomerates including ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph), and some mining companies, including Alcan and Kaiser. Allen is alluding to the exploitation of Jamaica through the mining of raw materials – mainly bauxite, which is exported to make aluminum. This shows how Canadian exploitation of Jamaica works in two ways: mining investment goes south, although the profits go to Canada, and Jamaican people and labour go north to Canada. These strip Jamaica of both natural and human resources. The reference to CIBC (Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce) is because this bank has had branches in Jamaica and other places in the Caribbean since the 1920s; she also highlights the irony of the word ‘Imperial’ in the CIBC name.

Musically, the song features reggae and rock elements. Before any other instruments play, there is a drum roll that is a typical reggae drum intro, so right away the listener has an idea of the style of the song. The piano and guitar accent the offbeat while the bass guitar plays a syncopated and melodic line; there is also another guitar that basically doubles the bass guitar. In terms of rock elements there is an electric guitar that plays at the start and during the choruses that has quite a bit of distortion on it. For percussion there is a drum machine and some percussion sounds, which may also be electronic, and could be heard as either dancehall or North American pop.

At times in “I Fight Back,” it sounds like Allen is screaming or crying and she manipulates the words to great effect; she makes it so that the listener cannot ignore certain lyrics. This half spoken, half sung vocal delivery and the reggae and rock rhythms, make it clear that this is dub poetry. The rock guitar tone and the lyrics about Canada in particular let the listener know that this is Jamaican Canadian dub poetry. “I Fight Back” is great example of a Jamaican Canadian dub poetry song from Lillian Allen, one of the originators of the genre. Musically the song draws on reggae and rock, making it a fusion of Jamaican and Canadian musical influences; this type of fusion is also characteristic of Canadian dub poetry.

* * * * *

The purpose in examining these nine songs is to show the variety of musical styles found in Jamaican Canadian music in Toronto from the 1970s and 1980s; to demonstrate how musicians’ artistic goals were realized; and to look at some lyrical

themes and their social relevance. There is a wide spectrum of styles of music created by Jamaican Canadians, from the Jamaican roots reggae style, to the fusion of Jamaican and Canadian genres, and many variables of these styles.

Many of these musicians wrote and recorded music that dealt with social issues, while others tried to introduce reggae to a wider audience; some did both. Interestingly, only three of the nine songs are available on CD or as a legal digital download: “Memories” by Noel Ellis; “She Loves You” by the Sattalites; and “I Fight Back” by Lillian Allen. This is evidence that these songs may be slowly disappearing within Canadian and Jamaican culture, although hopefully this isn’t the last time these songs are discussed. This musical examination has drawn attention to the myriad styles of music created by Jamaican Canadians in Toronto during the 1970s and 1980s. It illustrates the variety of musics, from Jamaican style roots reggae to various reggae fusions and distinct genres like dub poetry, which in Canada is another example of a fusion genre.

CONCLUSION

My hope is that the reader now has a greater understanding of Jamaican Canadian music in Toronto from the 1970s and 1980s, including the wide variety of issues surrounding it; the multiple levels of infrastructure; the distinctive aspects of this music and the obstacles faced by the musicians; the importance of the musicians who pioneered this music; and the wide variety of Jamaican Canadian musical genres and styles. Music is very important for Jamaican Canadians as a defining aspect of Jamaicanness, and is associated with nationalistic and cultural pride. Both the recreation of old sounds from the homeland, and new fusion sounds are created by the Jamaican diaspora in Toronto.

Diaspora and transnationalism are both important concepts that relate directly to Jamaican Canadian music, as music can function as a way to create a unified identity in diasporic communities. Both Jamaican Canadian music and people can be described as transnational, in that they have connections with more than one country. There are many race issues in the Jamaican Canadian music scene, from the level of the individual to a broader infrastructural level. These have an influence on the music in terms of lyrical content, the way the music is recorded and the reception of the music, but also in terms of where this music is heard.

The wide variety of levels of Jamaican Canadian musical infrastructure is an important part of this music scene. The Jamaican-owned nightclubs, record labels, recording studios and record stores in Toronto were and are vital to Jamaican Canadian music. Without this infrastructure and the people who helped create it, the Jamaican Canadian music scene in Toronto in the 1970s and 1980s would not have been as rich and

varied. The infrastructure set up during these years continues to the present, as Toronto is still a major hub of Jamaican cultural activity.

Jamaican Canadian music is distinct in several ways, from the blend of Jamaican and Canadian influences, to racially integrated bands, to the format of the *band* as the norm, to the rise of dub poetry. Despite this, there were and are many obstacles for Jamaican Canadian musicians including the Jamaican Canadian preference for Jamaican-recorded reggae. This may be read as a diasporic longing for Jamaica, as opposed to musical or artistic preferences. This bias extends to some Jamaican Canadian musicians themselves who prefer Jamaican-recorded reggae to Canadian-recorded reggae; these preferences are still prevalent. Other biases against Jamaican Canadian music include the racist practices in the music industry in Canada, including a lack of mainstream radio play and a lack of recognition at major awards shows. All of these biases continue to the present, as it is still difficult for Jamaican Canadian musicians to be recognized by the mainstream.

There were many musicians described in this thesis who were pioneers in the Jamaican Canadian music scene. The whole scene wouldn't have been possible without their years of hard work and dedication to Jamaican Canadian music in all of its forms. The wide variety of styles, all with a Jamaican base – from the early 'sweet' reggae fused with classical pop, to the recreation of Jamaican roots reggae, to other hybrid styles including dub poetry – are a major part of what makes Toronto such a multifaceted, interesting and important city for Jamaican music.

Even with a fairly limited focus on Jamaican Canadian music in the 1970s and 1980s, there is a lot of information. Rupert Harvey says he feels “honoured to have been

a part of [the] history” of Jamaican Canadian music, and was very enthusiastic about this project (Harvey 2011). The historicizing of Jamaican Canadian music in Toronto from the 1970s and 1980s is one of the outcomes of writing this thesis. Jamaican Canadian music is an important yet neglected part of Canadian musical history, and as Lloyd Delpratt says, “there’s so much people don’t know, and so much history we have” (Delpratt 2012).

This work opens the doors for other similar projects, including Jamaican Canadian music in the 1960s and earlier, or Jamaican Canadian music from the 1990s to the present. A more thorough inclusion of women in Jamaican Canadian music is another area that needs to be researched as there were and are many women involved in all aspects of this music scene. An analysis of Rastafarianism in Jamaican Canadian music would be another important area to look at. An in-depth comparison with other Jamaican diasporas is yet another option: there are a few texts on Jamaican music in the United Kingdom and even fewer on Jamaican music in the United States. Some kind of large-scale comparison of all three would be a huge undertaking, which I expect will occur at some point. This thesis has been a labour of love, and is only the start of my research in this area. Prior to researching and writing this thesis, I was a fan of both Jamaican and Canadian music separately, so in retrospect it seems like a given that I would enjoy this music. In choosing to study this music, however, I’ve been introduced to a whole new world of Jamaican Canadian music and culture that was previously completely unknown to me. I hope that this music continues to attract new listeners for years to come.

APPENDIX: SONG LYRICS, STRUCTURES AND FORMS⁶⁶

1. ISHAN PEOPLE – “TOUGH, TIGHT & DREAD” FROM *ROOTS* (1976)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	<p>Intro:</p> <p><i>A donkey cart</i> *laughs <i>Well I-man even come more roots,</i> <i>ya look, I-man jus check for the g_____ , you see, g_____ .</i> <i>The barefoot man.</i> <i>I at the car, g_____ , yunno?</i> <i>An a mark about ketchup?</i> <i>No dread, it's a g_____ .</i> <i>I find I step the weekly stool hangman, it just, well, hard up.</i> <i>Seen.</i> <i>Oi! I-shan People</i> <i>(Yeah Natty head/dread.)</i> <i>Wha gwaan p _____ ?</i> <i>Tings tuff, tight and dread</i></p>	<p>Everything spoken in Jamaican patois. No instruments in the intro, only voices.</p> <p>Inhaling and exhaling sounds from a spliff.</p> <p>Call and response between lead singer and group (group's response is in brackets) (This means, "What's going on?")</p>
0:37	<p>Verse 1:</p> <p>They said our time would come When hoodlums won't have guns We could walk the streets at night Without fear from hark and fight</p> <p>They promised us jobs So we can earn our bread Buy a place to lay our heads And keep our family fed</p>	<p>Sustained organ, electric piano and bass guitar note start the song. As these sounds fade away, there is a roots reggae drum roll intro on the snare drum. The bass guitar plays with lots of space between notes; the last two notes of the bass line are doubled with a keyboard for the whole song. A guitar accents the offbeat throughout the song. The bass drum accents beats two and four. Two hand drums can be heard (one is higher pitched), mainly on the right side of the mix.</p>

⁶⁶ All sung lyrics are written out normally; words that are spoken are in italics; lyrics that are sung by backup singers are in brackets; and lyrics that are sung by a lead singer with backup singers are underlined. Descriptions of vocals, such as indications of repeats will have a * before the text.

1:04	Bridge 1: Yet people suffering All this time When I-man check it out I-man find, say	Electric piano comes back in, playing between vocal lines as a call and response. Tambourine or other similar instrument comes in
1:14	Chorus: Them men them still are <u>dressed up</u> <u>Like Uncle Fester</u> Them don't care how we feel (Them don't care how we feel) Them forcing innocent people In order to survive To go on out and steal (To go on out and steal) But if them <u>dressed up</u> <u>Like Uncle Fester</u> We going to fix dem wheel <i>Alright</i>	This is a call and response with the lead singer. Organ and electric piano play minimally, between the bass guitar line. Bass guitar is still syncopated, guitar still accents the offbeat, and bass drum still accents beats two and four.
1:50	Verse 2: They promised us a dub So we could skank and dub They promised us a club Where we can wine and rub	Mostly the same musical features as first verse. More electric piano than first verse, which plays between vocal lines.
2:04	Bridge 2: Yet no one skanking No one wine When I-man check it out I-man find, say	Same musical features as first bridge.
2:14	Chorus	Same musical features as other choruses; this continues for the rest of the song.
2:53	*Repeat last three lines 6x	Organ, electric piano and bass guitar play more fills.
4:05	*Instruments only	Song fades out to end.

2. STRANGER COLE – “NO MORE FUSSING AND FIGHTING” FROM *THE PATRIOT* (1982)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	Intro *no vocals	Roots reggae style drum intro, played on snare and bass drum. The organ plays a sustained chord and a descending repeated melody. Guitar plays on offbeat, which continues for whole song. Bass guitar plays a melodic line.
0:14	Chorus: No more fussing and fighting No, no more criticizing What is for sale, give it to him What is for the holy man no one can take it away Can't take it away	Hi hats become one of the loudest sounds in the mix, playing a steady sixteenth note pattern. Bass becomes louder in the mix. Piano plays the offbeat with the guitar. Organ responds melodically and rhythmically to some lines in the chorus. A second guitar plays short lead lines with a wah wah pedal.
0:41	Verse 1: We must live in unity We're far away from home Sweet home I am coming home	Same features as chorus.
0:55	Chorus	All instruments accent the beat at the end of the chorus.
1:20	Verse 2: Liberation is not a symbol It's reality We should live the life of liberty It was meant for you and me You and me	
1:40	Chorus	
2:06	Verse 3: Too much guns and too much bombs Too many people have to run Jamaica, Oh, Jamaica, Oh, Jamaica, Jamaica	

2:25	Verse 3	
2:38	Chorus	Guitar responds to "Jamaica!"
3:04	Verse 3 *x2	Organ responds to the vocals in the last verse, copying the notes and rhythm of Cole's vocals.
3:31	Jamaica! JAMAICA!!	
3:36	Verse 3	Song ends with a brief organ flourish.

3. NOEL ELLIS – "MEMORIES" FROM *NOEL ELLIS* (1983)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	Intro *no vocals	Roots reggae style snare drum intro with cymbal. Bass drum accents beats two and four. Already there is a dub effect of the drums: it is an echo effect on what sounds like a snare and a wood block that further accents the second beat in one bar, then the fourth in the next. Very heavy bass guitar line with some space between notes. Piano accents the offbeat. Another piano line plays a melody in the high register of a piano, and it sounds slightly out-of-tune.
0:17	Chorus: *vocal – sounds like crying or moaning Somewhere behind my eyes Are memories of the days gone by Memories, ohhhh Singing memories Of beautiful days, ohhh	Same musical features as intro.
1:07	Verse: You know in how long Since haven't been back To the place where I come from Hardly even a letter Cause I-man don't talk too good on paper	"I-man" is a patois way of saying "I."

1:29	Chorus *different last line: Of beautiful friends	Piano melody cuts out briefly at start of second chorus. Drums start to have a delay effect put on them, so that it sounds very syncopated. For example, the snare/wood block repeats right after it is hit.
2:20	Memo-memo-memo-Memories *x4	Extra echo on Ellis' voice for this part.
2:35	Chorus	Same as previous chorus with more delay on the drums.
3:04	Verse	Musical features continue.
3:27	Chorus *dub echo effect cuts into first "oh"	Vocals are heard very quietly, like coming from underwater or from far away.
3:56	Chorus *dub effect cuts into third line of chorus on "memories"	Vocals cut out on the word "Memor..." with an echo effect at 3:56. Parts of chorus vocals come in and out with the dub version of song, which makes up the second half of "Memories."
4:03	*no vocals	It sounds like the tape is slowed down and everything briefly drops in pitch.
4:15		Electronic effects, like an AM radio being tuned at night, are added.
4:37		Bass drum and the piano melody are by themselves for a few bars.
4:40	Oh, oh	Small bits of vocals come back in.
4:48	Chorus *lots of echo on the vocals	Instruments come in and out, with lots of effects. A wood block is emphasized.
5:46	Chorus *even more echo on the vocals	Chorus vocals come in and out of the rest of the song.
6:07		Bass, percussion and drums are singled out.
6:38	Oh oh	

4. JACKIE MITTOO – “SOMEDAY SOON” FROM *REGGAE MAGIC* (1972)

Time	Section and Chords	Prominent Musical Features
0:00	Intro: 8 bars Am/Am/G/G x2	Snare drum intro is a sonic indicator or reggae. Guitar and piano accent the offbeat, which continues for the whole song. Bass guitar plays a melodic line that continues for the whole song. The hi hat cymbals are also syncopated. Strings play a melody that is not found in any other part of the song, and the woodwinds respond during the last two bars.
0:20	A section: 16 bars G/G/C/G/ Bm/Bm/C/D G/G/C/G/ Am/D/G/G	Organ comes in with a lead melody and dominates this section. Strings play a counter melody with the organ and are not very loud. Woodwinds respond to the organ melody in the last two bars.
0:56	A section repeats	On the repeat, the organ continues, but the strings move up an octave and are much louder in the mix. The woodwinds respond once again during the last two bars.
1:32	B section: 8 bars D/D/C/G/Em/G/D/D	Organ continues, but the woodwinds and brass dominate this section, playing a new melody.
1:50	A section	Woodwinds play during the first bar, then stop and let the organ shine on its own. The strings come back in during the second half of this section.
2:27	B section	The rest is the same as the first time through.
2:45	A section	
3:20	Repeat last 4 bars of A section 2x.	Fade out on second repeat to end.

5. TRUTHS AND RIGHTS – “METRO’S NO. 1 PROBLEM,” 12” SINGLE (1981)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	Intro *no vocals, but some talking	Sustained organ chord, dies out, replaced by sparse piano. Harmonica dominates. There is a sound reminiscent of a slide on a guitar.
0:23	Intro continues	Footsteps can be heard. There is talking in the background in Jamaican patois, unclear what they are saying.
0:36	Intro: <i>Times hard</i> <i>Crucial situation</i> <i>Yes</i>	The piano starts playing a blues rhythm. Organ plays sustained chords. More talking in the background. Harmonica plays a blues melody.
1:07	Intro: You had better watch out Tension in the city You had better watch out now, yeah Tension in the city Racial Violence Police Brutality Tension in the city, tension in the city Gotta get out, gotta get out of this city	R&B section begins. Snare drum accents beats two and four and the bass drum accents beats one and three. The ride cymbal plays eighth notes. Piano plays a bluesy rhythm, and the harmonica plays some muffled chords. The guitar plays some chords and the bass is funky. There are two singers, alternating certain lines.
1:36	Verse 1: Tension in the city The city’s getting hot for the summer The weather is getting warmer <u>The blood is getting hotter</u> *repeat	Reggae beat starts, clearly signified by the tom drum intro, the guitar accenting the offbeat, the bass drum accenting beats two and four and the loud bass guitar. The bass plays with space between notes, often accenting the offbeat. The piano responds to the vocal melodies. There is a flute in this section, which is not common in reggae, which comes in on the second repeat. Backup singers repeat the last line with the lead singer.

2:07	<p>Bridge 1:</p> <p>Racial violence explodes in anger Problems of the past, present and the future</p> <p>*repeat Hear what I say:</p>	<p>The flute plays a distinct melody along with the vocals.</p> <p>All the instruments play a descending melody.</p>
2:22	<p>Chorus:</p> <p>(Metro's number one problem) Say racial tension (Metro's number one problem) Say racial war, racial war (Metro's number one problem) Say, culture shock, culture shock (Metro's number one problem) Communication</p>	<p>Flute continues to respond to the vocals.</p> <p>Several singers sing the lines in brackets and the lead singers sing the rest.</p>
2:39	<p>Interlude</p> <p>*no vocals</p>	<p>Instrumental disco interlude, which lasts for six bars. It is most obviously disco because of the 'four-on-the-floor' drumming in which the bass drum accents every beat. The piano plays a syncopated melody, while the guitar continues as before. The bass guitar plays a new funky melody. During the third and sixth bars, all the instruments play in unison, hitting each beat with staccato shots.</p>
2:50	<p>Verse 2:</p> <p>Policeman on duty Your city's getting hot for the summer The trouble down in Rexdale <u>Pakistani family battle</u></p> <p>*repeat</p>	<p>Same musical features as the first time through each section.</p>
3:20	<p>Bridge 2:</p> <p>Too much oppression in this town (System of police crime and corruption)</p> <p>*repeat</p>	
3:36	Chorus	
3:52	Interlude	

4:04	Verse 3: If we can't live together Then how can we work work together? To build a better world, better world <u>A better world tomorrow</u> *repeat	
4:33	Bridge 2	
4:49	Chorus	
5:04	Interlude	Abrupt ending right after end of interlude.

6. LEROY SIBBLES – “LET MUSIC” FROM *EVIDENCE* (1982)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	Intro	Distorted guitar, keyboard and bass play two notes in unison that are sustained. The bass drum accents beats two and four, while the hi hats are steady and loud; these are both subtle hints at reggae influences.
0:10	Verse 1: I like to see people together Smiling faces, all having fun Each forgetting all of their problems Bodies moving as though they were one	Same as the intro.
0:28	Bridge: Enjoying the music When the DJ plays Oh, each one can use it In his own way	All the instruments become more active. The drums shift to a rock or pop beat, with the bass drum accenting beats one and three and the snare accenting beats two and four; this continues in the chorus. There are two loud guitars playing a lead line together.

0:45	Chorus: Let <u>music</u> lift you higher Let <u>music</u> free your mind Let <u>music</u> lift you higher Way down in my search I sing Music is the best I can find	Horns play short riffs that could easily fit in with a reggae song.
1:07	Verse 2: There's a message deep in life's music And you can find it if you try Some find pleasure in earthly treasures When you can find it in a lullaby	Instrumentation is the same as previous verse, bridge and chorus. Sibbles sings "pleasure" and "treasure" with a Jamaican accent.
1:25	Bridge	
1:43	Chorus	
2:04	Chorus *no vocals, guitar solo	Slightly distorted guitar solo, done in a rock or pop style. The melody draws on some of the vocal melodies of the song.
2:22	Chorus x8 *last two lines are replaced with ad libs such as "Get up, get up"	
2:41	*back up vocals: " <u>Music</u> Higher")	Female and male backup singers emphasize the words of the chorus. Guitar plays some lead lines towards the end.
4:29		Song builds up to fade out at the end.

7. MESSEJAH - "ARRESTED" FROM *ROCK YOU HIGH* (1982/3)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	Intro: Whoa yeah, yeah, yeah *sung over spoken patois ... <i>Dem read me my rights...</i>	Snare and bass drum play an intro reminiscent of reggae. Piano accents the offbeat. The bass guitar is melodic and sparse. A distorted electric guitar plays some short rock style fills.

0:18	<p>Verse 1:</p> <p>Well I was sitting in the back of a police car, oh yeah yeah (in the back, in the back) I was a-sitting in the back of a police car, oh yeah yeah (in the back, in the back) Say Babylon (oh, oh) Trying to conquer I (oh, oh) So they lock I in the back (oh, oh) Back of their police car (oh, oh) Well I heard them say (oh, oh) Up on their radio (oh, oh) They said six foot three, (oh, oh) Armed and dangerous (oh, oh) Last seen headed for King and Main (King and Main)</p>	<p>Bass and piano continue as above. An electric guitar continues to play short fills, twice per verse. Another guitar doubles the bass line. A third guitar with a wah wah effect on it plays some scratches in the background. There is also an organ that responds to the vocals. Some sort of a shaker plays sparsely throughout the verses.</p> <p>King and Main is not an intersection in Toronto or Kitchener, where Messenjah were based at this time, rather it is a more generic reference to a city.</p>
1:15	<p>Verse 2:</p> <p>Well I was sitting in the back of a police car, oh yeah, yeah (in the back, in the back) I was a-sitting in the back of a police car, oh yeah (in the back, in the back) “May I see you driver’s license, ownership and insurance? (He no have none) Would you mind stepping out of your car? (*unknown backup vocal) Have you in your possession any marijuana?” (*unknown backup vocal) Not a place to be That’s not the place to be</p>	<p>Musical features are the same as the first verse.</p> <p>There is an electric guitar that mimics a long, drawn out siren.</p> <p>Lyrics in quotes are from the perspective of a police officer.</p>

2:05	<p>Chorus:</p> <p><u>Not in de back, not in de back,</u> <u>not in de back</u> of a police car Don't want to be there <u>Not in de back, not in de back,</u> <u>not in de back</u> The police car</p>	An electric guitar harmonizes with the vocals.
2:21	<p>Interlude:</p> <p>*Spoken patois: two men talk about being pulled over by the police for being black, Jamaican or Rastafarian. <i>Babylon stop I and I just because I-man...</i></p>	An electric guitar plays a riff that sounds like a siren.
2:35	<p>Verse 3:</p> <p>So they take away I freedom (Oh, oh) Yet you blame it one the world, eh, eh, eh (oh, oh) They lock you in a cage (oh, oh) Make you uncivilized (oh, oh) Not a place to be That's not the place to be</p>	Same as first verse and chorus
3:01	<p>Chorus</p> <p><u>Not inna da back, not inna da back,</u> <u>not inna da back,</u> police car Not the place to be <u>Not inna da back, not inna da back,</u> <u>not inna da back,</u> police car</p>	
3:17	<p>Outro:</p> <p>Say don't you bother Babylon (Not in the back, not in the back, not in the back) Babylon cyaan bother you What me say? (Not in the back, not in the back, not in the back)</p>	<p>"Cyaan" is Jamaican patois for "can't"</p> <p>Song fades out quickly at end.</p>

8. THE SATTALITES – “SHE LOVES YOU” FROM *SATTALITES* (1985)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	Intro: I tell you she loves you, Oh, oh	Tom drum intro in a reggae style. Melodic and loud bass guitar line. Distorted electric guitar plays a minimal lead line, responding to the vocals and horns. Piano plays rhythmically and accents the offbeat. Horns play short riffs. Drums play in a rock or pop style.
0:13	Verse 1: You think you've lost your love <u>Well I saw her yesterday</u> , oh, oh It's you she's thinking of <u>And she told me, she told me</u> <u>what to say</u>	Piano, bass and drums continue as above. There is a slight delay effect on Hambleton's vocals, giving a thick pop sound.
0:34	Chorus: She said <u>she loves you</u> And you know that can't be bad No, no, no, no She said <u>she loves you</u> <u>And you know you should be</u> <u>glad</u>	Horns come back in the choruses. They play short riffs and then sustained notes.
0:56	Verse 2: (Ohhhhh) She says you hurt her so She almost lost her mind Now she says she knows <u>You're not the hurting kind</u>	The verse and chorus are the same as above. Backup vocals sing “ooh” in harmony with the lead line throughout the second verse.
1:18	Chorus	Same as above.
1:41	Verse *instrumental with: <u>Yeah, yeah, yeah</u> *x4	Same as above, but with sounds that seem like an electronic door opening, or some other digital sound. There are also some percussion instruments audible in the mix. One of these is a wood block, or another similar sounding instrument.

2:15	Verse 3: (Ohhhhh) Know it's up to you I think it's only fair Pride can hurt you too <u>Apologize to her</u>	Backup vocals continue as in the second verse.
2:37	Chorus (alternate lyrics): Because <u>she loves you</u> And you know that can't be bad No, no, no, no Because <u>she loves you</u> <u>And you know you should be glad</u> <u>Woooooo, yeah, eh, eh</u>	Backup singers and Hambleton sing "woooo," like in the Beatles version.
2:59	Verse: *ad libs: I saw her just the other day She told me she was going away Yeah, yeah, yeah Oh, oh, oh <u>Yeah, yeah, yeah</u> She almost lost her mind Yeah she loves you	Electric guitar solo played in a rock or pop style. Song fades out at the end.

9. LILLIAN ALLEN – "I FIGHT BACK" FROM *REVOLUTIONARY TEA PARTY* (1986)

(Lyrics reprinted in Lillian Allen's *Women Do This Everyday*, 1993. Spacing and capitals are based on how the poem is written in this book.)

Time	Section and Lyrics	Prominent Musical Features and Sounds
0:00	Intro	High-pitched drum roll starts the song, clearly signifying reggae. Syncopated bass line and piano accenting the offbeat are also reggae sounds. The electric guitar has a rock guitar sound. The drums sound like they may be made with an electronic drum machine. There are some electronic clapping sounds as well.

0:20	<p>Verse 1:</p> <p>ITT ALCAN KAISER Canadian IMPERIAL Bank of Commerce these are privilege names in my country but I am illegal here</p> <p>My children scream My grandmother is dying</p> <p>I came to Canada I found the doors of opportunities well guarded</p> <p>I scrub floors serve backra's meal on time spend two days working in one and twelve in a week</p> <p>Here I am in Canada Bringing up someone else's child While someone else and me in absentee Bring up my own</p>	<p>Bass, drums and piano as above. Electric guitar accents the offbeat with the piano. A second electric guitar basically doubles the bass line. Percussion instruments join in with syncopated rhythms.</p> <p>"Imperial" sounds like a squeal.</p> <p>With a Jamaican accent: "My granmadda' is dyin'"</p> <p>Pronounced "Cyanada."</p>
1:33	<p>Chorus:</p> <p>AND I FIGHT BACK AND I FIGHT BACK Like my sisters before me AND I FIGHT BACK</p>	<p>Rhythm stays that same, except the electric guitar from the intro comes back.</p> <p>Delay effects on the vocals on the last line in the chorus.</p>
1:46	<p>Short Interlude</p>	<p>Guitar that doubles the bass guitar get louder for a few bars.</p>

1:57	<p>Verse 2:</p> <p>And constantly they ask “Oh beautiful tropical beach with coconut tree and rum why did you leave there why did you leave there why on earth did you come”</p> <p>why did you leave there why on earth did you come?</p> <p>AND I SAY: For the same reasons your mothers came</p>	<p>Same as above, except the guitar doubling the bass guitar gets louder and more expressive. Allen mimics questions Caribbean immigrants to Canada might hear from non-Caribbean Canadians.</p>
2:27	<p>Chorus:</p> <p>AND I FIGHT BACK AND I FIGHT BACK Like my sisters before me AND I FIGHT BACK</p>	<p>Chorus, short interlude and verse are the same as above.</p>
2:41	<p>Short Interlude</p>	
2:58	<p>Verse 3:</p> <p>ITT ALCAN KAISER Canadian IMPERIAL Bank of Commerce Ravaging the third world but I am an immigrant here They label me Immigrant, law-breaker, illegal, minimum wager</p> <p>Ah no, not mother, not worker, not fighter</p>	<p>Pronounced “Tird World.”</p>
3:41	<p>Chorus:</p> <p>AND I FIGHT BACK AND I FIGHT BACK AND I FIGHT BACK AND I FIGHT BACK Like my sisters before me AND I FIGHT BACK Like my sisters before me AND I FIGHT BACK AND I FIGHT BACK!</p>	<p>There are echo effects on the vocals in the chorus.</p> <p>The song end abruptly on the last line.</p>

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