

# Jamaican Popular Music In Transition

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmMA3haZSC8>

## Abstract

Reggae was internationalized and popularized by Bob Marley & The Wailers in the 1970s, however, since his passing the genre has come up short in competition with other international mainstream genres. This is due to numerous variables and changes within the music industry. Some of these changes such as the digitization of music and the advent of streaming have massively impacted music sales thus pushing today's Reggae artists to reconfigure their business model and marketing strategies. Furthermore, due to this technological advancement and an observed reconfiguration of business and marketing strategies, a change in sound has also occurred. It could be argued that these changes in sounds puts the state of Jamaican music into a liminal space due to an incorporation of a variety of sounds, techniques, and genres that do not fit into either Reggae or Dancehall categories.

The liminality of this space is further compounded by the fact that the popularity and subsequent saturation of radio play of the Dancehall genre has led to a reactionary resurgence of the Reggae consciousness picking up since 2010. This resurgence, dubbed the Reggae Revival, has several objectives, some of which include (i) encouraging spiritual development through their musical/uplifting messages, (ii) to promote a sense of community around creatives, and (iii) to encourage Black pride and African aesthetics. These objectives and the interactions they promote have contributed to the changes in the Reggae landscape, however, there is very little literature on the study of this change. Therefore, this presentation seeks to explore Reggae in transition by tracing the impetus of, and the emerging effects from, the Reggae Revival movement through an exploration of past Reggae trends and comparing them to the current sounds and production styles heard in contemporary local Jamaican artists while interrogating the current state of the Reggae genre and its future on the worldwide music scene.

Keywords: Jamaican popular music, Jamaican culture, reggae, reggae revival, dancehall, music industry



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