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Reggae Marathon 2012 celebrates excellence

As the Reggae Marathon, Half Marathon and 10K organisers prepare to welcome the hundreds of participants who will once again challenge themselves by competing in the event on Saturday, December 1, in Negril, they will acknowledge Jamaica's yearlong celebration of its 50th anniversary of Independence.

"This is an important time for the nation and for us. Our focus this year, both for this significant milestone and for the Reggae Marathon event, is excellence," said race director Alfred Francis.

"We at Reggae Marathon believe that achieving excellence begins with setting goals and practising self-control and discipline, which are also necessary ingredients for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. That is our primary objective."

This year, the Reggae Marathon was also presented with the Abe Issa Award for Excellence by the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association. The award recognises and honours "individuals, groups and entities who have contributed significantly to the tourism industry by promoting the reputation and image of Jamaica as a tourist destination."

The recipient must bring "honour, fame and glory to our country" and be of "unquestionable integrity, with high ethical standards".

Francis said his organisation is grateful for the award, and pledges to continue to uphold the standards which it symbolises.

Queen Ifrica, Chuck Fenda tracks get big 'Notice'

Still basking in the recent success of Busy Signal's **Come Over**, recording powerhouse Notice Productions continues to churn out the music. Their latest is the release of the Digital Love riddim compilation featuring **Tiad A Dah Sup'm Ya** by Queen Ifrica and Chuck Fenda's **It Hard**.

The gritty reggae ballads have been receiving favourable reviews. They cover a wide array of social issues, from political promises to the perils of the less fortunate, yet still manage to exude a calm melodic groove. **Tiad A Dah Sup'm Yah** is Ifrica's first official single since giving birth to her child recently.

"Working with Queen Ifrica was such a great experience. We had fun. Her vocal delivery and passion for what she was saying was sincerely felt and, to have a woman speaking out against the injustice which you can hear in this song, I feel very proud to be a part of it," said producer Wayne 'Unga' Thompson.

Chuck Fenda, currently on tour in Canada, has released an accompanying video for his track.

Now available on iTunes and other digital platforms, the full compilation also features solid tracks from Hezron, Romain Virgo, Chronixx, C-Sharp, Ras Penco, Iba Mahr, Alva, Further Notice, and European singer Million Styles.

Tribe Sankofa prepares for concert season debut

Performing arts ensemble Tribe Sankofa is fully immersed in rehearsals and other preparations for their upcoming inaugural two-night season called Word-Soul: The Deluxe Edition. It will be held at the Vera Moody Concert Hall, Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts, on November 24 and 25.

Founder and artistic director Fabian Thomas, who also performs with the group, describes Tribe Sankofa as "a 15-member performing arts ensemble comprised of a vibrant and eclectic cadre of multi-talented performers who are combining their artistry to add an exciting new dimension to the performing arts landscape of Jamaica and the rest of the world. Our niche is spoken word/poetry, soulful song-styling uniquely blended with other visual and performing arts. Our vision and market is global".

The first night of Word-Soul: The Deluxe Edition, called 'Mostly Words', will have spoken word and poetry as its predominant offering, while 'Mostly Soul' - the second night - will showcase the group's vocal and musical skills.

Special guests will be sharing the stage with Tribe Sankofa during this milestone. They include Tanya Stephens, Michael Sean Harris, Della Manley, Jamaica Youth Theatre, actor Christopher Hutchinson, Jesse Jones (from Seaview All-Stars), Kevin Nelson, Renee McDonald (from the Company Dance Theatre), Roxan Webber and Ramone Gordon (both from The Quilt Performing Arts Company), Keanu Daley, and UK storyteller Jan Blake (in collaboration with the British Council).

Tribe Sankofa will also be enlisting the commitment of sponsors to make donations to assist four students, two from the School of Music and the School of Drama at the Edna Manley College and two from the University of the West Indies.

Partners already on board are Shades of Africa, Supreme Ventures, Mystic Delights, Dutches Delight, Rituals Coffee House, Jus Call Couriers, Copy Cat and the British Council.

OMI does NY media blitz

Riding on a wave of popularity since the September release of debut music videos **Cheerleader** and **All Threes**, OMI, recording artiste signed to Oufah Media & Productions, recently expanded his promotion campaign to the 'Big Apple'.

In response to numerous guest-appearance requests in New York, his management team planned a 10-day media stint to promote his current singles. The tour covered visits to more than 20 stations, Omi being interviewed on popular radio shows, TV talk shows, magazines, and online entertainment programmes. The Clarendon-born singer had the opportunity to interview with ABC-TV's Here And Now, Centric TV, **The Root Magazine** with Hasan James, Street Disciplez Radio, BronxNet Television and Interactive Radio with Jerry Barrow, to name a few.

He also spent a day meeting with executives at Black Entertainment Television and powerhouse reggae label VP Records.

Having joined forces with artiste-development guru Angelo Ellerbee of Double Xposure in the United States, OMI used the last six weeks to bombard the airwaves of many local New York and New Jersey radio and online stations. With his fan base consistently building across North America, Hawaii and Europe, his management team is working to strategically break his music globally.

The **Cheerleader** singer is enthusiastic about the future and is focused on taking his music to a higher level, as he has many more singles in the bag and an album in the making. Next is the official release and music video for his latest single **Fireworks**.

"This is hard work, but if you focus on your vision, success is inevitable. I want to break all barriers. I'm heading forward and there's no looking back," Omi said.

Poetry Society celebrates McNeill, McKay

On the heels of receiving a Musgrave Medal, the Poetry Society of Jamaica hosted its October 30th Fellowship under the theme 'Dead Poets Live', a theme revisited every three years. The 2012 edition saw the celebration of the lives and legacies of poets Claude McKay and Anthony 'Tony' McNeill.

The fellowship brought together a diverse audience, ranging from first-time visitors to senior writers such as Oku Onuora and Professor Mervyn Morris. Beginning with its

Legal documents blame AEG's decision to hire Dr Conrad Murray, who is currently serving a four-year sentence for manslaughter, to supervise the King of Pop's health in the run-up to his 'This Is It' 20-date residency at London's The O2.

However, Marvin Putnam, AEG's lawyer, has slammed the claims, saying "this lawsuit is clearly frivolous. It is literally barred by at least four different legal doctrines. The easiest is that Mr Williams was a personal employee of Michael Jackson's and was never a beneficiary of Mr Jackson's contract with AEG Live. As such, he has no legal standing to sue on that contract. Nor can he legally bring a claim for Mr Jackson's wrongful death".

"It is truly unfortunate that so many see Mr Jackson's demise as an opportunity to grab as much for themselves as possible. This is just the latest wrongful-death lawsuit with someone hoping to profit from Michael Jackson's tragic death in the same way they profited from his life," Putnam added.

Williams' class-action lawsuit seeks unspecified damages, citing breach of express terms of contract, breach of implied terms of contract, and breach of implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing after Murray treated Michael's insomnia by giving him the fatal dose of Propofol.

Swift, Bieber win big in Europe

Taylor Swift and Justin Bieber were the big winners at the MTV Europe Music Awards last Saturday.

The 22 year-old **We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together** Swift and 18-year-old Canadian pop star Bieber scooped three awards each at the star-studded event hosted by supermodel Heidi Klum in Frankfurt, Germany.

Taylor - who made her first appearance at the annual awards ceremony and recently released her new album **Red** - picked up awards for Best Female, Best Live and the debut Best Look award. "I am so excited about tonight. It doesn't even feel real, to get to my first EMAs and to win three awards is unbelievable. I am blown away. I had a blast during the performance, that was the most production I've ever got to do during a performance, with all the circus acrobats. It was so much fun," Swift said.

As Long As You Love Me singer Bieber, who was unable to attend the event as he had a concert in Brooklyn the following day and is due to meet Selena Gomez for crisis talks following their split last week, picked up Best Male, Best Pop and Best World Stage awards.

Korean pop sensation Psy was awarded Best Video for his global hit **Gangnam Style**, which he performed on stage with an army of look-a-like dancers and included a special cameo by David 'The Hoff' Hasselhoff.

Other performers included British **R.I.P** singer Rita Ora, who kicked off the evening's festivities by performing the song as she descended from the rafters in a giant bird cage, as well as Alicia Keys, The Killers, Muse and No Doubt, who blew away the audience with their amazing live performance of Looking Hot.