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JaRIA Honour Awards Virtual Presentation Slated for July 4th

Luciano, Stephen “Cat” Coore, Owen Gray and the late Ewart “U-Roy” Beckford Among 27 Awardees

Kingston, Jamaica –The Jamaica Reggae Industry Association (JaRIA) will stage their much-anticipated annual awards ceremony, the JaRIA Honour Awards, on July 4, with 18 distinct award categories recognizing the Exceptional Contributions and Extraordinary Impact of a broad swathe of local and international music practitioners. Originally scheduled for February 28th as the distinguished concluding event of Jamaica’s officially designated Reggae Month, The JaRIA Honour Awards were delayed due to measures implemented to protect the production team and participants from the COVID19 pandemic. The rescheduled July 4th date coincides with the partial reopening of the island’s entertainment sector on July 1, as announced by Prime Minister Andrew Holness.

Musicians, singers, producers, engineers, deejays, sound system operators and media personalities are among this year’s 27 honorees. The winners in all but two of the categories are determined by the JaRIA Awards selection committee, comprised of industry players. The Breakthrough Artiste of the Year and Song of The Year winners are determined by public vote and will be announced at the awards ceremony, which will be held at Kingston’s historic Little Theatre; the ceremony is closed to the public due to Covid-19 restrictions but can be watched online. The JaRIA Honour Awards will feature live performances in tribute to the awardees by veteran singers Freddie McGregor and Johnny Clarke and rising female vocalist Joby Jay. The event will be hosted by Jamaica’s frontline workers including nurses, street vendors, taxi drivers, supermarket clerks and others who have provided the many essential services that kept Jamaican society functioning during the lockdown period.

“It is very important to host the JaRIA Honour Awards at this time when the entertainment industry is being given a chance to breathe after 16 months of lockdown because Jamaicans and all lovers of reggae need to understand the importance of celebrating ourselves and the unsung heroes that we sometimes take for granted,” says JaRIA Chairman Ewan Simpson. “The Grammy

Awards and other award ceremonies were held throughout the world but the way our lockdown in Jamaica occurred affected our ability to produce the JaRIA awards. But we insisted that we must do it, so we had to 'wheel and come again' to ensure that we are able to compliantly produce our awards, and, as JaRIA, that we set an example, showing that we can do the things we need to do, compliantly, proudly, and celebrate ourselves, even in the midst of a pandemic. The awards will bring attention back to Jamaican quality entertainment."

The JaRIA Lifetime Achievement Award for Dedication to The Music Industry will be presented to veteran singer **Owen Gray**, 81, who has resided in England for many years. Gray's work spans the R&B, ska, rocksteady and reggae eras of Jamaican music and he is considered the island's first home-grown singing star, his breakthrough arriving with "Please Don't Let Me Go," which he recorded in 1960 with a young, aspiring producer named Chris Blackwell.

The late rocksteady singer **Phyllis Dillon**, vocal duo **The Blues Busters (Phillip James and Lloyd Campbell**, both deceased) the godfather of rap, the late **Ewart "U-Roy" Beckford OD** who passed away in February, and reggae's messenger, roots singer **Jepther McClymont OD** a.k.a. **Luciano** will be conferred with Icon Awards. Receiving Icon Awards as Gospel Artists are singer **George Banton** and the group **Change. Handel Tucker** and UK based brothers **Leroy and Dave Heywood**, better known as **Mafia and Fluxy**, will be honored for their Exceptional Contributions to the Reggae industry as producers. English outfit **Aswad**, formed in London in 1975, will be acknowledged for Exceptional Contribution as a Band; guitarist/cellist **Stephen "Cat" Coore** of the legendary band Third World and late guitarist **Dalton Browne** who passed away in November 2020, will be recognized for their Exceptional Contributions as Musicians (Instrumentalists) while the Exceptional Contribution as a Songwriter award will be bestowed upon composer/pianist **Harold Butler OD**.

Shane Brown and **Orville "Rorey" Baker** will be acknowledged for the Extraordinary Impact they have had as engineers and the late, great trombonist **Ronald "Nambo" Robinson**, who transitioned in 2017, will be recognized for his mentorship. Additional posthumous honors for Exceptional Contributions will be given to producer **Edward O'Sullivan OD**, better known as **Bunny Lee**, and prolific guitarist **Winston "Bopee" Bowen**. Two pioneers of British sound system culture will be celebrated for their Extraordinary Impact, **Lloyd Coxson** and the late **Ephraim "Count Shelly" Barrett**, who passed away in 2020.

Three outstanding media practitioners will be recognized for their Extraordinary Impact: IRIE FM talk show host/dub poet **Allan Hope**, a.k.a. **Mutabaruka** and the late veteran radio presenter **Tony Young**; Germany based Jamaican music online platform **Reggaeville** is acknowledged for work in New Media.

The promoters of the longstanding Kingston street dance **Rae Town** will be recognized for their Extraordinary Impact and The Gregory Isaacs Foundation Award will honor **Orville 'Bagga' Case**, a prolific illustrator and designer responsible for over 150 album covers.

"We are very proud of the variety of awards and awardees; we want people to understand that JaRIA is not just about roots reggae and those who existed 30, 40, 50 years ago as part of the music, but it is also about those who are making inroads now, those who are doing cutting edge

material, new media or working in gospel as much as those who are working in secular music, those who are flying the flag globally as well as those who are holding it down here at home,” adds Ewan Simpson. “It is so important that JaRIA, as the umbrella organization that is trying to pull together and celebrate Jamaica’s entertainment industry in an all-encompassing way, gives pride of place to who we are and to reggae, not just as a music form but as a preeminent Jamaican cultural form.”

The JaRIA awards will begin at 3 PM Jamaica time (4 PM ET) and can be watched on Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica (PBCJ) TV and on the Facebook pages of the Honorable Olivia Babsy Grange, The Ministry of Culture Gender Entertainment and Sports and the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission (JCDC). The awards can also be viewed on Reggaeville’s YouTube and Facebook pages and the YouTube page of Brazil’s Surforeggae Oficial.

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About the Jamaica Reggae Industry Association:

JaRIA is a non-governmental not for profit organization that represents and advocates for the interest of the Jamaican Music and Entertainment Industry.

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