

# DADDY RINGS



Interview with Daddy Rings - 23.07.2007

**As an artist who is in the Reggae scene since 1992 you must have passed several stations in life. Please tell us something about your history and how you get into the music business?** Music has always been a part of my mental and spiritual development. My grandfather was a very good singer and my mother is also a good singer. I received a guitar at the age of fourteen from one of my uncles that helped to shape my musical ability. My uncle was the owner of a sound system called "Culture Shanty Hi Fi". Some of the youths in my community including I would go with the sound where ever it played. That is how I learnt to dj. I came to Kingston in 1990 where I went to school. There I met some friends who heard me making songs. One of whom was Patrick Johnson who introduced me to his friend Oliver who knew King Jammy's. I did an audition which led to quite a few recordings. In 1996 I got the opportunity to meet Gussie Clarke who produced my album "Stand Out". The album was heard and loved by many including BenGee who decided to help me to promote the album in Germany. In doing so I have met some positive people who showed me positive vibes just to name a few: Matthias, Ingo from PowPow sound and Gentleman.

**You are born and raised in the country. What is the difference between city and country life?** The difference between city life and country in Jamaica is that many people find country life to be more difficult which I understand because many facilities that are available in the city are lacking in the country. As for me who was born and raised there it was a good experience. My parents weren't rich but they were proud people. Being the second child and only son of my parents five children I was never given any preferential treatment. We each received our equal share of love and discipline and now that I am living in the city where there is ongoing activities I rely on my rural experiences to be vigilant in order to excel.

**Being a Rasta and delivering strong cultural lyrics please tell us how important Rastafarian culture is for your life?** Rasta is a way of life for me. It is deeply rooted in my everyday livity and connects me to my roots. Rasta is my past and my present, Rasta is love, peace and happiness.

**Years passed by before you hit the market with your 2nd album. But you was always hard working and was involved into few projects in Europe like the songwriting and touring with Gentleman or brilliant recordings you have done for PowPow, or the collaboration with concious rapper Sékou. At all you traveled alot and have seen several places. How you think about the European Reggae scene?** Coming to Europe since 1996 I saw Reggae

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steady growing. The European Reggae scene is tremendous. When I perform in Europe I see the love and appreciation for my music. Europe has also grown to be one of the biggest Reggae markets in the world so I see it play a good role for the music.

**Your second album "The Most High" is just released. Listening to the album it is obvious that you have an extraordinary lyrical talent. What is the inspiration for your excellent lyrics?** I get my inspiration from the music I listen. The people and events happening around me but most importantly the inspiration from Jah.

**The depth of your lyrics and its attitude reminds me of some of the great Veteran Roots Artists. What do you think the younger generation of artists can learn from them?** I think what the younger generation of artists can be influenced by is the clean lyrical content of my music as well as the positive messages being sent. I want them to recognise that one doesn't have to use derogatory content to make good music.

**"The Most High" is full of great lyrics of which some deliver the truth, others are uplifting and inspiring, another one is full of positive vibes and the next one make you feel the warm sunshine of Jamaica. And on top there are teachings and words of hope and strength. What are the most important things for you to deliver to your people and the world?** One of the most important things for the people is to understand the message put forward in the music as it is meant to uplift their way of life. Open the door to unity and promoting oneness amongst the people of the world.

**In your combination with Gentleman called "The Future" you mention global warming. As well the world is a matter in another tune like "Want To Be" for example where you sing that mankind is destroying themselves by their own hand. What is your view on the world situation and how Jamaica is dealing with environmental problems?** The people of the world need to be more responsible for their actions as there are grave repercussions. Better care of the environment is needed. Jamaica is making strides in this arena by the establishment of state aided environmental monitoring bodies to manage the process.

**The experience you made in Africa is mentioned in the tune "The Most High". Tell us, what was your experience there in Africa?** My visit to Africa was an eye opener as the impression presented by the television was one of savagery and lack of civilisation of a people. This was not my reality nor experience as I met and communed with intelligent beings and experienced a rich culture and admirable places. In fact some of the areas I visited reminded me of

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yard. Ghana is a beautiful place and the practices were first world in most aspects.

**Your lyrics are expressing a strong solidarity with the ghetto youths. With “Second To None” - just to mention one - in which you emphasize that solidarity to the people. What message you have for the ghetto youth?** Ghetto is a state of mind so youths have to rise above negative influence and chart a future for themselves. They have to be self reliant and know that what you put in is what you get out, no one can decide your destiny, it’s all up to you. In the same breath society need to provide social programmes and skill training for the youths.

**You are well known for the ganja anthem “Herb Fi Bun”. On the album you come up with two very deep ganja tunes. What do you think about the usage of Ganja?** As we speak Jamaica has set up a Commission for the decriminalisation of Ganja, headed by Professor Barry Chevannes, and that is the same way the I feel about it that the Herb should be free.

**Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia is the central figure in many of your songs. How important is Haile Selassie I for you?** Haile Selassie is the Almighty High so therefore I reverence him and he is my King.

**You did voice one tune on a Rockers-riddim called “Raw Truth”, which seemed to be inspired by the Roots-sound of the 70s. With “The Wiff” you take the people one more time to the Golden Days of Reggae. “Cut Off” and “The Weed Song” also give the listener a spice of that great period of Reggae Music. Obviously you is someone who love him Roots tunes. Do you have a special preference for those classic tunes?**

The classics are the foundation for the Reggae Music, Reggae evolved from it and so those early music and artists form and is an important aspect of what I am doing now. I have nuff respect and appreciation and I love listening to them and they form a treasured part of my musical collection.

**Using different producers is giving your album a versatile mix of different styles. Who did you work with as producers?** I worked with Stephen Stanley, Mikey Bennett, Anthony Senior from the Al.Ta.Fa.An label, Gary Groeper from ababa janhoy records and Matthias Reulecke. Dia from Builders Music, Ingo from PowPow-Productions, M. Reid and Andy Livingston.

**You are working a lot in the Reggae scene. How you see the development of Roots Reggae in Jamaica?** Roots Reggae has been around for a long time but there has been a resurgence in its delivery as a number of musicians are embracing the positiveness that this genre of music brings. Roots Reggae is

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currently experiencing positive waves among the people, both locally and abroad.

**Roger Steffens who is chairman of the Reggae Grammy Committee argues for splitting the Reggae Grammy into two awards. One for Reggae and one for Dancehall. Is it a good idea to separate Reggae from Dancehall?** I think it is a move in the right direction as the two have marked differences and uniqueness so the appeal differs. The Grammys honours music by types so this would be most fair to the artists.

**You are well known and loved by the German audience for being a long year stage partner for Gentleman. How you rate the German audience?** I appreciate them for the support to my songs and rate them as lovers of Reggae Music which they have embraced and continue to support.

**Over the years you spent a lot of time in Germany. How is life in Germany different from Jamaica?** Germany and Jamaica have marked differences in climate and culture however they seems to share some similarities where the Reggae is concern.

**Last not least: Will your German fans have a chance to see you in the near future live and what are your future plans?** There are plans to promote the album locally and internationally. My German fans will get a chance to see I in the begining of 2008.



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