Glorious 70...

Happy Earthstrong

Dr. Rita Marley

Doctor of Letter (LITT) University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica
Order of Distinction (Government of Jamaica)
Nana Afua Adoebia (Queen of Development, Konkonuru Community, Ghana)
Personality of the Year (Ministry of Tourism, Ghana)
Honourable Marcus Garvey Lifetime Awards (Caribbean American Heritage Awards)
Living Legends Award (African International Media Summit)
100 Most Influential Contemporary African Diaspora Leaders
Lifetime Achievement Award, International Women’s Forum (2013)
Honorary Ghanaian Citizenship
Bridge Builders Awards (AFU)
Caribbean Hall of Fame
Mother, Grandmother, Great Grandmother.
Entertainer
Entrepreneur
Philanthropist

Wholehearted Thanks for being a beautiful sunshine and immense blessing to us all.
Wishing you abundant happiness, great health & magnificent life.
We Love You & Harambe!
If one desires to understand the context from which Jamaican culture evolved then one could best liken this to a lad who inherits a magnificent house, adorned with fine furniture of France, expensive stones from the English Palaces and gold from the Spanish coffers. Envious his neighbours are, for this is their desire. They are disappointed therefore when one day he rips its contents apart, redesigning it into a home that better reflected him.

African descendants’ efforts towards establishing their culture are best reflected in Bob Marley’s words “children get your culture, and don’t stay there and gesture or the battle will be hotter and you won’t get no supper. Wake up and Live.” Revolutionaries including Paul Bogle, Nanny, Sam Sharpe and their followers, who were infused with the ancestral spirit of Akan, Zulu, Igbo and Yoruba never welcomed the imperialist

"CHILDREN GET YOUR CULTURE, AND DON’T STAY THERE AND GESTURE OR THE BATTLE WILL BE HOTTER AND YOU WON’T GET NO SUPPER. WAKE UP AND LIVE"

William Knibb Memorial High School Captures Coveted Rita Marley Foundation (JA) Essay Competition Title for 2nd Consecutive Year

Read Nastacia Linton’s Winning Essay:

No, woman, no cry;
No, woman, no cry;
©Bob Marley Music Inc.
order, and therefore collectively toppled European slavery.

European imperialism, commonly referred to as Babylon by Rastafarians, remained resolute in attempting to subjugate the Jamaican culture even into the post-colonial era. However, the ancestral spirit of resilience led cultural pioneers to feverishly fight this imposition. Their effort gave rise to cultural expressions such as The National Dance Theatre which gave audience in Jamaica and abroad a repertoire inspired by our own diverse ethnic culture, the Ward Theatre and Little Theatre which rejected European fairy-tale characters and instead honoured West African characters including Bredda Anancy and Bra Tacooma. The ancestral cry of, “Wake up and Live” also reverberated in unique musical genres the people created including Mento, Ska, Rocksteady, Reggae and Dancehall (Ministry of Education, 2003).

One must acknowledge that each generation must continue to combat Babylon’s imposing ideals. Generations cannot afford to, “stay there and gesture,” or their culture will be swept from under their feet. It is therefore distressing that the youths have again become complacent, failing to realise that all their forefathers have fought for, is still being attacked by Babylon. Bob’s rallying Cry, “Wake up and Live!” therefore still persists. Youths today must be aware of those imperialistic factors striving to challenge their culture, and like their ancestors oppose them.
Social media is one imperialistic factor that attempts to challenge the African culture. Social media creates for its users a cyber-world which possesses its own cultural ideals. Many of these ideals are however akin to those of the European environments from which they emerge. The people of African descent have become engrossed in social media. However, this environment’s ulterior motive is to transmit subliminal messages geared at getting the people to ignore or become antagonistic towards Africa’s culture (Gilani, 2014). Like globalisation, the significant impact this has had on the people is evident in their practices. These include the risqué behaviours of youths who broadcast their sexual escapades and other immoral activities on social media platforms, the desire to copy and perpetuate practices of the popular culture such as skin bleaching and salacious dressing. In this cyber world western propaganda about Africa and the African culture are fed to its users daily. Babylon’s attempt at cultural destabilisation rages on through these platforms. Youths therefore must become aware that this is not the time to “stay there and gesture.” They must defend their culture.

Another imperialistic factor seeking to challenge the African culture is the scant regard for education. Under slavery the plantocratic society perpetuated the lie that blacks had little need for education and also that they were not desirous of it (Thompson, 2005). Education therefore was reserved for the white, privileged minority. This is evident in the fact that only 45 of the present 165 schools existed in Jamaica prior to 1962. It is time therefore for youths to awake, dispel this lie, and recognise that their history began before the inception of European enslavement. An examination of their rich lineage would reveal that Western medicine originated in Ancient Egypt some 5000 years ago. The Youths cognizance of their culture would reveal that Egyptian physician Imhotep diagnosed and treated over 200 diseases, 15 abdominal, 11 bladder-related, 10 rectal, 29 visual and 18 skin, hair, nail and tongue related 2,600 years before Greek physician Hippocrates who Europeans proclaimed as “the father of Medicine.” They will learn too that in the 12th century Africans and Europeans were educated in the three universities of Timbuktu (Windsor, 1969). They will realise too that the Moors ruled Spain for 800 years (711 AD – 1492). During this time, Spain and the rest of Europe made scientific progress in Astronomy and The Sciences. The Apathetic response to education therefore is not innate to Africans; instead it is a slavery infection.

In concluding, Bob Marley reassures the youths, “have no fear in this generation for non a dem can stop the time.” It serves as a reminder that the ancestral spirit of revolution still flows through their veins. Therefore, they must work collectively in the restoration of the urn of resilience that has been buried under Babylon’s imperial order. It is time to heed the call, “Wake up and Live!”

Works Cited
Distinguished ladies & gentlemen, teachers and students.

It is with tremendous joy and great honour that I welcome you the 3rd Annual Rita Marley Foundation (JA) Essay Awards Ceremony. The Essay Competition is one of several projects the Rita Marley Foundation (JA) established to actualise one of its goals which is to empower youth through education.

Other Projects in Jamaica include:

• Tertiary education scholarship funding. Currently assisting a student studying naturopathic medicine at Bastyr University in the U.S.

• Annual inter high school Public Speaking Competition. To help develop articulate, confident speakers.

• Back to School supplies for underprivileged students. This ensures students have requisite tools for the school term. It also helps ease the burden on financially challenged parents.

• Pen Pal Letter Writing Exchange Programme. Students at the Konkonuru Methodist Basic School in Ghana, West Africa and the Holy Trinity Basic School in Jamaica have forged wonderful friendships. Learning each others cultures and language.

• Reading Skills Programme at Basic Schools.

• Skills training for adolescent mothers at Mary’s Child Home.

• Cultural Storytelling project, designed to pass on the history, folklores and culture of Jamaica and Africa to the youth.
The Essay Competition aims to encourage students to write well. Good writing skills are an asset. A requisite for academic and professional success. Writing allows an individual to communicate effectively. Students who write well outperform those who don’t. As they’re able to effectively express themselves. Organisations hire persons who could speak well and write well. Their work is free of grammar and spelling errors. Persons with those skills could prepare effective reports, presentations and communicate masterfully on paper and via e-mail.

Lyrics from the songs Natty Dread and Wake Up & Live by the Hon Robert Nesta Marley (Bob Marley) were entwined to create the topic for this year’s Essay Competition. The topic, “Children Get Your Culture, and Don’t Stay There & Gesture Or The Battle Will Be Hotter & You Won’t Get No Supper. Wake Up & Live! It was selected by Dr. Rita Marley, Founder/President of the Rita Marley Foundation. It allows students depth and breadth for interpretation and expression.

We’re overjoyed to have HIC Foundation partner with us as the main sponsor for this event. This our second collaboration. We’re also thankful to Blue Moon Publishing for its gifts of internship opportunities for the 1st and 2nd place winners. This will provide practical introduction to aspects of writing and publishing. And also the prize of Summer Writers Workshop for the semi finalists and finalists.

York Castle High School, Papine High School, William Knibb Memorial High School, Wolmer’s Boys’ High School and Wolmer’s Girls’ High School are here today. We commend you all. We encourage the teachers to continue guiding, motivating and encouraging students to write well.

A qualified panel comprising Mr Vernon Derby, Dr. Donna Hope, Ms. Beverley Lashley and Dr. Rita Marley, judged the entries and determined the rankings and overall winner. Their decision will soon be revealed.

Students, we implore you, no matter the results of this competition, continue the art of writing. As it is a key to great achievements.
The Heart Institute of the Caribbean Foundation is thrilled to be in partnership once again with the Rita Marley Foundation supporting another educational programme aimed at empowering our young people. I want to congratulate Dr. Rita Marley and her team for taking on such initiatives that hone the speaking and writing skills of our young people, while simultaneously building their confidence and encouraging them to be the change they want to see in Jamaica. At the Heart Institute of the Caribbean and the HIC Foundation, activities such as these form a very important part of our outreach to the nation. We are keen on ensuring young people have the tools they can draw on throughout their lives to make positive change.

The HIC Foundation was founded in 2008 and has many initiatives aimed at increasing access and affordability to the services of the Heart Institute of the Caribbean. We have been inspired and motivated to be innovative and to think outside of the box coming up with, and implementing solutions that give Jamaicans access to high quality cardiovascular services at affordable prices.

One such solution is our community clinic which was put in place to accommodate patients with limited financial resources by offering reduced prices on all our procedures on designated days. However, access to affordable cardiac care is still limited by the absence of cardiac programmes in low income communities, and the distance and cost to travel to the locations that do provide cardiac care. The HIC Foundation is committed to bringing heart care closer to our patients and has initiated HIC Heart Stations. The HIC Heart Station provides an accessible and affordable way for people to get their hearts checked right in their community, while also providing a pathway to further treatment at the Heart Institute of the Caribbean if necessary. Furthermore, the Heart Stations create both employment and skills acquisition opportunities for young people in these communities.
We are so excited to be here today in partnership with the Rita Marley Foundation motivating and inspiring our young people. Before I end, I would like to thank the students for taking on this challenge, and for sharing their insights with us. I would like to charge them to continue to think creatively. We learn so much from you and Jamaica has so much to gain from your ideas.

Thank you.
students requested answers to various issues that impact the youth. Here are details of the discussion:

The Prime Minister expressed he felt happy to see two young men excel; because he usually sees girls for those courtesy calls. Permanent Secretary Mrs. Elaine Foster-Allen concurred. The Prime Minister asked Xaundre Mohansingh (2015 winner, 18 years old) and Bobby Francis (2016 winner, 15 years old) to tell him a bit about themselves. After each spoke, Prime Minister Andrew Holness was in awe. With delight he stated, “I feel empowerment, persuasive, confident, articulate.” And further added “Public speaking appeals to your reason. Public Speaking is a prerequisite to be in politics. You have to be passionate about whatever it is you want to do. It’s the first sign of integrity. Once you discover your passion, go with your passion. If you lose passion, don’t occupy the position or the people will suffer. Whatever you do, pursue it with passion.”

Xaundre Mohansingh (2015 winner) Glenmuir High School asked “What will be your legacy as Prime Minister?” He responded, I don’t believe in eulogies. One of the things that will be written is Jamaica on its way to universal literacy. Transformation in education (reading, writing, communicating, computing) started with me.” Also said “Another legacy that will have to be analysed. I’ve contributed much to non-confrontational politics in Jamaica. I’ve brought in a new generation of people in politics. Returning Jamaica to growth path, that will be another legacy and also making Jamaica a peaceful place through reduction in crime and violence.”

Bobby Francis (2016 winner) York Castle High School queried “What is your main goal for education among the youth?” The Prime Minister smiled and said himself and others were discussing it just yesterday. He answered, “Universal secondary education would be another legacy. Tuition free education and career advancement programmes. Literacy and full enrolment at secondary level.” He also said “Make the education system more aligned to the economy.”

Xaundre Mohansingh (2015 winner) Glenmuir High School inquired, “Is the economy right for free education?” The Prime Minister said “Yes, we did it before. But we should not be elitists. Don’t like hearing persons who got free education saying it can’t happen. It happened with them; therefore, why not with others. Before only 30% of poor students could attend high school. One minister created the 70/30 rule to ensure 70% of space in schools was set aside for those coming to high school. Churches made primary education free (universal education for 130 years). Noone complained. The budget is arranged to make universal education free for those 3-18 years. In 2009 tuition free education was implemented.” The Prime Minister went on to stress the importance of education and its benefits to the entire nation.

Bobby Francis (2016 winner) York Castle High School questioned “We’ve heard instances of increased unemployment among youth. What is the cause and how would you irradiate it (how would you go about doing that)?” The Prime Minister quizzed Bobby by kindly requesting that Bobby share his solution. Bobby
responded “I believe the core factor is the implementation of programmes. We need to take a different approach in the classroom. Since some students cannot grasp classroom subjects. Schools should include excursions to the classroom experience.”

Hon. Prime Minister Andrew Holness then answered stating “When it comes to youth and being unemployed, you have to have a transmission mechanism between education and work. Therefore, Jamaica needs to develop a clear policy on work. One is volunteerism and one where you are paid. Every Jamaican leaving school should be involved in some sort of work. Work helps in transitioning to employment. Work refers to a programme of apprenticeship that can transition to employment.”

In closing, the Prime Minister implored the youth to take education seriously. As their knowledge and skills will benefit the entire nation. He also thanked the Rita Marley Foundation(JA), the students their teachers/principal for their contributions to Jamaica.
Mrs. Simpson-Miller stressed the importance of education in attaining great heights. She included Marcus Garvey’s quote to reiterate that point “Show me a prosperous nation and I’ll show you an educated people.’

Xaundre Mohansingh (2015 winner) Glenmuir High School inquired when she embarked on political career. The former Prime Minister shared her tenuous life’s journey from rural Jamaica to attaining the highest office in the land. Said it began as a young girl, attending Councillor’s meetings and being assigned responsibility to record the minutes. In 1974 upon advise from some persons, she ran for public office as Councillor and won. Mrs. Simpson-Miller told both students, they are future leaders. ‘One may become Prime Minister. Never allow anyone to beat down your spirit to triumph. Always make sure you get to that victory line.’

Bobby Francis (2016 winner) York Castle High School asked Mrs. Simpson-Miller whether there were other career interests before venturing into politics. Yes, she responded “I worked at Trade Union Congress as Assistant to the secretary. The n shared a laughable experience. “One day I gazed out of the office window. However, was shocked to see a group of stark naked men. I called the Secretary who was also very alarmed.” Mrs. Simpson-Miller said she never looked through that window again. However, letter learnt those men were farm workers being examined and processed.

Mrs. Simpson-Miller added, “As Minister of Labour I ensured proper dignified lodgement was provided for farm workers. She further said, “When you become Prime Minister its the people first. When you treat them well, you will always be elected MP. People love when you are honest and kind. Don’t be afraid to serve your country in different areas.”

When asked if she envisioned herself as Prime Minister during her youthful days, Mrs. Simpson-Miller responded “No, poor little black girl and my hair was not processed. One day Ms. Francis Keane was cutting my hair. Some nuns walked in and asked ‘why are you cutting that precious head of hair?’ So Ms. Keane immediately stopped.”

In closing the Leader of the Opposition emphasised her admiration for both students. She encouraged them to pursue their dreams. Make their country proud and added she would like to have them join her to contribute to this great nation. Mrs. Simpson-Miller shared that she is penning her memoir titled The Journey from Good Hall to Jamaica House and extended an invitation to both young men to one day seat with her for one hour while writing.

The students are genuinely thankful to the Rita Marley Foundation (JA) for the assistance provided in assisting them to realise their dreams. Xaundre Mohansingh shared “…..thank you to the RMF for having given me the unforgettable and invaluable opportunity to do all that I have done since the competition last year. It has really helped to carve me out as an individual and prepare me for the road ahead.” Bobby Francis extended considerable thanks to Dr. Rita Marley and the Rita Marley Foundation (JA) for making his dreams a reality. He looks forward to a career as a Constitutional Attorney and serving as Prime Minister of Jamaica. He extolled the Rita Marley Foundation (JA) for its assistance with preparing him for attainment of those goals.
PenPal Letter Writing Exchange & Cultural Storytelling Programmes at EOC Basic Schools

Forty Three (3-6 year old) smart and bubbly students of the Tekle Haimonat Basic School in Bull Bay, Jamaica feast on a story of legendary African folktale character Anansi the spider. The spirit of all knowledge of stories and one of the most important characters of West African and Caribbean Folklore. The programme presented by the Rita Marley Foundation (JA) in collaboration with acclaimed Storyteller, Mrs. Amina Blackwood-Meeks.

Students at Konkonuru Methodist Basic School, Ghana and Holy Trinity Basic School, Jamaica have developed a strong bond. Each refers to his/ her penfriend by name. Students in Jamaica recently sent gorgeous post cards to their friends in Ghana. All cards received with Mayor Apprecilove.

At the start of the next school term, additional students will join the programme.
Water for Humanity & Rita Marley Foundation continue providing safe and accessible pipe borne water for Konkonuru Community.

Yes!!! Water for Humanity & Rita Marley Foundation continue providing safe and accessible pipe borne water for the Konkonuru Community. A borehole is currently being constructed at the Alpha & Omega Home for the Aged, a facility operated by the Rita Marley Foundation to assist and care for seniors. Water for Humanity & The Rita Marley Foundation look forward to successful completion of this project. Check out next issue of HARAMBE........

Michael Ossae (Assembly Man for Konkonuru Town, Nurse Brenda Powell (RMF (Ghana) and Mr. Godfred (Contractor)
MORE HIGHLIGHTS FROM 3RD ANNUAL RITA MARLEY FOUNDATION (JA) ESSAY COMPETITION

PRESENTATION BY KEYNOTE SPEAKER
MS. Dorrett R Campbell
Deputy Chief Education Officer
Schools Operations
Ministry of Education

Salutation

It is a pleasure to be associated with this, the Third Annual Rita Marley Foundation Essay Competition Awards Presentation Ceremony.

I bring you greetings from the Minister of Education, Youth and Information, Senator the Honourable Ruel Reid, who is currently overseas on the Ministry’s business and could not be here today.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information welcomes the continued partnership with the Rita Marley Foundation and its sponsors,
particularly the Heart Institute of the Caribbean which is the main sponsor of this competition.

I admire, approve and applaud your long term goal of eradicating poverty and hunger in specific selected communities using as its tools: empowerment of those communities through the creation of economic investments, improvement of education opportunities and the development of knowledge and proper practice in nutrition and health care. This goal resonates so much with the goals of education that it is an imperative for us to sustain this partnership in all the ways we possibly can.

You know, ladies and gentlemen: we get a lot of things right in Jamaica through collaboration and partnerships. If we could just learn how to work together to build the kind of partnership that guarantees the safety and protection of our children - the kind of community partnership that erects walls of protection against the diabolic, hollow, heartless onslaught of bloody murderers of innocence - If we could just get that right, then that would be what's right with Jamaica.]

I am especially proud of the schools and students who have participated in this competition and I commend all of you as winners this afternoon. You may not earn the coveted prize of first place but I know that your essay would have been at very high standard to have been considered in a competition that places a high premium on creativity, quality and excellence.

Not only that, but you benefited from honing your writing and communication skills, as is one of the objectives of the competition. The results and outcomes from our national and external exams tell us that our language capacity is less than excellent; but this lack of excellence in language skills is not reflected or even measured by external exams only. It is painfully obvious in our daily interaction and communication with each other and cuts across all echelons of the society.

In fact I chuckle when I hear some blaming the Jamaican Creole for our inability or rather failure to master the standard English, because the good speaker of languages, particularly the English Language, is the one who is able to flow seamlessly and effortlessly on the language continuum - comfortably mastering and manipulating the Creole and comfortable with what it represents, yet firmly grasping the rudiments of the English Grammar [I am not talking about speaking nicely - the painful truth is that many of us who decry the
Creole are neither good speakers of the Creole nor good speakers on the English Language. And I am not hurling stones at anyone; I am merely making an observation.

But that aside: I am absolutely sure that my teachers played a coaching role in the students’ final entries and I would like to recognise and thank them for their continued selfless service to this country. You are a major part of the landscape of national development; not only in the subjects - I prefer to call them disciplines - you teach but your commitment to ensuring that our students get their culture through the many co-curricular and cultural activities you lead in your schools. […] er and I don’t see that in your job description… and perhaps in the next round of negotiations, you should ask for an allowance for that as well…]

But you and I know that is what every called teacher does and what every teacher is called to do – to harness the rich experiences of our students and channel them in such a way to helping them become ideal Jamaican citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen:
Please help me applaud students and teachers of Papine High School; York Castle High; Wolmers High School for Boys; Wolmers High School for Girls; and William Knibb Memorial High School.

The Rita Marley Foundation is a front runner in promoting positive values and attitudes in this country through initiatives such as this annual Essay Competition. And what better organisation to do so, than one that has bragging rights for supporting the development of and propounding our culture across the globe.

One of the aims of this essay competition is to spread positive messages about the impact of Bob Marley’s music on the youth, Jamaica and the world. In observing all that is taking place around us today, God knows we need the positive vibes and messages.

And if we are pessimists, we would conclude, like the late outstanding Guyanese poet, Martin Carter that:

Everything’s gonna be all right!
Everything’s gonna be all right-a!

© Bob Marley Music Inc.
This is the dark time, my love,
It is the season of oppression, dark metal, and tears.
It is the festival of guns, the carnival of misery
Everywhere the faces of men are strained and anxious.

Or like Richie Spice’s: earth a run
red, ten year old a look dem
owna bread; I hear a next yute
dead, for that’s part of our reality too.

It is true that at the forefront of
our consciousness is a world in
turmoil and chaos, where efforts
to make peace often end up in
war and attempts to reduce
poverty frequently produce
dislocation and pain. We watch
the “strained and anxious faces”
of our people as we continue to
experience what the late former
Prime Minister of Jamaica,
Michael Manley, expressed as our
“struggle in the periphery”. We
note the “carnival of misery”
being experienced by some
people and we must respond to
their call to improve the
conditions of their lives.

But I prefer the optimist’s perspective: It says, ‘the cup is half-full…’ and in the abundance of water the fool is thirsty: And why do I say this? Instead of lamenting what we are not and what we don’t have, what we ought
to have and ought not to do; we ought to build on what we have and seize the opportunities that exist. It
was the Governor General the most Honourable Patrick Allen who said, there is nothing wrong with Jamaica
that cannot be fixed by what’s right with Jamaica.

We just need the right kind of wisdom in the right kind of leadership in the right kind of organisations to
‘run things;’ and it is this appreciative inquiry perspective that the Rita Marley Foundation has worked
tirelessly to uphold.

This essay competition therefore serves to remind us that our dark time is really a sliver of our reality - a
subculture that threatens to subsume the positive culture, if we continue to accept the former as the norm.
We cannot allow the noise of the negatives to drone out the bigger and more sustainable point that there is still good in Jamaica and that there are still those like the Rita Marley Foundation; like our teachers; like our essayists, who work daily to promote wholesome values and attitudes through their creative talents.

One of the most fundamental constructs of culture resides in the concept of “identity”. This relates to how we see ourselves, and the values we place on our lives, our environment and our realities, and on each other. Hence, there is a direct correlation between cultural identity and the values and attitudes that we display.

I believe our artistes, who are proponents of our culture must see as an imperative the need to give our young people a positive mirror in which to see themselves and the people with whom they interact. I posit that Marley Music does exactly that.

By using lyrics from Marley Music as the theme for the essay, the Rita Marley Foundation is constantly holding up to our young people and to the rest of Jamaica another alternative – a better alternative – another mirror through which they can see themselves instead of what they see in the distorted looking glass of lewd, violent and crass lyrics that are peddled on a daily basis in all our spaces.

In Marley music our young people see strong caring yet resilient families communities and who bend sometimes under the pressure of extenuating circumstances, but with sheer will they pick up themselves knowing that their feet – their will to live is sometimes their only carriage so they have got to ‘push on through.’

In Marley Music our young people will find positive ways of asserting themselves, advocating for their rights, pursuing their goals relentlessly without having to step on anyone’s neck to do so, for he tells us to get up and stand up for our rights; he tells us to wake up and live; to flee from hate, mischief and jealousy that invariably result in crass and violent behaviour; lotto scamming …and St James.

In Marley Music our young people are encouraged not to lose focus in spite the difficulties in spite of the craziness around us; not to let go of your dreams but to work hard to translate those dreams into positive actions: For Marley music tells them, Don’t bury your thoughts; put your vision to reality, rise up from sleepless slumber; wake up and live.

In Marley Music, our children are taught to appreciate their indigenous culture and to appreciate and accept themselves the way the creator has made them – yes natural locs and all – and to use the talents they have to make something of themselves to help themselves to eat a bread: Children get your culture and don’t stay there and gesture; for the battle will be harder and you won’t get no supper

The music helps to build self-esteem and self-confidence and to encourage our youth to cultivate independent thought because ‘you have got a mind of your own…and we really shouldn’t mek nobody fool you or even try to school you…”

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So no, woman, no cry; No, woman, no cry; ©Bob Marley Music Inc.

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And yes the music sermonises and shows us a better way to live among each other, to love ourselves and love our brother man, forgetting the bitterness the jealousy and the hate and just get together in one love and feel alright.

Marley Music teaches us to be reasoned and reasonable in our dealings with others; to be respectful, honest, truthful and to accept responsibility for our actions [so if you shot the sheriff, own up to it and accept the consequences of your action].

And ladies and gentlemen: these are the values that our school system is trying to teach our students; these are the soft skills that we would like them to have before we unleash them to society.

There are so much values and attitudes promoted in his music and so many lessons from which our students can learn that I have got to thinking that in the same way we teach Martin Carter and other Caribbean poets in our schools as an integral part of our curriculum; in the same way we now have a whole department at the UWI focusing on Reggae Studies, we really should explore the possibility of formalising Marley Lyrics as poetry in our Caribbean Literature courses both at the secondary and tertiary institutions and lobby for CXC to include those lyrics in the syllabi of CSEC and CAPE. Now this is not Minister’s or my Ministry’s position as yet but this is something that I would like to work with people like Dr Hope and the Rita Marley Foundation to explore and propose to my Ministry.

I have to say this: I grew up on Shakespeare and Bob Marley. I got a steady diet of the former from my high school teachers, through college right up to the University and my grandfather concertedly countered Shakespeare with Marley lyrics. He used to tell me that there was nothing Shakespeare said that Marley didn’t say in his lyrics and said it more profoundly and simply, “and after all him is we own.”

My grandfather advised me that I didn’t need to retort with crass words in any conflict, I should just quote Marley and argument done; I didn’t need to reach for a Shakespearean quote to express how I might be feeling about a situation or to make a commentary about life, I could just draw for the poetry of Bob Marley. And he was right and at a critical juncture of my life I was toying with the idea of explore for my thesis a comparative analysis of Marley and Shakespeare as two timeless poet who had a firm grasp on the varies and vicissitudes of life: Marley and Shakespeare, they hab a word fi ebrybody.

Can I therefore, ask our young people present here today to choose to consume what is wholesome and positive and empowering over what is lewd and crass and violent?

You have the power of choice and you have the alternative, choose to listen to clean conscious music that can inspire you, build you up and not to thwart your sense of self and distort your value system.

Once again, thanks to the Foundation; Thanks to Dr Marley; thanks to Bob Marley for working so hard to help make Jamaica the place to live, grow, do business, raise families and yes… retire.
Remarks by Mr. Lenford Salmon
Senior Advisor to Minister Hon. Olivia Grange

Salutations...
I am truly honoured to be here today among so many bright, young and creative minds.

I’d like to start by congratulating Dr. Rita Marley and her team at the Rita Marley Foundation Jamaica, for inspiring young minds to engage in this creative endeavor - this annual essay competition. The Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport acknowledges the work of the foundation and we applaud its mandate which includes the advancement and care of the vulnerable within our society.

The theme for the Essay Competition, “Children Get Your Culture, And Don’t Stay There & Gesture, Or the Battle Will Be Hotter & You Won’t Get No Supper. Wake Up And Live!” is not only inspiring, but “re-presents” a call to action that is urgently needed in our society. They are as poignant today as years ago, when the Hon. Robert Nesta Marley wrote the song. I am eager to hear how our young creative minds have interpreted this significant message into creative masterpieces. This theme, I’m sure, has caused you students to dig deep into your inner consciousness as a part of your creative process.

These haunting, taunting lines were of course lifted from the 1974 mega hit song “Natty Dread”, from the Album of the same name, which incidentally in 2003 was ranked at number 181 on Rolling Stone Magazine’s 500 Greatest Albums of all times.

Students, having gone through this exercise I am certain I don’t have to tell you the tremendous impact that Marley has made as a lyricist. There are events/observances every year that honour the life and legacy of Marley. His work was largely responsible for the wide acceptance of reggae music beyond our shores. His songs of faith, devotion, and revolution created a legacy that continues to live on, not only through the music of his family but also through generations of artists across the world, who have been touched by his genius! His music has had a tremendous influence on the world both in terms of reach and impact. In 2001, he was posthumously awarded The Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, an honour given by the Recording Academy to “performers who during their lifetimes, have made creative contributions of
outstanding artistic significance to the field of recording.” The words of his songs serve as encouragement to both old and young, in a world that is ravaged by wars, discrimination, poverty and social and political injustices.

Many of you know Marley’s famous “Redemption Song”, the words of which embodies our history of slavery. It speaks to us as a people, who were uprooted and forced to coexist in strange lands, expected to die or accept what was forced upon us - a process that undermined our identity and our dignity. But alas, that was not to be our destiny. We triumphed! We moved pass the degradation and we are here today a free people! The tone of Marley’s music was always one that outlined our realities, while inspiring a message of hope. I want you to reflect on this next observation: Today, Marley’s legacy and estate are among the world’s highest valued, and it is a product of the creative industries. It means that any of you students who are interested in joining the creative industries after you have completed school, can also do well for yourselves and your country! Bob Marley has long opened the doors to what is a thriving creative economy. The UNESCO/UNDP Creative Economy Report 2013 indicated that the global trade in cultural and creative products (goods and services) more than doubled between 2002 and 2011 reaching USD 624 billion in 2011.

Marley has made reggae into an important Jamaican brand. My Ministry is therefore taking steps to safeguard reggae within the context of International instruments of protection. We are aiming to submit our nomination to UNESCO to have reggae listed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. On the face of it, this move is really about securing reggae as a Jamaican brand, but in the medium to long term we know this kind of recognition will help strengthen how we negotiate our way in the global markets. Therefore, we expect economic benefits to redound to our music and related practitioners.

I note with great interest that one of the objectives of this Essay Competitions is the importance of writing for effective communication and achievement of academic and career goals, and I believe that engaging in competitions such as these will help you to fine-tune your communication skills, which will in turn make you excel in your academic and career pursuits. I can assure you that the further you advance in your academic endeavours, the more you will come to realize that clear communication is always necessary to carry out tasks effectively. Some of you may be sitting CXC Exams soon, and I can tell you that a great portion of your marks for each subject comes from your ability to communicate clearly the answer/s to each question. In fact, as you move even further to the university level you will need to call on the experience you will gain from these writing competitions to successfully move through your studies.

Students, in closing, I again congratulate each of you for getting to this stage of the competition. There are no losers at this point. You are a winner by virtue of your taking an interest in this important theme. It says you love your culture, and are respectful of the legacies of one of our greatest cultural icon, the Hon. Robert Nesta Marley. O.M.

All the best to each and every one of you. Ladies and Gentlemen I thank you all.

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BIG THANKS TO ALL WHOSE SUPPORT HELPED MAKE THE 3RD ANNUAL RITA MARLEY FOUNDATION (JA) ESSAY COMPETITION A VERY MEMORABLE SUCCESS:


We are GREATLY THANKFUL to MAIN SPONSOR, Heart Institute of the Caribbean Foundation, for its immense support and significant contribution.

TREMENDOUS THANKS to Blue Moon Publishing, Ms. Tanya Batson-Savage, for your notable involvement.

MAJOR THANKS to JUDGES: Dr. Rita Marley, Dr. Donna Hope, Ms. Beverley Lashley & Mr. Vernon Derby (Master of Ceremony & Judge)

SUPERB THANKS to KEYNOTE SPEAKER, Ms. Dorrett R Campbell, Deputy Education Officer Schools Operations, Ministry of Education.

HUGE THANKS to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church for the blessings.

ENORMOUS THANKS to PRESENTER Mr. Lenford Salmon, Senior Advisor to the Minister Hon. Olivia Grange, CD, MP, Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment & Sport.

GINORMOUS THANKS to MEDIA: Jamaica Gleaner, Loop Jamaica, Nationwide News Network 90.5 FM-Vernon Derby ‘At Your Service,’ Dr. Verene Sheperd ‘Talking History,’ Irie FM 107.5-Lady Rennae ‘Wake Up Call’

CONSIDERABLE THANKS to Ms. Terisa Thompson (CARICOM Youth Ambassador), Mr. Philip Riley (Charge D’Affaires-South African High Commission), Mitzie Williams (Volunteer), Mr. Wesley Dixon (photographer), Orlando Hamilton (Youth Peace Facilitator), Jamaica Pegasus management & staff

LOADS OF THANKS to MUSICIANS: Pure and Bongo Herman

SINCERE THANKS to Dr. Rita Marley (President/Founder), Directors (Cedella Marley, Stephanie Marley, Sharon Marley & Serita Stewart)

WHOLEHEARTED THANKS to Ms. Rosemary Duncan, Manager, Rita Marley Foundation (JA)

Earthday song to Dr. Rita Marley. Click link to listen.