



Rubber penis surprise for health workers

Jadel deserves it all

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Grim Reaper claims legends Blaxx, Jayson

Singer has only soca song to be featured on BET Jams



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As tension escalates between

Stop tripping!

Cardi B, Priyanka respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine

gram wrote, "The situation unfolding in Ukraine is terrifying. Innocent people living in fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones, while trying to navigate the uncertainty of the immediate future. It's difficult to comprehend how in the modern world this could escalate to such a

people of Ukraine."

Russia and Ukraine, celebrities from around the world have started reacting to the escalating crisis in eastern Europe. This was after Russia announced a "full-scale invasion" into Ukraine.

Among them:

Cardi B

Cardi B, who is known to speak her mind on issues, has now shared her thoughts on the escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine.

The Grammy award-winning rapper has criticised world leaders for focussing on the wrong issues. The rapper spoke on the issued when a fan asked her what she "thinks about this whole Russia thing."

Cardi responded to the user saying, "Wish these world leaders stop tripping about power and really think about who's really getting affected (citizens) besides the whole world is in a crisis. War, sanctions, invasions should be the last thing these leaders should worry about."

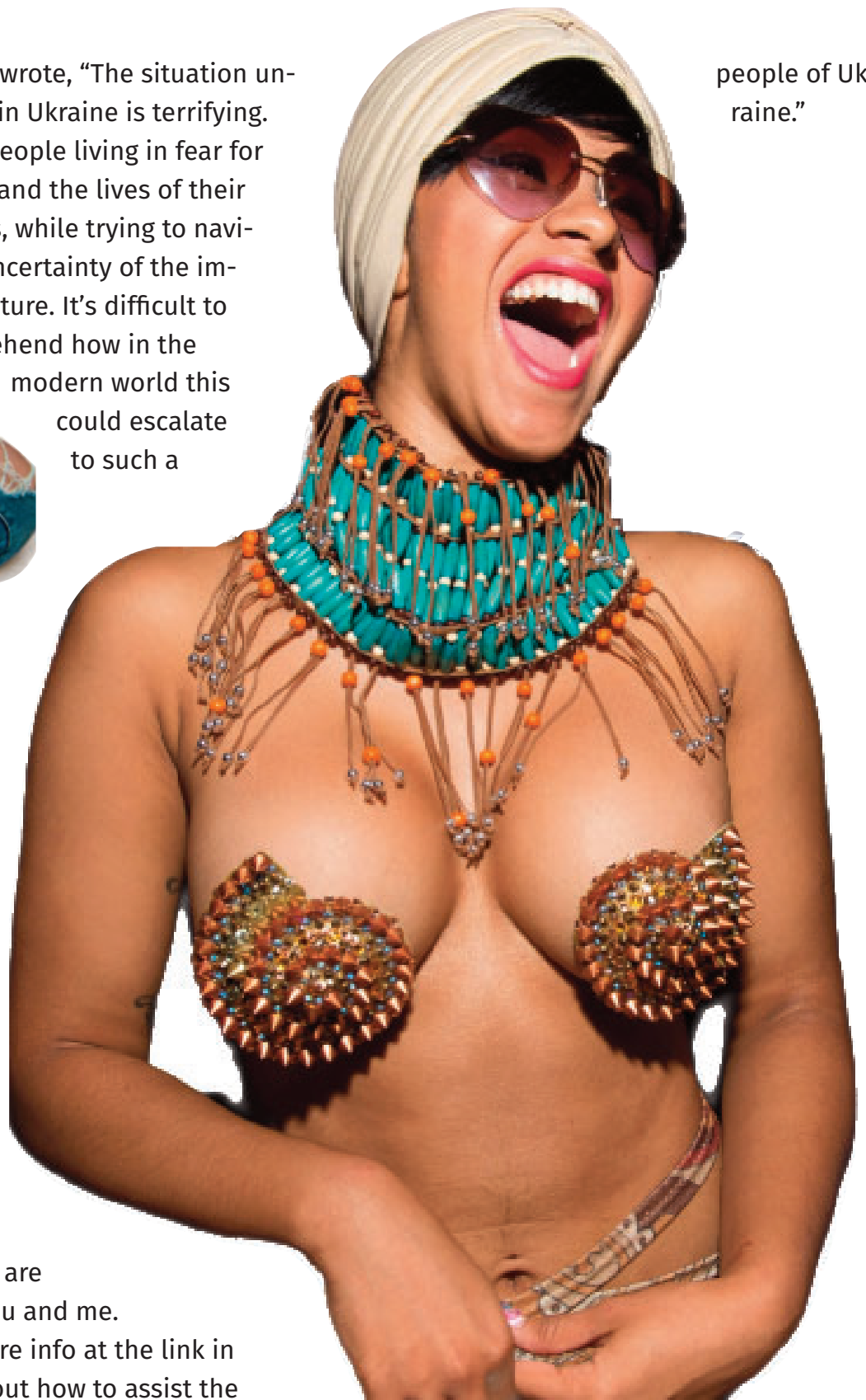
Priyanka Chopra

Priyanka Chopra reacted to the ongoing Ukraine crisis and dubbed the attack as 'terrifying'.

Raising her concern for the people living in the country, Priyanka on her Insta-

catastrophic point, but this is a consequential moment that will reverberate around the world."

She added, "There are innocent lives living in this war zone. They are just like you and me. Here is more info at the link in my bio about how to assist the



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Fans mourn as Soca star Blaxx passes from Covid complications

Popular Soca star, Dexter Stewart, better known as 'Blaxx', died at the Intensive Care Unit of the Arima Hospital in Trinidad today after contracting COVID-19, his manager Giselle Gellineau-Penrose has confirmed.

D'All Starz, of which he was the lead singer, issued a statement saying his family, along with the management and members of the band D'All Starz, regretted having to announce his untimely passing.

"May his voice be heard among the angels," it said.

The 61-year-old had been hospitalised since March 4.

In 2020, Blaxx was hospitalised with lung and kidney issues.

Fans had taken to social media playing some of his tunes, including his 2018 hit 'Hulk'.

They had also been sending prayers for the singer's recovery.

Trinidad and Tobago has registered 3,734 deaths and 137,000 infections from COVID-19 since March 2020.

Blaxx's real name is Dexter John Stewart, and he was born on December 21st. Jerry Stewart, the father who created the band "Jerry and New School," started him on his musical adventure when he was thirteen years old, and has continued to develop him into the person he is today.

He then became a member of the popular band "Fuccession," where he went under the stage name "Blaxx" for eleven years. Following that, he went on to play in a variety of different bands, including "Atlantic,"



Soca singer Blaxx has died from Covid complications

"Byron Lee and the Dragons," and "Blue Ventures," among others.

Blaxx met Mr. Roy Cape, the legendary artist, in 1999 and was invited to become a member of his family of artists (Roy Cape All Stars). It is a matter of historical record that Mr. Blaxx gratefully accepted the post.

Blaxx was in excruciating pain as a result of Covid and had to be admitted to the intensive care unit. Following reports that she had been brought to the Arima General Hospital with covid on Monday, the singer was taken to the hospital.

The news was confirmed by Giselle Gellineau-Penrose, his manager, in an interview with Newsday on Wednesday. Also, she indicated that he was under constant observation. Beyond that, there was no other information supplied to the public.

Going back in time, in 2020, he was hospitalised with kidney

and lung problems, but he was released from the hospital the following year, in November. In order to prepare for the better days of 2021, he hosted Blaxx and Friends at his residence. He had even completed and published his music for the Taste of Carnival season in 2022.

Blaxx's wife and family are in deep sorrow as a result of their loved one's untimely passing. Their identities, on the other hand, have not been revealed on the internet.

His funeral is set for April 6 at the Queens Park Savannah in Port of Spain.

An advertisement for Warwick Construction. The background is a light-colored wall with faint architectural drawings. A smiling Black man with a beard, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, an orange safety vest, and an orange hard hat, stands with his arms crossed. The text "HOME RENOVATION AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICE" is prominently displayed in large, bold, black letters. Below this, a smaller text box says "Need home renovation or improvement? Call us for reliable, affordable services". A yellow banner with the text "RENOVATION SERVICE" is positioned below the worker. A list of services includes: Drywall, Painting, Flooring, Kitchen upgrades, Basements, and General Renovations. At the bottom, a black banner with white text reads "WARWICK CONSTRUCTION". Below that, another banner says "NEIL NANDLALL CONTRACTOR +1 (647) 331-8709".

12-year-old wins 'Rajkumar title' one of Chutney's top prizes

MEET 12-year-old Aditya Seepersad, the young singing sensation and winner of the first ever Chutneymusic.com CRC Rajkumar 2022 title. The title of the competition could not have been more appropriate; "Rajkumar" means "prince" in Hindi.

"I am overwhelmed by the win," said Aditya whose submission "Mor Man Laga" took top prize over the weekend.

The Rajkumar title is part of the youth development programme of the popular website www.chutneymusic.com which was founded by Jason "DJ Floops" Sookram in 2018 to promote the East Indian culture and chutney music genre. Sookram laments the current stigma that is attached to chutney music. By working with young ones, Sookram hopes to change the dynamics as it concerns the topics that are usually sung in chutney.

"Aditya is a good singer whom we hope to groom from small to improve the quality of chutney music," said Sookram.

Aditya may be only 12 but he already has a growing repertoire of music and has had the opportunity to work with some of the biggest artists and producers on the music scene in T&T. Besides his love for cricket, football and video games, Aditya has a passion for music and loves playing the tassa and trap set. He began singing at the age of nine when he was asked to perform for his primary school's calypso competition back in 2018. Aditya was timid at first but he overcame his jitters and sang 'Education is the Key' which was written by Nermal "Massive" Gosine.

The following year, he took to the stage again with a song written by his dad Narine Seepersad and Kenneth Salik called "Plain talk" which blew away the competition and took first place. He then recorded his first Bollywood cover of the song "Mere Rashke Qamar," by that time he was a student at the Kevin Ji School of Music where he was learning to play the



NEW KID ON THE BLOCK: Aditya Seepersad

tabla. Although he had no vocal training whatsoever, he liked to see other kids dancing and singing to his music.

In 2020 he entered his school's calypso competition with the song "Trini Drumline". He came out on top and won best overall performance. Although Aditya was eager to perform, he had to take a break in 2021 to concentrate on his SEA exams. He was then asked to join Anthony Batson and a few talented kids for a Divali project that year and went on to do vocal training with Ramkissoon Ramdath, one of the best vocal teachers in Trinidad. For Divali last year, he sang a bhajan "Mero Man Raam".

One of his biggest dreams came true when he recorded his first ever soca parang "Ah Going Dey" last year. The song was written by Ricardo Melville aka Daddy Chine. Aditya recorded the song at Maha Studio which is where all the major performing artists in the country- the likes of Bunji Garlin, Machel Montano, Ravi B, KI and others have recorded. Aditya and his

nine-year-old brother Arvin later made the front page of a daily newspaper when Seepersad performed for Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley. Aditya is no stranger to Chutneymusic.com and decided to compete for the Rajkumar title. He sang the traditional chutney song "Mor Man Laga" which was given to him by Sunil Ramsunar which earned him the top prize.

The Form One pupil at Preysal High School wants to follow in the footsteps of his uncle Deodath Colai and become a pilot one day. In the meantime he is soaking up every bit of experience and knowledge about the music industry he can get his hands on. He has a management team MuzicMekanik Entertainment and is being guided by musical director, singer and radio announcer Rishi Ram. Aditya, whose role models are his dad and Raymond Ramnarine, already has some projects in the pipeline this year, most of his new music which will be released this year is original. His family plays a big role in the young star's budding music career.

Juno Award-winning calypsonian Jayson passes

There's no question that the music of Toronto's Caribbean Carnival is one of the most important elements of the festival.

The sounds of Carnival celebrations, across the Caribbean and North America, have evolved over the years, with the new generation taking the music that came before and making it their own.

"Everything takes a turn. It's like platform shoes," said John "Jayson" Perez, the only Juno award winner for calypso music, and founder of Pass The Torch, a non-profit calypso music academy for young Ontarians.

Perez passed away earlier this week after suffering a heart attack on March 22. He had been at the forefront of the Canadian leg of the beat that accompanies masqueraders as they jumped on the streets of Toronto.

Jayson won his Juno Award (Canada's version of the Grammys) for his 1991 hit "Soldiers We Are All".

Perez invested his time teaching young people about the traditions of the classic sound of calypso, a musical genre that originated in Trinidad and Tobago in the early 1900s.

In 2004 he created Pass the Torch, a program to teach the art form of writing and performing calypsoes to children and youth.

"Calypso is a slower beat so they can make you understand what they're saying," Perez said in an older interview with CBC Toronto.

"The music is a lovely story. They're the newspapers of the people. They bring you the news."

However, Perez said calypso has gone out of style, and is now a seasonal sound that only pops up around Carnival time.

"Calypso is not something like R&B and reggae — it is less popular, so you don't make any sort of money with it," said Perez.



The Toronto calypso community mourned Jayson's passing, with renowned calypso collector George Maharaj writing a tribute on Facebook: "RIP Canadian calypsonian Jayson, another kaiso soldier gone. John Jayson Perez an accomplished pannist, composer, arranger, singer, founder of the " Pass The Torch " calypso school for children in Canada, calypso radio host and many times Canadian calypso monarch sadly passed away today in Toronto. He will be fondly remembered for his monster hit " Drunken Sailor ". He was the only calypsonian to receive a Canadian Juno Award in the reggae category in 1991. Thanks for the

music Jay."

Former Canadian Calypso Monarch King Cosmos wrote, "He was an accomplished musician, composer, recording artiste and teacher whose passion and love of calypso knew no bounds. And he was equally passionate about promoting Canadian calypsonians whom he saw on par with the best."

Calypsonian Elsworth James wrote: "A long time stalwart in the Caribbean-Canadian music industry, we salute you, " while well-known deejay Dr Jay noted he was a "Canadian Calypso & Soca legend."

Funeral arrangements for Jayson are yet to be announced.

Hotline Bling: Iconic director X talks about his Trini roots

He has directed some of the most memorable music videos for the who's who in the entertainment industry, including Drake's "Hotline Bling", Rihanna's "Pon de Replay" and "Work" (with Drake), Iggy Azalea's "Fancy", Usher's "Yeah", Kendrick Lamar's "King Kunta", but it's soca music that keeps Director X moving in his down time. And what else do you expect from an iconic music video creator with Trinbago roots?

"My mother is Trinidadian," he declares.

Although he was born in Canada, X – born Julien Christian Lutz, always embraces his Caribbean roots. He is happy that although he doesn't visit T&T as he would like to (given his constant uber busy status), the heavy Caribbean presence in Canada makes him feel that he is never far from his mother's home.

His current workout playlist includes soca from friend Machel Montano (who he worked with on the singer and Ashanti's "The Road" music video), Swappi (Marvin Davis) and Kees Dieffenhaller.

Growing up, X told us that he really wanted to draw comic books.

"When I was young, in junior high, I thought I was going to draw comic books. Then in high school I found graphic design, so I was going to be a graphic designer."

By the end of high school, after having experienced life behind a camera as an intern at Much Music – a television station in Canada, X was certain that he wanted to become a director.

Given that he had a parent from the Caribbean, X's career ambition certainly raised eyebrows. You know there is a running joke that Caribbean parents always want their children to either be a lawyer or doctor, right?

He recalled, with much amusement, his mother and aunt's reaction when he



Director X: Caribbean parents always want their kids to be a doctor or lawyer

told them he was going to use his aunt's Brooklyn home, to shoot his first music video-which just happened to be Redman's "I'll bee dat".

"I am a Trini right, so you know what that conversation was? No mystery there. Especially back then.

"I'm going to be a music director,? I'm going to make videos? Please!

"I shot a music video at my aunt's house and she thought it was going to be some little thing. I remember her saying to me 'you've wasted a year in New York and now it's time to go to school.'

"Then I came and shot this big video. I came with trucks, lights, you know, the crew, and she was like 'oh okay, this is

really happening."

X's mother also found it "cute" that her son was shooting music videos. But when she met the equally iconic music video director Hype Williams, a man who X was fortunate to be a protégé of, she left him alone.

X's approach to making music video often involves listening to the music first.

How much autonomy does X have on any of his video projects is dependent on the artiste involved.

"Some people just want you to come up with an idea. Other times, the artiste has a clear idea and they want you to bring it to life for them. It's all part of the job."

Online T&T comic Ro'dey gets his shot at major Hollywood sitcom

After 30 successful years in comedy television, the producer behind classic hits such as *The Jaime Foxx Show* starring Jaime Foxx and Garcelle Beauvais, Martin featuring Martin Lawrence and Tisha Campbell and *Love That Girl*, starring Tatiana Ali (*Fresh Prince of Bel Air*), will be creating a new, Caribbean-themed comedy series featuring a mix of actors and star personalities from the region.

Top Caribbean comedian and entertainer Rodell Cumberbatch more widely known as Ro'dey announced his involvement in the project last week and his trip to Los Angeles California along with other Caribbean personalities including Ultra Simmo (Jordan Simmons) and DJ Ana (Ana-Leesa Ramnarine) in November to shoot four episodes of *House Out of Order*, said a media release from Black Collar Creative.

In an interview with Black Collar Creative Ro'dey said, "It's truly an honour to be casted for this new sitcom by executive director Bentley Evans. Getting the opportunity to work alongside a team of people who enjoy what they do just as much as I do is amazing, and being able to play a role that will highlight Trinidad and Tobago and Caribbean culture is a dream come true."

House Out of Order is a new comedy series from writer, producer and director Bentley Kyle Evans who has several classic, black American situation comedies under his belt and who co-founded Harvest Studios for content creation – one of the few black-owned studios. Recently, Evans reunited with Best Actor Oscar winner Jamie Foxx to executive produce *Dad Stop Embarrassing Me*, another new situation comedy starring Foxx, which is currently on Netflix.

"*House Out of Order* is about 'James' and his ex-wife 'Karyn' who own a home together where they raise their teenage son, 'Deon'," Evans in a remote interview with



Ro'dey has developed a fan base of over 500,000 online viewers

Black Collar Creative said.

"After getting a divorce, both of them refuse to move out. James moves his new wife 'Lisa' in, so Karyn moves her nosey mom in to spite him," Evans said as he explained the show's theme.

Evans has two number one comedy series records for 2021 – *Millennials* on AMC Network's streaming service ALLBLK, which is the number one show in the history of the network, the release said. *Dad Stop Embarrassing Me* is the second, and is also the number one comedy series in the world as reported by Netflix.

One of the key ingredients of the trend toward working more closely with Caribbean stories, is the importance of using talent and actors from the region and the Caribbean diaspora.

"Our team on the ground in Trinidad showed us Ro'dey's work and we were impressed. He has a lot of talent and casting him will take this show to a higher level,"

Evans said. "(He) is playing 'Xavier', James' good friend. He's super smart with a masters degree from Howard. He has a hustler's mentality and hates working for people."

Ro'dey is considered one of the top rising star comedians in the Caribbean, embracing the reach and flexibility of digital media as his main platform and making full use of his background in video production to create his content, the release said. As the CEO of his own production company, Blu Moon Productions, his skills in photography and videography have earned him critical acclaim in both film and staged theatre. He has also earned the title of "the one-man theatre company" as the creator, writer, producer, and actor of his social media comedy sketches.

Since his start in 2015, Ro'dey has developed over 20 characters that appear in these sketches – all played by him – entertaining over 500,000 of his fans online.

Jadel Deserves it All

Soca singer Jardine "Jadel" Legere's song *Deserve It All* has racked up 4.2 million views on YouTube. The singer said this is because it's been featured on MTV Base Africa and BET Jams. Her Carnival season has been packed and she's looking forward to travelling abroad in April to perform.

The singer said *Deserve It All* is the only soca song to be featured on BET Jams, and led to her receiving several opportunities and offers for collaboration.

"It started with the video being shared a lot, and then I started getting messages from African artistes asking for collaboration, only to find out that it was on MTV Base Africa. The video reached a million views in three weeks, within two months it had two million views, and then BET Jams picked it up as well. I only found out when someone sent me the video."

Jadel said she believed the song is popular because it was a diversion from her usual style.

"I believe what comes into it is vocal ability, the singing in it, because I'm singing more, not authentic soca and rap, I'm actually singing. It has an R&B effect and some spice, some jigginess, chants, so it was a different sound for them, and they pushed it out there which I was very grateful. It started to play there in October/November 2021, and immediately I started getting a lot of opportunities with producers having faith in me to put me on their big rhythms which I've never gotten the opportunity before."

The song was written by Jadel and producer Kit Israel, and the music video was shot by Spine on location at Las Cuevas Beach and The Villas at Stonehaven/Azulejo Tobago Mansion.

Jadel said she was offered the opportunity to be on the Buddy Pass Riddim produced by Miguel Joseph of Vibes Productions.

"He told me the rhythm was full, but he was giving me the opportunity to write something that was very big, and if it was big enough then he would find space and that's the only way I'd get an opportunity to be on the rhythm, so I wrote three songs to secure myself and he was impressed, he chose one which is *Up in the Party*, which



Jadel, the "Princess of Soca"

is the most popular song on the rhythm, and in the top ten in Trinidad, along with *Deserve It All*."

I Don't Want Your Man is another song which Jadel has recently released, written by Problem Child and produced by Sammick. She described it as a comedic bacchanal song. She also recently released *Spice It Up*, which she called a soca zess, crossover dance hall soca. It was produced by Nycenation and written by Rosario.

Jadel said this has been her best year to date. "I've been knocking on the door every year, this year is the first year I don't

have to monitor the radio and do a lot of marketing, this year it's on every shift, I'm confident that it's playing, it's a must play on every shift, and it's a really great feeling to be here, it's stress-free as opposed to the other years."

The singer said she left TT last year in May to do some things for her daughter, who is an American citizen, but was also able to book some shows.

She has performed in New York, Orlando, Atlanta, Texas, and Canada, as well as various Caribbean islands.



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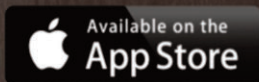


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Hiroko Okuda : the Japanese programmer who helped created Reggae's Sleng Teng rhythm

Reggae's Japanese connection

A musical revolution in Jamaica has a connection with a bouncy rhythm from a portable electronic keyboard that's the brainchild of a Japanese woman.

The pattern that resonates in the 1985 reggae hit by Wayne Smith, "Under Mi Sleng Teng," came from Casiotone MT-40, which went on sale in 1981, the first product Hiroko Okuda worked on after joining the Tokyo-based company behind G-Shock watches.

"It's really like my first child, and the child turned out so well it's outright moving," said Okuda, honoured as "the mother of Sleng Teng" among the hard-core reggae aficionados.

Sleng Teng is a form of digital Jamaican music that began in the mid-1980s, part of the rich repertoire of the disco-like genre called "dancehall". No one contests the key role played by artists like Smith and King Jammy, as well as the humble, battery-operated, \$150 MT-40.

One of the rhythm patterns Okuda created called "rock" on the MT-40 evolved

into "Sleng Teng riddim".

As legend goes, Noel Davey, the Grammy-winning keyboard player for the Marley Brothers, got an MT-40 from a friend, who picked it up in California. Before, Davey was blowing into a Melodica portable keyboard for that sound. Davey was toying around with the MT-40 and chanced upon the beat that's in Smith's megahit "Under Mi Sleng Teng".

And the rest is history, so to speak.

"You don't plan," Davey said, when asked about that moment. There are so many buttons on the MT-40, he was "fooling around," found it, lost it, then had to look for it and found it again. "It was a searching process," he said from Kingston, Jamaica. The power of reggae comes from its healing effect, like "therapy," being a music for the poor, for those moving up against apartheid, for the people, he said.

Davey, who has never been to Japan, said he would like to meet Okuda. The two share something in common — just as he feels he has never been properly credited

for his role in the history of reggae, he stressed Okuda deserves credit for the Casio instrument.

That groove went on to inspire much of subsequent reggae, distinctly heard in works by Sugar Minott, Ibo Cooper, Gregory Isaacs and Dennis Brown.

Michael "Megabass" Fletcher, a musician in Jamaica, said repetitive music isn't inferior. "It has its place," he said, demonstrating Sleng Teng on his bass. "A good song is a good song."

Fletcher said other keyboards were also used to play Sleng Teng, such as Casio CZ-101 and Yamaha DX100, from Casio's Japanese rival.

"Sleng Teng will never die," said Fletcher, who has performed or produced songs for Shaggy, Maxi Priest and Alborosie. Okuda, whose graduation thesis at Kunitachi College of Music in Tokyo was on reggae, was among the first recruits at Casio Computer Co assigned to work on musical instruments, then a new sector for the company.



You Deserve It!

Dominica offers itself as a viable new destination

Dominica is trying to attract more visitors its You Deserve It campaign which was launched by the Discover Dominica Authority.

This campaign is an extension of the Sa Ka Fete Campaign that was launched in 2021, reassuring travellers, agents and

other stakeholders that Dominica offers a safe and viable new destination for holidaymakers, a media release said.

The authority said, "Dominica is a new and undiscovered destination that offers a diverse range of experiences – from unspoiled nature to thrilling land and sea adventures to relaxing, therapeutic activities, rich culture, and flavourful Creole cuisine." It said "the nature island is the ideal way to get away from the hectic pace of life and its stresses."

The authority noted that Caribbean Airlines provides easy access to the island for visitors who desire to make the journey, with weekly connections from

Trinidad.

Travel protocols include a negative PCR test, completion of an online health questionnaire and an on-island Rapid Antigen Test, the release said.

"Dominica is unlike any other island in the Caribbean. Sites are uncrowded and unique – from the longest hiking trail that begins in the north and ends in the south, UNESCO World Heritage sites and soothing hot spas," destination marketing manager Kimberly King said in the release.

For more info: www.DiscoverDominica.com, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook and YouTube.

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From soundboard to spotlight

Keshav moves from production man to soca artiste

KNOWN for being half of the production duo Jus Now, producing soca hits like Big Bad Soca and Truck on D Road by Bunji Garlin and Junction by Machel Montano, Keshav Chandradath Singh has now added "artiste" to his several titles in the music industry.

Singh, who has loved music since childhood, is now gradually giving listeners a taste and feel of his musical style as a singer.

In more recent years, he has worked on popular tracks including Freetown Collective's Feel the Love, Kes The Band's IzWE, and Garlin's The Struggle.

He also produced the 2022 Live Again and Rice Pot riddims, and the 2019 Badang riddim with Rakka. He even had one of his collaborations (Winner Walk) featured in an Apple ad.

He said that just before the covid19 pandemic began, he was working on an album, as he felt it was finally the right time to begin this new journey.

"I started off writing, but now I just go behind the mic, and much like my bredrin Bunji Garlin, I deal with what I feel and it comes out on a mic. I might go back and change a line or melody or something."

He said when the world seemingly came to a standstill as the pandemic intensified, the time he spent writing and creating music "felt like years. In the beginning of this process, I felt like I was making up for lost time, since I'm sort of a late bloomer in this regard. But for me, I always wanted to do this and it was the plan all along."

In total, he wrote around 45 songs.

On March 12 – his 39th birthday – he released the EP Attraction on streaming platforms, with a launch party in the evening at the Dalai Llama, One Woodbrook Place, in Port of Spain.

The four tracks – Got Me Like, The Light, Swing, and Come My Way – were all written, produced, mixed and mastered by Singh and feature a mixture of pop, synth wave, Afrobeat, dancehall and soca.

He said he wanted to help listeners to



experience "what it's like to see love and attraction in my head, in a really simple way.

"I've had my brushes with and emergence in love and attraction and I wanted to put together something that felt like an authentic experience of different sides of love. From just meeting somebody, to being connected to them in an intense way – they're very inspired by moments."

His favourite track is The Light, which sounds as if it came straight out of a movie or video game from the 1980s.

Singh has always known he wanted to explore being an artiste, crediting a lot of his inspiration to music from the 80s.

"I used to listen to Michael Jackson, all the pop stuff that was out at the time, like many young boys and girls did. The 80s was a very exciting era for pop music and the music industry. It was larger than life at that time, and that stuff definitely left an impression on me."

Before this EP, he had released three vocal tracks – The Wickedest, Warm Sun

and Move.

Warm Sun, he said, was him trying to find a bridge between his typical soca material and the tracks he wrote for the album.

The newer songs, he said, "are a lot more moody, intense and artistic, so Warm Sun is a bridge between those two things and different sides: the dancey, drumming, colourful 'in your face' side and the thoughtful, moody, love-oriented side."

He said the feedback to that single was so encouraging that it pushed him even further to release an EP.

How does it feel to produce, mix and master your own EP?

For Singh, it was a "pure" process, "...In the sense that I've been a collaborator for so long, working within myself and collaborating with myself is a lot smoother...I don't have to articulate anything outside myself. It makes it a holistic, potent process."

He said the EP launch was amazing, as performing live is something he has always had dreams about.

Asked what he has had to get used to as a singer, he referred to something soca artiste Kees Dieffenthaler told him, that performing "is like a racecourse, and you're learning the course every time."

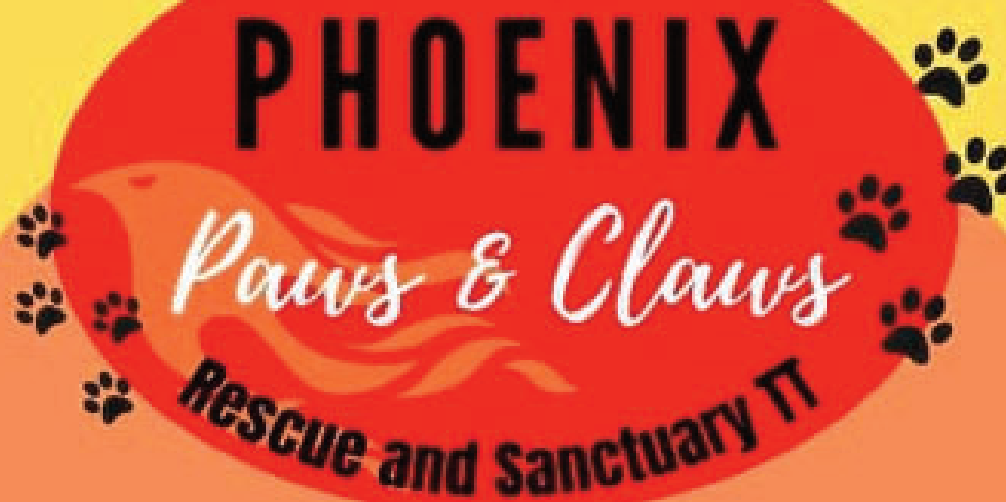
He said simple things like controlling breathing and how to use his energy properly were important things he focused on.

"Learning to pace yourself while still giving the most you can, learning things like making sure to hold the mic right...Simple fundamentals is what I'm really bent on making sure I execute properly."

Throughout the performances at the launch, the audience was very supportive as they cheered him on. His parents were enjoying themselves, dancing in the audience, until he brought his dad on stage so they could drum together.

He said his parents are "great advisers, and discerning, having been involved in the performing arts for so long. They have a lot of constructive criticism.



"I was so happy they were here to see it, because they live in Miami and I don't get to see them often."



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It's My Body

Patrice Roberts defends her choice of cosmetic surgery

A woman should be allowed to do whatever she wants with her body without constant scrutiny.

That's the "pro-choice" position on cosmetic surgery from soca star Patrice Roberts.

Roberts, who says "its no surprise" that she has had work done to her curvy frame, says for many women "in the public eye their image is their investment" and if that's what makes a woman happy then "by all means, do what makes you happy".

"Cosmetic procedures are no longer taboo and I've heard many women say that it is quite fulfilling. It's no secret that I have done by breasts, I literally had none and was uncomfortable with that, so I did what made me comfortable.

"It's just the same as me working out excessively to maintain my physique, or going for special massages, facials etc. Women should be allowed to do whatever they want without constant scrutiny. If a woman chooses to love on herself by enhancing her image, then power to her. I am pro-choice," Roberts said during an online interview with the Kit-charee on Friday.

While a hale body is the ideal starting point, the right clothing is key to completing the perfect look, especially for a star suddenly thrust in the global spotlight like the Toco-born singer.

Roberts' Carnival 2022 release "Mind My Business" has become a viral hit. Her ubiquitous hook of "Drink water and mind my business" has been echoed on over 25 million Tik Tok, Instagram and Twitter posts, shares and streams



Patrice Roberts: cosmetic surgery is an investment in your image

since its release on December 20.

The Mical Teja written soca anthem which features on Travis World (Travis Hosein) and Dan Evans' Happy Papi Riddim is also proving a sharable quote among global celebrities. TLC singer Chilli (Rozonda Thomas), former Destiny Child singer Michelle Williams and Karlie Redd of VH1's hit show Love and Hip Hop have all

shared videos of themselves dancing and singing along to the song's hook.

Achieving a look that matches that level of musical success starts with paying attention to trends and what A-list entertainers are wearing, she said.

"I love fashion as well as looking and feeling my best so I pay close attention to trends. I spend time researching and

looking at my favourite stars and fashion icons to get a sense of what feels like me or what aspects of style and fashion I can include in my looks," she revealed.

Roberts says her 2022 look, which she describes as "functional, sexy and street", is the result of working closely together with her hairstylist, make-up artist and stylist.

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WE HAVE EVERYTHING AS THE DOLLAR STORES BUT WE ARE CHEAPER

Kavir dances his way to the top of his challenges

Kavir is a 25-year-old energetic and talented dancer from Couva, Central Trinidad, who lives with his parents and his sister. Through the years, he attended various schools such as the Pointe-a-Pierre Special School, Lady Hochoy Home in Gasparillo, Goodwill Industries in Port of Spain and the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities in San Fernando.

At present he is being taught at home by his mom, who is focusing on helping him acquire life skills.

Kavir dances with his sister and her dance group, Nritta Dance Company and he hopes to open a cafe to sell puffs one day.

Kavir's mother spoke about raising a son with Down syndrome in TT.

"Kavir was like any normal child, but his learning style differed from what was perceived as normal by society's standards. The challenges we faced were not due to him, they were because of the people in the system, with whom I had to interact to ensure his growth and development to become an independent, self-sustained individual. Stumbling blocks and challenges were as a result of the national education and support system; my work environment; the advocacy and empowerment group and peoples' perception.

"Kavir was unable to gain admission into the general school system and the special schools were few, far and expensive, while at the same time afforded no solution to his learning style for him to move forward.

"Kavir's experience is one where he was physically abused by school personnel at three of the four schools he attended.

"Numerous attempts at getting the authorities to intervene proved futile. Student support service in most instances was unreachable.

"One of the major challenges that prevented me from giving the required care and attention to Kavir was the action of my superiors in the workplace. They were un-



Kavir has come a long way, says his mother

willing to facilitate and refused to understand my plight as far as the care of my child is concern.

"The advocacy group which I thought would have aided in bridging the gap and help with accommodation for better service of special-needs individuals was a disappointment. Having joined, I realised it was more of a forum where persons can market their business.

"Taking Kavir out was another challenge because of the way in which people reacted to him. Being very amicable, Kavir would on many occasions walk into a setting and verbally greet people or pay a compliment. There are some who refused to answer and looked at him with scorn.

"If Kavir has a meltdown in public people question my parental style.

"It is actions like these that add to the stress; we always have to be on guard and not allow him to interact, which means he's not free to explore his environment. Notwithstanding, there are persons who do the

opposite and comes up to converse. They are few but I am very thankful to them, as it's a learning process for Kavir.

"One of the positive things about covid19 is that he has learnt about social distancing, so the interaction is limited today."

Kavir's mom noted that for TT to be a better place for people with Down syndrome, "There must be societal change. With knowledge at our finger tips, one wonders why parents and caregivers are still faced with so many challenges brought on by people who should know better. It should be a priority to implement all the things needed for them to have a better life."

Despite the challenges, Kavir has come a long way. According to his mother, "While Kavir can interpret, analyse and question decisions he is innocent by nature, so he goes with the flow and accepts what is put forward, so for him challenges may not exist."



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Trinidadian Chef takes it to the 'Next Level'

For professional chef Reuel Vincent, celebrity chef Gordon Ramsey's reality-TV cooking show, Next Level Chef was a personal challenge rather than a competition against other chefs.

Vincent made it to the show's finale which aired on March 2, along with professional chef Mariah Scott from California, and the winner, a social media chef from Kansas City, Stephanie "Pyet" Despain.

For the final they had to create three dishes in three different kitchens in 90 minutes. Vincent made steamed little neck clams with chorizo and curry cream, pan-seared cod with pea soubise and summer vegetables, and rib cap with pomme soufflés.

He said a lot of the other contestants did not want him to reach the finals because they did not want to go up against him. While that attitude was understandable, as he too would not want to be blocked from his dream, he wanted the competition, which was why he enjoyed cooking against chef Scott in particular.

"I live for that. You can't go through life without being challenged. Then there's no room for growth."

He congratulated Despain on her win saying that as a black person from the West Indies he understood her drive as a person of Native American heritage.

"I can respect the stand that she's taking. I want her to stay true to that and don't waver for anybody. I believe her background has a lot of power in which she can show the world her culture. I support her creating opportunities and opening doors for people within the Native American community."

He said the finals was where people experienced chef Vincent, rather than Reuel. That it was an accurate representation of his personality, which was not always the case after edits were made to fit an episode into a 45-minute period.

"My final plate was absolutely gorgeous. It was me, my soul as an artist on a



Reuel Vincent: a finalist on Gordon Ramsey's TV show "Next Level"

plate. At that time I wasn't in competition with Pyet or Mariah. I was in competition with myself. It was me challenging myself, maximising while moving at lightning speed. "I stand by every single dish that I put out there for that final. I can say I was

happy with that and wouldn't change a thing. It's me being comfortable in my capabilities and what I can produce as a chef."

He stressed that he cooks because he loves it and competition does not define him as a chef.

Burnette pushes Guyanese music and culture to the world

WHEN it comes to the creative arts, Guyanese music has always been a force to be reckoned with, particularly as it relates to the preservation of Guyanese culture.

Within the Guyanese music industry, the name Calvin Burnette is certainly familiar. The artiste is popularly considered one of Guyana's leading vocalists, and he continues to contribute to the preservation of Guyanese music and culture through his work.

Burnette, who was born and raised in New Amsterdam, Berbice, said that Guyana is a blessed country with a tremendous amount of talent and talented people.

However, he believes that policies and decision-makers need to do more when it comes to music and entertainment in Guyana.

"I think we need to be sensitised about what copyrights is[sic] all about, because copyright is bigger than just recording a song and ensuring that nobody can steal your song and such like," he explained. "Copyright takes so, so much: cars, tyres, CDs, DVDs...As a result, while it is good for me, I have to be considerate of the average man who is trying to make a dollar by selling music from a pushcart to make a living. Therefore, whilst I might be eating, I have to consider the fact that I am putting someone else out of bread."

He believes that we as a populace need to be fully sensitised as to what copyright entails, how to ensure that the



Calvin Burnette: performed at the Dubai Expo earlier this year

person who creates the art is well compensated and that the smaller man feeds off of what we produce as music or forms of entertainment.

Burnette believes that the issue lies with more local content being offered as a music diet, rather than foreign music content.

If Burnette had his way regarding Guyanese showing their talent, he would have preferred to see a replica of performances that the country had, when the Guyanese delegation went to perform in Dubai for that country's national expo back in 2020.

This is the message that

Calvin wants the world to know. He also encourages support of our own as Guyanese.

"It starts first though with embracing what we put out like my grandmother would say, 'whatever you cook you have to eat and a lot of times, we tend to be a bit foreign minded when it comes to certain things,' he explained. "I mean, listen to our radio stations. Listen to most of the music that is played on our televisions. How much of it is local content? What is needed for us is the networking and proper marketing and, again, support."

The Berbice-born artiste

noted that when he is performing on stage, he loses all connectivity with negative emotions, because he would have gotten deeply in sync with his craft, even if he would have come out of a bad relationship.

"For me, the stage is my everything, so when I touch that stage everything disappears, all the problems disappear; all the fears disappear. For that hour or however long I am on stage, for that time is just me, myself and I.

Sometimes I am performing and I don't even see the crowd, because I am so caught up in what I am doing or how I am performing, but in dealing with certain things, you cannot allow it to get the best of you," Calvin noted.

The singer is the second child of four siblings. He grew singing in the Philadelphia Adventist Church, in humble beginnings with parents who did their best to ensure their children got the best out of life.

He recalled that it was at church that everything started for him.

"From singing in choirs to Pathfinders Club, Master Guide Club and just finding yourself vocally, this is where it stems from," Calvin revealed.

According to Calvin, he didn't want to be a singer, but a doctor, because he wanted to help people.

However, he got into singing through his association with friends at school, and, it is clear to see that that path has worked well for him.

Rubber penis has Indian health workers blushing red

A rubber penis in family planning kits used by local health workers has led to a controversy in the western Indian state of Maharashtra.

Opposition lawmakers say the rubber models will embarrass female health workers who use the kits to spread awareness on reproductive health.

But some workers say they have used similar models earlier without problems.

The kit also includes a rubber uterus, which hasn't sparked any reactions.

The kits have been given to Ashas - short for Accredited Social Health Activists - who are a crucial part of India's primary and community health programmes.

They perform a range of duties, including going from door to door to educate people about reproductive health and the use of contraceptives. This usually requires a lot of sensitivity, as sex is a taboo topic in many parts of India.

Dr Archana Patil, director of Maharashtra's public health department, told BBC Marathi that around 25,000 kits that include the penis model had been distributed to health workers and rural health centres across the state.

She added that the model has received negative feedback from only one district, Buldhana.

BBC Marathi asked around seven Asha workers from Buldhana if they felt embarrassed about carrying the models of the penis and uterus.

Two of them refused to comment. Two said it would be a little embarrassing to display the models in rural areas -



The rubber penises being included in Indian family planning kits

where people were already hesitant to talk about sexual health - but said it was a part of their jobs.

The remaining three workers said they had no problems using the model to explain concepts if needed. None of them wanted their names to be published.

Dr Patil said no one was being forced to use the models.

"If health workers feel awkward about speaking openly about these issues, how will work get done?" she asked.

Some politicians - mainly from India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is in the opposition in the state -

disagree.

Akash Phundkar, a BJP lawmaker from Buldhana, has demanded that the government take back these kits and apologise to the health workers.

Chitra Wagh, the party's vice-president in the state, alleged that the government was promoting "sexual indulgence".

Representatives of the Shiv Sena party, which is part of a coalition that governs Maharashtra, haven't commented yet.

An Asha worker from Pune - who also didn't want her name to be published - told BBC Marathi that they had used these models earlier as well to demonstrate aspects of

family planning.

"We don't give this kit to people. We just use it to counsel people about family planning. We were told about the models during our training," she said.

Dr Sagar Mundada, a sexologist, said using these models was important in rural areas where illiteracy rates were higher.

"It is not right to say that this will spread misconceptions. If we speak openly, people can understand issues better. If there is no discussion about sexual issues, that will actually lead to misconceptions," he said.

Strong world debut for Shenseea

New album debuts at Billboard's #2, but JA singer facing US\$10M lawsuit

Jamaican sensation Shenseea's album "Alpha" debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Reggae Albums Chart despite reporting solid first-week sales.

The 14 track project, which was released less than two weeks ago on March 11, continues to make waves as the "Trending Gyal" artiste transitions from the local Dancehall genre to the international art of Pop.

Alpha, which was released via Rich Immigrants/Interscope Records, reported 4,900 album-equivalent units in the United States during the first week of its release, according to data from Luminate tracking service. This includes pure album sales of 800 copies. Alpha's total first-week numbers include 2,000 copies in song sales, 4,616,400 in on-demand audio streams, and 750,600 in on-demand video streams.

Shenseea has received raved reviews from fans and critics alike for her effort. "Alpha" provides the best first-week numbers since Popcaan's "Fixtape" in 2020, when compared to other recent Dancehall/Reggae albums.

However, this was still not enough to dethrone King of Reggae Bob Marley And The Wailers Legend sits in the Number 1 position for the 115th consecutive week. The 1984 hits collection moved 2,968 units in pure album sales and has an overall sales of 11,162 (including streams) over the last week.

Still, fans believe there's more success to come and accolades to gain for Shenseea's Alpha. The album has so far found favor with its subjects and debuted at Number 1 on iTunes Top 100 Reggae Albums chart 24 hours after its release.

Alpha features collaborations from Sean Paul, Beenie Man, Megan Thee Stallion, Tyga, Offset, and 21 Savage and includes work from a slew of hit-making producers such as London On Da Track, Dr. Luke, Murda Beatz, Rvssian, and Supa Dups.

Shenseea has been enjoying a wave of international recognition, which has been boosting her dream to transition to Pop.



Jamaican superstar Shenseea has a strong showing on the Billboard charts

The Guardian has described the artiste's iTunes debut as heralding "Jamaican dancehall's next big crossover star."

But first, the ShenYeng boss may have to overcome a legal battle, as she and Interscope Records are being sued for 10 million dollars for an alleged copyright infringement over "Lick" featuring Megan Thee Stallion. The lawsuit was filed on March 3 by Anastas Theodore Hackett, who claimed that "Lick" copied his song

"Work" without approval and licensing.

In a now-deleted Tweet that was made on Saturday (March 19), Shenseea insinuated that the reports were untrue.

"Y'all still stupid for believing any and ANYTHING bro," she said.

As that story unfolds, Shenseea continues to reap the rewards from her debut album and enjoy her rise to international stardom.

Back to Jail

Jah Cure to sing the blues for six years in a Dutch prison

Cure, again!

The Reggae star Jah Cure has been sentenced to six years in prison in the Netherlands for attempted manslaughter.

“The 43-year old man was sentenced to six years in prison – with credit for time served – for attempted manslaughter. The court finds him not guilty of attempted murder. His claim of self-defence was rejected by the court,” Franklin Wattimena, a press officer of the Netherlands Public Prosecution Service, told Dancehall-Mag.

The Prison Walls singer, whose real name is Siccaturie Alcock, stabbed event promoter Nicardo ‘Papa’ Blake, 45, on October 1 at Dam Square, in the city center of Amsterdam, where he was booked for a performance. Cure had performed at Blake’s concert, two days before, in the Melkweg. However, he had not been paid his performance fee of 5,000 euros.

Blake, who is the head of the Roots Vibes Promotion company in the Netherlands, was hospitalized with injuries to the abdomen.

Prosecutors had demanded that the Jamaican singer be sentenced to eight years, with time served, for attempted murder and assault. However, Jah Cure’s lawyer Tim Scheffer argued that the incident was self-defense and that it was never the singer’s intention to stab the concert promoter in the first place.



Jah Cure: guilty of attempted manslaughter

Scheffer had also told the court that the threatening messages that Jah Cure sent prior to the stabbing were “part of the Jamaican reggae culture,” according to Het Parool.

On Tuesday, the panel of three judges rejected Cure’s claim of self-defense but ruled in his favor that it was not a premeditated act of attempted murder. “There is still too little evidence for a preconceived

plan to take the victim’s life,” one judge said, according to Telegraaf.

According to Nu.nl, the court today described the incident as an “apparently fairly trivial conflict” which Jah Cure ‘blew up and escalated’.

“The judge ruled that such a stabbing incident in broad daylight in a busy place such as Dam Square does give the victim and society a great sense of insecurity,” Telegraaf

noted.

Jah Cure can appeal the decision.

“Both the 43-year old man and the prosecutor can appeal to the Court of Appeal within two weeks if they disagree with the court’s ruling,” the Dutch press officer told Dancehall-Mag.

This will not be Jah Cure’s first prison stint.

In 1999, he was sentenced to 13 years in prison for raping and robbing a woman at gunpoint. He served 8 years and during the last leg of his sentence, the singer’s popularity skyrocketed following the release of his hit singles Longing For (2005), and Love Is (2005)—which he admitted were recorded illegally—and True Reflection (Prison Walls) (2007), which was sanctioned under the prison’s “Rehabilitation Through Music” program, per the Jamaica Gleaner.

He’s also known for the hit songs Never Find, the John Legend cover All Of Me, That Girl, Wake Up, and What Will It Take.

His 2015 album, The Cure which included the songs That Girl, Rasta and Life We Live, earned him a Grammy Award nomination for Best Reggae Album that year.

Cure’s latest song is Blood In The Water, which was released in February 2022.

Last September, before his arrest, he had announced that he was adding the final touches to a new album, titled Undeniable.

2022 WORLD CUP

GROUP STAGES

GROUP A

QATAR
ECUADOR
SENEGAL
NETHERLANDS

GROUP B

ENGLAND
IR IRAN
USA
WALES/SCO/UKRAINE

GROUP C

ARGENTINA
SAUDI ARABIA
MEXICO
POLAND

GROUP D

FRANCE
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