

Abstract

There are two aspects of the Jamaican culture which have received international attention and continue to characterize the Jamaican cultural experience worldwide. These two elements include the informal Jamaican language of 'patois' or nation language and reggae music.

Both subjects, 'patois' and 'reggae music' form the contextual base of the paper to follow. More specifically, the 'godchild' of the reggae genre, dancehall music will be the focus of the paper.

Dancehall has taken a firm hold in Jamaica's music industry, and continues to make its mark both locally and internationally. The lyrical content of this musical genre is often founded in nation language or 'patois', and this has often been a defining characteristic of these musical productions. As such, dancehall music offers a unique format through which artistes can communicate with their audience both within the performative space of the dancehall and in the wider Jamaican community.

Dimensions of this communication, as characterized through the linguistic framework of dancehall music, will form the basis of the discussion in the subsequent body of work.