

Bashment Vibes

A weekly look at the reggae scene by ORANTES MOORE

THE RETURN OF LOVERS ROCK

Weekend shows will mark revival

More than 20 years after British singers first established the soulful sound of lovers rock, the genre is enjoying a surprise resurgence thanks largely to shows such as A Lovers Rock Reunion, the third instalment of which takes place across the country this weekend.

The event, which will be hosted by Toyin Adekale, Choice FM's Daddy Ernie and comedian Whitfield, reunites fans with the music they raved to in the 80s and is expected to be the biggest show of its kind to date.

As she prepares for the three-night extravaganza, Toyin explains why lovers rock is so important to Britain's music scene and reveals her plans for a new album.

How will this weekend's shows be different from the last two instalments?

It's pretty much the same concept, but we have a few new acts; artists that people haven't seen in the last 15 to 20 years. In London we're going to be performing at the Hammersmith Apollo because there was such a great demand for the two previous shows. We just wanted to give lovers rock the platform the public have made us feel it warrants and we know it deserves.

No more smoky backstreet clubs. That was fine back in the day, but some of these artists have never had the opportunity to perform on a big stage in their own right. Many of them don't even realise they are still loved because of the huge impact they made on people's lives.

How does it feel being the promoter/co-ordinator of such an event as opposed to a performer?

I'm really happy; it feels great. It's a lot of work, but it's nice seeing things from the other end of the scope. Although I'm not a promoter, I'm learning a lot and adding another string to my bow.

Why are you not performing?

For me the show's not about that; I'm working in a different capacity. Plus, I want to watch the show (laughs).

I'm more interested in bringing the show together, rather than performing.

In the past 18 months lovers rock has regained the popularity it held in the '80s - why is that?

Lovers rock really made an impact and modelled our society. It has always been loved and you can't

get the music anymore, so when the audience come to the shows, they get to relive those times.

What does the future hold for Toyin?

I'm in the middle of recording my final album. I'm quite serious that this is my last album of this nature, whether it hits or misses. That doesn't mean I will stop singing, but I just won't release another album like this.

This album is pretty much in keeping with my background, but it isn't straightforward reggae. I have lovers rock on there, but I also have some interesting collaborations, including a combination with UK rapper Phoebe One. We're looking to put it out by the end of summer.

All good things must come to an end and now I can start ploughing into the business a different way, bringing in fresh blood through my agency, Talitha Voices. I have a good batch of talented singers and the roster is still expanding.

■ *A Lovers Rock Reunion - The Sequel takes place this weekend at the Cascade Banqueting Suite in Birmingham (Saturday, May 1), Bradford University (Sunday, May 2) and London's Hammersmith Apollo (Bank Holiday Monday, May 3)*



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TOYIN ADEKALE:
HOSTING EVENT