

Borsalino Productions presents

# Inna de Yard

The Soul of Jamaica



A film by Peter Webber

**IN THEATERS JULY 10**

**NEW ALBUM: APRIL 12**  
**CONCERT AT THE OLYMPIA: JUNE 15**

## SHORT SYNOPSIS

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*On the green landscapes of Kingston highs, a band of singers gather up for the record of a new album. More than 30 years after their golden age, they are back on a World Tour. « Inna De Yard » is the human adventure of men and women who embody Reggae and wear Jamaica's soul as a banner.*

## LONG SYNOPSIS

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A house filled with old vinyl records, perched on the slopes above Kingston. From the garden one can see the hills - the natural spirit of Jamaica is powerful and ancient here.

Sounds of percussion ring out - then guitar chords, brass, piano. Reggae rhythms pierce the air and disappear into the mountains. Jamaica vibrates to the sound of the music that made it famous throughout the world.

In the yard, some of the legendary voices of Reggae can be found. Ken Boothe, Winston McAnuff, Kiddus I, Juddy Mowatt, and Cedric Myron, the famous lead of the Congos, to name just a few. They have known each other forever and the golden age of Reggae is in their debt: they've sung with the greats in the back rooms of the ghettos, rubbed shoulders with Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Jimmy Cliff. For the project of *Inna de Yard*, they've reunited to revisit the biggest standards of their repertoire and record a unique acoustic album, returning to the sources of their music. On this occasion, they'll share the mic with younger singers, representatives of the new reggae stage. Together they'll unite their energy in a collective, powerful vibration.

Behind the scenes is director Peter Webber. He's been fan of reggae since the beginning. He will track the adventure of recording the album, which will be the soundtrack of the film, as well as the everyday life of the singers for several weeks. He'll then go with them on their international tour that's currently being organised.

With this musical session as the basis of this documentary, he'll create a portrait of these Rasta artists who have passed through the generations with different levels of fortune. Some have known glory. Some have had fleeting recognition, only to reject the system in order to lead ascetic lives, loyal to Rastafarian culture. They are the last witnesses of the explosion and recognition of reggae. It's a story in which they've each played a part, as each of them have been individually recognised as one of the biggest artists of this musical style by the media and the international press.

All these musicians are Rastafarians, and they embody a Jamaica with a strong identity, which has fascinated the entire world since the 60s. They are rebels, and come from all social classes; children of vicars or atheists, descendants of slaves or the emancipated, fishermen or jewellery craftsmen, they are either city-dwellers or they live on the coast or in the countryside. They believe in the virtues of plants, in the almighty power of nature... and in the success of this new beginning, which might represent a form of rebirth to them.

The aim of *Inna de Yard* - the film, like other big music documentaries such as *Buena Vista Social Club*, *Sugar Man*, or *Amy*, is to get to grips with a musical style, and at the same time witness the intimate lives of the legendary personalities which create it. Built around a series of portraits, and giving star billing to the reggae music which will permeate it from beginning to end, the film invites us on a visceral and musical voyage, and to discover reggae and some of the most colourful people who create and perform it every day.

## THE MUSICAL PROJECT INNA DE YARD

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*Inna de Yard* is a group of legendary reggae singers who join together to make an exceptional album, getting back to the sources of their music with an acoustic outdoor recording. *Inna de Yard*, literally in the yard, means in the backyard. This is where Jamaican musical trends are born and developed, such as ska, rocksteady, and of course, reggae. The yard, where those twenty musicians meet up to record an exceptional album over a few days, will be the terrace of a house perched on the hills of Kingston, in the heart of the exuberant Jamaican nature. An album which will unite legendary singers like Ken Boothe, Kiddus I, Winston McAnuff, Cedric Myton, the leader of the Congos, the Viceroy, Horace Andy, Marcia Griffiths but also the most promising representatives of the new generation of reggae, represented here by Jah9, Var, Kush McAnuff and Derajah. Together they'll revisit the most memorable tracks of their repertoire in an acoustic orchestration centred around a piano, a bass and an acoustic guitar, as well as a section of traditional Nyabingi Rasta percussion. Some brass instruments and an accordion will complete the ensemble. The imperceptible noises of Jamaican nature and the very special sonority of the music that is found here will help create the magic of the album. The sheer amount of talent is what makes this reunion unique and exceptional - as well as a communal ambition to remind the world of the originality and the beauty of this music, which owes just as much to soul, to gospel and to its American influences, as to Rastafari beliefs. It unites old stars of Jamaican music - true timeless legends - and the young generation, reunited by the pleasure of playing together, of sharing and transmitting, and of wanting to travel the world one more time. As the group was preparing an album with the ambition to make it a reference, it started an international tour with a peak in Paris, in a packed Trianon theater. The album will be out on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2019.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT PETER WEBBER

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As a teenager growing up in West London in the 70's, this music was everywhere. There was a large and well-established Jamaican community, and the Notting Hill Carnival, the capital's biggest street party, throbbed to the sounds of this music. In addition, the punk rockers who were the hippest young bands around were fascinated by the iconography as well as the music. If you were a fan of the Clash, as I was, Reggae was impossible to ignore. Their tireless promotion of this vital new sound from Jamaica, their infamous trip to the Island in 1978, their constant promotion of and name checking of reggae artists from Prince Far I to Delroy Wilson had an enormous impact on me, as did their cover versions from "Police and Thieves" to "Armagideon Time." Bob Marley's song "Punky Reggae Party" paid tribute to this unlikely union between the noise rock assault of early punk rock and the mellow sounds of reggae music.

My record collection was soon studded with records like "The Heart of the Congos" by the Congo's and Winston McAnuffs "Electric Dread". I sought out the few iconic films that captured the world reggae emerged from like "The Harder They Come" and "Rockers." The world they described seemed exotic, dangerous, and incredibly vital.

Like any musical explosion, the vigour and force of the genre eventually dissipated and other forms of music such as Dancehall took their place. But the music never died. A new generation of fans discovered the classic tunes and acts of the seventies and kept the flame of reggae music alive.

As a long time fan of the music, it was thrilling to visit Jamaica recently and meet some of my idols from that era, still in rude health and still recording. The excitement of meeting these musicians, hearing stories of the early days when the scene was in it's infancy, how they survived the lean years that followed, and how they re-emerged in recent years was very inspiring. It was also fascinating to spend time with some reggae artists from the new generation, the youth, brash yet respectful of their elders, proud to bring their own modern twist to the genre.

It became clear to me that there was a fascinating documentary to be made that followed some of the most interesting and charismatic of these characters, delving into the ups and downs of their lives. From the shantytowns to the more rural areas, these characters have emerged from poverty and hardship to tour the world. The elders, the ones I have listened to for years and admired, have survived crooked record companies, street gangs, violent political struggle and as they enter their 7<sup>th</sup> decade they have stories to tell that will curl your toes and warm your heart. They won't be around for much longer, and it was a privilege to meet them before they pass on to the heaven promised them by their religion – Rastafarianism. And the younger musicians, well, it's been hard not to be swept away by their music's uninhibited exuberance, the power of their voice, their political consciousness, but also the stories they tell.

A film built around these amazing characters would be a fascinating one, emotional and resonant. It would be a portrait of a singular island and a singular people. One of the best and most successful musical films of the last decade was Buena Vista Social Club, a film based on music from the island of Cuba, which is a short hop from Jamaica. The music is as powerful and the characters the equal of anything to be found in that film

This is a very personal project for me, one that fills me with passion and enthusiasm and connects me with the teenager I once was, a boy who saved up his pocket money and trekked up to All Saints Road to find the latest Jamaican sounds.

# CHARACTERS

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The older generation of musicians we will be filming have been on a real journey in their lives – from a very hard and poor upbringing, to youthful success in the highly competitive music scene of the 60's and 70's. There then followed many years of obscurity and poverty, as their music was no longer in fashion. In a happy turn of events, in very recent years their careers have been revitalized and as they come to the twilight of their lives, they find themselves rediscovered and celebrated once again. These characters have suffered their fair share of family tragedy as well – with stories of violence and death that emphasize the tough nature of their surroundings. This will not be a sugarcoated film. Instead it will delve down into the highs and lows of the lives of these characters. The audience might come for the music, but they will be moved, sometimes to tears, by the tough reality of life on this island. Though the film is a musical one, these characters, whose biographies are explored elsewhere in these pages, are the very heart of the film. Charismatic, talented, and often eccentric people who have led fascinating lives dedicated to their art. We will also introduce some of the younger generation of musicians who want to keep alive the traditions and inspirations of their elders.







## KIDDUS I, *The Rebel*

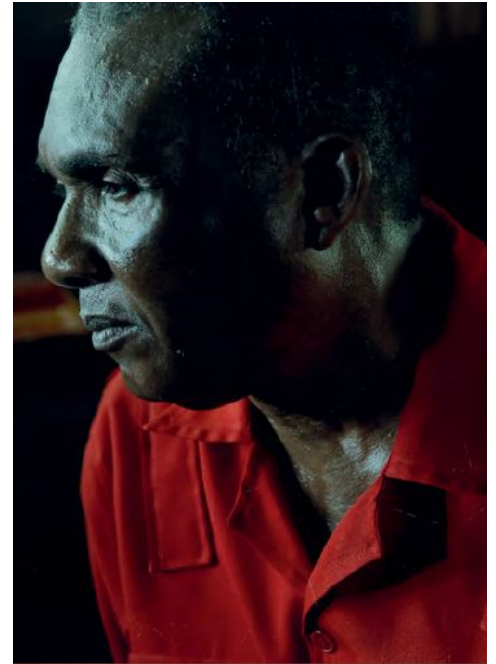
Kiddus I is a Rasta dandy, a mystic, a poet and a rebel who goes through life with a very British cool. This biracial seducer with blue eyes and a smooth voice became famous in 1976 due to a legendary scene of the cult film *Rockers* in which he made a recording of "Graduation in Zion". The New York Times called him at the time "One of the three greatest voices of Reggae". He was nicknamed *Dr Feelgood* by Bob Marley because of the amount of weed that he brought to the studio and for his intimate knowledge of the plant. The Rasta name he chose for himself means "The Blessed One" in Amharic (Ethiopian). But Kiddus I has always been

a rebel. Tempted for a while by armed revolution, the artist contributed at the end of the 1970s to the Movement for Peace between two political parties, the JLP and the PNP, which had been engaged in violent conflict over decades. In the end he chose music, to change 'minds and heart'. According to him, there are three ways to sing; *Unprojected*, *Somehow Projected*, and *Projected*. By projected, he means carrying a message, in a mystical state of search for unity. His political interventions during concerts were not always appreciated. Despite an undeniable, immeasurable talent, he disappeared little by little from the Jamaican scene. Probably too unconventional, too dedicated, this Rastafarian revolutionary hippy probably missed out on a career which would have been huge, right up there with the greatest. His return to the stage is a real godsend for music lovers.

# KEN BOOTHE

## *The Godfather*

Ken Boothe is the Godfather of Jamaican music: his status makes him an authority in the reggae scene, where he's recognised by his peers as the repository of reggae history, the canon, as well as being one of the iconic singers of this musical style. His house is a true temple of Jamaican music. Nicknamed Mr Rocksteady by the legendary Sir Clement "Coxsone" Dodd, he cultivated the image of a *crooner*, especially for his female audiences, and did not embrace a Rasta style. Yet his support for the movement is undeniable, as shown by the numerous songs he had at the top of the charts in the 70s.



Ken Boothe comes from the Denham Town neighbourhood, which makes up the golden reggae triangle along with Trenchtown and Jones Town. These working-class districts are where the greatest artists of the island grew up - Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer, Jimmy Cliff, Gregory Isaacs...

His vocal qualities are impressive and his imitation skills are often compared to those of Wilson Pickett. An early talent, he was first discovered as a teenager when he was singing in the street. He became the protege of Coxsone, who signed him under his label *Studio One*. At 18, he was number one in Jamaica. At twenty-six, his music rose right to the top of the charts in England. His hits were heard in the hippest sound systems and he was soon rubbing shoulders with artists and groups he's always admired: Delroy Wilson, The Wailers, The Gaylads, Rita Marley...

Under the direction of the tremendous composer Lloyd Chambers, his international status is established. Ken Boothe released "Everything I Own" (a recovery of "The Bread") on Trojan Records, which reached number one in 1974 for six weeks on the UK Singles Chart. Boy George's cover of him in 1987 also became a world-wide hit. British band UB40 covered several of his songs on their *Labour of Love* albums, and in 1995, he teamed with crossover star Shaggy for a new version of "The Train Is Coming", which appeared on the soundtrack of movie *Money Train*. His hit "Artibella" is even covered in 2013 on the album "Reincarnated" by Snoop Dog with the title "La La La".

He has performed ska, rocksteady and reggae with equal skill. Though he didn't participate in the rise of dancehall in the middle of the 80s, he's never stopped recording and still performs today on the stages of the entire world. With about 20 albums to his name, Ken Boothe was awarded the Order of Merit for his contribution to Jamaican music in 2003. His powerful and heady voice made him one of the key artists of his generation for nearly fifty years.

# CEDRIC MYTON

## *The Leader of the Congos*



Cedric Myton is an emblematic figure of reggae roots, who became famous with the legendary album "Heart of the Congos", by his group *The Congos*. This mystical singer stays true to his family origins: he lives cheaply on the coast of Old Harbour Bay in a house that he has been slowly renovating for about ten years, on the same land where he was born in 1947, between the church and the police station. In the middle of his small yard, he keeps a dozen or so beehives, like his father and his grandfather in their time.

Father to eleven children and married for more than forty years, he spends his time between New York, London and Kingston. In 2002, he was obliged to leave the United States after having been arrested for possession of Ganja, otherwise known to the Rastas as 'Wisdom Weed'.

Though Cedric Myton is mostly known for his legendary group, *The Congos*, his music career started long before this fabled vocal trio: as a youth he sang at the Seventh Day Adventist Church, as well as during Jonkanoo parades. He also founded in 1965 the legendary group, *The Tartans* with Devon Russell, Lindburgh Lewis and Lincoln Thompson.

In 1974 *The Congos* was established, with Roy Johnson and Derrick "Watty" Burnett, who's baritone voice wonderfully counterbalances his falsetto tones. Their first album "Heart of the Congos", with Gregory Isaacs on backing vocals, is a major opus of reggae roots, a truly inspired mystical performance. However the album had only limited release, due to an argument between the producer Lee Perry and Chris Blackwell's *Island Records* label, which had a preference for Bob Marley. Some commentators say that *The Congos* didn't get more publicity so as not to overshadow Bob Marley.

The album still appeared at number 46 of the Top 100 Pitchfork Media Chart of the best albums of the 1970s in all categories (between "Call Me" by Al Green and "More Songs about Buildings and Food" by the Talking Heads).



# WINSTON MCANUFF

## *Electric Dread*

This son of a strict pastor earned the nickname Electric Dread for his magnetic stage performances, with a dance that mimes an unhinged and possessed puppet.

It's only in the last ten years that he finally found the recognition that he's owed.

Winston Mcanuff was named after his Irish grandfather who immigrated to Jamaica at the end of the 19th century and became a slave master managing a dozen slaves.



Complicated parentage to say the least, when you're a Rasta with very black skin, interpreting each sign you receive as something mystical, says Winston with a burst of laughter. This honest and charismatic personality embodies many paradoxes, just like the Jamaica he lives in, which is more complex than it may seem.

Born in the hills in the centre of the island in 1957, like many Jamaican artists, he learnt to sing in the church - this one happened to have been constructed by his father. As a teenager he wrote the song "Malcom X" which he managed to get featured on the album of the then famous Dennis Brown (Visions of Dennis Brown). However, the huge amount of competition that existed at the time prevented him from breaking through.

He tried again in Japan in the 1980s, with his drummer brother Tony, who married a Japanese woman and stayed there. Together, they started an import-export business for cars with Jamaica. Winston also made many trips to Miami for business affairs with a Jamaican godfather who worked in real estate. At this time, he appeared in an episode of *Miami Vice* in which the Japanese turn a false Bob Marley into ice! A banning order from the US for ganja possession put an end to his frequent trips to the United States.

While it seemed like the 2010s might finally bring him recognition, his son - also a musician - was brutally assassinated in August 2012. It took months for him to recover. It's music that saved him. He composed beautiful songs directly inspired by this horrible situation. The album was hugely successful in France and he travelled throughout numerous European, African and Latin American countries. He's the first Jamaican artist to be nominated for the French *Victoires de la Musique* awards. This success rewards a stunningly enthusiastic, generous and optimistic character.



# VAR

## *Descendant of the Maroons*

Var, 30, grew up in the hills of Portland. His grandparents raised him far from the frenzy of Kingston, in a small village of Moore Town, in the heart of the *Maroon* lands. In the oral tradition, that's where Queen Nanny of the Maroon's landed. This slave, raised in Ghana, led the rebellion of "Black Maroons" and ended up getting liberty as well as some hectares for her community. Since this time, that region has enjoyed a unique form of independence in Jamaica and is still preceded over by the "Chief of the Maroons".

Var finds his inspiration in this proud and rebellious filiation. He sings as *a sufferer*, as if he was getting rid of the sufferance of his people that's been locked up for centuries. "For me, it's soul music, it's music that I carry in the deepest parts of my soul. I only express what I feel inside".

Carried by the strength of this inheritance, Var is one of the leaders of the new Jamaican generation that wants to get back to acoustic and organic music. He brings a different voice to the collective, soul, pop, and reggae, as well as a modern vision of his country which he describes through his songs.

# JAH9

## *The Spiritual and Political Rasta*



She's a Rasta, a rebel and proud of her black identity which she defends with a raised fist, or even "In the face of her oppressor" as she sang in her song "Babylon". She managed to make her mark in a country criticised for its misogyny and where few women were able to make a career out of music. Author, poet and singer, she was first recognised at dub-poetry evenings in Kingston before embracing a musical career whose growing success only became greater.

Born Janine Cunningham, daughter of a minister, during her time at the University of Kingston in 1991 she converted to the Rasta religion and the worship of Selassie I, the emperor of Ethiopia. This revelation inspires her art ("I Sing for the King"), though this didn't stop her from also covering Nina Simone and Billy Holiday in the bars of Kingston. Jah9 is a "Rasta Princess" with a strong personality and a determined attitude. An activist with a sharp tongue who speaks about the condition of women in the world, advocates the legalisation of ganja, and emphasises that Africa represents both her birthplace and her ideal place. Her spirituality is her life - she's also a yoga teacher - and her message. She's also deeply involved in social action, supports associations and publicly rallies for causes.

Her musical career took off in 2013 : she has recorded two modern "nu roots" reggae albums which have been released internationally. She plays in Europe, in the United States and in Africa. She is the most popular singer among those who have appeared on the reggae scene in the last few years.







## Feature Films

*Girl with a Pearl Earring*, starring Scarlett Johansson and Colin Firth, marked Peter Webber's feature film debut. The film has received numerous accolades, including three Academy Award nominations, two Golden Globe nominations, and 10 BAFTA Award nominations. Dino De Laurentiis tapped Webber to direct *Hannibal Rising*. Based on Thomas Harris' book, and starring Gaspard Ulliel, Gong Li and Rhys Ifans, this prequel depicts a young Hannibal Lecter as he gradually becomes a serial killer. In 2012, Webber returned to the big screen with the World War II drama *Emperor*, starring Tommy Lee Jones. He is currently shooting a film in Colombia called « Pickpockets »

## TV

In television, he directed Simon Russell Beale as Franz Schubert and explored the counter-culture of tunnel-dwelling road protesters in *Underground*. His 2001 Channel 4 miniseries *Men Only* stirred controversy for its frank and shocking portrayal of the dark side of male sexuality. It is notable for giving early leads to Stephen Moyer of *True Blood* and Martin Freeman of *The Hobbit*. In 2016, he directed the ITV miniseries *Tutankhamun*, starring Sam Neill.

## Documentaries

An award-winning documentary director, Webber directed several programmes for BBC Channel 4 about classical music including child prodigies, maestros and composers such as Richard Wagner. He also directed several popular science documentaries about a range of subjects including crash test dummies, deep sea life and phantom limbs. In 2009, he travelled into the remote Colombian Amazon to film with the Macuna Tribe for a documentary called *The Sand and the Rain*. As a creative Director at Qatar National Day for two years, he also executive produced several documentary films including Sarajevo Film Festival winner *For the Love of Books*, which was also the recipient of a Grierson Award in 2012 for Best Historical Documentary. He has recently directed « Ten Billions » and co-directed the wild life documentary « Earth: One Amazing Day »





## **CAST AND CREW**

**Director**

**Peter WEBBER**

**Co- Productions societies  
BORSALINO PRODUCTIONS**

**WAG PROD**

**WAGRAM FILMS**

**CHARADES**

**VALDÉS**

**In association with**

**LE PACTE**

**SOFITVCINE 5**

**REGION ILE DE FRANCE**

**SACEM**

**CNC**

**Developped with**

**DEVTVCINE4**

**Director Of Photography**

**Bernard Benant**

**Sound**

**Delroy Johnson**

**Editing**

**Giles Gardner**

**Co-Producer**

**Yann Legay**

**Producers**

**Laurent Baudens**

**Laurent Flahault**

**Gaël Nouaille**

**French Distribution**

**Le Pacte**

**International Sales**

**Charades**