**Reggae Music Genre in the Caribbean**

Student's Name

Course Number and Name

Institutional Affiliation

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Due Date

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I have chosen to analyze the musical culture of the Caribbean, and reggae is the selected music genre. According to Ramírez (2016), reggae music is more than a famous music style in the Caribbean, especially in Jamaica. Jamaican music was revolutionized through reggae music. When reggae music began in the late 1960s, it emerged as a cultural thunderbolt to Jamaica and the entire Caribbean area and the world. The reggae's spiritual, militant, and slow, jerky rhythm and the rebellious look of its artists, among other characteristics, have influenced societies, cultures, and musical genres across the globe. They contributed to counterculture movements in other regions outside the Caribbean, such as Europe, Africa, and the USA. In Jamaica, reggae is the most dominant music (Ferguson et al., 2016). Being the popular music in Jamaica, the genre employs a robust four-beat rhythm influenced by drums, the "scraper," electric guitar, and the bass guitar. This research paper will use Nettle's 3-part model to explore the sounds, behaviors, and ideas or conceptions that govern the sounds and behaviors of reggae music.

**Sounds**

The reggae music sound combines the loudness of soul music, the spiritual center of Jamaican mento, and the light touch of ska. The music genre is prominent for its rhythmic patterns heard in bass lines, percussion, and rhythm guitar parts. The reggae sounds comprise three primary rhythms, namely steppers, rockers, and one drop. Steppers are the same as the American four on the floor feel. The beat has a regular quarter-note pulse the usually accompanied by the bass guitar. An excellent example of the stepper beat is Burning Spear's "Red, Gold, and Green." In addition, the rocker's beat reiterates four quarter notes for each bar; however, it provides more room for syncopation. The Rockers beat is believed to be nearly related to the rhythm part of Sly and Robbie, who assisted in creating the "rub-a-dub" sound. The perfect example of the rocker's beat and sound is "Sponji Reggae," sung by Black Uhuru courtesy of its 4/4 pulse incorporated with offbeat syncopations. The one-drop beat comprises a steady 16 th-note pulse equal to the funk music of the American region. The sound is made by a backbeat accent from the snare and kick drums (Lovell & Buhanan, 2019).

The beat derived its name from the song done by Bob Marley and The Wailers. Reggae bands rely on similar core instrumentation like those of the American blues and rhythm bands. The most famed reggae instruments in the Caribbean region are keyboard, drums, lead vocals, bass guitar, hon section or synth horns, and electric guitar. Alleyne (2019) argues that modern reggae offshoots, including dancehall, reggaeton, and drum and bass, usually utilize drum machines and synthesizers. Listening to the music of Toots Hibbert, Bob Marley, and Peter Tosh, I can say that the texture of reggae music is thick and comprise various textural layers that are underpinned by bass line rifts. They also have melodic rifts, offbeat chords, and syncopated lyrics and rhythms. Reggae music has a distinctive quality form, and it is different from other music forms. The voices in the reggae are always on high and thick pitch. They are typical reggae songs that are massively good. As an outsider, I have noticed that reggae music is the same as a wave that makes you flow.

**Behaviors**

Reggae is strongly connected to Rastafari – an Afrocentric religion that emerged in Jamaica in the early 1930s mainly to promote Pan Africanism. After the prominence of the Rastafarian movement, this music genre's global fame became associated with increased Rastafarian visibility and ensured that its gospel spreads throughout the globe (Stokke, 2021). Reggae music has become a crucial vessel for transporting fundamental messages of Rastafari. The artist becomes the messenger, and then the soldier and the musician are perceived as the tools of change. Reggae music plays a significant role in Jamaica. Culturally, reggae has had numerous functions that appear to delineate Jamaicans. The social effect of reggae has significantly changed life in the Caribbean. It has built a comprehension of lifestyle in Jamaica and culture for other parts of the globe. It is a type of music through which the phrase can be spoken and heard. It is the way Jamaicans value their life and nationalism. In Jamaica, reggae implies regular in that the citizens of Jamaica are regularly suffering. In most cases, these are individuals who cannot access what they need. Reggae songs are used to promote love, sexual intimacy, social, political, and spiritual notions.

In Jamaica, reggae artists are referred to as prophets, shamans, and social commentators (Miller, 2019). The music genre is also used to address the people of the lower social class to get their heard and express their feelings regarding conditions impacting them and the entire country. Therefore, music has played a critical role in the lives of Jamaican citizens. This is factual for the poor individuals in the nation. Before the country started recording, the people could seamlessly uphold their traditions via music to the next generations. Reggae music can be heard at work, religious events, funerals, and other famous events. The masses still use to demonstrate resistance to poverty and oppression. For most Jamaicans, reggae music is among the poor individuals construct a definite, black, Jamaican identity for themselves. The Jamaicans can vent up years of suffering, frustration, and dehumanization under the hegemony of the white man. For a long time, reggae has been viewed as the vehicle for expressing the people's historical experience, working class, peasants, and unemployment.

Reggae music discusses economic shortages, homelessness, oppression, racial discrimination, and political violence. The theme of repatriation to Africa is credited to reggae music. It was the symbol of identity and pride among the people. In addition, the Jamaican authority has used this music genre to encourage their people to stick to social and political goals. Many politicians have used reggae music during campaign periods and political rallies. The Jamaican government has relied on reggae music to nourish the moribund economy by attracting tourists to Jamaica. The Rastafarian culture and reggae music have been shown as the traditional culture on the island. Some families restrict their people from listening to reggae music because it has been associated with harmful activities such as poor neighborhoods, crime, and poverty. In many, nations reggae music is prominent among poor and young people who undergo the harsh impacts of economic difficulties and unemployment. Religion is mainly associated with the Rastafarian movement. The worldwide success of Robert Nesta Marley caused the massive spread of Rastafarianism. Thanks to Bob Marley's influence in the reggae music industry to the outsiders, the awareness of the faith happened via his lyrics and appearances.

The Rastafarian religion believes that God makes himself known among the people via humanity. According to McKeon (2017), there must be one man through whom God exists ultimately and eminently, the Supreme man, Rastafari, called Selassie. In Jamaica, reggae is a big deal, and everyone participates in it communally because it is taken as the vehicle for social change. I have a solid connection to reggae music, especially redemption songs and those preaching about economic empowerment.

**Ideas**

People are creating reggae music, and they are participating in everyday life of the roots reggae because it brings hope to Africans under the Rastafarian belief. The idea used in creating reggae sounds is redeeming enslaved individuals ferried from Africa to work in sugar plantations in Jamaica. Reggae music has used views from the political arena. It has addressed social injustices experienced due to the influence of politics through oppression, bad governance, and corruption (Stern, 2017). Based on these ideas, reggae has outgrown and led to the establishment of various denominations including dancehall, and lovers rock, that delineate distinct themes. Regardless of its divergent evolution, reggae has regularly been utilized in the sociopolitical atmosphere. The ideas surrounding history, musical evolution, and culture helped express foreign and indigenous aspects by exploring themes on poverty. Many reggae musicians define poverty as a contemporary type of slavery that happens due to corruption and poor governance.

The economy of Jamaica is in turmoil because of its involvement in the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). In that regard, reggae musicians from the region have borrowed that idea to sensitize and give knowledge to the people of Jamaica regarding their economic scenario. They have embraced these ideas to assume leadership duties due to their commitment to bettering lives and spilling the truth. I can associate my own experience in life with the message portrayed in reggae music. I have witnessed people embracing education because they are fans of reggae music. This has also been used as a tool to combat poverty and bad governance.

In conclusion, reggae music is a genre famed among the poor and the young who undergo the harsh impacts of unemployment and economic challenges. Reggae music has evolved from an indigenous form of music to a global cultural component used to trigger the social change in contemporary society. The lyrics included in reggae music call for political and social transformation, ending inequality and oppression. However, deviant behaviors like smoking marijuana and violence have given this music genre a hostile cultural and social outfit. Consequentially, it has been denounced among many people because of its association with lower-class people in society.

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