



# Dance Hall Sound System..The Good, The Bad and The Ugliest

*Lou Gooden*

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This new book will get you acquainted with all the notable sound systems in Jamaica and the rest of the world. The book will be described as controversial only because it tells the truth and nothing but the truth, so help whoever reads it. Dancehall was before the 45RPM record format was invented. The name was then Danc?in Hall-a place where dance was kept and partygoers danced to live band music. Later, much later, with the introduction of Sound System ? Danc?in Hall changed its name to Dancehall in the late 40?s. This book titled ?Dancehall Sound Systems? (The Good, The Bad, and The Ugliest) is the ?bible? of Sound Systems not only in Jamaica, but also all over the world. This 13-chapter book covering over 460 pages is dedicated to four of the country?s musical icons; three of them were foundation members of the Skatalites and are no longer around -They are Roland Alphonso, Tommy McCook, and Don Drummonds and to Johnny Moore the other living member of this group. And special dedication to Sonny Bradshaw the only other living musician included in that pantheon. You will learn of Jamaica?s history, geography, and culture-from Port Royal to Negril. How and when Kingston became a city. You will experience the nightlife of early Jamaica when guns were only seen in western movies. You will get a feel of what a blues dance with a sound system was like, compared to today?s sidewalk systems, dutty wine and feuding no talents so called Dancehall D.J?s. Introduction It seems everybody is an expert on almost every subject that any writer puts on paper. They claim to be professional on what is professional, even though they have never seen the other side of what is unprofessional. Whatever they know and see is what they adopted from the people long gone. Anything that looks, sound, or act different from their adopted inheritance is classified as unprofessional. These kind of so called professionals have nothing to give, or leave to society when they depart their existing life. This book is about the Sound System History of Jamaica. It is about the country, the people and the Artistes who made it possible. It is about the men and women who were instrumental in taking the bold steps to establish this unique Jamaican entertainment machinery. I found it possible to divide the history into three parts, "The Good" "The Bad" and "The Ugliest". Once again our history is distorted by some of the information put on paper whether in books, the new modern machinery the internet and comment made by a number of people who try to fit in an era they don't belong or for the wants of wanting to belong. Here is a note I read somewhere as given by someone whom I thought knew the history of the subject in this book. He claimed, and I quote, that from its genesis as a public address system (P.A.) for political rallies, the sound system went on to become the basis of an enterprising dancehall scene. Here he discussed with others that the sound systems caught on not only because they provided an alternative to the lack of dancehall musicians, but also because they were more affordable to employ than bands. He further stated that because of their low cost, a group of friends could pool their savings, hire a sound system, buy some refreshments, and make some extra money by keeping a dance session and he also said during the same discussion, that sound systems allowed people who were previously excluded because of lower-class standing to enter the field of dance promotion and that the sound systems were the black and poor people's phenomena, because the black lower classes couldn't afford the band dance, and this is what they had. All poor people had to do was pay a sound system man about three or five pounds to bring his equipment, stick it on the sidewalk, inside the yard, and bring in the boxes of beer and you have a dance and make some money. [End of quo] They always take cheap shot at Jamaica's people to enhance their standing in society

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