

CELEBRATING SEAGA'S

BY BALFORD HENRY
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Golden Jubilee

"THE success of Edward Seaga's 100-song box set, *Reggae Golden Jubilee: Origins of Jamaican Music* could set the stage for a rebirth of vintage Jamaican music on the international scene in 2013," says Aaron Talbert, an executive at New York-based VP Records.

Talbert was speaking with the *Jamaica Observer* at the launch of the four-disc set compiled by the former prime minister at the Jamaica Pegasus hotel, New Kingston, on Friday night.

In a speech thanking all who contributed to the occasion, Seaga claimed that Jamaicans have never paid enough attention to the social value of their music.

"It is one of the greatest

social engineers Jamaica has ever had," he said. Seaga noted that despite discrimination against the music in the 1950s and 1960s, it was able to overcome media bias and dominate the airwaves, with support from various individuals and events including JBC's TeenAge Dance Party.

"It is a powerful, cultural and creative force," Seaga said. He explained how he was led to compile the songs for the box set, which includes extensive liner notes and track-by-track notations in a 64-page booklet, as well



as photographs from Jamaica's first 50 years of Independence. Seaga leaves Jamaica this week for New York to promote the set. VP Records will officially release it on Tuesday, November 6.

One of the big surprises of the evening was dancehall artiste Lady Saw who fitted gracefully into the vintage theme, getting the audience to its feet immediately with *Sycamore Tree*, a 1996 dancehall hit on Dave Kelly's Joyride riddim.

"I don't know why Mr Seaga chose this song, but it is an honour doing it here tonight,"

she said. Byron Lee's Dragonaires, led by veteran keyboard player Neville Hinds, kicked off the show with some major instrumentals from the ska era, including Don Drummond's *Occupation* and Seaga's first successful music production, *Dumplings*.

Ossie D's very amusing cover of Roy Shirley's *Music Fields* was followed by Lady Saw. Lovindeer performed *Pocomania Day* and *Wild Gilbert*. Great performances also came from Lloyd Parks and We the People Band, Ken Boothe, Ernie Smith, Freddie McGregor, Pam Hall, 'Tinga' Stewart, Admiral Bailey, Stranger Cole, George Nooks, Bunny Brown, Mutabaruka, Suzanne Couch, Junior Sinclair, Noddy Virtue, and keyboardist Robbie Lyn who did a moving rendition of Augustus Pablo's timeless instrumental, *Java*.

B/N Seaga, Edward



Edward Seaga (second right), is flanked by (from left) Aaron Talbert, VP Records executive; Kenneth Hall, former Governor General; and Andrew Holness, leader of the Opposition, at the launch of *Reggae Golden Jubilee: Origins of Jamaican Music* at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, New Kingston on Friday night. (Photo: Garfield Robinson)