



COVER STORY

Freddy McGregor on Life, Music and Purpose

I had the pleasure of interviewing one of the Reggae industry's best loved figure recently. I had been after an interview with Freddy McGregor for six months. Like a dedicated stalker, I persistently hounded this incredibly busy man as he jetted around the world on business. I wanted to talk to this man who had greatly inspired so many people with his music, through his lyrics and also by his character.

Freddy oozes a strong sense of purpose with a grounded sense of self which is then infused into his music and which audiences all over the world gravitate to. His dedication to his art form is commendable and his passion for the people even more so. Here Freddy talks about his life, his passion and his upcoming tour to the UK at the end of July.

Esther: Good morning, welcome to “Where are they Now?” with yours truly Esther Austin. Ladies and gentleman I have been trying to get this man for the past six months, so it just shows what perseverance and tenacity and share stubbornness can do. Ladies and gentleman I have on the phone with me Freddy McGregor. Freddy welcome.

Freddy: Yes, greetings, good morning.

Esther: Good morning. Freddy I always ask my guests in a nutshell; **who is Freddy McGregor?** Or you can be in a coconut shell; **who is Freddy McGregor?**

Freddy: I’m just another brother from a humble beginning, a very simple one too. In fact, whom God has given an inspiration to do a particular work which happens to be music and this brother is just trying to do it to the best of his ability and to please the fans

Esther: Fantastic. I love your energy that's why I was so keen to get hold of you because I knew that it wasn't just to interview Freddy McGregor the Celebrity, but to interview Freddy McGregor the man with the message because I can really feel a message in you and your music. Who have been some of the people who have inspired you personally along the way?

Freddy: There are a lot of people, musically I would start with people like Stevie Wonder, Dennis Brown, early artists like Marvin Gaye, people who sang a lot of “message” songs.

Then locally you have people like the Alton Ellis. Just about all the great artists came through the early years and were inspiring. Dennis Brown most certainly, being in that age group together and that’s how I start in terms of people who inspired me greatly.

I can single out one person, musically that I can say is a great inspiration to me and that’s Bob Andy. I still listen to Bob until today and I still try to figure out, how did he come up with those songs? I actually asked him personally and one day he sat with me and told me this song.

“People see me acting strange
They might think it's a burning shame
But the people don't realise
The pangs of hell that I feel
So let them say I'm mad
They don't know how it feels to be sad
I don't know who could be glad
In a situation like this

My last shirt's torn off my back
But that's not quite the fact
My shoe is down to my socks
No place to lay my head
Don't even own a bed
I can't remember when I've eaten bread

They don't seem to realise
What really keeps me alive
It's the power that's so great
That no man can destroy
They'd like to understand
Just where I get my helping hand
So they criticize”