

A GREAT SHOW

Promoters see Jazz & Blues Fest as ‘most successful’

BY HORACE HINES Observer staff reporter

FLORENCE HALL, Trelawny — Stephen Dear, chief executive officer of Art of Music Productions (AMP), promoters of the January 26-28 Jamaica Jazz & Blues Festival, hailed it as its most successful ever.

“I think overall when you look at the Thursday night one could say it was one of the best we ever had not only in content but in terms of performance,” Dear told the Observer.

“Friday night, I don’t need to mention what the attendance was like because it was huge. And so far tonight (Saturday) we have a very nice crowd,” he continued.

The festival was first held in 1996.

An estimated 20,000 patrons flocked the venue on Friday, mainly to see headliner Celine Dion. Fans could not get enough of the Canadian singer, who, in between belting out several hits, expressed appreciation for the love and support she got from her Jamaican fans.

Richie Stephens, in collaboration with German performer Gentleman, set the stage for the svelte Dion. Bryan Art, Jully Black, Tami Chynn, Tessanne Chin and Nicole Henry also turned in good performances.

However, many Friday evening attendees were trapped in traffic for hours, even as police worked assiduously to ease the gridlock.

Some had to park their vehicles and walk for over a mile to the venue. Dear regretted the delays. “I really want to apologise for the experience that patrons had on that evening. It definitely was not very comfortable for us hearing the hours that people had to spend on the road to get in,” he said. He revealed that promoters are considering having major headliners perform on Saturday when there are less persons commuting from work. Dear was elated at the strong turnout for Thursday night’s show which featured the evolution of Jamaica’s music since Independence from Britain in 1962. “Thursday had a real high point right throughout the evening. I am going to say Thursday night was a very, very strong night,” Dear said. Veterans Marcia Griffiths, Yellowman, George Nooks and Maxi Priest were the outstanding performers that evening. The festival concluded Saturday night with performances from, among others, Cee Lo Green, the Temptations Review, Heads of State, Destra and Damian Marley.



Patrons enjoy themselves at the Jamaica Jazz & Blues Festival in Trelawny. (Photos: Joseph Wellington)





Promoter Walter Elmore greets patrons at the festival.



DION... headlined Friday night's show