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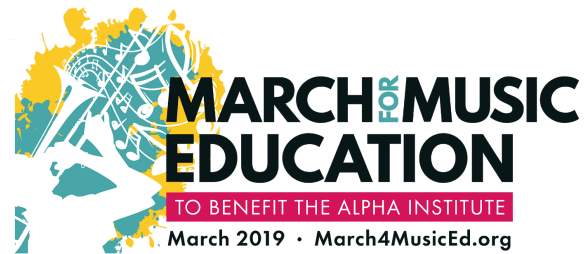
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MARCH FOR MUSIC EDUCATION SET TO ENGAGE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMMUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUNG MUSICIANS AT THE LEGENDARY ALPHA INSTITUTE IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA

March for Music Education (MME) is set to officially launch its March 2019 campaign, engaging the global music industry and fans in support of one of the world's most treasured music institutions--The Alpha Institute School of Music in Kingston, Jamaica. MME is a non-profit campaign that will engage musicians, record labels, management companies, and fans to support Alpha and its mission to develop the next generation of music makers coming out of the legendary school at 26 South Camp Road in Kingston. The March for Music Education Campaign seeks to fund 20 music student scholarships for returning and deserving Alpha music students during the 2019-2020 academic year.

"We are so appreciative of the efforts of the artists, labels, and companies supporting the work being done at Alpha and in particular for the opportunity it affords to Alpha students," says Margaret Little Wilson, Administrator of The Alpha Institute. "Youth music education has proven to contribute to community, professional and personal development. Alpha is looking forward to making connections and building relationships with music and education supporters around the world through the March for Music Education scholarship and instruction drive."

MME provides a convenient and interactive platform to turn seemingly small donations into large ones that make lasting social change in the lives of Alpha students and their families. MME brings together members of the music community, in Jamaica and out, to create immediate and maximum impact. The campaign begins with a challenge: MME invites music fans, artists, bands and brands as well as the public to take action by making a contribution to the campaign in the name of music education or a musical inspiration. Secondly, the campaign asks participants to share their commitment to music education publicly with an #ISupportAlpha post on social media using MME original social media content.

Over the coming weeks, MME will be signing up global partners -- regional and local artists, labels, and industry organizations -- to focus support on the next generation of Jamaican music creators, singers and players of instruments. From bands to brands that have been touched by Jamaican music, the music community can make a clear statement that music education, counselling and social assistance is necessary for those in Jamaica who need it most.

"Alpha gave me a second chance to life. When there was no other choice, Alpha was there," said Sajay Watson, Alpha Institute class of 2017, and now a full time studio technician for RJR, Jamaica's largest radio company. "Alpha is a family setting for me because it made me appreciate the value of working with others. Alpha is important to me personally and professionally because of the special music performance and technology training I received, which allowed me to pursue a career path I had always dreamed of."

MME in support of the Alpha Institute School of Music has already attracted notable partners, including Easy Star and VP Records, both of whom point to the impact Alpha has had on the development of Jamaican music.

“The Alpha Institute has been instrumental in building the global phenomenon that is Jamaican popular music,” said Pat Chin, co-founder of VP Records. “VP Records, which celebrates 40 years this year, would not have been as successful had not it been for the work of the Sisters of Mercy who run the school, the teachers and music staff at Alpha. As VP Records reflects on its history and the future of the music industry, we are eager to work with the March for Music Education to strengthen the work done by Alpha innovators like Don Drummond, Johnnie Osbourne, and Yellowman.”

And Eric Smith, of Easy Star Records, notes the importance of ensuring that the foundation of Jamaican music is not separated from Jamaica itself.

“We have an opportunity to put into practice the values that attracted us to Jamaican music in the first place--the music, the message, and the community they inspire,” says Smith. “The links we are creating now will not only support Alpha students who need it, but create connections around the world based on a commitment to youth, education, and economic development that we at Easy Star Records believe are a key part of our mission. We are honoured to be a part of the March for Music Education campaign.”

To make the campaign even more exciting, the March for Music Education is offering a chance to experience Kingston, Jamaica to everyone who donates to the campaign. Everyone who makes a gift will be entered to win a mountainside stay at Strawberry Hill, owned by the equally legendary founder of Island Records, Chris Blackwell, or the urban bohemian hangout called Jamnesia, where reggae and surf culture become one. This is not the time to sit on the sidelines. Join the March for Music Education and be a part of the action to benefit one of Jamaica’s most important and unheralded institutions.

Donations are accepted via PayPal on the March4MusicEd.org website using the “Take Action” buttons. Donations may also be made via wire transfer and by check. 100% of donations to the March for Music Education go to the Sisters of Mercy Jamaican Ministry to fund 20 student scholarships for the 2019-2020 school year. Scholarships underwrite tuition, transportation, nutrition, counseling, work experience and all materials needed for these students. Funds as well provide support for the music curriculum infrastructure, including teachers, for these students.

The Alpha Institute, led by the Sisters of Mercy for more than 100 years, was a home to thousands of orphaned youth and is best known as the place where many of Jamaica’s most accomplished musicians got their start--from jazz man Dizzy Reece to the Skatalites to reggae icon Johnnie Osbourne. The Telegraph (UK) noted Alpha’s role in helping “to release the spirit of one of the most musical islands in world” and the BBC has called Alpha a “dream factory”. Now a day program, the non-profit school provides young men 16-22 years old with holistic music training, personal development and work experience. In addition to session and touring work, Alpha has been successful more recently in placing its students in jobs that include music technology and radio broadcasting.

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