

Toronto reggae mainstays House of David Gang promise good vibes and good times

Written by Richard Amery

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Reggae band the House of David Gang have been a Toronto institution since the late '80s. They are excited to bring a whole lot of good vibes to the Slice on Aug. 13.



“It will be 100 per cent positivity and good vibes. We’re going to keep you all rocking,” promised drummer and founding member Collin Jahlin Edwards, who formed the band with frontman Desmond “King Selah” Anderson.

Both of them were in different reggae bands who came together to be the house band for a house band of an after hours spot called the House of David, which they named the new supergroup after. It was the hope of Toronto’s Rastafarian scene from 1988-96.

“Me and Selah have been together since 1988. At one time there was a real scene, but DJs are taking over,” Edwards observed.

Reggae music has always been part of their lives while they were growing up in Jamaica.

“Reggae is the music where we come from. It’s our cultural heritage,” King Selah said adding they have been in Canada for years, so they have incorporated a lot of western influences into their music.

“So we play rock and roll reggae music,” Edwards added.

“Everything we listen to influences us. Because we also have Canadian roots,” he said.

“We play a lot of different styles,” he said.

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One of the other Toronto musicians, the House of David Gang love in Friendliness. “He plays with Big Sugar but he also has his own band the Human Rights,” Selah said. “We both started around the same time. So we’ve known him for a long time. But there were a lot of bands playing in the late ’80s and early ’90s,” he added.

Though Djs and dance music has been taking over the scene, the House of David Gang still are able to play a lot.

“The House of David (venue) had some troubles with the law and shut down, but we keep doing what we’re doing. We play all over the country,” Selah said.

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“You still have to make it in Toronto,” Edwards added, noting the band still has to work hard to be heard.

“ And I still do my Peter Tosh Tribute,” Selah said.

After The House of David shut down in 1996, Edwards returned to Jamaica after becoming disillusioned with the Canadian music industry and the band took a break. But he returned and the band reformed seven years ago.

“Everything has been going great since then. We never look back,” Seleh said.

“We have no complaints,” he continued.

The band has had a busy summer full of shows and festivals including ArtsWells in Wells in northern B.C. over the weekend.

They can’t choose a highlight.

“ We haven’t got there yet. It’s still to come Lethbridge,” Edwards laughed.

The House of David Gang play the Slice, Aug. 13 with Hachey the MouthPeace at 9 p.m. There is a \$10 cover.

— *by Richard Amery, L.A. Beat Editor*