

Reggae and tango: Two rhythms, one shared soul

Dear Editor,

Every February Jamaica turns its attention once again to reggae — not merely as a genre, but as a living expression of national identity with global reach.

Reggae is expression, reflection, and rhythm with purpose. It is Jamaica's voice in the world.

At first glance, reggae and tango may seem far apart: One moves to the pulse of the Caribbean, the other to the dramatic cadence of the Río de la Plata. Yet, beyond geography and tempo, both genres share a remarkable common ground — authenticity, emotional depth, and a strong sense of cultural identity.

Few figures embody this parallel more clearly than Bob Marley and Carlos Gardel. Each, in his own way, became the unmistakable voice of a nation.

Marley transformed reggae into a universal message of unity and reflection; Gardel turned tango into an emotional language understood far beyond Argentina. Both reached iconic status during their lifetimes, and their voices remain permanently linked to



Musicians and engineers do studio work on *Jamaica-Argentina: A Tango-Reggae Soundclash*.

the cultural identity of their countries.

That shared legacy helps explain why reggae and tango continue to inspire new generations and new crossings. In Argentina, reggae has developed a strong and devoted following, shaping a vibrant scene that continues to grow. This connection was visible during Reggae Month 2025, when the Argentine band Nonpalidece performed in Jamaica, highlighting how reggae has become a meaningful cultural reference well

beyond the Caribbean.

Beyond live performances, this dialogue has also taken shape through collaborative creation. One such expression is *Jamaica-Argentina: A Tango-Reggae Soundclash*, an album built from a strong intercultural collaboration recorded between Buenos Aires and Kingston, with musicians from both countries. By combining iconic tango instruments — such as the bandoneon — with reggae rhythms, the project explores how distinct musical

languages can complement one another without losing their identity.

This kind of collaboration goes beyond fusion for its own sake. It reflects a deeper understanding that musical languages, like spoken ones, can converse while remaining true to themselves.

Tango does not stop being tango, nor does reggae stop being reggae. Instead, both expand their expressive possibilities.

As Jamaica celebrates Reggae Month, it also celebrates this broader idea — that music is not static, but alive, capable of travel, dialogue, and renewal. Tango shares that same spirit.

Different in form, similar in soul, both genres remind us that rhythm can connect cultures, histories, and emotions across distance.

In that sense, reggae and tango stand together — two rhythms born in different places, speaking the same timeless language. One love — a shared heartbeat carried by music.

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