

TRANSCRIPT: HEATHER BUBB-CLARKE AUDIO SHORT

Heather: I used to do the house parties with my cousin, and when he wanted to dance with a girl, he would say, “Heads, take over!” And I would select the music and play for him. So, that's how my love for DJing started.

My name is Heather-Bubb Clarke. My selector name is Live Wire Disco, and I named myself Live Wire because I can't keep my ass quiet (laughter).

[music: comes in and under Heather speaking]

Heather: I was born in 1955, in Kingston, Jamaica.

[sound: ambient from Kingston plays]

Heather: People look at my colour and hear my voice and they said to me, ‘Where ya come from?’ I'm of the lighter persuasion, as they would tell me down in the country. My lineage is: on my mother's side, Jerusalem. On my grandfather mom's side, France. And on daddy's side, Spanish and Irish, and his mother is Jamaican white, some Black, and Irish, as well. What is Jamaica's motto? Out of Many One.

Heather: We came from a very large family. My cousin, who—his name was Wallace Wilson, he's Red Rat's dad.

[music: a “Tight Up Skirt” by Red Rat comes in and fades under Heather speaking]

Heather: We were all into music, all of us. We used to go up to Tropical Plaza and they had a record store there, and you go into the record store. Daddy used to take us with him and mommy and select the records.

[sound: ambience of the drawing room in Kingston]

Heather: In the drawing room, there is the radio phone, they used to call it, and a turntable underneath it. The arm goes, and it drops the record and everybody is dancing.

[music: track they would dance to plays and fades under Heather speaking]

Heather: It was a beautiful life.

[music fades out completely]

Heather: And I came to Canada on the 4th of July, 1975 because of the political situation. It was a scary time.

I came here ahead. My mother spoke to me and she said, “Heather, if you don't leave this country”—I'm the eldest of the three girls—“If you don't leave, daddy won't leave. You are the one that your father will follow.”

Daddy was a very loving, caring father, you know? I was the boy he didn't have, (laughter) I'm his shadow.

[music shift]

Heather: When I left Jamaica, I could only come with \$50 in my pocket—per family. That's all you were permitted to leave the country with. When I first came to Canada, I actually just had my records—I brought it from Jamaica. Mom felt that it was necessary to bring all the collection that we had and we had a wide collection. I took my 45s and daddy made sure that I got my albums.

And when I went to house parties here, nobody had any music. Here by 12 o'clock you had to tone down the—the music, that kind of thing. Most events were shut off by one o'clock, even New Year's Eve!

[sound: record scratch]

Heather: Selecting at a party in Jamaica, you know it was Jamaican music, right? We could play till two, three o'clock in the morning, nobody trouble you. You could play 'til the cows come home—the cow dem would dance, too, right? (Laughter)

[music shift]

Heather: So I used to bring my crates of music and play for the house parties. And then the word got out, so my first event actually was in a church in Scarborough.

[music shift]

Heather: I wouldn't be a selector without my dad. He called himself the ground wire because I was the live wire. Right? (Laughter) The live wire is the wire that gives you the juice, he's the one that grounds you.

[music shift]

Heather: It was my dad who put the system together. My sound was different to everybody's: it was a sound that was stereo playing instead of being a mono sound. It gave you that capability of hearing the various instruments, versus when the mono plays, the baseline normally just hits you in your chest. And thus, that Live Wire sound was a mellow type of sound that they could dance up near to the speakers without that reverberation in their chest.

[music shift]

Heather: Daddy's role was to set up the equipment and he would go around the hall to ensure that the treble, the bass had the right settings within the hall. He also danced on the stage, right? He had two left foot, but daddy just loved being there enjoying the music.

[music shift]

Heather: The last event that we did, he was dying at the time--daddy was dying. And my sister Roma and my nephew came to help us. And, um, he cried. He couldn't stay, he had water in the lungs and we didn't know. Daddy couldn't stay, and he came home and wept. And he said to mommy, "I don't know how Heads is going to manage with all this equipment."

When daddy died on the 1st of February, 2001, a part of me died.

I played for about five years after he died, on and off, but I had to rent equipment and people recognized that even though Live Wire had the people playing and dancing and hopping all over the place, it was not her. It was not her sound. People would still ask me, but that love of music sort of went with daddy. And eventually over the years, it just tapered out.

[music shift]

Heather: I played in the community for over 28 years. I was playing for the older folks, the more mature folks, where it is not the Buju Banton, that kinda boom-boom-boom,

boom-boom-boom kind of music. They're into the more laidback type of reggae: Ken Boothe, 'Pitta Patta' from Ernie Smith, that kind of thing.

[sound: mashup of songs Heather would play during sets]

Heather: One love was my sign off song. So when they heard one love, they would come on the floor, they would make a circle, they would start to sing. And I hear them out there singing. And I just said, all right, it's your time now? And I just caught the music and I said one love and everybody one heart and rock.

[sound: Bob Marley's "One Love" comes up and completely fades out]