

Larry McDonald is a legendary New York-based percussionist for Dub is a Weapon, The Rocksteady 7, and a number of other reggae, ska, and world music artists. A native of Jamaica, he has spent nearly 50 years as a renowned session and live performer, working with virtually all of the icons of ska and reggae music. McDonald's work has been featured on dozens of albums, including those by Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Lee "Scratch" Perry, Taj Mahal, the Skatalites, Toots and the Maytals, Mutabaruka, and Gil Scott-Heron. In 2009, McDonald released his first solo album, *Drumquestra*, on which many of his longtime associates (such as Toots Hibbert and Mutabaruka) made guest appearances. This album – a mix of reggae, dub, and world music – includes 15 tracks by McDonald and his drum orchestra performing on over 20 percussive instruments. Some of the songs on the album, including "Mento in 3" (a National Public Radio "Song of the Day") were recorded at Green Grotto Caves, where McDonald drummed directly onto the rocks and on stalactites and stalagmites. McDonald is now collaborating on a memoir with Dr. Elke Weesjes, who will be present at his UWSP lecture, as well as working on a new solo album.



The Latin American/Caribbean Speaker Series at the
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point presents



Larry McDonald

Legendary Percussionist

speaking on

**THE HISTORY OF REGGAE MUSIC:
AN EVENING WITH LARRY MCDONALD**

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Dreyfus University Center, Encore Room

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College of Letters and Science
College of Fine Arts and Communication
Division of Communication
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Dean Christopher Cirno, UWSP College of Letters and Science
Mr. Mark Williams, UWSP College of Letters and Science
Dr. Elke Weesjes, *United Academics Journal of Social Science*
Mr. William Geoghegan, Brown Paper Tickets

Schedule of Events

Welcome by Dean Jeff Morin, College of Fine Arts and Communication

Introduction by Dr. Anju Reejhsinghani, Department of History, and Chair, Latin American/Caribbean Speaker Series

Public Talk by Mr. Larry McDonald

Q&A Session Moderated by Dr. Elke Weesjes

Description of the Series

The Latin American/Caribbean Speaker Series (LACSS) at UWSP was founded in 2011 to promote awareness of political, social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues in Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean region. The series brings scholars, artists, activists, and other specialists to our campus each year to share their knowledge with students, faculty, staff, and the wider community. Reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the series, the LACSS committee includes Assistant Professor Anju Reejhsinghani (History), Assistant Professor Jennifer Collins (Political Science), and Associate Professor Elia Armacanqui-Tipacti (Foreign Languages).

For more information about the series, including a list of upcoming guest speakers, contact Dr. Reejhsinghani at areejhsi@uwsp.edu or (715) 346-4122.



Photo of Larry McDonald by Tiffany Hagler-Gear

The History of Reggae Music: An Evening with Larry McDonald

A special presentation by the renowned percussionist

Larry McDonald was born in Little Bay Port Maria, Jamaica, where he was exposed to traditional African drumming in the jonkonnu, kumina, and burru styles. These and other rhythms, along with Trinidadian calypso, Jamaican mento, and American R&B, would influence the ska, rock steady, and reggae movements that arose on the island in the early 1960s, around the time of its 1962 independence from Great Britain.

McDonald came of age musically in this rich environment. By the time he was a young man, he had moved to Kingston and became a congüero. His early live experience came through playing for a number of jazz and mento bands in Jamaica and the Bahamas. By the mid-1960s, working with famed producer Lee “Scratch” Perry in Kingston, he was recording backing tracks for a number of up-and-coming Jamaican artists, including Bob Marley and Toots Hibbert. In 1970, he won the gold medal for “Best Percussionist” at the National Arena Festival in Kingston and “Musician of the Year” at the Musicman Awards.

In 1973, McDonald moved to the U.S., settling first in Indianapolis before making his home in New York City, where he worked with Taj Mahal from 1974 to 1978. He relocated to San Francisco in the late 1970s to play with several reggae bands before returning to New York in the 1980s, where he has remained ever since. During his long career, he has formed partnerships with a number of top artists in the U.S., Great Britain, Jamaica, and elsewhere. One of his most productive musical associations was with the late Gil Scott-Heron, with whom McDonald performed for over two decades.

In this presentation, McDonald guides the audience through the history of Jamaican music and of his own career. He focuses especially on the kumina, jonkonnu, ska, mento, and reggae movements, their impact in the U.S., and the continuing relevance of Jamaican music around the globe.