

KARTEL'S RESPONSE- NOT CONVINCING

The Editor, Sir:

I was extremely annoyed and disgusted by Adija 'Vybz Kartel' Palmer's letter to the editor, 'Censorship vs free expression - Critics are social hypocrites – Kartel'. Whereas I would have expected a response from the deejay pertaining to both the article written by Mrs. Esther Tyson and the decision taken by the Broadcasting Commission, I was shocked to see the reasons that Kartel gave in opposition to the article by Tyson.

Not hypocrites

Vybz Kartel refers to opponents of the song as being social hypocrites pointing to those people in support of Tyson's article. Let me point out that the essence of Mrs. Tyson's article was more geared towards protecting our younger generation. Everyone is aware that is not only adults who are listening to this song, but the children are as well and as a nation we cannot and must not publicly expose our children to this garbage. Let me point out that this call for censorship is not in any form hypocrisy. When my parents told me not to have sex until marriage and I know they were doing it, I did not consider that hypocrisy. It was obvious that it was just not my season to take on sex as yet. And if my parents were being hypocrites by doing that, well, it saved me from the disaster that thousands of my peers in Jamaica have experienced thus far. By the way, why is it that you do not allow your own children to listen your music?

You need to remember that the state has a very important responsibility in ensuring the protection of our children from such forms of music. You talk about free expression Kartel, but you must remember that this freedom is not in isolation to the other laws and rights that exist. We have a freedom of movement for example, but we dare not cross the borders of another country without the required documents. I point to Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child which includes the responsibility of States Parties to take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent 'The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity'. Article 17 of the convention encourages States Parties to encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child.

A link does in fact exist between exposure to sexual content via the media and the sexual behaviour of our children. North Carolina University posits that 'kids who have a heavier sexual media diet when they are 12 to 14 years old are twice as likely as kids who have a lighter sexual media diet to have had sexual intercourse by the time they are 16'. Additionally, in 2007, a study done by Tazhmoye Crawford of the University of the West Indies, Mona revealed that teenagers are identifying music, mainly of the dancehall genre, as a trigger for early sexual intercourse. I must commend Kartel for highlighting other factors which have resulted in this form of behaviour by our children, but it is important that he recognizes that such music worsens such behaviour.

Need for censorship

It is important that we protect our young people from this form of illicit exposure. I agree with Kartel that Rampin' shop is just as easily accessible as exposure to porn, 'R' rated movies and carnival revellers. However, where the state or an agency can play their part in ensuring that our young minds are not exposed to it, they should, they have the responsibility to. It is now time to move to put the ban to the playing of such content in the buses, taxis, or any public places where young people convene. We need to separate children from adults. There needs to be a clear line of demarcation between the two. Kartel we just cannot have a free for all in this country.

Accolades?

Kartel, there is a reason why your song '**Money fi spen**' got number one on the charts. This is because it had substance which appealed to the masses and which one did not have to be shaking their heads at. I for one enjoyed **Emergency**, as it was conscious. Let me point out that people do enjoy conscious dancehall and reggae music, and I proved this again last Friday at an event that was filled with thousands of people from all ages and all walks of life when they joyfully welcomed three of Bob Marley's songs being played in the middle of the strictly non-reggae music selection. Kartel, you are a lyrical genius and that is why you have the admiration of so many people, so, please I implore you to use your music and reunite Jamaica, to be a catalyst in bringing an end to the crime and violence which has intoxicated our land.

I am, etc

Paul McFarlane,

National Secondary Students' Council

paul.a.mcfarlane@hotmail.com