

Tjenbé Réd!



***Email to the cultural services  
section of the canton of Vaud  
on some inexactitudes  
in statements by Mediacom  
and Metrotop Festival  
concerning Capleton***

*Paris, Saturday the 8th of November 2008  
Press release No. TR08SOC36*

Dear Madame Brigitte Waridel,

In your capacity as head of the cultural services section of Vaud Canton, where a concert by the Jamaican *Reggae Dancehall* singer, Capleton, is being organised this evening, we have to inform you of our surprise at the way in which your section has taken at face value certain statements by the *Mediacom* company, Capleton's tour organisers, and by *Metrotop Festival*, their business partners in Lausanne. Our partners organisations, *Stop Murder Music Bern* and *Swissgay*, have in fact forwarded to us an exchange of emails between themselves, your section and *Metrotop Festival*, in which certain documents sent on by Mediacom are rehashed.

1. Everything starts out well in your email of the 6<sup>th</sup> November at 15:20hrs, where you indicate firmly to *Metrotop Festival*: *“We have learned from Swissgay, the association for the defence of the rights of homosexuals, that the Capleton concert for the coming 8<sup>th</sup> of November at the Metrotop is being held. This contrasts with the decision by those in charge of the Kaserne in Basle, where they refused to allow this artist to appear following overtly homophobic comments he has made in public, especially during his concerts. This is all the more serious because Capleton signed the RCA (Reggae Compassionate Act) which stipulates that no racist, homophobic nor sexist comments should be made during shows./ We ask that you immediately inform us, by return of email that you intend to distance yourselves from the comments made by Capleton./ You will easily understand that the Vaud State, which has offered to cover you against any deficit, cannot be associated with comments which are so discriminatory against a section of the population, given that we figure on your promotional material.”*

2. Things continue, however, in the well-worn manner. *Metrotop Festival* replies the same day, at 16:31 hrs, employing the sort of rhetoric to which we have now become used. *“Capleton, at the start of his career, wrote some songs which were a bit discriminatory, especially against the homosexual community... He has since*

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*made honourable amends... At the time of booking Capleton, we demanded written guarantees from Mediacom and the artist regarding total respect for minorities and anyone's beliefs... Guarantees which we received and which you will find attached."*

FIRST INEXACTITUDES - Capleton did not exactly write, *"at the start of his career some songs which were a bit discriminatory, especially against the homosexual community"*. He wrote and performed, between 1991 and 2007, some twenty nine of the 207 of the most homophobic songs in Dancehall, according to the internet site Murder Inna Dancehall (that is, 14% by him alone, which is some feat, when you consider that this site figures 99 artists) [1]. These songs call for the murder and hatred of people who are LBGT (lesbian, gay, bi- and transsexuals). Thus, *"Burn out a queer, Blood out a queer... Queers are fucking and sucking too much pussy... Blood out a queer, Blood out a shit (fucker)... Sodomite and queer man, I shoot up... Whoa... You should know that Capleton burns queers... The same fire applies to lesbians... Say, I burn everything as long as I know that they're gay... All queers and sodomites should be killed... Yow, string them up and hang them up alive... All queers who come around here... This mama earth says none can survive..."* [2].

SECOND INEXACTITUDES - Capleton has not exactly *"made honourable amends"*. On the 7th of June 2005 he sent a statement to the French Federation of LGBT Centres (it is an undated French translation of this declaration which *Metrotop Festival* has sent you). On this subject, the French Federation of LGBT Centres talked about an *"oracular"* statement and added: *"The French Federation of LGBT Centres is glad that Capleton has personally and in writing confirmed his decision, announced the 4<sup>th</sup> of February this year verbally by his label, never again to perform songs which could be "taken as attacks" (homophobic or against transsexuals). On the other hand, the Federation notes that Capleton has not regretted the homophobic nature of these songs but only that they had been "misunderstood or misinterpreted". The Federation notes that Capleton has said nothing about their possible final withdrawal, nor about his possible respect for the "type of life" LGBT lead, nor about possible attacks on these persons by certain of his fans"* [3].

His statement, which might have been clearer, did not prevent Capleton from issuing two new songs identified by the *Murder Inna Dancehall* site - *Toppating*, recorded in December 2005 and released along with the album *"Reggae Gold 2006"* on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2006, and *Hits Pon Toppa Hits*, recorded in July 2006 and released with the album *"Strictly The Best 35"* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2006 [4]. Then, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 2007, Capleton signed the Reggae Compassionate Act which again committed him never to perform such delicately *"discriminatory"* lyrics (if we may employ the *Metro Festival's* subtle euphemisms). Even if he, in December 2005, had somewhat qualified his

commitment of the 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2005, Capleton reneged on this new commitment on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2007, during a concert, by calling upon his fans, to “*put their hands up*” to “*burn the queers and sodomites*” [5]. *Metrotop Festival* suggests “*we need to know when to give a second chance to people who made mistakes*” - but Capleton has already had his second, and even his third, chance.

THIRD INEXACTITUDES - To better support its proposal, *Metrotop Festival* produced an attestation by Mediacom, no doubt a perfectly neutral and trustworthy external observer, free of any interest in the matter. “*In our capacity as the artist Capleton’s European agent, we guarantee that his concerts do not involve any discriminatory comments against any community whatsoever, or any race or religion and particularly against people of a homosexual orientation. Those concerts already held in this tour, or during the three previous years in Europe, are moreover the proof of this. Done by my hand this day in the full knowledge of its import in French law (Fait pour servir et valoir ce que de droit).*” This attestation is dated the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2008. It is annoying that at that date, Capleton’s notorious performance of the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 2007 had been completely well known. It is also irritating that *Mediacom* is trying to introduce a distinction between homophobic comments made in Europe and those made beyond Europe (a “*beyond*” not otherwise mentioned elsewhere). This distinction goes back to a rather outdated vision of the world, in any case one which has been abandoned with colonial times. It is also part of a way at looking at human rights which makes artificial distinctions between people. As the Franco-German TV Channel *ARTE* suggests, in a programme dedicated to *Murder Music*, broadcast on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, “*to think of these texts as forming part of Jamaican culture would be a sort of misunderstanding of the rights of man*” [6].

3. The most surprising thing is not that *Metrotop* and *Mediacom* employ this sort of rhetoric. Most surprising is that your section legitimates it without displaying any of the critical sense you might have expected from it. In its email of the 6<sup>th</sup> of November at 17:19 hrs (forty eight minutes after *Metrotop Festival’s* email), it “*takes note of these commitments*” and sees “*no reason to doubt them*”. Had your section read the details sent to you by *Stop Murder Music Bern* and *Swissgay*? Did it try to research and verify what was submitted by *Metrotop Festival* and *Mediacom*? Did it try to get in touch again with *Stop Murder Music Bern* or *Swissgay* to check out their version of the facts?

*For Tjenbé Rèd*  
*(Stop Murder Music France)*  
*President, David Auerbach Chiffrin*  
*tjenbered@hotmail.fr*  
*+33 (0) 6 10 55 63 60*

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[1] Liste *MID - Murder Inna Dancehall* (au 4 novembre 2008) : Admiral Bailey, Admiral T, Akon, Alozade, Angel Doolas, Anthony B, ARP, Assassin, Baby Cham, Baby G, Beenie Man, Black-er, Bounty Killer, Brian, Buju Banton, Bunny Wailer, Busta Rhymes, Cam'ron, Capleton, Chicken, Chuck Fender, Congo Natty, Daddy Mory, Damian Marley, Delly Ranks, Demo Delgado, DJ Collateral, Dr. Evil, Easy Star All-Stars, Elephant Man, Filco Ranks, Frisco Kid, Gabriel, Galaxy P, General B, General Degree, General Levy, Ghetto Max, Gringo, Hammer Mouth, Harry Toddler, Hawkeye, Horace Andy, Hot Shot Crew, Jiggy, Jiggy King, Juelz Santana, Junior Demus, Junior Kelly, Junior Reid, Kardinal Offishall, Kevin Evil, Kiprich, Krys, Lady Saw, Lexxus, Lovindeer, Lovy Jam, Macka Diamond, Mad Cobra, Mavado, Mega Banton, Menny More, Misty In Roots, Mr. Chicken, Mr. Easy, Mr. Vegas, Ninja Ford, Notch, Pan Head, Pierpoljak, Predator, Professor Nuts, Rally Bop, Ranking Toyon, Ras Berry, Red Dragon, Sanchez, Sayrus, Scare Dem Crew, Shabba Ranks, Singer J, Sizzla, Spragga Benz, Stapler, T.O.K., Tappa Zukie & Family, Terror Fabulous, Tony Gold, Top Cat, Twins Of Twins, Virgo Man, Vybz Kartel, Ward 21, Warrior King, Wayne Marshall, Wickerman, Yellowman, YT  
<http://soulrebels.org/dancehall.htm>

[2] *OutRage!/ Stop Murder Music/ Dancehall Dossier* (2004, p. 5)  
<http://www.tjenbered.fr/2004/20041231-95.pdf>

[3] 8 juin 2005 - *Capleton : «Ma musique n'incite à la violence contre aucun être humain que ce soit, quelque soit son genre de vie» - (Suite aux négociations ouvertes le 26 mai par Reims Liberté Gaie, «An nou allé !» et la Fédération des CGL, Capleton adresse une déclaration sibylline aux associations LGBT françaises)* - Communiqué de presse n°ANA2005/09  
<http://www.tjenbered.fr/ana/2005/20050608-00.html>

[4A] [http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/e\\_songs\\_more.htm](http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/e_songs_more.htm)

[4B1] [http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/u\\_lyrics\\_toppa.htm](http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/u_lyrics_toppa.htm)

[4B2] <http://www.tjenbered.fr/2006/20060620-99.pdf>

[4C1] [http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/u\\_lyrics\\_hits.htm](http://www.soulrebels.org/dancehall/u_lyrics_hits.htm)

[4C2] <http://www.tjenbered.fr/2006/20061121-99.pdf>

[5] 30 octobre 2008 - *Le chanteur homophobe Capleton viole le Reggae Compassionate Act et arrive en tournée en France et en Europe (Tjenbé Rêd devient relais du réseau Stop Murder Music en France et appelle les associations qui défendent les droits humains à une mobilisation résolue contre les propos de Capleton, aspirant «brûleur de pédés»)* - Communiqué de presse n°TR08SOC33  
<http://www.tjenbered.fr/2008/20081030-00.html>

[6] 3 novembre 2008 - *«Love, peace, unity et homophobie» : Arte se penche sur la murder music (Selon la chaîne de télévision franco-allemande, «considérer ces textes comme faisant partie de la culture jamaïcaine constituerait une forme de mépris envers les droits de l'homme car la philosophie du reggae prône bien autre chose»)* - Communication n°TR08SOC34  
<http://www.tjenbered.fr/2008/20080919-99.html>

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Association loi 1901 fondée le 1er mai 2007, déclarée le 24 mai 2007,  
Journal officiel du 16 juin 2007  
CCP Paris 5355746U | IBAN FR94 2004 1000 0153 5574 6U02 070 | BIC PSSTFRPPPAR |  
SIRET 500 965 678 00013 | NAF/APE 913E  
Membre du Comité consultatif des associations ultramarines  
près la Délégation interministérielle pour l'égalité des chances des Français d'outre-mer  
Membre de l'UNOM | Union nationale de l'outre-mer français  
Membre du RAAC-sida | Réseau des associations africaines et caribéennes  
agissant en France dans la lutte contre le sida  
Membre du CRAN | Conseil représentatif des associations noires en France  
Membre associé, Observateur de la Fédération française des Centres LGBT  
Membre du collectif UCIJ | Uni(e)s contre l'immigration jetable  
Stop Murder Music France, relais du réseau Stop Murder Music en France  
Signataire de la Charte francilienne des intervenants en éducation pour la santé  
et membre du Schéma régional d'éducation pour la santé en Île-de-France  
Signataire de la Charte de la Coordination française pour le droit d'asile  
Signataire de l'Appel pour un moratoire universel sur la peine de mort lancé le 6 août 2007  
par la Coalition mondiale contre la peine de mort  
Signataire du pacte interassociatif Ni Pauvre, Ni Soumis du 4 février 2008  
Soutien du collectif DroitsEtProstitution  
Courriels : [contact@tjenbered.fr](mailto:contact@tjenbered.fr) | MSN : [tjenbered@hotmail.fr](mailto:tjenbered@hotmail.fr) |  
Myspace : <http://www.myspace.com/tjenbered> | Site Internet : <http://www.tjenbered.fr/>  
Ligne d'écoute et d'information : +33 (0)6 10 55 63 60 (24h/24, répondeur à certaines heures)  
113, boulevard Voltaire, 75011 Paris

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