

Tallawah Mento Band

Tallawah in fine style

Basil Walters - Jamaica Observer
September 12, 2017



FLORIDA-BASED Tallawah Mento Band gave a well-received performance at the Redbones Blues Cafe in New Kingston last Thursday night. The Colin Smith-led ensemble kept the country's musical heritage alive on a night when Jamaica celebrated the 98th birthday of cultural icon Louise Bennett-Coverley.

So captivating was Tallawah with its wide-ranging repertoire that the group had to keep performing quite a number of songs long after the set was to have ended. The fans simply would let them go. During the main course, which was divided into two segments, the eight-member aggregation thrilled with music across genres such as jazz, pop, reggae, mento and gospel.

The 15-year-old band struck all the right chords with *Ribba To De Bank*, the title track from their album of the same name and other cuts such as *Yellow Bird*, *Stylish Girl*, *Rebecca*, *Peanut Venda*, *Calypso Island*, *My Jamaica*, *Sweet Jamaica*, *Ce Ce Rider*, *Sitting Here In limbo*, *No Woman No Cry*, and *Redemption Song*.

“I sat at the feet of Dr Olive Lewin, I was one of the original members of the Jamaica Folk Singers, so that was my foundation in mento music...It has been a wonderful journey...we have

played at several festivals, private parties, weddings. We've lots of requests for weddings, cocktail parties, but this is the first time we are playing in Kingston. This is the 50th anniversary of the Jamaica Folk Singers so I came to celebrate with them. I got in touch with Redbones and they said come on down, so here we are," Colin Smith, director/vocalist/guitarist of Tallawah Mento Band told the **Jamaica Observer**.

The St Elizabeth-born Smith didn't miss the opportunity to reveal his contribution to the preservation of the cultural legacy of "Miss Lou".

"I am on the Louise Bennett Heritage Council which is a Foundation in Florida which provides two scholarships every year to the Edna Manley College to two students for the past 12 years," he said.

— Basil Walters