

Richie Spice Biography

Most reggae fans became acquainted with Richie Spice in 2004 when his single “Earth A Run Red” began its ascent on the charts, first in Jamaica, then internationally, ultimately emerging as one of the years biggest hits despite being more than four years old! “Earth A Run Red” was originally featured on Spice’s debut album *Universal* released by the Cambridge, Massachusetts based label Heartbeat Records in 2000. At that time, Spice was a lone reggae soldier armed with an arsenal of well-crafted, lyrically uplifting tunes, but without supporting troops, he found it difficult to advance towards the professional frontline. “The songs were there but they weren’t getting any promotion,” Spice recalls, “and with just me going out there singing them, it was like one man against the world.”

In early 2004 Spice signed with 5th Element, a Kingston based management company/record label and they began a vigorous promotional campaign for “Earth A Run Red” in Jamaica which resulted in the song’s steady rotation on the airwaves and in the dancehalls. A subsequent video (directed by Ras Kassa) brought even greater visibility to Spice’s career and it wasn’t long before he became one of the most sought after artists for stage shows across the island. Additional hit tunes including the ominous “Folly Living (Blood Again)”, the haunting “Ghetto Girl” and the resounding hymn to herb “Marijuana” were featured on Spice’s debut album for 5th Element Records “*Spice In Your Life*” which earned unanimous critical praise. The New York Times named “*Spice In Your Life*” one the best reggae releases of 2004; the Los Angeles Times broadened the accolades, citing it as one of the year’s ten best albums of any musical genre and in Jamaica, The Observer newspaper honored Spice as artist and vocalist of the year.

Spice’s career has continued to soar as a result of his enthralling live performances (Billboard Magazine ranked him among the top six performers at Reggae Sunsplash 2006) and a succession of hits that have resided in the upper tiers of the reggae charts. As a means of expanding Spice’s international fan base, 5th Element has joined forces with VP Records and they will cooperatively release Spice’s next album “*In The Streets to Africa*” on February 6, 2007. “With VP Records, we feel we have the support needed to move Richie Spice to the next level,” explains Devon Wheatley CEO of 5th Element Records. “Now is the perfect time to make conscious reggae music stronger and Richie Spice is at the forefront of this movement.”

Spice’s appealing brand of roots reggae is characterized by smoothly crooned, impassioned vocals that lovingly caress, as he does on his current romantic boom shot “Brown Skin”, or just as convincingly, deliver the militancy of a righteous rebel warrior on “Open the Door”, or the aura of ancestral mysticism that defines “Motherland Calling”. Guided by the principles of his Rastafarian way of life, Spice’s lyrics rail against injustices and the plight of the oppressed, implore assistance for the youth and extend maximum respect to the ladies. “My responsibility is to use the talent that God gave me as an instrument to uplift people who are facing the struggle worldwide and let them feel happy in themselves,” Spice explains. “It is all about righteousness, and endorsing the love of the people, good over evil and life over death.”

Born Richell Bonner in the Kingston, Jamaica suburb of St. Andrew, Richie Spice hails from a musical family that includes his older brother Pliers (from the deejay/singer duo Chaka Demus and Pliers of “Murder She Wrote” fame) and singer Spanner Banner (best known for his mid 90s hit “Life Goes On”), now a member of the 5th Element family. It was Spanner Banner who initially brought Spice to the recording studio; although the hopeful singer didn’t get the opportunity to record, it opened his eyes to the proficiency that is required to succeed in the reggae industry. “It was a strong learning experience,” Spice recalls. “At that time I tried to record but I was never really ready so I couldn’t manage it. But it show me that there is a lot of work to be done so just do the necessary things until you reach that space where you are supposed to be.”