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## SEAN PAUL BIO

*“Dancehall reggae is not just about the killer riddims; people the world over love the way we speak. This music is here to kick up the bass and burn up the place. I’m talking on behalf of all dancehall.” --Sean Paul*



Sean Paul’s 1996 release of “Baby Girl” was the first of a series of undeniable reggae smashes that rocked Jamaica, quickly establishing a solid base for Sean Paul amongst the island’s dancehall massive. Part of the wave of mid-nineties Jamaican deejays that brought new blood into the Jamaican music scene, Sean Paul quickly pulled to the front of the pack. Hardcore dancehall fans were captured by his songwriting and rapping skills and Sean rapidly became a favorite with ladies in the audience.

As his reputation grew in Jamaica, the rest of the Caribbean quickly picked up on Sean Paul’s sound. Soon Jamaicans in Miami, New York and London knew the words “Dutty Yeah” were a signal to hit the dance floor. Record-breaking airplay on American hip-hop radio followed, and the success of **STAGE ONE**, Sean Paul’s 2000 smash debut album, established him as VP Records best selling current artist. With **DUTTY ROCK**, his forthcoming sophomore effort, Sean Paul has moved from strength to greater strength, ratcheting his sound straight up to the heights.

Born Sean Paul Henriques in Kingston, Jamaica on January 8, 1975, Sean Paul’s lineage truly reflects Jamaica’s national motto, “Out Of Many One People.” On his Portuguese father’s side there is a family legend about the shipwreck of horse-rustling ancestors during a daring escape from bounty hunters. Sean’s mother is a renowned Jamaican painter, and both his parents were noted athletes, a tradition Sean continued as a youth, representing his country in many international swim and water polo meets. After graduation from UTECH, he kept body and soul together by working as a chef and later as a teller in a bank.

In his early teens, dancehall reggae became Sean’s leading passion. Such artists as Lt. Stitchie, Major Worries, and Supercat were important influences. A few years later as Sean began writing his own lyrics, he made a link and busted some rhymes for Cat Coore, Bunny Rugs and Carrot Jarret of Third World. “Cat said, ‘Your voice sounds great, lets do some demos,’” Sean Paul recalls.

He developed his skills by making dubs and playing barbecues. In 1996 after a couple of singles, Sean made the crucial connection with then up and coming producer Jeremy Harding, owner of 2 Hard Records. Jeremy had just completed the Fearless riddim, and Sean voiced it with “Baby Girl,” his first woman-oriented lyric. “Baby Girl” became a huge hit, opening doors all over Jamaica for Sean. During this time, Sean continued to learn the deejay trade and mature as an artist. He hooked up with the Dutty Cup Crew, a group of aspiring deejays. “We used to smoke weed, and a ‘dutty’ is a used pipe, but that’s not what we were all about,” Sean explains. “In life, if you don’t work hard and dutty, you won’t get nowhere, so our cup is full.”

In 1998, Sean recorded “Infiltrate” on Jeremy Harding’s Playground/Zim Zimma riddim. The riddim was a reggae smash both in Jamaica and internationally and “Infiltrate” became a top record in the juggling mix. “Infiltrate,” “took me to enough places,” Sean recalls. Charting number one in Belize, the record rocked hip-hop mix shows in New York and Miami.

Hitting next with “Excite Me,” Sean’s name was spreading to the rest of the Caribbean, especially Trinidad and Guyana. Sean then recorded “Deport Them” which became the #1 record in Jamaica on Tony Kelly’s Bookshelf riddim. The song received major play in Miami and New York’s hip-hop mix shows, later crossing over onto regular rotation on **New York’s Hot 97**.

It was around then that Sean Paul joined forces with emerging sing-jay Mr. Vegas. Their first collaboration, "Hot Gal Today" on the Street Sweeper riddim by Steely and Cleve, became a #1 record both in Jamaica and throughout the rest of the Caribbean. Sean Paul and Mr. Vegas also collaborated on the dancehall hit "Tiger Bone," produced by Richard "Shams" Browne on the intercourse riddim. In March of 2000, just as "Hot Gal Today" was heating up in Miami and New York, VP Records released **STAGE ONE**, Sean Paul's debut album. Meanwhile, Sean and Mr. Vegas joined forces with producer Tony Kelly and multi-platinum rapper DMX for "Top Shotta," a song on the BELLY soundtrack, further lifting Sean's rep in the states.

After a fierce remix on the Punany riddim, "Hot Gal Today" joined "Deport Them" in rocking American hip-hop and R&B radio. Together the two tunes thrust Sean Paul's stateside career into orbit. He became the first reggae artist to have two singles added at the same time to a major American R&B radio station (**NYC's Hot 97**), and the first reggae artist to simultaneously chart two singles from the same album ("Hot Gal Today" at #66 and "Deport Them" at #85) on the Billboard R&B Single Chart. "Hot Gal Today" also hit number 6 on the Billboard Top Rap Singles Chart. With all the radio play on New York's **Hot 97**, Sean built up a major New York City base among tastemaker disc jockeys and true hip-hop fans.

Sean was named #3 Reggae Artist of the Year by Billboard and **STAGE ONE** was named Billboard's #4 Reggae Album of the Year; "Hot Gal Today" was featured on the **SHAFT** soundtrack. The sales of **STAGE ONE** went through the roof, making Sean Paul the biggest selling current artist on VP Records. At the same time, Sean continued his string of Jamaican successes with "No Bligh" for Penthouse Records, "Check It Deeply" for In The Streetz and "My Name" for Shocking Vibes.

Notably, Sean was the first reggae artist to perform on Hot 97's Summer Jam, one of the most important yearly American R&B/hip-hop concert. "Suddenly, I was with artists who were my mentors," Sean explains. "I met Big Daddy Kane, Snoop, Aaliyah; there I was, talking to Funkmaster Flex. It was crazy." That summer, Sean rocked Summer Jam-type shows from Miami to Boston.

A forward-looking artist, Sean began work on **DUTTY ROCK**, his next album, by continuing to record dancehall smashes with reggae music's top producers. The team of Sean and Tony Kelly scored again with "Like Glue" on the Buyout riddim. Next, working in combination with sexy Ce'Cile, Sean voiced on the hottest riddim of 2001, the Jeremy Harding-produced Liquid, to make the hit single, "Can You Do The Work." Both songs blaze on **DUTTY ROCK**.

As of this writing, Sean's "Gimme The Light," a smoking performance on the Buzz riddim, is a huge hit in Jamaica, Miami, New York and London and has begun crossing over with major airplay on New York's **Hot 97** and Miami's **Power 96**. "Give Me The Light" is the leadoff single on **DUTTY ROCK**. Other outstanding tracks include "I'm Still In Love With You," featuring Sean and Sasha on a romantic cover of the Alton Ellis/Marcia Akins classic. The album also boasts "Punkie," a huge hit around the Caribbean and in Latin hip-hop clubs in the Northeast, and will include a fantastico Spanish version of "Punkie."

With his radio success in the States, Sean stepped out on a forthcoming track for Mya. Around the same time, Sean and Lady Saw performed on a Beenie Man song produced by the Neptunes, who are working on a banging track for **DUTTY ROCK**. Sean also guested on songs by Razel of The Roots and Tony Touch; in return, Razel and Tony produced a track apiece for **DUTTY ROCK** further cementing Sean's unique position as one of hip-hop's most respected Jamaican deejays.

With the November 12, 2002 release of **DUTTY ROCK**, Sean Paul is poised to generate a mass of new fans both in dancehall reggae and in hip-hop. "I see dancehall reggae and hip-hop as fused together," Sean Paul explains. "When I was a kid, they were the two kinds of music that spoke to me and said 'MOVE!'"

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