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The Queen gets her musical crown - Artistes give Empress Menen more than a passing mention

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Her Imperial Majesty Empress Menen

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Yesterday marked 83 years since His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie and Her Imperial Majesty Empress Menen were crowned at the Cathedral of St George in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Abbaba.

While the overwhelming focus of observances of the date which is especially significant to the Rastafarian movement is on Haile Selassie, Empress Menen gets her due in song.

Singer Tarrus Riley's **She's Royal** is well known as a tribute to the inner and outer beauty of women. Among the standout lines are "What a natural beauty/No need no make-up to be a cutie/She's a queen".

However, referring to a regal woman by official title, Riley tips a lock at HIM Haile Selassie's move to make the equality between himself and his mate clear:

Yes I an I

I know the King and Queen crown same time

So I will never leave your side

Not saying Empress Menen's name outright, although the reference with the dual coronation within a Rastafari context is clear, makes the scope of those who can be considered regal wider.

Warrior King's view

Similarly, although he does not openly state a critique of the Christian Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in **Virtuous Woman**, Warrior King affirms the inclusion and equality of the woman in **Rastafari's Royalty**:

Give ises to the King

And his Empress Menen

Who showed us the right and true way of living

Woman could never cause sin

He goes on to affirm:

Equality inna Zion

By nature's law that's the way it should go

In a previous interview with **The Sunday Gleaner**, Warrior King said the line underscores his belief that "the man is the man in the relationship, but you have to respect the woman".

Ironically Mutabaruka's **Great Queens of Africa** (which features the voices of Sharon Forrester and Ini Kamoze) does not refer to the coronation of Empress Menen. However, he goes further back in time than the November 2, 1930, dual coronation.

Still, he includes Haile Selassie's matriarchal lineage, thereby emphasising the importance of woman in another way:

Talkin' 'bout Makeda, Queen of Sheba

Ruled from Arabia to Ethiopia

Fell in love with Solomon

Brought forth Selassie forefather

Menelik I

And the central message is:

Great queens of Afrika

Rulers all around

They were mighty brave and strong

Europeans couldn't get them down

As is his wont, the Informative History Man goes into extensive detail about Empress Menen in his track of the same name. He states her year of birth, 1890, the date of her wedding to Haile Selassie (July 31, 1911). And, of course, History Man speaks to the coronation:

1930 she wear the crown of Empress

She is the highest, the best, the greatest goddess

The circumstances of Haile Selassie's death on August 27, 1975, at 83 years old remain obscure. He was predeceased by Empress Menen, who died in 1962.

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