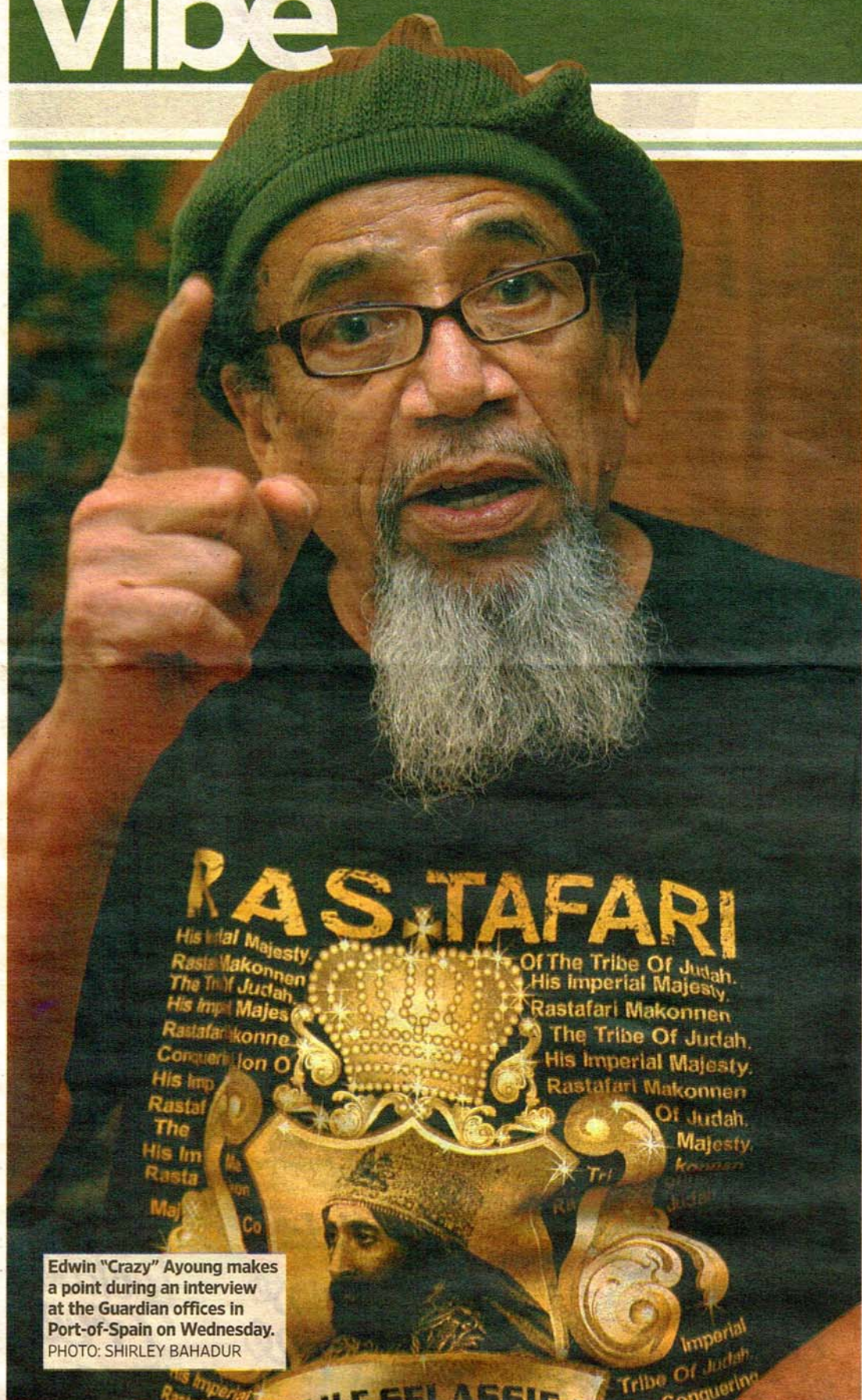


vibe



Edwin "Crazy" Ayoung makes a point during an interview at the Guardian offices in Port-of-Spain on Wednesday. PHOTO: SHIRLEY BAHADUR

CRAZY JAMMIN' TRINI-STYLE REGGAE

RHONDA KRISTAL RAMBALLY

Calypso icon Edwin Ayoung, known as "Crazy," is continuing to spread his wings in the music world.

He is now singing "Trini-style reggae" and even attempting to look like a Rastafarian.

Crazy returned from Sweden last Tuesday after performing at Musikens Hus (The Music House) in Gothenburg for eight days. Ayoung is no stranger there, having visited in 1992, 2003 and 2005.

The band Soca Rebels, based in Sweden, celebrated its 20th anniversary and Ayoung released his Trini-reggae version of The Eagles' 1977 hit Hotel California. His other song is My Redeemer Lives, he said was "a fun song."

Soca Rebels has been around since 1990, playing soca and calypso and promoting the culture of T&T.

Ayoung said the Swedes are "familiar" with him and his music, especially his 1989 hit Nanny Wine. Wearing a black T-shirt with gold print saying "Rastafari" and picture of Haile Selassie I, the 69-year-old calypso veteran shared his thoughts about being "a complete artiste."

His explanation for singing reggae is that it was derived from calypso.

"Calypso is the mother of reggae. The man who carried reggae to Jamaica is a man by the name of Nearlin Taitt.

"He is a Trinidadian who started reggae in Jamaica."

Ayoung's experimentation with different genres of music has benefited him as he has been able to get jobs beyond the Carnival season.

"Most of the people who get work outside are soca artistes like Machel Montano, but for calypso

artistes other than myself it is difficult," he said.

Ayoung boasted of being an all-rounder. "I could sing a party song...I could sing a chutney. I am versatile.

"I am the only employed calypsonian right now."

Ayoung's calendar is already booked for the next few months. He will soon be off to Barbados, Washington DC, Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto to perform. There's no stopping him from earning his livelihood—calypso.

He said other calypsonians should follow in his footsteps because he is paving a way for them to earn an income out of Carnival. He said: "The calypsonians have nothing at all until next year January.

"It is a seasonal thing, so what I am doing for them is opening their eyes and letting them see that we could do my style which is the reggae so they could get jobs, because calypsonians don't get work at all."

Proud that he "opened the avenue" for parang soca in 1977, Ayoung said after Miami Carnival, which is usually held in October, calypsonians have employment from October to December.

Other calypso veterans like Baron and Scrunter also sang parang soca.

Ayoung said: "I am not prepared to sit and do nothing until next year Carnival."

He has his own studio, The Facility, and has produced hits for Lady Gypsy, All Rounder, Delamo, Luta and Pink Panther, among others. For the rest of the year he plans to work on some new material surrounding the recent Cheryl Miller incident at St Ann's Hospital, but in the meantime he intends to keep his livelihood alive.

Calypso is the mother of reggae. The man who carried reggae to Jamaica is a man by the name of Nearlin Taitt. He is a Trinidadian who started reggae in Jamaica.