



## Jimmy Cliff

“I discovered I had glaucoma about 18 years ago. I have undergone operations and have managed to keep it stable with help of great Doctors to whom I am extremely grateful.” – Jimmy Cliff

Jimmy Cliff was born James Chambers on April 1, 1948, in Somerton District, St. James, Jamaica. He began his career as a musician, singer and actor by writing songs while still in primary school there, and later developed his talents while at Kingston Technical High School.

While receiving his secondary education, Cliff began entering local talent contests and pursuing potential producers. By the time he was 14, Cliff had released several singles, including “Hurricane Hattie” -- the hit that garnered attention throughout his birth country. Soon after, he was producing local hits regularly and representatives at the World’s Fair. In 1964, 16-year-old Cliff was chosen to be one of Jamaica’s representatives at the World’s Fair. He then signed with Island Records and moved to the United Kingdom. In the late 1960s, Cliff’s career took off, and he began collaborating with and receiving recognition from well-known musicians, including Bob Dylan.

Cliff began acting when he was in his early 20s. He starred in, and produced much of the soundtrack for, the reggae film *The Harder They Come* (directed by Perry Henzell) in 1972, which met great success around the globe, bringing reggae to an international audience for the first time. The movie was also known as one of the top college campus attractions of its era. The soundtrack featured four songs by Cliff and songs by a number of other artists, including Desmond Dekker.

With reggae suddenly high on the music industry’s radar, Cliff’s success continued to grow. He released a series of albums, toured for several years, recorded with well-known artists, including Kool & the Gang, Sting, Annie Lennox and the Rolling Stones, and won a Grammy Award for Best Reggae Album. In 1988, his song “Shelter of Your Love” was featured in the hit film *Cocktail*.

In 1995, Cliff collaborated with another musician on the song “Hakuna Matata” for the soundtrack of the film *The Lion King*. The song was also released as a single. In 2002 he performed at the closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games, and the following year, a song of his was included in the soundtrack of the film *Something’s Gotta Give*.

On October 20, 2003, the Jamaican government honored Cliff, awarding him one of the nation’s top three honors, the Order of Merit, in recognition of his contributions to the film and music of Jamaica. He is the only living musician to hold this distinction. On March 15, 2010, Cliff was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Upon learning of his nomination for the induction, Cliff said, “This is good for Cliff, good for Jamaican music and good for my country.”