



*TAURUS*

*TREVOR*

*WINSTON*

With vintage songs such as Little Nut Tree, Swing and Dine and By The Rivers of Babylon, The Melodians are regarded as one of reggae's great harmony groups.

To many, the lineup of Trevor McNaughton, Brent Dowe and Tony Brevett represent the classic edition of the group which formed in Kingston in 1963.

Both have passed on. Dowe died in 2006 and Brevett in 2013.

But McNaughton, who started the group, is still at the helm. In late 2014, the Fort Lauderdale-based singer recruited two other South Florida entertainers to revive one of the rocksteady era's outstanding acts.

Winston Dias, who had a hit song in the 1960s with Sericy Tea, and Taurus Alphonso who began recording in the early 1970s, are the new recruits. Their first assignment together was recording updated versions of Sweet Sensation and You Don't Need Me.

Both songs were produced by Willie Lindo, whose Heavy Beat Records in Fort Lauderdale has produced numerous hit songs by Beres Hammond, Dennis Brown and Boris Gardiner.

For McNaughton, it was a joy returning to the studio. He says the trio has rehearsed relentlessly to get that signature Melodians sound.

Alphonso, who is from Mocho in Clarendon, grew up listening to The Melodians. When the opportunity came to join them, he jumped at it.

"It's one of the greatest honours bestowed on me, I remember listening to songs like Stop and Go and Little Nut Tree," he said.

Before moving to the United States, he recorded songs like Jesus is a Soul Man and Live Together. Since relocating to the Sunshine State in 1986, he has released two albums: Strong, Gifted and Black and Survivor.

Dias recorded for various producers including Prince Buster before migrating to Canada in 1968. After 10 years, he moved to South Florida where he established himself as owner of the Classic nightclub.

He also toured as a member of legendary doo wop group, The Drifters. He is also elated to be a Melodian.

"The feeling is great, there is a great vibe and we are looking forward to big things," he said.

The Melodians first recorded during the ska era of the early 1960s, but hit their stride in the rocksteady period which ran from 1965-68.

Their biggest hits were for producer Duke Reid, including Little Nut Tree and Sweet Sensation. They also recorded for Leslie Kong who produced their biggest hit, By The Rivers of Babylon.

The latter is on the soundtrack to the 1972 movie, The Harder They Come. Dowe, Brevett and McNaughton are featured briefly in that movie. The Melodians got a second wind in the 1990s, when rocksteady enjoyed a revival in Jamaica and Europe.

This year, they celebrate their 52nd anniversary. Special things are in store.