

# UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE

#1 - October 2010

**Better Mus' Come  
Films, Films and more  
Jamaican films**

**INTERVIEWS  
Bushman  
Gappy Ranks  
Tippa Irie  
Jah Solid Rock**

**Rest In Peace  
Gregory Isaacs**

Lyricson ✦ Pablo moses ✦ Rod Taylor ✦ Heartical Records ✦  
Barbara Blake Hannah ✦ U-Roy & Cornel Campbell ✦ Tiken  
Jah Fakoly ✦ Maixal X ✦ Pama Internationnal ✦ Alborosie...

# United Reggae Mag #1 - October 2010

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## Message From Lyricson

**Lyricson.** One could make a very strong case that, on all discernible levels, the wicked Guinean born singer/chanter is simply one of the most talented and capable Reggae artists on the scene today. He certainly hasn't been one of the most active, however, which makes his releases that much more important and because of that fans world-wide should be well interested in the fact that, on November 8, Lyricson delivers his much anticipated big and bad brand new album, 'Messages'.



The album, which comes courtesy of PJK Entertainment [reportedly his own label], is Lyricson's third studio effort to date and is potentially his best complete piece of work as well. Amongst others, 'Messages' features tunes like Revolution, a combination featuring impressive Jamaican up and comer, Zamunda.

There's also Glad You're Mine, a tune fans should know from the sublime Special Delivery produced Sugar Riddim and the album's first single, the powerful From The Beginning [which drops officially on October 25] is on board as well. There couldn't possibly be anything better dropping on November 8 and even if there is do check out this big big release.

## Sign Up With Rod Taylor

Fans familiar with those delicately sweet vocals of the legendary Reggae singer, Rod Taylor, should be well on the lookout for his big and bad brand new single courtesy of French label, King Sound Music, the gorgeous praising tune Sign Up. Perhaps best known for previous hits such as the classics His Imperial Majesty, Ethiopian Kings and Behold Him, the nearly forty-year veteran Rod Taylor has continued making wonderful material of a similar vibes and this release may just be his largest in quite some time.



**" In Jah garden  
there is so much vibes  
and in his garden is paradise "**

Rod Taylor's Sign Up is currently available on 7" single from King Sound Music and if you really enjoy the riddim (and you will), reportedly it will also be release in early 2011 with a variety of different artists such as Jah Mason, Triston Palmer and more.



## The Far East Riddim Returns

One of the most well traveled and arguably one of the most popular Reggae compositions of all time, the big and bad Far East Riddim, has made it to French shores courtesy of Heartical Records and the venerable Basque Dub Foundation and done so to the tune of four previously unreleased and unavailable songs on the classic from Studio One. A constantly reinventing and resurging Michael Rose highlights this set with his tune, Downpressor and he's joined by all star veteran Ranking Joe, with Rastaman Talk, Chronicle with Sweet Sinsemilla and Carlton Livingston's Once Was A Man. Also on board are big tunes from the likes of Rootsamala, Jah Mikey & Daddy Shark and the incomparable Papa Kojak. Heartical's take on the Far East riddim is multi-platform and is currently already available on 7" Singles and is set to drop digitally on October 15, worldwide.



## Growing Out, The New Book by Barbara Blake Hannah

Due out on Saturday, October 30th and to be launched at the Bookland New Kingston store is renowned Jamaican author, journalist, filmmaker and public speaker Barbara Blake Hannah's new book 'Growing Out', published by Hansib Publications, UK. Growing Out To help with the launch and speaking at the event will be Beverly Anderson Manley, the former wife of The Most Hon. Michael Manley, People's National Party (PNP) leader and Prime Minister from 1972 to 1980 and again from 1989 to 1992.

Growing Out is the autobiographic account of Barbara's early years growing up in Jamaica, where from childhood black women's hair influences their self-esteem negatively to time spent living and working in London during the Swinging Sixties. It was while in London that she became the first black person to appear on British TV in a news capacity when she was one of 3 daily reporter/interviewers on the Thames TV daily magazine programme Today, hosted by TV personality Eamonn Andrews.

This job also made her national front page news and provoked racists to send daily hate messages to the station, which finally led to them bowing under the pressure and replacing her after only 9 months. This and other racism she encountered rather than dragging her down actually prompted her to seek education through black consciousness generated by the cultural, political and racial events of the time. The book goes on to describe how, with the aid of a narrative sub-story of "Mr. Jones" that illus-





-trates the typical lives of Jamaican immigrants in the 1960s, these psychological and actual experiences led her to grow out her natural hair and take strength and opened her mind to the full knowledge of her racial history and promote pride in her natural self. 'Growing Out' is available online until August.

## Rest In Peace Gregory Isaacs

Jamaican reggae legend Gregory Isaacs died at his London house after a battle with lung cancer. He was 59 years old. According to BBC Caribbean, the Cool Ruler passed away peacefully, "surrounded by three of his eleven children and his wife Linda Isaacs".

The reggae community has lost one of the unique voices out of Jamaica. The whole United Reggae team feel sad and all our thoughts go to his wife and children. Rest In Peace Cool Ruler. Gregory Anthony Isaacs was born in Kingston Jamaica on the 15th July 1950. He started out as an electrician and cabinet maker. He began his career recording for producer Winston Sinclair, in the late sixties. He formed his first group in 1969, a trio called The Concords. The group didn't find success, so Gregory decided to work as a solo artist. To gain artistic freedom and financial control of his own work, he launched, in the mid seventies, his own label : the legendary African Museum, still producing reggae nowadays. Meanwhile, he continued to record for others (GG's, Trojan, DEB, Charisma, Tad's, Jammys...). His first success album was Love is Overdue (1973) followed two years later by In Person. Then came Cool Ruler (1978) and Soon Forward (1979). Four years later, he produced Night Nurse, which was a massive international success. During the 80's, several albums followed in both lovers and rootsy styles. His final album was released in 2008: Brand New Me, on African Museum.

## Babylon You Wrong by U-Roy and Cornell Campbell

In what is being billed as the "first in-studio vocal collaboration" between the two, US based label Zion High Productions has brought together two certified Reggae music legends in the form of Daddy U Roy and the sweet voiced one, Cornell Campbell. The fruits of their work is a huge single for 2010 and one befitting the class and standings of two such venerable artists, Babylon You Wrong. The tune declares the days Babylon and all oppressive to be "numbered" and in the process forms just a gorgeous vibes!

You need not wait to sample arguably one of the biggest tunes of the year, Babylon You Wrong by U Roy and Cornell Campbell will be available digitally on October 26th via Zion High Productions [and it also comes with a dubbed out version of the nice riddim] and Zojak Worldwide and is also set to release on vinyl on November 9th.

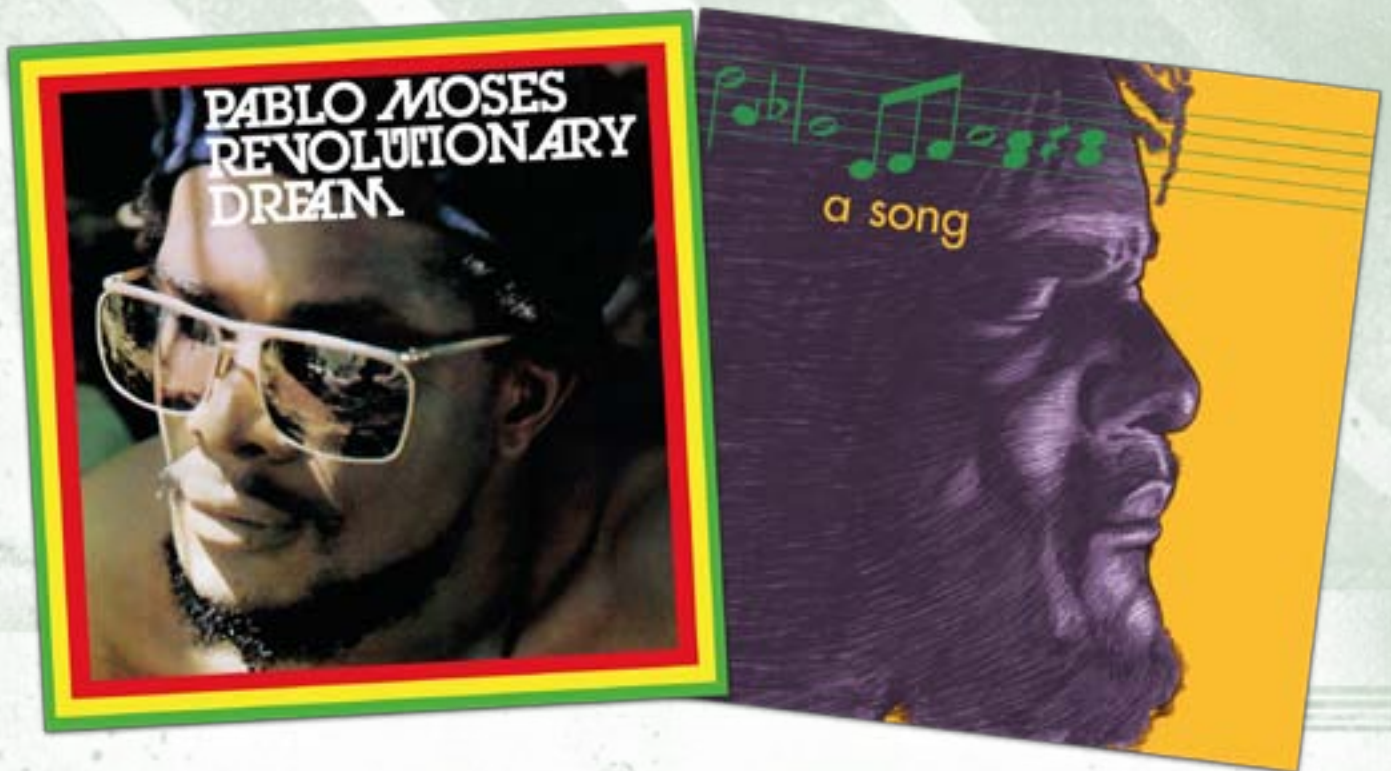


# PABLO MOSES





# Rebirth for Pablo Moses' early albums



After releasing Pablo Moses' latest album 'The Rebirth' in April, followed by its dub version, French label Grounded Music is reissuing his early albums.

'Revolutionary Dream' is an anthem of Jamaican music that has been reissued many times. It was originally released in 1975 with some of the best musicians such as Horse-mouth Wallace, Geoffrey Chung, Clive Hunt, Robert Lynn, Vin Gordon, Dirty Harry, Tommy McCook, Bongo Herman and many more. The album includes masterpieces such as the great Give I Fe I Name and also I Love I Bring - not forgetting the excellent Revolutionary Dream and We Should Be In Angola. This new remastered reissue also includes 3 bonus dub versions.

'A Song' is Pablo's second album. It was released by Island Records 6 years after 'Revolutionary Dream' and also produced by Geoffrey Chung with musicians such as Sly and Robbie, Cedric Brooks, Dean Frazer, Judy Mowatt and Rita Marley. Even if this second album is a notch below its first effort it includes the great A Song, Dubbing Is A Must but also Music Is My Desire and Protect I. For this reissue, Grounded Music also added 2 bonus dub versions as well as a 12" version of Dubbing Is A Must. Both albums were reissued on October 1st.

“I beg to differ on the writer's appreciation (A Song being a notch below Revolutionary Dream). I for one think A Song is a more carefully honed diamond than the man's first effort. Also, I think the higher production budget shows it was well used as the sound is fuller, rounder, sharper, as the arrangements are more intricate, etc... The mix is better, the mastering is better, etc... Just my personal opinion... (Comment posted by Guillaume Bougard on 10.22.2010)



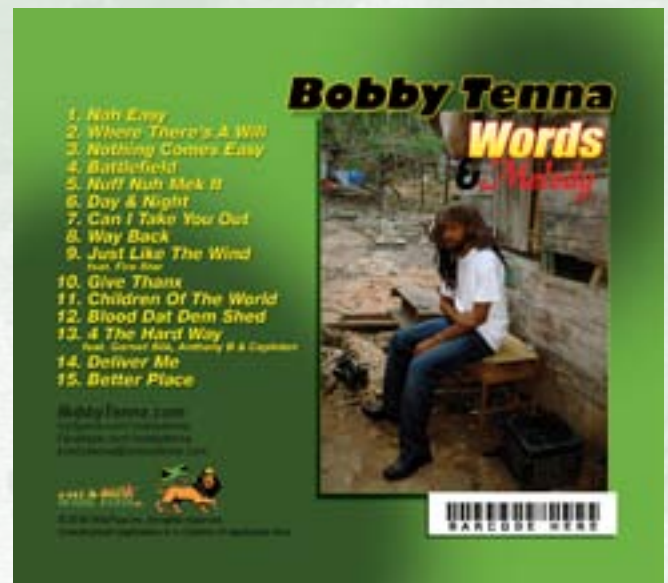
## Move From On Yah by Million Stylez

Following the release of his most recent full length album, 'Everyday', the always impressive Swedish born Dancehall and Reggae artist, Million Stylez, makes a most interesting return for upstart French label, FuryBass. The big song Move From On Yah is Stylez' take on the riddim from a bonafide classic and unarguably one of the greatest herbalist tunes of all time, Peter Broggs' International Farmer. While Million Stylez fails to quite reach those legendary levels (and so does everyone else, for that matter), what he and FuryBass do with the heavy vibes is masterful work and is a dominant ganja tune.

You can hear for yourself as Move From On Yah is available digitally on etailers worldwide right now.

## Bobby Tenna's Words & Melody

Former Jamaican cabaret singer, Bobby Tenna, is a name familiar only to a few of the most hardcore of Reggae fans, but hopefully his most recent venture will grab the attention of the greater Reggae listening community as the very impressive singer returns with his brand new sophomore album release, 'Words & Melody' for his very own WileFya Inc label. The album is a followup to Tenna's outstanding 2007 debut album, 'Give Thanx 4 Life' and it well figures to impress and resonate on similar levels.



The very straight forward album is highlighted by familiar pieces such as Battlefield [on Kemar 'Flava' McGregor's big 83 Riddim], Nuff Nuh Mek It and Just Like The Wind, which features Fire Starr. Also, listeners are certain to take note of 4 The Hard Way, a big medley style tune which features the St. James born Bobby Tenna alongside the likes of Capleton, Anthony B and the legendary Garnett Silk.

Hopefully the album can see an even further increase in the status of an artist whose popularity certainly doesn't match his very high skill level and quality. Without delay, fans can hear why as 'Words & Melody' is available right now from WileFiya Inc.



## The Ifficial Riddim

Following outstanding releases such as the Higher Meditation, World Go Round, Show Love and most recently the Clearly Riddims, extremely promising US based label Itation Records is back at work again with their latest composition, the Ifficial Riddim, which they now bring forth as an album. If their previous work is any indication (and it most certainly is), then this release will be another stellar piece as well.



Despite the fact that there aren't a ton of tracks on the Ifficial Riddim, Itation was certain to pack in the big names, as names voicing the riddim includes the likes of Anthony B, Pressure Busspipe, Teflon, Bescenta, Monsoon and Kali Blaxx. Also on board is Delly Ranx whose tune, Rasta Nah Bow appeared on his 2009 album debut 'Good Profile', also released by Itation.

Interested??? Of course you are. You can learn more about the Ifficial Riddim and get your hands on it as well beginning October 12.

## World Cry by Jah Cure

Jah Cure has just announced the release of his new album which will be entitled 'World Cry'. It should be out at the beginning of next year. This summer Jah Cure asserted during one press conference that it was by far his best album since his debut. On this new project we should find singles already released as 7" vinyl such as Before I Leave (on the Cardiac Bass Riddim) but also some new productions.



## 2nd Chances Riddim

Here is the first official release from J-Rod Records and certainly one of the best productions of these last few months. Capleton sounds in good shape on his title Get Real as does Sizzla who chants the great Forever. Once again Teflon proposes one of the best title of the series with excellent Dem

Say whereas young Zamunda offers a new ganja-tune with Free Up The Herbs. It's True from Anthony B is a notch below the other songs from this riddim as is Keep It Real from Cocoa Tea.



## Hi-Grade Ganja Anthems Vol. 3



Certainly it's going to take something pretty large to grab the attention of the herbalist community, if for no other reason than because . . . Well they're not known as being exactly the most attentive of groups now are they? Still, that doesn't mean that it isn't worthy of an attempt and Greensleeves is giving it their best shot of 2010 thus far with the third installment of their 'Hi-Grade Ganja Anthems' series. Unlike its two elder siblings, Vol. 3 in the series focuses primarily on the big herbalist tunes of the greats of today instead of offering the vast array of newer artists and those from yesteryear. Thus, veteran ace Dancehall DJ Charlie Chaplin's Bubbling Telephone

does seem somewhat out of place alongside efforts from the likes of Tarrus Riley [with Vybz Kartel and Demarco], Collie Buddz, Busy Signal, Jah Mason, Gyptian, Bushman and Ziggi Recado amongst others. If you can remember in your current state [fat chance], Reggae fans who also enjoy indulging occasionally, or every damn day, should be sure to check out Greensleeves' 'Hi-Grade Ganja Anthems 3' on November.

## Dance Drop Riddim



For his latest 'trick' Kemar 'Flava' McGregor and co. at No Doubt Records dig into one of the largest of modern Roots Reggae vaults and come up with and expand on a piece which was quite popular in its time and is now, in typical Flava fashion, given first class treatment via some of the greatest names in the business. The Dance Drop Riddim was previously best known as the composition which backed the tune Somehow by Sizzla Kalonji [now renamed Blessing Us] from the 'Speak of Jah' album, but Sizzla's suddenly gotten quite a bit of company.

Like who? Anthony B, Ziggi Recado, Chezidek, Lutan Fyah and Pressure Busspipe. Want more??? Everton Blender, Nickesha Lindo, Sadiki, upstar Khago, surprisingly Wayne Wonder and even Turbulence and Chuck Fenda with two previously heard big tunes from their own No Doubt produced sets.

Flava and No Doubt Records have gone largely in-house these days and the Drop Dance Riddim [along with just about EVERYTHING they've EVER done - EVER] can be purchased exclusively at their recently refurbished website [FlavaMcGregor.com](http://FlavaMcGregor.com).



# BUSMAN



## INTERVIEW

Bushman, born Dwight Duncan in the parish of St Thomas, Jamaica, is a long-time favourite of international audiences for his old school roots and culture message and rich, deep singing voice. Through the years he has been compared to many singers who came before him such as Luciano and Dennis Brown, but recently he has been paying tribute to Peter Tosh in the form of forthcoming album 'Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor', currently slated for release on October 19th 2010 [This album has now been put back to December]. To raise the profile of this repeatedly-shelved personal project, he's torn down the European Festival circuit over the summer, backed by the highly accomplished French group No More Babylon. When being interviewed Bushman is always moving to his own internal rhythm and when he spits his plosives - the "p" and "b" sounds in his speech - they hit you in the chest like sound system bass. Yet despite these distractions, Angus Taylor, was able to get the latest info on his album release backstage at Rototom Sunsplash 2010.

**Tell me a bit about your upcoming project 'Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor'.**

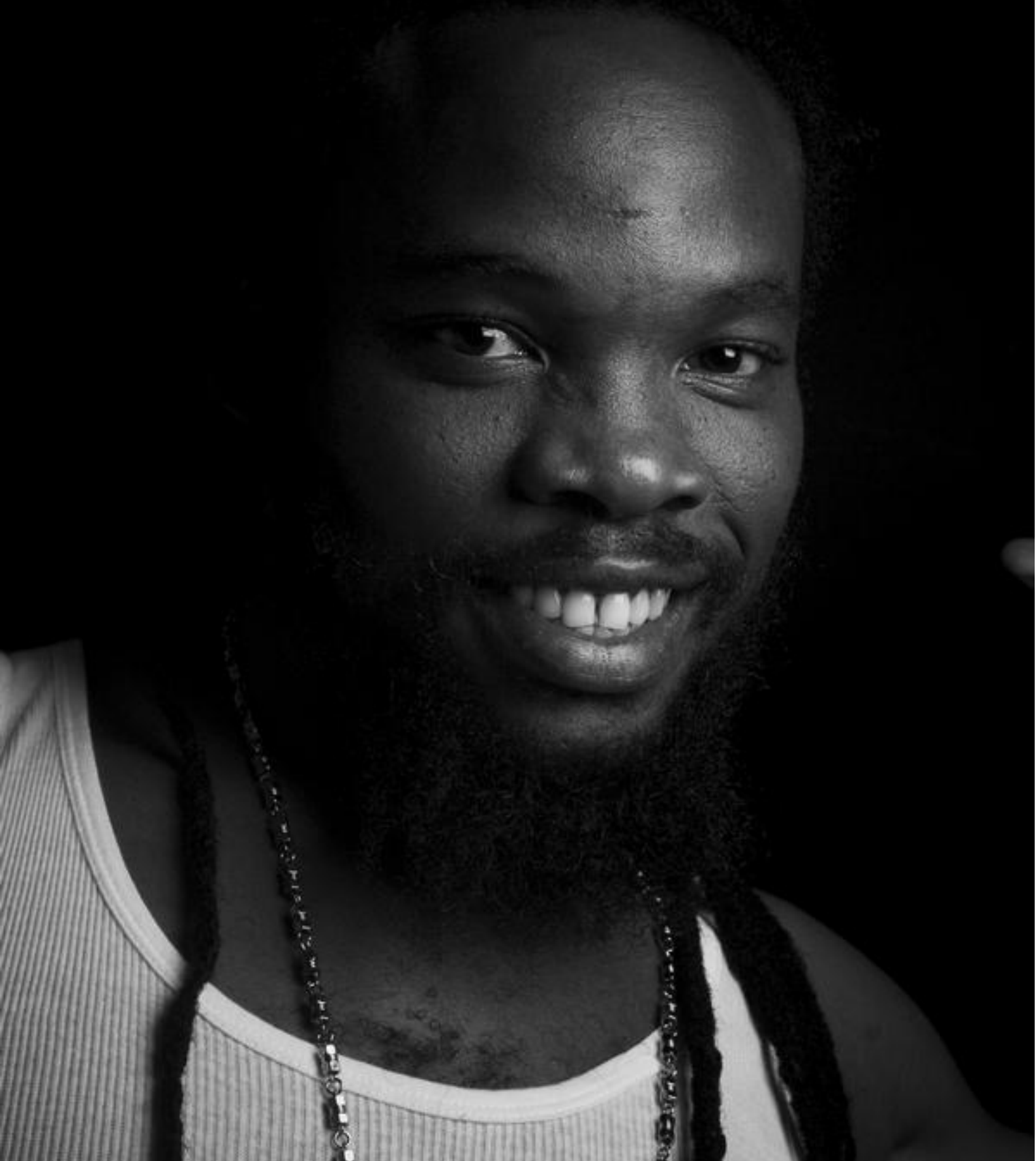
Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor? Well Peter Tosh has been such an influence on me. For me Peter Tosh hasn't got the kind of recognition of Bob but they have done the great work together. Also Bunny and Bob but Bunny is living anyway. So I took it on myself to do a tribute to Peter to establish - to RE-establish! - some of the great works that he has done.

**You covered Buckingham Palace on your 2008 album 'Get It In Your Mind'. Was this where the idea started or were you thinking of this long before?**

It was Lighthouse that song from the album Signs [2004]. I was doing this interview with Richie B, and Omar Davies, the Minister Of Finance in Jamaica, he was listening to the interview and got in touch with my manager. And he told my manager, "Oh! This man reminds me so much of Peter Tosh!" This was when I started to dig deeper into Peter Tosh's folklore and find out what this man is really about. BushmanThen someone came to me with Lighthouse, because Lighthouse wasn't written by myself, and the way the lyrics were written and they were projecting to me sounded like Peter yearning to come out. The sound of the instruments and everything.



**” Peter Tosh hasn’t got the kind of  
recognition of Bob but they have  
done the great work together ”**





So this was when I sung Lighthouse with a Peter Tosh spirit and a lot of people listening to it said, "it sounds like Peter Tosh!" so this is where it starts. Then Glen Brownie from the Brownie Bunch who are famous in Jamaica - Cleveland Brownie, Danny Brownie and them - well Glen the bass player who used to play with Peter, he came to me with Buckingham Palace. He asked me to do Buckingham Palace and I told him, "Really and truly Glen, I would like to do an album of Peter called

Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor". But Glen was a bit busy, I guess, and the word went across to Donovan Germain from Penthouse and he liked it and he said we would do it together as co-producers - Burning Bushes Music and Penthouse.

**"Music is a magnet. For me singers and players  
of instruments - all my springs are in thee"**

**You've been talking about this album since at least 2008. When is it coming out?**

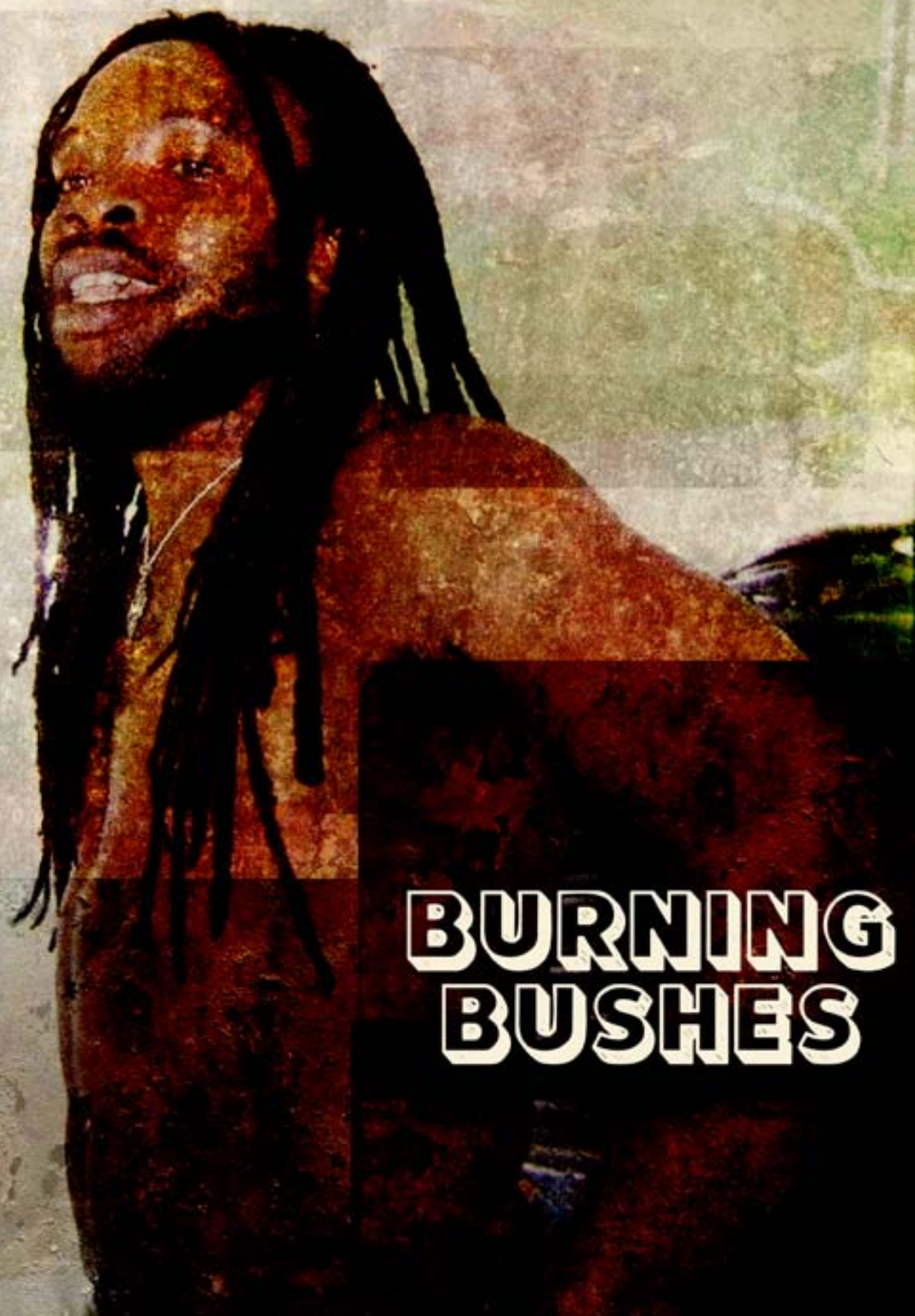
It comes out on Peter Tosh's birthday [19th October but this album has now been put back to December] this year. It's been three years in the pipeline, this album, because of negotiations to get rights for things and stuff like that. For myself, I'm trying to work with the Peter Tosh Foundation so that a dollar from every sale of the album goes to the Foundation and when we tour the Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor Tour, a dollar for every ticket to the concert goes to the Foundation. So these are things we are working on and hopefully we'll get it proper together. Hail Peter Tosh and the fans of Peter Tosh and reggae music.

**You've really got a real synergy with your band on this tour No More Babylon. How did you both gel together so well?**

Yes I Give Thanks and Praise. It's a good band. It was not a thing that was planned. Where great people desire to play music and where great singers desire to play with great musicians, we come together because music is a magnet. For me "singers and players of instruments - all my springs are in thee" so we feel each other. And this music - reggae music - is a great music. It's a soul food. It's not based on digital - it's based on ten or twelve or four or five hearts coming together to play music to a hundred million people. So we just play music - no borders no barriers. Rasta. Reggae



# BUSHMAN



## BURNING BUSHES



music - is a soul food. It's not based on digital - it's based on ten or twelve or four or five hearts coming together to play music to a hundred million people

**Now on stage at Rototom tonight you said the United Nations is "a front". Can you go into some more detail about that?**

Well really and truly for me now, the United Nations is the world police. They are the one who steps in and says when war should stop and when war should break. Now we take so much to fight wars that are really conflicts of interest, we all know - because there are a lot of hypocrites out there. If you take a million dollars to maintain a Stealth Bomber in the Middle East, yet Unicef and Smile.org say these these kids in Indonesia and places are being born... (pauses) retarded because of biological warfare and all these things. BushmanWe should fix these things! What do you call "inhumane"? What do we call "inhumane"? Are we the civilizers? Are we the civilized people when we prey upon our own people? Let us ask ourselves. Because it's not about just pointing the finger at one person - it's us. Are WE civilized? Not until we come together as one people with one heart, seeing no colour, no race, no class, no creed or these things will never change.

**Do you have anything to say to Bushman fans?**

Be yourself. Know yourself. Know what you stand for. Know your purpose in life. Know what you're about. Love Jah. Love Yourself. There's a thin line between love and hate - between wrong and right - and there's a balance. Evil on the back side, righteousness on the front side. Negative and positive govern the world - from the street bulb to the ignition from your car. All of these things work through negative and positive energy. They are all one but it is which one that govern that one? Good over evil I say. Be right with yourself. Love Jah and live. Yes Rastafari. Bless.

**Interview by Angus Taylor.**

**Are WE civilized?**  
 Not until we come together as  
 one people with one heart,  
 seeing no colour, no race,  
 no class, no creed



A close-up portrait of a Black man with a slight beard and mustache, wearing a white suit jacket and a dark tie. He is resting his chin on his clasped hands, looking directly at the camera with a thoughtful expression. The background is a solid red color.

**TIPPA IRIE**

**INTERVIEW**



**"I grew up listening to U Roy and wanting to be like U Roy, so it was just a natural progression for me"**

**What inspired you to do Hornsman Blow? A lot of people me included feel very strongly about horns. But generally people see lack of horns as normal. Often the demand for horns comes from foreign enthusiasts and lacks impact. Why was the time right to say it from within the reggae community?**

For me, with music, you hear a track and the fact that there were horns on the track and they were the lead point in the tune made me think about horns. Tippa I rieThen I thought about a popular saying artists use with regard to horns, which was Blow Mr Hornsman Blow. So that came into my head, I just wrote the lyric to the track and the two married together and I sent it to Marco from Far East Band and he loved it. So that's how it came about.

**Do you think the way the music business treats people means artists and producers use fewer live instruments to stay in control and on budget?**

Yeah. There's good music and there's bad music in my opinion. But sometimes there's bad music that's got money behind it and got the media behind it so that's what the people get access to and the people get into what they are fed. If they're fed electro music that's what they're going to get into a lot of the time. But then there's also people out there that love real music, hardcore music, authentic live music. So that's why we used a lot of live samples on the album because we appreciate live music and live instruments. It's good that you can gather musicians together and put a good piece of work together, so that's what I did.

**"I have the talent and the capability to be in the mainstream because I know how to perform and I know how to deliver good music"**

**You also have some strong words for promoters and critics on two of the tracks. Why did all this need to be said at this point in your career?**

Well sometimes you just have to say how you're feeling and write what you feel. I know that music is about a feeling and if you make good music you feel it and other people feel it. But sometimes you're not getting the love you deserve or a fair crack of the whip. I've had five number one tunes in the reggae charts, I've done pop tunes for Arsenal football team, I've done tunes with the Black Eyed Peas, and I've done tunes in my own right like Hello Darlin' that have crossed over into the mainstream. I have the talent and the capability to be in the mainstream because I know how to perform and I know how to deliver good music.



Original UK dancehall mc Tippa Irie's place in reggae history is assured. Yet that hasn't stopped him from releasing 'Stick To My Roots', a late contender for the best album of his career. A collaboration with Germany's Far East Band, 'Stick To My Roots' sees Tippa chat over everything from the latest dancehall rhythms and pop-lovers ditties to unusual forays into cultural music with his celebration of live instruments Hornsman Blow. Angus Taylor spoke to him at Reggae Jam in Germany about his resurgence, his new record and how he won't let nagging injuries keep him down...

**You told me 'Stick To My Roots' was your best work a year ago. Now it's out and it certainly is a great album. How has the response been for you?**

The response has been great. We can't complain at all. The album came out on 11th June and we've had good reviews from all the journalists, the distributor's happy, Tippa Irie - Stick My Rootsthe record shops are saying they're getting a good response from the people that are buying the music. So right now we're really happy and really excited about the album and we're trying our best now to get shows so we can tour the album as much as possible. We have to give thanks for Reggae Jam for giving us the opportunity to present some of the tracks to an audience like this. I'm very happy, I'm very excited and I look forward to promoting the album some more and we hope it does the best it can.

**You showed us what a great roots chanter you are. Have you always had that in you?**

Yeah, for me it's music. I love music and I grew up from a young age with my father having a sound system so I've always been involved in music in one shape or form or another. When I was at school I played in the Paddington Youth Steel Band. When I was at home my dad has his sound system so he used to play U Roy, Big Youth, Dillinger, Trinity, Tappa Zukie, I Roy and all these people – the list goes on. So I grew up listening to U Roy and wanting to be like U Roy and wanting to be a performer, so it was just a natural progression for me. I started to go around on as many sound systems as possible to try to promote myself and get myself a record deal – and it worked!





So all you ask for is a fair crack of the whip from the media, for them to accept and give our music the opportunity to be heard in places like Stoke On Trent or in Blackpool or Brighton or Newcastle - all these places around the UK where they might not get reggae music or get access to an entertainer. Because that's what I am – I'm an entertainer. I know how to involve the people whether they be a rock crowd, a hip-hop crowd or a reggae crowd. I know how to embrace people. I've worked with rock groups like Sublime which is like a punk rock group who are influenced by reggae musicians. Their singer died and they formed a group called Long Beach Dub All Stars which featured Tippa Irie, Barrington Levy, Half Pint and people like that. I went on tour with these guys and most of the audience were a rock audience but I still know how to embrace them and get them involved in what I'm doing on stage. That's all I ask for from the radio and in the mainstream: for them not to be prejudiced against our music – because it's good music.

**I'm an entertainer. I know how to involve the people whether they be a rock crowd, a hip-hop crowd or a reggae crowd. That's all I ask for from the radio and in the mainstream: for them not to be prejudiced against our music because it's good music**

**What's up with your foot? Is it the same injury from last year? How come it's taken so long to heal? Have you been working when you should be resting?**

Nah! Well I have been working! Because I've just come from Brittany and then I went to Italy to play the Vesuvio Festival at a mountain in Naples before moving on to Spain to do a show in Zaragoza with Nyabinghi Crew and a lot of Spanish artists. Now I'm doing Reggae Jam and then it's back to London for the One Love Festival. But yeah it's the same. It's just mistakes – you make mistakes sometimes! I was running down the stairs to answer my phone and I missed my step and went over on my ankle. The first time I was in Sardinia performing and I twisted my ankle and hit my knee on stage and I was out for six weeks. This time I was out for four weeks and I kind of still out because it's still not healed – but the show must go on.

**Will you continue to work with Marco and the Far East band? Will there be another album?**

Well you never know! It's a project we did, we think it was successful and we think it's going to be successful so if it ain't broke, don't fix it. If we do something that's good and people appreciate it then why shouldn't we do another one?

**Interview by Angus Taylor**



A portrait of Gappy Ranks, a Black man with a mustache, looking down. He is wearing a red beanie with a white logo, a blue shiny jacket, and a thick gold chain with a large diamond pendant. He is adjusting the beanie with both hands.

# GAPPY RANKS

## interview



The antidote to all the gloom and doom one hears about the state of the British reggae music, has been the explosive success of Jamaican-Dominican Londoner Gappy Ranks. An ability to sing or deejay over anything from vintage Studio 1 rhythms to the latest one drop and dancehall, as well as an astonishingly prolific workrate ("I have to feed him riddims" says manager Pierre Bost) have resulted in hero status at home and runaway success abroad. He's even ventured to Jamaica to perform in the bear-pit that was Sting 2009 and emerged unscathed. To mark the release of his first full length album 'Put The Stereo On', made up of said vintage backings revived by fellow West-siders Peckings, Angus Taylor was invited to the Harlesden home studio where the piercing-eyed gap-toothed star knocks out tune upon tune day and night...

**You've been kind of drip feeding your fans with singles and then an EP before your album release. Was this approach deliberate?**

Yeah, I like to think so. Because there's a lot of music coming out of the world and while it's not a competition, it is a very competitive market. So just to get your music out there and be heard and to stand amongst already established artists out there who have already broken through and get the airplay – as well as the ones who are doing it for fun and still get the airplay! – it was very important to send out the right material that would touch the people. Then they would come back and listen to what else I had to offer.

**Why did you go with the Peckings project for the full length album?**

Well that's a tricky question because to be honest you don't get the final say as an artist! It's your album but there's a whole other ballgame to it - this is what happens. But then this is not the only thing Gappy Ranks has to offer and they know that and the world knows that already. Gappy Ranks - Put The Stereo On So I'm kind of happy in a way that this Studio 1 album has been released as the first album because Studio 1 is what brought most of the genres today and you have to remember where you're coming from before you know where you're going. Studio 1 was playing in my house a lot and these are the forefathers of reggae and dancehall music we know today. Everything has branched off that and you have to pay homage. Put The Stereo On is about bringing people together and that's what I like to think my album can do – bring generations together. You're hearing a youthful sound on rhythms that are thirty or forty years old. It's hard to bring generations together but we've done the job and that's what Put The Stereo On is all about.

**It's interesting what you say about "bringing generations together" because an obvious comparison would be with Bitty McLean's On Bond Street. But where Bitty was really going all the way back to the old school vibe, your delivery and digitally altered vocals bring something different to the table, right?**

Yes and even the topics, like Pumpkin Belly. It talks about topics of today. So I'm talking about today's topics to the sounds of that era. It's like bringing a computer back



to when no computers existed. Fashion repeats itself and so does music. The world is a cycle and things come around and go and this is part of it.

**Lots of readers will be familiar with Tenor Saw's Pumpkin Belly. Tell me about the meaning of yours?**

Well there's the old saying, "How water walk go a pumpkin belly?" and there are lots of interpretations of what that means. How I said is "nobody knows how water gets in a pumpkin's belly" so that song is telling you, "don't judge anybody" because you don't know how they got there. I'm saying to youths that might go and pick up guns or weapons or drugs that maybe if they knew the circumstances or the consequences of that they wouldn't do it. That's what that song's all about, facing the consequences and acknowledgement.

**In terms of long-playing releases we've seen two sides to Gappy Ranks. The very contemporary one-drop/dancehall side from the EP and the raw Peckings vintage rhythms one. How many more sides are there?**

I'm a Gemini which is definitely a part of it. I fall under a very creative sign (if you're into the whole star thing!) and I'm a very creative person. But I think the majority of it has to be down to the fact that I live in London, which I like to think of as the capital city of the world and it's very multicultural. I could walk not even five minutes from here and pass thirty or forty different nations and all these things I incorporate into my music. Making reggae music helps you travel to different parts of the world, unlike some other genres which do well where they come from, i.e. hip-hop. But reggae music takes me to parts of the world other people may not go. And all these things broaden my mind and help my music to mature. Music is the biggest form of communication and if you cannot communicate on a world scale then I don't think you can communicate at all. So all my music has different types of music, different types of voices, different types of mood, these are all emotions that are played out.

**What was your upbringing in Harlesden like?**

Well Harlesden is like 90% reggae area and a 90% Jamaican area so it's been a very big influence in my life. Gappy Ranks Some of my happiest moments were spent here and a lot of dear memories that I hold close to me. But it wasn't a paradise location – far from it. It was very hard. Both of my parents are immigrants from the West Indian islands. They started afresh when they came over here in the late 70s. We had to struggle. I am the next generation that was born here and I haven't forgotten my roots but I am very patriotic about this place where I come from Harlesden – especially in the reggae business. Because if you've come to the UK as an international reggae artist you've come to Harlesden. Three minutes away you can see if you pass the Magistrates Courthouse, that's where Island Studios was where Bob Marley recorded the Exodus album. So the history's all around from Bob Marley to Alton Ellis to Buju Banton to Bounty Killer to Cutty Ranks to you name it! They know this area.



# GAPPY RANKS





**And Harlesden is also considered by many to be the backbone of the UK reggae scene. Did you know many home-grown or first generation immigrant artists when growing up?**

Oh definitely definitely! You cannot forget Chukki Starr, Sweetie Irie, Governor Tiggy, General Levy, the late great Rudy King, the late great Tubby T and REDD who's still here, Gregory Praises, Sneaky J...

**I take it you grew up with reggae in the house. Did you go through a phase of rejecting it?**

Never! Because reggae music is love and brings people together. I was always a people person. I've always loved attention and to perform and reggae music helped me to it - especially coming from that background - so it was very important to me. There's been a lot of bad publicity about reggae music but I think the people just never got to know reggae as they should have. It's the same thing that happened with rock music and punk music. It was the same way they dealt with them. That's why you heard Bob Marley come and sing about being a reggae-punk. Anything that rebelled against depression and oppression was always given a bad name and shunned. But it should never have because this is the revolution and the revelation you see me? Reggae music will always be here and it has always got its fight but we're still young - it's not even sixty years old. Not a lot of people know that but it's just turning sixty and we've got to celebrate reggae music. If you compare to history in the history books, sixty years is nothing. We're still growing, we're still young and there's a long long road to go so I hope that one day people will be reading - even if it's just a little inscription - about Gappy Ranks. Then I'll have done my job.

**I know you've been asked this before but how has the Dominican side of your family influenced you and your music?**

Very very much. I spent a year in Dominica. It's a very very poor country, a French speaking island and there was just a very different aspect that brought me closer to the world. The last time I was out there was in the year 2000 so it's been ten years and I hope to return there to do a big show. I'm very very proud of my roots and where I come from because if you're not proud of where you come from you can never go anywhere.

**Football references also appear in your lyrics. Were you a keen player? What other activities did you do at school?**

Not really! I loved the whole idea of playing the game. In primary school I remember I played one game with the school and then one more game in secondary school. I was like a... (pauses) they saw it as I wasn't good enough - as in I didn't behave well enough - to be in the team! A lot of my teachers used to see my music as a distraction. Maybe there were one or two - I think my parents have a couple of school reports - that saw what that "distraction" really was. It was creative and maybe my



teachers couldn't handle it. Because there's no such thing as a bad student – only a bad teacher.

**I spoke to Everton Blender about you name-checking him in Long Time. I know you don't sit down with paper and pen and write but how does that song relate to your youth?**

Longtime is about how Gappy Ranks now is in the studio and he's going all around the world and performing so the time that I used to spend – not really lazing around – it's just that there are no opportunities and there's nothing really to do, especially here in Harlesden NW10. That's why you see so many kids just walking the streets or just hanging around. It looks like they're just being lazy but there are no opportunities. So sometimes we'd just be hanging around on the corner and just cracking jokes and I used to be doing that with a lot of people and I don't want them to feel like I forgot about them. And it's not just me – I'm sure that you yourself, when you moved into your new job that you're doing right now, there were some things you couldn't do like maybe party all night!

**Too true!**

So this is what Longtime was all about – remembering the people you used to hang around with and the things you used to do. It's not that you don't want to do it any more. There's a difference between not wanting to do something and no time for it! It's like single parents who have to work jobs endless hours of the day and they don't really get to see their kids. It's not that they don't want to see their kids, it's that if they don't go out and work who is going to feed their kids?

**With successes like Stinkin' Rich and Heaven In Her Eyes, did it take a while for you to realize how big a tune you'd made or did it hit you straight away?**

Definitely. You know the feeling of a song within the first three or four seconds. It's an instant thing – and that's how I write my lyrics as well. It's instantaneous. It's almost unexplainable. It's like going to a Leonardo and asking him how did he paint this or how did he mix his colours. He probably doesn't know how to explain it to you. But with Heaven In Your Eyes, for example, I remember voicing that song and that peace and tranquillity, that serenity. It was the same day I recorded Mountain Top. Heaven In Her Eyes followed Mountain Top – it was like climbing to the mountains to reach the heavens! I felt sad, I felt happy, I felt all these emotions at one time. I think that's why that song has taken off how it is because it hits all emotions. And that's what music is supposed to do.

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**You even go in a deep roots direction towards the end of the album. Thy Shall Love is my favourite track on the rhythm I associate with Kenyatta by Joe White. Could you see yourself making a deep roots album?**

Anywhere my music is taking me now I shall follow. That's why I say Thy Shall Love Thyself and Thy Shall Love One Another. Because before you can love anything you have to love yourself. If you listen to the opening line of Put The Stereo On I say "Roots and Reality. That Inna We Blood" so I can definitely see myself doing that. There's a whole load of stuff we've

got for the people out there. There's a plan ahead and we hope we've made the right plan and the right choices but even if we haven't we'll learn from our mistakes and continue making music to the best of our ability for the people of the world.

**Now, you, like many reggae and dancehall artists use pitch corrective software like AutoTune. What do you think of the arguments that it is used too much in the music?**

Well firstly, I don't use AutoTune myself. I use Pitch Control which is a slightly different device. But what you have to remember is you have to embrace modern day technology. IGappy Ranks mean, without social networking Gappy Ranks wouldn't be heard where he is now so I embrace the old with the new. You have to respect all these things, because I'm sure, when the 456 Reel-To-Reel came in, people asked what happened to whatever it was they had before! In history some people will always shun change but it's changing. The music is changing and we have to embrace it every day. You have to quote artists like Mavado and Vybz Kartel who have changed the whole music game within the last five. It's just a different way of creative thinking and that's what music is about – being creative and being whatever you want to be. Go to the Tate Modern and ask, "why did the artists throw that on there?" Because they wanted to and they had to!

**Generally, the UK scene is viewed by artists as a closed shop where upward mobility is hard. How have you broken through into the international scene?**

Never give up and have good people around you. I've got a great management team, a good label behind me, good friends, good family and I've grown up in a great community. They've helped me reach this stage: selectors like Allan Brando, Silver Star, Quincy, Beat FM, Unique FM, Radio1Xtra, Choice FM, Daddy Ernie, and it's gone nationwide and international. And people like yourself asking me questions about my life and documenting it. These are the things, even if it moves slow like a





snail - and I've been doing this thing a very long now! I've seen Beverley Hills where a chandelier costs 3 million US dollars - that people could buy two houses with here in the UK - I've seen that lifestyle and I've seen the lifestyle where you have nowhere to sleep - when you're walking the streets when people are in their bed at night - so that's how I've managed to do it. By never giving up and seeing and believing and re-

specting and honouring. That's what the album *Put The Stereo On* is about: honouring and respecting and communicating and bringing people together.

**We all know Europe and the US are bigger markets but would you say Reggae is getting more popular in the UK now?**

Definitely! This is where the reggae came through before it reached the rest of Europe and America. The artists weren't going to America or Europe to voice - they were coming here to London. I'm not even just talking about reggae, I'm talking about this capital city we live in. Movies were made here. We look out of the window in London and it's dark and it's gloomy and we've only got the summer to look up to the sunshine - but look beyond that and there's potential and there's power! Because I always say, "If you can do it in London you can do it anywhere". It goes back to what I was saying - just keep on believing. Look at Sir Alan Sugar. Look at Levi Roots. A black man and a white man, both coming from broken parts of London and look where they are now - these are multimillionaires of different trades. Why can't Gappy Ranks do that? Why can't there be a footballer round the corner who someone bought some boots and walked into a club and they said, "You can be the next Rooney"?

**Would you say your success has come at a good time or are you part of the reason for reggae's success?**

I'd like to think that, but you know what? You have to Give Thanks. I have an album I'll be releasing in November called *Thanks & Praise* and it's all about giving Thanks & Praise. I believe in the share of blame: you always take your fair share. But also in the share of thanks: you always give it away. I can't take the credit and the thanks for all this.

**People have high hopes for you in the same way they do for someone like Tarrus Riley in Jamaica. Do you feel the pressure?**

No I don't because, firstly I believe I can do it, and, also, I'm an adventurer and an opportunist. If you do positive things then these things will come your way.



I feel proud that I am one of the artists who have made this happen but I have to remember the artists who were there before me. Look at General Levy: I can switch on my kickboxing channel and they'll play his song. This is international and he comes from my neighbourhood. The late great Tubby T - rest in peace - everyone knows his name around the world. There were many before me who gave me the power to do this and there will be many after. So it doesn't stop at Gappy Ranks just like it never stops at Sean Paul and Shaggy.



### **You were meant to play One Love Festival on August 7th. What happened?**

Oh Gosh! We left out and approached Wood Green on the North Circular and there was gridlock. I was supposed to perform at eight o'clock sharp. By ten to eight I was on the phone to the promoter who didn't believe we could get there in time so he cancelled the contract which in turn took the band off stage at the same time. We reached there at ten minutes past eight. It was the first time it's ever happened to us but it was gridlock and there was nothing we could do. We had to think about safety so we couldn't go onto the shoulder and drive like the police! We were just like every other individual that was in the traffic. But at the same time we still went down there and showed love to the fans. We still did the press work so while they didn't get to see me perform a lot of fans did get to take their pictures with me and got autographs. So I'd just like to send our apologies to the One Love people and the citizens and council of Essex.

### **Final question, what's next? Will there be a Special Delivery album?**

There will also be an album out in November named Thanks & Praise and in between there will be singles released independently. I've just done a collaboration with Tony Matterhorn called Just Tell Dem that will be digitally online. I've just done a song called New York which is a song about my travels through New York talking about the different places I've seen and the things I've been through. And the producer who did Stinkin' Rich [Macro Marco] will be releasing a tune called Girl Next Door on his Dutty Romance album. There's going to be a whole heap of mix cds, I'm going to keep on working constantly. Go online, go to my MySpace, follow me and talk to me on Twitter. I'm always on Twitter - it's very social! - go on Facebook and join the fanpage or just Google Gappy Ranks and in between - who knows? I'm a very creative person and I'm spontaneous so if you hear a collaboration between Gappy Ranks and Celine Dion - don't be surprised!

**Interview by Angus Taylor**

**If you hear a collaboration between Gappy Ranks and Celine Dion - don't be surprised!**



# JAH SOLID ROCK



JAH SOLID ROCK  
MUSIC FROM THE HIGHEST REGION



## interview



Dutch-based label JahSolidRock is behind one of this year's best releases – 'Judgement Time' by Jamaican singer Chezidek. The album has an air of reggae from the 70's and 80's. And that's what this label is all about according to the CEO.

As many other reggae labels, the story behind JahSolidRock started with a sound system and two friends with a passion for music.

Ras Denco – now CEO of the label – and singer Benaïssa Linger had a sound system in the late 80's and early 90's, named Umojah Ashanti. But something went wrong. Not between the friends but the music was changing, and not in a good way. At least according to Ras Denco :

*- We did the sound system thing for a couple of years with great fun and a lot of devotion, until the interest in roots music was changing toward dancehall and slackness. We could not find ourselves in that vibe of reggae, so we decided to put the sound system thing at a lower speed.*

### **The label starts**

It seems however that they couldn't keep their hands off the reggae business. About three years ago they decided to start the JahSolidRock label and used their contacts with several of the Jamaican artists they had met during the sound system days. One of the first releases was Benaïssa's sun drenched EP Voodoo/Coconut Water.

*- We hooked up with Silver Kamel records in New York and released Benaïssa's debut album 'Tables Turn', which did pretty good worldwide. The album was a collection of songs that all had a positive message; some roots, some crossover. From that moment we continued recording and have done some more releases over the last years, says Ras Denco.*

The label's biggest record so far is Chezidek's acclaimed album 'Judgement Time' that reached the streets earlier this year. Ras Denco explains some of the ingredients behind the success.

*- We put a lot of time and love in the album, and during the recordings in the studio with Chezidek there were also nice and positive vibes. We tried to keep that authentic roots reggae vibe from back in the days on the album; by using real musicians, real horns, real drums etc. And it's a real album, a studio album, not a collection of lost songs from different producers.*



### **Taking it back to the roots**

*And that's the mission for the label – taking reggae back to its roots in the 70's and 80's. Ras Denco believes the greatest and most creative reggae was produced during*



that period.

- It was handmade music. Music came from the heart in those days and had a positive message, he writes and concludes:

- Musicians were important, and the artwork made in those days had something mystical about them. It's exactly as David Rodigan said in an interview with Reggae-mani.com – music coming from Jamaica does not make any sense anymore. It's all hip-hop influenced, dancehall orientated and there is no more praising Jah. We try to go back to that foundation reggae sound, by working with great musicians, and people who still have love for reggae music.



### Value for the money

But producing roots reggae is often expensive, something that the producer Frenchie pointed out a few weeks back in an interview with Reggae-mani.com.

- It's difficult to pay all musicians and production costs to make a great album, and still try to make profit out of it. But still we think that people will pay money for great productions. We prefer to make a ten tune showcase album with all ten tunes solid, than a 23 track album, where only two tracks will stand the test. I also believe the buying public want some value for a CD, Ras Denco explains.

### Several albums ahead

He writes that the label has some interesting albums lined up. All of them made with real musicians and with a great deal of love.

– We've a compilation titled 'Cultural Vibes' coming out in October. It collects all releases we've done last year and this year on 7" and digital releases. We want to showcase our tunes on this album, and we hope to get some positive reactions, he writes and continues:

– We've also just finished recording the new album from Apple Gabriel titled 'Teach Them Right', which will also hit the streets in October. It's a special album, since it has been eleven years since Apple Gabriel did a solo album. We've also recorded a new album with Earl 16, and as we speak we are working on future projects with Chezidek, Brinsley Forde, and one of the most promising artists out of Jamaica – Zamunda.

If all these releases are any way near the high standard of Judgment Time by Chezidek, I'm confident that my record collection and JahSolidRock will have a long and fruitful relationship.

**Interview by Erik Magni**



# Alborosie :: Dub Clash

JDF - 2010 - Review by Erik Magni

"He's immensely talented". These words are from legendary selector and radio DJ David Rodigan when he described the Italian stallion Alberto D'Ascola aka Alborosie aka Puppa Albo. The parmiggiano lover out of Sicily, now living in Jamaica.

I concur with David Rodigan, especially after listening to Alborosie's new set 'Dub Clash', an album where he shows a new side of himself.

This is a unique dub album on several levels. First, it's been recorded and mixed in Kingston. Not usual for a dub album today. Second, Alborosie has produced and mixed it as well as playing drums, bass, keyboards, guitar and percussion on it. Third, it's been made with original organic vintage effects, creating an old school feeling without losing its contemporary vibe.

The album includes Alborosie tunes together with riddims I don't recall him voicing, for example Full Up, Baltimore and Queen of the Minstrel.

There are several Alborosie numbers included, for example versions of No Cocaine, Kingston Town and Global War. However, I miss dubwise excursions of Waan the Herb, Herbalist and Rastafari Anthem.

'Dub Clash' is dedicated to King Tubby, referred to as Alborosie's teacher. But this is not merely a tribute set. Alborosie has managed to push the buttons and turn the wheels creating a style for himself that we hopefully haven't heard the last of.





# Maikal X :: Genesis

**JahSolidRock - 2009 - Review by Ras Achis**

If one were to look at Reggae music from a global perspective and analyze it, region by region, it wouldn't be too long at all before a special note was taken of the fact that the Dutch and Dutch Caribbean scene has been absolutely flaming as of late with big big artists seemingly popping up on a consistent basis. While the biggest of the bunch arguably remains the newly christened Ziggi Recado, there are also names such as the Aruba born Smiley and the delightful St. Maarten grown Mischu Laikah. The most recent addition to that bunch, however, is arguably the most interesting as the

Holland born singer (of Guyanese and Curaçao heritage) Maikal X has a history in Hip-Hop circles before ultimately making himself into one of the brightest newcomers in all of Reggae music over the course of the past couple of years or so.



One of the nicest bits of news surrounding Maikal X was the fact that he aligned himself with the same Rock 'N Vibes label which successfully brought Ziggi to prominence and they've certainly come through in delivering one of the most anticipated debut albums of 2010, 'Genesis', which puts the talented and increasingly versatile and multi-dimensional singer on full display for the masses. Prior to the album's releasing there was a very nice flood of singles, one such tune, the gorgeous The Best In You which arguably tops the album which it also opens. The tune grew to such heights that it was also featured on VP Records' very popular 'Strictly The Best' compilation and has managed to carry its beauty thus far. Listeners should also be quite familiar with the most recent piece, Here She Comes (Maikal X's excellent take on Maneater from American folk singers Hall & Oates) and also Bear With Me which utilizes the lovely Changes Riddim courtesy of Jamaican super producer Don Corleon.

Given the history of combinations on Ziggi Recado's own albums on Rock 'N Vibes, it should be to no surprise that the label seemingly spares no expense in lining up an outstanding trio of collaborators to work with Maikal X on 'Genesis'. First is Peetah Morgan from the Morgan Heritage who joins in on the big social commentary We Know Why, one of the album's finest moments. Hawaiian Reggae diva Irie Love also gets a taste on the funky . . . Well the song is called Irie Love as well - A very fun and catchy vibes. And lastly there's the biggest name on the album, Luciano, who performs as he usually does on the strong praising tune Give Thanks, which finds Maikal sounding quite a bit like Reggae legend, Freddie McGregor.

Some of the mightiest moments on 'Genesis' still come with the singer by himself and doing and developing his own vibes. A tune like Lies is a nice example. It finds Maikal X detaching himself from a bad and less than honest woman and relationship





and on it he offers the single most hilarious line of the album, "Woman mi neva Chris Brown ya. Still yah try fi run a twist round ya" (in reference to the Pop singer with the problem keeping his hands to himself). While the overall quality of the album does take a dip in the latter stages, there are still very nice tunes such as the sweet Darlin and Born To Die which rides the Collie Weed Riddim from up and coming Dutch label JahSolidRock. Maikal X also saves one of his biggest shots for last as previous release and scathing social commentary, The Warning, wraps up 'Genesis'.

While it certainly does remain to be seen what level of success Maikal X can ultimate achieve in Reggae music, the levels surrounding his debut album are less in question. As a whole, it is very good. Yes - He does have a few things to work on (as does everyone else) and Yes - If this wasn't the moment to deliver a Ziggi/Maikal X combination then when? But on 'Genesis' Maikal X proves all the attention warranted at the beginning of what is hopefully a long and distinguished career.



# Tiken Jah Fakoly :: African Revolution

Barclay - 2010 - Review by Valentin Zill

After a history lesson ('Cours d'Histoire'), elaborate animadversion on imperialism ('Françafrique') and 'L'Africain' ("L'Afrique ne pleure plus, elle parle" – "Africa doesn't cry anymore, it talks") Tiken Jah Fakoly, today the most important Reggae export from Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), calls a 'African Revolution'. Talking is not enough anymore, it's time to act. And 'African Revolution' has the power to turn reactionaries into revolutionaries. African Revolution Tiken revolutionized his style, too. With a lot of acoustic elements, 'African Revolution' breaks away from its predecessors. Almost the whole spectrum of Mande instruments, including kora, balafon and ngoni, give the album a "traditional" touch that lets it sound even more African than all the other albums from Tiken Jah Fakoly. Instruments typically used in Reggae music are employed economically. Venerable constraints of the genre are disregarded to an extent that the World Music label would actually suit better.

The album contains twelve tracks. Title track African Revolution opens the excursion into the breadth of Mande music. Tiken proclaims the revolution of the youths of Africa.



Lyrics in Dyoula and English allow a maximum of fans to understand the message. Je Dis Non ! tries a little too hard to please European ears. Together with the Paris-born Nigerian Soul singer Asa, Tiken sings Political War. Thanks to its sing along potential it will surely be part of Tiken's live repertoire in the future. Marley Foly ("Greeting the Marleys") is one of the highlights of the album, it's a tribute sang to the Marley family in Dyoula. Especially the use of the kora spices up the tune. Il Faut Se Lever ("We need to stand up") turns back to the album's

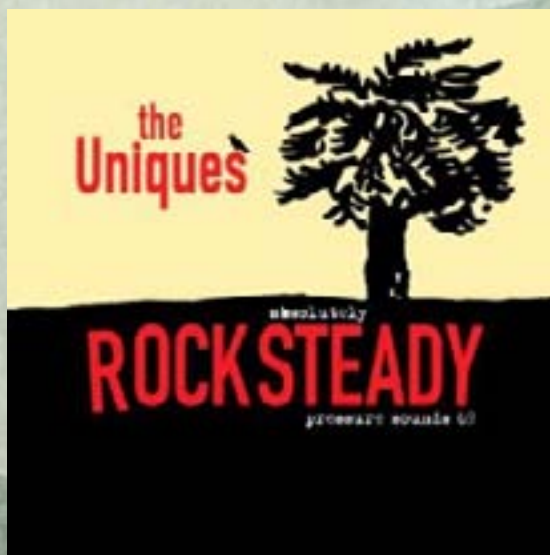
leitmotif. We need to stand up to change Africa, sings Tiken Jah, nobody else is going to do that for us. Simimory profits from its unusual beat. In Vieux Père ("Old father"), Tiken talks about the disappointments he feels when returning to Côte d'Ivoire. Sors De Ma Télé ("Get out of my TV") attacks the last word on opinions of western media. The tune is accompanied by an African means of communication, the tamani (talking drum). Also perfectly matching the album's central theme is Votez. The tune talks about the credibility of campaign pledges. Je Ne Veux Pas Ton Pouvoir comes in easy and relaxed, perfectly emphasizes its message: I really don't need your power, your money. Initié ("Thank You") sets another height of the album. Tiken thanks the women of Africa. As regards content and in terms of the catchiness of the melody, the tune can be compared to Sizzla's Thank You Mama. Laisse-Moi M'Exprimer closes the opus and rekurieren again to the leitmotif of the album. The antagonism of producing "traditional" West African music explicitly for European ears works out even. The album is not only a must-have for fans of Tiken Jah Fakoly. It can broaden the musical horizon of Reggae lovers and will enlarge Tiken's following outside of the Reggae community.



# The Uniques :: Absolutely Rock Steady

Pressure Sounds - 2010 - Review by Karl Pearson

This album harks back to a time when things seemed a bit more innocent as the Uniques sing songs mainly about the highs and lows of love, before reggae really took over and songs of sufferation became more prominent. Just a quick glimpse at the track list should be enough, with titles such as Give Me A Love, Blinded By Love, Love & Devotion and Let Me Go Girl, telling you what you're going to be getting lyrically. The Uniques, formed in 1967, originally consisted of Slim Smith, Roy Shirley, and Franklyn White, with Jimmy Riley and Lloyd Charmers replacing Shirley and White the following year. To many the '60s incarnation of The Uniques is regarded as one of the greatest of all vocal groups of the Rock Steady period and the enduring harmonies of this trio, in whichever guise, lift what could have been just another selection of run of the mill love songs into what are sublime and soulful classics.



Absolutely Rock-songs have been available through various compilations, their work has been Sanctuary Records. Smith & The Uniques tracks between both the loss of songs like

Gypsy Woman and Girls Like Dirt, but they are more than ably made up for by the inclusion of Build My World and the rather rootsy Stand Up And Fight, but whether it is to stand up and fight for rights or for love you'll have to decide. So with this in mind if you do already own the Sanctuary album I think you'll see there is still plenty more to be found here.

steadyMany of the available through various but this is the first time brought together since released 'Best of Slim 1967-1969' in 2003. The do vary somewhat, with the Impressions cover

The original production on these songs was mainly down to the then up and coming Bunny 'Striker' Lee, but they now have a very clean and crisp sound which suggests they have had some form of enhancement to bring them up to the quality of the 21st century recordings. However this has been done delicately and has not over sanitised them and with nice bass tones the songs still retain that certain warmth and richness that make this set a real listening pleasure.



# Pama International :: Meet Mad Professor

## Rockers Revolt - 2010 - Review by Gibsy

Dubbing, the art of dub engineering, taking a tune and reworking it, re-mixing it and thus giving the tune a new direction, an alternative vibe, making something new from what's already gone before.

For 30 years now the UK's legendary dub master Mad Professor has delighted dub followers worldwide with his unmistakable style of dubbing it up and dubbing you crazy with over 40 albums under his belt including many collaborations. Now comes an almighty collab with one of the UK's most celebrated reggae bands this decade Pama International.

Pama International, now coming up to 10 years in the reggae arena, with this their 8th album release, a dub version of their smash album 'Outernational'. What strikes me straight away with 'Rewired! In Dub' is the absolute club friendly nature of the album, a good chunk of these tunes could fit very happily within a town centre or city night-club amongst the funk, soul and street vibes being selected by the club DJ. With this album the listener is treated to just about every aspect of dub engineering tricks of the trade ever invented, indeed the Prof is responsible for some of these tricks of the trade from time. Elements of King Tubby's high pass filter style mixing (Dubstance) Prof working the faders on the riddim track (Saviour Dub) Echo's and delays superbly executed across the whole album all with a thoughtful approach in keeping the main elements of the original songs intact. It's funky, soulful and ever so reggae. Without hesitation the most radio friendly reggae album coming from the UK in over a decade.

Dub I Wait takes the listener down Mad Professor memory lane, a thinking man's dub with deep in the mix fre-track and the high end elements whilst Question Dub manipulation tactic made fa-the day by taking the listener and keeping them up there ple of this dub style can be One cannot deny the superb fessional playing of instru-tional has given the reggae past 10 years and no doubt their choice of enlisting Mad master tapes has to be the coup of the decade. An awesome journey through dub's past and present.



It's all there in this album, It's the Dub sound of now...and in fine style.



# BETTER MUS' COME

By Barbara Blake Hannah

## 'BETTER' HAS COME

After weeks of intense promotion in all media, including a guerilla marketing campaign that put a staged demonstration on the streets, 'BETTER MUS' COME' finally opened with a premiere in Kingston last week to reviews that were full of praise for Storm Saulter and his film.

Better Mus Come Based on a notorious episode in Jamaican political history, the infamous Green Bay Massacre when the two political parties battled for power using ghetto warriors, the film heralds a new era in Jamaican film making that focuses on a new, younger generation of film makers who hold the future of the industry in their digital hands.

The film has startling parallels with today's Jamaica where the island was caught up in a similar confrontation of political violence in the effort to capture alleged drug don 'Dudus' and extradite him to the US. As a result, the film serves as a reminder of how Jamaica's political landscape was created in those volatile times, with tragic results today - three decades later.

## THE IDEA

In an interview with the Sunday OBSERVER, Saulter explained the story behind the making of the film: "The idea for 'Better Mus' Come' came from the merger of a number of points. I was always interested in the Cold War and the whole geopolitics of that time. The effect that had on Jamaica and our relations with Cuba and the US was also interesting, then add to that the Green Bay Massacre," Saulter explains. "When you put all those together with the heightening party politics of the time, it makes for a great story."

Sheldon Shepherd, actor and performer in the Nomadz group, gives an impressive performance as 'Ricky', with another excellent young actor Everaldo Creary, and fashion model Nicole Grey receiving praise for their roles. Carl Bradshaw, without whom no Jamaican film can be made, has a cameo role, while US actor Roger Guenver Smith plays the role of the 'Michael Manley' politician with customary finesse.

As director, writer and co-producer of the film, Storm Saulter shows his professional film making skills and determination to deliver a first class film of international standards. The 27 year old director is a graduate of the Los Angeles Film School and apprenticed to such leading film makers as Little X. He has learned his craft well and perfected it by making several impressive small films, music videos and ads. 'Better Mus' Come' began as a short film that Storm showcased at a film festival he started at his family's hotel in Negril to show the work he, his brother and a group of equally young film makers are doing.



## REFINING THE STORY

Two years later, a full length version of the film was shown, but Storm and producer Paul Bucknor ('The Full Monty') were not satisfied and went back to the editing room to refine the story and product. Better Mus Come The finished film is professional and polished, with directing, photography and acting all blending into an entertaining whole.

Weekend reviews were full of praise. Sunday GLEANER writer Erin Hansen, wrote:

"Like many of Jamaica's classic films, 'Better Mus' Come' unearths a dark tale nestled deep within the ideological borders of zinc fencing. Not to say it should be dismissed or categorised as so. Instead, the plot navigates through a complex narrative. It questions what is good, what is evil and turns those questions on their head, creating a world in which a constant state of emergency drives one's motivations.

The beauty of 'Better Mus' Come' is not in its storyline of romance or brotherhood, which at times carries its plot in zig-zagging motions. Rather, the film's most poignant scenes are in the pensive moments with its main character who falters between what is right and what is necessary. Storm conveys these moments with visual dexterity, exercising his cinematographic mastery in ways that the Jamaican film industry hasn't seen since the '70s heyday of The Harder They Come."

Popular entertainment blog TALLAWAH, wrote:

**"A fully engrossing, well-acted and satisfying movie that represents a worthy new entry into the canon of Jamaican films that matter. A film local and international audiences will enjoy, Better Mus' Come is, in essence, a powerful socio-political statement, an inspired and ambitious undertaking, that questions authority, entertains and provokes thought. I can't wait to see it again."**

## FRESH NEW DIRECTION

It's a fresh new direction for Jamaican film which, despite the success of 40-year-old 'The Harder They Come', usually relies on jobs with the occasional US feature film that shoots in Jamaican locations, to call itself a 'film industry'. The several young film makers springing up to make movies with their digital cameras and computers, will undoubtedly be pleased with the doors that 'Better Mus' Come' must surely open for them. Storm could rely on his close ties with influential friends to ensure his ability to get all he needed to make the film.

Certainly the big budget that supported Saulter through 5 years of development, production and editing, as well as the advertising and promotion that have swamped the media for a month, is what has delivered the professional production of 'Better Mus'



Come'. Undoubtedly, this is the kind of investment needed for Jamaica to produce films of this calibre that can cross the bridge from local cinemas to the Hollywood box office, and many projects are waiting in the wings.

My hope is that 'Better Mus' Come' carries with it some of the talented 'down-town' film makers into the 'uptown' circles that can support their works and give Jamaica a chance to show that 'Better' has indeed come – not just to this film, but to the indigenous Jamaican film industry.

## Films, Films and more Jamaican Films

More and more each week, Jamaica becomes the film capital of the Caribbean, with a waiting list of films made by Jamaicans, in Jamaica and about Jamaica lined up for release in the next few weeks. Rise UpAt the same time, I keep receiving news of still more films waiting in the wings and premiering at international film festivals.

Hot on the heels of last week's successful launch of BETTER MUS' COME is RISE UP, a feature-length documentary due to premiere in Kingston on October 27. Directed by Argentina-born Luciano Blotta and produced by Jamaicans Mark Hart and Carlo 'Am-lak' Less, the film shines a spotlight on Jamaica's underground music scene by focusing on 3 young artists - Kemoy Lewis, Ice Anastasia (now performing as 'Juss Ice') and Turbulence who, when the film was made 7 years ago, was still an 'upcoming artist', and who has now become a successful reggae star.

The film is coming to Jamaica after reaching a worldwide audience in international film festivals, cinemas and on television, earning several awards in the process for its creatively developed storyline, its stirring soundtrack and cinematography. RISE UP traces the lives of three young Jamaicans, struggling for their big break as recognised artistes - Turbulence, born Sheldon Campbell from Kingston's inner city, whose career launched into orbit after Rise Up cameras stopped rolling; Clarendon-native, Kemoy Reid – a young girlwho has been blessed with awesome vocals; and Juss Ice, born Michael Lewis to uptown parents, who dubs his unique sound New Soul Reggae.

RISE UP also features appearances and performances by other rising stars as well as Jamaican music legends, Lee 'Scratch' Perry, Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare.

RISE UP's release in Jamaican cinemas will be followed immediately by the premiere and islandwide release of A DANCE FOR GRACE, about which I reported some weeks ago. Winner of the Reggae Film Festival 2010 Honour Award for Jamaican Feature Film, the film takes a look at Dancehall as a new dance form, rather than just a genre of 'slack' reggae music and, by projecting it through a heroic story with an American plot, takes Dancehall 'to di worl', as pleasantly as Usain Bolt's famous Olympic victory jig.





It's a simple story about a US high school dance team trying to win a competition and raise money for a sick elder. A Jamaican substitute teacher suggests they choreograph dancehall steps and takes them to Jamaica to learn it from the authentic performers.

There's lots of dancing, especially of the local dance groups competing in the video light, plus the coreographed numbers the Americans perform back home to win the competition and prize money. Written by Junior Powell and produced by lead actor Orville Matherson, with co-producers Kingston executive Joan Edwards and American Dale Foti under their Tower Isle Productions, *A DANCE FOR GRACE* is poised to be both a hit with young music fans, as well as an instant cross over to the American popular market.

As if those films are not enough, we have the promise of *JAMDOWN* – the film that revives the early and brilliant career of The Congos, which had its European launch in London recently and was also screened at Rototom Sunsplash.

However, the film I am most eager to see is the brand new documentary *FIRE IN BABYLON*, which had its World Premiere this week in London at the Vue Cinema, Leicester Square.

It's a film about the heyday of West Indian Cricket in the days such heroes as Viv Richards, Clive Lloyd, Michael Holding and others drove fear into the hearts of their opponents with their brilliant attacking brand of the game. As the film's promo describes it: "The film charts the glorious supremacy of the West Indies cricket team throughout the late 70s and 80s, and describes how the bat and ball was more effective than gunfire in the battle against racial injustice and the struggle for Black rights.



At a time of anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, race riots in England and civil unrest in the Caribbean, the West Indian cricketers struck a wonderfully defiant blow at the forces of white prejudice world-wide. With Caribbean flair, fearless spirit and a thumping reggae beat, they hijacked the genteel game of the privileged elite and replayed it on their own terms. By dominating at the highest level – longer than any team in the history of sport – their symbolic declaration was clear: people of colour will not be dictated to, whether on a cricket ground or in any other field of life.

The film's director is Steven Riley, whose most recent film *Blue Blood* (2007) dramatically portrayed the historic boxing rivalry between Oxford and Cambridge Universities. It premiered at the NY's Tribeca Film Festival, was released in UK cinemas by Warner to widespread critical acclaim and earned Steven a nomination for Best Film at the Evening Standard Awards as well as Best British Newcomer at the London Critic's Circle.

Producer Charles Steel is a BAFTA winning film producer and managing director of Cowboy Films, who produced feature films 'Amy Foster' (aka 'Swept From the Sea'); and Kevin MacDonald's 'The Last King of Scotland' about Idi Amin (2006) which won numerous awards including an Oscar for Best Actor and a BAFTA for Best British Film.

With a soundtrack of classic reggae by such artists as Bob Marley, Gregory Isaacs and Burning Spear, *FIRE IN BABYLON* is an education not to be missed. The battle with bat and ball only scratches the significance of this untold epic of sporting history. According to Director Riley, "The West Indian team's glorious reign marks the final chapter in a freedom fight stretching back 500 years to the African slave ships. As inheritors of 60s Rastafarianism and Black Power, the example of this talented generation was clear – to release black people worldwide from the modern yoke of mental slavery. Whether in Harare, Trenchtown, Handsworth or Soweto – the system of oppression they confronted had one name.... that name was 'Babylon'. Their message and spirit is I hope something that will inspire, entertain and galvanise people of all backgrounds and ages."

### **AND FINALLY, GOOD NEWS ABOUT 'JOSEPH'**

... interest by an investor means that this still-in-development feature film based on the novel *JOSEPH – A RASTA REGGAE FABLE* may soon be ready to roll. After all, Storm Saulter says it took 7 years to bring BMC to the Carib Cinema, so 2-year-old 'JOSEPH' is well within the timeline for a Jamaican movie production.

**I've said it before and I will say it again: Jamaica is the film capital of the Caribbean SOON TO BE THE WORLD!!!**



# GREGORY ISAACS

**THE COOL  
RULER  
1951 - 2010**





# UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE

Artists - News - Articles - Forum - Videos - Photos - Music

United Reggae is an online magazine created in October 2007 and dedicated to reggae music. It has the intention of offering a real international platform of information on this rich and healthy music. Our aim is to promote and spread the inspiring and healing vibrations of Reggae music and culture.

United we stand, Divided we fall... join us!

## Conception, design and creation

Xavier Simacourbe & Camille Monchicourt

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