

# UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE

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Alpheus  
Luciano  
Glen Adams

**Protoje**  
INTERVIEW

Manjul  
Romain Virgo  
Afrikan Simba  
Cen'c Love

Buju Banton and Friends in Miami  
Rebel Salute Launch



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NEWS 



# Digital Revolution by Steely and Clevie

Jamaican-born production team Wycliffe “Steely” Johnson and Cleveland “Clevie” Browne are more than producers - they are pioneers of dancehall reggae’s digital age. Thus, it is only fitting that this compilation album featuring their top hits is deemed ‘Digital Revolution’, set for release on January 25, 2011 from 17 North Parade, a division of VP Records.

Having built their world-renowned reputations as studio musicians, with Steely playing keyboards and Clevie playing drums, the duo rose to prominence as the house band at King Jammy’s studio at the time when drum machines were first introduced on reggae records. They quickly became Jamaica’s hottest production team and together forged a sound that would rule the dancehall scene for decades. Their imprint logged numerous top Jamaican hits and multiple U.S. cross-over radio hits from 1989 to 2005.

‘Digital Revolution’ is a three-disc collector’s edition that includes 42 of their most influential and biggest hits on discs 1 and 2. Disc 3 is a DVD that contains a 1988 interview and studio demonstration with Steely and Clevie filmed for the Jamaica Broadcasting Company (JBC), as well as a 2005 interview with the producers sponsored by Red Bull Academy. This collection presents fan favorites and rare insight on two of reggae’s most influential producers - a must have for collectors, and fans, everywhere.



## Tiger Records Online Shop

French born, Kingston based, producer Sherkhan has just launched the online music store for label Tiger Records. “From the studio straight to your headphones” says Sherkhan, who created the website to sell his work direct to the listener.

The shop stocks every Tiger Records production, including the Electricity, Box Guitar, Sufferah and Ol’Sitt’n riddims.

Check it out at [www.tigerrecordsjamaica.com](http://www.tigerrecordsjamaica.com)



## The Genesis of Maikal X... Again

On again, off again. On again, off again. Up until now, fans outside of Holland trying to get a hold of one of the better debut albums of 2010, ‘Genesis’ from impressive Dutch vocalist Maikal X, were searching without much luck as, despite rumours to the contrary, the album was only available in The Netherlands and on the Dutch version of iTunes. Well, after a few unfortunately long months ‘Genesis’ is now going global courtesy of a link between the label of its origin, big Dutch/Dutch Caribbean imprint Rock’N Vibes and industry leader VP Records. Back in 2008 Rock’N Vibes completed a similar deal with Greensleeves for the distribution of ‘In Transit’, the sophomore album of Maikal X’s labelmate, Ziggi Recado, so this move is neither totally unexpected, nor without precedent. Maikal X’s much discussed album ‘Genesis’ finally arrives in stores worldwide on February 18, 2011.

## Woman of A Noble Character by Turbulous

Nearly two decades years after his debut album, ‘Raw As Ever’, released, the Antigua born, New York grown DJ Turbulous is back again with his sophomore album for Cultural Production, the curiously titled ‘Woman of A Noble Character’.

For the unfamiliar, Turbulous is DJ with a very old school type of a style, somewhat reminiscent of a less colourful version of respected Jamaican veteran Louie Culture to an extent [or perhaps even Culture Brown as well] and he uses the style to make somewhat Dancehall-centric Roots Reggae with, again, an obvious lean towards the old school vibes.

Fans around the world can get infinitely more familiar right now as ‘Woman of A Noble Character’ from Turbulous is currently available in stores digitally and on CD as well.



## Formulla’s Tough Life

Underrated sweet singing Jamaican veteran Formulla has teamed up Irie Jam Productions from out Martinique to offer a brand new excellent song release for late in the year and heading into 2011, Tough Life, a currently digitally available single. The song is, essentially, an inspirational one which speaks on perseverance of self through tedious and more than tedious moments in life and perhaps what is most impressive about the track are the actual vibes which completely prevent the tune from sounding melancholy or just sad even with a nearly huge ‘aura’ surrounding it.

Fans can have a listen for themselves as Formulla’s new tune Tough Life from Irie Jam Productions is available right now digitally.

## Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor

With a studio album, 2008’s ‘Get It In Your Mind’, a live album, ‘Live In Paris’ from 2009, and a healthy stream of singles to his credit, the last few years haven’t left a great deal to be desired from outstanding veteran Jamaican singer, Bushman. Bushman Still, over that same time the most discussed of his projects was one which had yet to actually materialize but had been in ‘the works’ for quite some time - The singer’s tribute album to the legendary Peter Tosh, ‘Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor’.

The album features Bushman singing some of Tosh’s most well known tracks such as Legalize It, Stepping Razor, Equal Rights and more. Also, joining the Bushman are Reggae stars Buju Banton and Tarrus Riley on the album which features production from Penthouse Records and comes via VP Records and marks the first time the big label has released material from the St. Thomas native since 2004’s very well received ‘Signs’ album.

Barring yet another delay, the hotly anticipated ‘Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor’ is set to be released on 12 track CD and with 3 additional tunes digitally, on January 25th.



### Tears by Alborosie and Wendy Rene

In the past Alborosie released music using vintage samples from Dennis Brown.

Now he is back with a new single featuring the voice of Stax soul singer Wendy Rene, sampling her classic song After Laughter Comes Tears.

Tears was released at the end of 2010 by Megabass productions.

### Armageddon Time by Michael Rose

It is always a pleasure to hear a new single from Michael Rose and the release of Armageddon Time, produced by Black Money Records, is no exception.

### Gyptian Features in Tiny Desk Concert Series

Gyptian enjoyed a major resurgence last year even breaking into the mainstream with his global hit 'Hold You' and having just won Best Reggae Act at both the MOBO Awards in Britain and the Soul Train Music Awards for in the USA was invited along to the offices of NPR in Washington D.C as part of their Tiny Desk Concert series that gets artists to come in and perform a short acoustic set.

The short set that consisted of 'Hold You', 'Beautiful Lady' and 'Nah Let Go' and went down well with Frank Kelley at the station saying "once he began singing, his relaxed, supple voice pulled any straggling doubters over to his side". He went on to describe the occasion "Gyptian

sang his songs mostly straight, throwing in vamps here and there. But he couldn't help dancing in his seat, as he made delicate, fluttery motions with his hands and rocked in rhythm. In an environment that can throw off even seasoned performers, Gyptian came off as confident and expressive. He even growled directly into the microphone to close out "Beautiful Lady".

### Mr Brown by Lutan Fyah and Emanuel Stain

Lutan Fyah seems very productive this new year. He has just released a new combination single with his protégé Emanuel Stain of the Fire Squad Crew. The two singjays offer us the great Mr Brown on the Pressure Riddim.

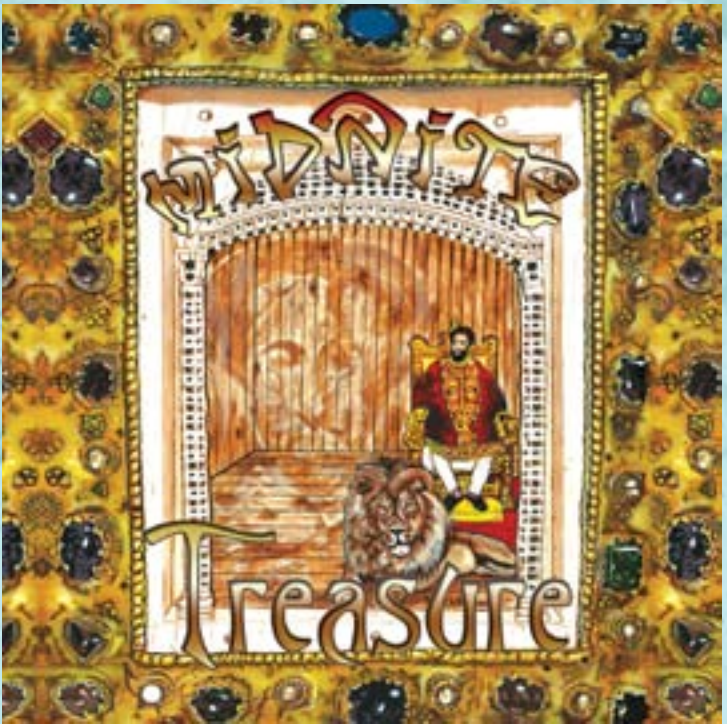


### Put Yourself Forward by Afrikan Simba

The label King Dubbist distinguished itself in 2010 with the great Mercy Riddim, which included the formidable Jah Rule from Ras Zacharri. Its first release of the year is Put Yourself Forward on the Ras Vibes Riddim by Afrikan Simba.

### The Treasure of Midnite

Have you ever asked yourself how Virgin Island Reggae superstars Vaughn Benjamin & Midnite manage to release 200 albums each and every year and not one of them, ever, has managed to attract the attention of the industry's leading label, VPRrecords?



In fact, the label hasn't stepped into the region very much at all, despite the existence and activity level of seemingly very marketable names such as Pressure Busspipe, Niyorah, Ras Attitude and others. Well, hopefully 2011 will begin a change in that because, along with Rastar Records, VP is on board with 'Treasure', the very first album release from Midnite this year. If you're unfamiliar with the band (shame on you) typically what happens with the vast majority of their huge number of releases is that Midnite - The Band - is absent and is 'represented' by the vocalist and brilliant song writer, the walking genius that is Vaughn Benjamin. And while that also figures to be the case on this release, it's never hurt their popularity as the band maintains one of the most fervent fanbases to be found in the entire genre of

Reggae music. Those fans will surely be most interested on January 25th as 'Treasure' drops physically and digitally from Rastar and VP Records.

### Little Roy's Heat Turns Up

Fans of the veteran singer Little Roy and London-based roots label Pharos may rejoice: 'Heat', their long awaited follow-up to 2006's 'Children Of The Most High' will be released on 18th March.

The album features the legendary rhythm section Mafia & Fluxy on bass and drums and Pioneer George Dekker on harmonies. It was recorded at Stingray studio, produced by Roy, Mafia and Fluxy and mixed by Prince Fatty's Mike Pelanconi. Extensive sleeve-notes come courtesy of reggae writer John Masouri, no less.

As with 'Children Of The Most High', the former 12 Tribes man has recut some of his vintage sides, including the much sought after Tafari Syndicate 7" Jah Can Count On I. Smoke free and in better voice than ever, Roy swears it's an improvement on the original! Have a listen for yourself before 'Heat' drops in two months time...







## Tyrone Taylor is still the Master

London studio and label Stingray has released the long awaited album from the late Tyrone Taylor. Titled 'Master', it was co-produced and mixed by Carl "Dillie" McLeod and includes a previously issued recut of Taylor's 1975 Jack Ruby production Life Table.

'Master' is out now for download from Stingray Records Online Store: <http://shop.stingrayrecords.net>.

## Busy Signal Sings Beres Hammond!

After dealing with the likes of The Commodores and Phil Collins, surely it can come to no surprise that the Dancehall's reigning most inventive, creative and 'envelope-pushing' of DJ's, Busy Signal, is at it again but this time he's tapping into a far more familiar source . . . Although he's doing so with arguably his strangest piece to date. The Donovan Germain and Penthouse Records produced Tempted To Touch is the very popular song of Reggae legend and the coolest man in the world Beres Hammond from ~1990 and the big and bad Busy Signal simply sings it. He sings it just like Beres sang it two decades ago, making this most unusual move even more unusual!



The song is reportedly a part of two forthcoming projects: One being 'Our Favourite Beres Hammond Songs' which is an album from Penthouse featuring a variety of artists (such as Busy, Tarrus Riley and Jah Cure) singing songs of the legend. Also, Busy is looking at his own next album (already) 'Busy For Lovers' which is being worked on by both Penthouse and Busy's homebase, Shane Brown's Jukeboxx Records.

Busy Signal continues to ignore the definition of 'status quo' and thrive on being the standout and the one willing to take chances and because of it, Dancehall is certainly a much more fun place to be.

## Fi Di Dancehall by Sadiki and Delly Ranx



Perhaps not quite on the international levels of Damian Marley teaming up with Hip-Hopper Nas on last year's 'Distant Relatives' - But more educated and familiar fans of Dancehall, Reggae and definitely Lover's Rock might be happy to hear that veterans Sadiki and Delly Ranx are linking to create an album of their own, 'Fi Di Dancehall' on Sadiki's very own Skinny Bwoy Records imprint.

Certain to capture attention here is the fact that the album appears to be somewhat random in that the two artists aren't exactly known for a long history of working together but, as tunes such as Girlfriend, Showoff and Dancing Forever show, there's clearly some musical chemistry between the two which can hopefully translate well into a big album early in 2011. The project also features fresh solo material from both so general fans of the artists should take an interest as well. 'Fi Di Dancehall' from Sadiki and Delly Ranx is probably one of the bigger named artists of the early year and fans can get their hands on it on February 8th.

## The Backstabber Riddim

Attempting to followup what was an excellent year 2010 is impressing German label Oneness Records who gets 2011 off to a very nice start with their first production of the year, the Backstabber Riddim. 2010 saw the same label doing very big things in the form of releasing not only the solid and well received Soul Riddim, but also album of the year candidate 'Long Journey' by Naptali, so the expectations for the label and the new riddim are very high.

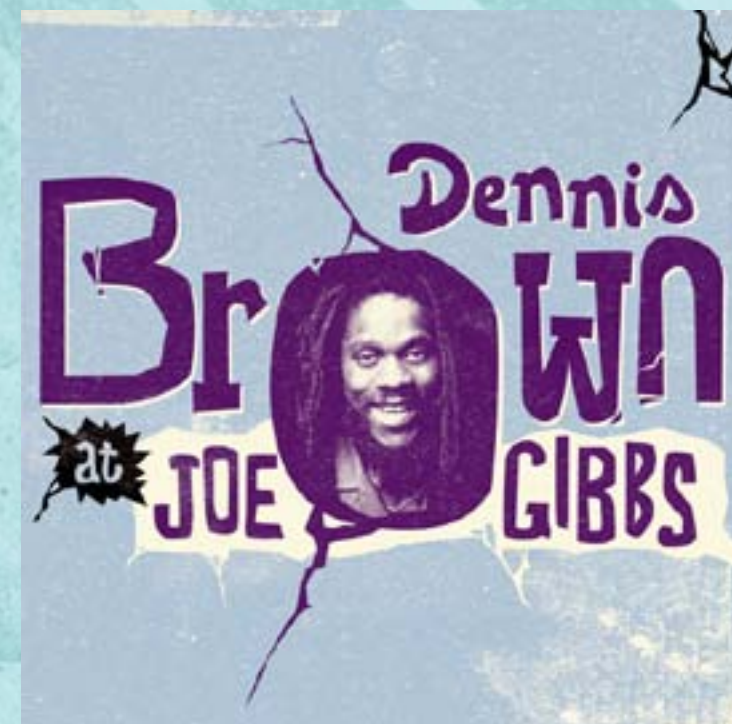
The Backstabber is a heavy Roots set with a bit of an old school edge, yet there is something undeniably modern about it as well. Tapped to voice the riddim is, very quietly, a blistering line up of artists who'll never stab you in the back such as Jah Mason on the riddim's title track with Fyah T, who had a hand in the production of the riddim, Turbulence, Lutan Fyah, President Brown alongside Raymond Wright and the aforementioned Naptali. AND - Listeners can also look for efforts from the incomparable Trini Queen of Reggae, Queen Omega and the fiery Jah Marnyah from out of Montserrat.

That ridiculously impressive group of names is already at play as the Backstabber Riddim via Oneness Records is in stores now.





## More Box Set Gold from VP Records to Start the New Year

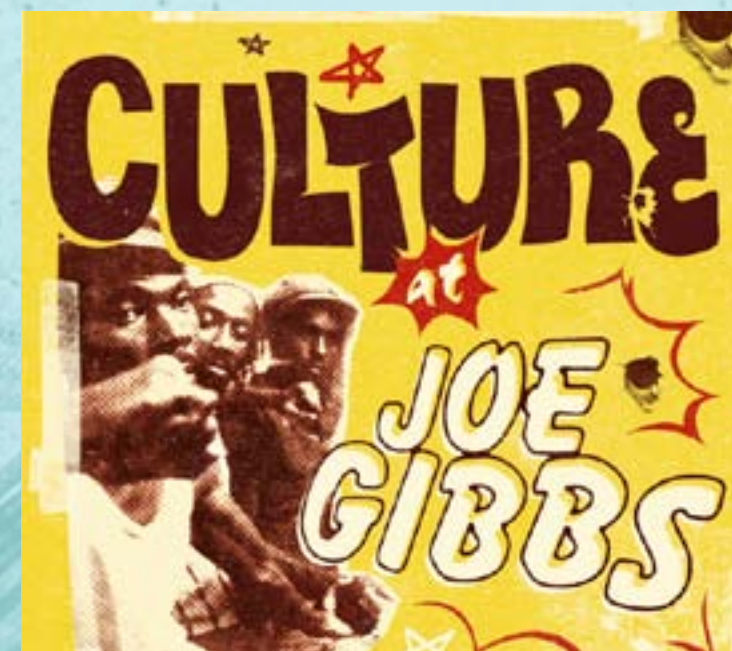


Due for release later this month are two new 4CD box sets from VP Records that will feature the works of Dennis Brown and Culture. The sets are similar to those of the popular Reggae Legend's series, but these will be titled 'At Joe Gibbs'.

The Dennis Brown collection will feature his two iconic albums with the producer, 'Visions Of Dennis Brown' and 'Words Of Wisdom', while discs 3 is made up of the six vocal sides from 'Love's Gotta Hold on Me' plus another thirteen tracks including the hits Let Love In, Created By The father, Open Up, I'm Coming Home Tonight and Historical Places. To complete the set disc 4 is a nineteen track compilation that includes the original 1972 cut of Money In My Pocket, When You Are Down, Smile Like An Angel, Stop The Fussing And Fighting and Get To Love In Time.

The Culture box is set to showcase three of their albums, 1978's 'Bal-

head Bridge', 1981's 'More Culture' plus their legendary debut 'Two Sevens Clash' from 1977. The fourth disc, as with that of Dennis Brown, rounds up the non album Joe Gibbs sides including their debut Belmont single 'This Time', together with eleven dubs the majority of which are appearing on CD for the very first time.



## A Righteous release from Reggae Roast

After their 'Evolution' single with Ghetto Priest in December, London's Reggae Roast collective have stepped up a gear with their new EP 'Righteous'.

The vocal is a heavy steppers track by Evergreen, Landlord and Ruckspin with chanting from Iration Steppas mc Dan-man.

Then come three mixes - a dub version by Manchester's Nucleus Roots, a dub-step mix from Bristol's RSD, and a future-bass cut from Dark Arx.

Get your stepping shoes upon your foot yes yes... Righteous is out on February 7th.



## New Scotch Bonnet Release

Mungo's Hi Fi are to release their remix of Everyman Does His Thing A Little Way Different taken from the album 'Time Will Tell' by Henry and Louis meets Blue and Red (aka RSD). The vocal is by Pacey and is a reworking of the Errol Dunkley original of the same name.

The song came about following a chance encounter with UB40 in Jamaica, who linked up a legendary recording session with top artists like Johnny Clarke, Tony Tuff and Willi Williams.

Mungo's Hi Fi have taken the vocal and crafted a one a way riddim track bringing it bang up to date in the only way they know how by adding a very heavy bass vibe to proceedings that you can feel as well as hear.

The flip side of this 180g heavyweight 12" features a dub work out by Mungo's and it will be available from the 24th of January on Scotch Bonnet records.

Check their website [www.scotchbonnet.net](http://www.scotchbonnet.net) for more details.

## The Throwback Riddim

With 2010 not having been the most active of years for Kemar 'Flava' McGregor and his No Doubt Records imprint, in terms of riddims, apparently they're trying to get 2011 started quite early with their latest release, the much discussed Throwback Riddim. Throwback RiddimFans of the label's work (which should pretty much be everyone at this point) might recognize the riddim as, much like the last release from the label - the Dance Drop Riddim - McGregor once again mines one of the deepest vaults in modern reggae existence for the Throwback Riddim which appeared on Gyptian's debut album from 2006, 'My Name Is Gyptian'.

As usual, No Doubt has assembled a very



impressive roster of artists for this sweet riddim as joining the aforementioned Gyptian are the likes of Honorebel (on the same song actually), Tanya Stephens, Etana [alongside Vybrant], Glen Washington, Nikesha Lindo, Pinchers and even Sanchez.

Like everything else they've ever done ever - The Throwback Riddim from No Doubt Records is currently exclusively available at [FlavaMcGregor.com](http://FlavaMcGregor.com).

## Etana's Free Expressions

Following a delay filled 2010, bonafide Reggae star Etana is FINALLY set to make her return with her much much anticipated sophomore album release, 'Free Expressions' for VP Records. You'll so often hear phrases such as "the most anticipated" or "the long awaited" in reference to specific albums, but this time it's definitely justified as 2010 saw 'Free Expressions' scheduled but delayed several times and with Etana's stardom seemingly peeking, fans worldwide are waiting to get their hands on the new album, particularly following her huge debut from 2008, 'The Strong One'.

'Free Expressions' features big previous singles such as Happy Heart, August Town and Free as well a whole heap of tunes which are set to be future favourites such as War, Retribution and more.

The album also features production from the likes of Kemar 'Flava' McGregor of No Doubt Records and Curtis Lynch Jr. of Necessary Mayhem.

HOPEFULLY nothing changes and fans across the globe can get their hands, physically and digitally, on what is set to be one of the biggest releases of 2011, Etana's 'Free Expressions', on February 8th.

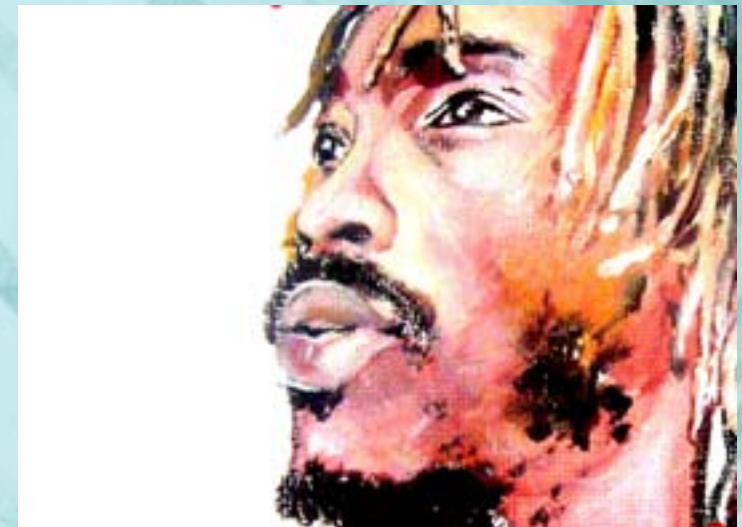


## Hi-Kee's Self Reliance

The very impressive globetrotting Hi-Kee checks in early 2011 with the release of his very first full length album for True Sounds Records, 'Self Reliance'. The album comes after Hi-Kee went on a global tear in 2009 and '10, having recorded for label after label around the world before finally finding a homebase with the wonderful boys and girls at True Sounds from out of the UK. So - Listeners can expect big time evidence of the Manchester native's musical travels on the album.

Where exactly has Hi Kee been??? He's worked with the New Zealand based Reality Chant Productions and throughout Europe as well with the likes of respectable labels such as House of Riddim, Rootdown Records, Bassrunner Productions, The Scrucialists and up and comers Maasto Records from out of Finland (yes, Finland) - All of whom have work which appears on 'Self Reliance' which also features strong combinations with Sophia Squire, Mykal Rose and a single tune, Babylon Your System Collapse, which features Hi Kee alongside both Luciano and the legendary Brigadier Jerry.

Although the buzz surrounding this one may not be too great as of yet, the album is very good and listeners worldwide can get a big digital taste of Hi Kee's debut album, 'Self Reliance' on February 4.



## Copper Cat Killed

Most ridiculously and most fucked up, Demar Graham - The up and coming Jamaican Dancehall DJ known as Copper Cat was recently killed in front of the home of his mentor, the very respected singer Richie Stephens, in Kingston, Jamaica. Copper Cat was reportedly shot for his Blackberry device which he refused to hand over to the potential robbers. Copper Cat had been in the public eye from very young as a disciple of Stephens', performing with and recording for the singer when he was a child and he had tunes such as Tears, Life Goes On and Fren Murderer (for which he shot a video) and Bogus Gallis on Ward 21's Cosa Nostra Riddim in 2010. Graham was just 22 years old.

In honour of his good friend, the sensational Khago, one of Reggae's breakout stars of 2010, has recorded the tune Cop-pa Gone Too Soon.





INTERVIEWS 

**ROMAIN VIRGO**  
**INTERVIEW**

BY ERIK MAGNI



## Romain Virgo wants to please the ladies

Jamaican wunderkind Romain Virgo dropped his self-titled album debut last June to wide acclaim. I got a chat with him a few weeks before the album hit the streets and Romain Virgo talked to him about Jamaica, his influences and what it was like working with legendary producer Donovan Germain.

Romain Virgo was only 17 years old when he in 2007 - as the youngest ever - won the Digicel Rising Stars contest in Jamaica. In 2009 he released an EP on Penthouse Records, a record that showed a great talent. Now he has an album that bears his own name.

I had a chat with him over the phone in late May. The situation in Jamaica was critical at the time and over 60 people had been killed in the state of emergency that prevailed on the island.

- It's tough in Jamaica right now and I try not to go out unless it's necessary, he says and adds that it is not a normal state on the island.

### Working with Donovan Germain

Something much more fun to talk about is his debut album that has taken almost a year to finalize. On the album he had the chance working with legendary producer Donovan Germain.

- It's a real nice feeling to have finalized the album and working with Donovan Germain has been fantastic. He has become something of a father figure to me.

### Ladies in mind

Romain Virgo's lyrics are about personal

experiences and things happening around him. He wants the music to be uplifting and danceable and mentions a particularly important target group.

- The ladies have to appreciate the music. That's really important, he laughs and continues:

- But hopefully the album includes something for everyone.

And he surely seems popular among the ladies. When I caught him live in Stockholm in December the ladies were excited to say the least.

### Focus on his music

He grew up on classic reggae artists and says he has been influenced by singers such as Bob Marley, Dennis Brown, Beres Hammond and Alton Ellis, who he also made a tribute to.

- It was Donovan Germain who suggested a tribute to Alton Ellis after he passed away. I never met Alton Ellis, but he is a real favorite. I already knew the lyrics to Breaking Up and Willow Tree, so it was easy to record Alton's Medley. In addition to recording, Romain Virgo focuses on his full-time studies at the Edna Manley College in Kingston. And it's been a busy time combining recording with studies.

- I have put a lot of time on this album and am glad I have understanding teachers. Probably I will be ready to graduate in about two years and then I can focus solely on my music.

# AFRIKAN SIMBA INTERVIEW

BY ANGUS TAYLOR



**In the summer of 2010 we spoke to the Anglo-Nigerian roots chanter, broadcaster and thinker Afrikan Simba. Born in East London on 11th January 1967, he fell under the influence of sound systems and Rastafari in his teens, first recording for the producer/singer (and now Twinkle Brothers bassist) Dub Judah. He endured the casual racism of the 1980s, and even a spell in prison in the early 2000s, and today is one of the most respected figures on the UK scene. It is impossible to separate a Rasta artist's life and his music, but everything Simba said was so interesting that we thought two shorter interviews, broadly divided into these topics would make more sense. Here is the first, dealing with Simba's upbringing, education and African identity.**

# HIS LIFE



## **Where were you born?**

Everybody asks that question because there are so many conflicting stories. "Me born upon the earth" - that's what I tell people now. Some sites say I was born in Nigeria, some sites say I was born in the UK. I was born in Hackney - now referred to as Crackney. Hackney was a beautiful place. Peaceful, nice, friendly. I was born in Hackney, my parents moved to Islington about age one,

then moved to Leyton when I was about three, stayed in Leyton til about thirteen. But in between three and thirteen we used to go home to Nigeria and come back and at age thirteen I went to live in Nigeria for a long period of time and came back when I was sixteen. When I was sixteen or seventeen I left my parents house and moved back to Hackney.

## **Why do you think you gravitated towards reggae music among all the things you were exposed to?**

Because reggae music was the only music that sang about and glorified Africa. The only music that spoke about our joys, our fears, our hopes, our dreams. It spoke about African life.

## **What were the early influences that took you towards Rastafari?**

The few Rasta brethrens I had around me. I wasn't one of those people who was inspired to be a Rasta by Bob Marley. It was more about a very personal relationship with a few strong young Rasta brethrens and we held communion together for a very long period of time. It was in that state that I grew. I had a set of elders around me as well from EWF and RUZ. The headman at RUZ was Jah Bones and those people grounded us. We were youth and we were seeking but they had more information.

## **What did you learn?**

I learned from them that repatriation is a must. That all the things that we are against in the West, all the things we don't like, and all the things we dream about building and developing for ourselves - mean we need to be in Africa. There are many things in the West that are nice and are good but at the time - in the 80s - there were skinheads having a clash between the National Front and

and the Anti Nazi League. White people were involved as well in fighting racism - most of the Anti Nazi League were white people - but there was this pressure, racial tension, everywhere you'd go. You couldn't even walk down the street and feel happy because if you saw a police van it was just like in the movie Babylon - when Brinsley sees the reflection in the shop window - the next thing is to run because if you don't you'd get fitted up with something anyway. Things may have got better on a social level but we see how the economy of the nation is not just cramping African people, it's cramping anybody and if you're not in the big league then you're going to feel it. So the things that we dream about, the way we want to grow, Africa is the best place for us. That was the main thing they taught me - Repatriation. They also put the relationship between His Imperial Majesty and us, as an African people, into context for me, as well as his relationship with the world, and who His Imperial Majesty really is.

## **What was your first experience of racism in the UK?**

It's hard to tell because you are young you don't even know what it is. So when you're being called a gollywog by adults and you're only a kid, even they know that you don't understand. They're just having some game, "Oh look at that little gollywog" or a man just comes up and pats you on the head and says, "You alright, Sambo?" or even just being very [patronising towards you - but you don't know it's racism at the time. But the first I realized I was being treated in a racist manner was in a cookery class in secondary school and after the class dispersed the teacher called be back and told me to look in the bin and said, "What do those remind you of?" and I didn't see anything of significance apart from some burnt cakes. Then she said,



"Don't you think they remind us of you?" and she laughed! That was when it hit me.

## **Would you say the UK is less racist now than back then?**

I can't really tell. I know there's much more of a mixture because music can be used as a very strong unifying force. Everybody loves music, and the more you get into a music, the more you want to know the roots of it. So Teddy Boys who were into Rock'N'Roll, found out it comes mostly from black people like Chuck Berry, Little Richard and all them man there rather than Elvis, who benefited from it. Elvis is like your Gentleman nowadays.

## **Or Eminem.**

Yeah! But we don't care about that because everybody should be allowed to feel and enjoy music no matter where it comes from. If I want to play English country dancing music nobody should be able to say, "You shouldn't do that because you're a black man". And I shouldn't say to a white man "You can't play reggae because you're white". I might say, "You Cy-aan play reggae cos you got the beat wrong!" But if he's playing it right then bully for him.

## **It took a long time for lots of people to start playing it right.**

But they're doing it now, and it's hard to tell the difference sometimes with the production - they got it.



So it's unifying us amongst the youth. When I was young black people went to black parties and white people went to white parties. Black people were dealing with reggae and soul and white people were dealing with pop. The thing that merged the two together was Drum 'n' Bass or Jungle and Hip Hop – all these underground musics that were using elements of rock and reggae. I think that's helped to break down a lot of barriers. But racism is sadly still there and it may not go away. It's hard to change people's perceptions. I pray for its death. I live for the day when I can say I've lived in England for a number of years and I haven't felt any racism.

**Why did you leave the UK for Nigeria in your teens?**

Because of the racism I was experiencing – especially that episode in school – I started to become very rebellious. It had a very negative effect on me to the point where I was becoming a racist. "I don't like white people" and so on. But the white man who didn't like me, didn't like me for no reason whereas I didn't like white people because I was being persecuted by them. I was a kid. This is what I can't understand about racism. Down to the little baby they will show you racism – what for??? I was becoming very rebellious but a rebel without a cause. There's nothing wrong with being a rebel but have a cause. When my parents noticed my attitude and behaviour was changing they decided to ship me out to save my soul.

**How did being in Africa contribute to your education?**

It contributed immensely. Living in the West everything that was primary had a white face and everything secondary had a black face. You'd find a black man driving the bus but you wouldn't find a black in management in London Transport.

When I went to Nigeria I saw African road sweepers and African judges. African bank managers, heads of media corporations – you name it. We were doing the things the top man in Britain was doing and it showed me that not only were we being undermined and used to do lower class work in the West, but also our potential – what we could do if given the liberty, freedom and space to do it.

**How did you come back to the UK?**

I was still a child and under the control of my parents. I had a choice I could have just visited and gone back but those three years I missed my parents and siblings. Although I had family in Africa that I loved and enjoyed living with I decided to stay. But I always go home regularly. I don't lose touch. I left for Nigeria when I was thirteen, spent three years in Nigeria, and then, when I was sixteen, came back and started to move with the same brethrens and we started to develop a sound system called Zulu Priest. That was the first Rasta sound system I got involved in, and I got introduced to Dub Judah and started recording.

**Your career was interrupted at the beginning of this century by being arrested. What happened?**

I went to Jamaica in the year 2000 to promote my new album which had been released on vinyl and on the way back – and it sounds ridiculous when you say to people "Bwoy! They found weed in my case!" – but it was found by customs in the UK and I really didn't know anything about it! I don't know whether I'm a mug or what but that was the reality! I've now got to the bottom of that. I know how the weed ended up in my case and I now know the intentions of certain people at the time. But I went to jail and did my time and got it out of the way. They gave me eighteen months and you're supposed to do

half your time so call it about nine months. I did seven inside and two with a tag because I wanted to start University. I could go out but I had to be home by seven or the tag would go off and anywhere they are they come and find you!

**Had you already decided to study before the trip to Jamaica?**

The opportunity came for me while I was in jail. I applied and got a good reference from the education officer while I was there because I was doing some little courses there. I studied Content Creation for Broadcasting and New Media. Basically it was about the principles of Television and professional programme-making for broadcast but I did do a bit of radio as well and since leaving Uni I've worked mainly in radio.

How did it feel to finally reach that tertiary stage of education for which your teachers at school saw your potential? University was a weird place because the biggest thing for me was the community. Because of the effects of racism and because of me being a Rasta from an early age when no one had interest in Rastas unless you were Bob Marley. Now there's a lot of interest in Rasta and having dreadlocks but when I was young most black people didn't want their kids to be Rastas - let alone white people. I remember going to a girlfriend's door and hearing her dad shout "I hope it's not that dutty dreadlocks bwoy at the gate!" so being a Rasta you faced oppression from the racist white man and your own. Especially if you were seen as someone with a brain and talent – "Why are you going to waste your life being a Rasta? You know you ain't going to get a job with them dreadlocks!"





# HIS MUSIC



## What were your first experiences of music?

Music in general? My dad was a great collector of music and I used to like involving myself in school plays and things like that. But it wasn't really until I was about twelve that I was introduced to sound system but some brothers who were about my age or a little bit older who used to live in my area - some of them on the same street as me. We had a sound called Exodus and I was the mic man from age twelve. In school when we had music classes. I learned to play the recorder, the violin and the drums - kit drums. But I didn't really concentrate on that once I became a vocalist! (laughs) Sometimes I regret it. I wish that I could play an instrument but it's all gone now!

## Why did you choose to become a deejay? Did you ever consider being a singer?

When I was young the first profession I wanted to take up was a bank manager because I wanted my parents to be rich. I thought the bank manager just collected all the money. I didn't realize the bank manager doesn't keep it! (laughs) Then when I realized I said I wanted to be an engineer. Music pulled me away from everything I wanted to do. I didn't choose music. I didn't wake up one day and say I wanted to be a musician. And when I started to deejay I didn't say to myself that I wanted to be famous and make a name and have records out. I was a Rasta youth, I had a message and I en

Dimbleby has been going around all these African towns. Why didn't he do that before the World Cup? Joanna Lumley followed the Nile because of the World Cup. Everyone is focussed on Africa. But Joanna's a lovely lady. I like the way she stuck up for the Ghurkas. Make sure you put that bit in there! (laughs)

## So, based on how you've pushed ahead with your music, your life in Britain, your education and your media career despite having to take time out, would you say you're someone who finishes what they start?

I try to be, especially if it's something that's important to me. Right now it's important to me that Africans have a voice, especially with all the negative media coverage. The media is a propaganda machine and there's nothing wrong with propaganda per se. Propaganda is just what you propagate. But if your propaganda is negative all the time towards a set of people then those people need to rise up and have their own propaganda machine.

## Do you have a final message?

Peace love and unity. But remember that peace, love and unity are children and their parents are equality and justice. There can be no lasting peace love and unity if I've got your things and won't give them back or you've got my things and won't give them back. So let's have equality and justice so we can have a long lasting peace love and unity. Don't allow those who have an ulterior motive to divide and rule us. Let's stay together and be friends.

**Here is the second part, dealing with Simba's musical influences, work in African radio, and increasingly diverse collaborations with producers around the world...**

of Western culture was still very dominant there. Things were a couple of paces slower in Ethiopia so you have more time to think and to feel your heartbeat. Sometimes when we're just moving we know our heart is beating but we're not checking it. When you're in Ethiopia you can really feel it! (laughs)

## This may be a silly question given all you've said but is Africa more your home than anywhere else?

Yes. Africa awaits its creators. Everywhere else has been created with the aid of the African. But Africans have been exploited and fooled. Africans in the West have a very big part to play in Africa because we have lived in the West and we know it inside out. We know when the West is being honest and we know when the West is telling lies. It's much easier for Westerners to fool an African in Africa. It's not so easy to fool I and I. They say, "I can't fool that man he knows all my tricks!" (laughs) Therefore we have a lot to show our brothers and sisters in Africa in order to stop them from allowing themselves to be exploited so much.

## What do you think of British media coverage of Africa?

I have a question for you - how often have you heard something good about Africa in Western Media?

(Laughs)

Well you've answered your own question!

## David Attenborough on the BBC shows the wonders of African wildlife I suppose.

Yes, and it's also all around the World Cup isn't it?

So because I'd been mostly amongst black people (because of racism) and mostly amongst Rastas (because of this anti-Rasta thing) when I went to university I knew people of other races but I didn't sit down with them. And in University you do group projects so you are forced to work together whether you are a Rasta or whether you are gay. And that's an unusual mix but you could end up on the same project and you couldn't refuse to work with someone because they are black or gay. When you're forced into situations you learn so much more about people. That was the biggest learning curve for me - the community of people that make up a University. People come from all parts of the world to learn, and apart from learning they go and drink together - especially in broadcasting when it's "a wrap"! I liked what I learned but there was so much more I learned beyond my course. I really value getting the opportunity to go to University and experience that. People have always said I'm a great communicator but it's made it easier for me to communicate with different people and get on with them.

## When did you first travel to Ethiopia and how did you feel when you arrived?

I first went there when I finished university in 2004. I'd just dropped my pen and decided to go home to Nigeria but I thought, "I've always wanted to go to Ethiopia" and discovered I could go to Nigeria via Ethiopian Airways which was stopping in Addis Ababa and then continue my journey home. Again that was very important and very special for me and I'm glad I made the move. I remember feeling... peace - because Nigeria is very populated and our cities are swarming with more people than London. Lagos is crazy! So I'd been to Africa and felt African but it was still very fast and Nigerians are very into commerce and business so that aspect



and I enjoyed going on the mic and chanting. I didn't know it was going to lead to big things.

### **Who were your favourite deejays when you started?**

Jah Thomas, Ranking Dread, Trinity, U Roy, I Roy. Ranking Dread was my number one. For my generation the U Roys and the I Roys were very distant from me because they were in Jamaica. Ranking Dread had travelled from Jamaica to England and he was busting up the place! I liked his style so I adopted it.

### **How did you feel about what happened to him later?**

When I first loved Ranking Dread I didn't know he was involved with certain negative elements. It was sad to know that about a man who could chat such positive messages – because if you listen to his word sound it doesn't fit the negative stories that you hear about him. I don't know how he got mixed up in it. I just know that this world is a wicked world and people can be used, abused and dragged into things that even they don't want to be involved in. I think everybody has bitten the bait and been tempted to do one thing or another that they shouldn't do. But some people don't learn from it and some people strengthen their will power and discipline. It's all about choices.

### **How did you meet Dub Judah?**

My sound Zulu Priest [mentioned in part one] was originally about five and in the end it whittled down to three – myself, a brother called Daniel Anthony Brooks, who we later called Zulu because he was the controller of the sound, the operator, and a brother called Shadrach Levi. Shad was the scout who used to scout for music for us because every sound had to have their exclusive music. He found Dub Judah, introduced him to us, and along the line Judah heard me and told me that my



of voice wasn't just for sound systems. It was the type of voice that was commercially appealing and could be used even outside reggae music. But I've never really thought about success. It's like when you're walking somewhere, you aren't just thinking of your destination – you're looking at the trees and the shops and then you get there!

### **How important was your first trip to Jamaica as a reggae artist?**

Immensely important again. The main vehicle for the message has been reggae music and today the music is coming from all corners of the world. But until the mid 80s all the messages of the Rasta man had come from Jamaica.

So the journey felt special because I was going to the source where all the reggae greats come from. Also I'd only experienced Africans from the Diaspora in Europe. This [Jamaica] was not their native home either. When I went to Jamaica I realized the average Jamaican there is very different to the average Jamaican in Britain in their concepts, their ideology, their behaviour.

Africans who come from Jamaica to Britain, just as their behaviour changed over the years when they left Africa, also changed when they went from Jamaica to Britain. When I went to Jamaica I found them to be more African.

### **Tell me about your work for Voice Of Africa Radio, where you present a weekly show?**

Voice Of Africa started about ten years ago – this year we celebrated our tenth anniversary – but we've only been on the FM dial as a legal station for about three years. We operated as pirates for about four or five years, and then we applied to become a legal station and Ofcom said "We don't talk to pirates. Come off air then apply". We had a six year campaign – it wasn't something that happened over night. Before Voice Of Africa I was on Genesis Radio where I was one of the first [African] people on the FM dial. You must remember that before Pirate we didn't have any media as African people. We had David Rodigan playing an hour or two of reggae and Tony Williams, but I can't remember anybody apart from maybe John Peel playing something by Fela Kuti.

So when I first started with Genesis I wasn't playing reggae – I had a show called Tour Of The Motherland playing Highlife, Chimurenga, Makossa, and these different African beats. So when Voice Of Africa Radio came along it was focussing mainly on Africans from the continent whereas – let's face it – Genesis and all these pirates have never claimed to be African stations. They've always claimed to be black, and in their blackness they never looked at Africa – which is the blackest part of the world! They played reggae, they played soca, but they never played Highlife, Juju, Chimurenga. So Voice Of Africa gave Africans from Africa a change to have a voice and play some music. So I joined them because it was something different that I wanted to help develop. I stopped when they were campaigning and I went to Uni but as soon as they got their licence and I got my degree the same year

– I tried to get into the BBC and all the big media houses – Voice Of Africa took me back gladly. I started as a presenter and then worked my way to managing the station for about two years. But then I decided I loved my life in music more.

### **You've recorded for UK producers and labels like Dub Judah, Channel One and Sirius Records, but you've also recorded for more unusual labels like Jah Warrior, Urban Sedated and you've played a wide range of music on your show. Do you think reggae – and music in general – should experiment and diversify?**

Yes. It's good to use different elements. The first experimental reggae – and it doesn't sound experimental now – was Sly & Robbie. When Black Uhuru first started their reggae had a different sound! And Michael Rose was dressing up in leather suits with this rock kind of image – leather pants and all that! (laughs)

But it was fun and new and exciting because reggae had this new sound. Sly & Robbie had discovered the Syn-Drum which had these space-age sounds. And with my music, I work more producers outside of the UK these days.

I'm working a lot with Professor Skank in Greece. I'm working with Cultural Warriors in Switzerland, Lone Ark in Spain. All these people are playing reggae but when you come into something, apart from all the external factors that are there, you're going to be bringing something from yourself. So the Swiss man may want to play authentic reggae but there's also going to be something from him. So that makes my music more diverse and, somehow, more organic.





## **You played at Glastonbury 2010. How was that?**

It was nice. It was very tiring – not because of the performance but because of the amount of space you have to cover on your two feet! Just the walk from the car park to the venue was about an hour – and I had cases of records and cds. But as soon as we came off stage I sold nine copies of my album and a few singles immediately after my show without having to walk about. Which means nine people who saw my show immediately wanted to take Afrikan Simba home with them, and I felt good about that.

## **What album are you currently working on?**

I'm working on an album with Sirius Records called Born Ethiopian and one for different production houses called What Is Rasta? That tune with Skank seems to be doing big things .

## **Tell me about the concept behind What Is Rasta?**

The concept of What Is Rasta? I mentioned earlier [in part one] a man called Jah Bones. He passed away a good ten years ago or more but he left a very strong mark on my psyche. All the Rasta Elders I had met before Jah Bones were very against Babylon System and so was he. But most of them were like, "Bun book", "Bun school", "Bun education - Whiteman education", "Bun Babylon book". If it was down to them we wouldn't even look at a computer because "We bun computer"! (laughs) Jah Bones was the first Rastaman I knew that had been to university. He had a Bsc Honours in Sociology and had written a book called Rastafari: History, Doctrine and Livity. What Bones tried to show us was that Africa gave the world numeracy, the alphabet, words, letters, language, architecture, music. All these

things were born in Africa so whatever they're teaching in school anywhere else in the world started in Africa. All their teaching is your thing – it's not Babylon thing.

My favourite thing when I'm on stage in Greece is, when I've done a couple of songs, to have a pause and say, "Welcome Greece – How you feeling?" and everyone cheers. Then I'll say to them, "I'm very happy to continue that great relationship between Greece and Africa. Are you aware of the relationship between Greece and Africa?" and they say, "No?" (laughs)

Then I'll say, "Sadly in other parts of Europe the relationship has been marred by slavery but we look at Greek history we see that the Greeks went to Ethiopia and learned."

Because the Greek Gods came from Egyptian Gods right? But a lot of people are looking at me strangely by this point and thinking, "What's he talking about? What did we learn from Africans?" so I say, "Have you heard of Pythagoras?" and some smart-arse in the crowd corrects my English pronunciation! So I say, "I have heard that Pythagoras is the father of mathematics. Is this true?" and they say "Yes! Yes! Greek man is father of mathematics!" (laughs)

But then I say, "Answer me this then? Which is older? Pythagoras or the Pyramids? Because the Pyramids are built on the theory of the 3,4,5 triangle. The square of the Hypotenuse equals the sum of the two squares of the other two sides. This is what they call Pythagoras theory. So, now we can see that Pythagoras learned mathematics from Africa – and this is the great relationship I am here to continue!" (laughs)







# MANJUL INTERVIEW

BY VALENTIN ZILL

**Roots Dub founder Manjul is sitting on the couch in his Humble Ark studio in Bamako, Mali. He smiles relaxed. Dawn has set in, his working day is over. Although the Rasta had fasted the whole sabbat, he takes the time to answer my questions at length. We talk about his successful repatriation, his work as musician, arranger and producer and his collaboration with artists like Sugar Minott and Amadou & Mariam.**

**Ras Manjul, when did you start to do Reggae music?**

I grew up in the seventies in Paris, and Reggae music was played everywhere in my district. I met a Rasta bredda when I was 13 years old. He had a studio at home. He showed me the way.

**To which places did the road of life take you?**

I moved from the 18th district of Paris to Mayotte. Africa was calling me from very long time, but I was not able, not ready to go there, so I decided to go to Mayotte first, which is close to La Reunion. I had family in La Reunion. And Mayotte is closer to African culture than Reunion. So it was a nice place for my Queen and me to discover ourselves and get closer to Africa. After three or four years there, music was calling me. I realized that Reggae music was my mission. In Mayotte, we were in the bush, very far from town, and it was hard to fulfill this mission. So I decided to move to La Reunion, where I was still in the bush, but we had electricity. I build my first little studio and started to work with many breddren there. After a few years of work, one of my Dub albums worked nice and opened the doors to Europe, so I went back there for six months to

to promote this album, Indian Ocean in Dub. I worked in many studios and met different artists. I went to London to work for Jamaican artists and producers. Jah made me meet Sugar Minott, I worked with him on his album Leave Outta Babylon and toured with him. That was a very nice experience. It showed me that I was able to lead an artist and show him how to sing and how to write songs. Then my wife and I decided to make our dream of repatriating to Africa a reality. We went to Mali and stayed there. We planted the seeds in solid foundation. I don't want to move to any other place, c'est definitive, although only Jah knows. It's a good place for my children to grow up, you know, it's social living.

**Does your life here live up to the expectations you had prior to your repatriation?**

It's better than that. I never really planned it. I was searching myself, too. I feel more in the hands of Jah in Africa, even though some things are harder, but I know there is a reason for everything. All my dreams are reality now.

**You never think about returning to Europe?**

Not really. I've spent as much time outside of Europe as in Europe. I'm not a man who says "I like this place, I hate that place". I love the earth, cause Jah created the earth! My family and my music brought me to where I am now. My raison d'être is to be there and do what I do. So I continue that, it's my satisfaction. No matter where I am, I don't want to be anywhere else.

**What advice can you give to Rastas in the Caribbean who want to follow your example?**



If somebody really feels it, he will know how to make it a reality. You have to be ready to do it. When you think it's hard, it's gonna be easy. When you think it's easy, it's gonna be hard. There are many parameters. But of course it's really important for Rasta people to look to Africa. They need to come to Africa, work there and bring their power. Africa is Ithiopia. Those who repatriate benefit from it.

**Have you had some formal education in music or sound engineering?**

No. I learned it all with my eyes and my ears. That's the best way to do it. But you need to know what you like and what you don't like. Otherwise, even if you can play everything, you'll be handicapped.



**How is your studio set up?**

The most important thing for me in the studio is the board, an Amek Big by Nieve and Longley. I work with analog hardware, I just removed the old 24-tracks because it was too expensive to maintain. I exchanged it with a PC four years ago. It has fast processors and good sound cards. The board is an analog one. I mostly work with equipment from the seventies and eighties. I was born with that, I won't give it up. I'm keeping up the flag!

**What are the principal differences between your studio and others in West Africa?**

My studio is set up for live music. Drums and bass are especially important for me. It's perfectly suited for seventies live music, for Reggae, Soul and traditional music. The other studios here work more with digital technology, they care about the software, but they have no boards, no periphery. There are different tools for different music. My studio is a Reggae studio, perfect for recording the music I love and listen to.

**Do you prefer touring or working in your studio?**

I prefer working in the studio, cause I'm in my yard with my family. But it's important to tour and I love it, too, the vibes are nice. And I profit from my experiences on tour when I'm back in studio, cause I know better what works for the people. It's like mixing medicines. If that is done in a laboratory only, you don't know the medicine's real effects on humans. You have to go out and test it, feel the effects and fine-tune it. It a science. Medicine and music is mystic. You have to feel and see the effects of your music.

**Tell us about your label, Humble Ark.**

It exists thanks to the success of Dub to Mali Vol. I – Faso Kanu, the album I recorded with people like Tiken Jah Fakoly and Amadou & Mariam. I took the name from my studio, it's a tribute to Lee Perry. His music made me feel the power of the arc of the covenant. It let me feel my place as a Reggae musician and Dub master. The revenues of Dub to Mali gave me the opportunity to give breddren around me the chance to sing and present their work

in Europe. This album really opened a lot of doors. Me is a family man. If someone brings food, I say don't bring food just for me. If you bring food for my whole family, I will take it, if you can't don't bring it just for me. Before I founded my own label, I worked for a lot of singers and producers, but I was not the executive producer, just artistically. I started to produce executively artists like Takana Zion, Bishop, Natty Jean from Senegal and DJ Lion from Sierra Leone. Jah brought different bred-dren to my place, I really want to open doors for others with my works.

**You're the creator of a style called Roots Dub.**

I'd describe it first as Rasta music. It can be Nyahbingi, Ska, or more like Rock. It always iron, wood and water things. I haffi feel the elements in music. I can record traditional music, too. Like that of Mali's mystical hunters. But it's always something we can call Rasta music. To be more precise, I do Roots Reggae, but in all kinds of patterns – Rockers, One Drop... We don't do Steppers, it's too urban, we don't touch that very often.

**What about Reggae music in Mali?**

Reggae music is here in Mali from the beginning, it's there in the traditional music. It was marginal for the people before it was linked to Rasta, to consciousness. But more and more, like in a lot of countries, there's less confusion now. People really appreciate it now, they see the differences between artists and styles. They feel concerned, cause Reggae music is music for Africa and African music. I never saw a country where they respect Rasta people so much as in Mali. Even police, even military! So Reggae music is there, inside everyone. We just have to cultivate it. West Africa is all about Roots Reggae, only in the nightclubs



they play Dancehall.

**Has the Reggae scene in West Africa grown in the last years?**

Yeah, there’s been a real explosion. There are more and more artists. And everybody is coming here now. I feel it, everybody feels it. It will be really massive soon.

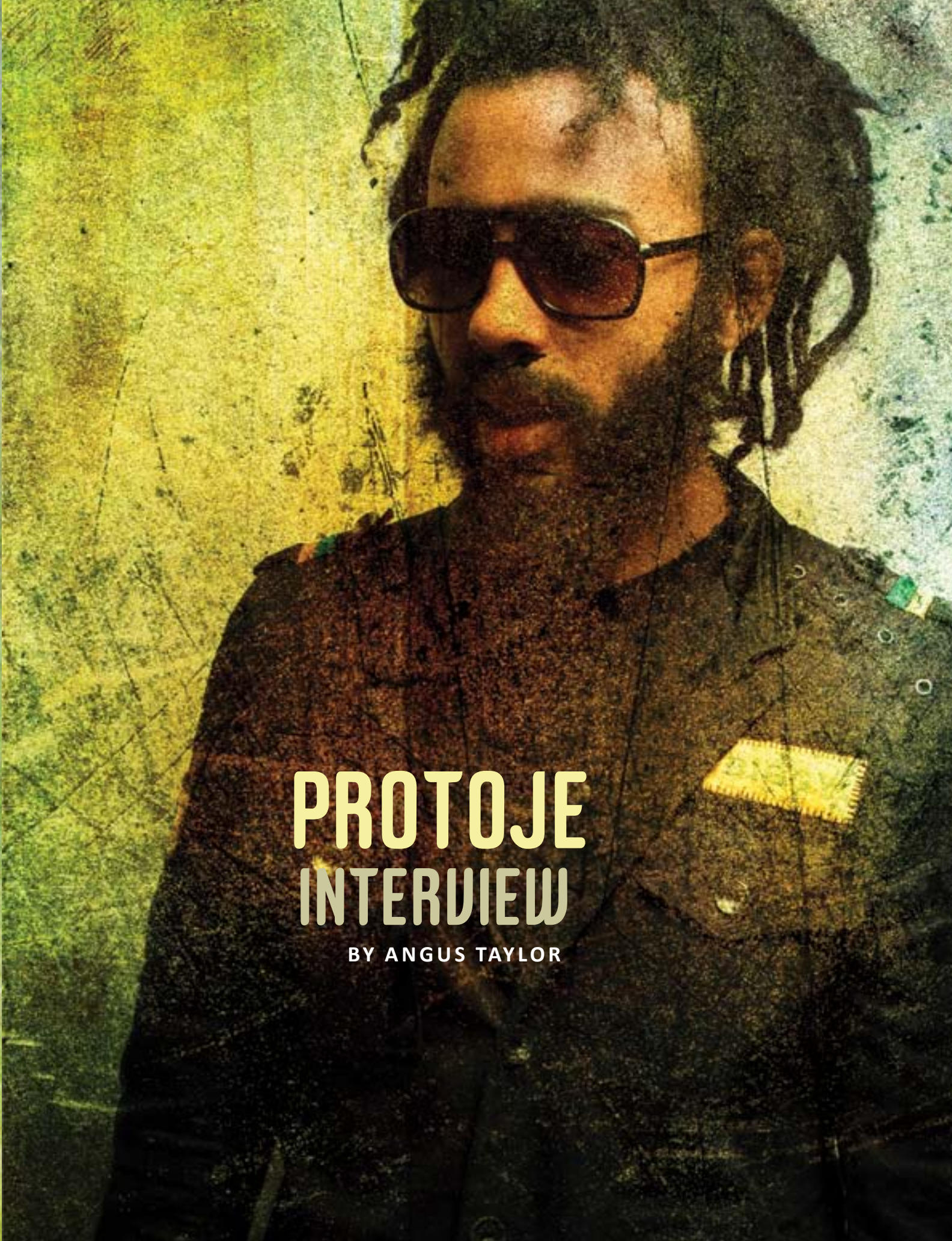
**You won a gold CD for Amadou & Mariam’s album Dimanche a Bam-ako.**

Exactly. Jah runs things mystically... I met their son, who does Rock music. Amadou & Mariam where looking for a studio to record the African parts of Dimanche à Bamako.

My studio was little at that time, but Amadou called me one day and asked about it. They sent someone to take a look at it and we agreed on working together. So we did the African parts here with them and Manu Chao. It was nice!

**On which projects are you working at the moment?**

I’m focusing on the third volume of Dub to Mali. The first and the second volume allowed me to present myself, Takana Zion, Bishop, Adama Yalomba and Assetou Kanuté. Now we work hard on the third volume to come back with a fresh sound to present new artists like Bishop, DJ Lion, Takana Zion and Natty Jean. We’re still in studio to finish things. Time will tell.



**PROTOJE  
INTERVIEW**

BY ANGUS TAYLOR



**Protoje Diggy was born Oje Ken Ollivierre, St Elizabeth Jamaica, the son of the singer (and now lawyer) Lorna Bennett. After attending the St Elizabeth boarding school Munro College, he considered going to law school like his mother, before deciding full time music was his thing. Seven years later he has dropped his first album, The 7 Year Itch, produced by his cousin Donovan 'Vendetta' Bennett of Don Corleon Records. The disc contains five previously released singles including Arguments (produced by DJ Karim), Dread, and JA but also a raft of equally rewarding new material in the lush and sweet Don Corleon style. Angus Taylor had the privilege of conducting Protoje's first interview with the foreign press about his album, his upbringing and whether he could be a future deejay megastar. At the time he was voicing his cut of Corleon's new rhythm The Message out soon...**

**First of all, how does it feel after seven years to get your album out to the people?**

I just feel very humbled and I have to give thanks for it because it was a long time working on it as you say. Just to see it happening now makes me feel good that I stuck to my music and didn't give up on that goal.

**Tell me about the process of making the album. How closely did you work with Don Corleon?**

It took seven months to record fully. We would work for about a month and then I'd go off in the country and so some more writing. That's how I work. Then I would come back and say, "I have this song" and we'd go do it.

But on a day of recording I would wake up early and get to the studio about ten in the morning. Don is a master chef so he would have food cooking and make sure everybody is fed. Then we'd have a vibes and kind of mellow out, and sometimes I wouldn't start recording until late in the evening when the tone and the mood is set. He recorded twelve of the thirteen songs on the record at his studio so we worked very closely. He is a real perfectionist so I learned an immense amount of things doing this album man! His work ethic is such that even at two or three in the morning when I am tired he would be mixing – because he engineered the album also.

**You released a lot of the album as singles and an EP - how confident are you in the lesser known tracks?**

The special ones to me weren't released as singles. Firstly because they came later in the process but also because the strength of them meant I wanted people to come and listen to the album and be like, "Wow!" Four of my five favourites are still there. I feel pretty confident in the strength of the album because this wasn't a collection of singles – we made an album and managed to craft it in a particular way from start to finish. What the rest of the tracks are going to do is put those five singles into perspective.

**It's a very live sounding album (as you've mentioned in previous interviews) - how much of it was built and how much played live?**

All of it is live in some way. Some of the tracks were played with a full live band whereas others would have drum programming and then some live bass and guitar, keyboards and sometimes even live drums over that too. Danny Bassie pretty much played guitar and bass on all the tracks and he was the one who would come into the studio with Don and I and give us his creative ear. So he was a big part of me growing in confidence while doing this album.

**How did you and the band come up with the crazy dub jam breakdown on Wrong Side Of The Law?**

When we me and my band Indignation perform Wrong Side Of The Law on stage, we always do this thing where I say, "Dub style! Dub style!" and they go off for a minute or two and rock out. So when I went to do the track with Don I said I just loved the whole "dub style!" thing. We were down in Tuff Gong recording with some real legendary musicians – Danny Bassie, Kirk Bennett and Bowie on keys – all veterans with me the young youth there. And I just said it, "Dub style! Dub style!" and believe me, it was all them – they just went off into a whole musical breakdown. My lead guitarist in my band Jason Wharton is the one playing all that crunchy guitar siren sound. That's one of my favourite things on the record because I've always wanted to do that.

**Your mother is the famous singer Lorna Bennett and your father is track coach**

**and musician Michael Ollivierre. Tell me about your memories of growing up with their music in your life.**

I don't have a lot of recollection of my mother's music from being small. But she would do shows and I would go to them and see her perform. My dad was also a performer and they would have shows together. My dad is from St Vincent and he was a Calypso King down there one year. His influence on me was that calypso is different from soca because it's very story oriented. So when he would sing songs to us it would be a story that has a twist. So I kind of incorporated that story telling into my writing. But music in general was always a part of my household, whatever type of music, they would always be listening.

**What was the first song that inspired you?**

That would be learning that Slick Rick song Children's Story. One of my dad's athletes, an older guy used to listen to it, and that was the first with music I was like, "Yow!" I was seven or eight and I just started to learn that song. It was the first song I ever knew and I used to rap it all the time. From then I just fell in love with music.

**Your mother became a lawyer as well as a singer. Would you consider having a profession to fall back on?**

It's not for me. I started to do my pre-law to get into law school and I stopped. I just couldn't wait any longer. I just wanted to do straight music. I don't even think about having something to fall back on. This is what I'm doing. It's like, when do you stop a baby from trying to walk? He is going to walk when





he walks.

### **Were your parents ok with that?**

My parents are very supportive of what I'm doing. Naturally they wanted me to finish school but I just told them my spirit couldn't resist it any longer. My mother gave up music for school so I know a part of her can sympathize with what was going on. I guess she just let me take the opposite route. She gave up music for school, so I gave up school for music. So it balanced again!

### **You talk about the pressures of having Don Corleon for a cousin on the title track of 7 Year itch. Have you had criticism from people about this?**

I wrote that song a couple of years back when I was at a point where I been doing this for so long with nothing really happening. Me and Don are family but we didn't really start working together until last year. Naturally a lot of people were wondering why both of us don't work before. It was a mystery to them – especially when Arguments came out. A lot of people still think he produced that song. But he thought I needed time to develop and he was right. I wanted to just go but it was the best thing that ever happened to me because I got a chance to develop my craft. We were always cool in the time we weren't working. I was just doing my thing. So when the time came to do that track I said, "What's the word cousin? You help your cousin. So every word that they hurt me with worth something" meaning, "Now I have the chance so let's go!" I wanted to kick off the album with a very honest description of my situation and that song is my favourite.

### **You really blew up with Arguments pro-**

### **duced by DJ Karim - which talks about various girl troubles. How accurate a picture of your life was that song at the time?**

Very accurate. I am really a soul writer. I write to express. But I write my music over any period of time it takes. The first verse is where I just got out of a relationship and I'm wondering what to do, then the second verse is me going into my new relationship and someone telling me to slow down and just focus on them. Now when I hear that song I would be more mature about it because I wrote that song four years ago in 2006. I'm past that stage.

### **Is there a lady in your life right now?**

Right now the focus is music. 2011 belongs to the music: fully focussed on the getting the music out there and getting some travelling done. That's where the focus wants to be even though at some times you'll want for that aspect. Right now it's music, travelling new places, seeing new faces.

### **As well as girls and ganja lyrics there are some more serious songs. Tell me about the meaning of Dread?**

Dread is really about wanting to do music. It's not really about hair or anything like that. That song's background is me being eleven or twelve years old and wanting to do music. It's about being submerged in the Jamaican culture of the time with everybody wearing those shoes and Buju Banton deejaying and locking the place like that. So Dread is to show the transition from being young, wanting to do music to being in the music. It flashes from '92 to 2010.



**JA talks about the dangers of Jamaica but how you won't leave. A lot of foreign people hear mixed messages about Jamaica. Why is Jamaica such a great place?**

People have endured so much in Jamaica. Nevertheless, it's one of the most positive places. The creation, the art, the music – just the positive energy that has been created from this place. (pauses) I can't even speak and not get emotional about it. People suffer but they always find a way – and out of the hardships Jamaica endures. We always bring something positive out of it – always. You have to live here to know. Even though we have so much stacked against us people still say, "We Yard". These sentiments I'm singing are what people say all the time. Jamaica is an inspiration – believe me.

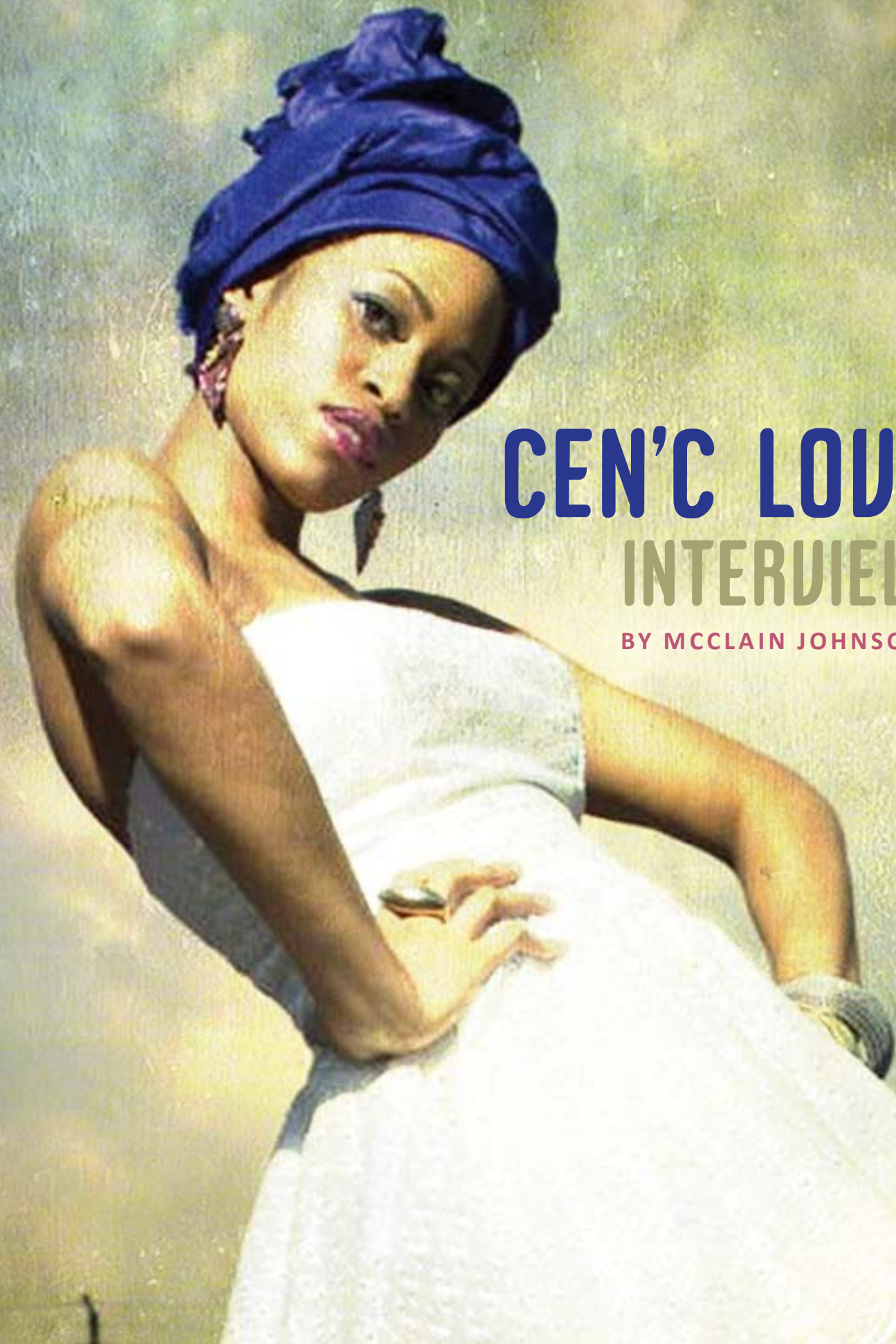


**You talk in your lyrics about admiring the Marleys when coming up. How did it feel to work with Ky-mani on Rasta Love?**

You're not missing any of the lyrics seen? (laughs) It was an honour. I was so excited when I heard we were going to do a track. Hearing Welcome To Jamrock was another turning point. It was an inspiring record. The music being made has been inspiring to a lot of artists out here. So working with Ky-mani was a blessing. He did a good job. I met him and we reasoned on the music. He's working on some new music [with Don Corleon] too so look out for his stuff coming out. We really hope people will get to hear this single. We're doing the video for it tomorrow.

**Will you keep working with Don Corleon or do you have your eye on other producers?**

Don and I formed a sound together in 2000 so we'll be doing music for a very long time. I'm open to working with other producers but we have a good vibe going right now. But we always welcome new music because new music to write means more music for people. I want to do a good amount of music and focus on putting my band together so me and my band can create music also. I really just try to get through each day, day by day. I don't want to think too far ahead and get overwhelmed. I'm going on my first small tour in Europe with four or five countries and nine dates. These are new experiences so it's hard to project. Instead I'm just taking it day by day. Keep positive, keep making music and keeping the energy balanced. The only thing I ask of people who hear my music is to spread it. And I hope they just feel something from it.



# CEN'C LOVE

## INTERVIEW

BY MCCLAIN JOHNSON



**Cen'C Love is an up-and-coming reggae singer-songwriter. She is the daughter of the legendary Bunny Wailer. Her new single Casanova, was released in September last year and her debut album 'Love Letter' is about to be released on February 9th. Cen'C recently discussed her songwriting process, memories of her childhood, and her lyrical inspirations.**

**How does your songwriting process work?**

I get divine inspiration from Life. Sometimes it begins with a melody in my head that I turn into chords on the guitar, or a "la la la" that I turn into lyrics. At other times it starts with a thought, a catchy phrase, a poem that I turn into a song. Not all the songs I compose are completed in one day. There are those magic moments when everything just flows out at once, but often I develop my masterpieces over time. That can range from a couple days to a couple years.

**How old were you when you wrote your first song?**

Probably as soon as I could talk I wrote my first song, maybe not on paper. My mom used to make up childrens' songs for us growing up so that was natural.

**What was the first song you learned how to play on guitar?**

I am Ready for Love from India Arie, was the first song I learned to play, once I got over my bruised fingertips.

**What inspires you lyrically?**

I am inspired by everyone's stories, my own included. Our experiences give us so much to write about.

**Do you remember the first reggae song you heard?**

It was probably in the womb, and was most likely a Wailers tune. I do remember listening to Black Uhuru as a child.

**Do you remember your first time on-stage?**

Since becoming a recording artist, my first time on stage was at Centennial Park in Atlanta in 2006. I had a little stage experience prior to that as a performing arts student at Dekalb School of the Arts in Atlanta.

**What are some of your favorite childhood memories?**

Listening to my father reasoning with his brethren in our yard. I learned a great deal about life and about how men think. He is very colorful and entertaining, and his voice is one of a kind. I really loved traveling with my Mom in the summer and going to cultural events and meeting other Rasta children and their families. I learned a lot from those experiences.

**What do you feel are the biggest misconceptions about your father?**

People always think that he's sitting on a bag of money. But he is really a pipeline. As it comes it flows.

**What are the most important lessons you learned from your parents?**

My parents taught me that we create our own reality, and you reap what you sow.

They also taught me that a strong foundation is the best gift you can give a child to prepare them for a successful future in this world. If you sow good seeds and begin with strong roots you will get firm trees and rich fruit.

**How do you feel that your sound has evolved over the years?**

When I first began composing as a recording artist I had more R&B and Neo-Soul tunes. Because my voice was still fresh out of training, it was a little difficult to come out of my round classical voice. I had to work on getting back the natural edge I had before vocal training. That's when I started singing with a more Dancehall flavor and writing in a 'street' style. Now I'm in the middle with a sing-jay vibe. I have grown to embrace my unique sound, and my confidence has helped me to polish my delivery.

**Who are some of your favorite producers to work with and why?**

Bunny Wailer is one of my favorite producers to work with because he allows me creative control in the studio, and supports my compositions with high quality live music. I also enjoyed working with Bobby Digital. He appreciates my voice and originality, and is very encouraging when I am in the booth. I also love his riddims.

**What artists and producers would you love to collaborate with?**

The list is long! I look forward to working with Andrew Tosh, NAS, Sizzla Kalonji, Outkast, Queen Ifrica, Pressure, Fyakin, Lady Saw, Tanya Stephens, Ras Attitude, Junior Gong, Beres Hammond, and Midnite. I really could

go on. Producers I admire... Stephen Marley, Stephen McGregor, Rico Wade from Organized Noize and more.

**What advice would you give to up--and-coming vocalists and songwriters?**

Read Read Read! Reading and writing go hand in hand. Be willing to put in long hours and sacrifice food and sleep. Make sure you love what you do so it's work and play in one. Maintain positive relationships, because the music world is very small.



**Can you tell us about your upcoming album "Love Letter" ?**

Shaka and I met at Georgia State University and have been close friends and music partners since. I had previously written and made demos for about half of the songs before we even decided to do the album.

It's while I was in my last trimester we decided to start recording for the album. We didn't have a name until we were almost done recording. We linked up with musical engineer Paul Katzman, one of Shaka's friends and a longtime fan of "Supreme".

He was eager to do some recording while he was off from school for a while. After



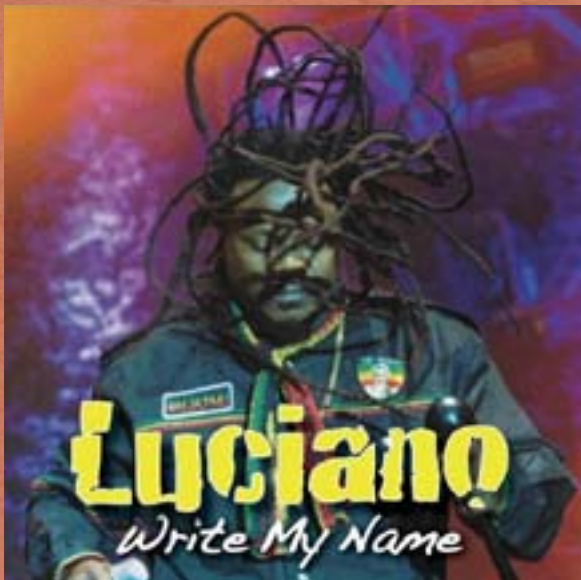


I gave birth to my son in Dec. 2009, we cranked out the album. Shaka had some original beats he was already working on, I had songs I had been longing to get out, so we collaborated. We co-wrote a few songs, and I covered one of his original songs, Springtime. He also added to my acoustic compositions, Hey You and Paradise. On one of the tracks Shaka uses a sample from a Bunny Wailer classic, with a hip hop twist, one of his many tricks, Kanye West style. We had a few 'spontaneous' additions, like Casanova, which I penned a few years ago with a friend of mine, Georgia Phipps-Blake, and Feel Good, which just featured Shaka and my brother Abijah at first, before I added a

verse. We produced the album at Coconut Rose Studio, our home studio in Atlanta, so the environment was relaxed which made the process comfortable and fun. That's what really made it possible for me to spend quality time with my newborn, and regroup. We are now continuing to develop Lyvestone Music, and this is our first project. There are collaborations in the pipeline, but none on this album except features by Shaka Girvan and Abijah Livingston. The music is different, very new, yet it's reminiscent of classic Reggae and R&B, where simplicity goes a longer way. With jazzy melodies plus new-school Dancehall lyrics, a cool ride with unexpected turns like life itself. I'm excited to have this album released, to widen my reach and help engage this generation to open our minds and hearts to another level of consciousness and Love.

REVIEWS 





## LUCIANO - WRITE MY NAME

Luciano recently dropped his second album in 2010 and I must admit that I was a bit skeptical about Write My Name when I first read about it. Why? Luciano has put out too many mediocre albums in recent years. In my view the Frenchie produced set United States of Africa – released in July – was his first great album since Serious Times that dropped in 2004.

So I naturally thought that Write My Name would be a huge disappointment. But I was mistaken. Seri-

ously mistaken. Because Write My Name is a great album. Maybe not as great as United States of Africa, but definitely one of Luciano's better albums in the 21st century.

Write My Name is produced by Rawle Collins and was recorded in Atlanta, U.S. All compositions are fresh and written by Luciano himself. This makes this set a bit different from the Frenchie album, which included some previously released tunes co-written by others. Album starter Taking Off sets the pace. Its slow, almost musical, beginning is just a chimaera. After 20 seconds its driving chorus is in full swing and Luciano certainly shows who's the man.

From there on it's a very pleasant journey with some great one drop riddims, nyabinghi flavor and 70's soul. Check Miles Away with its sneaking beat and sensual groove.

The one thing this album lacks though is some horns. Now these arrangements are handled by keyboard which is not nearly as good as the original thing.

Luciano has once again proven that he is a force to be reckoned with in reggae music.

**Review by Erik Magni**



## From Creation by Alpheus

Neil "Alpheus" Martin's career has followed a path as unique as his character. From cutting his first album under the tutelage of Mr Dodd at Studio 1, through working with the dynamic French duo Bost and Bim, to now, swearing off one drop reggae all together to voice a ska and rocksteady set for A Lone's Roberto Sanchez - his philosophy of fate ("everything for a reason") is one he clearly lives.

Instead of using original recordings in the manner of the great Peckings, Sanchez has painstakingly assembled shiny new versions of ancient

rhythms and fresh compositions in the same style. Over these Alpheus sings his mellifluous themes of love: previously released single Turnaround Ball reminisces on a night of dancing atop the rhythm to the Wailers' Studio 1 ska Do You Remember?; Freddie McGregor's Need More Love base backs his confession that he loves a girl Inside Out; while Ultimate describes the ideal partner (with the amusing line "the fire we make could burn down an igloo. Let's make love without further ado ") over Phil Pratt's romping rocksteady instrumental Dirty Dozen. Better still, the Sanchez/Martin material such as the majestic, worldly wise In Time stands up just as well.

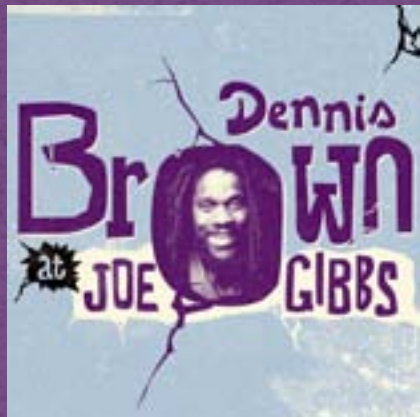
But although Alpheus famously countered the rather Eurocentric focus on roots and culture by saying, "It's all reality music. It's not just about how sad you can be, how poor you are, and if you are Rasta or not." - he always sings some deeper sides too. The title song, another single on another Pratt relick (Hemsley Morris' Little Things) calls for unity in humanity while Live and Learn, using the Kingston singer-producer's own vocal Reach Out, deals with the aftermath of friendship. Two instrumentals and two dubs (in the mode of 70s revisits to Studio 1 and Treasure Isle gems - including a hand drum heavy flip to the title track) play us out.

Last year Bigga Morrison's Skatroniks reminded the mainstream what real ska is like, now Alpheus consolidates this welcome revival, celebrating the great Coxsone Dodd and the equally deserving Phil Pratt for a new audience. Sanchez has already impressed reggae fans with his Earl Zero album 'And God Said To Man'. Get ready to be impressed again by this trip back in time...

**Review by Angus Taylor**



## Dennis Brown at Joe Gibbs



Dennis Brown's singing career began in the late sixties when, at just 11 years old, he came to the attention of the legendary owner of Jamaica's Studio One record label Coxsone Dodd. His first record was a cover of the doo-

wop hit No Man Is An Island, which revealed him to have a talent mature far beyond his years. The single was an immediate hit in Jamaica, and led to his first album, of the same title in 1970.

As Dennis matured his voice strengthened and works with producers Lloyd Daley and especially Winston "Niney The Observer" Holness made him a well respected and much in demand performer in Jamaica. It wasn't however until the release of 'Visions' in 1977 that Brown, who was now teamed up with the Mighty Two, Joe Gibbs and Errol Thompson, major crossover potential was to be brought to the fore. The production that Gibbs and Thompson applied to his smooth, reassuring voice and his comfortable range soon made him an obvious target for major labels seeking another international success story a kin to Marley.

To compliment Brown's vocals on 'Visions' Gibbs pulled together a backing band of well seasoned musicians including the likes of Sly and Robbie, Lloyd Parks, Vin Gordon, Bobby Ellis and Tommy McCook, which with their effortless flexibility complemented his polished delivery admirably. Lyrically the album is typical reggae fare, covering the plight of the sufferers, repatriation and deep held Rastafarian beliefs along with lovers tales like Love Me Always and a cover of Ray Charles' This Little Girl of Mine. The album went straight to the top of the reggae album charts on its release and was voted reggae album of the year by both Melody Maker and Black Echoes in the UK and this all despite only being available as a high priced import.

CD2 features the follow up album 'Words of Wisdom' from 1978, with this set firmly consolidating Brown in the position as the Crown Prince of Reggae. It is packed full of classics including So Jah Say, Should I, Black Liberation, Ain't That Loving You and the #14 British chart hit Money In My Pocket, that brought Dennis to the attention of whole new audience.

CD3 breaks away from the single album format by featuring the six vocal sides from 1984's 'Love's Gotta Hold on Me', which featured backing again from Sly and Robbie in their We The People Band guise. To bolster this disc VP have added another thirteen tracks of choice cuts like Let Love In, Created By The father, Open Up, I'm Coming Home Tonight and the soulful Historical Places.

The final CD is 'Reflections', which completes the story by gathering up a further nineteen tracks that serve as a real best of celebration. Songs include the original 1972 cut of Money In My Pocket, which with its slower and more bass heavy, melancholy feel is far better suited to the sentiments of the lyrics than that of the bright, skip along hit version. Other highlights include the sublime almost boss reggae of When You Are Down, the heart wrenching lovers of Get To Love In Time and Stop The Fussing And Fighting, on the Real Rock riddim. This disc also has a couple of reworked reggae classics in the form of a pounding Man Next Door a take on Dr Alimantados Poison Flour, John Holt's Hooligan and the Alton Ellis big rocksteady hit Girl I've Got A Date.

Off the back of the success gained by some of these songs Dennis Brown signed a contract with A&M in the U.S in 1981. Unfortunately like many of Jamaica's most promising stars his music was largely mishandled and suffered from poor promotion. Now though VP has put together this essential set that shows him in his absolute prime and with the aid of The Mighty Two at the controls they created some timeless reggae classics that brought him to the verge of the major international success he so rightly should have deserved.

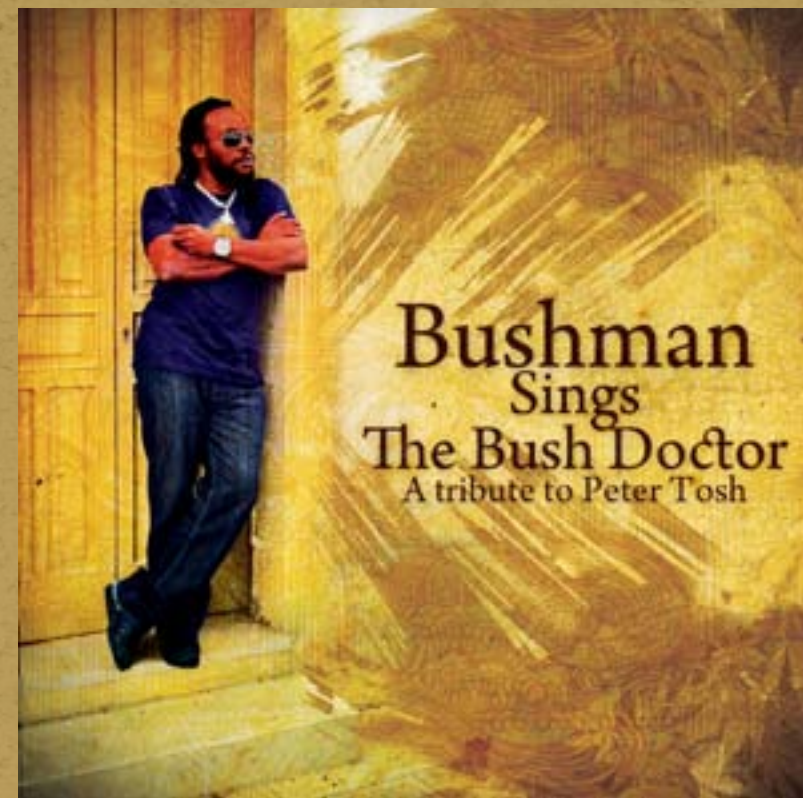
**Review by Karl Pearson**

## Bushman Sings The Bush Doctor

After two years of negotiations and postponements, Bushman's tribute to Peter Tosh has at last been released via reggae giant VP. And although no one can sing Tosh quite like the Stepping Razor himself, Bushman's deep, authoritative recreations are worth the wait.

Having heard in 2004 that his singing reminded people of Tosh, the St Thomas The parish singer began planning a series of songs to remind his younger fans of the great man. Buckingham Palace, recorded with Glen Browne and included on 2008's 'Get It In Your Mind', suggested the idea was sound.

We hear the forceful side of Tosh in Stepping Razor; the religious side in his hymn Ighziabeher; and his defiant love of ganja for Legalise It and Bush Doctor. Bushman's St Thomas neighbour Tarrus Riley takes the place of Mick Jagger for a value added reworking of the duet Don't Look Back, while the now troubled Buju Banton sounds anything but worried on Mama



Africa - voiced some years ago. The music (co-produced by Penthouse, mixed by Jukeboxx's Shane Brown, and featuring Robbie Lyn on keys and Mikey Chung on guitar, who played on the original 'Bush Doctor' LP) is nice and organic sounding enough not to besmirch the originals yet clearly in the modern one drop style. Bushman's impressive bassy brogue lacks the bite of Tosh's delivery; but his more peaceful, equally powerful vocals simply put his own mark on the songs.

As both Tosh tribute and new Bushman album this is a long anticipated pleasure. Tosh didn't tolerate shoddy work and there is none here.

**Review by Angus Taylor**



## 7 Year Itch by Protoje



Oje "Protoje Diggy" Ken Ollivierre is the son of the St Elizabeth singer Lorna Bennett: famous for her cover of Dusty Springfield's Muscle Shoals track Breakfast In Bed, but also responsible for lesser known, arguably superior Harry J sides such as her haunting take on the Bells' Stay With You A While. Concurrent with her career Lorna studied to become a successful attorney. Wanting the best for her son, she enrolled Oje at the prestigious local boarding school Munro College to further his education.

But music, it seems, was also in his blood, so instead of lawyer he became a deejay (although he has a burgeoning singing voice too). Again, family would prove crucial. Lorna's brother is the father of Donovan Bennett aka Don Corleon whose Vendetta sound

allowed Protoje to impress the crowds. It was almost a decade, however, before Oje's cousin would produce this his first album, perhaps Corleon's finest work with a male vocalist since Pressure Buss Pipe in 2007.

Protoje has plenty to say about himself. On the title track he explains how his mother sent him to study when he wanted to be musician like the Marleys (one of whom, self-confessed black sheep Kymani, sings on the hip hop flavoured Rasta Love). He loves the girls and the ganja: DJ Karim produced breakout hit Arguments deals with the downside of being an object of desire, while both Roll and No Lipstick reveal a potentially dangerous predilection for smoking in bed. He also confesses to selling herb in the past but on third single JA he confesses "I've never been a shotta" – leaving the gun talk alone.

As you'd expect from Don Corleon, this is slick radio friendly hip hop and R&B kissed one drop that may not be tough enough for some reggae fans. And Protoje's disarmingly confident and open lyrics are not so much sufferers songs as the thoughts of a culturally minded young man enjoying life. In the end, like most of Don Corleon's one drop output, this is quality pop music - that can compete with any around the world.

Unlike his mother Oje has decided not to fall back on a profession during the rough and smooth of the business. One thing's for sure though - like her, he has the talent to last the course.

**Review by Angus Taylor**

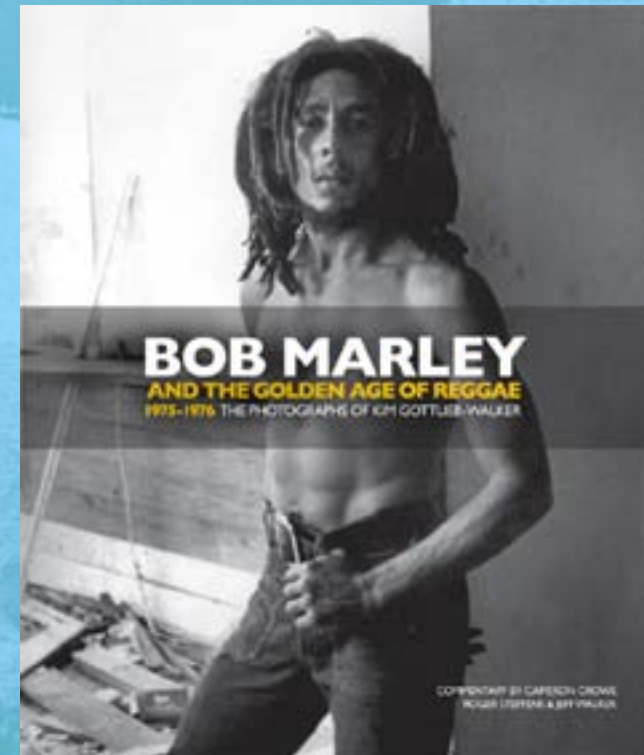
## Bob Marley and the Golden Age of Reggae

The photographs in this new coffee table book are scarcely 35 years old – which isn't very long in a historical sense - just a drop in the bucket of unfolding time. But, for those of us who came of age during the early years of reggae, leafing through Kim Gottlieb-Walker's photographs may bring about the strange and uneasy feeling that despite their relative newness, the images seem to represent events from an ancient world, and to belong to a time long passed.

For reggae fans, the moments that Gottlieb-Walker captured on her trips to Jamaica in 1975 and 1976 reflect the last days of innocence of a music industry and a world that hovered on the brink of change. Bob Marley's music came to us in the days before every other type of music was measured by its relationship to hip hop, before world music was a term and when an album was a complete statement that could not be fragmented by downloading. The very fact of Bob Marley's ascendancy reflects a time when risks were willingly taken, and in the optimism of the post sixties world, the universe outside our gates was compelling, interesting and exotic - and not the domain of terrorists real and imagined. Above all, they reflect a time when it was radical to listen to reggae. A time when dreadlocks weren't a fashion accessory and reggae was dangerous music that was not played in supermarkets or repackaged as lullaby records for children.

In the intervening years, images of Marley - like those of Che Guevara - have been co-opted by fashion and corporate media to become a kind of shorthand for rebellion within safe bounds. For those who grew up in the years since Marley's death, it may be easy to scoff at the naivete that saw artists like Bob Marley, Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh as agents of societal change. It may be hard for them to realize the risks that were being taken on all sides to carry reggae out of Jamaica and to the world at large. Gottlieb-Walker's book chronicles the lives and early days of the pioneers – black and white – who expanded the boundaries of what was possible to convey in a pop song. To look at these photos of a young and vibrant Bob Marley is to be taken back to a time when many believed that three chords played with a rebel attitude and the bass turned up to 11 could change the course of the world and its history.

Time is a funny thing, and these photographs play with our perceptions as the images freeze particular moments for eternity. Gone from the earth for decades, Bob Marley and Peter Tosh will always be as young as they appear in these photographs. We never got to see them age, so the compromises of mid-life, the slight shifts in apocalyptic vision that many of their contemporaries experienced and were judged by, were never rested on their shoulders. Some artists like Bunny Wailer – photographed here in his youthful glory – are still with us, as is Winston Rodney (aka. Burning Spear)





captured here as a very young man with none of the creases - deep as oak roots - that now line his face, but sadly many of reggae's founding fathers passed on long before their natural time. For these men, Gottlieb-Walker's photographs of these men - so young, electric, crackling like lightning rods with vitality and energy - act as reminders, eulogies for their formative days as well as their enduring influence.

The photographs in this book also point back reflexively at the viewer. For the young, they provide a fine and energetic record of the birth of reggae. For the artists' contemporaries and older fans, they bring back a time when her subjects were musicians rather than icons. Gottlieb-Walker breaks through the hype as she portrays Peter Tosh as a person who in one image laughs heartily while watching a three year old white boy playing with a turntable. The spontaneous photo of Seeco Patterson relaxing on a pile of lumber as well as the ones that reflect Jacob Miller's life affirming grin are enough to brighten even the darkest of days. In the end, it is virtually impossible to pick a favourite image from the treasures that reside between the covers of this book.

As impossible as it may seem to fans from the Trenchtown days, lush coffee table books about reggae and Bob Marley are nothing new. Recently released volumes with photos by Adrian Boot and David Burnett have each shed light on Marley's ever-expanding mythology, but of all these books, 'Bob Marley and the Golden Age of Reggae' is really something special. Of all the publications currently available, it is the only one that expresses the Marley behind the image - a Bob Marley who smiles easily and who has not yet perfected the 'screw face' he often adopted in later photos. Sympathetic essays by Cameron Crowe, Roger Steffans, and Kim's husband Jeff Walker ac-

-company the images, but for the most part, she wisely lets the photos speak for themselves. The book exists in a world where it is forever 1976; there are no recent photos of any of the subjects to break the spell. And what a heady spell it is! Looking through the book, my whole adolescence came back to me as I recalled the first time I heard 'Burnin' on my friend's brother's turntable, swaying back and forth as we clumsily rolled spliffs to accompany 'I shot the Sheriff' and 'Hallelujah Time.' The associations and memories that this book brings out will of course vary from person to person, but however these images affect one, it shouldn't take long to realize that 'Bob Marley and the Golden Age of Reggae' is the best book of reggae photographs ever published. I can't recommend it enough.

**Written by Doug Heselgrave**



# ARTICLES





# Tribute to Glen Adams

It's been a sad year for reggae veterans. Fans have mourned the passing of Vivian Jackson, Lynn Taitt, Sugar Minott, Sonia Pottinger and Gregory Isaacs in 2010 and as the year ends, we have to add another name to the list.

Glenroy "Capo" Adams passed away on December 17 at the age of 65 in Jamaica. Glen suffered a stroke earlier in the year and although he was on the road to recovery, his condition worsened at the end of the year and he died after spending a couple weeks in the hospital, surrounded by family and friends.

Glen was best known for his time behind the keyboards in the Hippy Boys and later the Upsetters, but his musical career went much deeper than many people realize. He was born in 1945, and like so many Jamaican youth, music became Glen's greatest passion. While he was a teenager, Glen sang in a vocal group and a solo performance on Vere Johns' Opportunity Hour in 1961 caught the attention of Clement "Coxson" Dodd, who arranged for Glen's first record "Wonder Thirst" (AKA "Look Before You Leap"). The single didn't go anywhere, and it was a few years before Glen found success again, teaming up with Ken Boothe as Glen and Ken, coming in second place in the 1966 Festival Song Competition with "I Remember".

While he earned a living as a tailor, Glen moved on to work with Duke Reid at Treasure Isle as an informal musical director and talent scout, introducing singers to the Duke for recording. In 1967 Glen walked out on Reid and returned to the recording studio as a solo artist once more, cutting a series of rocksteady singles for Bunny Lee. He also sang in an early Pioneers line up, recording a few songs with the group including "Shake It Up".

A definitive moment for Glen came at a session for Lee in 1968. He was asked to play organ when the regular keyboard player didn't show up for a session. While his style was rudimentary, his keyboard work added a certain vibe to the recordings, which included "Bangarang" by Stranger Cole



and "Everybody Needs Love" by Slim Smith. Encouraged by this unexpected acclaim for his work, he further honed his keyboard skills and before long Glen was a regular session musician.

Glen's next musical project was one of the bands that he is best known for. He formed the Hippy Boys with guitarist Alva "Reggie" Lewis, bassist Aston "Family Man" Barrett and his brother Carlton Barrett on drums. The group cut a series of wild and groovy instrumentals including "Death Rides A Horse" and "Psychedelic Reggae" as well as backing Max Romeo on his rude hit "Wet Dream". The band also recorded as the Reggae Boys and the Soul Mates, with Adams and Lewis performing vocals on early reggae favourites such as "Them A Laugh And Ki Ki" and "What Is This" (AKA "Ba Ba"). The Hippy Boys performed on sessions for a variety of producers, including Bunny Lee, Joe Gibbs and Sonia Pottinger, who produced their only LP, Reggae With The Hippy Boys, in 1969.

Fate stepped in when in November 1969 the Upsetters famous "Return Of Django" became a top 10 hit in England and the band was invited to travel overseas and tour the country. The original Upsetters were unable to commit to the tour and so Lee "Scratch" Perry approached the Hippy Boys to take their place. And so it was that the Hippy Boys became the new Upsetters.

The band toured England to great acclaim and performed on Top Of The Pops. Upon their return to Jamaica, the Upsetters were rather frustrated with Perry, who apparently had taken the lion's share of the money from the tour. At this time, Bob Marley had been following the Upsetters with great interest. After some years of struggling, The Wailers were looking to jump start their sound and were amazed that The Upsetters had been so popular overseas. Before long, Bob Marley realized that a collaboration between them and The Wailers could be an unstoppable combo. After a few rehearsals and jam sessions together, Marley talked The Upsetters into abandoning Perry and joining the Wailers.

The sessions that Glen Adams and friends recorded with the Wailers and Lee Perry proved to be a high point not only in their careers but in the history of reggae. The chemistry between Perry and Marley, the Wailers and the Upsetters proved to be phenomenal. Together, they produced classic songs like "Small Axe", "Duppy Conqueror", "400 Years", and many others that changed the course of reggae and laid the foundation for Bob Marley's subsequent success. Some of the songs were re-recorded later on in Marley's career, but the magic of the Perry sessions has never been surpassed. One of the most famous Perry productions from these sessions was the mesmerizing "Mr. Brown". The song - a spooky story of a man who dies and is reincarnated as a crow who perches on his own coffin on the way to the funeral - was written by Glen Adams who also provided the unforgettable organ work on the song.

In addition to working with Lee Perry and the Wailers at this time, Glen also played keyboards for producer Herman Chin Loy and was the original "Augustus Pablo". The name was invented by Chin Loy who wanted a more exotic sounding moniker for his performers in order to create a sense of mystery. After Glen recorded a few songs as Pablo, Chin Loy then gave the name to the young melodica player Horace Swaby, who permanently adopted the name and become famous as Augustus Pablo.

In 1972, the Upsetters split when the Barrett brothers became a permanent part of the Wailers band. Perry kept the name Upsetters to refer to the floating band of musicians that played for him over the years. Glen remained with Perry for a short time and a few years later left Jamaica for the United States, settling in Brooklyn in 1975. From there, he started his own record label, Capo, and for the remainder of the decade cut some very funky reggae and disco tunes as the Glen Adams Affair, including the dancefloor favourite "Just A Groove" and the early hip hop number "Chicken Scratch" with DJ Freeze.

For the next 20 years, Glen stayed active, working on a wide variety of projects and recordings. He played piano and keyboards for New York-based Reggae producers Brad Osbourne and Lloyd "Bullwackie" Barnes, started another band named The Realistics, and played synthesizers for Coxson Dodd when he too relocated his Studio One operations to New York. More recently Glen worked with old friends Susan Cadogan and Keith Rowe as well as popular dancehall singer Shaggy. Although he had mostly been sitting in the producer's chair and in the studio for many years, Glen finally returned to live performances, touring the USA and Europe in 2002 with ska revivalists The Slackers and played occasional shows with the Jammyland All Stars.

Glen suffered a stroke in early 2010 and remained in poor health for the rest of the year. While visiting Jamaica with his wife Judy, his condition suddenly deteriorated and he was admitted to hospital. Although his family remained hopeful of a recovery, Glen passed away on December 17.

A YouTube search for "Glen Adams" reveals many obscure records and live performances, a lifetime of music that will no doubt be rediscovered now that Glen is gone. On his Facebook page, Glen's description of himself was simply "I don't like to big myself up. I am humble in the way Jah want I to be." With such a rich musical legacy behind him, Glen's modesty is just as impressive as his career.

**Article by Mick Sleeper**



## 2010 Reggae Albums Top 20

Last year Angus Taylor’s top ten was arranged in numerical descent. But to quote one of the featured artists below “Music is a mission, not a competition” so this year, Angus has simply selected his twenty favourite albums of the year, in no particular order. Feel free to suggest your favourites from the list below or any he has missed out.

### Romain Virgo - Romain Virgo

2010 was amazing for long-playing debuts. Like Tarus Riley, you really have to see this man live to truly “get” what makes him such a prodigious talent. Still, this album was a solid entertainer from a potential superstar.

### Maikal X - Genesis

Another strong debut, this time from a soulful voiced singer out of the Netherlands. The calibre of guests like Luciano and Peter Morgan says it all.

### Natty King - Born To Be Free

This crowd-pleasing serving of cultural and herbal topics, produced by Austria’s hardworking and capable House Of Riddim, was well-received on both sides of the Atlantic.

### Toussaint - Black Gold

The US has been home to some of the most unusual yet brilliant releases this year. This album was compared to classic soul and Steel Pulse, but whether you agree or not, it definitely had its own thing going on.

### Jahdan Blakkamore - Babylon Nightmare

A sprawling citadel of musical and vocal styles from the man of many voices - on more of a reggae foundation than previous album Buzzrock Warrior. An East Coast meets West Coast project lovingly put together by Lustre Kings.

### Red Earth Collective Meets Soothsayers - Red Earth Dub

The flipside to the boys and girls’ amazing One More Reason from last year. Nuff said.

### Chezidek - Judgement Time

A little front-heavy compared to previous effort I Grade. But the opening vocals (Ganja Tree and Live & Learn) are two of the best Chezidek songs ever recorded, while the later tracks maintain a good standard from there on in.

### Apple Gabriel - Teach Them Right

Apple’s illness and homelessness meant everyone was hoping JahSolidRock and Not Easy At All’s followup to Judgement Time would succeed. A more unified album than Chezidek’s, including one of few reggae songs to criticize violence against gays.

### Earl Zero - And God Said To Man

Unabashed time-traveller Roberto Sanchez put a less raw but still atmospheric West Kingston veteran in a backward-stepping showcase setting. Includes a revisit to Earl’s composition made famous by Johnny Clarke, None Shall Escape the Judgement.

### Annette Brissett - Lift Your Head Up

Once again this list is way too male dominated (perhaps we’re not on the right mailing lists!). Sadly Etna’s hotly anticipated album was put back until 2011 but veteran drummer-turned-singer Annette Brissett dropped this mature and soulful record, which she wrote and played almost entirely herself.

### Skatroniks Jamaica - Skalsa # 1

In the popular imagination Ska has been left to the tweed-wearing Two Tone or baggy shorts punk crowd. Bigga Morrison and his supergroup reminded us that it’s a Jamaican invention, mixing in salsa, step-pers and nyabinghi drums along the way.

### Tippa Irie & The Far East Band - Stick To My Roots

Tippa Irie warned us this would be his best work, and it was certainly one of the best of 2010. From deep roots to contemporary dancehall, Tippa and the Far East band proved they could put their minds to anything and thrive.

### Junior Kelly - Red Pond

This year heard the return of gruff roots veterans. After five years without an album Junior Kelly reminded us why he is so well regarded. The rhythms of the Fire House crew are slick but Kelly’s vocals, including a remarkable third verse on Stumbling Blocks, are sublime.

### Taj Weekes & Adowa - A Waterlogged Soul Kitchen

Bearing one of the year’s strangest titles, the third record from the New York based St Lucian tightened up his classic soul rebel music and poetic lyrics. Less bleak than 2008’s Deidem yet still emotionally-charged through and through.

### Nas & Damian Marley - Distant Relatives

This meeting of hip hop, reggae and African music breached and bewitched a mainstream eager to criticise such a high minded concept. Along with John Legend and the Roots’ Wake Up!, this album shook up and cheered up the world in 2010.

### Clinton Fearon - Mi Deh Yah

This year the ex-Gladiator took his sterling work with Boogie Brown Band up a notch, playing bass himself and fine-tuning the production beyond anything he’d crafted before. The difference shows, in his best solo album yet.

### Lloyd Brown - Cornerstone

Lloyd is a cert for this list every year. You don’t even hear a straight one-drop until the fourth track but then come Bob Marley samples, Joe Higgs covers and Duke Reid rocksteady. More daring than last year’s For Your Consideration but every bit as strong.

### Busy Signal - DOB

You’ve heard from various tastemakers and veterans that there’s nothing good coming out of Jamaica, but even the naysayers have a soft spot for the increasingly eclectic Busy. While his sing-

-ing voice suffers without pitch correction on stage, the studio yields a fearless, totally different sounding album every time.

### Gappy Ranks - Put The Stereo On

Another artist bucking the trends is London’s Gappy Ranks. By dropping modern vocals over Peckings rhythms, his debut brought the forward thinking and the luddite tendencies in reggae fans together as one. The Union Jack colours on the cover sent a clear message. A modern classic in every sense.

### Capleton - I-Ternal Fire

This album divided critics in embracing the soft balladeer style of modern one-drop, and contained many previously released singles. Capleton’s strained singing is an acquired taste, but the way he adapted to the rhythms of Shane Brown and Flava McGregor seals his place as one of the all time greats.

### Review by Angus Taylor





## PHOTOS



## Rebel Salute 2011 Launch

Rebel Salute 2011 Launch was recently held at the Wyndham Kingston Hotel. Over the years this annual event has come to be known as one of the must events on the entertainment calendar.

Starting out in Mandeville, Manchester, the event which is now held at the Kaiser Sports Club, St. Elizabeth is known for providing quality reggae music, unearthing new talent and showcasing some of the artiste who have made significant contributions to Jamaica's reggae music industry.

This year seems to be no different as the event is scheduled to have over fifty artistes performing. Among the top acts scheduled to perform are Beres Hammond, Tarrus Riley, Carl Dawkins, Movado, Jack Radics, Toots & The Maytals, Dennis Alcapone, Loner Ranger, Little John and many more. The event is scheduled to take place Saturday, January 15th.

**Review and photos by Steve James**



**QUEEN IFRICA**



**TONY REBEL AND FRIENDS**



**ROLAND BURRELL, LONE RANGER & FRIENDS**



**PEPSI GIRL**



**SCION SUCCESS, QUEEN IFRICA, TONY REBEL**





## Buju Banton and Friends live in Miami

"Why them wan' see Buju Banton cry" Is it because I said 'Boom Bye Bye? Is it because I say Selassie I? Is it because I'm black and not shy?" Buju voiced these outspoken words onstage Sunday evening in Miami, Florida. Buju Banton has now over a year to ponder these questions that has made him a target for his anti-gay lyrics and then "Driver" which drew a different kind of attention to him.

January 16, 2011, the highly anticipated date of 'Before the Dawn Concert' finally arrived! It was a perfect Miami night, a comfortable 65 degrees and clear skies. In conjunction with Rockers Island and Gargamel Music, Bayfront Park Ampitheater was filled to its capacity of 8,000 enthusiastic fans. The production was tight, with Chuckles working hard behind the scenes. The security was even tighter, with US Marshals as Buju's escorts and police presence backstage.

Aside from all Buju's legal issues, his performance was the best I would say of his whole career. He looked healthy, vibrant, in great spirits and physical condition. His stamina onstage was non stop and the audience could feel the vibez that this humbling experience has given him the opportunity to look into himself and rise above his situation. Music is his calling and the stage is obviously where he is most comfortable singing and dancing. The spiritual heights of his presence onstage connected emotionally with his fans.

Judging from his awesome beyond words performance, the harmonies of the 'Gargamel girls' stronger than ever, the band tighter than I've ever seen them, the 2 hour performance delivered most of his hits. He entered the stage singing an acapella version of "Destiny," and the crowd went wild. He then broke into tunes like "Not an Easy Road," "Untold Stories", "Wanna be Loved" and a few bars of "Driver".

Joined onstage by the timeless beauty Marcia Griffiths they performed their duets "Closer" and 'Live On." We were promised a surprise guest on the show flyers, and at this point Buju states that his mentor Beres Hammond was supposed to be his guest, but was unable to make the journey. He chants into "Who Say Big Man Nuh Cry" that he duets with Beres. Stephen Marley, who "rose up" to Buju's rescue for release during these troubled times joins Buju onstage.

The crowd goes wild once again! Then when Damian joined them a roar from the audience swept the ampitheater. Stephen & Buju sang Bob Marley's "Duppy Conqueror,"

which was so appropriate for the occasion, then Stephen and Damian Marley ended their portion with boom new hit, "Jah Army." Next his Penthouse days bredren, Wayne Wonder, takes the stage and they sing "I Don't Know Why" and "Forever Young." Gramps Morgan spiritual presence manifested, and together they sang the "23 Psalms" which brought tears to many eyes in the audience. It was a touching moment as he prayed to the Lord to have mercy on him. The audience cheered as David Marcus, Buju's attorney came out for the finale, who earlier in the evening Buju commented "Nuh watch him skin color, him black like we!"

Buju's support group of family, friends and fans travelled from far and wide to witness this extraordinary event. Media people amongst us even flew in from Amsterdam! Others came from New York, Jamaica, Canada and England.

Artists flew in to perform and show their support for their fellow showman. Richie Loop opened the show singing his hit "My Cup." Next Rastafarian Everton Blender entertained the audience with his hits "Ghetto People Song" and "Lift Up Your Head." Nadine Sutherland has matured into a beautiful young woman, but can still wine and dance like a young girl! Singing her hits such as "I'm in Love," she rocked the crowd. Foundation artist Freddie McGregor took the stage with his lovely backup songbirds Twiggi and his daughter Shema. The audience sang along as he did a medley of his tunes. Another surprise! Gyptian runs onto the stage..breaks into his hit "Hold You." He has gained experience and displays much confidence in his stage presence.

Smooth Wayne Wonder takes the stage, followed by another surprise guest Michael Rose of Black Uhuru fame. Gramps Morgan belted out some of his tunes as a single artist. Tarrus Riley and manager/mentor Dean Fraser are always a hit. He couldn't go away without singing "She's Royal." To my surprise... who is this sporting a Mohawk? Wha? Sean Paul! He sang his hits and was joined on stage by Spragga Benz! What a combination! Shaggy performed a little longer, singing "It Wasn't Me" with Rayvon accompanying him. Serani also joined them onstage. Shaggy sported a baseball cap with jeans to match. He gyrated and grabbed his crotch Shaggy style. Miami's own DJ Khaled hyped the audience and an almost bald Busta Rhymes dressed in a red t shirt, chanted with him toasting style.

Ten P.M. Buju Banton embraced the audience and the rest is history! I feel so fortunate attend this spectacular event and I pray Buju Banton will be set free to entertain the world in the manner to which we have become accustomed. His next trial date is February 7, 2011... FREE BUJU! **Review and photos by Gail Zucker**







# 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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