

UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE

#9 - June 2011

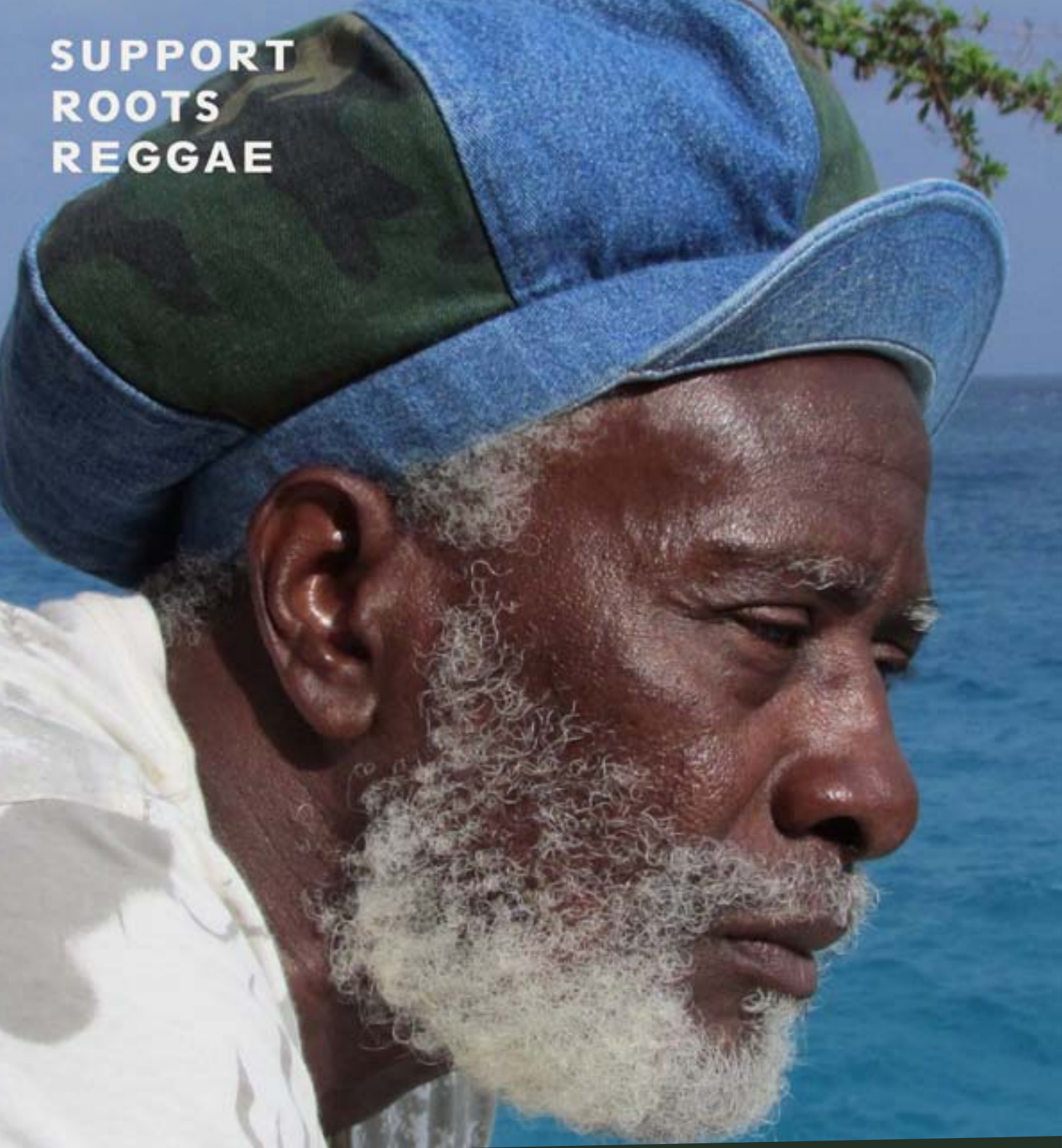
Sizzla INTERVIEW

**KEMAR FLAVA MCGREGOR
ALBOROSIE
GAPPY RANKS
BETH LESSER
REALITY CHANT
MO'KALAMITY**

**Reggae Film
Festival 2011**

**Best of the Best - Miami Reggae Festival - Upper Park Reggae Festival
Reggae 4 Japan - UCLA Jazz Reggae Festival - Portraits of Rural Jamaica**

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United Reggae Magazine #9 - June 2011

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Dub Store Sound Inc Release A Selection Of Ska Classic

Dub Store Sound Inc, the official Studio One agency out of Japan is releasing a selection of 7" vinyl reissues on the Federal Records' Kentone label that was one of the greatest Ska production houses in the mid 60's. This material is taken from Ska's heyday and features rare and previously unreleased material. The first of these collectable 7's is the double A-sided single from Ernest Ranglin & Selected Group titled Free Form and Skalvouvia. Both songs are bright mid-tempo instrumental tracks with a jazzy feel and very strong trumpet and alto saxophone solos over Ernie's industrious lead guitar.

Next up are vocal group the Sharks (also spelled Sheiks) with a previously unreleased early acoustic cut You Made Me Warm on the A-side while the B-side is occupied by the more up-beat original cut.

Eric "Monty" Morris sings sufferers' protest song, Blackman Ska, which for the time was rather unusual in that it broke away from the usual songs about love, but he's back in that theme on the B-side for A Spot In My Heart For You. Both of these tracks have never been previously released and were reportedly recorded for the 1965 various artist album 'Jamaican Skarama' (reissued by

Dub Store Records: LP/CD503) but never made the final cut.

The fourth single features unknown vocal group Monarchs & Drumbago All Stars with All Of Me on the A-side and Sneer Towners singing a previously unreleased version of You Say Me Say on the flip. Then last but by no means least is the final single featuring the classic male/female duo Stranger & Patsy with Word Is Wind backed by The Skatalites and a very smooth and soulful Dobby Dobson with Cry Another Cry.

The Sweet Baby Riddim

Cool things are going on at the well reputed IrieVibrations Records in 2011 and they've just gotten a bit sweeter. Besides a big forthcoming project from Reggae legend, Luciano, in the form of the 'Rub A Dub Market' album, as well as reported pieces from both Anthony B and Konshens, the Austrian based imprint is also pushing an album for their Sweet Baby Riddim. This laid back, predominately Roots set proves to be quietly infectious and should find a very fine audience amongst Reggae fans, both initiated and new alike.

Certainly tapping names such as the aforementioned Luciano, Anthony B and Konshens [alongside Delus] to voice the composition will only help matters and if that does quite get your attention, then perhaps

efforts from the likes of Sizzla Kalonji, Perfect or Dutch songstress, Mischu Laikah, will.

IrieVibrations' Sweet Baby Riddim Selection is set to hit digital stores around the world on June 17th.



Rock A Shacka Presents...

Japanese label Rock A Shacka have recently brought out two new releases for your listening pleasure. First up is a 12" vinyl featuring Carlton Manning, probably best known as Carlton from Carlton & the Shoes, but who was also the mentor of the popular vocal harmony trio the Abyssinians.

Here he applies his sweet haunting voice to the contemporary, soulful, R&B tinged lovers rock number 'Crazy Moment' on the A-side, while dub Poet Patrick Davis brings a deep spirituality to the same riddim for the Jah proclamation 'Hail H.I.M'. Rounding things off on the B-side is a dub from multifaceted Ruv Bytes (Takuto Kuratani).



The Osaka based producer works as the in-house engineer at Rock A Shacka, plus he is responsible for all of the labels artwork, as well as editing the weekly Pirate's Choice podcasts.

The second release is a limited edition 7" vinyl that sees Norma Fraser's 'Every Body' make an appearance on this format for the first time. Norma first made a name for herself in 1961 when she duetted on the Jamaican chart topper 'We'll Be Lovers' with Lord Creator. She later signed for Coxsone Dodd where she recorded a number of singles through into the Rock Steady and Early Reggae eras.

The flip of this single is by one of Jamaica's best known bands The Skatalites with 'Freedom Sound' possibly one of the strongest ska instrumentals ever despite it's lack of trombone melody which suggests that this may have been recorded during one of Don Drummond's stints at Bellevue mental asylum.

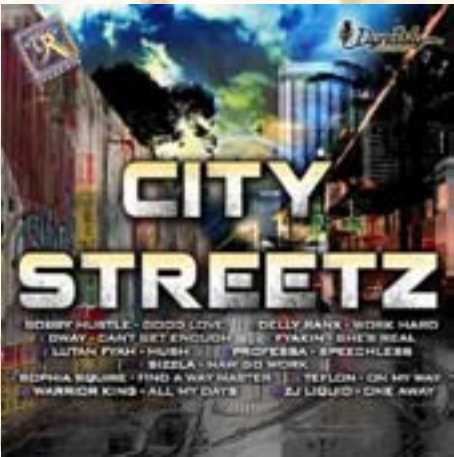
As with all Rock A Shacka re-

leases the quality and attention to detail is excellent and these two releases just further enhance that reputation.

The City Streetz Riddim

Following up on a very impressive release of the Alive Riddim earlier in 2011, the flaming Dynasty Records quickly returns with an arguably just as bright set, the City Streetz Riddim. Despite its title, the riddim, which was done in conjunction with the very strong Twelve 9 Records [Wire Waist, Flare, Spider Wed Riddims] isn't the rough and tough vibed composition that you might be expecting, instead, it is one sweetly built piece which features a healthy mix of social commentaries, spiritual sets and even Lover's Rock.

Taking top honours on these streetz is definitely Sizzla Kalonji with Nah Go Work and also providing stellar tunes are the likes of Lutan Fyah, Sophia Squire, Delly Ranx, Warrior King, Liquid [big big tune] and others.



Zojak Worldwide has delivered the sterling City Streetz Riddim from Dynasty Records and Twelve 9 Records to digital outlets everywhere and it is currently available.

Sierra Nevada World Music Festival 2011, Roots For The People

Two things you should know about Northern California's Sierra Nevada World Music Festival: The three-day ticket is a fantastic deal and unique acts make it worth attending all three days. Sierra Nevada (or SNWMF as it's commonly known) has evolved into one of California -- if not America's -- most unique and anticipated reggae and international music showcases. The now 17-year old festival features camping accommodations in addition to two live music stages and a sound system DJ area. Surrounded by the lush green Mendocino foothills and close to a killer craft brewery, SNWMF combines local charm with exceptional music.

The organizers put a premium on appealing to a variety of fans -- from college kids to dedicated roots aficionados -- with acts this year like Rebelution, I-Octane and Pablo Moses. Although, not quite as old or well-known as its Nor Cal contemporary Reggae On The River,

SNWMF has carved out it’s own legacy with previous years’ appearances by Johnny Clarke, Jah Shaka, Alton Ellis, Big Youth, Misty In Roots, The Ethiopians and other heavyweights. The 2011 line-up is equally as appealing with Collie Buddz, Taj Weekes, Brigadier Jerry on day one, Horace Andy, Romain Virgo and Rocksteady legends The Cables on the second day, while day three features Anthony B, Duane Stephenson and Dennis Alcapone among many others.

SNWMF solicits performer ideas via their active user “Phorum” where a variety of reggae rumors, events, trends and tunes are also discussed and debated. “We rely heavily on what our attendees have to say about our festival each year in an effort to improve on our creation from the year before,” says festival promoter Warren Smith. “[We] take careful note as to who they want to see grace our stage the next year.” Smith notes that this year’s presentation is accented by music from across different decades and eras. “Between The Cables and The Jolly Boys, Steel Pulse and Horace Andy, Rebelution and Collie Buddz, the 18th annual Sierra Nevada World Music Festival will feature three generations of the best in reggae music,” said Smith.

SNWMF takes place at the Mendocino County Fairgrounds, two hours north of San Francisco in Boonville, home to

the Anderson Valley Brewing Company, one of America’s best microbrewers. Three-day advance-purchase tickets are only \$150 while single-day tickets are between \$60-70. Camping is only available to 3-day ticket holders for an additional \$60. Camping is recommended in order to enjoy the late-night sound system sessions, which often feature surprise artist appearances. According to it’s website, SNWMF’s mission is to “promote music with a message of peace, unity and brotherhood, which transcends the divisions of race and culture.” With values like these along with active fan input it’s no wonder that this festival gets better every year.

Sierra Nevada World Music Festival 2011, June 17th, 18th & 19th, 2011, Mendocino County Fairgrounds, Boonville, California. <http://www.snwmf.com>.



Invasion Of The Mysteron Killer Sounds

Due for release on 16th of June, via Soul Jazz records, is a various 2CD / vinyl album compilation titled ‘Invasion Of The Mysteron Killer Sounds’. The album, though not entirely a true reggae album it does feature music from some of the radical, pioneering, electronic, scientific, dub producers of the Jamaican digital dancehall revolution such as King Jammy, Steely and Clevie, Sly Dunbar, Prince Jazzbo, King Tubby, Dave Kelly and Firehouse Crew along with electronic and futurist artists of today Harmonic 313, Diplo, Roots Manuva, South Rakkas Crew and The Bug, who in collaboration with Stuart Baker of Soul Jazz Records has compiled this album.

These new digital producers have taken inspiration from these digital styles that exploded out of Kingston in the 1980s and blended them to create work that is contemporary, whether it is dubstep, acid, hip-hop, electronic but can still be linked back to what at the time was considered to be the revolutionary computer-based sounds that were coming out of Jamaica.

The 2CD initial release comes in bespoke, limited edition, card box packaging while the deluxe gatefold double album editions come on heavy weight vinyl. Both editions also come with a specially commissioned graphic science-fiction novel by the Italian comic book designer Paolo Parisi, whose books have included diverse subjects from

John Coltrane to Chernobyl and tells the tale of what digital music will be in the future, featuring King Tubby, Steely and Clevie, Jammy, Jazzbo, along with Alien Sound Lord Abductors, Aural Freedom Fighters and Digi-Dub Voyagers.

The whole thing sounds very interesting and exciting and I’m sure ‘Invasion of the Killer Mysteron Sounds’ will be a must for any fan of Digital, Dancehall, and Dub, so if you’d like to pre-order the album to be sure of getting all the goodies go [here](#).

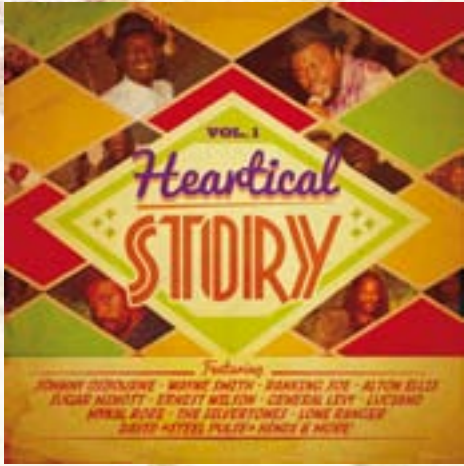
Wa Wood by Keke I

The infectious rhythms and bawdy lyrics of mento, the first Jamaican recorded music, have enjoyed a revival of late thanks to the likes of the Jolly Boys and the Blue Light Mento band.

Now Dean Fraser has produced a modern mento and calypso influenced track with former Sugar Minott protégé Keke I for Sugashak Records.

Titled Wa Wood it tells a similarly ribald tale of female self-amusement to the 1970s mento revivalist Stanley Beckford’s Soldering. Modern beats meet the traditional mento banjo and Fraser’s sax imitating a clarinet.

Wa Wood is out now and an album is rumoured to be in the works.



Heartical Story

Heartical is originally a French sound that started in 1999, and has since played all over the globe. They have clashed against, and juggled with, some of the biggest sounds in Europe and Jamaica, including Killamanjaro from Jamaica, Massive B from the U.S. and Supersonic from Germany.

In 2001 the crew launched their label aimed at releasing old school roots music. To date over 50 titles have been released on vinyl and digital download.

As a ten year celebration Heartical is now set to put out its first official compilation featuring an impressive line of artists. Most of them reggae legends like Johnny Osbourne, Little Roy and the late Sugar Minott and Alton Ellis, who sings Peaceful Valley over the Ministerio del Dub riddim, which must have been one of his last recordings.

‘Heartical Story’ compiles 20 tunes – 17 vocals and three

instrumentals – built on eight riddims from BDF (Basque Dub Foundation). Most riddims are relics of classics such as Derrick Harriott’s pulsating Tonight, Glen Brown’s haunting Slaving and Studio One’s Far East or the rolling Real Rock.

The compilation is a minor chord celebration in a foundation style. This is roots music as it was meant to be. Just listen to Lone Ranger in Original Style. It’s the chatting Ranger with his ribbiting and oinking against the riddim led by an apocalyptic organ.

Now available as digital download and on CD on June 6th.

‘Heartical Story’ shows that none of these foundational artists have lost their flow. They sound just as fresh in the 2000’s as they did in the 70’s and 80’s.

Reggae Summer Fest 2011

The Summer Reggae Fest at Fort St-Père in Brittany near St. Malo, France first took place over one night in 2008 and has now grown, following the success of last year, so that it is held over two days.

This year’s event will take place on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th July and offers a varied international line up across two stages. The Friday night will feature main stage performances from Jamaican stars Horace Andy

and Michael Prophet plus headliner the Italian born Alborosie. The sound system stage is set to offer the UK's Channel One and Martin Campbell along with French systems OBF and Legal Shot and a special appearance from Shinehead.

Saturday sees Jimmy Cliff, Aswad, Diana Rutherford and David Rodigan taking to the main stage, accompanied by an impressive team of artists on the sound sytem stage consisting of Johnny Clarke, Al Campbell, Dancehall originators U-Brown and Echo Minott plus the talented Scottish female vocalist Soom T and more from Shinehead.

Tickets are priced at 26€ for the Friday, 30€ for the Saturday or 52€ for both. Included in this is reserved camping for festival-goers, with toilets and water points. There is also a Festival Village with bar, Caribbean restaurant, vinyl and CD stands as well as clothing.

Site opens on Friday, 8th July at 12 am and closes Sunday, 10th July at 12pm.

We Must Rise Again

The Reggae community definitely has been quick to aid and observe the tragic earthquake in Japan on March 1, which is only fitting as the country has, particularly as of late, become a hotbed of fans of the greatest music in the world and a very



popular tour stop from some of the music's premier acts. Besides tunes from the likes of Gappy Ranks, there's also been a very large concert and other issues as well. Japanese label, Diamond Edge Records is also doing its best to bridge the gap as they're now releasing a jam packed single featuring some of the biggest names in the genre.

We Must Rise Again features Gyptian, Ghost, G-Whizz, Duane Stephenson, Bunny Rugs, Cherine Anderson, Lukie D, Junior X, Anthony Que, Ginjah, Chevaughn and Bushman who came together to sing the Norris Webb [of Third World] produced track for the people of Tohoku, Japan.

The song will be available digitally soon and 100% of the proceeds will go to benefit those affected by the earthquake, via the Japanese Red Cross.

Reggaeville presents Festiville 2011

Online magazine Reggaeville has launched Festiville 2011: a digital magazine focusing on European summer festivals. As well as the lowdown on over 70 different events it features interviews including Gentleman, Harrison Stafford and Ziggy and Stephen Marley, as well as 20 album reviews and photo spreads.

Dour Festival 2011

The Dour Festival held in Wallonia, Belgium from the 14th to 17th July 2011 is one Europe's premier music festivals and last year saw more than 125000 people pass through its gates.

Its all encompassing musical diversity, across seven stages is similar to that of the world famous Glastonbury Festival in England and in 2009 it received the award for best European festival in the intermediate category where it was competing against the likes of Bilbao BBK Live (Espagne), Coke Live Music Festival (Poland), Couleur Café (Belgium), Melt! Festival (Germany), Paleo Festival Nyon (Switzerland), Pinkpop Classic (Netherlands), Spirit of Burgas (Bulgariia), Taubertal-Festival (Germany) and TMobile INmusic Festival (Croatia).

There is a strong reggae presence this year with Friday night featuring performances from Dutch sound system Forward Fever with Leah Rosier along with UK sound systems King Midas Sound, Blood Shanti & The Shanti Ites featuring Emmanuel I Joseph and Conscious Sounds with a collective of Dougie Conscious aka Dougie Wardrop, Sandeeno, Christine Miller, Wayne Mc Arthur & Afrikan Simba. There is also an appearance from Welsh "ragga metal" band Skindred, whose blend of metal, punk, and reg-

gae from the disbandment of vocalist Benji Webbe's previous band, Dub War has been going since 1999.

Saturday sees veterans Johnny Clarke and Horace Andy joined by recently reformed Coventry (UK), 2-Tone legends The Selecter as well as the Belgium artist Wahwahsda, who combines reggae with hip hop while applying freestyle lyrics of, consciousness with comedy, plus Percubaba, from Rennes, France.

On Sunday it's the turn of Tarus Riley, Anthony B, Israel Vibration and Groundation plus French outfit O.B.F Dub Sound System, DJ Hugo Freegow from Liège, Belgium and Kingston's Busy Signal & HI Voltage Band. Busy is one of a new breed of dancehall artists and a member of The Alliance, founded by one of his heroes, Bounty Killer. He also has 3 studio albums behind him since his initial success with 'Step Out' in 2005 as well as a whole host of concerts, both in Jamaica and internationally.

Dour has a large camping ground, available from the 13th July, with plenty of amenities including WC, showers, running water, cooking areas, sanitary areas plus a bakery, shops, bars and all other types of vendors that can usually be found at these events. If you have eclectic musical tastes or just fancy something different then this could be the festival for you.



Bonafide Riddim

Late last year French label and backing band Dub Akom put out the powerful Weak by Konshens on the Bonafide riddim. They must have got some great response, because now they have decided to release a Bonafide one riddim album with some major singers and sing-jays from the Caribbean, Africa and Europe. The album features pounding cuts from usual suspects such as Jah Mason, Lutan Fyah, Pressure and Natty King. But Dub Akom has also voiced some lesser known artists, and all of these nearly outshine the wider known ones. Bahamas-based singer Ricardo Clarke is in fine form with his gospel-tinged singing style. South African Jahnett Tafari is equally impressive. The album features 15 vocal outings and one instrumental. All of these of the highest quality.

The Bonafide one riddim album hit the streets as digital download on June 7th and as CD on June 20th.

Garance Festival 2011 Final Line Up

Along with the addition of The Abyssinians, Queen Ifrica, Tony Rebel plus Junior Reid & Sly & Robbie, announced soon after we originally brought you news of the Garance Reggae Festival another host of new acts have been confirmed to appear at the French event which takes place from 27th till 30th July 2011 in Bagnols-sur-Cèze.

These additional acts are, on the Wednesday night in Dub Station Corner Swiss based outfit Lion Youth who have been influenced by the Channel One Sound System, Jah Shaka and Aba Shanti I plus French crew Steppin Forward and fellow country man the DJ, composer T.i.T. who is growing something of reputation in the dub community with his experimentation of mixing psychedelic breakbeat and dub which has led to his work being played by the likes of Iration Steppas, Blackboard Jungle and LFO. Thursday will see the arrival of Ken Boothe on the Main Stage along with the UK artist Natty who released the EP ‘Things I’ve Done’ last year.

Junior Kelly and the Senegalese performer Kayamanga, who communicates his vision of Africa and its richness of culture and traditions through a gallery of poetic verse are added to the roster on Friday, while Saturday sees the ap-



pearance of “crossover” sensation Gyptian. Also on the bill that night and flying the flag for the Virgin Islands scene is Pressure, who will hopefully be showcasing some of his new material from his forthcoming album with producer Don Corleon due out some time in the autumn. Another artist appearing on Saturday who has also tasted success with Corleon

is his cousin Protoje, who released the much lauded album ‘The Seven Year Itch’, last year. Completing the list of new acts appearing at the festival is one of the most prolific engineers and producers out of England Gussie P, who will be on at Dub Station Corner. His career started in the early ‘80s and in that time he has worked

with the likes of Mafia & Fluxy, Fred Locks, Michael Prophet, Cutty Ranks, Earl 16 and Capleton. Here though he will be on stage with Prince Livijah, who has worked with host of labels and sound systems but is now at Reality Shock, where he is preparing an album.

The Jah Army Riddim

The latest release from Ghetto Youths International, the Jah Army Riddim, is not only likely to be one of the bigger compositions of 2011, but it’s easily one of the most interesting as well. Of course, being a bite from the Marley clan, it’s going to get a bit of an extra shine, but in this case, it doesn’t need the help at all. The composition is actually a reanimation of the classic General Penitentiary Riddim and it’s blessed by a tune from the Marleys, Stephen & Damian who link up for the title track alongside the infamous Buju Banton, which also features prominently on the former’s recent album, ‘Revelation Pt. 1: The Root of Life’.

But that’s not all - That loaded track is joined by efforts from the likes of Chris Ellis [son of Alton], Tarrus Riley, Jah Cure, Marley regular, Spragga Benz, even Pressure Busspipe and others.

The Jah Army Riddim is up and available for your digital consumption right now. Fans of

Roots Reggae, new and old alike are sure to find something to enjoy within.

New Genre Based 2CD Series From Trojan

A few years ago Trojan Records brought out the box set series that collated many of their past releases and grouped them into Ska, Rocksteady, Roots, Dub etc. well now they are doing it again with the launch of a new genre-based 2CD series, though thankfully not pigeon holing some into Skinhead, Mod and even Suedehead reggae sets, that will feature the very best in Jamaican sounds from the past half-century.

Many of the songs drawn from both the Trojan and Island catalogues will have been available on these past box sets or on other compilation releases, though Trojan do say that some recordings are making their CD debuts, but whatever your taste in Jamaican music whether it be Mento and R&B or Roots through to Ragga

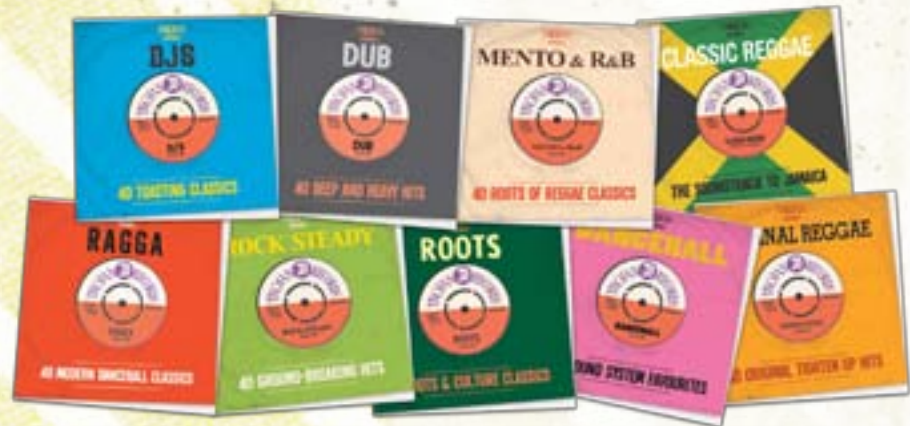
there is something for all and when you get 40 tracks for just £4.99 are a great value way to supplement your collection or collect all these songs if you haven’t done so before.

New Strange Things from Irie Ites

Veteran French label and production crew Irie Ites has recently put out four new cuts on their bouncy Strange Things Hip-Hop riddim. The original version was produced by Phil Pratt and had John Holt on vocals.

Irie Ites first version was issued in late 2009 and was soon followed by a hip-hop remix. Both versions were voiced by artists such as Junior Kelly, Pressure and veteran deejay Trinity. Now Irie Ites has voiced Sizzla and French singjay Ilements on Strange Things Hip-Hop and also remixed Lutan Fyah’s Work it Out and Chezidek’s wicked ganja anthem Bun di Ganja.

The new cuts now are available on vinyl and soon on digital platforms.





Listen to Brina



Brina is an upcoming female reggae singer from Jamaica, who recently put out her debut double A side single Listen/Real Reggae Music.

These two tunes are real scorchers. Believe me. If you like early 70's reggae Trojan or Pama style, then both tunes will surely appeal to you.

Listen is a soul-drenched one drop whereas Real Reggae Music is a pure summer banger reminiscent of Reggae From the Ghetto with its gospel chorus.

Brina recently opened for The Mighty Diamonds and The Jolly Boys on their UK tours. And her upcoming debut album features a stellar line-up of musicians – Sly Dunbar, Toots Hibbert, Michael “Ibo” Cooper, Dean Fraser and Nambo Robinson just to name a few.

Brina's powerful voice and style can be compared to the queen of reggae Marcia Griffiths, so be sure to check out her single on a download platform near you.

New Horizon by Ras Zacharri

Shem Ha Boreh Records delivers the latest and sophomore album from the very interesting Ras Zacharri, 'New Horizon', who broke out in 2009 with the surprising hit album 'Herbs Man' which did more than a little damage and now label and artist are trying to duplicate their initial successes and from the quality of the new album, their chances are quite high. Zacharri was joined by the likes of Natty King, Gregory Isaacs and Luciano on 'Herbs Man' and this time around, he's also enlisted a formidable trio of guests - Veteran singers Earl Sixteen and Mark Tenn join on separate tunes as does wicked chanter, Tiwony, from

out of Guadeloupe, on previous hit single Pagan's Eyes. Also, the album features production from the esteemed Uprising Roots Band.

Ras Zacharri's new album, 'New Horizon' is in stores, digital and physical right now, courtesy of Shem Ha Boreh Records.



Diana Rutherford is a Ghetto Princess

Jamaican singer Diana Rutherford has in the last years made a name for herself with some strong titles for French – nowadays resident in Jamaica – producer SherKhan, the man behind Perfect's stunning album 'French Connection'. She has also been produced by veteran Jamaican producer Philip "Fatis" Burrell.

Now she is headed to drop her debut album 'Ghetto Princess', where all tunes have been recorded together with SherKhan. The album has been preceded by the acoustic tune

Rebel.

SherKhan and Diana Rutherford have been working together for five years, and one of the earliest titles was the R&B-flavored duet with Erup, You Mean the World to Me.

Since then she has voiced riddims such as Box Guitar and Sufferah as well as a single with Sizzla titled A New Day. These three, along with 13 more, are available on 'Ghetto Princess' that hit the streets in late June.



Firm In Jah by Slimmah Sound and Lyrical Benjie

Roots Tribe Records has announced its 10th release. It's a showcase album where Slimmah Sound teams up with Lyrical Benjie, resident singer for the acclaimed King Shiloh sound system that hails from the Netherlands.

Their previous collaborations have proven fruitful. And the new album – 'Firm in Jah' – will

probably follow in the same path.

The album contains five vocals followed by five dub versions. The production is handled by multi-faceted musician Tim Baumgarten.

The pair started working together in 2008 and the first releases were the wicked Sit n Wonda and Girl Don't Trust the World 7" singles. The former is also available on the 'Love Jah More' showcase album.

'Firm in Jah' will be available on CD, vinyl and digital download on July 1st.

Zion Train Dub Revolutionaries

Set for release on the 16th of June is a 2CD "Best Of" collection from one of the UK's leading reggae influenced acts Zion Train. The album has been compiled by lifelong Zion colleagues Maken of Warsaw and Les Earthdoctor of Wales, with the bands full cooperation and along with many of their hits will include vinyl-only rarities and a never before released radio session for John Peel.

Zion Train started out in the late 80s as a sound system fusing dub with minimal-techno & global influences which helped to redefine dub music in the 90s. In 2007 they received recognition for all their hard work in pushing the boundaries of

reggae and dance music when their ninth studio album, 'Live as One', received the hugely coveted 'Best Dub Album' at the Jamaican Reggae Grammys.

During the bands past twenty odd years they have toured extensively taking them from the UK to the USA and across Asia, South America and back through Europe helping them to become one of the most popular live dub acts in the world today.

If you want to catch the Zion Train live experience you can catch them at the following venues throughout the UK and Ireland between now and October.

J Boog EP

J Boog really made a name for himself with last year's Let's Do it Again on Don Corleon's Major riddim. Since then he has voiced tunes for French duo Bost & Bim among others.

These two tunes along with six other are collected on the brand new J Boog EP, titled EP, available as digital download.

J Boog's raspy soulful voice suits several types of riddims, something the EP shows very well. From the hip-hop inspired one drop Coldest Zone to the mellow Waiting on the Rain, with its infectious whistling.

Included are also an interesting take on Junior Murvin's Lee

Perry produced classic Police and Thieves.

This set makes it clear that J Boog should be awarded a full album for himself.



Reggae Sun Ska Festival 2011

The 14th edition of Reggae Sun Ska Festival takes place this year from Friday the 5th to Sunday the 7th of August in the picturesque town of Pauillac close to the ocean, lakes and vineyards, near Bordeaux in the South of France.

Despite the Ska term in the festivals name there is varied mix of reggae styles from entertainers old and new such as The Heptones, Toots & the Maytals, Luciano, Romain Virgo, the Marley brothers Ky-Mani and Stephen plus a splash of Hip Hop on the Sunday night with an appearance by Art Melody from Burkina Faso.

Reality Shock Free The World

UK based studio and record label Reality Shock have just released the ‘Free The World’ riddim album which was recorded at the House Of Hits studio in Spanish Town, Jamaica.

The riddim itself is in an original roots/steppers style and features drums by the legendary Leroy “Horsemouth” Wallace, star of the 1978 film “Rockers”. There are 15 vocal cuts on the album from some of Jamaica’s leading reggae artists, including Jah Mason, Junior Kelly, Lutan Fyah, Jah Mali, Tony Curtis & many more.

The album is available to download now at itunes with selected cuts due out on 12” later this year.

We Remember Gregory Isaacs



Veteran Jamaican saxophonist and producer Dean Fraser has assembled an all-star cast of singers and musicians to pay tribute the late and great Gregory Isaacs, who passed away last year.

‘We Remember Gregory Isaacs’ is a two disc album released by VP Records. The first disc presents 16 of legendary vocalist’s hits as well all lesser know tunes. Featured artists are among others Tarrus Riley, who sings Front Door, and Gyp-tian, on a version of My Number One.

The second disc contains instrumental versions performed by Dean Fraser himself.

This is the second tribute to the Cool Ruler. French producers Irie ltes did a relick of Soon Forward voiced by The Tamlins, Naggo Morris, Trinity and Dillinger already in December.

‘We Remember Gregory Isaacs’ will reach the stores in August.

Free from Chains by Kabaka Pyramid

Kingstonian singjay Kabaka Pyramid has just released the interesting single Free from Chains, available for free download over at Bandcamp. It is a tasty mix of roots and early dancehall scented with some hip-hop. The riddims is in the same vein as Stephen Marley’s recent Jah Army riddim.

The single is taken from the EP ‘Rebel Music’, scheduled for release in July.

Don Corleon Presents Dub In HD



It is not often these days that you hear dub music produced and mixed in Jamaica. Last year Alborosie put out ‘Dub Clash’, a limited edition project where he had dubbed some of his own material, as well as other well know reggae tunes, in a vintage dub style.

Now it is happily enough time again for a Jamaican dub album. In February a Youtube clip of Jamaican producer Don Corleon dubbing in his studio started circling around. Soon it was made official that he was working on a dub album titled ‘Dub in HD’.

The album presents ten dub versions of riddims such as Drop Leaf, Major and Seasons, but also individual tunes, like Protoje’s Wrong Side of the Law.

United Reggae now has the opportunity to present a sample

of one full track from the album. Above you can listen to Natural Black’s Far From Reality on the Seasons riddim.

This is a wonderful initiative from a young Jamaican producer, and I certainly hope that others will follow in his footsteps.

‘Dub in HD’ will be available for digital download on June 21.

The Template Riddim



PBR Productions may not yet be a household name in the Reggae music community, but with more and more output such as what is to be found on their Template Riddim, that may prove to be only a temporary state for them. In just four vocal tracks, this set manages to make a mighty fine imprint on the listener and one which likely ensures that they’ll be coming back for the label’s next release. Vibing this sweet composition is the up and coming Jay Stutta, Adena Myrie [Sister of infamous Reggae legend, Buju Banton - née Mark Myrie],

Luciano and Lutan Fyah alongside another up and comer in Jah Victory, who is very impressive.

The Template Riddim is available digitally right now, courtesy of PBR Productions.

Perfect Says Hold On Buju

Hold On Buju is the latest release from the eccentric and colourful chanter from out of St. Ann, Jamaica, Perfect, who is also gearing up for a full album, on which the tune is featured, later in 2011. The track comes from the venerable Californian based imprint, Lustre Kings Productions and is (OBVIOUSLY) in tribute to the infamous Reggae legend Buju Banton, who is currently incarcerated, awaiting sentencing, on a significant drug conviction. Certainly this isn’t the first tune of its kind, but it just as certain to be one of the finest.



Perfect’s forthcoming album, ‘Back For The First Time’ will be in stores soon, but fans can currently grab up the album’s initial single, Hold On Buju, through etailers across the globe, courtesy of Zojak Worldwide.

New Releases From Jahspora Production

Parisian label Jahspora Production who brought out some fine releases by the likes of Takana Zion, Manu Baobab and Ras Mykha last year are back with two new 7"vinyl 45s.

New Jerusalem is by singjay artist BraveHeart, with whom the label released the anti-Sarkozy government tune Paris is Burning also last year. This time round the rhetoric is seeking guidance, protection and giving praise to Jah with the flip a throbbing dub by Step-Art.

Marina-P & Ganja Tree make up the second release with In Your Eyes produced in conjunction with ADM. A bit of a stepper this with Marina supplying a captivating sung chorus to Ganja Tree's dancehall chat. The flip again features a dub in a classic style that has been mixed by Nico129 and arranged by B.Nice & Jahspora.

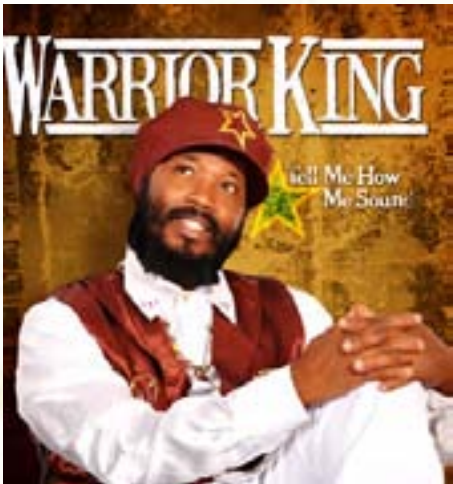
Tell Me How Me Sound by Warrior King

The once very promising Warrior King may not have been heard from in quite some time, but he's soon headed back to change that and in a very big way - His brand new album [number four to date], 'Tell Me

How Me Sound'. The album, which is set to reach stores in August is produced by veteran Colin "Bulby" York and is to be released by Tad's Records, which has a reputation for [generally] pushing high quality and predominately Roots Reggae sets.

Reportedly 'Tell Me How Me Sound' will feature mainly new tunes, with the only exception being previous single - The very well received Melody.

The return of Warrior King, 'Tell Me How Me Sound' hits stores across the planet in August.



London International Ska Festival 2012

After the phenomenal success of London's first International Ska Festival in over twenty years it has been announced that the event will take place again next year over the week-end of 3rd -6th May.



2012's 4 night festival is to be held across 3 venues The Brixton Academy, The Sheperds Bush Empire and The Islington Academy and promoter Sean Flowerdew has just announced the first 2 bands that will be appearing.

First up is one of 2 Tone's greatest musicians and writers Noel Davies of the The Selecter who'll be appearing with his new ten piece band to perform some of The Selecter's classic hits like 3 Minute Hero, Missing Words and Too Much Pressure plus new material that is said will bring the 2 Tone style and passion into the 21st century. Also confirmed are another English band and one of the highlights of this year's show, the Hotknives, who just missed out on the 2-Tone explosion when they formed in 1982 and are renowned for their wry lyrical accounts of everyday life.

Earlybird tickets are on sale now from www.londoninternationalskafestival.co.uk/tickets/ with the first 100 x 4 day tickets at a discounted price of £99.99 plus no booking fee, saving you a whopping £40.



Universal Tribute to Gregory Isaacs by Suga Roy & Conrad Crystal

On October 25, 2010 the Reggae community lost one of its most legendary of voices when Gregory Anthony Isaacs died in London after an extended battle with cancer. The reaction was great across the world and eight months later, wonderfully, it continues, as the venerable duo, Suga Roy & Conrad Crystal now release their latest project - 'Universal Tribute to Gregory Isaacs'. The album features the pair taking on 18 of Isaacs' most well known hits such as Rumours, Universal, Tune In and, of course, Night Nurse. Also, joining in on the album are veterans Fantan Mojah and Luciano on separate tracks.

'Universal Tribute to Gregory Isaacs' can currently be purchased through etailers worldwide and will be avail-

able on physical CD release on June 23rd by Fireball Records (Suga Roy's own label).

Buju Banton Sentenced To 10 Years

Today United States Judge Jim Moody in the Sam M Gibbons US Court in Tampa Florida sentenced Buju Banton to 10 years for drug trafficking offences.

A jury found him guilty in February of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute cocaine, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offence and using a telephone to facilitate a drug trafficking offence. The judge threw out the gun charge, acknowledging that Banton had no idea others involved in the conspiracy were carrying guns, which was the basis for the charge and he was therefore not convicted of carrying a weapon himself.

The harsh sentence is in fact the lowest sentence legally allowed for his role in a large cocaine trafficking deal that took place in 2009 and had he been found guilty of the firearms charge he could have expected at least a further 5 years to his sentence.

Banton appeared at the sentence hearing, which lasted just over an hour, dressed in grey jail scrubs and shackled at the ankles. He did not speak in court and did not react when

Judge Moody announced the sentence he just blew a kiss and waved to his subdued supporters, some of who were crying, as he was led away.

He will serve his time at the FCI prison facility in Miami and with good behaviour could be out in 6 years. His attorney David Oscar Markus says he plans to appeal stressing, "This fight is not over, we will keep fighting for him. Mark Myrie (Buju's real name) is my brother, and I'm going to keep fighting until they tell me to stop."

Rototom Sunsplash Festival 2011

The main stage line-up reads like a who's who of reggae, past and present and with this year being the 30th anniversary since Bob Marley's passing will feature son Stephen Marley opening night of Thursday 18th with more of his offspring appearing in the shape of Kymani and Ziggy Marley along with wife, and mother to both Ziggy and Stephen Rita Marley on Tuesday 23rd.

There is also a Dub Station that will feature the likes of Bush Chemists, Adrian Sherwood, Jah Observer, Channel One, O.B.F., Aba Shanti, Iration Steppas ft. Maki Banton & YT, Stand High Patrol ft. Pupa Jim, Blackboard Jungle, King Alpha, and Dubkasm ft. Solo Banton, plus a Ska Club with DJ 1-TA Raw & 3rd Ball.

Black Judah's California Green EP

Sugar Black and Dylan Judah, collectively known as Black Judah are set to release their much anticipated and environmentally conscious EP set, ‘California Green’ which features the well respected [and quite popular] duo not only delivering their typically impressive blend of Roots Reggae and Hip-Hop, but doing so while keeping some big company. In just seven tracks, the pair manages to link up with Jamaican Reggae stars Anthony B and Warrior King and also legendarily ‘green’ rapper, Snoop Dogg, on the project’s title track.

Black Judah has amassed quite the large fan base and one would imagine [correctly] that while they continue to wait for the full album, this release would find a very comfortable home on the players of both Reggae and Hip-Hop fans. We won’t have to wait too long to find out either as their new EP, ‘California Green’ reaches digital stores on June 28, courtesy of Atomic Records & Zojak Worldwide.

Phoenix City Records

A new ska, rocksteady and reggae label is on its way from one of the UK’s longest run-



ning independents Cherry Red Records who were founded in 1978.

This new subsidiary label named after one of the Skatalites biggest hits, Phoenix City, is to be run by Sean Flowerdew the keys man behind bands Pama International, The Loafers and proprietor of the Rockers Revolt label. The aim of the label will be to release the finest in ska, rocksteady and reggae from around the world, from classic reissues to the best new sounds around.

The label launches in August 2011 with a series of previously unreleased digital releases from The Caroloregians, the original King Fatty featuring members from Big Boss Man, The Bongolian & The Loafers, Intensified, The Sidewalk Doctors, plus reissues from Pama International and Capone & The Bullets. August will also see the first of what will be a series of monthly samplers ‘Phoenix City Scorchers’ showcasing some of the hottest ska, rocksteady & reggae sounds of now, with Volume One includ-

ing previously unreleased material from Sir Horace Panter of The Specials.

With the launch date not that far away the label is at present still looking for new and established acts to sign, so if you represent a band/solo artist in the fields of ska, reggae, rocksteady, dub or even soul then send an email to sean@pamainternational.co.uk with a mp3 or weblink to your music.

Also Due to Sean’s commitments to this new label and his work with organising The London International Ska Festival, it does mean that the Rockers Revolt label which he started around three years ago and brought out some fine releases in its time from the likes of Ed Rome, The Slackers and Mungos Hi Fi will be slowly wound up and as such they are holding a closing down sale with prices starting from as little as prices starting at £0.01p, so visit www.rockersrevolt.com/ while stocks last.

Joggo's Modern Rockers Vol. 1

Having spent the last few years making and securing his name on the Dutch and Surinam Reggae scenes, the very talented Amsterdam born chanter now turns his focus to the entire globe as he releases his debut album, ‘Modern Rockers Vol. 1’. Having recorded for a variety of labels, such as Not Easy At All & JahSolidRock, Silly Walks,

Necessary Mayhem and most recently The Handcart Market, Joggo finds himself back in the comfortable care of Dredda Records for the album, which is reportedly where he got his start.

As the album’s title would suggest, this project features a more vintage vibes of Roots Reggae which is where Joggo thrives on tunes such as recent single Strong Like Lion [alongside Turbulence & Jah Decko], the cool lover’s piece, I Am Blessed, DJ Play Me Some Roots and other winners.

This album is very strong and you can soon hear for yourself as ‘Modern Rockers Vol. 1’ by Joggo for Dredda Records is set to reach stores across the world on June 27.



Amsterdam Reggae Festival 2011

On Sunday July 31st the Amsterdam Reggae Festival will be holding its first outdoor edition at the NDSM Werf in Amsterdam.

This reggae festival has taken place 4 times before at indoor venues the Amsterdam Heineken Music Hall and the Rotterdam Ahoy and has featured reggae artists like Mavado, Jah Cure, Mr Vegas, Richie Spice, Tanya Stephens and many more.

The main stage line up for the event is: Gentleman, Midnite, Junior Kelly, The Skatalites, Ken Boothe, Romain Virgo, Third World, Lutan Fyah, Ziggi Recado

This will be supported by a Jamrock Area with the Jamrock Soundsystem and special guests as well as The Roots Corner, that is said will feature several top international DJ’S, though no information on exactly who is available at present. It all gets underway at 13:00hrs and tickets are priced at € 35 available online at www.1stpriority.nl, www.seetickets.nl and all Free Record shops in The Netherlands.

The Return of Xterminator

One of the most influential and successful Reggae labels of all time, Xterminator Productions, has been hard at work under the guidance of the legendary

Philip ‘Fatis’ Burrell and now the world gets a taste of exactly what they’ve been pushing recently. The very notable label is about to deliver a trio of excellent tunes which are set to soon be available around the world.

The up and coming Jesse Royal [who, reportedly, re-energized Burrell’s passion for making music] offers up two very strong tracks. The first, I Need You, is a duet with singer Kayla and is done across a new Xterminator riddim, the big and beautiful Bridgetown. Royal also returns with the syrupy sweet and classically vibed set, Butterflies, which is a big Lover’s Rock tune, not to be missed.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE PICTURE? THEY ONLY PAINT IT TO TRICK YA"

And what would a return of Xterminator be without the presence of their most well known product, Sizzla Kalonji. Riding high of the enormity of his recent release, ‘The Scriptures’, Sizzla returns for the label with which he established his now legendary name for the latest of what has to be hundreds of large tunes between artist and label, the stirring social commentary What’s Wrong With the Picture.

All three tunes from Xterminator Productions will be available on etailers worldwide, very soon.

BETH LESSER

"I saw reggae as vibrant and pure. There is probably no other genre that is so detailed, open to new influences and musical experimentation"

Beth Lesser provides reggae history

Across all industries and fields there are people who work in the background, but still play a very important role. It can be a songwriter or functionaries at a marathon. People we are in great need of, but that are rarely seen or get the appreciation they deserve.

Reggae journalist and photographer Beth Lesser is one such. She has been a vital part of the international reggae scene since the late 70's when she became interested in Jamaican music.

"I started listening to reggae after punk had died in the late 70's. I liked the aggressiveness in punk, its grassroots feel and spontaneity. But the music lost all that and went bitter and in-

troverted," says Beth Lesser.

She began to seek out new music, music that you could have fun to. And that's when reggae came into her life.

"It was through punk and the English two-tone scene that I came in contact with reggae. Also, I had anarchist friends who loved Bob Marley and The Harder They Come soundtrack. I saw reggae as vibrant and pure. There is probably no other genre that is so detailed, open to new influences and musical experimentation," she says.

Started Reggae Quarterly

Through her anarchist friends she met Jamaican reggae musician Ernie Smith, a rendezvous that further increased her interest in reggae. As a result, she and her husband David Kingston took the initiative to start the cult magazine Reggae Quarterly in 1981.

The magazine was and still is - if you manage to get your hands of a copy - much appreciated, particularly because it included interviews and photographs of many legendary artists and musicians.

"My husband and I went to Ja-

maica in search of Augustus Pablo. Our original idea was to make a magazine about his Rockers International operations."

Augustus Pablo turned out to be a humble person and very willing to talk about his music and activities. But he did not think the pair would be confined writing only on Rockers International. Instead, he invited them to dances and various studios where they were given unique opportunities to meet many of Jamaica's stars of the time.

"My best memory is when we went with Augustus Pablo to King Tubby's Studio. It was on our first trip to Jamaica, and to see King Tubby in work is all a reggae fan can dream of."



An unbiased view

In addition to Reggae Quarterly, she has published two books - King Jammy's and Dancehall: The Story of Jamaican Dancehall Culture. She has also just put a book on her longtime friend - the late and great Sugar Minott. The Legend of Sugar Minott & Youth Promotion is a vivid portrait of this acclaimed singer and has rendered great interest.

King Jammy's is, as the title indicates, a deep exploration of one of Jamaica's top producers. The Story of Jamaican Dancehall Culture is wider and describes reggae - especially dancehall - in an easy and free way. The book is spiced with fantastic artwork and personal experiences from 80's Kingston. "What inspired me to write Dancehall: The Story of Jamaican Dancehall Culture

was that the information and facts available on the Internet provided a biased and unrealistic view of history. For example, the artists with computer knowledge have had the opportunity to highlight their own role in the music, while others have been forgotten," she says and continues:

"At the same time, such a great part of dancehall music was created live rather than on disc. Many of the artists who were not recording have not been given any space at all in history. For example, Brigi [Brigadier Jerry] and Charlie Chaplin were influenced by Canada's Screecha Nice."

Several talented women

Beth Lesser says she is part of the old reggae generation and does not keep track of current reggae artists.

"I like parts of contemporary reggae, but I prefer the deejay style that rides the riddim, rather than forcing it. I also pre-

fer live drums, especially Santa Davis. He would make any riddim magic just by improvising. However, I am glad to finally see so many talented women. I love Lady Saw and Queen Ifrica," she concludes.

A few fast ones to Beth Lesser

FAVOURITE ARTIST?

I have many - Barrington Levy is one, Sugar Minott of course and U Roy are some of my favorites.

BEST REGGAE SONG?

Dance Pon The Corner by Jah Thomas.

BEST REGGAE YEARS?

1980, or perhaps 1979 to 1981. They knew how to use percussion.

BEST REGGAE PRODUCER?

Junjo and Jah Life - their early works. George Phang has also had some classics and Jammy has been successful ever since the 70's.

**Interview by Erik Magni
Photos by Beth Lesser**



GABRIEL CALCOTT

FROM REALITY CHANT

"When I started Rastafari was just a part of reggae. Now Rastafari is first"

Gabriel Calcott is a producer from Christchurch, New Zealand, where he runs Reality Chant productions, whose rhythms are fast making a name for themselves all around the world. Since the day he was born he was exposed to reggae music from his parents' record store, working there from age sixteen. Realizing the life of a record store worker involves the daily pain of seeing choice platters pass into the hands of your customers, the young Gabriel shrewdly took advantage of the lack of demand for rare vintage reggae in Christchurch and much of the second-hand stock went straight in to his own crate! Around the same time he became a selector and, in 2000, started his own Dubwise sound system and production house with friend and musical collaborator Confucius. Their first album 'Dubwise Meets Confucius At The Control Tower' was released in 2002 and featured vocals from one Papa Levi (not Phillip Papa

Levi the Saxon mc) and a Maori chanter named LittleJah. Their next long-player was 2003's locally massive 'Dubwise Reality Chant', which boasted international voice talent in the form of London-based Montserrat-born Raggadon and the Nigerian Iya Far'I – both of whom encouraged Calcott in his growing Rastafarian faith. Gabriel then started his Reality Chant label in 2007, which has issued an album by Papa Levi – retitled Sniper Levi – as well as big rhythms such as Country Living, Nah Bow Down and Fire I Blaze (the latter two being relicks of old Dubwise backings) ridden by Luciano, Natty King, Hi Kee, Deadly Hunta and many more. Just as our interview began a minor tremor shook the studio, warning of the tragic earthquake that would devastate Christchurch exactly one month later. Fortunately, Gabriel was out of the country at the time, but our thoughts are with all those who have suffered since then.

Your studio is outside of the city of Christchurch, right near the beach. How does your environment inform your music, and what is a typical day?

I can't stand city life. I have to be semi out of Babylon to function. I look out of my window and see the hills and it's important for my creative process to be in an irie space. I do music full time so every day I'm in the studio. Reality Chant is still me and Confucius – between the two of us we can build a whole rhythm. I'm a Nyabinghi drummer so in all my rhythms you'll hear the heartbeat. I'll lay down the drums then I'll take it to his studio round the corner where he's got a wicked Midi setup and we lay down guitars, bass, keyboards. He plays melodica and flute and all types of things. Then I'll take it back to mine and do any overdubs, bring in a trumpet player and do the mixing and post production. We've got a really tight system and can put down a rhythm in about 3 hours.

How influenced is your music by Rastafari?

To me it's all about Rastafari. Getting into reggae music was the foundation of Rastafari. But as I've grown with reggae music I've also grown in the faith and livity. My last album Kings Highway was livicated to The King and spreading the positive message of Rastafari and everything that comes with it. Reggae for me is a vehicle to work with conscious artists who have a strong voice and something to say. My last album Kings Highway was livicated to The King and spreading the positive message of Rastafari and everything that comes



with it. Reggae for me is a vehicle to work with conscious artists who have a strong voice and something to say.

How did you go from producing local artists to international superstars?

It started with the Country Living rhythm. From about 2007 it became my mission to push reggae from New Zealand to the rest of the world because it's such a limited market here. When we released our first two Dubwise albums in 2002-3 reggae was booming in NZ but by the time we put out Sniper Levi's album reggae wasn't so cool anymore with the youth. The music industry was suffering

generally in New Zealand and it was time to start looking more globally. The first artist from Jamaica I voiced was Chrisinti whose album Comfort My People I really loved. I messaged him through Myspace and sent him the rhythm and within two days he'd phoned back and left a message saying he'd written two songs, one of which he sang down the phone! I was new to the business then and didn't know how to negotiate so I think he was pretty happy with the deal! He recorded the tune called So High which set the foundation for the rhythm and working with future artists.

So who was your next link?

A couple of months later Jah Mason was touring with a guy from Australia's Firehouse sound system who I had brought over to New Zealand for a show. Jah Mason and his manager wanted to record with some local producers from Australia or New Zealand so Lucius from Firehouse put me in touch with them. I sent them the rhythm and the Chrisinti tune and they were really interested so Jah Mason wrote the tune while he was in Australia, flew over for a gig and met me at the studio to voice Put Jah Above on Country Living and a combination for Sniper Levi's album. When Jah Mason's manager got back to Jamaica he emailed me links with more artists and I voiced



Ginjah who I was really feeling at the time from his song Unification with the German crew Scrucialists. He voiced a nice lovers tune called Happy Years.

How did you link with Luciano?

Just after the Ginjah tune Luciano and Mikey General came out to New Zealand to do some shows and Dubwise were the support act. I picked them up and gave my bro who was driving the Country Living cd for the stereo. As we pulled up to the lights I could see Luciano and Mikey bopping to the music and looking at me with this puzzled look! That night they wrote a song for the rhythm and before the show the next day we went to the studio and voiced the tunes. By luck my Dubwise backing vocalists had just flown into Christchurch that day so Luciano was able to direct the backing vocals for his own song. After that I had enough tunes to put out the rhythm so I contacted One Love in Jamaica and negotiated to

get the vinyl pressed and distributed and the rhythm was also released online via Soundquake in Germany in 2008.

How did you come up with your Kings Highway album released in 2010?

Well the Country Living was really more aimed at a dj market with the 45s and it wasn't so much for home listening so I thought I needed to put those tracks on an album. I didn't want to do a one rhythm album because that concept wouldn't really work here in New Zealand so I decided to work on a multi-rhythm album. I linked with some more artists like Lutan Fyah, Natty King and Hi Kee and told them beforehand the concept of the album was The Kings Highway. Natty King and Sniper Levi – who had by this time changed his name again to David Levi which is how he started – did a combination for the title track. They wrote their parts separately but somehow as Rastamen the spirit brought

them together to do a song that worked – I hardly had to edit it at all. I told the rest of the artists I didn't want slackness or even lovers tunes – just pure heartical Rasta business.

You've also been doing some work with Germany's House Of Riddim. How did that happen?

That was through Lenny Roots, Jah Mason's now ex-manager. When I voiced the first tune with Natty King on Kings Highway, Fyah Bed, Lenny and House Of Riddim were co-producing Natty King's album [Born To Be Free] and he said they'd really like to use the song for the album. They wanted to slightly re-record some of my rhythm – keep it the same but use some of their live band – so I sent him all the files and he recorded live drums, bass and keys and mixed it in.

That album is popular in the Caribbean so even in a slightly different form that must have been great.

Yeah it was. Especially reading reviews that said Fyah Bed was the highlight tune! I've also remixed one of their Natty King tunes with Louie Culture which is coming out on his new album. Since Ganga Lee I've always had a huge amount of respect for Louie Culture. Since Lenny stopped working with Jah Mason he's been producing Louie and I've produced about five tunes for the album – one of

them is called Judgement Fi Babylon on the Fire I Blaze rhythm. I reckon it's one of the biggest tunes both me and Louie Culture have ever recorded. We've talked about artists from New Zealand, Jamaica and continental Europe. How did you link with Deadly Hunta from the UK for your huge tune Give Thanks on the Fire I Blaze rhythm – and when is the album coming out? One of Hunta's main producers DJ Skitz has been coming out to New Zealand for the last ten years. I helped co-promote his gig with Rodney P in about 2008 with Nice Up crew from Wellington. I played Skitz the Country Living rhythm in the car and he said he had a brethren in London – one of the wickedest vocalists I was ever going to hear! – who he had to link me with. He introduced us via email and Hunta voiced the Fire I Blaze rhythm in early 2009 – so it was a little while later that I actually released it! Initially we were going to do an EP but reasoning with him last year we decided to put our tunes together with others he's done in the UK and Europe for Damalistik Roots Survival and Reality Shock and do an album between Reality Chant and Hunta's own Much Love label. But he's still working on getting his album out with Catch 22 which he's been pushing in all his live shows so that has to come out first.

New Zealand used to have a Rastafarian MP in Nandor Tanczos which hit the international headlines. How supportive an

environment is New Zealand for Rastafari?

Brother Nandor's been working to establish a United Rastafari Aotearoa National Council. I was up in the North Island with him at a gathering the weekend before last with a big group of Rastas. The brother Nandor is a really serious brethren and personally I probably wouldn't have been as willing to be involved if it weren't for his work in parliament. He's such a hardworking, trustworthy, organized and honest bro so when it comes to organizing a united voice for all Rastas in NZ he was the ideal person. In New Zealand Rastafari is majorly misrepresented, especially in the media. They think Rastas are just pot smoking hippies. There's a 12 Tribes in Auckland but they've had issues in the organization which don't put Rastas in the best light. There's a lack of spokespeople for Rastas in New Zealand which is why we're establishing the council for I and I people as a movement so we're not misrepresented.

And how does New Zealand tend to view reggae? Certain bands have crossed over internationally but they're more fusion based.

In New Zealand reggae music is partially responsible for the misrepresentation. There's a lack of Rasta livity within New Zealand reggae. A lot of bands here are quite happy to flash the red, gold and green flag and the Lion

Of Judah but they're not Rastas so it causes confusion for people here. Reggae bands just use Rasta imagery as a fashion to sell albums which really vexes me. There's an international perception that everyone in New Zealand loves reggae. But for me a lot of New Zealand reggae is very watered down lightweight business. They don't really cover militant topics, they're saying nothing – just words in the wind. It's something I've always struggled with – the lack of the foundation, the lack of Nyabingi, the lack of the heartbeat. It's all a bit loose too. Every "chank" you have to put love into it. You have to spank that guitar and Kiwis just haven't quite got it.

Surely commercialization of Rasta ideas is something that happens the world over?

It's particularly bad here. There's a lack of West Indian community here. Apart from myself there's been maybe three or four Rasta reggae groups over the last 20 years. That has been part of mine, Dubwise and Reality Chant's mission to create a bit more awareness within the music of Rastafari culture and where reggae music came from. Going back to what I said earlier, Brother Nandor starting the council has been a bit step because it's nothing to do with reggae. For me when I started Rastafari was just a part of reggae. Now Rastafari is first.

Interview by Angus taylor

GAPPY RANKS

"The real talent and the real stories will always overpower the fake ones"

Since our last interview with Gappy Ranks he has continued on the path that took him out of poverty and homelessness to being the UK's number one young reggae star. He's released second album 'Thanks & Praise' - exploring the more modern dancehall and one-drop side to his repertoire. He's played in Sheffield with David Rodigan, toured Japan during the earthquake (which he documented in song with I Was There), and performed bittersweet ballad Longtime (about the life he left behind) on the BBC's flagship music programme Later With Jools Holland. But Gappy still lives in his local area and strongly believes that others can achieve what he did if they are prepared to follow their dreams. Angus Taylor spoke with the man and his manager Pierre Bost at Gappy's North West London studio where he was voicing a Happy Birthday tune as catchy as the one sung around the world...

You've given the people vintage rhythms with the Peckings album. Now you've released your first one drop and dancehall album Thanks & Praise.

Put The Stereo On was a Studio 1 album talking about my childhood and the present day. The new album is exactly what it says, giving Thanks and Praise. I don't believe an album should be songs just thrown onto a cd and compiled. It's like cheating the listener. So my album and my songs tell a story and they're all laid in a certain way and pattern. You'll find Thanks & Praise produced by Jazzwad, One Day At A Time, dealing with my own personal relationships in a way everyone can relate to, songs like Tun Up featuring Russian, it's new, it's modern. You'll also find Better Must Come which, if you're in your down or worst times, it can only get better when it's at its worst. Also Could A Run Away featuring Delly Ranx which is about how many times I've had to stand up and face the facts and what life threw at me. The people have a lot more impor-

tant stuff to buy in the world – they need their toothpaste, toilet paper, got to pay rent, all these things - but if they have a little left over in these times of recession, buy the Gappy Ranks album because it's a good buy and a good listen.

You've got quite an international cast of elements on the album – Russian and Delly from Jamaica, Macro Marco from Italy, Special Delivery from France...

Definitely because over the last two years Gappy Ranks has become international and my name is known internationally. Give Thanks for a great management team, Special Delivery, my own label Hot Coffee Music, labels like VP and Greensleeves, and friends and family. I have got to tour dif-



-ferent parts of the world and understand myself and know myself. So therefore my music becomes international because you stop speaking about local and start speaking to the world. As you grow so does your music.

Did you enjoy music at school?

Music was hard for me in school. In the UK curriculum when you learn music you learn classical music. Maybe I could have used that today but I was afraid to learn these things. I didn't understand them from the culture I was coming from. You have to remember this is a youth coming from a Harlesden, Jamaican background and you've got as teacher teaching you classical music. I didn't care about Mozart and - what's his name? - Beethoven! I couldn't understand their music. But the teacher understood who I was and I have to big up Mr Gilman. Also, IT - I hated going on the PCs with the black screen and the green writing. In my school we had ten Apple Macs and I refused to do the lesson unless I could use the Apple Mac. Up to this day I'm fond of Apple Mac so big up Mr O'Brien for keeping me on them!

After you left school you went through some bad times. What happened?

I was going through unforeseen things like I had nowhere to live so I was all around the place but at the same time I was find-

ing who I was. I went away for a whole year back to Dominica so that was finding myself. All these things made who Gappy Ranks is today and made me a stronger person. I'm still learning, still maturing and still searching. When I look back on my history I was a bad student. A bad child if you like. Growing up as an only son I found myself on the streets from a very young age. I wouldn't like to say "mixing with the wrong crowd" because it was falling into the wrong problems. Problems at home. These things happen. But everything's OK today.

Right now there's a lot of discussion in the UK press about people getting into the music business through very privileged backgrounds via stage school and so on.

I'm not fussy because this is a crowded world and every day the population is rising so you'll find in every different business and industry populations will rise. What I do know is music is something you cannot learn in a college or school. It's within you. It's a part of you. And what makes it part of you is the things you go through. A lot of music is emotional and heartfelt – the best musics are heartfelt and emotional. You find a lot of these songs are love songs or about hard life and so on. If you are in the music business and you've never lifted a finger in your life and you don't know what it's like in the real outside world, you're going to find it

hard after your one hit tune you paid so much to promote. But I don't hate you for it because this is music and everyone's entitled to do what they want. But the real talent and the real stories will always overpower the fake ones.

You were on the BBC on Jools Holland. Did you watch Reggae Britannia? What did you think?

Honestly?

Yeah honestly.

It was a great show, great performance, great artists, but that's not where reggae music ends. And for somebody watching and listening to reggae music for the very first time switching on BBC, they'd think that's where all reggae music has started and stopped. They never dealt with the present and future of reggae music which is Gappy Ranks and many other artists. I've done so much for the UK that I should have been on that stage show. I felt it but I still watched and am giving joy so big up Dennis Bovell and all the rest who took part.

How did it feel to play with David Rodigan in Sheffield in April?

I remember listening to Rodigan on Kiss Fm from when I was a youngun. He was the first person I heard play Louie Culture Gangalee and Tiger's When and Tiger even bigs him up in the song. Just the other day Vybz



Kartel bigged up David Rodigan, he's a very important person in the reggae business. Reggae music is something where when you love it you love it with a passion and he definitely has that passion just because of his knowledge, love and understanding of the music. It takes a lot of passion and love to do that. Rodigan is a very inspirational person.

People are always saying reggae is dying. Rodigan said last year that he wasn't happy with what comes out of Jamaica, although he's more impressed this year.

All respect to David Rodigan but what you have to remember is as music goes on you have

so much passion for it that everybody feels hurt at how the industry be working. I myself think social networking has come in and declined artists from selling as much as they used to but it has also brought the world together and made it a lot easier for other artists – like I was – to be heard. Just like in everything you have problems and I'm sure as the industry comes together and gets its glory it will only get better. Big up people like Buju Banton (we all know the Buju Banton story and what Buju's going through right now) but look at that – out of the worst times he's going through right now he won a Grammy. In everything you have bad and good and you just have to take them as it goes.

People also say reggae is doing much better outside JA than inside.

Well, what you have to remember is you are talking about a very poor country and has a lot of problems which the world needs to pay more attention to. And you have to remember reggae music is born from Jamaica. That's where it comes from. So all royalties are supposed to go to Jamaica anyway. So yes, I do think Jamaica is missing out on a lot of the highlights they're supposed to get but Jamaican people are everywhere and where they are so does their culture spread so that's why there's reggae music everywhere. It's not about who's embracing it more or who's lov-

-ing it more - it's about the economy. And as I said before, if you have enough money to buy my album buy my album. But people have got to wonder about how to put food on the table in places like Jamaica and things like that so big up every artist who's working hard and doing their thing for reggae music – that's all I can say.

Do you think filesharing is as much of a problem as people say?

Definitely and a lot of the blame is with the record companies. Those were the ones who were supposed to be protecting the artists in the past, present and future time. They never locked onto the internet and the whole mp3 downloading – they were

really late. So you had these sites coming and controlling it before the record companies. It's their fault that we're feeling the pain of the lack of policing our music and sales. But as I said it's also beneficial, you have to see the positive out of everything, and things like this are helping my music be heard and played around the world. We have to live with it. Sorry.

How many rhythms would you say you voice in a year?

(laughter from others) About 1,500. (Pierre: Nah, about 3-400) No way! Last year I did about 700 (Pierre: No, 400 because when we're on tour we don't record). Alright 500! (Pierre: When you're at home you record two a day but not on

tour)
How many are released a year?
About 60.
What advice do you have for young people who want to make it in music?
Don't be like me. Be like yourself. You are your best friend and your worst enemy. Respect yourself and others will respect you. See your dream and others will see it. Believe in yourself and others will believe. And for the young ones, brush your teeth in the morning. (Pierre: And the evening!) And in the evening.

Interview by Angus taylor



MO'KALAMITY



"The real talent and the real stories will always overpower the fake ones"

Mo'kalamity is a rising female singer based in Paris, of Cape Verdian origin. She has already released 2 albums : 'Warriors of Light' in 2009 and 'Deeper Revolution' in late 2010 (that has just been re-released). Her feel? Strictly conscious lyrics over a fresh rootsy reggae played by her band, the Wizards. As an independent artist, she has toured extensively on the local Parisian stage, in Cape Verde and in Europe, to spread her good vibrations asking us to awake our consciences. Interview.

Tell us more about the imminent re-release of your second album 'Deeper Revolution'...

It first came out in 2010 but it was quite a low-key release, no announcement or big distribution. The album was only available in some shops in France and at the end of our concerts. But we had positive feedback. It's still a good surprise to see people from France to Canada or Cape Verde know our music whereas even in France, there wasn't really any media plan to launch the release. Musicast is reissuing the album, so it will be available everywhere in France and also via Internet.

How did the story begin with your band The Wizards?

I started as a backing vocalist in some French groups before I realized that I wanted to build my own project. I started to compose my own songs and with time I refined my artistic vision. I formed a band with musicians I already worked with and The Wizards were born! The line up changed, I met Johnson, on keyboards who also was my manager for a long time.

You mostly write in English. Why?

I used to listen to a lot of Anglophone music and this language seems to me as more smooth whereas French sound seems to me more hard, less easy to swing... But when I write, it has to be natural. I don't limit myself. The choice of language comes naturally.

You played twice in Cape Verde in 2010. How was it?

I thought I would introduce my band there but the people were perfectly aware of my history. Our first album 'Warriors of Light' (2009 - L'assos' piquante) had travelled by word of mouth. They were waiting for us. All the concerts were sold out. It was more than what we expected! It was a great experience. The reggae scene is setting up there but the local musical scene is rich with many genres and full of talented musicians.

What are your views on reggae in 2011?

I still buy albums because I'm not familiar with this new virtual culture. I like getting a cd in my hands when I want to listen to it and not getting a usb key with compressed mp3's. Nowadays, we can consume all and anything without immersing yourself.



All that is available, right now, it's dangerous for me. It's just quick consumption, it's not good. I hope people who like our music will make the effort to buy our album.

It's rare to see you on riddim series or as a featuring...

For various reasons. For me music is firstly sharing. To make a collaboration, we need a sharing, good vibration with the artist or the producer... I'm not looking after featurings or series just for a good reputation. I need a sharing, a musical meeting. I released

various vinyl records alongside French dub producers : Junior Cony, Barbes D, Digital Rockers, Blackboard Jungle or Nyah Skanky.

In your songs, you often talk about selfishness, the hardness of the world we're living in. Do you believe there is hope?

Of course. I don't believe in fate. The current worldwide situation is really hard but it seems we're coming to the end of something. It's time to act. It's in little actions that we can improve our societies.

In my first album, I said "music eases the soul". I'm sure of that. Music gives hope and strength to each and everyone.

How does the worldwide news inspire you in these times?

The awakening is on its way. Just look what happened recently in Maghreb. It gives hope in Unity and our ability to gather....But, who pulls the strings ? People are hungry, they want freedom and justice. The Occident and their allies can't ignore much longer

that people need to get a new worldwide balance.

What does reggae lacking to help it go forward?

In France, a lack of serious organisation. But, most of all, it seems that this music is not taken seriously by the media and music industries. We need to gather to make reggae movement progress.

As we can see in your first video Autour de Toi, you give equal importance to the aesthetic, the arrangement, images, artworks ...

It's important for the global sense of my project, from the sound and the lyrics to the cover of the album and the video, that it be coherent. And it's also due to lucky meetings like with Pietro Di Zanno (director of Autour de Toi who also directed Ayo's videos) and also my graphic designer, Seb Thiroux.

What are your influences ?

A lot of roots music. I always quote Bob, Burning Spear, The Gladiators, The Congos... All the vocal trios from the 70's. I also like Otis Redding a lot. On the actual scene, I like Tarrus Riley. I saw him on stage and it works well. I like how his last album is produced.

**Text and photos by
Franck Blanquin**



SIZZLA

"Africa is my reservoir of knowledge of everything"

Since Sizzla dropped 2010's Homer Harris compilation 'Crucial Times' he has attracted media scrutiny for spending 6 months in Africa - including a visit to Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe. Now back in Judgement Yard, he has finally released his followup, 'The Scriptures' - this time without Greensleeves - for King Jammy's son John John. The result is an even more roots reggae oriented record than 'Crucial Times' or its predecessor 'Ghetto Youthology' - using some vintage rhythms from John John's father. Sizzla spoke to Angus Taylor at John John's studio in Jamaica about the album, his travels and his own place in today's reggae scene...

You have a new album out with John John. You've worked with him before on some tunes but whose idea was it to do a full album together?

I would say the Most High. We don't just get up and make the album based on our lifestyles. We've studied the music by go-

ing to the dancehall, the club and to stage shows. Listening to the radio, to sound system, listening to people to see what's happening with new Prime Ministers and politics and change. So due to the fact that the people are familiar with old school reggae, if we could take it back to the people with a beautiful message it would be great. So this album is really an ancient album with a present day meditation.

There are some old rhythms on the album. As well as Zion Gate there's Jah Fire Will Be Burning from John John's father. Why was the time right to pay tribute to veteran musicians with these tracks?

That is why we called it The Scriptures because it's new but the thoughts are old. It's not just the thoughts of Sizzla but of people before us. The world loves one drop and Jammys has some beautiful rhythms so we asked Father Jammys if we could use them and said "Let's go!". The people want new songs and when I see Bob Marley make great songs and people like Beres Hammond make new songs I think "You've got to be in this league Sizzla" so John John and me we sat and meditated on all these things and even mediate on people like you yourself. So we just try our best to make it nice and make the world nice with beautiful music naturally and lead them on a path where they

can listen to some tracks and be inspired I hope. Because the Most High inspired us to make it without colour, class, race or creed. We as Rastaman have to make sure the hungry be fed the sick nourished the aged protected and the infants cared for. Music has done a lot for me. Not just to make me popular but to help me to feed the people in the ghetto, to help my neighbour, send them to school, send their kids and my kids to school. So I created this album and put a little more spice in it! So it can make some good money so it never stops selling so that when anyone calls on me I can sing that album and help them out.

There's a lot of singing on this album and there are some very nice female backing vocals on the album. Was it in your mind to make a singing album?

Yes sir, because reggae music goes well with singing. Sometimes we like to spice it up with a little more deejay thing and rough it up but let's sing the notes you can hear so the world can sing along and let me know you know music. So I decided to put a lot of singing on this. Singing and deejaying is really different. Deejaying is more harsh and more explicit and more to the point whereas singing is more subtle and smooth and reaches the mind. So I personally use both arts within the vocal with singing

to soothe the mind and free the minds of the people. To get the cheerfulness out of them. Sometimes when I listen to a rhythm I try to get the cheerfulness by deejaying or a little rap or something and sometimes I sing to get cheerfulness out of people. That's really the principle and the law of music - to create joy, happiness and help people enter more of a spiritual realm.

You also go even further back to the foundation with Happy Birthday in ska style. Were you wishing anyone specific a happy birthday or just everyone?

Yes sir. Because when I look around I kept a lot of back to school parties for the kids in Judgement Yard and I kept a lot of birthdays for my sons and daughter and a lot of kids who visited. I noticed that the music helps the people to rise up above certain ill feelings and they need the music. We don't just use music for the message. We use music for advertisements and for promotion. That is why you will get a different song at different times from Sizzla. We use music for just about everything. Even the politicians use music to promote to get votes. There is everything in the music. So I looked around and thought the art of the music is to be smart and always be above and be on the tongue of the people in the right way. So if I could make a



Happy Birthday song then every day people would sing more Sizzla and I would get more popularity! (laughs) I planned for this album! Father Jammys said "Sizzla, where did you and John John get that album, it bad!" so I said "You know what Jammys I got to promote the Scriptures properly!" Do you know why else it is called the Scriptures?

Why?

Because I wanted to get the Christians and all people that read the bible also. To look and see how people are suffering in the ghetto every day. They are doing their application and their degrees and this and that and still they aren't getting their jobs. So when I call it the Scriptures and make songs like Happy Birthday I want to reach out to more people. So I try to sing a birthday song and

make a whole heap of people want that song because I need money and you must not steal. So you work and get your stuff honestly. I want to make songs not just for the message but smartly. Also to keep yourself in the spotlight and on the radio and in the cameras - not for hype or for boastfulness but for the cause of the people and the nations.

What have your six months in Africa last year given you?

It's given me everything I've lost. That I didn't really remember I'd got. It's given me back love, life, strength, knowledge, wisdom and understanding. It's given me blessings. It's given me respect. It's given me smartness to know that all the people in the world should visit Africa and see themselves. Because when I go to America I see the American side of me. I

I see who I am in America. When I go to Africa I see my roots and my culture. I see my pride and my shame and all the things that keep me down. I see myself free. I see myself as a true leader. I learn a whole lot of stuff. I see who human beings are really. Who they are on the earth. They are specially created on this planet to live in love and help each other. When you reach that realm you'll see other realms but you can't see them until you reach that realm. Africa is my home. I see where I'm from. I see where all my ancestors are from. I see where all the knowledge is from. Where civilization is from. So I think everyone should visit Africa and see what has happened to Africa and create an Africa in a sense that can lead the world. Same as how people look to Jamaica for spirituality in the music, when I go to Africa I say "Oh gosh. This where we're from".



So I as a Jamaican should be looking to Africa to my ancestors my people for more spirituality, more knowledge, more education of who I am really. Not just as an artist singer, but through biology, geography, through maths, physics, chemistry. Through just about everything concerning knowledge and inspiration. So Africa keeps me more as who I am as a Jamaican and I know more of how to speak to the people in the world and of who they are. Africa is my reservoir of knowledge of everything.

How did the people you are close to in Jamaica cope with you being away?

The people in Jamaica said "Sizzla? What you doing around here? I thought you were in Africa. You should be in Africa. We heard you live in Africa. What you doing around here?" And I said "Yes! Marcus

Garvey did send me fi yard!" Emmanuel I and Selassie did call me and said "You go to the world of people in Paris, France, Europe and sing about Africa" so how can I go to the people of the world and not go to Africa? I sing to the people of the world saying "Africa beautiful". How can I say it is beautiful when the world looks at me and says "Have you been to Africa?" I want to say "Yes! I must come the next time I am going!" And it gives them strength, conviction to the words. Because people would say "Sizzla comes and teaches and speaks on certain matters and we have been following Sizzla singing about Africa and we know everything is from Africa. Yet Sizzla doesn't come to Africa to mark their books? How comes you are coming teaching us about Africa and Rasta and black people and you haven't been here to learn more from your other families?" So yes, I must leave my Africa and come back to the West to everybody and come round. But Africa calls everyone on the island to come around and build and create Africa and live in love and obey the commandments. Nothing else.

Today in the Gleaner there is an article about dancehall music making people depressed. Did you read it?

No, I didn't see it. But music doesn't make anyone depressed. Why should it? Music is being created to raise the



spiritual realms of the people. But I would say that they might craft that knowledge based on lyrics. If you've got an office you're not going to degrade the office because the individual in the office is not working up to standard. Remove the individual and add someone who is capable and knows the criteria and beauty and love of the office. So I respect their opinion because that's made me want to go and make a dancehall album now knowing that person made that criticism. I'm going to make a dancehall album and WHIP WHAP WHAP! All over the place! I've just made a one drop album but now that person in the Gleaner gives me my duty now to go and make a dancehall album to make that person say "I like that! That is what dancehall is". We are working for the people so if the people want to cuss and say "Sizzla did this wrong" speak and let me hear.

It's been 30 years since the passing of Bob Marley. As someone who has been compared to him in terms of your impact on the music what are your thoughts on this occasion?

Great thoughts. It is honourable and I send my condolences. And in keeping up this respect for the honourable Robert Nesta Marley I appreciate him very well and I support because a tree without a roots is nothing. A ship without a rudder is

vulnerable to the storm. Bob Marley was a great teacher. His daddy was white, his mummy is black and we love him so we don't care. We are going to keep celebrating the king just as we celebrate His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I. Because the minute you disrespect the work of your elders you are disrespecting the nation. Bob Marley has inspired us and taught us very well and the reason being is that he teaches and embraces the name of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie I Jah Rastafari. Once you show the nation The King they are going to get out of their punkness and their drunkenness and get out of their kinkiness and say "Oh! I'm a king! Bob speaks of The King. I'm not going to go in front of The King looking like a punk. You gotta look straight and upright." When Bob says Selassie I he is teaching me to break free from all physical spiritual and mental slavery. I have been to Zimbabwe and have kept the 30th anniversary of Zimbabwe independence because the people said "It's been 30 years now since Bob came here and celebrated the independence and we have been looking for you for about 10 years". So I respect that and support it.

You have made over 40 albums and now there is a new generation of artists. Do you consider yourself a veteran?

I wouldn't say that. I leave that

to you and the people. I consider myself a messenger, a humble servant, a father, as a role model. People are looking unto me. But to give myself titles saying I am a veteran I think is really presumptuous. I leave that to the people and just keep doing my work. I didn't come to claim titles. I came to see the sheep to spread messages! (laughs) I would say I'm a shepherd. I would say I'm a priest. I would say I'm a king. I would say I'm a humble servant. I would very much say I'm a prophet. I'm a teacher. But a veteran? I don't think that's for me to claim. Leave something for the people to decide! (laughs)

Interview by Angus Taylor



ALBOROSIE

“I am on a mission. It is me. I am a vintage guy. I am an old man in a young man’s body”

Alborosie craves revolution

Alborosie is back with his upcoming album ‘2 Times Revolu-

tion’ (released on June 20 in Europe and June 21 in the U.S), the follow-up to his acclaimed ‘Escape From Babylon’ set released in 2009. This Italian-born Jamaican resident uses his music to start not one, but two, revolutions. To United Reggae he reveals why, and also makes a public announcement.

Alberto D’ Ascola was born in Messina on the Italian island of Sicily 33 years ago. In the year 2000 he decided to take the next step in life and move to Jamaica. “I needed something different. I came here be-

cause I was sick of Italy. I did not come here to be an artist. I could have been a fisherman, It just happened that I started at Geejam,” says Alborosie on the phone from Kingston, and continues:

“Jamaica is the place to be, and I have lived here for eleven years now. First time I visited was in 94’. From then on I went three times a year. Jamaica is my home. You will never bring me back to Europe. This is me right now. I have a house, a studio. This is where I belong, even though I have strong Italian roots.”

Alborosie is relaxed, laughs a lot and speaks excellent patois. It is actually hard to hear

that he originates from Italy. Now that the album is out he is preparing for the usual European tour, as he puts it.

New influences

He says that ‘2 Times Revolution’ describes his reggae journey so far.

“It has some latin and hip-hop ingredients. Not very different from my other albums,” he explains, and continues:

“I have always been influenced by latin music. This is just my first tribute. I was like, let’s do it this time. I have wanted to do it for a long time. Latin is magic. Latin music is great, and I have it in me.”

Need a change

Alborosie is a rebel, and does things his own way and in his own style. The title of the new album gives a rather straightforward message.

“We need a revolution,” he says, and explains:

“We need a spiritual revolution and a musical revolution. We need to fight back. People are not happy. Revolution is evolution. The music is suffering, especially reggae. Now it is hype music, music that is not long lasting. We need to bring back the sound from whence it came.”

It is obvious that Alborosie has given this a lot of thought, and he wants to see a change in the direction of reggae music.

“There is the new Jamaican music that the young people want. But it is not the only way. I guarantee that on Sunday, they will play old school roots and culture here.”

He sometimes gives the impression that he is preaching when we speak. He has his arguments and the goal is set – reggae needs its roots.

“I am on a mission. It is me. I am a vintage guy. I am an old man in a young man’s body,” he chuckles, and adds:

“The Hennessy hype is not for me. I am not saying that people should not enjoy the hype, but let’s not lose the foundation.”

Does it by Myself



In the press release of the new album, Alborosie says that he is not thinking about himself as doing reggae anymore – he is doing Jahspel.

“Christians do gospel. I’m a revolutionary Christian so I do Jahspel,” he explains like it is the most obvious thing in the world.

Alborosie is a multi-faceted musician. He is usually credited for production, engineering, composing and arranging as well as for playing a number of instruments. He has also built his own guitar, shown on the album cover.

“I am going to build a keyboard and drums next,” he chuckles.

He also has his own studio. He is like the essence of the DIY-movement.

“I have always done everything by myself. I am in the studio for six to seven months, so Specialist comes to the studio and checks the production.



I lose perception, and it is difficult. That is why I have a split personality – Alberto D’Ascola, the producer, and Alborosie, the artist,” he laughs.

No expectations

Even though Alborosie’s last album was a success and his concerts are well attended, he explains that he does not have any expectations on ‘2 Times Revolution’.

“If I like the music, I am good with it. It is success for me. It is a celebration for reggae. I do not care for money, f*** money. I work with the Most High. I never have any expectations in life. Time will tell.”

Alborosie has in his career put out loads of duets with both familiar artists as well as lesser known ones. Last year he even put out the two disc duet compilation ‘Alborosie, Specialist & Friends’.

Public announcement

On the new album he teams up with Junior Reid and Etana, both artists with whom he has worked with previously. When I ask what artist he would like to get the opportunity to work with he is silent for a few seconds, and then fires off in a serious tone.

“I am going to make a public announcement. I want to work

with Bob Marley. Let me do one song with him, please. Give me one a capella. I want to do a form of remix. One day, one day,” he dreams.

Interview by Erik Magni



KEMAR “FLAVA” McGREGOR



“We need to start making records and making songs again”

Kemar “Flava” McGregor was born in Montego Bay and went to school in Germany where he studied sound engineering. In the last decade he has risen to become one of the biggest producers coming out of the island, playing a vital part in the rise of artists like Gyp-

tian, Etana and Ginjah. Early in his career it was assumed he was one of Freddie McGregor’s sons yet he has carved his own niche specializing in sweet sounding slick roots reggae. And unlike most Jamaican producers he favours one drop over dancehall, only relicking 3 old rhythms - all from his idol Coxsone Dodd. In the last year, however, he has undergone an acrimonious split from VP records over publishing issues using his Twitter and his blog to make a series of statements on the subject. Now he is taking a different direction with his

Cool & Deadly rhythm, embracing international artists with a focus on UK lovers rock. Angus Taylor spoke with Flava about his new project, what he sees as a crisis in Jamaican music and how illegal downloading actually helps sales...

You’re releasing your Cool & Deadly rhythm at the end of the month - tell me about that.

The Cool & Deadly rhythm is something I’ve been working on for over a year now. Like most of my releases it took me quite some time to put together. This is a totally different release from all Flava McGregor releases. It doesn’t just feature artists from outside of Kingston, Jamaica - it features artists from the UK, Germany, Canada and the US. So it’s something different, interesting and more of a lovers rock vibe because as you can see there’s not much lovers rock out there right now and lovers rock has contributed to reggae a lot. So I have really taken time out to work on an international project that can bring that taste because the reggae industry is kind of down right now. Nothing interesting has really come out lately and with what has come out I haven’t really seen a buzz or anything exciting about it - for reasons I don’t know. That’s why I’ve taken time out to work on this project so it can bring some spice into reggae.

Why did you decide to work with some of the UK's lovers rock giants like Maxi Priest, Janet Kay, Carol Thompson, Peter Hunnigale, Lloyd Brown...

As you know Angus, most of what's coming out of Jamaica is not interesting. Most of it is violent. Even the lyrics of most roots artists isn't exciting. So I think it it's time for some lovers rock. As you know my name got out there through some of the young artists I developed like Gyptian. Everything that comes out of Jamaica, you can predict the artists that are going to be on the project. It's the same thing we do. So this time I wanted to reach out to some talented artists and some veterans that 90% of people in the reggae industry in Jamaica and the US have never heard of that are huge and very popular. So I made some contacts and reached to Janet Kay and Carol Thompson's manager and said, "Hey, I'd like to work on a project with these artists" and that's where it started. I sent them some stuff and they liked it so now we're developing a working relationship - because this is not going to be the only thing they're going to be on.

You've also linked up with some rising artists like Peter Spence, Adele Harley and Lady Lex...

Adele, I was actually going through iTunes looking for



stuff and I accidentally stumbled upon her record, preview listened and said, "Wow! This artist sound real good". So I did some research and reached out to her. It was the same thing with Lady Lex. Flava McGregor actually reaches out to these artists. That's what makes a good producer - reaching out to people who have talent. That is something I say as a young producer who has made a lot of impact on this industry. It's very important to go out there and find people with talent - not wait for them to come to me.

A lot of UK artists don't even like to be referred to as UK artists as they see it as secondary. Do you think this project can help change that?

It's definitely going to change that because Flava McGregor is a leader and not a follower in the industry. And for other producers in Jamaica and the US to see Flava McGregor

reach out to a Peter Hunnigale or a Janet Kay, Peter Spence or a Roger Robin they're going to say "Wow - what has Flava come up with?" because I really think these artists are underrated and really talented. You know how the reggae thing in Jamaica operates - a lot of producers won't record an artist unless he has a buzz but as I said, I'm not that kind of producer. So the spotlight is going to be on the UK artists because they're talented - and I hope I don't offend anyone by this but - they're easier to market and co-operate and I like that.

You've cited Coxsone Dodd as an influence whose rhythms get relicked time and again yet you've only done it once or twice.

I understand the business and I know how it goes. I went to school for this. So why would I get up every day and lick a whole rhythm that another producer has created? It makes

no sense. For me, Angus, if it wasn't for my talent, I don't think I'd even be doing this interview. So I really have to produce and create original stuff so the world can see Flava McGregor's talent. To go into the studio and relick Sir Coxsone's rhythms is not my thing. I respect Coxsone and all these producers and I will create a beat that has a vintage sound or Studio 1 vibe. If you listen to a lot of my stuff you will see a lot of Sir Coxsone's influence. I really am a fan. I did do some because if you're a fan eventually you're going to do something that they did but I've just covered three Studio 1 tracks. But because Coxsone is someone I look up to I don't do it to make money from it - I do it to honour him because I really love and respect his work.

There has been some debate about the degree to which Coxsone was involved in the day to day production of the music. Today being a producer is more hands on. What is a typical day for you?

To some degree I think you're right about that. Producers now I think are more involved. Me, I'm involved in my production 100%. All my beats, ideas, artists and lyrics - the way a bass or a drum should play - it's all my ideas. I'm an engineer/producer/writer/arranger - I'm everything.

Is it technology that has given

producers more control?

No because I think there are still at least 90% of Jamaican reggae producers who are still not familiar with these technologies and still sit down in a chair and let the engineer produce the record for them. You can hear it and when you listen to a Flava McGregor or a few other producers productions you can hear that we definitely get involved. Like when I put out a one drop rhythm like the Rub-A-Dub you can hear "Rubadub, rubadub" so here is a producer that is into his thing. I contribute to a lot of my songs 100% - even down to writing the lyrics.

Tell me about your experiences as a student in Germany studying engineering and how that helped your career? What do you think of German reggae right now?

I was a radio DJ and used to do a lot of remixes and had an

ear for music so becoming an engineer was pretty easy for me. I think I was actually born to do music and if you are put on this earth for a mission I guess it's going to be easy. So it wasn't too complicated for me because I had the ears and understood the whole technical thing about it. I really have to give it up for German reggae. I don't want to offend anyone but in the last few years I think the best reggae producers produce out of Germany. I think the producers there have the real authentic vibe that we the producers in Jamaica have lost. That's why when you look at these big reggae festivals like Summerjam you find there aren't so many artists from Jamaica. They go in the studio, they develop new talent and it's working for them. Reggae right now is in Europe. It's going backwards for us because we are the ones that are trying to do reggae now. We're doing a lot of R&B and calling it one-drop, and we're doing a lot of hip-hop and calling it dancehall.





What's the solution?

We need more producers because a lot of guys out there aren't producers. They have a little laptop and have a program, they play a beat and say they're a producer. And a lot of artists have to live up to their own standards and realize that by going around recording for these so-called producers - I'm not saying it's going to damage their career - it's already damaged their career. It's damaged at least 90% of their careers - these beats they put out. It's not been properly produced and it's not reggae.

Have you tried to educate and guide other producers?

It's not an education issue because I know a lot of these guys and they're from an up-town background and went to school. It's just a hype. As you know a lot of stuff that happens in the reggae scene in Jamaica is hype. I don't know how to explain it but they really need to find themselves I think. The producers who can do the job and the artists that have disappointed their fans rights now need to look into themselves and go back in the studio. We need to start making records now. The hype is not working. Reggae out of Jamaica is not doing well at all. When I look at the charts - not the local chart but the international sales chart - there is hardly anybody from Jamaica there. The ones are still there are Bob Mar-

ley and the ones that are controlled by major companies.

Is this to do with illegal downloading?

Illegal downloading actually helps but record companies use it as an excuse not to pay artists. If an artist like Beres gets 10 million downloads that equals 5 million sales.

Speaking of record companies you have spoken on your blog about VP Records a lot this year. Have you resolved your issues with VP?

No and that is something that is not going to be resolved for



now. I think I'm going to be the only producer who is ever going to stand up and fight for my rights. I'm not going to wait until I pass away and my kids have to take this up and battle with these people and lose. While I'm here with life I'm going to defend and go for what's mine.

You talked about the need to make records. Is there a danger that these types of disputes can cut into time spent making music?

Kemar "Flava" McGregor is music so I don't really think it will take away much of my time. But sometimes I really do need breaks because I can't get up every day and do it. Sometimes you really have to take



time out, look back and see what other producers are doing and what artists are doing wrong so that when you come back you really know what to do. So it's not doing that, all I'm doing is making sure I secure my rights. In terms of focussing on my music I'm on it. I just took a break and I'm sure even you Angus have to take a break! (laughs) But this is where I have a problem. For the last 13-14 years now I've been in the studios producing, producing, producing and not taking enough time. But at the same time every time I go in the studio and make a record it's like I'm adding more problems to it because the ones before I didn't solve them. So it's just issue, issue, issue coming up. So I think I have to



focus on producing music and taking care of my intellectual property. But apart from that everything is good. I have to focus on producing new artists that have talent, who love this and want to take it to another level. Not an artist where you put the time and then tomorrow they're going to sign with another company or disrespect you. Most of the artists we work with have a history of doing that us as producers. So I'm reaching out to new people now. Not Jamaican artists anymore. I'm going to take it global.

After the Cool & Deadly what have you got in the pipeline?

I'm working on a lot of stuff. A new rhythm called the 80s Rock which is going to be the next big release. When I talk about the 80s Rock you know what I'm talking about - it will be an 80s sound but more modern because I think we need that. We need to bring back that authentic vibe that people go to buy. We need to start making records and making songs again.

Interview by Angus Taylor

The Fittest Earl Sixteen



A perfect fit for Earl Sixteen.

You can't go wrong with a showcase album. And certainly not if the production is handled by Not Easy At All and Earl Sixteen is responsible for the vocal duties. The collaboration between the JahSolidRock label and production crew Not Easy At All has certainly born some sweet tasting fruit. First the Chezidek album and then

the full length set from Apple Gabriel. Both praised by critics. Now these Dutch fellows drop another scorcher – 'The Fittest' from foundation artist Earl Sixteen, responsible for the wicked, and recently re-issued, album 'Reggae Sound' and several timeless tunes. 'The Fittest' does not resemble the hardcore riddims and production style courtesy of the late Mikey Dread. The sound on 'The Fittest' is airy, relaxed and smooth with great live in-

strumentation. It contains 10 tunes, each followed by its dub version, or, as in one case, by its U Roy deejay cut. Hardcore followers of JahSolidRock and Not Easy At All will notice some familiar riddims. Changing Times utilizes the backing from Chezidek's Live and Learn and Rise Up is based on Gifted Ones by Apple Gabriel. A bunch of the riddims are new, and I literally get the chills each time I hear Modern Slavery. Clavinet, saxophone and a pulsating riddim similar to early 80's Sly & Robbie. Earl Sixteen's pleading voice and the moaning saxophones are intertwined in a perfect combination. An excellent mix of hopelessness and joy. Modern Slavery is also a good example of Earl Sixteen's conscious lyrics that concerns issues such as the situation in Africa, slackness, child labor and trafficking. He sings "there are more slaves today, than there were four centuries away...trafficking drugs just to survive" and calls repeatedly for a solution.

This is the third stunning album released by JahSolidRock and Not Easy At All. I have a feeling there is more to come, even though it will be a tough task to outshine any of these three releases.

Review by Erik Magni

Thanks & Praise Gappy Ranks

A more personal, equally impressive second work.



Gappy Ranks' first album 'Put The Stereo On' was a real crowd pleaser, combining vintage Studio 1, Treasure Isle and Bunny Lee rhythms from Peckings and Stringray with his contemporary lyrical themes. For his second effort, however, Gappy clearly hankered to revisit the current one-drop and dancehall sounds of his EP 'Rising Out Of The Ghetto'. Yes, some will find the treated vocals, slick digital backings and big pop radio choruses of re-

cent reggae harder to swallow. But accept them for what they are, and this is a more personal, equally impressive piece of work.

As with Stereo there is familiar and new material. This time, however, we hear a variety of producers instead of just two. Five of the tracks have already been released as singles (two – the Macro Marco production Stinkin Rich and Special Delivery ballad Long Time appearing on 'Rising Out Of The Ghetto') while a further 9 are fresh. There are the three acts to the album. An opening one drop segment includes the title track (produced by the UK's Jazzwad) and Special Delivery's One Day At A Time (on the Wailers' Small Axe rhythm, a nod to Stereo's smash hit on Soul Rebel, Heaven In Her Eyes). On the former, Gappy shows his gratitude for the way he has turned himself around from troubled youth to music star. For the latter he looks back on his life as a work in progress, asking for forgiveness for the mistakes he's made. The second act takes us

into the cheekily boastful unashamedly commercial world of dancehall. There's ridiculously catchy single with Russian Tun Up whose thumping beats and lyrics celebrate the excess of being on top. More of a test for the purists will be Animal Sons production The Road which sounds like a flashback to 90s Ibiza. But as a proud member of the internet generation, Gappy sees Jamaican music as compatible with anything, while the accompanying words are worthy reality fare. Finally, there's a return to the one-drop for deejay duet Could A Run Away with Delly Ranx, dealing with past hardships overcome. Closing acoustic guitar driven lullaby Better Must Come backs off from the heavily electronic arrangements, telling ghetto people to follow their dreams. If you like modern reggae you'll love this record. And if you don't, remember this is the same Gappy who gave you Stereo and give it a chance. You may thank him one day.

Review by Angus Taylor

Chino Debut album

A mixed bag from Chino.

Most dancehall is released as singles or on one riddim compilations, and it's been a while since I heard a full length album from a dancehall artist. I believe that Busy Signal's 'D.O.B' was my latest dancehall acquaintance as a full length album.

And now it's time for another one, since Daniel "Chino" McGregor's self titled debut album has hit the streets.

The Busy Signal set and Chino's new album have one thing in common – both albums wander in several different directions, which is good, and bad.

On Chino, dancehall and one drop is the foundation. But Chino and his producing brother Stephen "Di Genius" McGregor have added R&B, hip-hop beats and some hip-hop rhyming. They also show an unhealthy interest in rock guitars, as in My Soul, Badness and the previously released Never Change (From Mawning).

Chino consists of 15 tunes and contains some real gems. The 90's dancehall tribute Driv-



ing Me Insane featuring sweet voiced Denyque for one. It is heavily and heavenly inspired by the Shabba Ranks & Chivelle Franklyn crossover hit Mr. Loverman released in the early 90's.

Other highlights include club banger I Am with its French-tinged guitar and accordion, the R&B smooth Mus Come Back and the upbeat one drop Leaving (Seal the Link).

This is a diverse set that offers something for everyone, and I would have been real pleased if those rock guitars would have been left out.

Review by Erik Magni

Frankie Paul Most Wanted

Some timeless classics and a good introduction to this great singer.

Frankie Paul made his record debut only in his teens. He was influenced by singers such as Dennis Brown and Stevie Wonder, but soon developed his own charismatic and more dancehall oriented style.

In the mid 80's he scored some huge hit songs for producer Henry "Junjo" Lawes, including Jump No Fence and the ganja anthem Pass the Tu Sheng Peng. Both are included on Greensleeves' recent Frankie Paul 'Most Wanted' set.

After working with dancehall don Lawes he moved on and started working for a majority of Jamaica's top producers, and he was extremely productive during these years.

Album after album and hit after hit followed. Among them the energetic Tidal Wave for George Phang, the Dennis Brown relick Cassandra for Steely & Cleve and the radio friendly Sara for King Jammy.

Frankie Paul 'Most Wanted' contains some timeless classics and is a good introduction to this great singer.

Review by Erik Magni



Luciano Rub-A-Dub Market

Luciano's most European outing yet is another success.



Luciano received great acclaim for 2010's two albums: 'United States Of Africa' (produced by Paris-born Frenchie) and 'Write My Name' (for Georgia-based Rawle Collins). Now he has taken his penchant for working outside Jamaica even further, teaming up with Austria's IrieVibrations (who were behind Perfect's 'Born Dead With Life' in 2008 – one of the best long-players of that year). Where the previous two records used Jamaican musicians like Style Scott and Sly & Robbie, these backing tracks were built by IrieVibrations at their studio in

Vienna. And at times the anti-slackness lyrics to opener Rub-A-Dub Market could be aimed at the exalted status of cultural reggae beyond the island when Luci sings "Carry me music over Rub A Dub market and the music sell off".

The more critical stance on religious behaviour exhibited on 'United States Of Africa's King Of Kings continues with Praise Jah Any Time ("Don't wait for devil slide tackle before you go running to the Father for a miracle"). Meanwhile the more personal side of faith, reflected in 2008's Dean Fraser production 'Jah is My Navigator', makes an appearance with Hard Road, on the Jungle Skunk rhythm - which is very close to Ernest Wilson's I Know Myself. And as with 'Write My Name', there are songs that hint at frustration that the righteous message isn't getting through. For Voice Of A Trumpet Luci compares himself to Moses, trying to lead the people to better things...

But unlike 'United States Of Africa', which had only one love song, there are plenty of mellow offerings here. Truly Love Someone showcases one of several gruff spoken-word



Luciano interludes; Feeling For Love rides the modern ska shuffle boogie of IrieVibrations Work Off rhythm, used on the Perfect set; whereas Love Me Or Leave Me and Love Paradise are both minor key romantic efforts in fine style. 2011 is the year when the Jamaican media woke up to the existence of foreign countries' longstanding and successful reggae industries, and some listeners will hope that Luci takes his new-found vigour back to Jamaica for his next work. But in the meantime this is another good outing from Jah Messenger, perhaps not as "revelationary" as 'United States Of Africa' nor as consistent as Perfect's 'Born Dead With Life', yet still nice to your ear.

Review by Angus Taylor

The Return of Sound System Scratch

We're not scraping the bottom of the barrel when it comes to Lee Perry releases, because Scratch had a very deep barrel.

Pressure Sounds upsets with the amazing sequel to 'Sound System Scratch, Return Of Sound System Scratch'. This incredible collection of Black Ark dub plates and heavy roots music is now available on CD, MP3 and double LP; serious collectors will want to check for the limited edition double LP. As if all of this wasn't enough, Pressure Sounds have also come up with a cool 7" single of Strong Drink, a melodica cut of Junior Murvin's False Teacher featuring a mind-bending dub plate version on the B-side. 'Return Of Sound System Scratch' is arguably a stronger collection than 'Sound Sys-

tem Scratch'. Sound quality is better throughout (although audiophiles always seem to find something to moan about when it comes to reggae) and the choice of material – almost everything is previously unreleased – is excellent. Although all of the tracks are great, a few deserve special mention. The first revelation is the previously unreleased Righteous Land by Aleas Jube; while Jube's vocals are nothing special, the jaunty rhythm track is a delight, especially when stripped down on its dub version, Righteous Rocking. Junior Murvin's terrific version of the Impressions' sublime People Get Ready is here as Get Ready in a seldom-heard alternate mix. Another revelation comes from Full Experience vocalist Candy Mackenzie, who performs a gritty cover of Jeff Barry's Walkin' In The Sun, retitled Long Enough. Mackenzie's brassy vocals give the song an authenticity that is lacking on the original tune; perhaps Scratch was inspired by the later B.B. King version. Leo Graham fans will be happy to hear Revelation Time, a



sterling roots number that is reminiscent of Leo's Joe Gibbs single Perilous Time. The melancholy Darkness In The City by Jimmy Riley has always been one of my favourite early Black Ark tracks. It's a harrowing tune that paints a vivid picture of urban violence on top of a bouncy, minimalist keyboard skank. Mistakenly credited to Judge Winchester on the 1974 Black Art single, it's nice to see this haunting roots track see the light of day again. And of course there are the dub plates and alternate mixes of well known tunes such as I've Got The Groove by George Faith, the Upsetters' Enter The Dragon and Scratch's powerful Jah Jah Ah Natty Dread, here in previously unheard, extra Upsetting, outer space style. In a word, outstanding. 'Return Of Sound System Scratch' proves that we're not scraping the bottom of the barrel when it comes to Lee Perry releases, because Scratch had a very deep barrel.

Review by Mick Sleeper

Sizzla The Scriptures

**Sizzla Kalonji
forges typical
brilliance.**

Fans of the once over-active genius that is Sizzla Kalonji have perhaps taken both he and his immense talents for granted as once upon a time in the not too distant past he was counted upon for three or four generally very good releases in any given year and, looking back, listeners rarely went more than a four or five month period without a new album. Times have most certainly changed these days as, shockingly, the last legitimate release from August Town's most famous resident came nearly seventeen months ago in the form of the decent old school set, 'Crucial Times', in January 2010. Seventeen months, just four years ago or so, would have been enough for him to reel off six or seven albums, including one potential all-time classic. However, with that being said, the time has definitely added to anticipation for the next album from Sizzla, whatever it may be, and now that wait is over.

'The Scriptures' is the brand new superbly titled set from the legendary fiery chanter who has been enjoying a bit

of a comeback in recent times having managed to register several significant singles and - All the while remaining very active in recording and touring as well. With that, it would figure that an album would be a perfect way to even further reignite passions across the world for this undeniable force in Reggae music and to do that, Sizzla has returned to a very familiar source, although one who makes his debut producing an album for him. Lloyd 'John John' James Jr. is well known as being the son of, arguably, the greatest producer the genre has ever known, King Jammy, but he's also a very strong maestro in his own right. Having previously worked with Kalonji on an impressive string of singles of various styles [several of which would appear on 'Waterhouse Redemption', the 2006 King Jammy helmed set], John John now acts as the primary 'caretaker' of an entire album and given the obviously high level of musical chemistry between the two, the results should come to the surprise of no one.

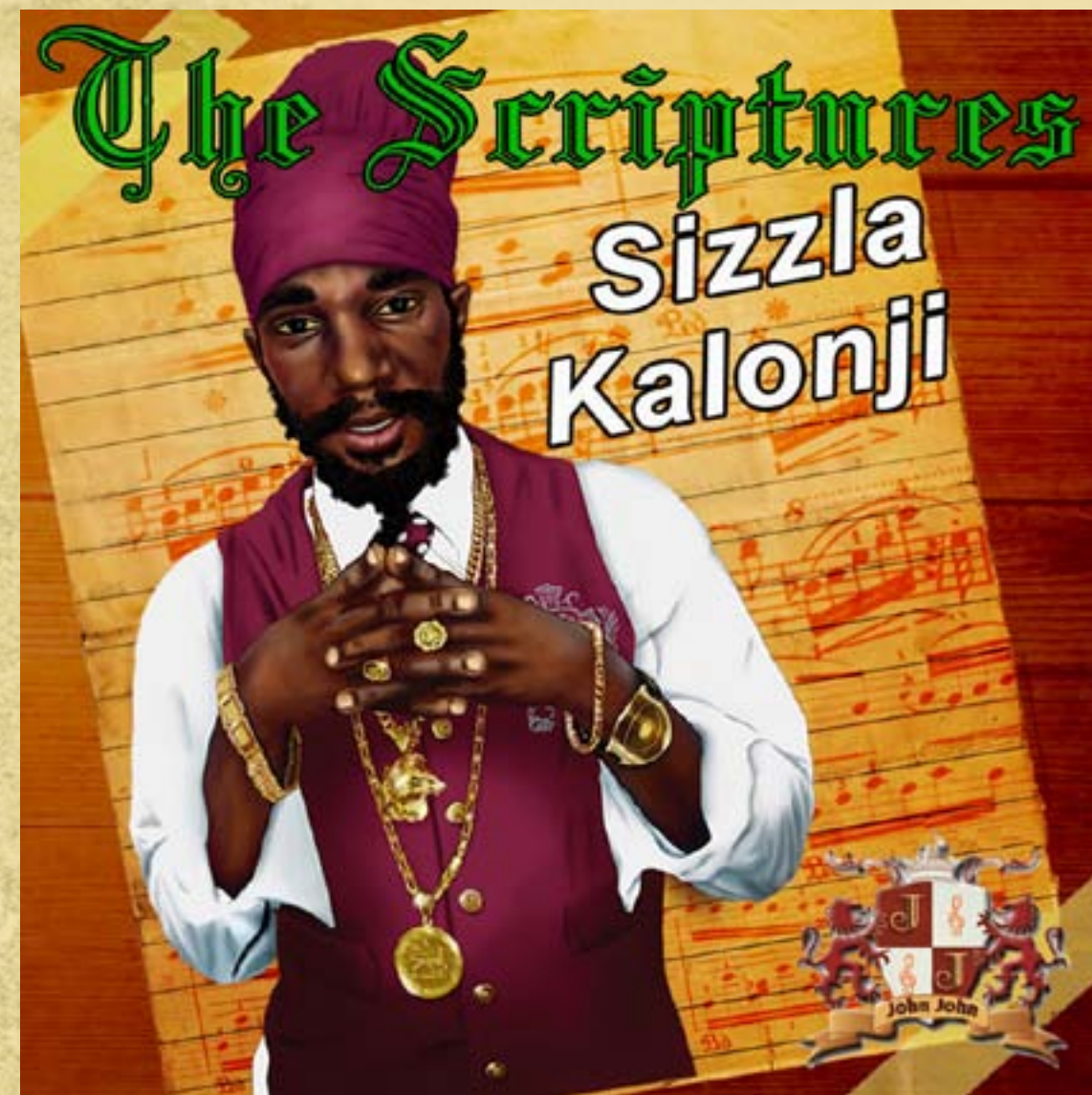
'The Scriptures' is a very very good album.

Throughout the thirteen tracks on this album, Sizzla maintains

a predominately laid back style and that, when linked to these kind of big sounding and somewhat old school compositions provided by John John is just very attractive musical craftsmanship which is sure to thrill older fans of the artist, and perhaps newer ones as well. You'll go quite deep into this one before you reach a tune which isn't to a high standard and several highlights are along the way. One of the very first is the sublime In Jamaica, which finds Sizzla giving praise to life in the sweetest place on earth via a version of the venerable Father Jungle Rock Riddim.

***"THINGS RUN DIFFERENT IN
JAMAICA BLACK PEOPLE LIVE
DECENT IN JAMAICA AH BEER
SUPERSTAR COME FROM JAMAICA
BADMIND PEOPLE STAND FAR
FROM JAMAICA"***

Just before that is the album's sole official combination, the very heavy The World is Watching which features Canadian Hip-Hopper, Peter Jackson, and is this very large piece on which Kalonji reminds all that, no matter who you may be, someone has their eyes on your actions, so make sure your actions come from a righteous place. For his part, Jackson



does add to the song as well. The classically 'rinsed' Cleanse My Soul is another fine tune and one which may not [but it may be] be quite vintage material, is extremely close and, much like the vast majority of the album on which it appears, is ultimately pointed in the right direction in terms of its quality.

The album pinnacles between two extremely impressive songs What A Whoa and the previous hit single, Music In My Soul from the Zion Gate Riddim. Both of these selections

would rank exceedingly well in comparison to anything Sizzla has done over the course of the past decade. And they both are, in their own respective ways, exemplary of most of the tunes on the album - They're very well done and exist somewhere in a healthy and vast spiritual context. Other highlights include the gorgeous Jah Is My Shield, the strange love song, Let It Be and God Bless You Mama.

There's also the title track on which Kalonji utters the

vaguely ironic lyric, "Jah bear my witness. Most High cleanse all sickness. Go and read your scriptures - Go and read your scriptures". Its irony exists that his music, as a whole, has been a musical scripture for millions of people around the world for years and after listening to 'The Scriptures', the response to his urging may prevailingly be amongst his fans: 'We just did'. Well done.

Review by Ras Achis

Mista Savona Presents Warn The Nation

Heavyweight sounds from Down Under.

Australian and Melbourne-resident Mista Savona rose to worldwide prominence with the Fire Dragon riddim, an inspired and clever relick of the Drum Song riddim, originally recorded at Studio One. This percussion driven Middle Eastern flavored masterpiece was in 2009 voiced by huge artists such as Sizzla and Burro Banton.

Their cuts are, along with 14 others, represented on the Mista Savona produced compilation titled 'Warn the Nation', released last year in Australia, and now in Europe and the U.S.

This is a multi-riddim album, and the only riddim that is represented with more than two cuts is Fire Dragon. Apart from the aforementioned versions, there is an semi-instrumental Bongo Herman lead cut and Sizzla also does it acoustic style, on a lick where he is in fine form, jumping from total despair to joyfulness. It's such



a blessing to hear Sizzla when he's on top of the game.

'Warn the Nation' is a conscious, raw and dense reggae album that deals with environmental issues, injustice and inequality.

It is heavily influenced by hip-hop, dancehall and dubstep as well as Indian and Middle Eastern music. Just listen to the pounding Stumble & Fall (Enemies Scatter Mix) featuring Junie Platinum or the straight

one drop Chant Rasta Sound, one of the last cuts from the late Alton Ellis.

Mista Savona has managed to produce a compilation that is both uniform and diverse. It is remarkable that this gem has been hidden Down Under for so long.

'Warn the Nation' was released on June 10 by Soulbeats Records.

Review by Erik Magni

Ziggi Recado

Fascinating album from Ziggi Recado.

There's a new Ziggi in town. His last name is Recado and he has got a brand new reinvented sound on his third album. It's an adventurous blend of reggae, soul, hip-hop, funk and rock. One thing that has remained from his previous albums is his vocal style. It's rebellious, cool and edgy.

Most of the production is handled by Ziggi Recado himself and the majority of the tracks are recorded together with his live band The Renaissance Band. And the live feeling is present through most of the album. Ziggi Recado celebrates musicianship and careful production. There are pleasant surprises on almost every single track.

Just listen to the beautiful and organic Can't Stop Me Now built around a laid back rock guitar. It starts with guitar, moaning saxophone and funky drums. Then it's just Ziggi Recado and the guitar. Along the way it adds organ, percussion, drums, bass and strings. You've to wait over three minutes until the song is complete



in its instrumentation.

Real Talk showcases his vocal capabilities, when he sings both in a high Prince style and then switches to his usual sing-jay approach.

Reggae purists also get their share too. The heartfelt single Mary produced by Special Delivery, the Omar Perry/Tippa Irie duet Jah Alone on Curtis Lynch's Gorilla riddim and the pumping Maikal X duet This Year are contemporary one drops in fine style.

Whether or not you like the genre mixing of distorted funk rock, psychedelic Prince-styled soul and reggae riddims you have to be fascinated by this bold, remarkable and unexpected set of songs.

Ziggi Recado has been available in the Netherlands since April and was released internationally on June 6th.

Review by Erik Magni

Al Campbell, Tony Roots and Christine Miller in London

Al Campbell is rarely mentioned by the casual follower of reggae singers. But if you add up the sheer number of killer tunes he has recorded he belongs in the pantheon for sure. The smooth-voiced maestro performed for nearly 2 hours on Bank Holiday Sunday at the Hootananny, giving a 5 song encore yet leaving his fans shouting for more hits.

Strolling on stage in an oatmeal suit and straw hat, Mr Campbell soon broke a sweat doling out classics in lovers, roots and rub-a-dub style.

Assisted by the legendary Ruff Cutt band he crooned his way through smashes like Gee Baby and Late Night Blues, along with heavy-weight collectors' pieces such as Jammin' and You're Mine, as well as new material from his forthcoming Peckings album 'Man From Studio 1'.

"Me born in music" said Al - the son of a gospel preacher - reminding the people of his multiple lovers rock number ones in the UK. A further hint at his past came with a quick a capella of his old band-mate the late Prince Lincoln's

Humanity. And while he is a master singer Mr Campbell put his pipes to other uses. He imitated the sounds of a delay effect and a bass guitar during Ruff Cutt's many expertly rendered dub versions - especially the iconic storm-lashed Crucial Bunny Version to You're Mine.

Promoter Cecil Reuben arranged a particularly strong support act for the evening too. The UK's Christine Miller and Tony Roots (with Sister Naffi-l) played their bottom-heavy culture music backed by a special supergroup



formed from the 3 of the venue's regular ensembles, dubbed The Artist Band. In January Al Campbell appeared in Shoreditch's East Village singing brilliantly over Peckings rhythm tracks. With some of the country's most respected live musicians a whole new level was reached.

By Angus Taylor
Photos by Adelina Royal & Véronique Skelsey



Best of the Best 2011

The 5th anniversary of the Best of the Best Weekend kicked off Thursday night, May 26 on South Beach with a myriad of events happening at local clubs. The “Big Show” 2011 featured two blockbuster concerts on the weekend at Bicentennial Park in downtown Miami, with hip hop and rap ruling on Saturday while island vibes flowed on Sunday. Visitors to Miami Beach enjoyed an eclectic mix of street cafes and restaurant and an array nightlife choices, with official Best of the Best Weekend 2011 events at Cameo and Mansion nightclubs on South Beach and Opium, nestled in the Seminole Hard Rock complex on 441 in Davie.

As any back-yard playa who’s ever organized a bad-ass party will tell you, you can’t have a really great holiday blowout without a crowd that’s ready to party; food with soul, Jamaican style, which means jerked just about anything, fried fish, corn on the cob, sugar cane and fresh coconut water, and the entertainment must include a touch of rap, a few dancehall DJs, some of the biggest names in reggae and hopefully, beautiful weather.

Needless to say, the Best of the Best fest had it all. This annual Memorial Day bash at Bicentennial Park delivered not only Damian and Stephen Marley, reigning kings of



Reggae but Alison Hinds, the undisputed queen of Soca. Now we’re all lucky enough here in South Florida to have the Marley family as locals but any time any of them perform, the crowd comes out to welcome them. The Caribbean took over downtown Miami with a serious dancehall bashment party that brought in fans from all over. The ladies choice, Sanchez, provided his

unmistakable brand of lovers’ rock, the Marley brothers presented modern urban reggae sounds and finally the elder statesman of the dancehall, Shabba Ranks, closed the show with his distinctive gravel-toned vocals. I did wonder why every other word he sang was “Shabba” but I guess that’s just his thing.

Text by Susan De Leon
Photos by Gail Zuker



Reggae 4 Japan



York College Auditorium in Queens New York was overflowing its capacity of 1300 Sunday evening, June 5, 2011.

The event to aid Japan's Earthquake victims was a huge success in terms of aid to Japan and entertainment to all who attended. Each artist that performed mentioned a few words about how huge Reggae was in Japan and how the Japanese people embraced Reggae music. They said that Japan has done so much for reggae! Mighty Crown, top Japanese dancehall sound system co-organized the event along with Irish & Chin & VP Records. Alaine & Dutch reggae singer Ziggi Ricardo both gave excellent performances. New Kingston started the show and backed Ziggi with positive energy. Chino & Stephen McGregor excited the audience with sister

Shema singing backup vocals. Freddie's children are really making a name for themselves in the industry!

Japanese dancehall group Fireball captured the stage in 3/4 length cut off pants and sneakers. The crowd responded to them and sang along to Jimmy Cliff's tune You Can Get It If You Really Want.

Duane Stephenson did a cool set featuring Dean Fraser on Sax. Tanya Stephens crooned out her hits. Gramps and Peetah Morgan did some wicked harmonizing. Mr Vegas entered the stage trashed and ready, complete with suit, dress shirt, tie, and sunglasses.

Maxi Priest did his thing, joined onstage by Red Fox and then Beniton the Menace joined him onstage to sing Shabba's part in Housecall.

Freddie McGregor decked out in red did a great set and the audience joined in singing his many hits. Tarrus Riley was well received and Dean Fraser appeared to be enjoying himself and having a wonderful evening.

Capleton took the stage dressed in red from head to toe. He was doing his set when an announcement was made that Shabba Ranks was in the house. Shabba took the stage with Capleton was still there. They shook hands and Shabba did quite a set, both artists blazing the stage lyrically. Nuff props to

Ruff Kut Band who backed the whole show with stamina and vigor!

Finally, Damian Marley's energy ignited the auditorium! Then, looking dapper in a white blazer and white hat, NAS joined Damian onstage and the crowd went wild when they started singing Promised Land.

Chin of the team Irish & Chin came onstage at the end of the show giving thanx to all who made this show possible. Once again, history in the making for Reggae music!

Text and photos by Gail Zuker



UCLA Jazz Reggae Festival

This year's festival marked the 25th year that the UCLA student body volunteers produced this fabulous day of fun in the sun. There were lots of vendors, art projects and of course the much anticipated performances of some of reggae music's finest entertainers.

I arrived early and had lots of walking to do to get my press credentials and VIP armband. We photographers were corralled to the side of the stage and were ushered into the photo pit for the first three songs of each artist. The VIP lounge was quite a walk from the press area so I used some of the time during the opening artists to get some nourishment and rest before the main artists were to perform.

First up on my agenda was The Wailings Souls, a veteran reggae band that has had multiple reggae Grammy nominations. They opened with their rocking reggae hit "She Pleases Me". They performed such classics as "Old Broom" and "Picky Picky Head". They had the massive sold out crowd on their feet dancing right from the start.

Next, the very sultry and sexy, Tanya Stephens, had the crowd winding to her charming dancehall style. She loves to talk to the audience, especially addressing the males in the audience, telling them how much women appreciate them. Some of her most popular



songs performed were: "These Streets" and "It's A Pity".

Now it was time for all the girls' favorite boyfriend, Gyptian! And all the girls did scream as the very popular Gyptian took to the stage. He opened his show with "Nah Let Go" and all the girls, especially, sang along to every word of his song. Some of the other mega hits he performed were "Hold You" and "Beautiful Lady". The girls swooned as he pranced across the stage, sometimes flashing his locks. He gave an outstanding performance!

Finally, headliner and Grammy winner, Steel Pulse took to the stage opening with "Find It... Quick". The UK's finest reggae artists performed flawlessly and always have fantastic stage presence. Lead

singer and main creative force within the band, David Hinds, flashed his hip-length locks and belted out the lyrics to his many hit songs, including... "Chant A Psalm", "Blues Dance Raid" and "Stepping Out". I was able to get backstage at the end of the day to chat with some of the members of Steel Pulse and give out some photos. BIG UP Steel Pulse, you have been close to my heart for many years. Thanks for the inspiration.

I drove home listening to 'True Democracy' to keep the vibe going!

**Text and photos
by Jan Salzman**



Upper Park Reggae Festival

Since when the most important Italian reggae festival, the Rototom Sunsplash has moved to Spain in 2010, Italy didn't give up to the good vibrations of reggae music. That's why new festivals are taking place all over the country.

The Upper Park, a brand new festival at his first edition, took place on June 18th. It was designed and realized by a group of young lovers of reggae music, with the intention to promote the various styles and many facets of this music, to help it to grow and diversify over the time. Aimed to veterans of the genre, but also to newer listener of this music, this event was a big reggae party, an open space day, with a rich line-up of national and international artists, a 12 hours of live in a single day, in the beautiful and historic location of Arena Parco Nord in Bologna.

In this beautiful hot and sunny Saturday of June, several thousands of young and old people came to attend to the reggae-marathon! The Live session was opened by a young Italian reggae band, The Kingstoned, followed by the veteran of the Italian reggae, the SUD SOUND SYSTEM from Salento (the Jamaica of Italy). Then it was the time for other new artists of the Italian reggae scene such as Gamba The Lenk, Nico Royale, Lion D and Miss Linda. Another

promise of the Italian reggae scene that performed on the stage of Upper Park was Anansi, a young boy that participated to the last edition of the Sanremo, the world famous festival of the Italian song, bringing there reggae music with his tune Il Sole Dentro, an unusual genre for this kind of festival.

Then Boom Boom Vibration -an Italian reggae band that recently collaborated and recorded their new album 'Vibra Unica' with the Italian/international reggae star Alborosie- went on stage. Despite to the sweltering heat and the scorching sun, the Italian reggae massive was large, dancing and breathing the good vibes.

They prepared in a masterly way the massive to the first awaited headliner, the king of ska DERRICK MORGAN! A very charismatic man, with a great vitality, performing some of his historical hits, dancing and feeling the great vibes together with the massive.

Another Italian artist, loved and appreciated by the youths, took the stage: Brusco and the Roots in the Sky preparing the massive for the next performance: the second headliner and most awaited artist was ready to take the stage: I'm talking about a legend of the reggae music, coming back to Italy after several years: JIMMY

CLIFF! The whole audience sang along with his idol, some of the most beautiful successes like The Harder They Come, I Can See Clearly Now, Many Rivers To Cross, with an exciting performance of the Nyabinghi anthem Rivers Of Babylon and the world famous Reggae Night.

Time is going fast and it's time for the last performance of this wonderful reggae marathon.... And the better way to end this day is calling on state the artist that the whole reggae world envy to Italy: his name is... ALBOROSIE! Acclaimed and celebrated by the crowd, and happy to come back to Italy and Bologna, Alborosie performed some tracks of his just released new album '2 Times Revolution', but also some of his greatest hits and among them, the inevitable Kingston Town.

It's midnight and this day is almost over... it's time to turn off the music and turn off the lights... but nobody and nothing could ever turn off the great vibes and the feelings that we lived in Bologna today! And we are already looking forward the second edition of Upper Park reggae festival that will surely take place in the next year! See you there...!

Text and photos by Nadia Bestjamaica



Reggae Film Festival

The 4th Jamaica REGGAE FILM FESTIVAL was held May 23-28 at Studio 38, New Kingston. The venue was a tree-covered open courtyard in the PULSE modelling agency complex, decorated by Props & More with a film theme including a massive reel of film and smaller reels hung around the open courtyard. The stage was divided into performance and screening halves, with films shown on a screen designed like a clapper board, while banners promoting the event's sponsors provided a backdrop for photographs of the many celebrities and VIPs attending. A bar offering a wide variety of drinks, and a spacious yard that encouraged socializing, made the venue was a perfect home for the week-long event.

Declared a success by the Jamaica Film Academy organizers, the Festival accomplished several of the JFA's goals for increasing and improving the Jamaican film industry, and included important cinematic moments. These included:

- * The entry of 11 Jamaican films, an increase from 2 in inaugural year 2008;
- * The emergence of a strong body of Jamaican animators creating work that is both amusing, as well as thought-provoking;
- * The high quality and increased participation in the

Make A Film In 24 Hours competition and its sponsorship by RBTT/RBC Bank;

- * The large number of entries from European countries including Britain, Spain, Poland, Slovenia, and the surprising entry from Tehran, Iran;
- * The 'discovery' of new Jamaican director Vanessa Phillips, winning both the RBTT/RBC 24 Hours Film competition and the Best Short Feature awards;
- * The presence of film makers from the USA, UK, Canada, Antigua, Spain including Hollywood actor Cedric Sanders;
- * The sponsorship support by the Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO, DIGICEL, SUGASHAK RECORDS, IRIE-FM and international companies REGGAE FILMS UK, H&H Pictures In Motion and Tait Computer Services

Make a film in 24 hours

The festival opened on Jamaica's Labour Day, May 23 with the start of the RBTT/RBC Make a Film In 24 Hours competition. Fifteen teams of young film makers, some experienced, others first-timers signed in and waited to learn the 'element' that had to be included in each film to ensure no one had started their film before



time. This year's 'element' was: SOMETHING MUSICAL and with this in mind, teams set off. They were certainly inspired by the prize of JA\$50,000 offered to the winner by the Bank as part of its on-going support of the creative arts and especially of emerging young talent. The following morning 12 of the original 15 returned with completed films, which were then sent to a judging panel composed of the festival's international film guests, Cordel Green, head of Jamaica's Broadcasting Commission, and Festival Director Barbara Blake Hannah. The entries were screened each night of the Festival and as it was too difficult to select only five finalists, six were chosen for the final cut.

The outstanding winner was the film WHAT IF? by director Vanessa Phlllips and Daniel Singer, with THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IS IN THE MUSIC by film novices Denise Gladshaw and Regina Beavers, winning for them

selves a holiday at Couples Hotels. The Audience Popularity vote went overwhelmingly to the entry STAY FIRM by Craig 'Amaziyah The Great' Kirkland, winner of last year's competition. He received a DIGICEL Blackberry Bold as his prize.

Opening Night

The Opening Night ceremony was hosted by Jamaica Film Academy Chairman, celebrated actor Carl Bradshaw who starred in the historic Jamaican film THE HARDER THEY COME. He spoke of the link between music and film, saying "Film is a composition of sight and sound. We Jamaicans have conquered the world with our sounds, now it is time to do it with sight." Guest speaker Spanish Ambassador H.E. Celsa Nuno Garcia, reminded of the historic links between Jamaica and Spain, pointing out that her country now hosts Rototom Reggae Sunsplash — the world's largest reggae festival. "The potential of Jamaican culture has not been economised and exploited fully yet, and the combination of the film industry and reggae holds an endless array of possibilities." RBTT/RBC Senior Vice President Roxanne Lindsay spoke of the Bank's support of film festivals in Trinidad and Toronto, Canada, saying how pleased she was to add Jamaica to this list. DIGICEL's Sandra Legister added her company's en-

dorsement, while Rastafarian Elder, Bro. Sam Clayton of the Mystic Revelation of Rastafari who was featured in one of the night's documentaries, brought Ethiopian blessings.



Film screenings began with the animated film BAD INFLUENCE by self-taught Jamaican animator Reinardo Chung. This short tale of a would-be gunman is told with 3-dimensional, all-action movement, a rich dialogue and a stunning conclusion to the story, and received loud applause that showed why it won the DIGICEL Best Animation award. This was followed by HOLDING ON TO JAH, the one-hour documentary by US director Roger Hall that uses interviews, music and historic footage to tell the story of the birth and growth of reggae from the people and beliefs of Rastafari religion. Several Rastafari in the audience included dub poet Mutabaruka and Elder Empress Sister Mitzie.

US feature film ROCKSTEADY — THE MOVIE starred Cedric Sanders (THE SOCIAL NETWORK) as a Jamaican-fathered young man who tries to become a stock car racer to pay his mother's mortgage. This film found favour with the audience, thanks to Sanders screen presence, as well as the rocking reggae soundtrack by Steel Pulse — whose lead singer David Hinds has a supporting role in them which won the SUGASHAK Award for Best Soundtrack. Both Sanders and the film's director Mustapha Khan attended the Festival, bringing some Hollywood stardust to the event. The short feature DINNER by Antiguan director Tameka Jarvis-George was shown next. This video-poem about a woman's anticipation of her husband's homecoming and dinner preparation, raised some eyebrows due to a small moment of implied sexual intimacy, but this in no way affected the positive reception given the director of her film.

Festival Night 2

To the great regret of the Festival organizers, Antiguan film makers Mitzie and Howard Allen were unable to attend and screen their new feature THE SKIN and their earlier film THE SWEETEST MANGO. The clay-mation animated film TRIBUTE TO PETER TOSH by UK director

Scally Ranks was shown. This unique stop-motion technique using clay figures of the artist brought a humourous, yet serious side to the reggae hero's words about Emperor Haile Selassie, and was punctuated by snippets of Tosh's songs. This was followed by Jamaican director Wayne Benjamin's short film THE CROFT – the first episode of what he described as a horror TV series. A film script-writer drives to the mountains to restore his writer's block, and finds a mysterious apparition is following him. Spanish director Jep Jorba, who attended the first Reggae Film Festival in 2008 with his film RICO RODRIQUES – THE LEGACY, returned this year thanks to sponsorship by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, with his documentary INTENSIFIED – COME FORWARD, narrating the history of the British band that revived interest in Ska in the 1980s and inspired the birth of scores of European ska bands. This was followed by VISION OF PARADISE, an introduction to a film on Lee Scratch Perry. Then came the film INVITATION from Iran, which follows a family emigrating reluctantly from Tehran to Baghdad, Iraq. Narrated by the young woman who filmed it using a cameraphone, the film gives a revealing look into the family's journey through war-torn territory that is more graphic and emotional than any CNN or Aljazeera news story.

Festival Night 3

After the 24 Hours Film entries were shown, the evening screened HEAVEN & HELLSHIRE, a short picture-poem about the popular Kingston beach by US director Sugar Cane, who also attended and entered the 2010 Festival. This was followed by the BBC documentary REGGAE BRITANIA, directed by Jeremy Marre, a history of the influence of reggae in Britain and how the music has impacted on race relations and social interaction. The film shared the UNESCO Honour Award for Best Documentary with Friday night's cricket documentary FIRE IN BABYLON. Technical problems cut short the night's film screenings, which were to have included BEYOND BABYLON by Polish director Michael Szydlowski, SUPERSTONIC SOUND: THE REBEL DREAD by UK director Raphael Erichsen, and THE CASE OF THUGGY THUGGY RUFUS, a US feature directed by Stephanie Slade. (All films had previously been screened for the judges.)

Festival Night 4

The Children's Programme was held at 2 p.m. this year rather than last year's 10 a.m. slot. Due to the extremely lim-

ited festival budget that did not enable press advertising, the event was not attended by many persons to view the film MADE IN TRENCHTOWN – a documentary by Dutch film social worker Esther Magdenberg about her work setting up a library in Trench Town. The film KIDS PARADISE – THE GREAT LOST TREASURE HUNT – a children's TV drama by Festival Director Barbara Blake Hannah, was also shown.

The evening's films began with a live performance by reggae artist Marcus I, who was later featured in the Brazilian documentary VIAJAH. The animated CABBIE CHRONICLES by Alison and Tabois Latchman, which is a running feature on Jamaican cable TV, roused roars of laughter with its simple 2-D images and wickedly funny script. Playwright Ginger Knight's play-to-movie ROOM FOR RENT, with rib-tickling performances by Volier Johnson and Deon Silvera, was appreciated by all, including veteran Jamaican actor Munair Zacca, who attended all the festival screenings.

Hawaii-based US director Joe Trivigno, whose 11 MILES TO PARADISE was screened at the 2010 Festival, returned with FROM KINGSTON TO CALI, a concert documentary featuring reggae icon Jr. Reid performing to a full house in San Francisco on a tour of California. This was followed by one of the Festival's controversial entries, DAVID IS DYING by UK director Stephen Lloyd Jackson. This

story of an HIV-infected upper-class Black stockbroker contained a shocking scene that merited its midnight screening. Though not strictly a 'reggae film', the film's entry was accepted by the JFA because of its excellent production values, unusual script, good direction and also a stunning performance by the lead actor that won him Honourable Mention on Awards night.

Festival Night 5

The full house attendance on Friday, May 27th showed that despite the lack of press advertising, the word-of-mouth promotion of the festival, plus its continuous reporting in the social media Facebook and Twitter, had brought out film lovers to see three of the most talked-about films of the festival. This was the night when the six 24 Hours film finalists were screened to the audience and a popular choice selected. The films were followed by another of Jamaica's new animation cartoons, JERK CHICKEN by director Samuel Stewart, in which the chickens fight back and which received a standing ovation from a laughing-out-loud audience. This year's Reggae Film Festival has shown that there is Jamaican potential for a Disney or Pixar-type feature film. Coretta Singer, whose breakthrough, award-winning KINA SKY was the only

animated film in the 2010 festival, was a proud 'godmother' of this year entrants.

New record company Sugashak Records of Mango Valley, St. Mary, presented a live showcase of their artist KeKe-I, who gave a well-received performance backed by a live band of reggae professionals. Sugashak handed out rustic bags filled with CDs, press releases and organic soaps made in their Mango Valley country village.

BOB MARLEY: THE MAKING OF A LEGEND by Jamaican actress/director Esther Anderson shows footage she shot when she met Marley in the year while he recorded the 'Catch A Fire' album. Though his locks have only just started growing, his comments show that his Rastafari philosophy was already firm. Surrounded by a young Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer, the young group yet unaware of the fame and money to come, relax and speak their world views, giving an early glimpse of Marley that with the hindsight of 50 years, is amazing to see for the first time. Esther supports the footage with background narrative of Rastafari history, as well as her own memories of the time spent with him and with the growing Rastafari movement. Returning to the people and places of that history, she reflects with them on the Marley they knew, and the legend he has become. The film's presence in Jamaica co-incided with its screening

at the Cannes Film Festival taking place that same week, and the director specially honoured the Reggae Film Festival and her home country by showing her film at the same time as its gala Cannes screening.

The next documentary, FIRE IN BABYLON, was in the news that week for holding the top sales position for sports documentaries on Amazon.com. Directed by Stevan Riley (THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND), the film recounts the exploits of the winning West Indies cricket team of the 1970s that was faced with a barrage of racism, but used its bowling fire-power, batting expertise and racial confidence to overcome the English and Australian cricketers and make themselves everlasting Caribbean heroes. Laced with references to Rastafari, Black Power and the politics of the 70s, the film is a conscious tribute to a great moment in Black Caribbean history that deserves its Honour Award as the Outstanding Film of the Reggae Film Festival.

The midnight movie was BUBBLIN', directed by US-based Denise Campbell. A story of a single-mother country girl who turns to 'bubblin' (dirty dancing to lewd dancehall music) in seedy nightclubs to support her fatherless daughter, the film nevertheless captures accurately what life is like for women like the film's lead character. Controversial because of its subject matter, visual content and use of unlicensed

music, the film nevertheless showed that Campbell is a capable director.

Award Night

L&SHarmony, daughters of reggae superstar I-JahMan Levi, performed life to open the Awards Presentation. The full list of Awards is attached below. Then long awaited announcement of the winner of the RBTT/RBC 24 Hours competition was no surprise, as those who had seen it were unanimous that WHAT IF? by Vanessa Phllips was the winning film. The young film maker, previously unknown, showed that she is a major film talent capable of writing, directing, producing and acting in well-made productions. She was definitely the talk of the Festival, receiving several offers of interest in whatever productions she undertakes next. The winning film was shown, then given a choice of winning films, the audience unanimously called for the cricket documentary FIRE IN BABYLON. The night and the Reggae Film Festival 2011 ended on a high and positive note. Plans are now underway to present THE BEST OF THE REGGAE FILM FESTIVAL at venues in Jamaica, Canada, the USA and England and to make the 5th Festival in 2012 be a worthy celebration of Jamaica's 50th anniversary of Independence.

See you in 2012!!!

Award Night

RBTT/RBC AWARD
MAKE A FILM IN 24 HOURS:
'WHAT IF...' Vanessa Phillips

UNESCO AWARD FEATURE
DOCUMENTARY: 'FIRE IN BABY-
LON' (Dir: Stevan Riley)

'REGGAE BRITANNIA' (Dir: Jer-
emy Marre)

JFA HONOUR Awards: 'BOB
MARLEY: MAKING OF A LEG-
END' (Dir: Esther Anderson/
Gian Goody)

HOLDING ON TO JAH (Dir:
Roger Hall)

DIRECTOR – FEATURE FILM
– Mustapha Khan - "ROCK-
STEADY"

Nominees: Stephen Lloyd Jack-
son – DAVID IS DYING

KNUTSFORD COURT HOTEL
AWARD – ACTOR – CEDRIC
SANDERS – "ROCKSTEADY"

Nominees: Volier Johnson –
'ROOM FOR RENT'

TAIT COMPUTER SERVICES
AWARD – ACTRESS: Danielle
Clarke 'BUBBLIN'

Nominee: Vanessa Phillips –
'MISINJUSTICE'

DIRECTOR – SHORT FEATURE:
Vanessa Phillips – 'MISINJUS-
TICE'

Nominees:
Tameka Jarvis-George: 'DIN-
NER' – JFA HONOUR AWARD

Wayne Benjamin: 'THE CROFT'
Jovel Johnson: 'RECKONING'

SUGASHAK AWARD – SOUND-
TRACK:
Steel Pulse – 'ROCKSTEADY'

Nominees: 'HOLDING ON TO
JAH

DIGICEL AWARD – ANIMATION:
'BAD INFLUENCE' Reinardo
'Mental' Chung

JERK CHICKEN – Sam Stewart
– JFA HONOUR AWARD

CABBIE CHRONICLES – Ali-
son Latchman – JFA HONOUR
AWARD

COUPLES AWARD – SCREEN-
PLAY – Ginger Knight – 'ROOM
FOR RENT'

JAMAICA FILM ACADEMY –
SPECIAL AWARDS

REGGAE CONCERT: 'FROM
KINGSTON TO CALI' Dir: Joe
Trivigno

OUTSTANDING FILM OF THE
FESTIVAL: 'Fire in Babylon' Dir:
Stevan Riley

CINE JAMAICA HONOUR
AWARDS :

Craig Kirkland (Amaziyah The
Great), Carl Davis, Volier John-
son, Ginger Knight, Carol Reid,
Sam Stewart, Jovel Johnson,
Wayne Benjamin,Reinardo
Chung, Alison Latchman, Va-
nessa Phillips.

By Barbara Blake Hannah

Black Roots, Jah Mason, Mo'Kalamity and Informative Historyman in Paris

The 14th edition of Zicalizes festival took place near Paris, France from 11th to 21st. Check this photos from the last evening with Informative Historyman, Mo'Kalamity and The Wizards, Jah Mason (backed by Dub Akom) and Black Roots on stage.

Photos by Jennyfer Papin



Miami Reggae Festival 2011

Peacock Park in Coconut Grove came alive for this free festival to “Feed the Hungry”, a campaign to benefit Curley’s House, a non-profit project to feed the needy. Performers included Jafe, Ephniko, The Spam Allstars, Soulflower Amn, Cultura Profetica, Morgan Heritage and others. All nationalities came together through the universal language of Reggae Music. Photos by Gail Zucker



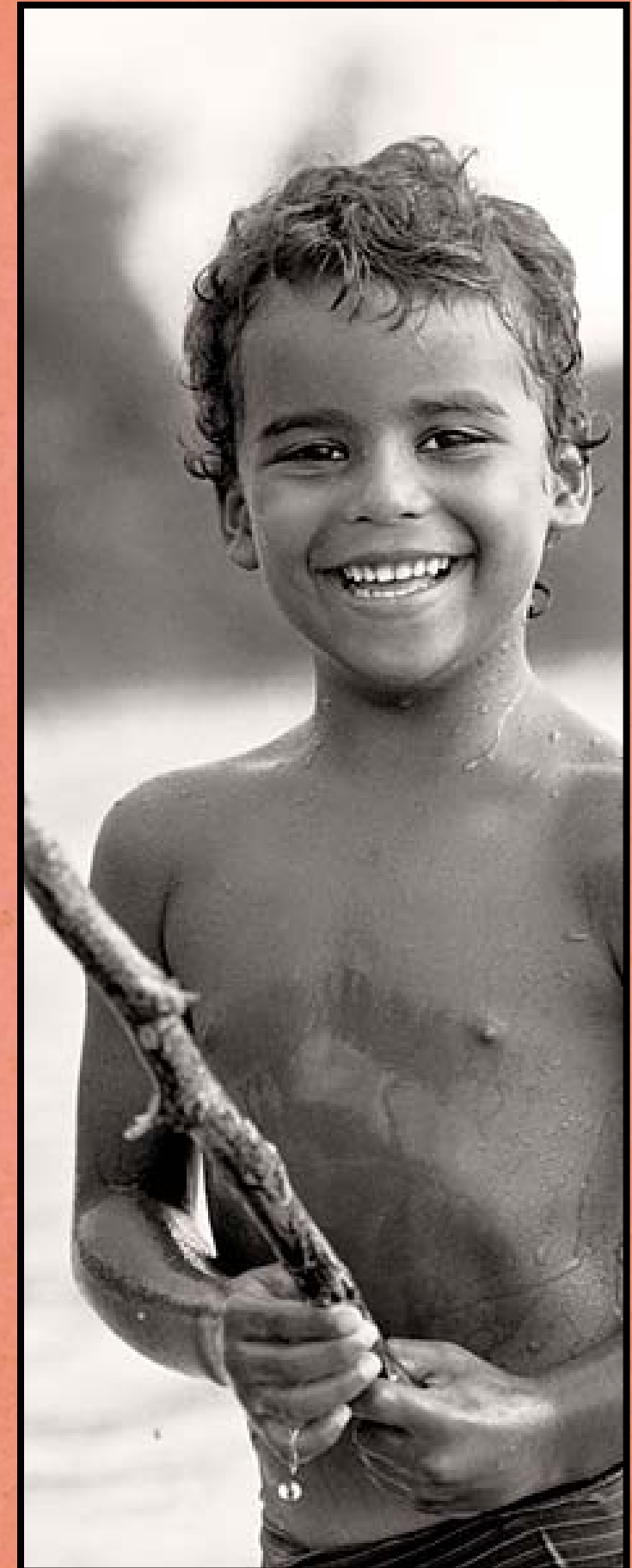


Portraits of Rural Jamaica

My first trip to Jamaica was in 1979 to do a black and white documentary on the Rastafarians as a final project for a University degree in Visual Anthropology. I was in awe from my first moments off the plane. The air was so moist and hot, the land bursting with a thousand shades of green, punctuated by flame red flowers. Reggae blared out from cars swooshing by, the scent of ganja lingering behind. In the countryside I found warmth and spirituality from a people who had little material wealth.

I have been to Jamaica countless times since then, have photographed reggae artists extensively, published scores of photos in magazines, album covers, calendars, and on multiple websites, but my favorite images, the ones that whisper sweetly to my soul, are my Portraits of Rural Jamaica. The bulk of this series was shot all across the country between 1979 and 1988, but I continue to add to it with every island visit. I would encourage all of you that go to Jamaica to get beyond both the tourist resorts, which will isolate you, and the crowded city streets, which will exhaust you, and journey into the countryside, which will surely captivate you with its lush beauty and magical charm.

Photos by Lee Abel





Protoje, Raging Fyah and Rootz Underground Mash it up in Kingston

Dubtonic Kru, Di Kru Productions & Steppin Razor have been putting on some wicked shows on Fridays for their Plug N' Play Productions at the Jonkanoo Lounge at the New Kingston Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica. I was fortunate to catch Protoje, Raging Fyah & Rootz Underground on May 13, 2011. A band called Blu Grass also performed. Protoje entertained the audience... They loved him! He is so into his music, at some point, it almost looks like he is in a trance. It's no wonder he and Ky-Mani Marley have their hit tune Rasta Love. Raging Fyah are five talented musicians that have joined together for a fresh unique sound. Rootz Underground gave a great performance, even though the stage was too small for Stephen Newland to perform his famous jumps... The audience enjoyed his guitar playing!

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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