

UNITED REGGAE

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*FRANKIE PAUL
TINGA STEWART
JEMERE MORGAN
KABAKA PYRAMID
JAHTARI
CALI P
SOUL JAZZ RECORDS*

I Octane *INTERVIEW*

**Dancehall: The Best Twenty Riddims and Five Tracks of 2011
Our Favourite Reggae Albums 2011 - Tarrus Riley and Friends
Cat Coore and Benjy Myaz in Kingston - Embrace The Positive**

★ EDITORIAL by Erik Magni



A glance in the rear-view mirror to the future

A glance in the rear-view mirror marks the start of a new year for United Reggae. But we also take a solid look at two rising reggae stars with a bright future.

Siobhan Jones is one of the newest additions to the United Reggae team. She, myself and Angus Taylor have put together two best of 2011-lists.

For this issue she has compiled her best dancehall in 2011-list with 20 riddims and five tunes, while me and Angus have joined forces for a 20 best albums of the year list.

When browsing through the lists I find both young and old artists. One of the younger talents is hip-hop/roots reggae singer Kabaka Pyramid, who Angus portrays in an interesting piece. He has also met another artist who is predicted a big breakthrough this year – I-Octane.

When reading this issue the reggae and music industry seems brighter than ever. Welcome 2012!

COVER PHOTO BY CHRISTIAN BORDEY

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The Transition by Andre Prehay

Jamaican singer Andre Prehay has recently dropped his largely self-produced debut album 'The Transition'.

He currently spends his time between the UK and the U.S., and the album's 13 tracks were recorded in Texas and mixed in Jamaica.

'The Transition' is mainly in the softer vein of roots reggae, even though the pace increases in the dancehall-tinged Party so Well and the ska-infused Education Needed, a combination with Swedish rapper and singjay Promoe of Loop Troop Rockers.

'The Transition' is currently available as CD and digital download.

Joshua Moses Reissues

The little-known Bristol singer Joshua Moses has been featured on Bristol Archives Records' excellent compilations 'The Bristol Reggae Explosion' vol. 1 & 2.

The label is now set to venture into the reggae vinyl singles arena and has scheduled two limited edition 12" releases from Joshua Moses.

The first 12" Africa (Is Our Land) was originally released in 1978 on the More Cut label and produced by Dennis Bovell. It is now acknowledged as a classic slice of UK roots and on the rare occasion's copies surface they regularly fetch prices over £100. The vocal cut was included on 'The Bristol Reggae Explosion 1978-1983', and following numerous requests the label has decided to issue it in its original format along with the original dub mix.

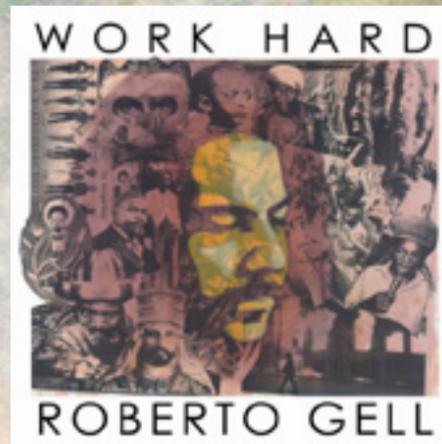
The second 12" from Joshua Moses is Rise Up, and is another strong roots outing. Until it's inclusion on 'The Bristol Reggae Explosion Volume 2' it had remained unissued and unknown, and the B side of this 12" is the previously unreleased dub version

Both 12" are available on 20 February and limited to 500 copies each at www.bristolarchiverecords.com.

Work Hard by Roberto Gell

Dominican American Roberto Gell follow up his EP 'Midnight Ravers' with his twelve track debut album 'Work Hard' in early January.

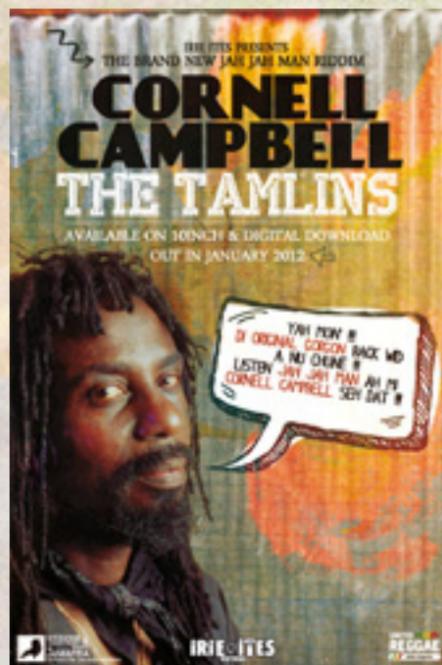
Roberto Gell sets his experiences from the streets of Los Angeles to a sound of live played roots reggae melded with hip-hop, alternative rock and Latin influences.



Jah Jah Man Riddim

French production crew Irie Ites follow-up on their Bucket Bottom riddim relick. The new riddims is titled Jah Jah Man and features sweet vocals from Cornell Campbell and 70's harmony group The Tamlins, a group that resurfaced last year with the worthwhile Alborosie-produced album 'Re-birth'.

This 10" hits the streets in mid January and also includes a dub version of each cut.



Lord Uptown New Singles

Swedish producer Lord Uptown hails from the small town of Uppsala, a town that hosts the international three day festival Uppsala Reggae Festival, and sometimes hailed as the reggae capital of Sweden.

Lord Uptown's labels Dub Cobra and Bomb Proof Dubs provided the reggae scene with a bunch of slices of heavyweight UK roots in 2011.

Now it's time for the third release on the Dub Cobra imprint and the second on Bomb Proof Dubs.

Power in Unity, Humble Dread and Dead Serious are – just as previous releases – in the electronic UK roots vein inspired by outfits such as Zion Train and Alpha & Omega. This means deep and tasty bass lines along with horns and melodica.

Power in Unity and Humble Dread drop on 9 January and Dead Serious hits the streets a week later. All three tunes will be put out digitally, but vinyl issues are considered for future releases.

The Laboratory by Da Professor

Time again for another January album from Jamaican producer Don Corleon. In 2011 it was Pro-

toje's excellent debut album '7 Year Itch', and this year it's yet another album debutant – Da Professor and his 'The Laboratory'.

A bunch of the album's 14 tunes are already released on Don Corleon's riddim compilations Antique, Feelings, Message and Broken Hearts. The combination with Protoje titled Skanking & Rocking was also posted on Youtube last year.

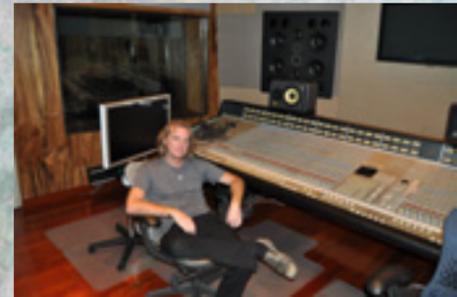
Apart from the duet with Protoje, veteran Ken Boothe shows up as well as Hawaii-based crooner J Boog.

'The Laboratory' hits the usual digital platforms on 10 January.



Beres Hammond and 9To- morrow's

Three members of the 7 man strong American band, 9Tomorrow's, spent time in Jamaica recently doing some video filming and working on new music at the much-in-demand Harmony House studio. This was not



their first visit. Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, these up and coming musicians collaborated with Beres Hammond last spring on a remix for their song 'Walk Through the Door' which was released in September 2011 on their Blind Eye Records label. Since then, the track has been doing well on Itunes and getting regular airplay on SiriusXM radio.

According to band leader and lead guitar player, Dave Kellog, he first met Beres Hammond in the early 90s when he was with the Bahamian band, Courage. Having worked with this legendary singer in the past, he made the trip to Jamaica to personally invite Beres to add his signature vocals to their "lovers rock" inspired track; a style Beres has mastered throughout his career. A blurp from the band's website captures the moment Beres first heard the music and Dave's feeling of amazement when the reggae great started bobbing his head to the beat. I'll leave it to you to imagine what he

must have said or done when Beres gave him affirmation in the form of the simple, honest response, “it’s good, it’s very good...which one do you want me to sing on?”

The rest, as they say, is history.

Who Dem A Program by Protoje

It took Jamaican singjay Protoje about seven year to finish his debut album ‘The Seven Year Itch’, which was released in early 2011.

Now – only a year after – he is set to drop his sophomore album ‘The 8 Year Affair’ also produced by Don Corleon. Its first single Who Dem A Program unleashes Protoje in a serious militant style over a dubby riddim.

Who Dem A Program is also said to set the tone of the album and reveals a brand new side of this upcoming singer.

White Collar Criminals by Sylford Walker

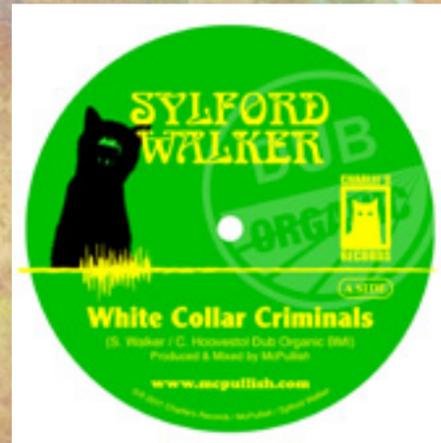
Veteran Jamaican roots vocalist Sylford Walker has put out a new single with American heavyweight dub and reggae producer McPullish.

White Collar Criminals/Dub of Correction is a fine slice of

extremely heavy dub-infused sparse roots reggae, and fits perfectly as a soundtrack to activities within protest initiatives such as Occupy Wall Street.

“This timely one drop song has had a strong response from sound systems, live audiences and radio selectors worldwide and we hope it reaches a wider audience in these times of political unrest and rampant corruption,” says McPullish.

At the same time McPullish makes three previously 7”s with vocals from Lutan Fyah, Mark Wonder and Sylford Walker available for digital download on all major digital platforms. The 7”s and the digital versions feature its dub counterpart.



Bloom Field Riddim

Cultural Production from France has recently dropped the one riddim album Bloom Field, with artists from islands such as Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia and Anguilla.

The 18 cuts in a one drop mode boast mainly upcoming singers and deejays, but some might recognize Antigua-born New York-grown veteran deejay Turbulous, who put out his latest album ‘Woman of a Noble Character’ last year.

The Bloom Field riddim is currently available as digital download.

They Call Me Mr Melody by Singing Melody

Internationally renowned reggae vocalist Singing Melody is gearing up for his first solo album since the 2002 released ‘Expressions’.

Collide – the first single from his sixth solo album ‘They Call Me Mr. Melody’ – was put out in September, whereas the new album hits the streets on 17 January.

In the ten years that have passed he has been making his voice heard in the all-star vocal group L.U.S.T as well as producing artists such as Morgan Heritage and Turbulence and working as an event promoter in Jamaica.

The 13 track album features never before heard material and combinations with artists Stacious, U-Roy, Lymie Murray and L.U.S.T. The production is mainly produced by Tony Kelly and Lynford Marshall along with contributions from Dono-

-van Germain and Skatta Burrell.

Everton Hardware, better known as Singing Melody, is no newcomer in reggae business as he has been active for some fifteen years. Born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, he got his first real break when he recorded his first song Tie Me for King Tubby in 1987. He later went on to work with acclaimed producers Bobby Digital and King Jammy.



Lala Vizuri by Brina

Jamaican singer Brina, who last year dropped the excellent singles Listen and Real Reggae Music, is back.

Her new single Lala Vizuri (Sleep My Little Baby) is a cool one drop that shares both English and Swahili. It’s recorded with Sly Dunbar on drums, Istvan Dely on percussion, Demar Gayle of Raging Fyah on keyboards, Omar Francis on guitar and Kieran C Murray on bass.

“Every singer should have a baby’s song. I have been performing this song since I wrote it in 2009, and now it’s time to share it with the rest of the world. This is a song for healing the soul. It goes out from my heart to the children of the world,” says Brina in a press release.

Think Twice Riddim

In November Warrior Musick’s Dameon Gayle dropped the Think Twice riddim, a riddim inspired by Phil Collins’ smash hit ballad Another Day in Paradise.

The first single of the riddim was Fantan Mojah’s anthemic Rasta Got Soul, where he pays tribute to legendary reggae artists – “If me no call your name, please catch me inna di next song, cause the list a di name a to long.”

“The riddim originally started as song for one of my artiste Sir Ford’s up coming album. Every time we hang out he has been singing that Phil Collins song Another Day in Paradise, so we decide to get it done for the album. We worked on the riddim and tried to record the song on it but it just wasn’t successful, deciding that we should try an original song for the riddim, Oh Lord,” said Dameon Gayle to HDP Global in December.

Duane Stephenson’s cut is a cover of the original tune, and

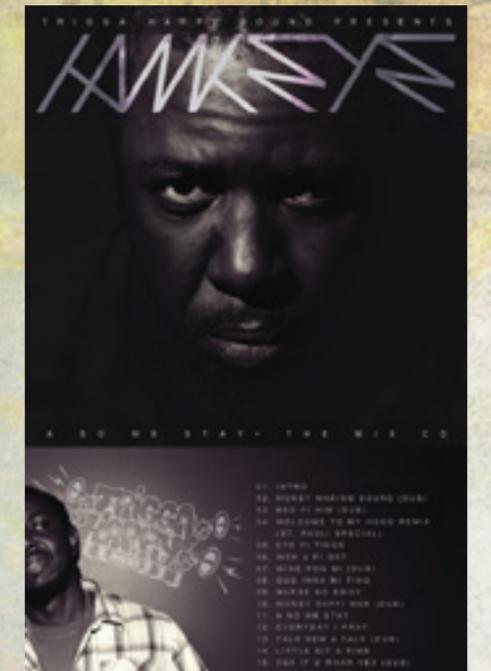
among the other artists that have voiced the riddim are Luciano, Devano, Lutan Fyah, Lymie Murray, Sir Ford, Zamunda, Anthony B and Turbulence.

New Mixtape From Hawkeye

Jamaican dancehall artist Hawkeye, who turned to a more cultural approach some years ago, has put out a new mixtape with Germany’s Trigga Happy Sound.

‘A So We Say’ is available for free download here and holds 25 tunes where of several are unreleased specials and exclusive mixes.

Hawkeye emerged on the scene in the late 80’s, and has worked with many of Jamaica’s top producers during the years. Some of his biggest tunes include the catchy Ooh Ah Aah, Bubble and Wine on the Diwali riddim and Go Rachel.



Club Dance Riddim



Kemar “Flava” McGregor’s latest riddim album Club Dance has cracked the iTunes reggae albums top ten chart in the UK peaking at the number nine position.

The album features Sinead O’Connor’s new single How About I Be Me and showcases a who’s who of British lovers rockers, including Janet Kay, Peter Spence and Carroll Thompson alongside a new generation of young, international reggae artists, such as Maddy Carty, Ammoye, Rekha and Nikesha Lindo.

“As you know, reggae music is one of the most popular genres around the world – it’s pretty much considered pop music,” says Kemar McGregor in a press release, and continues:

“To make people listen, it comes down to the vibe. If the rhythm has that vibe, it’s likely to get radio airplay. If the melodies are good, and the rhythm

has the right feel, it will cross over. Everyone will accept it – the dancehall crowd, the R&B crowd, the hip-hop crowd. The whole world will accept it, because reggae is already considered pop music.”

Anticipated Bob Marley Film Premieres in February

Kevin MacDonald’s long anticipated film about Bob Marley will world premiere at the 62nd Berlin International Film Festival taking place from February 9-19.

‘Marley’ is said to examine the life, legacy and global impact of Bob Marley and will take a look at the life of the reggae icon by interviewing many of the figures in and around him as well as using rare archival material.

According to a blog dedicated to Bob Marley the director’s of Marley have been given unprecedented access to the Marley family’s private archives and granted permission to include rare material. This is supposedly the first time they have granted this access to a film maker.

Kevin MacDonald – director of ‘Touching the Void’ and ‘The Last King of Scotland’ – is the third director and ended up directing the film after Jonathan Demme and Martin Scorsese

failed to get it finished.

Ska Madness 2

Due for release on the 23rd January is ‘Ska Madness 2’ which is another one of those collections of classic Ska and Rocksteady sounds that helped inspire the 2-Tone movement that rose to prominence in the UK in late 1979.

As you will derive from the title this is the follow up to 2010’s ‘Ska Madness!’ which collected together a selection of the original tunes that the 2-Tone bands, such as The Specials, The Selecter and The (English) Beat had covered during their time. This time however the collection, compiled by Rhoda Dakar (The Special A.K.A and Bodysnatchers), focuses more on tracks which influenced the original bands, were favourites on the tour buses during the various Two Tone package tours and were used to fill the interludes between the bands at these gigs. Amongst the 20 tracks featured are 7 Top 10 UK Chart hits including Desmond Dekker’s #1 Israelites from March 1969, a #9 from June 1970 Love Of The Common People by Nicky Thomas and from an artist who recently ventured some way back to his roots with his ‘Sacred Fire’ E.P is Jimmy Cliff’s excellent Wonderful World, Beautiful People which surprisingly only peaked at #6 in October of ’69. Also there are some tunes that maybe aren’t so well known from these type

of compilations such as Wear You To The Ball from The Paragons, Ali Baba by John Holt, The Jamaicans Ba Ba Boom Time and UK act Symarip’s Skinhead Girl.

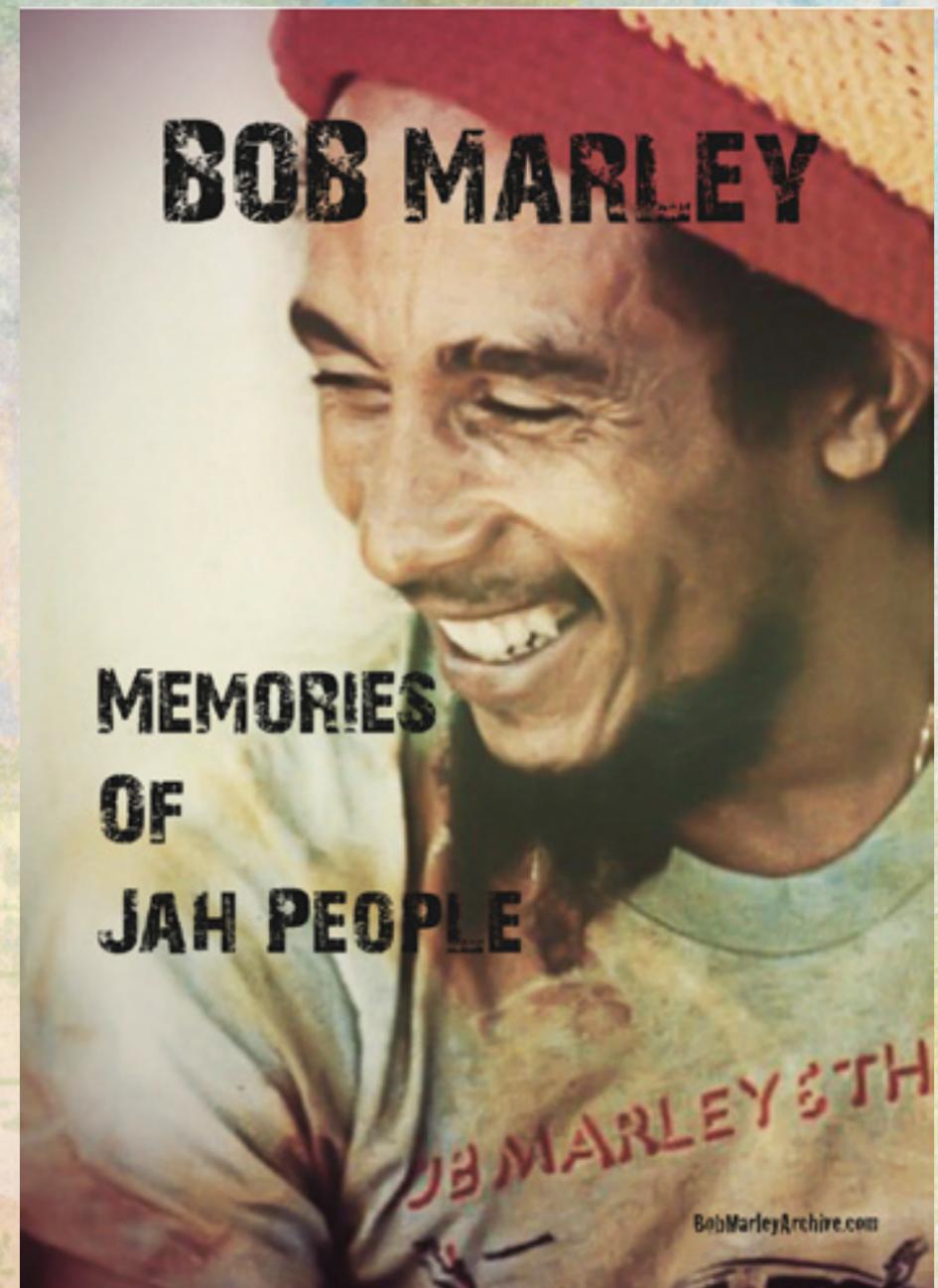
This may just sound like more of the same to some but the original ‘Ska Madness!’ has now sold over 115,000 copies and was the 4th biggest selling budget album of that year and at last count was the 6th biggest selling budget album of 2011! So it just goes to show that there is still, thankfully, great interest in these old songs. So if you are one of the people who brought volume one then this is its must have companion and if you are new to these sounds then this is as good a place as any to start and explore what drove these great bands on... oh and don’t forget to give volume one ago while you’re at it!

Bob Marley: Memories of Jah People

Emmanuel Parata is a French reggae lover. Since his childhood, he was lulled by the music of Peter Tosh, Jacob Miller, Third World and many other reggae legends...

But one artist in particular stood out: Bob Marley.

The music of Bob and his universal message permeates Emmanuel’s life and that is why he decided to become a collector



of memorabilia.

Ten years ago, Emmanuel launched his investigative work. Motivated by his passion for reggae, he began extensive research for rare videos, concerts audios, interviews, unpublished photographs and newspaper clippings of Bob Marley & the Wailers.

Wanting to share his passion with fans around the world, he decided to create his website in 2010 BobMarleyArchive.

com, and to open its archives of audio clips, interviews, rare photos, and a section called “Memories.” These have now been assembled into an eBook, Bob Marley: Memories of Jah People.

“I thought there were many fans of Bob Marley, but many of these fans have never met or even seen Bob in concert, so I created Memories Of Jah People so that they can live the moment as if they were there,”

said Emmanuel. "About a year ago, I collected unpublished stories, real stories of people who met Bob Marley in professional settings, in person, or just at a concert. I have assembled these stories in an interactive book, and the reaction of the fans and feedback have been mostly positive."

"My new project is to write a book with a lot of stories, illustrated with original photos from my personal collection. It may take a long time, but I want the best for the fans. And I hope my dream will come true..."

It is still a work in progress. Stay tuned...

Jamaican Producer Winston Riley Died

Veteran producer and songwriter Winston Riley was shot in the head in November last year and fell into coma. Yesterday he died in hospital, writes Jamaica Observer.

Winston Riley started his career in the 60's and is probably most known for the Stalag riddim, a riddim that has provided the basis for Sister Nancy's smash hit Bam Bam, Tenor Saw's Ring the Alarm and hip-hop group Fu-Schnickens' Ring the Alarm. A few years back Beyoncé and Collie Buddz did their take on the riddim with a

version of Ring the Alarm.

Winston Riley became 65 years old.



Errol Scorcher Has Died

Jamaican veteran deejay Errol Scorcher died on Thursday 19 January following a ruptured blood vessel in his head, reports Jamaica Observer.

He worked as a deejay on several sound systems in the 70's and 80's, and later ventured into producing his own work.

His signature song Roach Ina de Corner was released in 1980, and finds him riding a relick of the classic Real Rock riddim.

Errol Scorcher was 55 years old.

Cruz Control by Anthony Cruz

Jamaican singer Anthony Cruz, who's uncle is the late and great Garnett Silk, has been making music for well over a decade. He debuted in the mid 90's as a lovers rock

singer and later gained some fame with songs such as Half-way Tree and the Buju Banton combination Place Too Bloody.

On his fourth album 'Cruz Control' he has teamed up with producers such as Lloyd Campell, Mixing Finga and King Jammy's son John John.

The album holds several already released singles, including Rumors and Lies and Only the Father, on a relick of Bob Marley's Coming in From the Cold.

'Cruz Control' is currently available as digital download on platforms around the globe on Anthony Cruz' own label Shan Shan Music.



Beat And A Mic by Chronixx

Jamar McNaughton, aka Chronixx, is a 19 year old from Jamaica that has hooked up with French production team Special Delivery for a new single and an upcoming EP.

Chronixx decided to pursue



music seriously after the passing of his little brother in 2007, but actually wrote his first song at the age of five and went on to be choir director and worship leader at church by the time he was only eleven.

He has previously been working with Lutan Fyah and Romaine "Teflon" Arnett. After the passing of his friend Alty "J.O.E" Nunes he further reinforced the calling he got from his brother.

His new single Beat & A Mic is available in online stores and the EP hits the streets later this year.

Future Cuts From Necessary Mayhem

Producer Curtis Lynch of Necessary Mayhem fame is set to drop the label's fourth album release - 'Future Cuts'. It features a wide array of artists from Europe, North America and Jamaica and previews tracks from forthcoming 2012 riddim releases as well as new mixes of Necessary Mayhem classics.

Among the artists that shine of 'Future Cuts' are Maxi Priest, Ziggi Recado, Sizzla and Necessary Mayhem veteran Mr. Williamz.

'Future Cuts' is available on 7 February on LP and one week later as digital download.

Natty Dread Makes Photo Archive Available

Acclaimed French reggae magazine Natty Dread put out the last issue in July 2010. The month before they published a special issue that contained some of the photos published during its ten years as a periodical.

Some of these photos (plus some exclusive ones) are now available as a slideshow via the publishing house Jamaica Insula website. Among the artists portrayed are Lone Ranger, Max Romeo, Chezidek, Queen Ifrica and Bushman. Check it as they add one new photo each day.

In Awe by Midnite

Almost three months have passed since VI-roots trailblazers Midnite's latest album 'Kings Bell'. That means that it's time for a new set.

Their newly recorded studio

album 'In Awe' features ten tracks with Vaughn Benjamin on lead vocals and Juaquin Wilson on bass and production.

'In Awe' is Midnite's fifth release on Fifth Son Records, and their second album distributed through reggae giant VP Records.

"This new album is yet another authentic piece which captures the melodic sound of true roots music at its best and with Midnite's management and Vaughn's support we will continue to offer Midnite's music to a wider audience worldwide," notes VP Associated Labels Group's Director, Donovan Williams.

'In Awe' is scheduled for release tomorrow.



Real Reggae Riddim

PayDay Music's first release of 2012 is the Real Reggae riddim, a riddim created to show the foundation of reggae music and primed to capture the listeners within the first few

chords.

“The music needs a change, the younger Jamaicans don’t seem to have a sense of where the music comes from. I wanted to create something for everyone,” states Grammy award winning Austin “PayDay” Green, in a press release.

Dubmatix' Atomic Subsonic Made Available For Free Download

As a great way to start the New Year Dubmatix has, for a limited time, made his 2006 follow up to ‘Champion Sound Clash’ available for free download.

This 12 track album features various reggae styles including straight roots and its dub, steppers dub and electro dub from a host of artists including Freddie McGregor, Anthony B, Howie Smart, Raffa Dean, Fredlocks, Rasta Rueben, Treson plus Treasure Chest Productions.



Sensimilla Love by Faraji



Lovers rock and soul vocalist Faraji delivers the sensual tune with passionate lyrics and smooth vocals on his latest release Sensimilla Love (Wonderful Feeling) featuring Dwisdom.

Faraji worked with producer Paul “GrooveGalore” Kastick for his debut release of 2012. It was recorded at the Groove Shack Studios in Kingston Jamaica, and evokes an all star cast of musicians, including the talents of Shaggy’s musical director Michael Fletcher, guitarist Junior Jazz of Inner Circle, Reggie Griffin of Isley Brothers and Baby Face fame and drummer Paul Kastick, who performs with the likes of reggae star Maxi Priest.

Sensimilla Love (Wonderful Feeling) is available on e-tailers worldwide, and Faraji will be supporting Beres Hammond on the road in the first six months of 2012.

Etana Offers Four Songs For Free Download

Jamaican songstress Etana is currently working on her follow-up to last year’s album ‘Free Expressions’.

Her third album is scheduled for release in the second quarter of 2012, and the marketing of the album has already begun with no less than four songs available for free download.

Kemar “Flava” McGregor has produced I am Strong and the Lutan Fyah and Luciano combinations Gun and I Will.

Beautiful Day is produced by Etana’s Freemind Music and Austrian production team and backing band House of Riddim.



FRANKIE PAUL

“I’d like to be in space movies... I’d like to play the man who comes from another planet”

Partially sighted singer Frankie Paul (born Paul Blake, 1965, Kingston) is one of the most prolific Jamaican recording artists of the 1980s. In an era when the deejays were increasingly ruling the dancehall Paul proved to be the exception, cutting hit after hit in a voice that has been compared to both Dennis Brown and Stevie Wonder - who he met and was inspired by while still at school. Under the patronage of Earl Chinna Smith he recorded his first tune at age 15. His big sides like Worries In The Dance and Pass The Tu Sheng Peng are played ferociously in dances today and he is still in excellent voice, touring around the world. At the time of writing Frankie is preparing to release his new solo album on his recently established Coffee Walk label. Angus Taylor spoke to Mr Paul as he and his management were having dinner post-performance at Reggae Jam in Bersenbrück, Germany in the summer and got a quick snapshot of his hugely productive career, all told in his distinctive trans-gulf-of-Mexico drawl.



You grew up with music around you because your mother used to keep dances.

She used to keep dances but she used to go to church also and she used to sing there. So I got all what she had because she’s now passed away.

Tell me about your time at the Salvation Army School for the blind.

It was a wonderful time. It was filling and it was learning. There I was taught a whole bunch of things which I memorized and brought out in my everyday life and everyday living.

You had acting lessons there - how have you used that in your everyday living?

Well, I’ve used it quite a few

times but I’ve never quite got to the international stage of it, which I’ve always wanted to try. I think I’m going to try it next year. See if I can get into being in a few movies. I’d like to be in space movies, like sci-fi. Alien movies. I’d like to play the man who comes from another planet (puts on alien voice) WHO ARE YOU??? WHAT ARE YOU DOING??? IT IS NOT REQUIRED FOR YOU TO BE HERE!!! I AM GOING TO SEND YOU BACK DOWN TO EARTH!!!! (laughs)

You met Stevie Wonder at school didn’t you?

Ah! It was a wonderful day. It was raining a little in the morning. The school bell rang but we didn’t know what was happening. They told us we were going to have a surprise! We all went to the assembly hall and

we saw keyboards set up and a microphone and I was saying "Who's this?" and I saw them bringing him onstage I thought "Stevie Wonder", my idol!" and it was fabulous. A wonderful time. I got up on stage and sang "I can see clearly now" and Stevie Wonder said "Oh. Beautiful voice you've got there. Keep it up and I hope you become international with it". And here I am today. They call me the Jamaican Stevie Wonder.

Who was a bigger inspiration - Stevie or Dennis Brown?

Both. I couldn't choose.

Tell me about how Earl Chinna Smith helped kick-start your career?

I used to live downtown Kingston, Denham Town, Tivoli Gardens area and I knew some guys who saw me singing and they said "You're wasting your talent. Let's bring you to somebody who can get your talent up there more than it is now." They brought to Earl Chinna Smith and we went to Channel One, Jumbo, Henry Junjo Lawes, Harry J Records, Jammys, all those labels. But I started with High Times. My first tune was African Princess and it did wonderful. It was my first big hit.

Some of your biggest hits were for Junjo Lawes. What was your experience like, working with him?

At first I was scared of him because I had heard he was a bad man and he used to tie up people and do all kind of things. So I said to myself "I am going to see who is Junjo?" So when they locked the studio I was in there hiding, because no one was allowed in there when Junjo was recording. So I went into the studio and he said "Who this little boy I-yah?" and I said "I can sing you know" and he said "Let me hear you". So he put on a rhythm, I sang and the whole place went berserk! He was like "Yo! Give him five more riddim!" and they gave me five more rhythms and I sang. When I had finished recording he had one of those brown paper bags filled with money and said "This is yours". I went home and me and my friends sat down counting out pure twenty dollars - at the time no hundred dollars was [in circulation] in Jamaica it was just twenty dollars. We counted counted, counted and we got a lot of money time - which was nice! It was nice working with Junjo because he was a man that paid! He treated the artists good.

How did you come up with your two most famous tunes - Pass The Tu Sheng Peng and Worries In The Dance?

Worries In The Dance, I was in the dance one time and the girls were acting real outrageous. Dancing on their head and they were going down on the floor and I was saying "This

look like worries man!" So immediately I went to Channel One and I did the first version for this guy George [Phang] that came from Canada. Tu Sheng Peng, I was coming from a cabaret show in Negril and my friend said "Wh'appen, we go have a Tu Sheng Peng in the house" and my other friend said "Tu Sheng Peng does the man 'nough". I thought "Wha? Them got me now call Tu Sheng Peng?" so I just asked them if I could use it. They said yes and I sang "Pass the Tu Sheng Peng, pass it over".



You recorded a huge number of tunes - could you estimate how many? Are you happy to have recorded so many? If you did it all again would record so much?

Last time I checked I did over five thousand tunes. And I'm still going strong. I am. Yes I would.

When the music turned digital it didn't seem to stop you at all. You just carried on making hits. Do you prefer live music or digital?

Live music. It gives you more deeper inner feeling. It makes you think of original things. Original things happening around you. It's not like camouflage. The digital thing is camouflage. But you know, you can still make the digital thing sound like it's live, if you put your heart and your mind to it, it will sound live.

You were a very successful singer in a time of many deejays. Today, would you say there are enough singers in the industry?

I would say there are singers but they are scared to get out there and do their thing due to what's happening now. What we have to do now is get back to the roots and remember that it's God, the Most High God, nothing else, nobody else that runs the thing. He probably is not too quick at doing what some people want him to do but it surely will come some day.

How much of what you do is improvised? Is that a skill you got from sound systems?

Well I didn't plan it! (laughs) Most of it is straight from the head. Not only sound sys-

tems. It's a skill I got from being around everywhere. Sound system, on the street, in the parks, in my home everywhere.

How do you keep your voice in shape?

Well...I do a lot of practice, testing it out every day. Make sure it's working properly. Make sure all the notes are there. All the slurs are there. The energy's there. And the vibes is there. So there is nothing I leave out. And the prayer. Most important thing of all is the prayer. I do a prayer before I do anything in this world today so God can look upon his son and give me more blessings.

Which do you prefer - live performance or recording?

Live performance. Actually I prefer both - live performance and live recording!

What recordings do you currently have in the pipeline?

I have a new label coming out named Coffee Walk out of Montego Bay, Jamaica and New York. I have a new album getting ready to come out on the market. I haven't given it a name yet [It has since been announced as Broken Hearted]. Actually I have two new albums getting ready that haven't got a name yet. Very soon they will be out playing on the radio and playing all over. And a lot of people will enjoy it because

they have nice tracks.

What do you do in your spare time when you're not making music?

Make music! Making music and listening to my bedroom set. My bedroom set is one of the nicest things in the world today. It's very heavy, it has a lot of top end, it has a lot of mid-range. And I've got my full pouch of CDs which I non-stop play every day. When neighbours come they say "Could you turn it up a little for me please?" and I say "Sure" and I crank it up a little bit for them! (laughs)

What's on your stereo these days?

I'm still listening to old school. Old school reggae, old school R&B. I'm not too into most of the new stuff. I'm into like Richie Spice and Romain Virgo [who also played Reggae Jam that weekend] but most of the stuff I wouldn't go near to - that's not my style.

**Interview by Angus Taylor
Photos by Franck Blanquin**

Stuart Baker founder of Soul Jazz Records



“We built up the courage to contact Clement Dodd and told him how much we admired Studio One”

Soul Jazz and Studio One is back

Soul Jazz Records is an acclaimed label that has evolved into a diverse company that offers both records, DVD's and books. One of the label's highlights is the relationship with Studio One Records. United Reggae has talked to Soul Jazz' founder Stuart Baker about Studio One and the future.

Soul Jazz Records is an inde-

pendent label that started its journey more than 20 years ago and has since issued music in a broad range of genres, including reggae, house, hip-hop, punk, jazz, funk, bossa nova and soul. Music with strong historical and social background.

Apart from releasing records, Soul Jazz has also ventured into publishing books and DVD's as well as branched out to Sounds of the Universe, a

label, releasing more specific single artists, and the name of the shop in London.

“We are indeed an independent label and as such see ourselves as quite removed from the mainstream music industry,” explains Stuart Baker, founder of the label, and continues:

“Five years ago we decided to develop our publishing offer within music books and films, in order to move in a different direction from other labels. This seems to have worked. In the future I would like to develop a digital model for what we do, that incorporates music and books and film in some way.”

Passion is the key

Soul Jazz is known not only for great music, but also for great packaging and design. The releases usually include booklets rich of photos and texts on the history of the project.

“Although we have changed styles many times, we always have a passion behind our releases and wish to communicate this to people - hopefully this is our reputation,” explains Stuart.

Built up courage

One of the critical factors behind the success among the reggae audience is the rela-

tionship with Studio One Records that started about twelve years ago, and the great releases that have sprung from that connection.

“We built up the courage to contact Clement Dodd and told him how much we admired Studio One and asked if he would be interested in working with us,” reveals Stuart, and explains why Clement Dodd chose to work with Soul Jazz:

“He chose to take a chance and trust us to work with. I think it was because we were always polite and when we first introduced ourselves we said that we were a record company who released soul, jazz, reggae etc as opposed to just reggae. We sent material from our catalogue which I think is how he wanted to be presented – alongside jazz music for instance rather than solely reggae.”

Clement Dodd was one of the instrumental forces behind reggae music, and Stuart explains what is so special about Studio One.

“Well, it is a much used phrase, but it is the foundation label of all reggae music. It was at the centre of a musical world and leading the way.”

Back on track with Studio One

A few years back Soul Jazz,

to many people's disappointment, stopped reissuing Studio One material. Stuart explains that it had to do with family issues.

“Studio One is a family business. Our relationship began with Clement Dodd. When he sadly died in 2004, we continued our relationship with Studio One via his daughter Carol and his wife Norma Dodd, who also sadly passed away in 2010,” says Stuart, and continues:

“These events obviously meant that for a while Studio One's concerns were elsewhere, however we are now both looking to the future.”

Sleeves strength of the catalogue.

The relationship between Soul Jazz and Studio One is now happily back on track, and the first scheduled releases are a compilation of Studio One tracks titled ‘The Legendary Studio One Records’ and a book on the cover art of Studio One.

‘The Cover Art of Studio One’ follows other great books from Soul Jazz, including Beth Lesser's ‘Dancehall – The Rise of Jamaican Dancehall Culture’ and Gilles Peterson's and Stuart Baker's ‘Freedom, Rhythm and Sound – Revolutionary Jazz Original Cover Art 1965-1983’. Stuart explains the story behind the new book.

“Well, anyone who collects Studio One knows that the sleeves are very much a part of the strength of the catalogue. We began publishing books about five years ago, such as Beth Lesser’s Dancehall and cover art books about jazz and also Brazilian music, so a Studio One book seemed a very natural thing to do,” explains Stuart and adds:



a dynamism and energy. Rock steady releases such as The Cables and Alton Ellis are cool and restrained. Dub albums are minimal and sparse and the dancehall era has some of the best in my view,” explains Stuart, and adds:

“Even though Studio One used a number of designers the covers always feel like Studio One.”

The 200 page book contains hundreds of both classic and rare sleeves. Stuart says he loves them all, but mentions two that stick out.

“I love the Juks Corporation cover where the characters move along the dancehall and the girl vanishes in the different editions,” he says, and continues:

“I love the fact that The Wailing Wailers had an earlier sleeve with the group in different positions.”

Studio One favorites

When it comes to particular album releases it seems easier for Stuart to mention favorites, at least with regards to albums from Soul Jazz.

“On Soul Jazz I would say Studio One Rockers, which was our first, The Keyboard King by Jackie Mittoo, which was one of our most successful and our four hour film Studio One Story, which was a big project,” he says, and continues with original Studio One albums:

“Original Studio One is an almost impossible question to answer. In fact it is impossible! This second I would say I love Michigan and Smiley for the culmination of musicianship, good time feeling, the re-using of rhythms and the intellectual fun of this and the timelessness.”

Studio One favorites

There are a number of Studio One releases planned, but Stuart is keen not to reveal any details.

“Our Studio One releases focus on compilations, which leaves Studio One itself free to promote its own catalogue at the same time,” he says. Still, Stuart says that he’d like to re-issue classic albums from the likes of The Skatalites and Horace Andy.

“But really, we are very happy in the approach of compiling the catalogue in hopefully interesting, fun and different ways.”

Interview by Erik Magni

“Styles match the music”

Studio One’s cover sleeves artwork changed during the years of operation, and you can see a great difference in, let’s say, early ska releases and the dub albums issued in the late 70’s.



“I think the styles match the music. Ska releases such as The Skatalites are charged with



CALI P

“Just because I started out with Modern Roots, doesn't mean that I only have to stick to this musical style”

Cali P - 26 years old - grew up in Switzerland and spent a lot of times in the Caribbean Island Guadeloupe, the home of his dad. Over the years he voiced some of continental-europe’s biggest riddims like Superior, First Sight or Tek A Train. His first album ‘The Lyrical Fyah’

in 2008 spread his name all around the world and even got released in Japan.

After regular visits to America, South America, Africa and of course shows all over Europe, he moved permanently to Jamaica, the home of Reggae-music.

In just one year he managed to get bookings for big shows like St. Mary Me Come From, Sting and Rebel Salute, shared the voice-booth with established acts like Capleton and even recorded a song with the legendary producer-duo Sly and Robbie.

In October 2011 Cali P released his second LP called ‘Unstoppable’, a collaboration with Dancehall-HipHop-Producer Riga, and reached the TopTen of the Reggae-iTunes-Charts in the USA, Canada and of course Switzerland.

How did it happen that you moved from Switzerland to Jamaica?

I visited Jamaica for the first time in 2009 and stay there for the time of four months. The vibe and the spirit of the island was amazing. After my visit I returned to Switzerland

and decided to move to Jamaica. It only took some weeks until I went back to Jamaica.

I live there now since one year and I'm very glad with my situation and how we moved forward in this short time. I found a own house to live in and we also built up our own studio. Before there was just a garden, now we have our proper working studio. Bobby Digital and his team helped us with the electric wires and building the recording-room. I'm very happy everything happened very fast and the feedback to my sound is great.

Was it easy to get in touch with other labels and other artists?

Well, I'm in touch with jamaican labels & artists since over ten years and they always suggested me: "Ey Cali, you need to come to Jamaica. Over there the people will appreciate your music much more" and that's what we did now. Very important is also that I brought my own Label - Inspired Music Concepts" - to Jamaica and enrolled it correctly with all paperwork. Jamaica has one label more, where young artists can voice their tunes and get some recognition - and the people appreciate that very much.

Who's exactly involved in your label?

The label was founded by Black Phantom and myself in Zürich



in 2009. Today we also have Tanner Hall and Iceberg as co-owner and people like producer Riga or Selecta Chiqui Dubs, which are also a part of the Inspired Family. And of course there some more people for the graphics, webpages and promo. It's a big team.

Now in Jamaica you can find an artists on every corner and there's a certain competition. How does that influence your music and does also push you to better results?

That aspect makes a big difference for personally. In Europe I didn't really feel that. I could not see any artists around that invested more time and energy into his music than me.

In Jamaica everybody's working 24hours a day. Not just as recording artists, but also as event-organizer or producer. That also gives me strength and power for myself.

But I don't feel like it's a rivalry between the artists, sometimes I'm at a studio and write a song and then an other artists sings it and when he's getting exposure with that, I'm happy too.

With your move to Jamaica what changed for your career. Are you getting more recognition?

I really getting more exposure since I live in Jamaica. Also before when I was based in Switzerland I had worldwide attention, did songs for labels all around the world, but since I'm in Jamaica I'm getting more and more attention. Jamaica is known a music-land, everybody's who's involved in Reggae or Dancehall is always watching what's happening on the island. So since I got featured in Jamaican radio's and TV-shows and sound systems play my songs in the dances, the whole world see's that.



Your song "Like A Lion" was played on heavy-rotation on Irie FM. How did that happen?

Me and Black Phantom attended a sports-event in Ochio Rios. Then we had a little jam session on the parking lot. Blacks played my Riddims on the car-speaker and I performed some of my current tunes to a small crowd of people. More and more people joined us to see what's going on and after a while a man stepped to me. He introduced himself as a news-reporter at Irie FM and he was very interested in my music,

especially "Like A Lion". We linked up several times and eventually I gave him some Promo-CDs, which he passed forward to the Irie-FM-Selectors. That's how "Like A Lion" entered the program of Irie-FM. Frey Vineyard. Tap Nat Musik and the Frey Vineyard present a show called the Beneficial Reggae which is growing. We're starting to think about the next event. Those are the main things we're thinking about.

When I posted my webpage and Facebook that "Like A Lion" is on rotation in Jamaica, it also buzzed big in Switzer-

land and Soundsystems all around the world linked me for Dubplates. But the funny thing is: I released "Like A Lion" four months before it was featured on Irie FM and back then it didn't get this huge recognition.

Since October 2011 you have your second album called 'Unstoppable' out. What's the new album about?

The new album is a collaboration with me and Riga (Producer from Geneva). I working with him since many years and we did many songs together



over the last years. We experimented with new sounds and just recorded tunes, without thinking about an album. When I moved to Jamaica I thought I would be a pity, if these songs just get lost in the archives. So we decided to release it as a pure Dancehall-HipHop-Album. I've got fans, who are listening to Roots-Reggae and others also like HipHop or RnB. For me music knows no boundaries and I person-

ally like many different genres.

Just because I started out with Modern Roots, doesn't mean that I only have to stick to this musical style. Right now I'm already working on my next LP, which will contain strictly Roots-Music.

Since one year you're based in Jamaica, your producer Riga is based in Geneva. Did you sent

a lot of files for and back?

No, everything was recorded in his studio. We started about 3 years ago, at this moment I was still based in Switzerland. Sometimes he already had the Riddims finished and other times we vibed together.

Soundwise "Unstoppable" is very modern with electronic-produced Riddims, but the lyrics are more what to expect from a Roots-Album.

For sure. I can't switch my personality just because I'm singing on a Dancehall-Riddim. I always stay true to myself and it gives me motivation to record this kind of Riddims. Maybe there are people out there, which can't relate to Roots-Sound, because it's too slow for them. People, which are more into the "club-vibe" definitely can party to this album, and when they take a minute and listen carefully to the lyrics, they will notice that I touch some serious topics on the album. That very important for me personally.

**Interview by
Demian Hartmann
Photos by Felix Rioux**

TINGA STEWART



"Mr Boris Gardner was a perfectionist. I sang a little off key - he took the bass and conked me on my head!"

Neville "Tinga" Stewart was born in East Kingston and grew up around the Kingston 11 Waltham Park Road area. He and his younger brother Roman Stewart both showed an aptitude for singing, with Roman cutting his first side in

1967 and Tinga following him in 1968. But it was on the hotel and club circuit that Tinga really made his mark, performing a wide variety of Jamaican and foreign popular music with the Boris Gardner Happening that would inform the soulful love songs of his recorded works. A solo career beckoned when he won the 1974 Jamaica Independence Festival popular song contest with Play The Music, which reached a high point when he took the 1981 contest with the classic Nuh Weh Nuh Better Than Yard. Roman and then Tinga relocated to New York and continued to be active in the dancehall era

until, sadly, Roman passed away due to heart problems in 2004 after a concert by his old friend Freddie McGregor. But Tinga has carried on the family legacy and in 2009 released his latest album 'Nah Linga', co-produced by his son, taking more of a roots direction than the lovers staples for which he is known. He has a new single Victim produced by Patrick Booth of Sollueshing Productions due in mid January 2012. Angus Taylor spoke to Tinga about his "love of love", American soul music and how he has remained current through the years...

Who got into music first, you or your brother?

My brother recorded before me but I was involved in it first. He recorded in '67. The Tenors group produced a song with him Walking Down The Street on the other side of a tune called Ride Me Donkey. Me, I was always singing in bands. My first band was called Wildcats band and we used to sing a lot in clubs. Then I moved on to the Boris Gardner Happening from 1971-74.

What was your first tune?

My first tune was with Ernest Wilson and the Clarendonians - a song called She's Gone in duet and that same night I did a song called Hear That Train. We went down to Dynamic Sounds studio, Byron Lee's studio, and there were musicians like Esmond Jarrett on drums, Hux Brown on guitar, Jackie Jackson on bass, Gladdy Anderson on piano, Winston Wright on keyboards - musicians like those. It was great we recorded two tracks and just had to sing everything one time. It was produced by Derrick Harriott.

Both you and brother sang for Derrick Harriott, right?

Yes, he did a song for Derrick that was written for Dennis Brown - Now That The Change Has Come [Changing Times]. That's why people always say Dennis followed Roman's style because they were close friends

for a time. And when Roman sang "NOW THAT THE CHANGE HAS COME... WE MUST HAVE SOME FUN..." in that big style that a lot of artists have tried to imitate - no one imitated him like Dennis Brown.

What was Derrick like to work with?

At the time Derrick was a very cool producer, a singer producer, so good to work with. In those times we had The Chosen Few there alongside myself because they did the background vocals to my first song Hear That Train. They backed my songs with their harmonies. He also had people like the Kingstonians, Eric Donaldson passed through, Rudy Mills, and Scotty did his solo thing to make a name for himself away from the Chosen Few, Big Youth, and Keith & Tex who sang Stop That Train. All those people were around Derrick.

You were quite active on the hotel and club circuit in your early days – what are your memories of those days?

Great memories. People dancing, singing to people. We'd play American pop songs, calypso songs and a wide repertoire of soul songs. I learned to sing all those songs with Boris Gardner. I remember one time I was singing this song and people were dancing and I sang the song a little off key - he took the bass and conked me on my head! To make me aware that I

was flat. That made me aware of what I was doing and try to sing better. Mr Boris Gardner was a perfectionist. I should say I went to a university working with Boris for three to four years and it was a great experience.

You've sung and interpreted many American soul and R&B songs in your solo career. Was it that period that gave you that versatility – singing all those styles of music?

That's correct. That was the nurturing for me singing all those songs that came from the Boris Gardner tutelage and the experience working with him made me come out with all those songs you're talking about.

How did you depart from Boris Gardner to go solo and be replaced by Earl 16?

I really didn't leave. It was 1974 and Ernie Smith wrote this song for me called Play The Music and it won the Festival Song while I was with Boris Gardner so I started getting solo work all around the country and Boris hired Earl 16. He took my position as vocalist with the band but I wasn't fired or anything like that. I just moved on and it was cool runnings with everything.

You sang the winning festival song of 1974 and wrote the winning song of 1975 – when

Roman won the next year.

Yes, I wrote that one in 1975 - a song called Hooray Festival - and decided not to enter with the song. What really happened was in the finals they didn't pick the song. But Toots and the Maytals dropped out of the competition because they had to go on tour. So because that song made an impact on that night they called back for that song. Toots dropped out of the final six and Roman won it with that song.

Was there ever a rivalry between you and your brother – as two professional and successful singers?

Never. We did two albums together - one called Brother to Brother and one called Break Down The Barriers - and we always had a good vibes. At no time did we ever quarrel over singing. He'd leave New York for Jamaica and make the rhythm tracks, bring them back to New York and we'd voice them together. That was how we'd do it because he left Jamaica in 1976 and didn't come back.

As we said, you covered a lot of soul tunes like Why Can't We Live Together, Rainy Night In Georgia; Al Green, The Drifters – what is it you love about those great American artists and songs so much?

You see, I love love. Those songs are expressing a lot of



love. I love singing to women. I like to sing those balladeering love songs because you can soothe the world with love. I like to sing culture songs too but when I tour there are a lot of love songs.

Who are your favourite US singers and why do you like them?

Al Green, Marvin Gaye. When I was singing with Boris Gard-

ner band I always wanted to sing songs like Let's Get It On and I just loved the styling of Al Green and Marvin Gaye.

A lot of younger people in the UK and Europe know you for your 1977 cover of Timmy Thomas' Why Can't We Live Together on the Blood & Fire Darker Than Blue compilation.

That was for Ronnie Virgo, who

laid the rhythm tracks with Sly & Robbie. Ronnie told me he had the rhythm and he wanted me to do Why Can't We Live Together so we went into Channel One studio and the background voice on it was Brent Dowe. It was big outside of Jamaica because it didn't get any play here or get a big boost here. It just came out in Europe.

But the tune that most people in Jamaica know you for is Nuh Weh Nuh Better Than Yard which again was the Festival song of 1981 – tell me the story behind that song.

That was when Bob Marley was sick in Germany. Everyone was in mourning in Tuff Gong Studios. Then Sangie Davis said he had this song for me and started playing it on the guitar and it sounded very melodious to me and we wanted to enter it in the Festival. At the time we saw Rita Marley coming through the gates and played her the song and she said she wanted to produce it. The next day we went into the studio with the Wailers band and cut the track - and the rest is history!

You and Roman both feature on the concert DVD Vintage Reggae Bash Brooklyn 1983 at the Empire Roller Skating Center in Brooklyn with Big Youth, Leroy Sibbles, Ken Boothe, Delroy Wilson, Tinga Stewart, Roman Stewart, The

Blues Busters. How did that happen?

I was in New York and the brother who was putting that festival show on was a good friend of mine so he asked me and Roman to do the show. I did a couple of songs on that show and they only put one on the video but it was a good show.

Why did you decide to leave Jamaica and follow Roman to New York?

I got a green card. I went over there for a while and after a couple of years I got a green card in about 1986. But I was still going back and forth to Jamaica. Then after a while I decided to get citizenship so I had to stay there for a little while, for a few years.

In the late 1980s and early 90s as the dancehall thing happened you carried on: covering American classics in deejay combination like Take Time To Know Her, Save The Last Dance with Ninja Man and Up On The Roof with Tiger for Steely & Clevie.

The first time the combination happened with Ninja Man I went by Jimmy Cliff's studio in Jamaica and saw Ninjaman. Every time he saw me he said he wanted to do a song and we heard this rhythm playing and

Witty the producer was in the studio so we just went in front of the mic, Ninja Man was in front of me and I just sang it in one take and the song was finished. They told Ninjaman where to come back in and I sang the intro, he came in and I came in and that was it. One take. That was the first one, Take Him To Know Her. The second one came when Pickout the producer gave me some rhythm tracks. I went into the studio with him and was singing on this track and thought, "You know what? I'm going to give Ninjaman a second combination tune". So I went down Edison Avenue where he lived on my bike and said, "Ninja! I got a song for you man! A combination we can do down Channel One!" I said, "The song is called Cover Me" and he just looked at me and said, "Under Mi Love!" So we just jumped on my bike back to Maxfield Avenue and we did two takes - the engineer was Souljie - and it was history again!

How have you coped with your brother's passing in 2004 and what's your favourite memory of him?

My favourite memory of Roman? Oh gosh. So many memories. I remember Roman as the king of specials in New York. Any time an artist would come from Jamaica or any artist in the world came through New York they would have find Roman. You name any artist and they would tell you. If they came to



New York it was Roman they had to find because he had the connections to do dubplates. He'd says, "Brother, I have some work for you" and we'd go to the studio. Everybody is the business: Ken Boothe, Alton Ellis...

Finally you came with a new album in 2009 called Nah Linga featuring a very cultural song Hail The King on the drum song rhythm with Ras Myrhdak.

Well, the name of the album came about because my name is Tinga so I said "Nah Linga - that's what the name of the album is going to be". The engineering is by Mixing Finga who

works with Capleton. We got together and mixed all the songs. One of the tracks is produced by Willie Lindo called Believe Me but most of the songs are produced by myself and Mixing Finga. There is a lot of cultural content on there. As well as Hail The King there is Praise Him, which is about respecting your parents and culture and not being a hypocrite, written by Willie Lindo. People often say to me, "Tinga! You sing too much love tune! Cho! Why you don't do some culture tune for Europe and them people!" So I decided to do some cultural content because people long to hear the culture side of Tinga.

You have a new single, Victim, out for 2012. What does the

future hold for you?

Good things. Touring - can't stop! - and the album is picking up very well on iTunes, the internet and all that. People like it and they are buying it. So I'll keep on singing and performing - that's what I love best. So for 2012 I'm still recording new songs and I'm still going.

Interview by Angus Taylor

Jemere Morgan

"I have some pretty big shoes to fill but I'm ready to take on the challenge"

Every reggae lover knows or has heard at least a song of Morgan Heritage, the royal family of reggae. And a new generation of this talented big family is growing up, and it has been a pleasure for me to have the chance to interview Jemere Morgan.

You are the son of Gramps Morgan of Morgan Heritage. How do you feel being part and representing the new generation of this great family? Musically speaking, which commitment means carrying a last name like this?

I feel very blessed and humbled to take part of my family legacy. I have some pretty big shoes to fill but I'm ready to take on the challenge and take what my family have done in the business to another level which will set the path for the next generations of Morgan's to come... and it's a bunch of us so get ready! (laughs)

So young, just 17 years old, and already two singles released: "First Kiss" and "Sunshine Glow". Can you tell us something about these releases, the studio experience or any anecdote?



Well my first single "First Kiss" came along by me singing in the shower which I love doing because of the reverb in the

bathroom (laughs) and that's how I came up with the melody. So I took it to the studio and put my thoughts into the lyrics and there you have it "First

Kiss". Now my second single "Sunshine Glow" is a funny story. That was actually the first reggae "one drop" song I ever done so I was a little nervous because I had no clue what I was doing. I sat in the studio for 3 hours trying to find a melody and nothing was coming to my head. So I took a break from the studio and then came back 45 minutes later and I finally found the melody! So I put the melody down and went back and put words into it and there you have it "Sunshine Glow".

Your songs are very romantic, and the lyrics are mostly about love. Do you consider yourself a "lovers rock" singer? How important is for you to transmit messages through music?

Well I'm a teenager so this is the time where you start to first feel real feelings about a girl so I'm always built up with all these feelings inside of me about the girl I'm with and I always take things that girls say and put them into a song. And Yes! I'm a big fan of "lovers rock" music too, if there is one type of genre I can say that makes the girls say "yeahh" (laughs) then I will say it's "lovers rock". Music is life! Even the hardcore rap songs you hear now and days people can listen and relate to their own life so the message in my music is very important. I represent for all the young teen boys that go through prob-



lems with their girlfriend and sometimes they don't know what to say or what to do to make their girl happy again. So I want to be the one they turn to and dedicate my songs to their problems.

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music is very important. I represent for all the young teen boys that go through problems with their girlfriend and sometimes they don't know what to say or what to do to make their girl happy again. So I want to be the one they turn to and dedicate my songs to their problems.

Your name JEMERE means "wish come true". Which is your biggest dream you would like to see accomplished?

I've always dreamed of selling out a stadium one day so doing that will be a huge accomplishment for me and I'm looking forward to doing that in my near future.

**Interview by
Nadia Bestjamaica**

Kabaka Pyramid

"I have always been musically a split personality"

Keron Salmon AKA Kabaka Pyramid created seismic waves with the release of his free to download Rebel Music EP last summer. Combining roots reggae and conscious hip hop as seamlessly as Nas and Damian, and featuring a guest appearance from man of the moment Protoje, the EP issued via his Bebble Rock label seemed to unite reggae fans across the world. Bebble Rock is a musical, social and familial community that grew up around Salmon, his brother and their friends in the Hope Pastures/College Green area of St Andrew. In 2002, after completing high school Salmon left Jamaica for Fort Lauderdale where he began rapping and making beats, finding the Bebble Rock crew had set up their own studio for him to work in on his return. At about this time he chose the name Kabaka Pyramid, bringing together the name of a former Ugandan king and the iconic polyhedron. Several hip hop mix tapes followed until another trip to the states in 2004 led to a meeting with fellow rapper Young Diction who introduced him to the producer Danger. Their collaboration single Dear Hip Hop was chosen to feature on



a Myspace invasion mixtape by DJ Green Lantern. In 2009 following two more hip hop mixtapes the Transition Volume 1 and Volume 2 Kabaka and his management team decided to fuse his hip hop and reggae heritage as one - and the rest

was history. Six months after the dust had settled Angus Taylor caught up with Kabaka Pyramid to discuss his many sided talents...

Your rebel music EP really took off last year. Why do you think it created such a buzz?

A few reasons. I think the sound isn't necessarily unique because it's often compared to Junior Gong and Protoje and such. But I think the sound blended in the way it was with the reggae and hip hop mix and the content - the level of information - that had a major impact on the reaction from people. I've been overwhelmed, trust me. It's a blessing.

I'm glad you mentioned Junior Gong. People compared Rebel Music to Distant Relatives - is this a flattering or superficial comparison?

Definitely flattering because those two are artists I look up to. Junior Gong and Stephen Marley's productions I look up to as a producer as well. I have no problem with when people say "You sound like somebody else" because I'm not trying to reinvent the wheel. You have to use your influences and mould them into your sound.

You've really embraced the mixtape culture in the same way hip hop and rnb have been to get mainstream interest. Is this the way to build a buzz when people won't buy albums? How has the response to the EP translated into mainstream radio play or big show bookings?

That was the approach from the outset. This was promotion for people who don't know Kabaka Pyramid and are wondering "Why should I pay for it if I don't know it?" So we put it out there free and it's not a problem because we do it for the love of it. Radio stations are playing it, some less known than others, but a couple of disc jocks on major stations have been supporting me ever since and a few new ones logging on since the EP. I'll be doing a show here in Kingston called Plug 'n' Play that Dubtonic puts on every Friday at Jonkanoo Lounge. I'll be there along with other acts like ChronixX and Kelissa that I link with. I'll be doing JARIA - the Jamaica Reggae Industry Association - they're keeping a series of shows in February for Reggae Month. I'll be on either the fusion night or the reggae night! Because my stuff is kind of... (laughs)

You are an mc, producer, engineer - how did you get into each one?

Mc-ing just began from my high school days. Just me and my brethren just listening to a lot of rap and a lot of dancehall and then trying it out for ourselves. That just grew into building a home studio. I used to watch my brother Supanova producing a lot and he taught me how to use FruityLoops and make beats, and how to use Acid Pro and record. I had a background in using those programs from having a sound

where we'd make mix cds and remixes. I've always been into computers and into music so these things come naturally. I'm always eager to learn every time I go to a big studio, picking their brains to see what compressors they use, reverb, when to do this and that. My production has been an evolution. I have the mindset that if I can't get something done for me I'll just learn to do it myself. I like an old school sound with hip hop drum loops and old school sounds in reggae instrumentation. So I will sample some old reggae, create a drum loop, add some more instruments whether some keys, guitar or some horns. I use Ableton Live right now, big up to Suwandi for showing me that program which revolutionized my production. So it's a lot of sampling and a lot of getting live instruments and musicians to come in the studio.

Tell me about how you became part of the Bebble Rock Family?

Bebble Rock started mainly with youths I went to high school with and from other high schools in Hope Pastures, College Green. Man like AJ they have always been around, man like Grabba Smallz I went to school with, my two managers Abi and Duanie, my brother Supanova - so it's always been a family thing. We'd always had a studio which has been a central link up point. Right now the studio is at Abi's house. These are not just musical re-

-relationships - these are brethren where it's more like family. Taiwo was a key member when we focussed more on the hip hop and passed away in late 2007. But that kind of galvanised the unit again and we built this studio here and it was just constant music from there - albums and mixtapes and this sort of thing. Bebble means "Sharp" and the rock signifies the solidity. So the rock will always stay sharp and the music will always keep the direction one pointed while it's always solid content and solid music.

Your previous two mixtapes - the transition 1 and 2 were hip hop. Was your plan to focus on hip hop then?

Definitely - I was still doing a lot of reggae songs then but it was still in a developmental stage. But the hip hop we were more confident with and considered ready for the streets and for the underground vibe and thing. Hip hop is just something that comes natural to me as well and that spurred our confidence that we should put out some music. We put out the Transition 1 while I was still in Orlando and then after we did the Bebble album in Jamaica when I came back in '08-'09 we released Transition Volume 2 which got a lot of good support.

What is the Jamaican hip hop scene like?

It's a very underground scene. A lot of the rappers are from



different communities. There's no real showcase for them so you will have rappers out in Portmore who don't really know what's going on in Kingston. We hear there are rappers in Mandeville and it's like the connections are not really being bridged as they should be. But hip hop is huge in Jamaica. Everybody knows from Biggie and Tupac straight up to Wu Tang and Nas to the main-

stream stuff like Little Wayne and Rick Ross. You have a lot of rappers but the thing about it is that Jamaicans for the most part are not comfortable with people rapping - particularly rapping with a foreign accent. That's why there's pretty much no radio support for local rappers. Boyd from Alric and Boyd used to play local rappers back in the day with Holocaust and Beast and those guys but he's

not on the radio any more. My disc jock brethren named ZJ Rush, me and him are close so he will play some of my hip hop tracks here and there, but for the most part it doesn't get supported in the mainstream.

Who are your all time favourite hip hop artists? And your favourite reggae artists?

Gza and Raekwon from Wu Tang, Common, Nas and Canibus. Talking about Sizzla, Dennis Brown, Peter Tosh, Ini Kamoze, and Junior Gong. Those are my all time favourites.

You talk in your lyrics about doing music for the love of it. Do you have to find other ways to make a living? Is music something you do in your spare time?

I'm just reaching a stage in the last few months where if I got an offer for a 9 to 5 job I'd probably turn it down. Things are rough in Jamaica. My family have been going through a rough patch for the last few years. But we still give thanks for a place to stay and right now I don't have to worry about too many bills and things and we have the studio. It rolls around my mind but I don't really stress about that still. The music, just even getting dubplates and keeping those things in circulation, gives me a good income and doing little shows here and there - hopefully we can line up some tours... I do some side hustles like selling

football jerseys. We have our duplication thing in the studio, cd duplication with Lightscribe, and studio time where I work as an engineer, so I have to supplement.

How do your spiritual political and artistic beliefs express themselves through your music?

The main motivation for me to do music is to bring across a message. The message might be different due to the vibe of the production or just my vibe at the time but I try to stand out with a level of content in my lyrics. I find that a lot of the type of information given in certain songs I listen to - particularly in hip hop - I don't find those messages being brought across in reggae. So I try to go as deep as I can with my spirituality and my Rastafarian faith. Because there is an evolution going on in consciousness right now and people are rising so I think the music needs to rise with that consciousness. People need to know about yoga, about Tai Chi, about energy, about chakras, about meditation. Not just saying these things but actually doing and talking about them from experience.

Tell me about your Kemetic Yoga. Is it complementary to your music?

Yoga is something I try to do every day. Yoga is about balancing and unification. Unifying the higher to the lower, uni-

fying yourself to the creator. If I can keep a balanced heart and mentality then my music will be balanced and beneficial for people. Yoga keeps me level and with the deep breathing as well it enhances my breathing and ability to project my voice and even with abdominals and things like that so it's very much a part of the process.

Tell me about what the relationship between reggae and hip hop and what it means to you?

(pauses) For me it comes out of the same milieu, the same energy source. African people come from Africa. Some of us came to the Caribbean, some of us went to the States. All were taken and brought to these places. And the same revolutionary energy that was being cultivated in the 50s, 60s, and 70s, it just manifested in two different ways. A lot of the same things being spoken of, the fight for freedom, the fight for liberation, the struggle of poverty against oppression, but it just manifested in a different bounce, a different groove. So what I try to do is just fuse the grooves together and there are so many different styles with this type of music that I just love and appreciate it when someone does something unique. Like Ini Kamoze, the man just has style, and he is another one who did what I am doing now in fusing the reggae and the hip hop. So I kind of look to him as the prototype, and I know Protoje does as well.

People complain about hip hop infiltrating reggae but you make a kind of roots hip hop that no one seems to be complaining about.

It's kind of funny because I was literally expecting more people to give that kind of review! But I think it's because it's more rootsy and a lot of the complaints now about hip hop fusing into dancehall is this new more modern sound of hip hop. That synthesizer and that one drum loop, where you find all the rhythms just sound the same and sound flat. So when you come with the roots now and you add that hip hop bounce to it, it's a different sound altogether. It's still soulful music from the heart.

Tell me about the genesis of this hybrid project.

I have always been musically a split personality. There was Ini Kabaka who does reggae and there was Ronnie Pyramid who does hip hop. And if you listened to the two of them you'd have no idea it was the same person. But me and my management team sat down around September of 2009 and said "We have three different paths. We can stick to reggae, stick to hip hop or we can fuse them". We did a song called Betta Mus Come with me and Koro-Fyah shortly after I watched the movie of the same name and it was like the beginning of a transition point. We realized we found the sound, the delivery, the lyricism and

the groove which started a progression. Then I did Free From Chains which fully manifested the sound because it had the roots, the hip hop and the lyricism. I actually wrote that song on Common's Resurrection - I actually wrote it to the that beat. I was writing it with the mindset of writing a hip hop song but I did it in a way where it could be sung as a reggae song with the melodies. I built a beat sampling Ini Kamoze and I sang it on it and the man then said it sounded good so we realized we needed to do a project on this. Protoje linked me too and said "You need to put out some music" and when he heard that song he was overwhelmed and it just sprung forward from there!

Which producers apart from yourself contributed to the project?

Julian King Biggs Morrison did the first track The Sound - from the moment I heard it it had to be the in-track! Louis Plant or LP did Feel Di Vibes, me and Proto were supposed to do a combination on it but then we ended up doing the Warrior track. That was produced by Zinc Fence which is ChronixX and Teflon. They also produced I Alone and Real Music. Pay Check is a producer from California who I linked through Vicious Automatic which is my manager's cousin, he gave Vicious a beat and I recorded Prophecy on it. We did the hip hop version first and the reggae version after. All other

tracks were my productions.

Protoje, Dubtonic Kru, yourself - do you see yourselves as part of a new movement in music in Jamaica?

There is a renaissance going on right now. I know it's in alignment with this whole 2012 shift that's going on and it's manifesting in Jamaica in this way. The music is definitely having a revival with Uprising Roots, Dubtonic, Raging Fyah, Jah9, Proto, ChronixX, Kelissa, Cen'C Love, and I definitely consider myself a part of it. I'm proud to share stages with these people - the talent is overwhelming right now.

We've talked about a lot of positive things but in the interests of balance I have to ask you about something that a lot of people are quite frightened of. Are you going to release an album which people have to pay for? (laughs)

(Laughing) I think we're looking towards next year for an album. I want to release some singles that we plan to put on iTunes. I'm doing a lot of work with some outside producers that linked me since the EP was released and like the music. I've been working mainly with Urban Tree Music from Germany. I've been working with Coronado. He sends me beats all the time. The links are building but definitely Urban Tree family and some others around Eu-



-rope and California and things. I want to spread out the music as much as possible but we don't have much resources here so if I can do work with other producers and get the name out there, hopefully we

can sell some songs on iTunes. I might put together another EP, it might be free, we'll just see what happens, but I'm just going with the flow right now. It's still in an exposure stage.

I'm trying to get on more shows, trying to do a small tour in Europe this year and just keep it moving.

**Interview by Angus Taylor
Photos by Sabriya Simon**



JAHTARI

“We try to use different sound aesthetics than the classics, something that doesn't come from the reggae tradition, and see what happens”

Jahtari explores the technology frontline with old-school equipment

German label Jahtari and its founders Disrupt and Rootah have taken the 80's digital reggae craze to a new level. They're not only inspired by

reggae from that era, but also by classic video and computer games made for sets such as Nintendo and Atari. United Reggae got a chat with Disrupt about his influences, the importance of technology and his all-time favorite video game.

I grew up in the 80's. There was no Internet and no com-

mercial TV or radio. Vinyl still reigned and CD was just about to get introduced.

Kids played with physical toys and games. No iPads, no Teletubbies. But in the latter part of the 80's things started to change for my friends and me. We were introduced to Commodore 64 – THE computer at the time – and

Nintendo. From then on, nothing was ever the same. I spent countless hours playing games on the computer and later on the Nintendo console that my parents got me and my brother.

When I talk to Disrupt – one half of the Jahtari label – it almost feels like we share a common childhood interest in computers and video games. He and his partner Rootah use their computer experience when they produce music today.

A different approach

Together they started the Jahtari label in 2004. Initially releasing everything as free MP3's, but since 2008 they also release vinyl. They're essentially making reggae and dub, usually with ultra-heavy bass lines.

“We try to use different sound aesthetics than the classics, something that doesn't come from the reggae tradition, and see what happens. Like 8 bit sounds,” says Disrupt.

Neither Disrupt nor Rootah come from a reggae background, and they both discovered reggae relatively late.

“We originally come from Detroit techno, the Warp releases and generally more electronic music when it was a bit more underground. We were also

big fans of the Basic Channel records, and since we went to their Hardwax store in Berlin a lot we discovered their Rhythm & Sound stuff, which was the first time we really heard something like an off-beat,” explains Disrupt, and adds:

“When they later started to repress a lot of Wackies records we were totally hooked to dub and reggae. Lee Perry, King Tubby, King Jammy, Bunny Lee, etc.”

Disrupt gives several reasons as to why he loves dub.

“It's seemingly slow, so there are many gaps to fill with whatever you want. Faster music doesn't have those gaps. I also love the hypnotic quality of it all. It very much works like techno: layering soundscapes on top of each other, free from any fixed song structure. It's a very free and universal music.”

A common ground

Techno and house music is often described as music forms derived from dub. Jamaican producers also pioneered remixing, or versioning as it is called in reggae.

“I think techno took a lot from dub, consciously or not. If you listen to Basic Channel records, and then to Rhythm & Sound – done by the same people – the similarities become apparent. It's the layer-

ing of soundscapes to form a song, the hypnotic repetition and minimal muting or adding of sounds that made us feel at home with dub immediately, although we had never heard it before. Techno is just using the same essential techniques,” he says.

Disrupt uses his previous musical experiences in his reggae and dub productions.

“I love synth strings, especially the Detroit guys like Carl Craig, Robert Hood and others were great with them. They are almost never used in reggae, so it's great to see them work perfectly in there. It's also good to approach dub coming from the loose forms of techno, away from the classic verse-chorus-structure. Thinking in varying loops rather than a fixed formula,” explains Disrupt.

Apart from all these reggae and techno producers Disrupt also mentions computer games as an important influence.

“Since we also played a lot of computer as kids in the late 80's and early 90's, we grew up with the brilliant game soundtracks from this era. Definitely a big influence as well.”

Digital laptop reggae revised

The music coming from the

Jahtari headquarter is not described as digital reggae. Instead they're using a more significant description – digital laptop reggae.

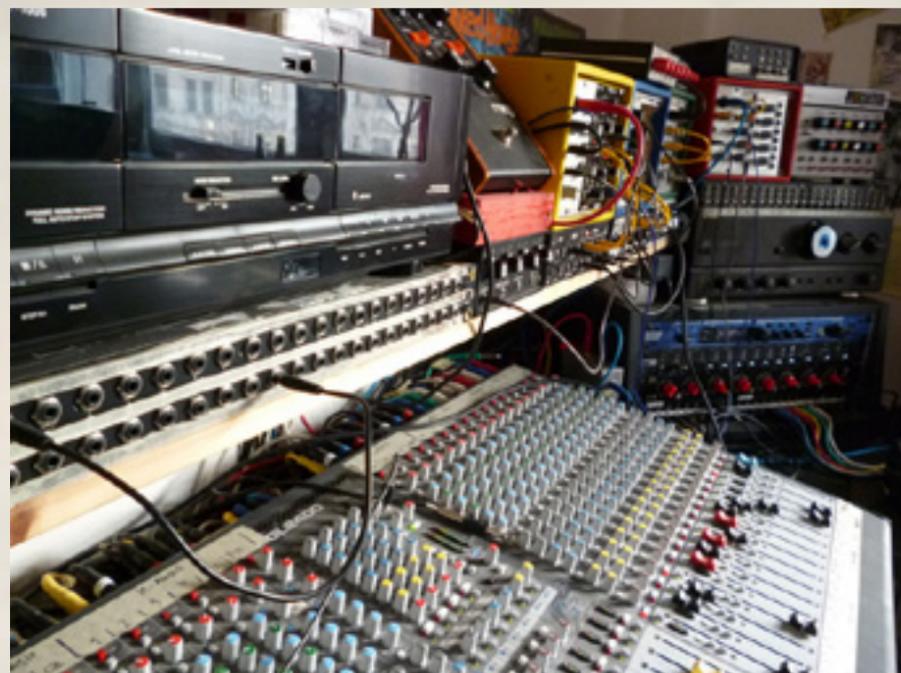
“We came up with that term quite a long time ago. It just says that we do reggae with a computer, as we couldn't afford any other gear then, and make it sound like a computer too. You can do a lot of funny things to songs with a computer, things that the classic masters couldn't do in the 70's, so it was time to explore this field more,” he explains.

However, they have now moved on. Today they instead try to do as little as possible with computers.

“Nowadays you spend too much time in front of computers anyway. Facebook, e-mail, Youtube, iPhones, apps, etc. It's just too much. It feels very freeing to use real machines, to get a break from it. Also machines will never have a driver or windows problem, you switch them on and they work. You feel just much more like a musician than a computer technician,” says Disrupt, and explains the shortcoming of a computer:

“It's a great machine, but it's missing one essential thing – you can't really touch all the knobs there,” he says, and explains further:

“That's why we've now started to use old school analogue synths, modular systems,



drum machines, filters, Game Boys and also build our own synths from old Commodore or Soundblaster chips. The sounds from those haven't really been used in reggae. So let's see what comes out there. We should definitely come up with a new term for the sound, though. Voltage controlled dub or something.”

The codex

Disrupt and Rootah are seemingly structured and efficient. If you visit the label's web site you'll get a clear view of what the label is about – both in graphics and in words. They have also taken the time to explicitly explain what they do and what they're looking for. All of this is summed up in a three point Theory.

“The Theory was first of all for ourselves – to write down what exactly it is you want to

do with the label. The codex, so to speak. Since we're always looking for new artists we posted it on our site, to get in touch with other people who think the same. This way we got to know a lot of other musicians out there who are also up for exploring the boundaries of dub some more,” he explains.

Curiosity is key

In the Theory they write about the technology frontier and that it is essential to constantly keep researching on that frontier. But Rootah and Disrupt mainly use old school technology for creating music.

“We always try to do stuff to reggae that hasn't properly been done before. To achieve this it wouldn't make much sense to use the same technology that for instance Lee Perry used. He got all out of his gear that's possible, and



to do that very same stuff over again. So we have to look for ways to dub things up in a way that wasn't an option back then,” he says, and exemplifies:

“Like computers. Or analogue synths and modular systems. That Kraftwerk-kind-of-gear is very old school, but was very expensive at the time, and thus a Moog synth was almost never used in reggae. Synths became big only in reggae when they went cheap, and

that was the digital era of the mid-late 80's. Luckily today you can build analogue gear quite cheap yourself.”

Explore the frontline

Being in the frontline of technology is essential to Disrupt. You need to explore the frontier and come up with new things. Disrupt gives another example:

“Like when dubstep came,

that was unheard of. Nothing else makes sense, there's no point in repeating stuff that has been done to death already. Technology gives you the tools to expand this frontline, but not everything that's new is necessarily also better. Funnily enough old synths without any displays and preset patches can often give you more experimental sounds than new ones.”

Favorite video game

Thinking about how the music from the Jahtari imprint sounds, you definitely get the feel of old meets new. The bass lines are abyss deep, and some of the other ingredients make you think about classic video games like Super Mario Brothers. Even though this first version of Nintendo's pioneering video game is probably my all-time favorite, Disrupt has other beloved choices for the top spot.

“It has to be the two first Monkey Island adventure games (all later ones don't count). Not only have they an amazing pirate story, a brilliant Simpsons-kind-of humor and a great atmosphere. They also got a brilliant reggae soundtrack by Michael Z. Land. Looking back, this was the first time I ever heard reggae from a computer. I'd always wanted to make proper heavy dub versions of those tunes.”

Interview by Erik Magni



I-Octane

"Don't take anything in the business personally. As long as you have this approach you will reach far"

Byiome Muir, who sings and deejays in equal measure as I-Octane, grew up in Sandy Bay the musically fruitful parish of Clarendon. A boisterous, ambitious youth, he began attracting notice for his musical abilities while still at school, but his extra-curricular performances took a back seat to his studies as he prepared for a career in architecture. Sadly his application for a student loan were rejected and his single par-

ent family lacked the means to support so long a period of vocational study. However, this freed him up to focus on his music, until a passing producer seeing him hanging around outside a locked Kingston studio led to an audition for Donovan Germain at Penthouse records. There he took the name I-Octane in reference to his energetic temperament yet it was after he left Germain's stable for Arrows Recording three

years later that he had his first hit Stab Vampire in 2007. A slew of heavily rotated singles and show bookings followed before the fine-locked vocalist made the transition to established star with an attention-grabbing performance at Reggae Sumfest 2011. Now he is poised to cement his fame internationally with the release of his official debut album 'Crying To The Nation' overseen by Shaggy impresario Robert

Livingstone and distributed by VP Records. Featuring a variety of producers such as Livingstone, Dean Fraser, Paul "Cashflow" Mitchell, Christopher Birch and engineers including Laurent Tippy Alfred and Shane Brown, the album is set to drop February 14th. The same month, two years after he toured with Tarrus Riley across Europe, he will return to France and the Netherlands as a headliner. Angus Taylor spoke to a young man at ease with one-drop and dancehall rhythms, the science of marketing and social networking and, most crucially, the weight of expectation his shoulders...

You originally wanted to be an architect. Designing buildings is similar to making music in that you create things that people will remember. Did you have big ambitions when you were young?

Yeah man. I actually did well in school in that department but apparently the world boiled down back to money again. I mean you have enough youth with enough talent but if the financial backing is not strong so they just have to settle for half the amount they could accomplish. I was in school but my mother never really had the money to finance my education so I after I left pre college with two year diploma I had to just stop. Musically

I was just a diamond in the rough talent so music something I did in my spare time out of natural love for it. It wasn't my main focus because education came first. I'd just do it voluntarily just like I'd play football voluntarily. But after I left school the passion for it grew and kept on following me. Growing in the slum you never want to become a non-progressive element involved in crime or violence so I just occupied my time with music.

How did get your break into music?

In Clarendon I was at a penny concert when one individual from Kingston was there and liked the vibes. So he started bringing me to the studio in Kingston because he was established. Then one day he said to me "I no feel like going studio today" so I just went by myself. That day something magical happened. I was locked out of the studio for the entire day because I came on my own. But then a random individual went to the studio to do some work with his artist and passed me outside at ten in the morning. And when he came out at six in the evening I was still out there sitting down waiting for an opportunity to go in. So he was like "Yow, you is an artist? I like the determination you have. I pass you here and still pass you back. Let me hear the material you have".

How did you meet Donovan Germain?

He introduced me to a lady named Marcia Simpson who was a good friend of Donovan Germain but at the time I was a deejay and she only managed singers and not deejays. So she said she had a friend and I would fit quite well in his camp. When I heard it was Donovan Germain I was like "Whoa! This is a great opportunity" because Donovan had Buju and all of the great artists go through him. When I did the audition he wasn't there so I did the audition with an engineer and left. Then he called me a week later and said "You have the talent, image, everything". But he never had the time to focus - I wasn't the main priority because he had Buju and everyone that was current - so after three years I just told him I was going to go out into the world and see if I could make it on my own and he supported me same way. That was how Arrows came in and I spent a couple of years at Arrows. I'm actually on my own now. I manage myself. I do shows and pay for everything with cash out of my pocket. I have a nice team but I actually manage myself. I'm not signed to anybody. I'm an independent artist.

How does it feel to be about to get your official first album to the people?

Over the years I was working

towards getting out an album but I just had to get the brand of “I-Octane” to a certain level before I put out a debut album so the people will know about the brand “I-Octane”. Now the people are familiarized with what the brand has to offer, the time is right and we have just put in hard work and are getting the debut album out and everybody seems to be excited about it.

Tell me about the process of making the album. Were the rhythms already built or were rhythms built around you?

The process was hectic because at the time I was on tour. So each time I went back to Jamaica it was off the plane- in the studio-record! Most of the rhythms were created already. I would select the rhythms or we’d have musicians come in and make rhythms around songs that were written already. That process resulted in a complete album in the space of a month. It was an independent project at the time. Robert was making the album and then shopped it around. A couple of companies heard it and loved and then VP came on board and wanted to be a part of it. It wasn’t directed by a record company. So it was hectic in the time space because the album was supposed to be released in September. I was working from the end of June to July so we only had a month to come up

with the album, mix it then get it out to release in September but apparently we never met the deadline so it was put back to the second week of February - Valentine’s Day!

Most of the material is new but you still included Lose A Friend which was adopted as an anthem during last year’s state of emergency. Were you on the island at the time?

Yes, I was. I was away from it but it still affected the I mentally in terms of how the media covered it in terms of going out to the world. It’s different when you’re actually there to when you just get it in a newspaper you read. You have a different perspective, I think. A whole heap of people lost their lives so it was a mournful time for the country and it never looked good on the country itself so it affects everybody still. But these things happen and we have to get past it.

You sing a lot about social issues but you’ve talked in the past about not being a political person, not being partial to any party or government.

I am a youth who doesn’t really deal with politics still. I’m just concerned for the people and that’s why I choose to do certain songs that help the people alleviate themselves from certain stress. The next man might have a different

perspective but politics is like religion to me and I don’t really do religion nor politics. Those things segregate the people and mash them up mentally, creating crime and violence and war. They never give any form of enlightenment or light so for me politics is a no-no still.

You collaborate with Agent Sasco, Tarrus Riley, and Alborosie on the album. Did you get to spend any studio time with them or were their parts recorded elsewhere?

Alborosie had the track sent to him and he delivered it back to I-Octane and we to’d and fro’d and finalised it. But Tarrus Riley and Assassin were in the studio and the vibes were great. Tarrus Riley is a very experienced artist. I call him my big brother because he is a youth who has shown me a lot of things. When we were touring he was the youth that came to me and said “I-Octane. Don’t cover the microphone” because he is well experienced. Assassin is one of the leading dancehall artists and he is so experienced also. It was pure great vibes in the studio and natural energy so everything just came alive.

You seem very switched on to social networking, you keep your fans updated by blog and Facebook. How important are these aspects to



success as a music artist in the modern age?

It’s very imperative because without the fans enough artists lose it. They feel like they are the ones that are powerful but without the fans you cannot become an artist. You could be the greatest artist singing the best songs in the world but if not one individual likes one of your songs then

that record will never move and never break. So you have to have those things there, keep those things there close to you. Artists are busy but whenever you have the time you have to show the fans you appreciate their effort and their time also.

I notice you don’t have a Twitter. For an artist so en-

gaged with social networking that must be a conscious decision.

Yeah man. I wasn’t a fan of the Twitter thing. I’m not against it but I’m not a fan. I was interested at first but people sometimes use Twitter for the wrong reasons. For instance some man would just come on the street and write and tweet out “Mi see I-Octane in Orlando with a new girl”. They assume things. They don’t know if it’s a business meeting or what? But they Twitter something like that out to the world and readers just take it like how they read it. It causes problems because people use it for the wrong reasons so I wasn’t a fan of it.

You’ve mentioned branding several times. How important is it to understand branding and marketing as an artist today?

It’s very imperative to know that because whether you like it or not this is 80% business. The rest is talent and mindset. Frame of mind is 10%, talent is 10% but it is 80% business. You have a whole heap of great artists in the world who are even more creative than some of the established artists right now but if you are not business minded or you are not marketable then it will not work. So you have to be a brand. People have to see a brand. A brand like any



brand. So people say I-Octane is a brand and no say I-Octane is an artist but then even if I-Octane is not on stage they can recognize that there is I-Octane same way.

What's the best advice you've received in the business?

The best piece of advice was: have an open mind to constructive criticism. The business is a business so don't take anything in the business personally. As long as you have this approach you will reach far. Because you could go to the studio this week to do an interview and get locked out of the studio for some reason but if you were to take that personally you will write off that studio forever. When after a few years that same studio might arrange for you to reach the next level but because you took what happened before personally and the opportunity passed. For me now, you have a whole heap of producers who never used to voice I-Octane. I linked them every day and they never used to voice me but when I became an established artist they were ready to voice me. But I don't take it personally because they are a big label and these are big producers, their name is already out in the world, so I have to put those things aside and remember that voicing for those producers has also enhanced me too.

You've talked in past inter-

views about aiming for Bob Marley status. Is the sky the limit for your ambitions?

Yeah man. I want to reach the highest level as a musical star. That's why I keep the Almighty close and pray for those things every day. Because the world itself is a rough world and reggae music is the biggest music in the world, yet still underground because we don't really have institutions and it wasn't properly developed. It's a global language like football - everybody knows football and every nation knows reggae music. But what happened to reggae music is you have the same people in the business who at first help it to reach a certain status and then in the long run they are the same ones trying to tear it down. So you have to just know in reggae music that you have to try to sidestep all of those things there and just do you and do it to your best ability.

Interview by Angus Taylor

Photos by Christian Bordey

I-Taweh Overload



This record deserves its chart success.

I-Taweh out of St Ann's parish Jamaica, now resident in California, spent 17 years playing guitar and bass with marquee reggae acts like Sugar Minott, Mystic Revelation of Rastafari and Everton Blender. But all the while he was crafting his own songs and snatching some recording time here and there on the road. Following a spell in hospital in 2008 he decided to seize the day and assemble his first solo album. In an almost fairytale denouement to his story so far this self released old school roots record, of the kind received wisdom says only appeals in Europe, hit number one on Richie

B's Jamaican reggae album countdown. 'Overload' was officially re-launched in Jamaica last week - nearly a year after its original release.

I-Taweh's voice has been compared to Burning Spear but it has a softer quality that also recalls Pablo Moses. As a veteran touring and session musician he was able to use his links to gather a remarkable group of players for a debut including Bongo Herman, Horse-mouth Wallace and Sly Dunbar. Dean Fraser plays sax on the set's strongest track The Prayer which uses the immortal chorus lines of Tony Tuff's classic Deliver Me (although I-Taweh insists the resemblance is coincidental). The title song, currently in Richie B's singles top twenty, is a Spear-like remembrance of a laden slave ship and appears alongside a second, hand drummed mix that nods to I-Taweh's period with Count Ossie junior. Braveheart tells of I-Taweh's friend Garfield whose fearless nature led to his being on the wrong side of the law and the wrong end of a gun.

Five tracks were voiced with the French group Broussai who

were the first to record I-Taweh while on tour in 1999. These are very much in the slow deep roots mode - and though they sound different from the slightly hip hop flavoured opener Runaway, what makes this album succeed is that all the material from the various sessions over the years maintains a consistent mood.

Where most debut long-players drop only partially formed I-Taweh's hard work and musician links have paid off. This record deserves its chart success and should be in roots reggae fans' homes, all over the globe.

Review by Angus Taylor

Old Skool Young Blood 3

Peckings Records Presents...



OLD SKOOL YOUNG BLOOD 3

Featuring hit tracks from: Courtney John, Gappy Ranks, Bitty McClean, Dean Frazier, Lady Lex, Peter Hunnigale + Many More.

Old meets new in fine style.

In the early 60's George "Peckings" Price relocated from Jamaica to the UK. He is said to have been a close friend of producer and label owner Clement "Coxsone" Dodd, a very valuable connection when George Price set up his own record shop in London in 1974.

George Price passed away 20 years later and his sons Chris, Duke and Trevor took over the operations, and also started to make their own productions built on riddims from mainly Clement Dodd and the late Duke Reid.

Their debut album was Bitty McLean's 'On Bond Street', which was released in 2005. It

was followed by the compilations 'Old Skool Young Blood' in 2006 and 2009 as well as Gappy Ranks' debut album 'Put the Stereo On' in 2010.

Now another slice of old meets new has arrived, and 'Old Skool Young Blood vol. 3' picks up where its predecessors left off. The 14 tunes include a number of Duke Reid's finest cuts of rocksteady riddims. The vocals are provided by singers such as Gappy Ranks and Courtney John as well as lovers rock crooners Peter Hunnigale, Peter Spence, Sadiki and Bitty McLean.

The riddims are played by The Supersonics – an outfit led by master saxophonist Tommy McCook – and are beautifully crafted. You simply can't go wrong with music like this. It's smooth, melodic and infectious. Just like Gappy Ranks' "ah ah ah ah aaaah" chorus in his Kooyah Kooyah.

George Price should be proud. His sons are doing a great job in keeping the reggae legacy alive.

Review by Erik Magni

The Legendary Studio One Records



A great re-launch from Studio One and Soul Jazz.

Many artists, producers and labels in the world of reggae music aspire on being the founder of the genre. Who invented reggae and where it was invented could probably be a topic for near endless discussions.

One man who would certainly pop up in such a conversation is Clement "Coxsone" Dodd, producer and founder of Studio One, a business that covered almost every aspect of the music industry – soundsystem, pressing plant, auditioning, recording studio, publishing house and more.

Under his tutelage several sing-

ers and groups rose to international prominence and virtually every artist in Jamaica wanted to work for Coxsone in the 60's and 70's.

Among the artists that recorded at Studio One you'll find some of the household names in reggae music. You name them and they've probably cut at least one track 13 Brentford Road in Kingston 5, where the studio was located until it closed down in 1979, when Coxsone got tired of the violence and moved to Brooklyn, New York.

Some of the most acclaimed artists that recorded at Studio One is featured on the compilation 'The Legendary Studio One Records: Original Classic Recordings 1963-80' out now on Soul Jazz Records. It has been three years since the latest Studio One issue from Soul Jazz. And it is more than welcome.

It contains a total of 18 tracks that covers ska, rocksteady, reggae, dub and dancehall and is something a sampler with well-known and lesser known artists and tunes.

Included are The Skatalites scorching Ball of Fire and Mich-

igan & Smiley's pulsating Rub a Dub Style in a brilliant extended version complete with sound effects.

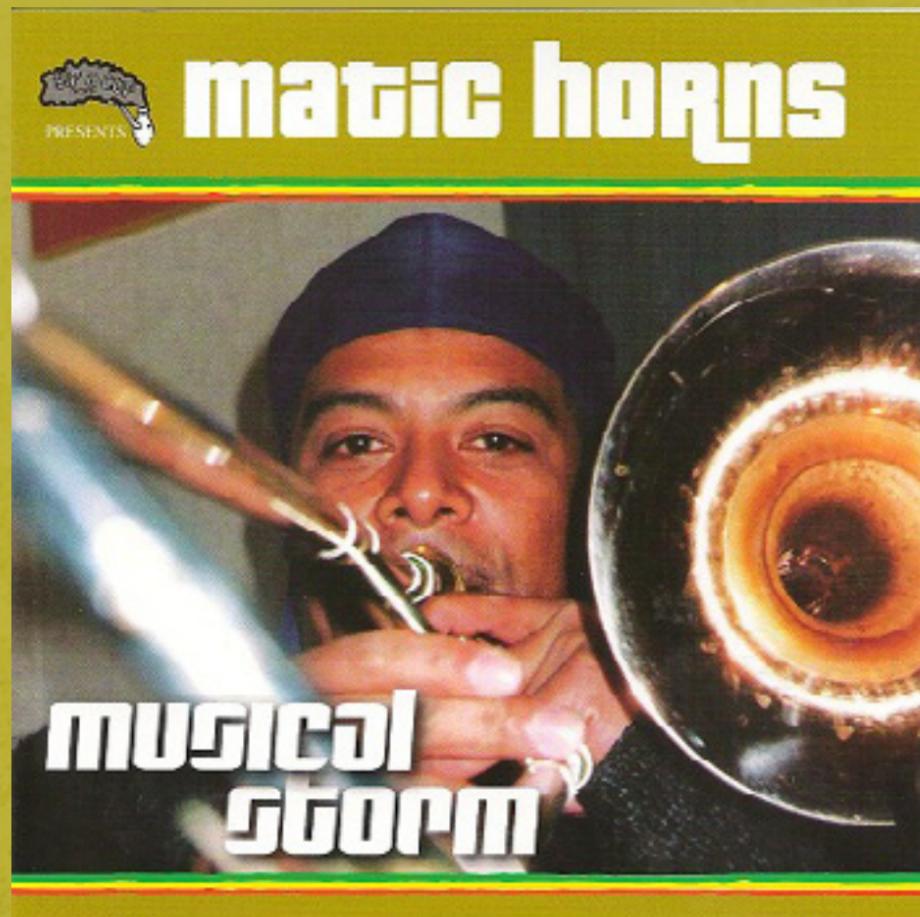
Other highlights include Prince Jazzbo's haunting Rock Fort Dub and guitar virtuoso Ernest Ranglin's beautiful instrumental Ranglin Doodlin'.

This compilation is a great re-launch of a very fruitful collaboration and according to the press release there are more to come in the end of the year. Bring it on!

'The Legendary Studio One Records' is available on CD, 2xLP and digital download.

Review by Erik Magni

Matic Horns Musical Storm



A musical storm is coming.

You don't hear a lot of instrumental albums these days. But when you do they're often quite good, as in the several enjoyable efforts from U.S. band 10 ft. Ganja Plant or Neil Perch's Zion Train.

The most recent instrumental album that landed at the United Reggae residence is trombonist Matic Horns aka Henry Tenyue's 36 tracked double CD 'Musical Storm' produced by Gussie P and recorded with a host of talented musicians – Sly Dunbar, Style Scott, Mafia & Fluxy, Jah Shaka and Norman and Ralston Grant of the Twinkle Brothers.

Henry Tenyue started his ca-

reer in the late 70's working with Dennis Bovell and Linton Kwesi Johnson and then moving on to record and tour with UB40.

During the past years he has moved towards rootsy and deep riddims and his previous album was the haunting 'Increase the Peace' for singer and producer Mike Brooks, an album where he blew the hell out of a prime selection of vintage riddims.

'Musical Storm' is in the same great vein with several relics of classic reggae and ska songs, but also a number of fresh originals. Henry Tenyue lets his raw trombone speak with a sensitive aggression over the hard edged, dubby drum and bass heavy riddims.

Out of the 36 tracks only two feature vocals. And it is supplied by Henry Tenyue himself with no loss of quality.

'Musical Storm' is a sparkling musical feast that you can dine on for many months to come.

Review by Erik Magni

Dub Investigation Dub City Vol. 2



Good work from the Investigation team.

Dublin City's Dub Investigation's new release is an impressive 10 track CD entitled 'Dub City Vol. 2'. Comprised of a considered ensemble of musical instruments overlaid with crisp vocals, the release launches

an attack on a host of society's ills, extols the merit of revolution whilst holding tight to the value of love and Jah.

Guest inputs from Ras Tinny, 'Sox' Carter and Sarah Gleeson enable the release to present a varied and vivacious sound. Indeed so forceful are some of the tracks that the uninformed could easily be forgiven for thinking that Lucky Dube has

come back to life - whilst definite shades of the early 1970s Wailers can be detected in the opening to 'Guidance'. Stand out tracks include 'Ayele', 'Show Me The Way' and 'Wake Up'. Good work from the 'Investigation' team. We look forward to more.

Review by Gerard McMahon

Mystic Soul I Am The One



A lyrically and musically diverse album from a voice that sounds like it should have a good future ahead.

Released in the summer of last year Mystic Soul's debut album 'I Am The One', is one of those albums that I'm surprised we didn't get to hear more about. Now I'll admit this album is probably not going to go down to well with the hardened dancehall and roots crowd, but this album does I believe have huge crossover potential, as it, at times, slips into that reggae/pop/soul Bitty McLean territory sort of thing

with its easy going vibe. The most striking thing about it all though is the great silky smooth vocals that Mystic Soul delivers with a very clean and vivacious delivery that coupled with his boyish good looks is sure to attract many female fans.

Mystic Soul started out life as Winston Hall and grew up in Kitson Town, St. Catherine, Jamaica before relocating to Waterhouse when he was nine years old. Here he was a runner-up in the Tastee Talent contest in the late 1980's before another move followed in 1998, but this time to the United States where he fine honed his craft and thanks to childhood friend and DJ, Danny B, got an impromptu audition for Wayne Russell and Raphael Logan of Lyric-Surge Records that brought us to the point we are at today.

As I say musically it merges reggae with pop and soul with the tracks Gone With The Wind and album title track I Am The One having more of an R&B feel as opposed to reggae. Man Fe Talk which features a tough deejay chat from Red Fox, pounds along on a hip hop beat with rock guitar, while on a lighter note Horny Reggae is sensual and soulful and contains no brass instrumen-

tation in it what so ever.

The world of reggae is represented by some solid modern roots on Crazy World, A Mi De Yah Wid You, Ride Een plus album stand out track Sufferation which condemns the struggles and violence that curse many inner city youths. Sorry is bright and breezy with something of a rocksteady vibe to it with Pledge and Good Friends giving us a touch of lovers style, leaving just Coming Home which is an acoustic, heartfelt ode to the land of his birth...Jamaica.

Overall a lyrically and musically diverse album from a voice that sounds like it should have a good future ahead.

Review by Karl Pearson

Da Professor The Laboratory

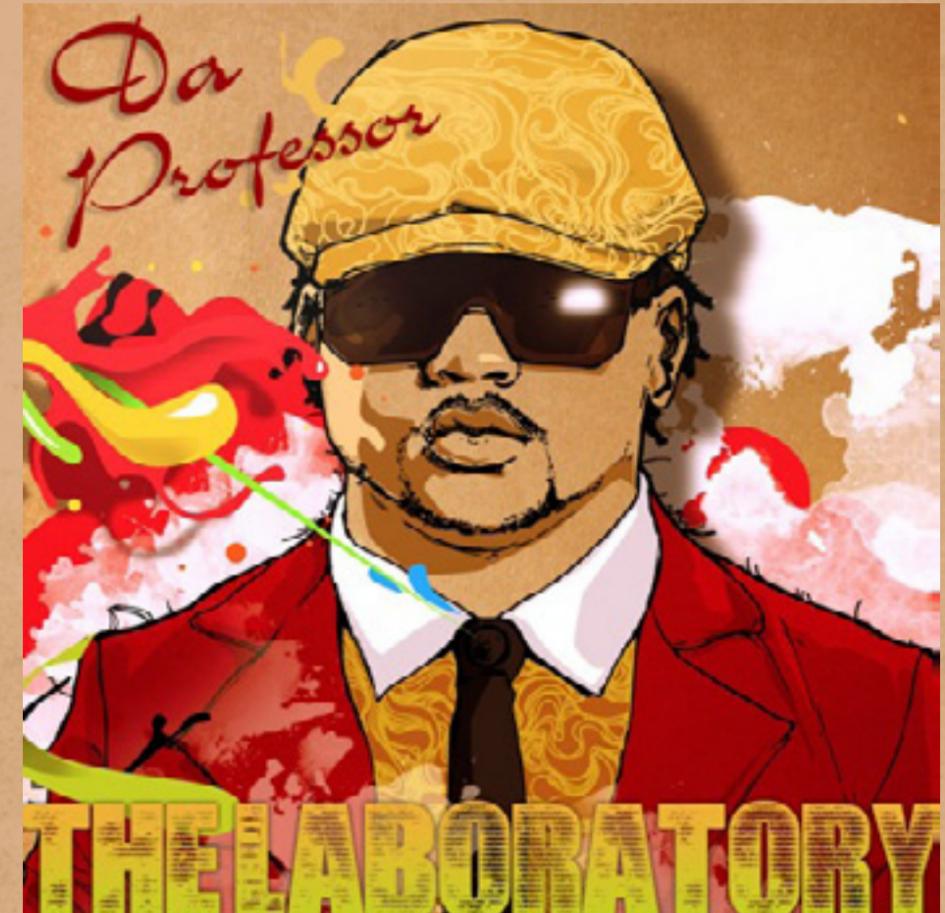
Sparkling chemistry in Da Professor's laboratory.

Professor is a popular title in the reggae industry. You have Mad Professor and Professor Grizzly. But also three artists with just the title. Or almost anyway.

Groundation's lead vocalist Harrison Stafford has an alter ego called Professor and in the 70's and 80's there was an Jamaican engineer who also went by the name. The latest addition is Da Professor, who was born and raised in Kingston, but has also spent time in Florida and New York.

His debut album 'The Laboratory' is produced by Don Corleon – one of Jamaica's most prominent contemporary producers, and well-known for his slick, polished and stylish productions, usually with a tasty feel for pop melodies and memorable hooks.

And Da Professor's debut set is no exception. It's smooth journey into Don Corleon's blend of one drop reggae, dancehall and R&B.



His production is spiced up by Da Professor's interesting vocal style, or styles. He can switch from soul-styled singing to gritty deejaying in a jiffy.

Even though the album boasts three duets – J Boog, Ken Boothe and Protoje – you can easily be fooled that it's one more singer on board on several songs. When I listened to tunes such as By My Side or the upbeat Party Non Stop I could swear that another one

singer handled the chorus and another the verses. But no. It is Da Professor all along.

It must have been a great chemistry in the studio when this album was recorded, because 'The Laboratory' is yet another strong effort from the Don Corleon camp.

Review by Erik Magni

Errol Bellot Know Jah



2012's album schedule is already off to a good start.

In music, natural talent doesn't always equal exposure. The ska pioneer Eric Monty Morris only recently released his debut album. Likewise, it has taken the phenomenally gifted UK roots singer Errol "Gideon Zinger" Bellot some 30 years of hard hitting sides and memorable live appearances to unveil his first long-player 'Know Jah' (although Gussie P's equally excellent 'Sip A Cup Showcase: Greetings In The Name Of The Most High' could also claim the title - being issued at almost exactly the same time.)

The former offering comes via Reading's guitarist/producer

Kris Kemist of Reality Shock Records, the label behind fellow album-latecomer Solo Banton's 'Walk Like Rasta'. Kemist's crisp, tough roots productions strike the balance between organic and digital, soundsystem and private listening. In short: the perfect environment for one of the world's greatest Rasta singers to ply his craft.

The struggle to commit this mysterious, complex character to disc is evident in the presence of opener Know Jah - which Kemist says he and Errol began recording 9 years previously. The song's message however is still pertinent - telling young non Rasta fans of roots reggae that while they maybe love "the drum and bass" many in the music are after something more. Beautifully sung in a voice from the Luciano/Prince Malachi region yet with its own distinct timbre, Errol's messages tend to have this prescient quality - his superb Jah Tubbys 45 Roots Gone International highlighted the worldwide popularity of classical reggae to which the Jamaican media has awoken only of late. The Blair-and-Bush-bashing Hooligan, on Denmark's One People Productions' head-nodding One People rhythm, is

perhaps less topical but none the worse for it.

A few songs will be familiar. Everything Possible is out on 10" while a recut of Errol's original big single Babylon (which first appeared on the S&G imprint in 1981 and has been recorded on several occasions since) and label tribute Reality Shock surfaced on 2008 sampler 'Reality Shock Volume 1'. But the majority, like the major key serenity of Militant Souljahs and Time For Change, are previously unheard. To the eleven vocals Kemist has added six dubs for an almost "showcase" feel.

Followers of the Gideon Zinger have awaited this moment a long time - and it is worth the wait. 2012's album schedule is already off to a good start.

Review by Angus Taylor

General Smiley Meets McPullish At Dub Cove

An uncompromising roots reggae album from General Smiley.

General Smiley, half of the successful deejay duo Papa Michigan & General Smiley, a duo that recorded the excellent album Rub a Dub Style for Coxson Dodd and the immensely popular Diseases for Henry "Junjo" Lawes, has teamed up with U.S. producer McPullish for his new album.

'General Smiley Meets McPullish at Dub Cove' - released in December last year - is a completely different story compared to the bubbling grooves General Smiley recorded in the 70's and 80's.

This is a modern roots and dub album with sparse arrangements and heavy bass lines. And mean heavy as in ultra-heavy. These thunderous bass lines could probably be of service if you'd like to try and force the doors to Fort Knox.

The eight vocal cuts - where of one is a combination with Sylford Walker - come with their dub counterpart. General Smi-



ley's voice has changed during the years and he doesn't sound as vital as he did back when. It's deeper and darker and not as melodic as it used to be. It might also have something to do with the style, since he on this set sometimes rather speaks than sings or deejays.

McPullish and General Smiley have created an uncompromising and hypnotic reggae album that doesn't make an effort to please radio dj's around the world. How-

ever, it might just blow a fuse or two when sound systems set tunes such I Wish or Natty Natty on heavy rotation.

Review by Erik Magni

Live at the Turntable club



A reggae legacy made available.

VP Records' subsidiary 17 North Parade has just re-issued 'Live at the Turntable Club'. It's the first ever live album recorded in Jamaica, and was originally issued on Trojan in 1975.

Dennis Brown, Delroy Wilson and Big Youth were all in their

prime when this was recorded. The backing is provided by the always reliable Soul Syndicate. And the riddims are raw, sparse and with a no-nonsense approach. Just guitar, bass and drums engineered by King Tubby, Dennis Thompson and Errol Thompson.

Delroy Wilson and Big Youth rock their hit songs, while Dennis Brown performs the well-known Cassandra along with the lesser-known Rock With Me

Baby and Give a Helping Hand.

The Turntable Club was the place to be in Kingston in the 70's, and Winston "Merritone" Blake was the man in charge. The CD booklet includes a thorough interview with him, where he tells his story and gives a glance of a music industry full of hope and enthusiasm.

'Live at the Turntable Club' is a piece of music history made available for the first time in almost 40 years.

Review by Erik Magni

Dancehall: The Best Twenty Riddims and Five Tracks of 2011

Exciting year for dancehall.

2011 has been an interesting year for dancehall (what year isn't). Many significant events have occurred which have left the world wondering what is in store for the genre in 2012.

Who is going to step up and take the crown for Dancehall King now that Vybz Kartel is currently otherwise occupied? Is it really going to be Popcaan,

or are some of the older veterans going to push their way back in? Assassin aka Agent Sasco has consistently been the best deejay on the riddims he has voiced - what about him? In fact, is Jamaica still leading dancehall? Who and where do we look to now for the dancehall sound?

In light of all of this, as people's eyes turn to the rest of the world for dancehall, it's important to note the fantastic tracks that have been released over

the past year. Riddims such as Overproof and Adde Productions' Summertime have been getting significant amount of plays.

This current list is not just based on the amount of plays, downloads, or forwards the tracks have been getting throughout 2011, but also a chance to mark the lesser recognised - but with just the same amount of quality - riddims that were released throughout Jamaica and Europe.

Tracks



Stylo G – Call Mi A Yardie

Stylo G made a real mark on the UK dancehall scene this spring with Call Mi A Yardie. Produced by his brother Kody (an ex-member of UK funky outfit Crazy Cousins), it has also potentially been one of the most re-mixed tracks of the year.



Vybz Kartel – Go Go Wine

Even though he's currently incarcerated, it's important not to overlook the amount of quality tunes that Kartel has released over 2011. June saw the release of his album Kingston Story on Mixpak Records. Go Go Wine is one the most widely played songs from the album.



Popcaan – Clean

Kartel's protégée is tipped to be the next big deejay in dancehall. His track, Clean, on Snap Back riddim (TJ records) has been getting plenty of plays, wheels, forwards, backwards and whatever else comes in between.



Terro 3000 – Haters

Up and coming Jamaican deejay brings us his own take of the Ward 21's classic track, Haters. Even though this track has not reached as widely as the others included in the list, Terro 3000 is certainly one to look out for.



Cham – Wine Pon Di Buddy

Best known for his 2006 hit Ghetto Story, Cham brings us this raw and very catchy track. Released late into 2011, this is sure to be played far into 2012.

Riddims

In no particular order, here are twenty of the best dancehall riddims from 2011.

Riddim: Ninety

Produced by: Kubiyashi Prod

Cuts to check out: Kenyatta - Clarks, Konshens ft Fadda Fox – Life and Death

Riddim: Pepper

Produced by: Di Genius

Cuts to check out: Agent Sasco – Nothing At All, Mavado – Pepper

Riddim: Bar Mitzvah

Produced by: Skatta Productions

Cuts to check out: Bounty Killer – Wine Fi Di General, Chino – Fi Di Gyal Dem

Riddim: Star A Star

Produced by: TJ Records

Cuts to check out: Assassin – Dem Fear We, Lady Saw – Wife a Wife

Riddim: White Label

Produced by: Equinox

Cuts to check out: Spice – Fix Me, Kemikal – Hey Girl

Riddim: Matrimony

Produced by: Washroom Entertainment

Cuts to check out: Assassin – Yuh A Wife, Lady Saw – Matrimony

Riddim: Blaze Fia

Produced by: Dutty Rock Music

Cuts to check out: Assassin – We Love Di Gal Dem, Elephant Man – Turn Mi On

Riddim: ?Question It

Produced by: Truckback Records

Cuts to check out: Red Rat – Red People, Lady Saw – Caan Do Mi Up

Riddim: Hotta Clapz

Produced by: DJ Frass Productions

Cuts to check out: Assassin – Cruise & Go Round Dem, Spragga Benz – Come Home

Riddim: Contra

Produced by: ZJ Chrome

Cuts to check out: Vybz Kartel – Sex & The City, Mavado – Do Road

Riddim: Summertime

Produced by: Adde Productions

Cuts to check out: Vybz Kartel – Summertime, Popcaan – Ravin'

Riddim: Mad Organ

Produced by: Curtis Lynch (Necessary Mayhem)

Cuts to check out: Maxi Priest & Tippa Irie – Like This Like That, Million Stylez – Milli Swagga

Riddim: Barb Wire

Produced by: Q45 Productions

Cuts to check out: Mr Vegas – Certain Law, Assassin – Profile Pic

Riddim: Summer Fling

Produced by: Chimney Records

Cuts to check out: Mavado – Final Destination, Tarrus Riley – Summer Fling

Riddim: Firewire

Produced by: Lockecity Entertainment

Cuts to check out: Sizzla – Launch Out, Major Mackrel – More Gal A Road

Riddim: Spot Check

Produced by: Wundah Productions

Cuts to check out: Stylo G – My Style, G Starr – Spot Check

Riddim: Overproof

Produced by: JA Productions

Cuts to check out: Mavado –Settle Down, Daniel Beddingfield – Sometimes You Just Know

Riddim: Big Dog

Produced by: Boardhouse Records

Cuts to check out: Assassin – Dem Bad In A Gang, Lady Ali – New Style

Riddim: 12 to 12

Produced by: Christopher Birch and DJ Smurf

Cuts to check out: Konshens – From 12 to 12, Agent Sasco – Wi Bazzle

Riddim: Beat Box

Produced by: Jam 2 Productions

Cuts to check out: Cecile – I’m So Fly, Lady Saw – Better Off

Review by Siobhan Jones

Our Favourite Reggae Albums 2011

As voted by some of our team.

Angus Taylor hates making end of year lists. Erik Magni loves them. So this time we decided they should join forces

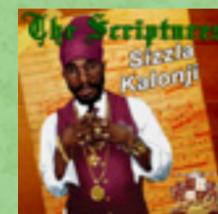
in choosing their favourite albums of 2011 (we decided “the best” was asking for trouble!). Only those that showed up on both their private lists were selected for the final top 20. However, we have also included a list of essential albums that didn’t make the list so that all

honourable mentions are included. This list is unranked, but feel free to suggest which albums were better than others and which ones have been overlooked. No reissues or compilations have been counted. There is a special section for free downloads at the end.



Stephen Marley Revelations Part One: The Root Of Life

The second half to this two part concept series never surfaced this year as initially promised. But part one was a beautifully crafted tribute to Stephen’s father’s era of music and his finest platter yet.



Sizzla The Scriptures

Every culturally minded album by Sizzla is hailed as a return to form but this one actually was: a wobbly opus using digitally enhanced Jammys rhythms from his son John John. The tracks actually felt like they had been chosen for a reason while Sizzla’s controversial falsetto never sounded better on the Beach Boys/Animal Collective-like Jah Is My Shield.



Takana Zion Rasta Government

The Guinean chanter’s longplayers have gone from strength to strength and this was his masterstroke. Lyrically simple (but hey, the man speaks multiple languages), the messages were manna to roots reggae fans worldwide.



Hollie Cook Hollie Cook

Punk had a curious relationship with reggae in the 70s. But today the ethereal voiced daughter of sex pistol Paul Cook created a head swimmingly retro lovers rock debut with unstoppable engineer Prince Fatty that pleased purists and public alike.



Alpheus From Creation

When British Studio One prodigy Alpheus said he would never sing another modern reggae song it sounded bizarre. But that was before he and producer Robert Sanchez unleashed this note-perfect recreation of the days of Coxsone and Phil Pratt in the ska and rocksteady era which took the critics of Europe by storm.



Earl Sixteen The Fittest

Dubby Dutch double team JahSolidRock and Not Easy At All trumped this list with two releases last year. This time they kept their hand in with a full showcase effort from prolific roots internationalist Earl Sixteen.



Richie Spice Book Of Job

The unmistakable voice of Richall Bonner over Penthouse and other rhythms was an early favourite from Jamaica in 2011. My Life, a remixed adaptation of Randy Crawford's Street Life, was an instant modern classic, while Richie's singing on the Raging Fyah production Black Woman had a distinctly West African vibe.



Protoje The Seven Year Itch

Lorna Bennett's talented singjay son's eclectic radio-friendly introduction silenced the doom and gloom merchants who had been writing off Jamaican music. The last-minute removal of strongest track Our Time Come (due to clearance issues over its Burning Spear sample) was a disappointment but the rest still held its own.



I-Taweh Overload

Again the naysayers were silenced when a St Ann's parish roots reggae artist took the Richie B album chart number one spot. Veteran session musician I-Taweh Cunningham's story - like his record - was one of the most inspirational of the year.



Perfect Back For The First Time

Another St Ann's man, the ever dependable Perfect, linked up with Californian rhythm team Lustre Kings for a record that hit his highest heights since 2008's Born Dead With Life. More of a grower than that album it was a unanimous choice in our office nonetheless.



Joggo Modern Rockers Vol. 1

Yet another strong rootsy album from the Netherlands. Clarence Seedorf's brother Joggo's direct and desperate tone along with several sing-along choruses made this a very memorable set.



Uprising Roots Band Skyfiya

The debut album from one of the several bands that have surfaced in Jamaica in recent years. This is eerie roots reggae that pays homage to pioneering Jamaican groups such as Culture and The Gladiators.



Luciano Rub a Dub Market

His third full-length in less than a year, and Luciano continues to work with producers outside Jamaica with great success. This one was produced by Vienna-based Irie Vibrations and holds many familiar Luciano ingredients – beautiful harmonies and grandiose choruses.



Sara Lugo What About Love?

The little lady from outside Munich with the room-silencing voice decided not to make a straight reggae album for her debut. Even so, it was a prodigious statement that played on the close relationship between soul and reggae, and announced the rising of a new star.



I Wayne Life Teachings

I Wayne's Third Record for Loyal Soldiers caused a dilemma for liberal listeners. His proscriptive lyrics seemed preoccupied with sexual behaviour but the music was stronger than anything he had released before.



J Boog Backyard Boogie

The Hawaii based singer's cracked-voiced crooning seemed well at home on the more Jamaican sounding rhythms of his second disc. This versatile, hugely popular artist delivered one of the best slices of "island pop" this year.



Ziggi Recado Ziggi Recado

Ziggi's third album showed a brand new side to him. This was an adventurous blend of reggae, soul, hip-hop, funk and even rock. In some cases it would have sounded disunited, but it's actually a cohesive whole.



Midnite Kings Bell

On their fifth album in 2011, and about the 45th during their career, Midnite is more accessible than ever before. But it doesn't mean that Kings Bell offers extravagant harmonies or na-na-na's. It's still the same Midnite, but - thanks to producer Andrew Bassie Campbell and his top Jamaican session musicians - with clearer melodies and more memorable hooks.



Raging Fyah Judgement Day

Singer Ray Darwin's former band mates have found a new singer, and on their promising opening set they play skanking, uplifting reggae as it was played in the 70's.



Little Roy Battle For Seattle

The reggae covers industry took a bold step beyond the safer choices of Easy Star Records. Little Roy's second album in 2011 deservedly moved him into the mainstream as he highlighted the uplifting quality to Kurt Cobain's songs across a series of Nirvana covers. It's the second appearance on our list from producer/

engineer Prince Fatty whose daring concept showed he is as interested in taking reggae forward as looking back.

Other essential albums that didn't make the list

(i.e. we couldn't agree!)

- Reggae Regulars - If Only
- Tappa Zukie - X Is Wrong
- Gappy Ranks - Thanks & Praise
- Little Roy - Heat
- Deadly Hunta - Speak My Mind
- Etana - Free Expressions
- Joey Fever - In A Fever
- Ray Darwin - People's Choice
- Alborosie - Two Times Revolution
- Warrior King - Tell Me How Me Sound

Free downloads

- Collie Buddz - Playback EP
- Kabaka Pyramid - Rebel Music EP
- Mark Wonder and Zion Roots - The Dragonslayer
- Mandinka Warrior and Mr Williamz - Dancehall Nice Again
- Jahmali - Sounds with a Purpose

Reviews by Angus Taylor & Erik Magni

Tarrus Riley and Friends

Check these photos of Tarrus Riley, Beres Hammond, Marcia Griffiths, Luciano, Louie Culture, Tony Rebel and more in Kingston.

Emancipation Park, located in the heart of New Kingston came alive on Thursday, December 23rd with Tarrus Riley & Friends annual free concert. The event which has been growing in popularity over the years was even better this year. The venue was jam packed with patrons who came to see their favorite artiste perform and were also treated to several surprise guest artistes.

Most artistes were backed by Tarrus Riley's Black Soil band and several other musicians who contributed their talent. On several occasion during the concert the audience was brought to their feet as they were honored with several of Jamaica's top artiste each performing on stage at the very same time. For many in the audience this has not been witnessed on stage in recent times. Among some of the artistes who graced the stage were Marcia Griffiths, Romain Virgo, Beres Hammond, Louie Culture who showed that he still has tons of energy to perform, Luciano, Pinchers, Tarrus Riley, Tony Rebel and many more.

Based on the performances that night, the audience at Emancipation Park were treated with a superb Christmas performance that will be embedded in their minds for some time to come.

Report and photos by Steve James





Cat Coore and Benjy Myaz in Kingston

Check these photos of Cat Coore and Benjy Myaz at Kings Plaza in Kingston with Boris Gardner, Beres Hammond and more.

If you're looking for a new hang out spot during your next visit to Kingston, try Mike's Bar in Kings Plaza on Constant Spring Road. It's a laid back pairing of parking lot chic with MTV Unplugged type performances served with mouthwatering local fare and the requisite accompanying beverages. Roast fish is the signature dish but other options are available. Depending on the time you get there, appetizer or dessert could take the form of the soulful sounds of musicians of the calibre of Ken Boothe, Boris Gardner, Ernest Wilson, A.J. Brown, Lenn Hammond, Benjy Myaz or Cat Coore; some of the artistes that have graced the stage in recent times. The entertainers usually perform to tracks or go acoustic.

So...add Mike's Bar in Kings Plaza on Constant Spring Road to your social calendar for a Tuesday night. Dress code is casual. Admission is FREE.

Report and Photos by Steve James



Embrace The Positive

Born Free Records presented this event in Delray Beach, Florida on December 18th 2011 with Mamadee, KEHV, Cen'C Love and more.

It was a balmy winter evening on December 18, 2011 in Delray Beach as we stepped into Pineapple Groove for "Embrace The Positive" featuring Mamadee hosted by Bornfree records. Lance-O and the Kulcha Shok crew had it on lock playing conscious reggae music making sure the vibes were set before the show was to start.

Delray Beach's own Jerry "Screamin' Demon" Lee-man came on stage to warm the people up with the blues. Singing songs like Feels Like Rain and a cover of Marvin Gaye's Mercy Mercy Me had the people singing along with him.

Tonight was the night for Bornfree Records to showcase their roster of artists. We were all in for a treat as KEHV premiered his video for Love Will Find A Way and we were immediately transfixed. KEHV "The Prince of reggae soul" serenaded us with acoustic versions of his songs Conscious Farmer and Caribbean Souljah amongst others.

Aspiring artists Aima Moses and Adam "The Teacher" Barnes were followed by Bunny Wailer's children. Cen'C Love and her brother Asad took the stage. Cen'C who's voice is very reminiscent of an Erica Badu with a pinch of Jamaican seasoning reminded us all that tonight was a night of love and peace as she sang of the empowerment of women with her song Casanova. We were reminded once again of the importance of inner beauty and self confidence with a powerful accapella version of her song These Lies.

Kevens with his eclectic synergy of drum and bass, reggae and rock was up next, he took control his song Take Control suggested; and had everyone in pineapple groove with their hands in the air grooving along with the music. During the finale of Put Your Hands Up, guitarist Ronny



Gutierrez and drummer Joe Fagan took it as their time to shine jamming with energetic guitar riffs and drum rolls that had the crowd whistling and screaming.

This energy carried on as The Resolvers took the stage with the intention to keep this party going. Ojay and Sahara Smith made their presence felt with their strong voices alongside a blaring horn section and heavy ska/ reggae influence they sang tunes such as Soulfire and Special Delivery that had the crowd dancing the night away.

Finally the time had arrived for Germany's Mamadee to take the stage! For those of you who aren't sure who this wonderful artist is - let me give you a quick lesson... Mamadee was born in East

Germany to a German mother and a African father while growing up she always had a vision to pursue a career in music - in 2002 she became one of the feature background vocalist for German international reggae sensation Gentleman - Since then she has toured internationally and now she was here in South Florida!

Opening up her set with brand new single Beautiful Soul the theme of love and light and optimism was cemented. Before performing her song Good Days she gave a warm smile and thanked everyone for coming out and embracing the positive. The aura that Mamadee carries with her enveloped the entire room and it was obvious that she came to pineapple groove to spread the message that she very clearly wishes to express - the unity and one perfect love for one another.

Patrons could see that performing Hope was joyous for her as she clapped her hands along with the people in the club. Strutting the stage as she sang and pumping her fist along with the drum-beat showed that she was really enjoying herself on stage and performing for the people of South Florida. An historic moment occurred half way through the show as she asked the people to "give it up " for Conrad Eric Glaze, otherwise known as Bornfree. He took the stage, the connection between the both of them was one of true love and you could tell there was compassion with the mixture of his spoken words and her sultry singing as they delivered their collaboration Who I Am for the first time.

Africa Is Calling was a proud performance for Mamadee, you could tell this was her homage to her african roots - moving her arms and hands fluidly and swaying her body to the rhythm singing from the heart as she closed the show.

In conclusion, "Embrace The Positive" did exactly what it set out to do. There was a tremendous show of talent and positivity which Bornfree Records represent. We all left the venue with a loving energy and positive vibration that could not be denied.

Report by Sarah Soutar
Photos by Gail Zucker



Rebel Salute 2012 Launch

Tony Rebel annual festival was launched on 3rd January.

If the launch of Rebel Salute 2012 is anything to go by then the 19th staging of one of the most conscious reggae shows on the musical calendar will be a stellar event.

Held at the Wyndham Kingston, the prelude was like a meeting concert in itself as several artistes turned out to show their support for Tony Rebel and his Flames Production Company.

The show is scheduled to take place on Saturday, January 14th at the Port Kaiser Sports Complex, St. Elizabeth.

As this is the 50th anniversary of Jamaica's Independence the promoters plan to pull out all the stops to make this staging a memorable one.

Artistes who are scheduled to perform some of whom will be gracing the stage for the first time or the first in a long while are Mikey Spice, Johnny Osbourne, Max Romeo, Yami Bolo, Eric Donaldson and C-Sharp Band.

Other big acts expected include Tarrus Riley, Johnny Clarke, Queen Ifrica, Capleton, Stephen Marley, Luciano, Maxi Priest and Edi Fitzroy to name a few.

If you are ever in Jamaica, this event is a must.

Report and Photos by Steve James



Anthony B in Los Angeles

Anthony B played at The Dub Club, The Echoplex in Los Angeles, USA on January 4th.

Anthony B has quite a musical history with about 25 albums, over 1000 singles and appearances on over 100 albums over the last 14 years. Born Keith Anthony Blair, on March 31, 1976 to very spiritual parents, in Clark's Town, Trelawny, Jamaica, he has brought to the music industry spiritual consciousness and social convictions not unlike one of his greatest influences, the reggae legend Peter Tosh. In 1992 he made the trek to Kingston, Jamaica and soon linked up with well known music producer Richard "Bello" Bell of Star Trail Records which produced such massive hits as *Raid the Barn* and *Fire Pon Rome*. Anthony B started his own record label in 2002, Born Fire Records. His current tour is promoting Anthony's latest album, 'Rasta Love'.

I timed my arrival at The Dub Club perfectly as I got there about 20 minutes before Anthony's set, which allowed me time to set up my equipment and get into place for a spectacular show. Anthony B is a magnificent performer to watch as his energetic moves fill the stage with action as he chants his conscious lyrics. Always giving

his all to every performance, Anthony B came onstage to Peter Tosh's famous song *Rastafari*, delivering the song with power and strength. With such a vast repertoire to choose from, Anthony had quite a long set list of 20 songs. I was able to acquire Anthony's set list at the end of the show (he saw me take it and laughed), so you can peruse the list to see your favorite songs. His high kicks and jumps while still singing amazed the crowd, who sang along with him through many of his songs. I had lots of fun taking photos throughout the set, trying to capture his high energy! He chose to save his biggest hits for last as he held his lighter high for *Fire Pon Rome* and then launched into *Raid the Barn*. There was a "pull up" as he started *Raid the Barn* and he ran off stage for a few moments coming back to delight the crowd completing the massive hit. He did a couple more songs during the encore which left the crowd with love and light and fully satisfied with his awesome performance.

I made my way backstage to put away my camera and say a brief hello. Anthony, charming as ever, gave me a big hug that put a smile on my face for the drive home. His self-produced new CD 'Rasta Love' is fantastic! Pick it up and support this wonderful artist. Don't miss him if he comes to your town! Respect!

Report and photos by Jan Salzman



Anthony B and Junior Toots in San Francisco

'Greeting's in the name of his majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie, Jah Ras Tafari!' Hearing that never really gets old, does it?

On a warm winter's night on January 12, 2012, at San Francisco reggae hot spot, The Independent, Jah was definitely in the building. Lighting up the night in no small fashion was Junior Toots, backed by the Fyah Squad Band, a traditional reggae 4-piece. True to their name, their riddems were locked tight, allowing Junior Toots to shine. 20 minutes into his set, we had seen three totally different looks from Toots, embodying ska, dancehall, and straight up roots reggae. Junior Toots commanded the stage, dancing and gyrating fiercely, truly connecting with the audience, as seen by the energetic call and response.

By the time he got to Physically Spiritually from his new album, 'A Little Bit Of Love', Toots was on fire, working every corner of the stage, his voice well warmed, yet raw, real. Junior Toots was joined on stage by Sol Atash, who sings back up on Seek The Truth in Farsi, which brought a different element to the show



that was welcomed by all.

All in all, Junior Toots wowed and amazed the crowd and myself. We chanted for an encore, which unfortunately never came, but left us all wanting more, and I'm gonna get some. The crowd filled in, chalice and spliff's filled the air, and in true Anthony B style, he took to the stage, leaping furiously like some kind of Rasta drum major shaman, instantly whipping the packed house into a frenzy. His trademark staff flying in the air, towel in back pocket giving the crowd the gymnastic performance that is 100% Anthony B. Out in support of his most recent album, 'Rasta Love', we were treated to his unique sound that transcends traditional dancehall, bordering on progressive reggae, his positive message was ever present. "With reggae music, it doesn't matter your race, class or creed," said the member of the Bobo Ashanti branch of the Rastafarian

movement. "Rastafari spread the teachings of love and peace." This was ever present as he swaggered into 'Coming In Hot'. And later on we got a full dose of Anthony B's signature power, energy and sheer madness as he ripped through a wild version of Never Wanna Lose You. Several hits from Anthony's massive catalog rounded out the night, all skillfully laid down by his world-class band. By the end of the set, I was tired and sweaty from ritualistically dancing for most of the night. With Anthony B's seeming endless releases and tireless tour schedule, he has been and will be an artist to watch for some time. The man is possessed, in a good way, and to my eyes, on a higher plain. Can't wait to hear, and see what he comes up with next.

Report by Jerome Forney
Photos by Lee Abel



UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE

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

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!**

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