

UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE
#19 - May 2012



CHRISTOPHER ELLIS
PETER HUNNIGALE

I-WAYNE

HOLLIE COOK

PRINCE FATTY

HORSEMAN

HARD BREAKA

JESSE ROYAL

BROTHER CULTURE

TARRUS RILEY

DEAN FRASER

ROOTZ UNDERGROUND

MARLEY MOVIE PREMIERE

Sly Dunbar

“When I see the red light I go for it. I
take chances”



The children are coming

It must be hard growing up with a world-renowned mother or father. Being in the spotlight from an early age and when reaching adulthood you're predestined the same career path. Kind of like the royal families around the world.

The nearest you come royalty in reggae is the Marley's. Several of Bob and Rita's children – along with kids from Bob's affairs – started early in the music business and have had successful careers, especially Damian, Ziggy and Stephen.

There are however several kids of famous reggae singers that have come forward in recent years. I'm talking about Jimmy Riley's son Omar, better known as Tarrus, Derrick Morgan's daughter Ventrice, aka Queen Ifrica, or Denroy Morgan's children in Morgan Heritage.

One of the latest additions to the list is London-born Christopher Ellis, the youngest son of the late and great Alton Ellis. United Reggae's Angus Taylor has met him and learned firsthand about the road from his extraordinary childhood to his star studded present. And interestingly enough he is working with Stephen Marley on his upcoming EP and album.

Original cover photo by Wonder Knack - Editorial photo by Brian G. Elliot

United Reggae Magazine #19 - May 2012

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I-Wayne Reveals his Top Tunes



Bankie Banx and The Dune Preserve... Just Cool!



Trojan Records To Celebrate 50 Years of Jamaican Independence

by Karl Pearson

This year on the 6th August it will be fifty years since Jamaica gained independence from Great Britain and to help celebrate this fact Trojan Records will mark the anniversary with a series of rare and classic releases, themed on a different reggae artist or label each month. Lee “Scratch” Perry actually kicked things off back in March with three releases including a lost album from Candie McKenzie, George Faith’s ‘Super Eight (aka To Be A Lover)’ and The Full Experience ‘Young, Gifted and Broke’. This month (April) will see four releases from the famous Treasure Isle label: ‘Treasure Isle Presents

Ska’, 40 massive Ska hits from the early to mid-sixties. ‘Treasure Isle Presents Rock Steady’, highlighting what many to believe to be some of the finest Rock Steady recordings ever, from a label that was at the cutting edge of this musical revolution with an array of talented vocal acts, backed by the legendary Tommy McCook & the Supersonics band. Then there’s ‘Treasure Isle Presents Original Reggae’ a collection of the label’s output from 1968 to 1973 and finally a limited 7” single featuring two previously unissued Ska sides, Easter Bonnet by Roland Alphonso and Duke Reid’s Band flipped with Feeling of Love by Stranger Cole and Ken Boothe. May will see six titles themed under ‘Classic Island Records Artists’ including Toots and the Maytals ‘Pressure Drop’, Black Uhuru ‘Guess Who’s Coming / Best Of’ and Steel Pulse ‘Prodigal Sons’, as well as ‘Best Of’ collections from Sly & Rob-

bie, Burning Spear and Aswad. Johnny Hudson, Head of Marketing at Trojan Records stated: “The themed monthly releases are just one of a number of exciting initiatives we are rolling out to mark the 50th anniversary of Jamaican Independence this year. Trojan Records and its artists have played a significant part in the history and cultural influence of Jamaican music, and so we’re incredibly excited to be associated with this landmark event. We’re also looking forward to announcing several other exciting partnerships for this year soon too.” For more information and to purchase any of these titles visit the Trojan Records website www.trojanrecords.com

10 Deadly Shots Vol. 2 by 10 Ft. Ganja Plant

by Erik Magni

U.S. reggae band 10 Ft. Ganja Plant has dropped several mainly instrumental roots reggae albums on the ROIR label since they were signed in 2001.

The latest set is ‘10 Deadly Shots Vol. 2’ and its main instrument is organ, while the first version focused on the guitar. And to master the organ, 10 Ft. Ganja Plant has invited Roger Rivas of The Aggrolites.

‘10 Deadly Shots Vol. 2’ is currently available on CD and digital download.



Lloyd Brevett of The Skatalites Has Died

by Erik Magni

Lloyd Brevett – bass player and co-founder of the highly influential ska group the Skatalites – died on May 3rd at the age of 80 after being treated for a stroke and seizures. He helped to define and refine ska music and has played on countless of immortal ska, rocksteady and reggae tunes, among them Eastern Standard Time and Guns of Navarone, the latter versioned in the late 70’s by The Specials. The original Skatalites only existed for about 18 months between 1963 and 1965, but were essential in popularizing the genre, which included elements of R&B, jazz, calypso and Cuban music.

The only remaining original member of the 48 year old Skatalites is now alto saxophonist Lester Sterling.

The Universoul Rebel by Chaddy Royal

by Erik Magni

U.S. based singer Chaddy Royal album debuted last year with ‘The Awakening’, a collaboration with South African producer Bereket Tafari. But prior to that set Chaddy Royal had recorded Stress Free and Warriaz together with French producer Little Judah. These two tracks are now brought back to life together with nine other songs for Chaddy Royal’s second album titled ‘The Universoul Rebel’, currently available for digital download on the usual platforms.



LLOYD BREVETT

David Jiro

Babylon City by Clinark
by Erik Magni

Bermuda born singer Clinark – who dropped a Michael Jackson tribute album two years ago – sends out a message for the youth with his latest single Babylon City, voiced on House of Riddim’s Crisis riddim. Clinark now lives in Edmonton, North London, and saw firsthand the devastation last year’s riots had on his local community and nearby Tottenham. “I had the Crisis Riddim sent to me by Sam Gilly at the House of Riddim several months ago and I just had the chorus, ‘can’t you see what a gwan in Babylon City,’ as I watched the riots unfold on the TV last summer, I immediately thought of this song,” explains Clinark in a press release, and continues:

“When I passed through the affected areas, seeing that whole buildings had to be torn down I was shocked. I just felt able to finish this song with those images in mind. It’s a dire warning that we need to focus on our children’s well-being, more than ever, to safeguard



the future and all need to communicate better.” Babylon City is currently avail-

able as digital download.

Impression by Zen Bow
by Erik Magni

Seb Carayol is a French writer that has been writing for the now folded French reggae magazine Natty Dread as well as acclaimed U.S. magazine Wax Poetics. He has been writing about obscure reggae for almost a decade and now wants to give something back to the artists he has encountered. His new venture Reel-Heavy Records is reissu-

ing a long lost roots gem from Jamaican born U.S. resident Zen Bow. ‘Impression’ 12” was originally released in 1986 in 1,000 copies on a small label based in Connecticut and nowadays fetches huge sums in the collectors market, and some have paid up to \$600 to get their hands on it.

‘Impression’ 12” will be available in stores on May 15th, and in the meantime you might just check Seb Carayol’s story on Zen Bow in Wax Poetics no. 43 September/October 2010.



Warm My Soul by Blundetto
by Erik Magni

Blundetto is French radio DJ Max Guiguet’s musical alias. He has worked at Radio Nova in Paris since 1998 and has now put out his second album titled ‘Warm My Soul’, a set where he has invited several guest artists, among them reggae singers Courtney John and Jahdan Blakkamoore. “I only invite people I admire, and so my policy is a bit wait-and-see with some people to see where they go with my track, like

the rasta man Courtney John, for example. We met out in Jamaica and later I sent him some demos without giving him any particular instructions. He didn’t let me down,” explains Blundetto in a press release. ‘Warm My Soul’ was recorded together with several experienced musicians and is a melting pot of latin-soul, reggae-dancehall and jazz-funk with an additional, cinematic feel to it. And everything was recorded in Blundetto’s home studio, something that has affected his sound. “I always listen to and record music at a sensible volume, and I like sounds that caress the front of the brain bulb gently. I try

to produce an emotional response because that’s what I appreciate in other people’s music. I prefer my instrumentals to conjure up passion, melancholia or love rather than get everyone on the dance floor,” he says. ‘Warm My Soul’ collects eleven jazzy tunes and is available now as digital download.



Reggae Music Lives by Gramps Morgan
by Erik Magni

Gramps Morgan – a regal member of the internationally renowned reggae band Morgan Heritage – is back with a

new solo album. ‘Reggae Music Lives’ follows-up on his debut studio set ‘2 Sides of My Heart’ released in 2009, and hit the streets on April 24. The release his debut album led to performances on a string of high profile tours with soul singers John Legend and India Arie as well as the impris-

oned Jamaican deejay Buju Banton. “I’ve grown so much as a producer, song writer and vocalist. Overall, my experience from touring and working with India Arie, watching John Legend perform every night, touring with different artists, working with the different producers on this album and getting a chance to work with my brother Peetah one-on-one writing songs, has brought me to a whole other level,” says Gramps Morgan in a press release. The majority of the tunes on ‘Reggae Music Lives’ are produced by Gramps Morgan himself, but producers such as Clive Hunt and Kemar “Flava” McGregor have also been involved. “My experience really came into play in making this. I think this album is really the best of the brand called Gramps Morgan, as a product, you finally get the sound of Gramps Morgan. The first album was just discovering, getting it and learning myself. Gramps Morgan has been born on this album,” explains Gramps Morgan. The album’s first single The Almighty topped the charts in South Florida and New York while Life Too Short, released on March 28th, advanced in the fight for justice in the case of the fatal shooting of the unarmed 17-year old Trayvon Martin in Florida earlier this year.

Around The World by Dutchie Gold

by Erik Magni

Jamaican singer Dutchie Gold has rocked stages since the 80’s and worked with producers such as Junior Reid and Massive B. Two years ago he met up with producer Don Ranking and their collaboration has resulted in the album ‘Around This World’, now available on CD and digital download. The album includes 15 tracks and spans over reggae and dancehall to contemporary club music.

Reggae Magazine Irie Up Suspends Publication

by Erik Magni

In January 2010 reggae magazine Irie Up was launched. Now two years and twelve issues later Irie Up is indefinitely suspending publication. The suspension is due to the economic situation in Europe, which has made continued publication impossible. The team behind Irie Up will continue to keep the website open in the event of



an upturn, and the Reggae Movement Exhibition, which was inspired by Irie Up, will continue to run until the end of this year. Issues 2 to 12 will be available as back copies. Irie Up and its editor Ronan Lynch wish to say thanks to all of those that have supported and contributed to Irie Up over the last two years.

13 Months in Zion

by Erik Magni

Legendary producer and melodica king Augustus Pablo’s son Addis Pablo has once again teamed up with Ras Jammy for another roots reggae project. The eight track compilation is titled ‘13 Months in Zion’ and features a melodica cut from Addis Pablo himself along tracks by Cali P, FreeTown Collective, Zebulun, Kamray, Jah Defender, Kelissa and Di Govannah. ‘13 Months in Zion’ is currently available as digital download.

Ancient Future by Yasus Afari

by Erik Magni

Jamaican dub poet Yasus Afari has been recording for 25 years and has just launched his seventh studio album titled ‘Ancient Future’. It features young and emerging artists and producers as well as iconic veterans from Jamaica, New Zealand and the UK, including Toots Hibbert, Bobby Digital, Dean Fraser, King Kapsi and Benjamin Zephaniah. The press release describes ‘Ancient Future’ as a “decidedly eclectic mix of textures, sounds and feel” and that is has a “rootsy yet cosmopolitan vibe”. ‘Ancient Future’ is currently available as digital download.

Foundation Sound Release 12” Vinyl EP

by Karl Pearson

Foundation Sound, the UK based sound system and record label have released a 12” EP titled ‘My Burdens’ featuring Dark Angel on vocals. The track is then given the dub treatment plus handed over to two rising stars of dubstep TMSV and Dirty Specs who each add their own take on the B-side. The riddim for ‘My Burdens’ is a rebuild of Ini Kamoze’s 1983, Trouble You A Trouble Me to which Dark Angel delivers his philosophical and thoughtful message on life’s stresses and tribulations alongside his faith in Rastafari. Dark Angel has performed throughout the UK and in numerous countries across Europe, releasing recordings on Boka and Roots Garden Records as well as collaborating on numerous RnB, Dancehall and Hip-Hop tracks. Tomas Roels aka TMSV is an up-and-coming dubstep producer from The Netherlands whose work has been released on labels such as Box Clever and Tube10 records as well as a featured remix on the Greensleeves compilation album ‘Dubstep Chapter 1’. Dirty Specs are a production and remix team consisting of Sam King and Richard Hales who have a diverse musical agenda based on their shared

love of reggae and jungle/DnB. ‘My Burdens’ is their second remix following on from one featured on Chezidek’s ‘The Place’ EP released earlier this year on King Dubbist records.

Rasta Communication by Keith Hudson

by Erik Magni



The late revolutionary Jamaican singer, songwriter and producer Keith Hudson’s 1978 release ‘Rasta Communication’ has recently been luxuriously reissued by Greensleeves. The new double disc version includes the original ten tracks along with 17 other cuts including dub versions and the previously unreleased dub to I Broke the Comb. In addition all four sides of the two non-album Greensleeves Keith Hudson 12” singles, as well as the two rare Jamaican single mixes of Rasta Country and Jonah, are making their CD debut. Sleeve notes are courtesy of reggae historian Harry Wise. ‘Rasta Communication’ was recorded at Randy’s, Channel One and Chalk Farm with a final tweek from Prince Jammy at King Tubby’s. The album also featured a top line up of Jamaica’s finest musicians including Aston “Family Man” Barrett & Carlton Barrett and Sly & Robbie. To celebrate Record Store Day 2012, Greensleeves has also released a four-track limited edition vinyl EP titled Bloody Eyes

with original album and dub versions of the song in a vintage 12” Jacket.

Earl 16 and Easy Beat Productions Have Jah On Their Minds

by Angus Taylor

London based Solution Sound System are known for their rootical selections and for their work with Austin Spiderman Palmer of the legendary valve sound Jah Observer. They played with Austin at his final send off dance before he left England for Jamaica and are now going to take over his sanctified spot at Notting Hill Carnival 2012. However, Mark Anderson of Solution also runs Easy Beat Productions whose latest release is a trio of relaxed meditative dubby roots offerings on the same rhythm available on 12” and digital download. Prolific veteran singer Earl 16 Daley takes the vocal Jah Is On My Mind; Anderson then works up a straight mix of the rhythm Mind’s Eye; while Solution live collaborators Ital Horns gently parp their way through an extended instrumental cut Blow Your Mind (which segues in to the dub, Mind Over Matter on the 12.) The 12 has been out since April and the digital release descended on May 14th.

A Change For Winston Reedy and Donkey Jaw Bone

by Angus Taylor

Following last year’s album ‘Paris Is Burning’ with Derajah, the Parisian roots organic group the Donkey Jaw Bone have just released another collaboration longplayer. This time the band have linked with sweet voiced former Cimarons singer Winston Reedy, who they met during a trip in London in winter 2009 through saxo-

phonist and flutist Eric “Rico” Gaultier from Faya Dub. Focusing on Rasta messages across its 15 tracks, ‘Make A Change’ was produced and played by the Bone at their analogue suburban Paris studio. The album is out now via the deceased French label Makasound’s offspring Chapter Two.



Afrikana Policies by Dan Ratchet

by Erik Magni

Reggae singer Dan Ratchet spent several months in Kingston and London studios in 1986 working on recordings intended to be his first album. But the only songs to see a release were Sweet Rosie, a limited pressing on the Jamaican Star Time label, and The Time Has Come, which was released in Zimbabwe as a double A Side. The rest of the tracks remained in a safe until Bristol Archive Records licensed them for the forthcoming album release ‘Jah Poor People’. As a taster for the album, the label will release a double A sided four track 12” single and digital download of the tracks Afrikana Policies/Ekomé Is Unity, both sides featuring the vocal version followed by dub versions in tasty reggae discomix style. The songs are taken from the session tapes and the mixes on the dub versions are exclusive to the 12” vinyl and digital download. Afrikana Policies/Ekomé Is Unity will be available from June 11th.

Shots by Voicemail
by Erik Magni

French production team and label Dub Akom ventures into dancehall with their new riddim Full Swing, following strong one drop riddims such as last year’s Bonafide. The initial single is voiced by dancehall duo Voicemail and is titled Shots. It’s an upbeat, catchy and sing-a-long summer anthem, and is currently available as digital download. The complete riddim compilation boasts artists like Beenie Man, Lukie D and Konshens and hits the streets on May 29th.

Studio One Sound
by Erik Magni



Soul Jazz Records has yet again dug deep in the mighty vaults of Studio One. Their latest addition to their Studio One catalogue is ‘Studio One Sound’, a set collecting 18 tunes ranging from classic ska and rocksteady to deep roots, heavy dub and dancehall-influenced roots. Among the featured singers and groups are The Heptones, Ken Boothe, The Skatalites and Johnny Osbourne, all of whom launched their careers under the tutelage of Clement “Coxsone” Dodd, owner and founder of Studio One. ‘Studio One Sound’ includes some in-demand and collectable tracks. The sleevenotes are handled by Rob Chapman, author of last year’s book about Studio One as well as ‘Never Grow Old’ and ‘Downbeat the Ruler’. The album hits the streets on May 28th as CD with slipcase, double-album thick card sleeve and heavyweight vinyl.



Keep Trying by Jah Marnyah
by Erik Magni

Montserrat-born singjay Jah Marnyah got his breakthrough in 2004 with the Vibronics-produced scorcher Anointed One, and has since then released several well-received singles, among them the mighty Stormy Weathers for Nick Manasseh. In 2010 he launched his own label Faya Works with the single Sweat of Your Brow. Another single is now set to be put out. Keep Trying is produced by Sound Guyz, and comes in another four versions. Two dub versions credited to Vibronics and one acoustic version and one hip-hop mix by Scribe. Keep Trying is available as digital download from May 18th and is taken from Jah Marnyah’s debut album coming in June.

Vibration Lab meets Linval Thompson
by Erik Magni

Last year Vibration Lab played the One Love Festival in UK and bumped into reggae veteran Linval Thompson backstage, and decided on a collaboration, which resulted in him voicing one of their riddims in the Stingray Studio in London. The result is the ‘Tribulation Time EP’, an EP that contains the title track along with four remixes courtesy of RSD, Radikal Guru, Riddim Tuffa and Adam Prescott as well as three dub versions by Vibration Lab, RSD and Riddim

Tuffa. ‘Tribulation Time EP’ is currently available as digital download and limited edition 12” double pack.

Necessary Mayhem Black
by Erik Magni

In December UK producer Curtis Lynch – of Necessary Mayhem fame – launched a drum and bass subsidiary named Necessary Bass. Now it’s time for another subsidiary. NM Black is Necessary Mayhem’s alternative lab-scientist cousin set to release future dub. The tracks released on this label is said to be more electronic than the output on Necessary Mayhem, with more samples and bass. The first release is a 12” with two tunes. The A side features Ganja Man, Ganja Woman with vocals from international reggae star Mr. Williamz, while the B side hosts a dub version from Killa Mosquito titled Ganja Dub. Now available on vinyl and digital download.



Busy Signal Arrested on Extradition Warrant
by Steve James

The reggae music industry was dealt yet another massive blow with the arrest of popular dancehall DJ, Busy Signal. He recently performed in Paris and Amsterdam and was on his way back from London to Jamaica when he was picked up by the authorities at the Nor-

-man Manley International Airport in Kingston. According to reports, he is facing extradition charges in the United States. It is alleged that in 2002 he was held on drug charges in the US and fled that country before his sentence could be handed down. The DJ has done collaborations with top artistes in the business such as C-Sharp and Marcia Griffiths and was the only DJ on VP Records’ ‘Reggae Gone Country’ album. He is known for popular hits such as One More Night, Nah Go a Jail, Jamaica Love and his cover version of The Gambler. To date he has released four albums: ‘Step Out’, ‘Loaded’, ‘D.O.B’ and ‘Reggae Music Again’ released last month. He is scheduled to appear in the Half Way Tree Resident Magistrate’s Court on Thursday.

Sierra Nevada World Music Festival 2012 Lineup
by Karl Pearson

The line-up for the 19th annual Sierra Nevada World Music Festival, taking place on June 22, 23 & 24, 2012 at the Mendocino County Fairgrounds, Anderson Valley in Boonville, California has been announced. There will be over 30 bands playing some of the best sounds in roots reggae and world music from the four corners of the globe. Headliners for the three day event are Jamaica’s own Third World and Jimmy Cliff on the Friday and Saturday respectively plus with his first appearance at the festival in four years Luciano will be helping to bring proceedings to a close on the Sunday. Other artists emanating from the home of reggae music include Israel Vibration, The Twinkle Brothers, Johnny Osbourne, Lutan Fyah, Cherine Anderson, Romain Virgo, Sister Nancy, Stone Love, Earl Zero and SNWMF debutee Prince Alla. UK acts will include the outspoken dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson backed by the mighty Dennis Bovell Dub Band. Zion Train who’ll be rocking Boonville with their hybrid of



reggae and dance music, while top DJ David “Ram Jam” Rodigan MBE will be spinning a mixture of classic and new sounds. The southern hemisphere will be represented by Katchafire, an all Maori reggae band and House of Shem both from New Zealand. Back closer to home will be Hawaii’s Iration with Jah Sun, Dub Nation, Rocker-T, Afrolicious, AfroMassive and LoCura all appearing in their own “backyard”. On the world music front the audience

can expect some treats from Miami’s Locos Por Juana and one of Chili’s biggest cumbia bands, Chico Trujillo who will be taking to the stage on Sunday night. As well as all this participants will also find extensive schedule of children’s activities, arts and crafts, an international food court, family and alter-able camping, vendors galore plus a large barn, that usually houses antique farming equipment, is converted into a dancehall where

sound systems will be heard pounding out reggae beats until the small hours of the morning. For additional information log onto www.snwmf.com, or call the hotline at (916) 777-5550.

Best Of The Best Weekend 2012 Lineup

by Gail Zucker

Best Of The Best Weekend 2012 returns to South Florida this May 25th - 27th. Celebrating it's 6th year, the Memorial weekend extravaganza, produced by XO Management, Rockers Island and Massive B, will consist of back-to-back blockbuster parties and community events.

The lineup for the Best Of The Best Concert on Sunday May 27th at Bicentennial Park (1075 Biscayne Blvd.) features acts in Reggae, Hip-Hop, Dancehall, Soca and Kompa: Fabolous, Meek Mill, DJ Khaled, Fat Joe, French Montana, 2 Chainz, Shaggy, Mavado, Mr. Vegas, I-Octane, Ace Hood, Laza Morgan, Serani, Khago, Marcia Griffiths, Admiral Bailey, Iwer George, Frankie Paul, T-Vice, Ghost, Brianna, Tony Matterhorn, Demarco, Wayne Marshall, Christopher Martin. The concert will be hosted by Funkmaster Flex alongside Jabba.

Vybz Kartel disbands Portmore Empire

by Erik Magni

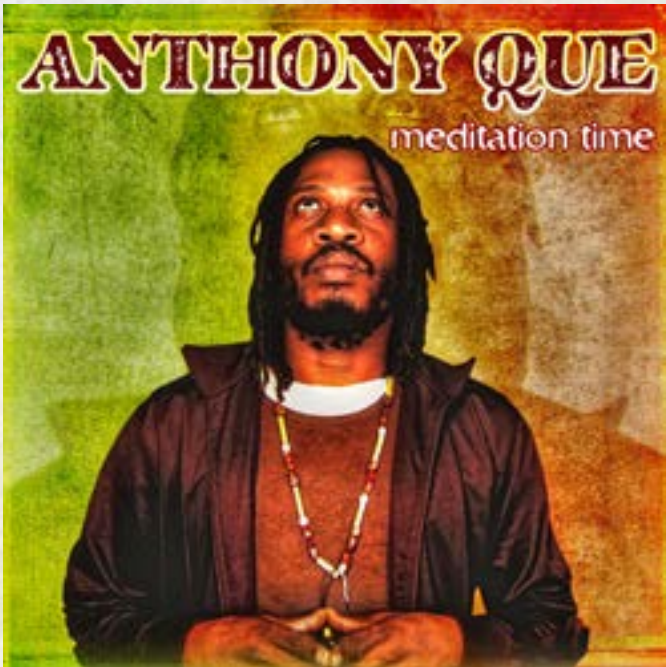
Dancehall superstar Adidja “Vybz Kartel” Palmer – who is currently incarcerated on murder charges – has put out a statement today where he disbands the Portmore Empire, an alliance of dancehall artists from Portmore which has been lead by himself for many years, and used to include successful artists such as Jah Vinci, Popcaan and Deva Bratt. “These artistes have been under the Adidjahiem [Vybz Kartel’s record label] leadership for years, where they have honed their craft and made their mark, and as such, are well on their way to becoming major forces in dancehall. They have reached a level where they are more capable to take on their careers by themselves, and it would be unfair to them, based on the limited resources of Adidjahiem Records, and current legal woes of the Adidjahiem C.E.O. and team members,” writes Vybz Kartel, and concludes: “I wish them the best and I am confident that they will live up to my expectations. In the future, Adidjahiem will continue to bring out new acts and groom them for stardom.”

Two of the former members of Portmore Empire – Gaza Slim and Tommy Lee – have formed a new label to pursue their careers.

Reggaeville Riddim Release

by Erik Magni

Online reggae magazine Reggaeville has teamed up with Oneness Records from Germany to present the Reggaeville riddim – a relick of the Paragons’ rocksteady classic Riding on a High and Windy Day – with cuts from a virtually who’s who in contemporary reggae music. The 20 cuts, 26 when adding the bonus cuts available for free download, are voiced by Tarrus Riley, Sizzla, Etana, Ray Darwin and many more from Jamaica, Europe, India, the U.S., and Indonesia. The Reggaeville riddim was preceded by the Skarra Mucci & Kiprich single Love Mi Fi Me in March, and the full riddim is available as digital download on May 25th.



Meditation Time by Anthony Que

by Erik Magni

Jamaican singer Anthony Que started singing at the tender age of ten and recorded his first single in 1997 for Sugar Minott’s Youth Promotion label, and then moves on to work for Beres Hammond’s Harmony House cutting the Jah Cure combination Same Road. His debut album, ‘A Brighter Day is Coming’, is recorded in the UK for producers such as Mike Brooks, Stingray and Russ Disciples. Its follow-up is also recorded in the UK, but this time together with Tony “Ruff Cutt” Phillips. Anthony Que’s new acquired fame allows him to participate to Jamaican festival Reggae Sunsplash, and back in his homeland he also records his third album – ‘Jamaica No Problem’. The promotional tour of the album takes him to France where he meets the Babyclone Band and 149 Records, and a fruitful collaboration begins with Anthony Que voicing riddims like Datta and Speaker. The latest result of their joint efforts is ‘Meditation Time’, Anthony Que’s latest album. It contains 15 slices of dancehall, moderns roots and lovers rock and is set for release on May 28th.

Soothsayers Still Aren’t Leaving

by Angus Taylor

There’s no firm release date for the eagerly anticipated followup to Soothsayer’s last vocal album, 2009’s ‘One More Reason’. But in the meantime, they’ve released a new 12” EP reworking one of their biggest 7” tracks from 2011 - We’re Not Leaving - and containing further hints as to how the next record will sound. We’re Not Leaving is as close as the collective have come to a pop song. So there’s a radio edit of the original Manasseh mix (essentially cutting out a lot of the hornplay from Idris Rahman and Robin Hopcraft) and an aquatic sounding dub by Pama International spar DJ Wrongtom. The Brixton Pound, featured on their previous longplayer, ‘Red Earth Dub’ (2010), is refashioned as a deejay cut from drummer and Hol-lie Cook compadre Horseman, entitled Red Earth Roots. Then there are previously unreleased versions to new album songs: One Day featuring Julia Biel and a vocal and instrumental of a track called Human Nature - all three mixed by Mark Rae and Rhys Adams AKA YesKing.

Recorded at Prince Fatty’s Brighton Ironworks studio and Soothsayer’s own London lair, these quality sides are out now on Red Earth Records as a 12” and for digital download...

SHAGGY

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I-OCTANE

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“It’s organized chaos!”

Interview by Angus Taylor
Photos by Gerard McNamara

Beyond the odd solitary man with a guitar singing No Woman No Cry reggae is rarely heard live in a train station. But on Monday April 23rd that’s exactly where Sex Pistol daughter and neo lovers rock star Hollie Cook could be found performing with producer engineer Prince Fatty and deejay Horseman as part of St Pancras rail and Eurostar terminal’s Station Sessions festival series (the week before saw an appearance from visiting Jamaican artist Josie Mel). As embarkees from France went in search of home comforts like UHT milk and a cold beer they were treated to Hollie and Fatty’s serene dubby musings: Milk and Honey, Body Beat, I’ve Got Your Money (complete with flashed wads of notes as props) and covers of the Whispers And The Beat Goes On and Andrew Sisters For Me You Are. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the importance of clear passenger announcements the acoustics were pretty good. Hollie’s parents Pistols drummer Paul and nutritionist Jennie were also in attendance. Bereft of proper questions, Angus Taylor scored a quick impromptu interview with Hollie, Fatty and Horseman post performance. Thanks to Mel Ruben for making this chat possible.

Hollie Cook, Prince Fatty and Horseman at St Pancras Station

How was performing in a train station? Have you done that before?

PRINCE FATTY: No, but you know what? It was a lot of fun. After the initial few seconds where you’re just getting it all together then it’s nice.

HOLLIE: It was really weird but in a good way! I felt like a busker and that’s a good thing.

HORSEMAN: It was different. Like Hollie said it was like busking. It was nice.

HOLLIE: I did a small amount of busking in my teenage years. It’s sort of like passing trade, isn’t it? It’s cool to see people stop and pay attention.

How often are you in this station?

HORSEMAN: So often! It’s like our second home you know!

HOLLIE: We’re here once or twice a week for the last five weeks. We like it here.

PRINCE FATTY: I’m here at the Eurostar at least once a month literally. I love it man! The Eurostar is the bomb. Oh, I shouldn’t say bomb, sorry! I nearly got arrested! I meant the Eurostar is great!

Are you going to get on a train in a minute or are you going to spend that money you were flashing around during

I’ve Got Your Money on a cab?
(Laughter)

HOLLIE: No, my mum’s going to give me a lift home and I made sure I gave Horseman his money back!

HORSEMAN: No, no - that was just part of the show - you know what I mean?

Prince Fatty, when you’re mixing behind Hollie and Horseman do you find other producers and engineers try to look at what you’re doing?

PRINCE FATTY: Well I suppose people are inquisitive and they try and look a bit. This is our portable set-up but sometimes we have the tape machines and that really freaks people out! People are often surprised because when they hear the sound they think I’m playing records but they don’t realize I’m doing all the dub and the mix live.

How important is it to mix live?

PRINCE FATTY: I think it brings a nicer energy because the bass goes round the singers. I can follow them as opposed to the singers following a record or remembering exactly. So I can bring energy up or down behind them, which helps!

How did you enjoy making the Hollie Cook In Dub

album? What influences do you put into it? Are you say a Scientist or a Jammys man?

PRINCE FATTY: Well for me making reggae is a pleasure. I love it. It was a blast. There’s a few of the classic Jamaican producers that I like. I’ve taken like two of three different things. I’d say more the Jammys and Tubbys - that era. Scientist for me was the beginning of the end! It was still good though! I love those guys but I am a disciple of King Tubby.

HOLLIE: I had no part in it! I was just like “Take it away and do your thing!”

Hollie, you have a big gig coming up supporting the reformed Stone Roses in Manchester in June. How did that come to be? Are you looking forward to it? Are you nervous?

HOLLIE: Ian Brown loves the music. He came to see us play at the Jazz Cafe in November last year and soon after that he asked, so would imagine it was a result of seeing us live. I’m very nervous! But very much looking forward to it. It’s one of those things where it’s a very big gig so it’s very daunting and intimidating. And it’s also that not being a headliner is always going to be a challenge for the audience. The gigs are just a really big deal anyway. There needn’t even be a support act in the first place be-

cause of that but it's still really exciting.

Horseman, you performed in another unusual place at Easter Weekend, jamming at Reggae In Da City downstairs at Cottons, when Dennis Bovell and Kofi also got up on stage.

HORSEMAN: Yeah! Don Chandler, the bass player asked me a long time ago but every time he asked me we were playing a show so it clashed with Prince Fatty and Hollie. So that time I wasn't doing anything and I went down there, played two drums and did a lickle deejay. There were about seven drummers in the place! The resident drummer was really happy to see me!

Hollie, would you consider playing at Reggae In Da City?

HOLLIE: Of course!

HORSEMAN: They asked me if Hollie could come that time but she was far, far away.

HOLLIE: Wherever I can be, I will be!

Horseman, another group that performed there the time before was Reggae Regular which you used to drum for back in the early 80s. Were you asked to join the reformed line-up?

HORSEMAN: Not again, no.



I'm satisfied with where I am now! (laughs) I saw Patrick the guitarist and he knew about it already. What happened was we played at the 100 Club and Reggae Regular was there. The 1981 version and they had a different drummer - but it's not the same.

Prince Fatty tell me about your forthcoming Prince Fatty vs the Drunken Gambler album

PRINCE FATTY: I'm just about to go back to the studio now to finish the last couple of bits! I'm about a month late. It will feature the Mighty Horseman and Hollie Cook as well, plus George Dekker from the Pioneers, Winston Francis, Dennis Alcapone, Mutant HiFi. It's basically the full gang in full effect.

Hollie, tell me about your own new album in the works.

HORSEMAN: It's tasty!

HOLLIE: The new album is the main big new plan. I'm just doing it, just writing it, and I guess I've been paying more attention to playing live but I feel like in the next couple of months we'll get stuck in in the studio. I'm building some skeletons at the moment which we're going to breathe some life and flesh into hopefully! It's unplanned. Just going with the flow. More shows across Europe and hopefully the UK as well. Just building on the live show this year as well as getting more stuff done in the studio. There's not a huge amount of structure but at the same there is! It's organized chaos!

You've talked about killing off the Prince Fatty character - is that going to happen? Or has he taken on a life of his own?

PRINCE FATTY: I'm not sure at the moment. I think the Mutant HiFi is going to stab me in the back! That's how we're going to end it. I think he's threatening me but he's still my friend. I think the double cross is going to come...



“I want to be myself and bring something to my dad’s legacy”

CHRISTOPHER ELLIS

Interview by Angus Taylor

Christopher Ellis is the youngest son of the late great Alton Ellis. The South London born prodigy was taken on tour as a youth by his father, performing Alton’s songs in Jamaica and around the world - including Alton’s final show at the Jazz Cafe in 2008. Yet despite audible and visual similarities to his dad Christopher is now his own man, having come to the attention of Youth Promoter Sugar Minott and in 2010 been signed to Stephen Marley’s Ghetto Youths International label. Ellis has also become a singing foil to fellow UK deejay success story Gappy Ranks collaborating on the Marley/Sly & Robbie creation Knocking At My Door, and performing together at the now hallowed Jazz Cafe in October 2011. Christopher is about to release a taster EP of his work (produced by Stephen) in preparation for an album at a later date. Angus Taylor learned firsthand about the road from his extraordinary childhood, growing up around his father Bob Andy and John Holt, to his star studded present, surrounded by Marley scions, Snoop Dogg and Jah Cure...

Tell me about your journey into music.

I’m born and grown in London. The first time I stepped on a stage I was 11 years old at Hammersmith Palais with Delroy Wilson, the Melodians, Alton Ellis, Dobby Dobson, Ken Boothe, John Holt. I sang I’m Still In Love and I shut down the whole building with that one song. When the people started clapping and going “Waay!” I said “Wow, I could get used to this!” (laughs).

That was your first show?

That was the first show I ever did Angus. I started to do shows by myself but then my mum cut them off. So I turned to football and did some trials for Crystal Palace. It didn’t go well but I was good at football still. My dad kept saying “Christopher, come sing with me” and started taking me on tour when I was 16 or 17. I went all over the world. If my dad was here now I wouldn’t be doing music with the Marleys. I’m only doing this now as the baton’s been given to me because he’s gone. I don’t really need to be a star or a big singer, it’s just

because of my dad and my love of music. If he was alive now I think I’d be with him just doing his songs on his shows, because I was happy doing that.

How big an influence on your life has your mother been on you?

My mum now, I have her as an angel which is kind of a bad thing because everyone is imperfect. I’ve never seen her do anything wrong, I’ve never seen her swear, she’s a Christian. She brought me up with manners, how to be respectful, everything that I know good, she taught me. Sometimes I tease her and say she stifled me in music, because I was starting to get booked for shows at 11 and 12 that my dad wouldn’t do and then she said “No more shows. School”. As I got older I was a bit upset about that, but it was protection.

You have a new dancehall track Yard Style on Wundah’s Good Food rhythm.

My songs are mainly love songs - kind of my Dad’s mood. One day someone said to me “Yow, you should try dancehall!” So I made a

song about them asking me that, saying “Could you ever sing in a yard style?” “Could you ever sing on dancehall?” I was doing an interview with Robbo Ranx, Wundah was there and he said he’d love to work with me. The first thing he sent me was this! As soon as I heard it it just gave me the bounce I needed. I went to the studio and had the first verse only. But when I got there the rest just came to me, everything just connected and it went fine.

You’re signed to Stephen Marley’s label. Stephen said to me that he was drawn to you because you both had a similar road to travel.

I agree so much. On Yard Style song I sing (sings) “So say it’s set for me, cos it’s hard when you’re reggae royalty”. I see it as a responsibility and I’m sure Stephen sees it the same, trying to carry on a legacy that was built by our fathers. He just saw me, connected with me, he loves how I sound, and away from the music we get on as friends, there’s loads of comedy when we’re around! He’s the boss, but he’s so funny! He can relate to my story. That’s how we

came together.

From how “correct” his productions are I thought Stephen would be a hard taskmaster in the studio...

The man is a genius! But he doesn't act like he is. What he's doing is natural. He's got a line in his song where he says “I'm not in it for the fame, I'm in it for the love”. I sit in the studio and I think “This guy doesn't even know how great he is!” The man is a magician! His music is a different calibre. Even on this last album we did, Revelations Part 1, he took it back to history where you get a flute blowing for 30 seconds on its own or you get a hornsman doing a solo. That ain't happening today in reggae music. Taking it back to how our fathers did it: real music!

Have you heard the Part Two of the Revelations?

I've heard the Part Two! Stephen played it for me, oh man! I don't know how he does it! The first one's called the Root of Life and this one is the Fruit of Life. This is coming off of the reggae, so it's like hip hop sound, reggae incorporated with soulful grooves.

It's more similar to Mind Control, his first album, mixed contemporary. His songwriting... I was just blown away by him!

When is your album with Stephen coming out?

First I'm going to release an EP. We're not far from finishing that album. When it does come it's going to be quality songs and people will love it. It's worth the wait! But we're going to release a five-song EP by summer, that's the plan.

What's Damian Marley like to be around and to work with?

Let me tell you about Damian. You know when you hear someone say when a person walks in a room the room lights up? That's really the case with Junior Gong. He has a special aura. Let me give you an example of how driven this guy is: we'll all be in the studio at 4am and everyone is drifting off to sleep, a bit tired, Damian “Junior Gong” Marley is marching up and down with a Guinness in his hand preening lyrics. This is a guy who's successful and out there already, taking over the world already. Someone like

me is there feeling tired and wanting to sleep, who hasn't had even a quarter of his success. When I see how driven he is I think “Ah, so that's why he's where he is!”

You've done a lot of travelling around, in London, Jamaica, Miami over the years. Where do you call home now?

I'd say my real home is in England; that's where my mum is, my kids, my girlfriend, everyone is there. At the same time I could live in Jamaica. I love going to Jamaica because it reminds me of my dad. Whenever it's time to leave Jamaica I'm not happy. Then I come to Miami, spend loads of time with Stephen and Damian, but I don't really like Miami so much, there's too many highways, freeways and roads; pure motorway. But I love being in the studio with the boys.

One person you met in Jamaica was Snoop Dogg.

He's great. Everyone always runs around him like he's a superstar, but he's one of the most down to earth people, always got a spliff in his mouth, as soon as the spliff's finished he's building an

“I'm still starstruck by Junior Gong and Stephen”



other. We were in the studio and Damian played one of his productions and Snoop said “Yeah man, get me on this, I like this!” He’s a superstar but he acts so normal, so laid back. We all went to Trench Town and oh man, you’d have thought it was Michael Jackson! People came out and were chasing the cars, crazy time!

Another mentor in your career was Sugar Minott.

Sometimes I feel sad when I think about Sugar because he didn’t get the credit he deserved. Sugar always used to say people in Jamaica didn’t show him the credit like the foreigners. He was loved in England, big time! In Jamaica they don’t book Sugar, they don’t big up the Godfather; he’s the Godfather of dance-hall. He was a man that if you could sing in key and in time he would voice you in his studio. When my father passed he said to me “Ellis, come here anytime and voice, do what you want to do, free of charge, because your daddy is my daddy”. He took me in like I was his son.

How did you react to his passing?

I was in Atlanta. I got a phone call saying “Sugar Minott just died!” My heart sank and I just started crying. Many artists that I’ve met and have passed like Delroy Wilson, Dennis Brown, that I grew up seeing every day, I didn’t cry tears for them, but that’s how much Sugar Minott affected me. I cried for Sugar Minott. I was in Atlanta and I cried. I went to see him about a month before he passed and he told me that he’d got some chest thing, and he said “Ease off the chalice“. Sugar Minott passed but Sugar is in my heart. I love that man.

The final Jazz Cafe concert that you did with your father has been put out on DVD. You went last year to be on Gappy Ranks’ “and friends” show. How did it feel to be in that same venue again?

That was nice, man. In fact that was my idea, because Gappy was going to do a show in a different venue. I said “Gappy, no man, do Jazz Cafe”. It was so nice to step out at Jazz Cafe man, there are so many memories there. I performed three times there with my dad. It was so nice to walk down

those stairs again, feel the whole energy. This year I’m hoping to do it again by myself, one night with Christopher Ellis at Jazz Cafe.

Would you like to win lots of Grammys as Stephen has done, or does that kind of thing not matter to you?

If I don’t ever win a Grammy that’s not going to affect me. I won’t see myself as a failure. When the people accept you, that’s what I want. Check this: Tarrus Riley has never won a Grammy, he’s one of the biggest artists in reggae music; Jah Cure, same thing. If I won a Grammy I’d be very happy and hope my kids are proud of me, but really all I want Angus, is for people to love my songs. But... a Grammy would be nice! (laughs)

What is the one thing that people who loved your father’s music don’t know about him as a person?

That he was a comedian! I have a cousin called Ity works in a duo: Ity & Fancy Cat, they’re like the Ant & Dec of Jamaica. They are funny! Ity’s brother is called Blakka Ellis, he’s a comedian as well in Jamaica. They’ve got their



own show on TV and stuff. It runs in the blood. They’re my dad’s nephews and my dad had a comedy as well. The man was so funny, Angus! One time we were on a plane when it just touched down in New York and everyone started to clap, and my dad

turned to me with a blank face and said “Christopher, them think it’s a stage show!” Any time my mum used to discipline me, my dad was a saviour so I could always run behind him for shelter and protection. Did you know that my dad never went to

Africa? He always said “Me cyaan believe I never been to Africa before”. Hopefully I can fulfil that. Yeah man, Angus I really miss him man.

And what is the thing about Christopher Ellis that people who love his music don’t know about him?

That I’m just a normal young black kid from London, whose dad happens to be Alton Ellis. Sometimes I’m overwhelmed by the love. My love for music is raw! I’ve never took singing lessons, so everything I’m doing is just by accident. It’s not by the book. I just want to keep rising and working with the band. It’s really nice for me because I started off just singing Alton Ellis songs in Jamaica when my father passed, I was on four or five shows a month singing pure Alton Ellis. Now it’s nice that I’m stepping out as Christopher Ellis, and Alton Ellis’ son on the side instead of first. I want to be myself and bring something to my dad’s legacy. Instead of karaoke, the legacy.

JESSE ROYAL

Interview by Marc Marino

"Musicians are the driving force. We have to keep the live music alive"

I first met Jesse Royal on the steps of the world famous Grafton Studio in the Vineyard Town section of Kingston, Jamaica. I have been following Jesse for some time now and he is one of the most promising

Kingston youths. Jesse has been making music for years and now he is writing and recording tracks for his debut album. He has worked with Philip "Fatis" Burrell, Earl "Chinna" Smith and Sizzla Kalonji a few big names in Reggae Music. Along with this interview Jesse Royal has given United Reggae the exclusive on the Butterflies acoustic Inna De Yard video with Earl 'Chinna' Smith on guitar. He has also given us the premier of his Mixtape titled 'Misheni' which is Swahili for "The Mission". 'Misheni' is available as a free download as a "Thank You" to current fans and as introduction for those who are just learning of Jesse Royal.

Jesse, in your own words who is Jesse Royal?

Jesse Royal is the voice of the youth. Jesse Royal is everyone, everything that is happening now. The voice of the people with Rastafari at the head of it.

What music are you listening to today?

Well, we've always been listening to the King, Bob. The Beatles are there, Bill Withers, Super Cat, Junior Gong, Ragga, and Sizzla Kalonji. Nice music you can't resist.

Which of your songs is your favorite to perform live? Which song has the most meaning to you?

Every song has its own meaning. Every song has its own vibe. Every piece connected. Every ingredient in a dish is important from the carrots to the garlic. Every song has its own little place. We love them all.

How did you become involved with Xterminator Records, which was founded by the late great Philip "Fatis" Burrell?

I always did music and was friends with Fatis' son Kareem 'Remus' Burrell. We were all friends and the music thing came together naturally. Each man playing their part. Fatis was an elder who we looked up to even called him Uncle Fatis. From creation it was Jah's plan from before I knew. Like Steve Jobs said it's not until you look that you can connect the dots.

Fatis was known for using live musicians for his work. Is this something you plan to follow in the future?

It is a must. Out of respect and it is the real way to do the music. It is very nice when the vibe comes from 5 different souls. When everything comes together it is a different energy than when one man does his thing. You have to keep the authenticity alive. The musicians are a KEY part. I cannot say that enough. They are the driving force. We have to keep the live music alive.

Last year you toured with Sizzla and recently visited Brazil and Africa. Can you share a memory from your trip?

It was lovely and it's always



lovely to learn. I learned a lot of things on the road. At the end of the day the music is for the people. People are being mislead and mistreated all around the world. You have to go check what's going on. You can't really speak about it if you don't know what's going on. Who feels it knows it.

What are your future plans?

The future plan is to get the youths aware. Our generation has to come forth and fight this fight. Set a different standard in this world. Really implement the things we have been fighting for. My plan for an E.P. will soon come. Thinking about calling it Royally Speaking. I let the cat out of the bag. It is a mission not a competition. Each and every one has to play their part.



PETER HUNNIGALE

Interview by Angus Taylor

"Steve Jobs' name is ironic. People LOST jobs because of what he thought was an innovative idea"

Usually when United Reggae talks to an artist they have something to announce or promote: an album release, a tour, even a book or a film in the pipeline.

Not so, the butter-wouldn't-melt voiced lovers rock veteran Peter Hunnigale, who started as a guitarist and bassist in the late 70s and went to on to record for labels including Fashion Records, Ariwa, and his own Street Vibes imprint, picking up multiple awards and chart successes (such as 1989's Raggamuffin Girl with Tippa Irie) along the way. Since his last album, 2009's self produced 'Reggae Ville', the singer has been taking things easy, doing a little production, and a variety of community based projects. But this period of downtime made him perfectly placed to give some heartfelt and fascinating views on the music industry to Angus Taylor when they met in Brixton at the end of February - a few of which may surprise...

What are you working on right now?

I'm just freewheeling. It sounds a bit absurd but I'm just doing what I want. I've just produced a song with Wendy Walker, a cover version of Mary J Blige, called Hurt Again where she's getting a lot of attention from radio stations. Then there's also a duet I've done with Michael Lloyd Pinq. I'm also doing a bit of international work with the Japanese doing bits of lovers stuff and a lot of dub work for sounds like Iration Steppas where I've been rebuilding a lot of their tracks and refashioning some of the 70s steppers stuff which is a lot of fun! A totally different fit! But I'm a musician so I enjoy making music and production so that's my love at the moment. It's really one of the best places I could be - it's still keeping my hands and mind working and keeping the joints greased!

But you have still been making a big impact on reggae in the live arena in your now established role as compère of Don Chandler's Reggae In Da City monthly event at Cottons in Exmouth Market. It's a free night where people can see big names, join in themselves and network, whatever

they want. Talent shows have always been a part of reggae and it's taken the best bits of the talent show format and put them back into a new format at a time when live music is the one thing that seems to be staying vital.

Don is my bass man in a band we put together just before last year called True Vibes. His concept was telling people come and do your reggae thing, sing if you want to sing and a few of my colleagues will play some music behind you. It's a totally different role for me and it's come at a really good time because my mind's sort of everywhere at the moment. Some time last year that it actually started to sprout legs and start moving on its own and then we thought "We've really got something here!" It's threatening that we need a bigger venue! Because this thing could really blow up!

Where do you see it going next?

I'm interested in getting the record companies in now to get some of their acts in. We don't care what you're up to - pop whatever - if you've got a new signing get them to come down and use Reggae In Da

City as a platform as part of a portfolio for the artist. Have you done a bit of reggae? Have you done live open mic stuff in a venue? Come and test your bones out and get your record company in here at the same time. I really want to make it a platform where major acts who have probably just come out for a drink for the night can say "Yeah I'll have a go at that! Give us the mic! I might be from the rock world but I'll do a blues ballad on a reggae track".

It's somewhere you can see a Michael Prophet or a Christopher Ellis but you can also see something really unusual like the violinist Namhee playing a tribute to Dennis Brown. What's been your favourite Reggae In Da City moment?

I've had several. On one of the first nights there was a lady who was slightly inebriated and wanted to sing Hurts So Good by Susan Cadogan. So I said "Ok, in for a penny, in for a pound"! Now this woman was el blotto - she was close to caving in! - but she got up there and even though she could barely stand up she got through the whole song! Another one was Linda Duru - a black woman who came from Scotland who came up and



sung Summertime. So when I asked to introduce herself and she said "Hi my name's Linda" in a Scottish accent I knew the London audience would be so messed up by that! I mean, we've seen Indian people speaking Scottish but a black chick was so weird! Then there's Lexi Eccles! She's got a great voice. I think the emphasis of Reggae In Da City is weird and wonderful - it has got to be.

Your job is to work very closely with the band. How does

being a musician help you as a singer compared to singers who've never picked up an instrument.

It's put me years ahead of most artists who cannot play an instrument. And that's the majority of artists in the music industry. Maxi doesn't play, Tippa doesn't play, Michael Gordon, Paul Dawkins, a lot of my colleagues just sing. In that area of the game I hold well and it's given me no end of advantage of what I need to do and what I understand about music. It

also means I won't be broke! (laughs) I'll always have a bit of dosh! It's a valuable language and skill.

As a Brixtonian you will be aware the cancellation or possible postponement of Lambeth Country Show 2012 due to the Olympics. But on a wider level free local festivals have been being eroded for years. As someone who has seen the ups and downs of the industry - does reggae music do better or worse in hard times when the govern-

ment has less money?

Reggae music has never been funded so in times of good or bad we just move at the same speed all the time. When we have a recession it doesn't affect reggae music because we've never been funded anyway. It's perhaps not a good way of seeing things but reggae will survive because of it. Yes the industry has been going down. My greatest cry is seeing record shops disappear. I hate it so. Record shops to me are a great place to be and a point where you can get reference to what's happening with music. It's got to the point where you can't buy a decent a decent cd anywhere (I won't buy one that's been burned). But we still continue to make reggae music and if we really have to make it available we've got iTunes which I'm not happy with but it's there as an outlet.

The problem with iTunes is the files

Everything is a compression ratio. iTunes have got m4p files. They're all lossy files, they all have a compression ratio to them where they knock off the top and the bottom frequencies and tell you you only listen to certain frequencies be-

tween 100hz and 10k and to some degree they might have a point. But analogue was going from 20hz right up to 20,000 (although at our age we won't be able to hear more than 12-15K!) (laughs) But if you listen to some of the old well recorded analogue you've got so much bottom end there and top end that we can hear and it's so fabulous. I'm not a fan of mp3s and m4ps and joe public doesn't understand that it's just the same as listening to a cassette tape which is a second generation recording. People have substituted quality recording for second generation recording and saying it's quality. How can that be quality? This is what they're spending a whole quid for - a second generation recording. They don't understand. So I am not a fan of iTunes.

You're not a fan of Apple in general are you?

Steve Jobs' name is ironic. People LOST jobs because of what he thought was an innovative idea for his company Apple who didn't give a toss about the music industry or any industry. It's like "I make computers, and I'm going to show that I can put teacups on my computers, I can put tables on, I can put an-

anything on" and that's what he did. It was nothing to do with the benefit of mankind or making life better. When they came up with downloading your music through iTunes a lot of the artists were told "You're never going to make any money off of it". What do you get for iTunes downloads now? 20 pence? 30 pence? We can never run an industry off of it. Record companies let me down. They should have fought back for their industry and said "You can make your iPad but you ain't putting not one of our records on there. You're not going to use our industry to sell your product. You're a computer company. If you're going to do that make sure you two thirds or at least a third back to the industries you are taking from" and I'm sure Apple would have said "That's too much".

These days kids play music on their phones and rip files from YouTube which may explain the lack of bass in a lot of music these days...

I think a lot of this could have been stopped. I know the internet's territorial and what you can accept in the UK is different from what you can accept in China but in terms of the laws here we could have protected

the industry here a long time ago. They could have upheld our intellectual property rights and said to people in the UK that "You cannot put people's music on the internet without a contractual agreement." People have got used to downloading our music free on the internet and once you get used to music being free on the internet they want to get it free on their phones and it's easy for a company to sell their phones on the back of that. That's how that culture grew and it's what people expect now but that doesn't make it right. That's not right at all. People say it's the way forward. It's not the way forward. They need to stop doing that with our music - which was an electronics based industry. We were electronics not computers.

I asked Tippa this a few years ago, but what's the difference between the way people collected sound tapes back in the day and sharing music on the internet?

Soundtapes were a specialist thing. You couldn't go into a shop and get a soundtape. People weren't standing at the tube station selling soundtapes! You'd have to get it from someone who was in the ses-

sion like the soundman himself, Saxon, because it's got to come from his machine and then he decides to sell a couple of these tapes at two, three quid a go. Yes, people could have sold them on our whatever but it wasn't an industry, it was more of a specialist thing. I think what we have today is an expected thing where the government's given way to people being able to download songs for free without prosecution and it's a standard, widespread thing now. That's the difference. The creative art is not seen as as important as Wembley football, the Olympics, or Wimbledon. "Oh you sing, dance, and prance around on stage? Oh you write books? You make films? Get a real job". But if it's the football? "If we see you selling a counterfeit ticket we'll lock you up mate". The creative arts are not respected in this country.

This is quite an old one but what did you think of the BBC's Reggae Britannia the concert and TV series - now that dust has settled?

As much as people don't like and don't want to hear it - I get it. The reason I get it is because it was Britain's view of what reggae music was. It wasn't

a black man's point of view. It wasn't Brixton's point of view. It wasn't a Jamaican's point of view. It was from Britain's point of view and this is why you had songs from The Specials. And they did do well to bring in some of the classic acts like Dennis Alcapone and Big Youth. It's what Britain recognizes as reggae music so I can't go along with some of the problems or issues that some people have about it. People say "Peter Hunnigale - you should have been on there" and I say "Bless you and thank you for that love" but that is not what Britain recognizes as reggae music. From the late 60s today black people didn't just listen to reggae music alone. You had an English white community who loved reggae music and those that can remember Top Of The Pops will know it had a healthy attendance of reggae music going through the charts - Dave and Ansell, Tito Simon, Desmond Dekker, I loved that about coming up through the sixties. It's Britain's perspective on reggae music so I didn't have any complaints.

You were in the Story Of Lovers Rock film, which very well received, but of course some people also criticized it for not telling the whole story. With

a title like that then people may take it literally - even if they accept no one was going to call it “A bit of Lovers Rock”.

(laughs) That’s never going to happen. The essence of the story was never a documentary of lovers rock. That’s why it didn’t feature a lot of people who should have been in there. Basically it was the filming of a show that we put together at the Academy for UK lovers rock music and then through a bit of politics this film culminated from it. That show was nothing to do with the history of lovers rock but the only way that the filmmakers and producers and people that filmed it could make some benefit from what they had done on the night - and that’s putting it in a nice way - was to make a film of it. Cut it up into bits and pieces with the traditional lovers rock artists and then get someone to narrate in between the bits and pieces, make a story out of it, then call it The Story Of Lovers Rock. This is why we have all the holes in there but as you say even if it didn’t you’d still have people saying “why wasn’t I in there?” because everyone’s got their memories of what lovers rock was and even if someone only did two

songs that could be what was their memory of what was iconic from the time.

Tippa Irie told me a few years back that you are his favourite singer. Is he your favourite deejay?

There is a bias that I have but if you ask me? Yes he is the best deejay in the world. I could be hated for that statement! (laughs) But I’m going to say yes because the camaraderie is going to be solid. I do have lots of great deejays that I love. Chukki Starr is a great British deejay, Starkey Banton, even Horseman who plays drums and is a deejay. You’ve got Macka B up in the midlands who is quite respected and I think he’s fabulous as well. But as a working deejay right now Tippa Irie is really flying the flag for UK artists. There are different flavours of deejay and everyone is going to have their favourites but Tip is iconic of what’s going on.

I set you up for my final question, which again I asked Tippa, and made sure it was the last question in case it went sour - but you’re from South London so why do you support Arsenal?

(laughs) That’s probably why! Because we’re from South London. You had a couple of teams closer to home like Crystal Palace - who actually aren’t doing too badly now. I’m a bit older than Tippa but not by much - I’ve always liked Arsenal. I’m not as avid a football nut as Tippa because he’s got his season passes and everything. But for a London club when I was at school and what we represented Arsenal was always the team for as long as we remember from George Graham coming right through to Arsene Wenger which I’m not too happy about at the moment. I think he’s doing some really wrong things. If Harry Redknapp was manager of Arsenal we’d be alright mate.



HARD BREAKA

Interview and photos by Aude-Emilie Dorion

"Gambian society is hard to live in but I believe I can pass through with my music"

Let's start with Gambian singer and producer Mamut Jeng aka Hard Breaka. Originally from Faranang, he moved to the coast where he produces music. After performing at Ariwa BACK TO AFRICA festival in January, it is in Senegambia at Unity Records Studio that the artist welcomed me for this interview. In this private meeting we looked back on his career and his projects with new label Unity Records...



Hi Breaka, how are you today ?

Fine thanks.

So we are going to come back on your 10 years long career. You started in 1997, what can you tell us about your experience in the music industry so far, your career, what have been the goods and the bads, what is your challenge ?

As you said I joined the music industry in 1997. Back in the days I was collaborating with the hightech Buldof label. I have worked with them for eight years, recording and searching over and over again until I was satisfied with my work. This is when I released my first single ‘Oneness and Signs’ which had been a success in the Gambia. I performed all over the country. This years with the Buldolf Studio helped me continuing further my development into producing quality music.

We are presently in your recording studio, can you tell us how the Unity Records adventure started and when ?

Music has always been a part of me and at some point two years ago, I wanted to launch my new productions that con-

sists in bringing together 14 Gambian artists around a mixture of traditional Bambala music and modern riddims. As a guitar player myself, I am sensitive to the composition of my riddims. I started working on the ‘Ladies Riddim’ and decided to build my own studio with my sound engineer and together with all the people at Unity we produce sound and craftwork artists.

Your single ‘Moan and Groan’ had been a buzz in the Gambia and has pretty explicit lyrics, tell us about the context in which you wrote that song ?

Gambian society is hard to live in, there aren’t too many perspectives for us over here. I believe I can pass through with my music. Moreover music can be a catalyst for action as any other art form within the society. My texts talk about the social problems we encounter in the Gambia.

You have a powerful, émotive and smooth voice, can you tell us about your influences?

Well without hesitation I’ll tell you Garnett Silk, brilliant Jamaican artist who turned from deejaying to singing in 1989.

During the early 90’s he was hailed as a rising talent, but his career ended by his early death in 1994 while attempting to save his mother while their house was on fire. Among the people he worked with features the great King Tubby and Sly & Robbie. As for my music I compose and write the lyrics at the same time, taking inspiration in my day to day life and my African roots.

After ‘Oneness & Signs’ and ‘Sitting in the Dark’ you are working on a new single, can you tell us about it ?

As I am busy producing artists it’s been some time since I last worked on a track for myself (smile), the ladies riddim have been on the charts for quite some time now so we decided to work on a new project, we are currently recording a tune called ‘Linkin’ It’ featuring some artists from abroad. I like music with no boundaries, my music always searches new sounds mixing different rhythm and different flings. I like mixing acoustic and dubstep elements into my music. I like to call my music ‘Be yourself’ because it has no boundaries, you can call it reggae, ragga, Bambala, electro, in fact it’s not limited to one thing, it’s a



fusion of things.

on the net ?

Thank you for having me at Unity Records today, is there anywhere United Reggae readers we can follow you at

You can follow me on myspace at <http://www.myspace.com/heartbreakergambia/music>. Bless up.

SLY DUNBAR

Interview by Angus Taylor

Photos by Laurent Gudin & Wonder Knack

"The steppers drumming really started with Phil Chalender at Studio 1"

Like Ernest Ranglin, Lowell "Sly" Dunbar has been an excessively generous contributor to Jamaican music. Since he first built his own drums out of discarded cans as a child he has played on thousands of pivotal records by a myriad of producers as well as co-helming as many more himself with his partner and bassman Robbie Shakespeare.

Dubbed "Sly" because of his love for American soul music - specifically Sly & The Family Stone - his debut recording session came via the keyboardist Ansell Collins. Encouraged by Collins and Lloyd Parks Sly drummed for a variety of bands during the new reggae age: The Rainbow Healing Temple Invincibles (with Parks), the Volcanoes (which he joined through Invincibles guitarist Ranchie McLean), then Skin

Flesh & Bones who had a residence at the Tit For Tat club in Kingston.

It was at the neighbouring Evil People venue that he met Robbie, liked his vibe, and the two became staunch members of Bunny Lee's band the Aggravators, migrating to Channel One as the Revolutionaries - where Sly created the "rockers" drum sound. There they accumulated enough studio time and money to start their seminal label - Taxi, hitting big first time with Gregory Isaacs' Soon Forward.

International mainstream success beckoned due to their work with Grace Jones for Chris Blackwell's Island Records, who signed up their key harmony group Black Uhuru. In the dancehall era the duo popularised the combination song with Chaka Demus and Pliers Murder She Wrote. They continue to push the boundaries of popular music to this day.

Angus Taylor spoke with the living lynchpin of Jamaican rhythm on Easter Saturday 2012 just as Dennis Brown - one of his countless collaborators - was about to be honoured with a blue plaque outside his former dwelling on the other side of town. This interview is the reason why he missed the start!



Tell me how you entered the music business in the late Sixties...

I came into the music at 15 years old. Ansell Collins was the one who brought me into the music for my first session. And at age 16 the second song I played was Double Barrel.

You and Ansell pretty much came up with Double Barrel, even though he sold the tapes to Winston Riley who is credited as writer?

Yes, he came up with the piano lick [Very similar to the lick from Ramsey Lewis' Party Time] and then we started working the tune. So I was like his little writer and he would take me everywhere he would go in Jamaica. We worked on that song for a week and then we cut it. We had to borrow someone's drum set for me to play on because we didn't have one. Lloyd Parks was the one who was kind of there and tutored me before I went to the studio so Lloyd Parks and Ansell Collins took me into the recording studio. I still speak to Ansell every day. He calls me on the phone and we talk about music ideas. We still do it same way.

After working with Lloyd and Ansell (and just before you met Robbie) you joined Skin Flesh & Bones, where you played with a wonderful underrated singer called Al Brown who covered Al Green's Here I Am - Come and Take Me (1974) and later Bobby Bland's Ain't No Love - in reggae style.

I joined a band called Volcanoes and he was the singer. Then the band split up and we went to the country to play in a hotel for a while before coming back into town and forming Skin Flesh and Bones and he was the singer there. So in the [Tit For Tat] club we were playing band music so we had to learn a lot of different songs - reggae, soul, calypso, everything. Cynthia Richards was a vocalist with us too. We would play Wednesday to Saturday every night so we would rehearse all these songs. So when Al Green came with Here I Am Baby we used to play the full version on stage. We would always be playing the Al Green version because Al had a tone like Al Green. I don't remember who suggested it but we thought we could do a reggae version of this song. The owner of the club who owned the band, Dickie Wong, suggested we call

a session saying he wanted to do an album with Skin Flesh & Bones and Al Brown. This was the first song we cut and it was a smash! I think I did play on Ain't No Love too!

Let's talk about some more of the more collectors' artists you worked with. Later in the seventies around 1977-78 when you and Robbie were at Channel One studio you played on the Phase 1 records tunes produced by Roy Francis. He was a producer with a very distinctive sound - how involved in the recordings was he? Or was it musicians like yourself and engineers like Errol Thompson who were responsible?

We knew Roy for years, from when we were at Channel One and even before. He used to live in America and come every so often to do sessions so we were playing a lot of songs for him. Now he owns Mixing Lab studio in Jamaica and we're still friends - in fact I went there the other day and played on two live rhythms because he wanted a dub kind of thing. We talk on the phone a lot and when he needs some stuff I go down and play there, so we're really good friends. In those



days we'd listen a lot to Philadelphia International Records, as well as Motown, Stax, everything coming in, but we liked the Philly modern soul kind of sound. I used to wonder at how powerful and how driving that American recorded sound was and tried to get everything we were doing in that driving force. So we would tell the engineer to try to get it kicking and slamming just like the American records we would play for reference - to get something that sounds like that in volume and power. And at that time with the drum and bass everybody wanted to have the drum

in their face! (laughs) So they would push it you know?

I also want to ask about the late great Freddie McKay, who you played on many songs and a couple of his big albums like Doing It Right (1977) and Harsh Words (1982) . Another artist who people don't know enough about due to his untimely death...

Yes it's true. The funny thing when you talk about Freddie McKay is you used to see him every time we'd go down town and we'd play on a couple of tracks for him. Some of them

I don't remember the titles of the tracks but one that really stands out was his festival song...

Dance This Ya Festival (1976)?

Yes! I was in a restaurant once and this guy came up to me and said "What were you thinking when you played that drum on that festival song?" I said "I don't know". I did the Jacob Miller festival song the same day [All Night Til Daylight] in Joe Gibbs studio and then I went down to Channel One to do Freddie McKay's song. I had never heard him before but when I got there JoJo of Channel One said, "We have to win it now Sly!" and I said "Yes, we have to win!" So I said to Ernest "Soup the drum up" as a code word to just make the drum burn! When I heard the (sings horn melody) and thought "We have to make some fantastic rolls to make the drum start!" so that when the needle hits that record it just pops up so TISH! (sings horn melody) and come with the cymbal. Because it was a festival song you want it to sound happy and so I thought "We have to make it double happy!" so I went (imitates drum sounds) and the studio was crowded literally!

would come in and be a part-time drummer when the drummer wasn't around. We used to see one another in studios and I knew Dennis was a great singer because I was always a big fan of Delroy Wilson and when Dennis came on the scene I knew he used to sing for Derrick Harriott and all these people. Then one time I started playing these sessions for Joe Gibbs and Niney and I played on songs like Wolf and Leopard and then we went and did a tour in England - I think it was '74. Me, Dennis, the band Skin Flesh and Bones - I don't remember if Al Brown was there, I think Toots was there. It was a long time ago!

Fair enough!

He used to come by Tit For Tat and sing part time with the band. He also used to live up the top of the road from me so we would always check one another. So one day me and Robbie asked him to come to the studio to do some songs [for Taxi] and he sang Revolution and Have You Ever Been In Love, and Hold Onto What You Got. Sitting And Watching was cut before for somebody who didn't like the song. We said "OK we'll take that

song then!" and we put it on our tape. From there we were good friends and I think I did another tour with him and Big Youth - I was playing with Dennis and Soul Syndicate with Big Youth. I think Niney called me once and said I'd played on more Dennis Brown tunes than anyone else! They said I played on maybe 2000-2500 Dennis Brown songs. I did most of the stuff for Joe Gibbs.

Also Revolution has been versioned so many times on top of that.

Yes, everybody used that rhythm he did for us! And even Money In My Pocket - I played on the original version and then I went back and recut it and changed the drum pattern and this was the new version that went into the charts. I played on both - which a lot of people don't know.

There are so many things you played on that we could be here all day...

Sometimes I sit down and try to remember and I am blank. Sometimes people call and remind me and I'm like "Woah". Or sometimes I listen to the radio and it sounds like me but

then there was a time when a lot of drummers would try to sound like me so there are these little trademark things I would put into the song!

Do you find a lot of reggae fans are a bit obsessed with the difference between rockers and steppers drumming - and do people often ask you about it?

They do often ask, but the steppers drumming really started with Phil Chalender at Studio 1 - the song Mr Fix It. He played it on that song and I used to listen to him a lot and I still do because he played on so many Studio 1 records. I also listened to Horsemouth and some of this stuff was already being played. When I came in as a drummer I listened to all these great drummers - because Jamaican music has produced some great drummers - and to find my place I had to listen to what they were doing. I thought "I have to take this thing and make it my own because I cannot play like them". And because I listened to all this R&B stuff I took all the stuff that I listened to as a kid - Motown, Stax, Philadelphia, Al Jackson, Earl Young and all these great drummers - and

said "I have to develop myself if I want to stay in this business". I started working on patterns and beats and taking ideas from them.

Give me an example of how you re-imagined the past...

Like if you listen to [the Mighty Diamonds] Right Time Come - Lloyd Knibbs was the first person I think who played it because I cut the pattern away from one drop to a song called Addis Ababa for Skatalites and a couple of other songs. I listened to him a lot and said "I am playing reggae right now. I can play a pattern like this". So when I played Right Time like this right through people just couldn't believe it because drummers then just played one drop - they might accidentally play a little thing different and then come back to the one drop. I was playing the pattern right through and then JoJo from Channel One gave me the go ahead to pursue that so I started doing a lot of this.

How does the actual music you're playing on inspire you?

A lot of people see me and don't know the inspiration I'm getting when I'm playing

this thing. Sometimes the inspiration is coming from the bassline or sometimes from the singer. Because I'm playing a song and playing a part of it not as a drummer but even as a keyboard player would play it. Listening for the pattern or the kind of beat I could flip in the chorus. There is a song called How Could I Leave by Dennis Brown where I played on the original take. When I came back from tour Errol [Thompson] said I had to dub all these drums over saying "It's not rocking" meaning there was no groove in it. I thought it was ok but they said "No". So I went in the Friday morning they put on the track, I said "This is what I'm feeling" and they said "Play anything you want!" (laughs) Because they knew I wasn't going to play the one drop so they said "Play anything" to make it groove. I started playing and the whole studio jumped up, saying "That's it! The whole song is finished!" But I was just grooving to the bassline and the melodies Dennis was singing. Then there is another song I did which a lot of people don't know I did which is Punky Reggae Party for Bob Marley.

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Tell me about that...

I did it at Joe Gibbs’ it in one take and he couldn’t believe it! I said “Go and record it in one take - I might not get it”! So then he called Scratch and

said it was done and Scratch said “What you mean done?” and he said “Sly did it and it’s gone!” (laughs) So there’s an element of singers and people and it just comes to you. You don’t know how long it’s going to take and it just happens. I just go in with a frame of mind to play on a hit record, to play a hit pattern. So I am calculating everything when I am going in thinking “What am I going to do today?” I have these things spinning around in my head about what the pattern is going to be like and if the tune is like this or that. But I listen a lot to everybody.

We’ve talked about Bob so let’s mention Peter Tosh’s Equal Rights (1978) which was reissued last year with demo versions and outtakes. You were the one who gave Stepping Razor its stepping drum pattern. Did you check it out and how did you feel about your work being reissued like this?

I haven’t listened to the outtakes although I did hear it was reissued. Peter Tosh stuff was cool. Equal Rights was when I first got into the band and was the first album I would do with Peter. I was listening to Peter Tosh the other day and trust

me, all this music is coming alive, because reggae is something we are checking. Listening back to them now it’s in a class by itself - nobody is playing reggae like that anymore. If you listen to Stepping Razor and Nothing But Love with him and Gwen Guthrie and Crystal Ball and Pick Myself Up - listen to just the rhythm of Buckingham Palace. We were just about experimenting with everything we could experiment with to take to reggae music. Whereas you find that in today’s music there isn’t a lot of experimenting. Everything is just going around - the same thing, the same thing every day - so you don’t find anything new. But Peter Tosh albums today, sometimes I sit down and listen and my mind is blown. Even when I listen back to the live shows on YouTube I’m like “Really? That was how it was going down?” Because when you’re on stage you’re just playing and you don’t really know how it sounds - I mean, my God, this is killing you know? (laughs)

You just mentioned Gwen Guthrie. Tell me about how you entered the pop music mainstream with your work with Grace Jones album Warm Leatherette (1980).



I remember before we started the Grace Jones project Chris Blackwell invited Robbie and myself to his apartment to listen to Grace’s stuff and he gave us a copy of a record. To this day we haven’t listened to another record that he gave us yet! So the session was in Nassau we went down to the studio, nobody knew what to

play and we said “We’re just going to make some music”. Everybody said “Shouldn’t we rehearse the song first before we go into the studio?” Robbie said “No, let’s go in the studio, get the vibe and let’s go cut it!” We had taken a Black Uhuru tape Sensimilla to Nassau and we played it for Chris and everyone was blown out

by the sound of Sensimilla and Alex Sadkin the engineer said “We should take this sound for the Grace Jones sound!” He listened to the tape and he had the bass sound, the drum sound, he had the direction we could go because didn’t have any concept for Grace. That was when Chris signed Black Uhuru and we went on to cut

Grace Jones.

A win-win situation

Combinations also have other aspects, such as when an established artist teams up with an aspiring talent to help his or her career. But, Jah Sun has other benefits with combinations in mind.

“Combinations are also great because it gives each artist the chance to tap into the others fan base and get more exposure. But mostly I choose to do collaborations to make my albums more interesting. Personally, I think the fans appreciate it and I get great joy working with other artists as well. So it is a win-win situation,” he concludes.

How did the session go down?

The first song we cut was Warm Leatherette and the second song of the session was my favourite song of today in the world was Private Life! So you can imagine us in the studio and this the second song! The sound was already there! All of us were playing for like the second time because we didn’t know Wally Badarou and Barry Reynolds but Mikey Chung was there, Sticky Thompson was

there and Robbie was there. Everyone thought we had been playing together for years but this was only the second time we’d played. When you listen to the track, even today, even some of the engineers in Jamaica say “Wow!” We did four albums with her and it’s been great because it was fun playing with her. I don’t know if it was because she’s Jamaican and she felt comfortable around us but it came out so great because she felt comfortable and we could relate to one another. That project and the Peter Tosh project were what really launched Robbie and myself to international status. People started looking into what we were doing and then the Black Uhuru came after and then everything came after because people were saying “This sound is great.”

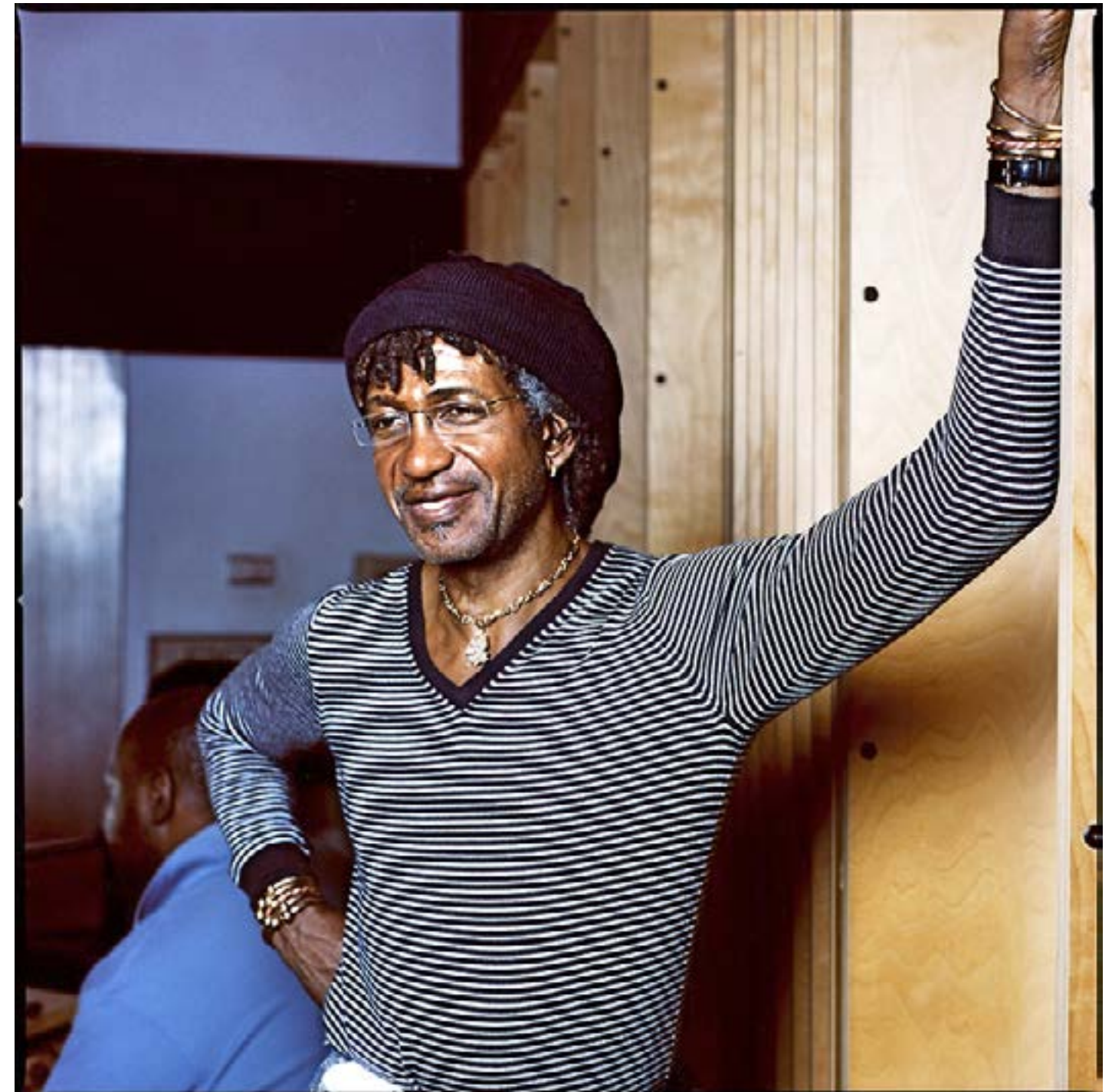
Let’s talk about Black Uhuru because your link with Michael Rose went back a long way before the albums you produced.

Michael Rose and I grew up in Waterhouse. His brother and I were good friends. They knew me from in the music industry from when I was a kid and I used to come on television and

play with Tommy McCook every Thursday on a programme called Top Ten Tunes. So everyone round there knew me and knew I was fooling around with music. I was trying to get his brother into the production side of things and his brother sang a song with my cousin where they had a little group they were trying to form. Michael used to sing in a little band but even before that we used to take Michael up to his aunt and I used to walk with them.

How did you start to work with Michael?

One day Michael came and checked me and asked me if I knew Joe died. I said “No” and he said he died in a crash! I said “Whooa” and told him “I’m at Channel One studio so feel free if you want to come and check me for any link, if I can help I will help”. He did a song for Dickie Wong on Tit For Tat called Observe Life or something like that and then he started checking me at Channel One because I was down here every day and he would come by. We did a version of Artibella which came out pretty good and I said “OK, it can work” but we didn’t record anything for a



long time because I heard they had formed this group called Black Uhuru and he did an album for Jammys which I played on but at the time I didn’t have the money to go into the producing business.

You were originally going to

produce their first album instead of Jammy’s weren’t you? But you were on tour with Peter Tosh right?

Yeah, they came back to check me and said they made it and I said “OK”. So I gave him some Earth Wind and Fire and some

other things said “Listen to these people” and he came back and started singing Plastic Smile and Shine Eye Girl and it sounded great. So we did some cover versions - a version of Let Him Go by Bob Marley to try the vocal and he did a version of Sun Is Shining too.

So we were just experimenting with things. And he came back with the sound and I said “It sounds great - now we can do some original songs” So we went back and start cutting the original stuff like Plastic Smile.

Michael’s vocal sound changed so much between his work for Niney and his work for Jammys. How did your own sound develop with Black Uhuru at that time?

We had just come back from a tour with Peter Tosh and we had been at a rock festival where the reggae was sounding so light! We wanted to get it sounding pounding like the rock’n’roll music! So when I came back instead of playing rim I started playing open snare to get some more energy from the music. Our music was a bit slower than rock’n’roll so we had to try to get some energy in it. But at the same time if you doubled the tempo you would get rock’n’roll just by flipping the snare pattern. So I decided if I could play open snare and get more energy it would start sounding tougher live. That sound developed as the Black Uhuru sound because it had this cutting edge to it rather than playing on the rim

because we were hitting hard. With Black Uhuru we got a lot of chances to do creative stuff on our own - because we were in charge so we didn’t have to listen to anybody! (laughs) We could do things our way. Like Sensimilla - everyone said it had one of the wickedest reggae patterns there is! We would start fooling around singing and playing the pattern then saying “let’s go for it!”

Having worked with the Rolling Stones and Simply Red who would you say is the bigger reggae fan out of Keith Richards and Mick Hucknall?

(big laugh)

Trick question!

(laughing) I think Keith Richards is really a reggae fan and I know Mick loves it also! I think they really appreciate reggae and they love it very much. I think all of them do because when they come to the table to work with reggae you can see their love and the expression in their face!. But another album that was good for us was the Serge Gainsbourg album - it stood up at the time but to this day I think it’s one of the best reggae albums. Even to-

day when I listen to that record it is excellent and it was done in only one week!

Let’s talk about American soul music which you’ve mentioned in the interview. You covered Al Green, got your name from Sly & The Family Stone, Marvin Gaye has figured in your work a lot of over the years from Delroy Wilson through to Bitty. Who is your greatest soul singer of all time?

Marvin Gaye and Otis Redding. I like them all but there is something about Marvin Gaye - I don’t know if it because he was a drummer! (laughs) But there is something to his songs - the way he sings effortlessly. The other day I was listening to his version of the American national anthem and then we did this version with Ken Bob of How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You.

Ken Bob’s got a great voice.

Yes he does. We were cutting this version because we are just trying to make some music people can enjoy because today in Jamaican music I don’t think a lot of people are writing very melodiously now, so

that’s kind of missing. When we used to be at Channel One and Wailing Souls used to come to the studio and they said Wailing Souls were coming today you’d know the rhythm is going to burn! They’d come with some songs you really can play! When you listen to War you can see the reflection of how I should play that song. There was no other way I could play that song because the way they sing “War in the east and war in the west” and the way I play (imitates the galloping drums) you could hear the army truck coming and the soldiers marching! This was the picture I am seeing! Today you don’t see that story anymore in the melody people sing.

Your last dub album Blackwood Dub has got a lot of critical acclaim as a “back to basics” dub record. Tell us about Alberto Blackwood and his role in inspiring the album.

Burur is like an engineer who came in as an apprentice. He’s a good friend of Robbie. Robbie brought him in and he’s been around us. I make a lot of rhythms for him so I was talking about dubs because they always love what we have done

and when they see us playing this thing live they always give praises. So we said it would be a good idea to dub it out. We went in with Mikey Chung, Robbie Lyn to Harry J’s studio and laid down the tracks and that was it (laughs). Then Robbie rolled up with an additional bassline and I did some percussion stuff. I wanted to make it sound - not like a new dub but have some of the old elements with new little things to make it sound fresh.

There are no vocals - did you decide not to add them before, during or after you laid the tracks?

We were making these dubs for a little while and when you make dub you don’t really think of vocals. Most dub albums are like vocal tracks from when they took the vocal and so we just run the rhythm tracks and put some vocal in. But this time there was no song - we were just making all this stuff up! (laughs)

In some of your concerts you start with drum and bass then bring in vocals half way through set. When people go to a roots sound they hear the vocal then they hear it

stripped but on those shows you go in reverse and build from the ground up.

We play the instrumentals and some dubs because this is when we get to really play! Because sometimes you can’t do a lot of it while the singer’s singing and you’re enjoying it so much that you don’t want to stop! (laughs) So sometimes the vocal might come in a bit late! So when they come they take the rest of the show for themselves! (laughs)

How long does it generally take from the time you arrive in the studio to tune and mic drums before recording anything?

It depends. If we have a good engineer it should take a couple of hours before you start recording because you have to mic the drums. Sometimes you have a good engineer who knows the sound that I want, so it doesn’t take a long time to get it. The drum is probably the hardest thing to get the right sound on so somebody like Stephen Stanley or Steven Stewart or Fatta Marshall will know exactly what to go for. Or Garfield or Bulby. They’ll come around and listen to the drum

sound and say “Ok, that’s fine. I know what we can do” and we just take it from there.

Let’s talk about your forthcoming album with Shaggy. You’ve worked with him on the title track of his 2004 album Clothes Drop and on your Grammy nominated album Made In Jamaica with Bob Sinclar - but what was the catalyst for working on a full album together?

I think what happened was Robbie was talking to him about how he hasn’t really done a full reggae album yet. I’d always said to myself that Shaggy should really go on some really tough hardcore reggae rhythms so Robbie suggested we cut some tracks and he’d said yeah. It was a good experience because it was the first time I’d been to his studio and then me and Robbie ran away to Japan and stopped there for a week. It was good because we laid around 30 tracks in only three days. We cut a lot of tracks and we might cut some more - it depends because we will try and wait until after the holiday period passes and then he might come back into Jamaica and try to put on some vocals and some backing

vocals with Cherine Anderson. We’re trying to get finished as soon as possible.

Shaggy said in an interview he has 200 songs he’s sitting on at any one time - what was the process like for this album? Did you tailor everything from ground up?

Yes, what he have done is tailor-made from the ground up. He’s a person who loves to cut a lot of songs but for Robbie and myself if we can’t get the hit song within 15 songs then something is wrong. Because we know the direction someone is going for and we listen to a lot of references to what is happening in the industry at the time and we also go back and listen to all his hits for what they contain. We break down the molecules of all his songs and listen out for why these songs were big hits and what caused it. Then we take ideas or we probably just take the tempo and then go to work. I might build a drum pattern or Robbie might come in with a wicked bassline or something that sounds good. Because we always go for the groove and a lot of people forget that the groove is the most important thing - the swing of the song.

I want to find that line and say “Ok this is it” and then we’re fine! (laughs)

In March Shaggy joined Robbie and Bitty McLean on stage as part of Blue Note festival in New York to celebrate 50 years of Monty Alexander. You’ve been working with Bitty on his second album with yourselves - is that done now?

Yes, I wasn’t there because my work permit didn’t come through until after the gig so I didn’t go. The album is already cut because the music was done last year. We’re just doing vocals and in the process of mixing now.

Bitty likes to mix his own albums - is he mixing it?

Yes, it’s cool what he does. I respect him very much. Great engineer, great musician, great songwriter - he’s just a good all round person.

On the last one he sang some roots direction - will he be going further in this direction? There’s a video from 2010 at Anchor of Robbie playing and Bitty singing Freddie McKay My Cup (It’s Running Over). Was this from sessions

for this album or just a jam?

I remember him singing that track and us playing but I can’t remember if we cut that track! There are so many tunes! It’s going to be right across the board but you’re right. We could take a roots rhythm and make it sound like a pop rhythm but deep down it’s roots. But what we did is just play some solid rhythms for him and he could take it from there and do anything to it - he could make a dub album from them. I think it can connect with everything. He can connect to all the rhythms. It could be a roots rhythm and he could be singing some wicked melodies on it. I think it’s going to be a great album for him. He came down to Jamaica and cut everything and everything was live.

Also you’ve been working on Brinsley Forde’s album - which has been in the making since 2008 and planned since long before.

We laid tracks for the Brinsley Forde stuff and I think he is working on it at the moment. I don’t think he has finished voicing it but as soon as he has he will probably send a cd to us

to listen to what he has done. Because everybody is busy so they have to do it in their own time. I like working and music is my life and this is how it has been for years! So it makes me comfortable when I’m around people like Bitty or Brinsley or any musician like Robbie Lyn, Nambo, Lenky, and Cherine Anderson. Once they come in and start playing and I’m just standing by the drum machine making a beat we start vibing. It makes your day feel really good because this is what you love and enjoy. You’re having fun and working at the same time.

You worked with Jimmy Riley as producer in the early 80s with on Rydim Driven (1981) and Put The People First (1982). Would you like to do another album with Jimmy or his son Tarrus maybe?

(laughs) It’s like you’re looking in a crystal ball because we are currently doing some new tracks with Jimmy Riley. Last week we were sitting there when he had done a new track and we were supposed to put on the backing vocal. He was talking about doing some showcase stuff and putting like seven or eight songs on the EP

and we were trying to pick the songs that we wanted. He has this kind of David Ruffin or Levi Stubbs voice, so we’re going to try to cover this Four Tops song Still Waters Run Deep. We started talking about it and he started singing about it and it sounded great right there because he has this big voice.

(Jimmy Riley phones)

Sorry that was Jimmy Riley! I told him we were doing an interview and the journalist just called your name - he couldn’t believe it!

I noticed when we were setting up the interview that you have an iPad - have you made much music on it?

I fool around on the iPad because I have Garageband on it. It’s just for a rough sketch because sometimes I listen to ideas and hear a couple of things and say “Hmmm, I might make something like that”. I’m always researching and searching for things and fresh ideas - anywhere, anytime! Even sometimes while doing interviews the journalist might say something about a particular track that he likes and I think “Oh if he likes it



sound and say “Ok, that’s fine. I know what we can do” and we just take it from there. I’m going to make something again like that!” (laughs)

OK, I’ll bite! I believe you are in the process of reissuing some of the Taxi singles on cd. One of my favourite tracks is Al Campbell’s Back Off With Your Cocaine which is highly prized on original Taxi 12 – any plans to put that out for the wider public?

Oh! That’s a wicked track! I have that on tape so when this interview’s done I must run it off! See? That’s what I mean. I have so many songs that sometimes people have to remind me of all these tracks!

Which drummers do you admire who are making a name

for themselves now? What do you think of say Kirk Bennett for example?

He’s good. There are a lot of good drummers now but I don’t get a chance to talk to them that much because everybody is doing their thing. There’s Squidly, and the guy that plays for Tarrus Riley and Dean, there’s Stewie, there’s a bunch of them. But it all comes down to what you’re thinking of. When I see the red light I go for it. I take chances and have like a different thing. Because I’m listening to so many things and my thing is to develop the drumming section in reggae I take everything and try to make a pattern from that. Whereas today in music everybody’s playing safe and just playing the regular one-drop. Nothing is wrong with that but when I

play the one-drop I’ll try to do things on the tom-tom when it comes to the chorus because with one-drop sometimes I think nothing is happening in the track. The singer is singing beautifully and the musicians are playing great so I don’t think the drummer should just sit there and just play the same all the way through it. If you can do something and it fits what’s happening you go for it! But I don’t know if a lot of them are scared to take the chance and are worried it won’t sound good?

What in your background makes you less worried?

When I was growing up I learned to live with a microphone and the drums. So I could go into a studio and know what I can play because the mic would sound a certain way and if it doesn’t sound a certain way I won’t because it won’t sound good. So I play the one-drop with a little swing and you have to listen to the chord progression and the tempo. Then there are certain things you can’t do in a certain tempo so I will choose the rolls I do and don’t play. I saw an article on Facebook where the guy said “All reggae drummers travel with their

drum sound but all their snare drums sound the same. Sly’s snare drum doesn’t sound like a reggae drum. This is why his sound is so different because his snare drum is different.” I try to be different but I’m not putting down other drummers because I respect all drummers and look up to them a lot. But I think for me to come to the market place and make a statement I have to find something that people will like and people will enjoy so I’m always on the searching side of things. I’m still searching, I’m looking, I listen every day for ideas, even from television.

How do you have time to watch TV?

I sleep with the television on and radio playing at the same time so that if I wake up and hear something I’ll say “Oh that sound good!” and try to remember it so I can try it later. Sometimes you just know what is and isn’t going to work. Even today, for reggae, a lot of people say it doesn’t have that feeling, that soul because I am in one little room playing and everybody else in a control room. It’s not like you’re hearing a band playing in the studio like in the days of old. So

the soul and the expression is not there. Maybe this is why a lot people don’t try different things because you cannot pressurize yourself when you are just sitting in that room. When with a band in a big room and everybody is playing all at one time you can feel it much better.

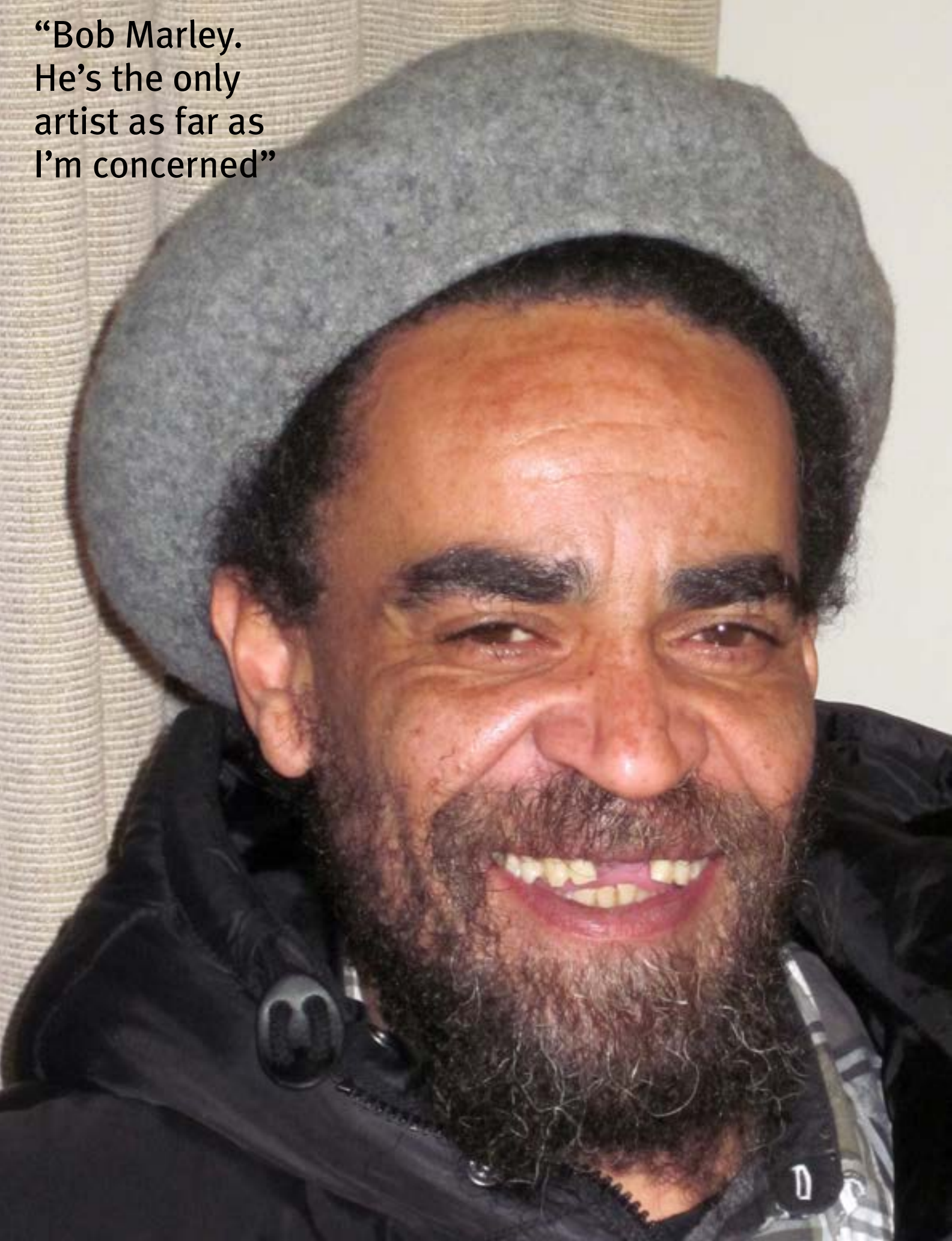
You won a Reggae Grammy in 1985 for your work with Black Uhuru on Anthem, you won a Grammy in 1999 for your album Friends, you were twice nominated in 2011. But both Stephen and Damian Marley have won Grammys for albums that sampled your rhythms. Even when something you have made is taken out of your hands it still seems to attract acclaim. Are awards important to you?

Yes, we won the first reggae Grammy with Black Uhuru and we were also nominated for an R&B album in 85. We have been nominated 9 times. Yes, it’s important to me but if I get it, I get it and if I don’t get it, I don’t get it. As long as people recognize the works out there and feel satisfied and they like them. The greatest thing for me is when somebody comes and says “I like your work”. I feel

so blessed. I makes me want to move on all the time. So people coming to me keeps me going all the time. I say “Wha? They really like it?” and it makes me want to move to the next level. I’m trying to compete with myself and climb a ladder where I can’t reach the top! I keep trying and can’t reach! (laughs)

Thanks again.

Thanks for taking the time out. It’s been a very enjoyable interview. I could go on for hours just talking. Sometimes you have an interview where the person knows the right questions to ask. Even if they don’t ask you something you can tell them what they forgot to ask. Like we haven’t even talked about Gwen Guthrie! Next time we do it we can just pick up from where we left off and do the rest!



“Bob Marley.
He’s the only
artist as far as
I’m concerned”

BROTHER CULTURE

Interview and photos by Gerard McMahon

Brother Culture is one of the UK’s most renowned reggae MCs. From his base in the bustling borough of Brixton, London, he has left his sizeable stamp on the genre across the globe. As part of the festive season’s celebrations Brother Culture hit Dublin town to heat up the tempo, with the aid of the legendary Jason’s Rootical Sound System. In between setting off fireworks in the city’s Grand Social venue - and touching the Atlantic Ocean via a trip to perform in Limerick city the following night - Brother Culture shared his considered thoughts on music and related matters with United Reggae.

Tell us about your African/Celtic origins?

My mum is from Hilltown, which is in County Down, and my dad is from Nigeria - making me half Nigerian and half Irish.

How did the MC work start back in 1982?

My (older) sister used to MC before me. Her name is Sister Culture. She was a great MC for Jah Revelation Muzik. I went to school in Africa (Nigeria), so when I came back from school - when I was 15 or 16 - I was fascinated that my sister was MC on the soundsystem and I was attracted to the whole music system. So it was through my sister really.

Are you still a member of the 12 tribes of Israel?

Yes ... to a degree. Yes, of course. It's my foundation, but I'm not a practicing member.

What has given you the greatest satisfaction in music?

The first album I made with Manasseh – the ISIS album was really great.

What has been your greatest disappointment in music?

That I haven't become huge yet.

How did you link up with Kin-yama Sounds?

I met them through a good friend of mine called Flex - who used to have a label called Flex – a 'mash ups' label. I made a 'Paragons meets Brother Culture' track with Flex and we did a lot of studio work 3\4 years ago and they were contacts of his in Switzerland. I done 2 singles for them: 'Spiritually Equipped' and 'Things to See' and then 2 years later they asked me to make an extended work with them. So I done an album with them called 'City of Vibes', that's been released as a download (in October 2011).

Are you happy with the reaction to your latest venture with them (7 track EP, City of Vibes)?

Yes, very much – very, very happy, because it was actually a project of mine where most of the songs I wrote them 20-26 years ago, that had lots of lyrics I had never

really used in my later career. So it was like going back to original Brother Culture lyrics. But people didn't really know them, they were songs I'd written but never really performed. It's all roots, no dubstep influences, because for many years I've been making lots of tunes that have got different influences. But I wanted to make a more traditional kind of roots reggae, roots rock. So I'm really happy with it.

Is the link ongoing?

Good question. To some extent, yes.

Can you tell us what you're working on right now?

Well I've just completed an album with a producer called Youth, who is a former bass player with a punk band called 'Killing Joke' and he's quite a famous producer. He was the executive producer on ISIS. Most of my stuff is released on Dragonfly records. So we've made this new album called 'Brother Culture Versus Youth'. It's basically a kind of psychedelic roots dub album with vocals. And I experimented in not writing songs with verses and



choruses like I normally do. It's more like my voice as an instrument and it's being released in Japan (early 2012) as a prerequisite to a tour we're going to do in May that's going to be in Japan and China. Also I'm working with a producer from America called Ras Kush. I've just had a release with him this year called 'Protection'. I've done a series of tunes with him, and he'll be releasing them throughout the year. I've started to work with the Prodigy again – I worked with

them about 3 years ago. So I've just recently voiced 10 new tracks for them. So hopefully they might use 1 or 2 or even 3 on their next album. There's other little projects that I'm working on. I'm trying to concentrate a lot on MCing on soundsystems again this year as opposed to doing PAs and stuff like that.

You've worked with many sound systems, bands and artists. What are your happiest memories?

Too many, so many. The first time I came to Jamaica to MC, I think it was in 1985 and I was MCing that night with Brigadier Jerry and Ambassador and MCs from all around the world. That's always been a high point.

You've performed in ~50 countries, any happy memories?

More than 50, again it's difficult (to say). It doesn't really work like that with me, because I'm happy MCing.

It doesn't really matter anymore where it is. I forget sometimes where I am. It's really irrelevant whether I'm in Reykjavik or Brazil. But it was really good, really exciting when I first went to Brazil, for the fact that it was Brazil and it was quite a unique vibes. But Mexico is my favourite place that I've ever MC'd in my life, because they're very warm and they're on a different level.

Do you want to share any bad memories with us?

I've got lots of bad memories. Lots and lots and lots of bad memories. One of them in particular is what's held me back in my career is that I've been too open with a lot of producers. And what always happens to Brother Culture is that I always meet these producers when no one knows them and they approach me when I've got a little bit of a name. But the kickback isn't much. These producers pay you a couple of hundred quid (~€250) and then tell you that you're going to get publishing and promotion when you don't really get anything tangible. I'm not an artist that works with lots of agents and managers.

I'm very organic. Most of the bookings as Brother Culture I get through contacts developed over the years. I keep the fee reasonable and I've opened the way for many U.K. roots MCs in London especially. I – Brother Culture – led the way and they all follow. But I'm very wary of giving my work to producers who I don't completely trust and respect. The excesses of the music business are also a negative for my career, maybe I've taken things I shouldn't have or drunk too much of stuff. You know, all of these kind of things, I'm human.

Who is your favourite reggae artist?

Brother Culture! No, that's easy. It's Bob Marley. He's the only artist as far as I'm concerned. In my opinion Marley is almost like Sheeba returned. The level that he reached, no artist has ever reached that. Most of these artists that you see coming nowadays are just feeding off the remnants of what Bob Marley done already. And obviously Lee Perry, King Tubby and Dennis Brown (vocally) are my all time favourites. But there's many artists, art-

ists you mightn't even know that well ... But the big ones, it has to be Bob Marley.

What has been your greatest achievement in life?

Having my children and being married to my wife.

What has been your biggest disappointment in life?

It's a hard one, because I haven't had that many disappointments. I've enjoyed my life. But maybe my biggest one is that I would have liked to have achieved more at this stage of the game. I learned the rules of the jungle too late and I'm having to play a lot of catch up.

Have you interests outside music?

Yes, very much. I like religion, studying different religions and their history (e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism) and science and the wonders of the world. I like football. I see it as a spiritual game, a bit like life. But this MC thing has engulfed most of my life.

In life, who has had the greatest influence on you?



It's interesting. I'd say my mother. Musically, philosophically – it's difficult to pin it down to one person, because you get inspiration from different people.

Do you have any remaining ambitions in life?

To live healthy, to stay fit and to achieve some more recognition from the roots

community in the U.K., because I feel that I'm being marginalised by roots snobbery by the people who put themselves in the position of gatekeepers and choose who they want to bring through.

Will you live out your life in Brixton?

There's no way of me saying that. I don't know. I couldn't

say. But probably not. I don't want to be in Brixton when I'm in my late 60s, 70s, get a little piece of land in Africa with some chickens and a few goats. That's basically my ambition, I don't have no lofty ideas. But I don't want to grow old in the U.K.

Skarra Mucci

Return Of The Ragga-muffin

Skarra Mucci's intoxicating energy drink.

Review by Erik Magni

I came across Jamaican born singjay Skarra Mucci about three years ago when I heard his take on Million Stylez' riddim Love We a Deal Wit. Skarra Mucci's cut – Everybody Bawling – was almost as great as Million Stylez' title track.

A decent album from Skarra Mucci titled 912 followed the same year. Its follow-up – the crossover hip-hop effort 'Skar-rashizzo' – was naturally a big disappointment, when it reached the street in 2010.

'Return of the Raggamuffin' is Skarra Mucci's latest album. And this time he has managed to get everything right. Almost anyway. The closing calypso track Suppa Star should have been left out.

But the other 16 tracks are way above par, and European producers such as Bizzari, Oneness and Weedy G Soundforce have made an excellent job with these riddims, including both fresh originals and relicks.

Some of the tracks are previously released, such as Jah Blessings on the solid Jaguar riddim, Love Mi fi Me the first single of Reggaeville riddim and Herberman Anthem on Hyper Slam riddim.

Skarra Mucci's energetic vocal style suits the intense and often minor key riddims perfectly. His style is at times like a deep-voiced Perfect or a more melodic Burro Banton and he has obviously studied deejay's from the early 80's to learn his craft.

Almost all of these 16 tracks would make it to the final in any contest, but the Delroy Wilson combination Movie Star, the 90's dancehall-tinged tongue twister Raggamuffin and Big Dreams, where he shows some of his rap technique, are particularly tasty.

Skarra Mucci has more than made it up for the hip-hop detour with this relentless and first-rate effort.



The Dualers

Prince Buster Shakedown

One of the UK's best kept secrets release their homage to one of the most important figures in the history of ska and rocksteady

Review by Karl Pearson

Formed in 1999 The Dualers are probably one of the UK's best kept secrets and this despite being also one the UK's true musical success stories, from busking the streets of London to performing large venues such as Croydon's Fairfield Halls, Churchill Theatre in Bromley, Kingsmeadow Stadium in Kingston, the Brentwood Centre in Essex and selling out the capital's prestigious O2 Indigo theatre 4 times. They have also tasted Top 40 UK singles charts success hitting #21 with Kiss On The Lips in October 2004 and then a year later when Truly Madly Deeply peaked at # 23.

Now they have just finished a headline slot at the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire London, as part of the London Intl Ska Festival, where they have showcased songs from their new album 'Prince Buster Shakedown'.

This album, as you may have guessed from the title, is a homage to one of their biggest influences and also one of the most important figures in the history of ska and rocksteady. The bands founder and lead singer, Tyber Craunston discovered the sounds of Prince Buster through his Dad, Bill, who throughout the 60s helped introduce ska music to the capital via his Savoy Sound System. This therefore makes this collection a highly personal one that covers both booming ska grooves with songs like Chinaman Ska, King Of Kings, Firestick and the classic Enjoy Yourself as well as the soulful rock steady sounds of Take It Easy, Orange Street and the lovers lament of Nothing Takes The Place Of You, a cover of an R&B song by Toussaint McCall, that appeared on his 1967 album 'Judge Dread Rock Steady'. There is a small touch of funky reggae as well in the shape of another cover of a cover with Jean Knight's Mr Big Stuff as Sister Big Stuff that appeared

on Buster's 1976 album of the same name.

If you are looking for interesting reinterpretations of these songs then you may be disappointed as these are straight forward covers that remain true to their original sound and style with just today's modern production techniques, performed by Sean Flowerdew and mixed by Manasseh, bringing them up to date. It is good though to see that, with the exception of Enjoy Yourself, they have shied away from covering songs that have already been done by many of the 2-Tone bands of the early 80s, so hopefully this collection will introduce people, who are not familiar with Busters work, to some new and different tunes and entice them to find out more about The Prince.

'Prince Buster Shakedown' is available now via Cherry Red Records on their ska imprint Phoenix City.



Various Artists

Listen to the Music: Caltone's Jamaican 45's 1966-69



Another set of vintage rarities on Pressure Sounds.

Review by Erik Magni

UK reissue label Pressure Sounds has started the year in an old school vintage reggae style. First it was a compilation with early reggae scorchers produced by Lee Perry. Now the label has reissued a second collection of tunes from Blondel Keith Calneck, aka Ken Lack, and his group of labels, including Shock, Jontom and Caltone.

'Listen to the Music: Caltone's Jamaican 45's 1966-69' collects 21 tunes covering frantic ska, up-tempo early reggae and elegant, classy rocksteady. A few straight forward R&B and Sam Cooke influenced tunes from The Uniques are also included. Ken Lack was a business man with a keen interest in music and is not one of the more well-known producers in the history of reggae music, but thanks to the Pressure Sounds compilation Safe

Travel – released in 2005 – he has received some very well-deserved attention. Bunny Lee and Phil Pratt handled most of the hands-on production on his recordings with input from Trinitobagoan guitarist Lynn Taitt, saxophonist Tommy McCook and trumpeter Johnny Moore.

One of the better known singles from the Ken Lack camp is The Heptones' Gunmen Coming to Town, a tune that borrows its melody from the William Tell Overture.

Ken Lack worked extensively with Tommy McCook, and his saxophone is present on many of the tunes. And the horn arrangements are classy and tasteful throughout the compilation.

Standouts among the vocals cuts are The Clarendonians' – with the extraordinary talent of Peter Austin taking lead – I'm

Sorry, Devon & The Tartans' Making Love and Alva Lewis & Lynn Taitt's Return Home. The harmonies are excellent and so are the musicianship with outstanding lead guitar and shuffling organ work.

'Listen to the Music' is currently available on CD, double LP and digital download and includes excellent liner notes courtesy of Pressure Sounds' founder and director Pete Holdsworth.

Cool Runnings

Cool Runnings

The finest explosion in Bristol yet.



Review by Karl Pearson

Having had glimpses of Cool Runnings via Bristol Archive Records excellent 'Bristol Reggae Explosion' series it is finally great to hear them on an album in their own rights. Cool Runnings were one of Bristol's longest lasting reggae bands with a career that spanned twelve years including the entire 1980s. During this time Robin Hoods Of The Ghetto was inexplicably the only cut to ever see a proper release. The rest of this album is therefore made up of tracks recorded between 1983 and 1985 at various local studios with a couple of live tracks, Lawman and You Can't Pay Me thrown in for good measure, which help highlight why the band had great appeal as a live experience.

Their sound is somewhat located at the lighter end of reg-

gae, towards the Lovers Rock market, which fits the soulful style of vocalist Winston Minott like a glove, just check out the smoothness of album closer Last Train. This style and their multiculturalism is bound to draw comparisons with UB40 but the vibe I get from is much more akin to that of Gregory 'The Cool Ruler' Isaacs and just like Gregory they can belt out a good rootsy tune as well, as is proved by the repatriationish cry of We Must Go Home, the serene Children Of Zion and of course the aforementioned, brass backed, Robin Hoods Of The Ghetto.

Reasons as to why more of Cool Runnings work has never seen the light of day until now are beyond me, but it is with big thanks to keyboardist Mark Tuck and guitarist George Condoover who originally formed the band and who have held

onto the various master tapes that we are able to enjoy them now, twenty years after they split and went their separate ways. Perhaps with better / proper management and wider exposure they may have achieved more success back then, there is no doubt in my mind that their sound would have been very commercial for that time, but for whatever reason at least Bristol Archive Records have come up trumps again to fill in another missing piece of Bristol's cool reggae musical heritage.

Nazarenes Meditation

Skillful harmonizing on the Nazarenes' fourth album.

Review by Erik Magni

Ethiopian brothers Noah and Medhane Tewolde are known as the vocal and multi-instrumentalist duo Nazarenes, a duo that has been based in Sweden for many years.

They established themselves in 2001 with their self-produced debut album 'Orit'. Their breakthrough came three years later with the acclaimed set 'Songs of Life', a set followed by 'Rock Firm' in 2008.

Now the Tewolde brothers are back. Back in full swing with an album produced by Tippy I of Virgin Islands-label I Grade, a label known for working closely with Vaughn Benjamin and Midnite.

The first collaboration between the Nazarenes and Tippy I was the single Everlasting which was included on the various artists' compilation 'Joyful Noise' put out in 2009.

On 'Meditation' the Naza-

renes have made an album that confirms just how great roots reggae can sound in 2012. 'Meditation' is reggae in the same school as excellent vocal harmony groups like The Meditations or The Mighty Diamonds. And hearing these two brothers sing together is a soulful experience.

'Meditation' re-uses some of the riddims used for previous Tippy I productions, and if you're familiar with Jahdan Blakkamoore's 'Babylon Nightmare', Toussaint's 'Black Gold' or Perfect's 'Back for the First Time' you'll most likely enjoy tunes such as Mamy Blues, Everlasting and Lonesome Lady.

But there are also a number of new riddims. The dreamy Alive is one such, Politrickcians, in a UK dub style, is another.

Several of the songs come close to pop and rock arrangements and Get Together will probably make Chris Martin of Coldplay proud with its catchy sing-a-long chorus. It sounds



like it's made for playing at large festivals or stadiums.

The Nazarenes might have a long way until they've achieved a following as big as Coldplay, but if Noah and Medhane Tewolde keep making music as good as Meditation it's just a matter of time until they play at Glastonbury or Madison Square Garden.

Lloyd de Meza Back To Eden

A solid reggae debut from Lloyd de Meza.

Review by Erik Magni

Dutch soul singer Lloyd de Meza has teamed up with his compatriots in production crew Not Easy At All Productions and label JahSolidRock. The result is his love-infused debut reggae album 'Back to Eden', a set based on the rootsy rock-solid backing that has previously provided the foundation for albums by Chezidek, Apple Gabriel and Earl Sixteen.

One of Lloyd de Meza's first takes on voicing reggae was Part of My Life included on the various artists' compilation 'Cultural Vibes Vol. 1' put out in late 2010. Previously he has released several hit singles in the contemporary soul/R&B vein in his native language.

Apparently Lloyd de Meza started to record reggae by accident. He dropped by the JahSolidRock studio, enjoyed what he heard – pounding bass lines, groovy drum patterns and melodic horns – and voiced one riddim after another.

Lie to Me was the first single from 'Back to Eden' and dropped about a year ago. It contained some wicked clavinet work and a catchy chorus. The album is in the same strong vein, and particular highlights include the three combinations Back to Eden, Mama and City of Love with Joggo, Richie Spice and Kinah, a female singer I'd love to hear more from.

'Back to Eden' shows once again that the combination of Not Easy At All Productions and JahSolidRock works very well, and I hope they will start building new riddims soon, since this is the fourth set that uses more or less the same riddims. However, I can't say I'm tired of them yet.



Movie

Marley Movie

Kevin McDonald has done a fine job of celebrating Marley's legacy on the big screen..

Review by David Katz

Kevin McDonald's feature-length Bob Marley bio-pic has a lot going for it. A sensitively rendered exploration of the life and work of Jamaica's most famous son, it presents the public with a lot of different viewpoints of the man, mostly rendered through first-hand interviews conducted with those that knew him best. There is some appealing archive footage as well (though some ancient material suffers from poor visual and audio quality, having degraded over time), and there are excellently executed visuals, some shot from above, which remind just how beautiful—and dangerous—much of Jamaica actually is. Though a few errors and questionable assertions form niggling annoyances, it is a fine film overall that is basically required viewing for Marley fans and anyone interested in Jamaican music and culture.

The film begins at 'the door of no return' in the West African slave fort from which countless

souls were shipped across the Atlantic, the ancestors of Marley's mother's side of the family among them. Soon we are flying over Jamaica's incredibly dense tropical wilderness, landing in Nine Miles, St Ann, to check the circumstances of Marley's birth in 1945; the facts are that his teenaged black mother was made pregnant by a womanising, self-mythologizing white man already in his mid-60s. The film's first false move comes up here: a supposed cousin of Bob Marley tells us that his father, Norval Marley, was a white man 'from England', when he was in fact a mixed-race Jamaican, and surely the on-screen narrative, provided by subtitles, should have corrected this mistake. Next, a nephew of Norval tells us that he fought in some war overseas, but the narration claims there is 'no evidence to support the assertion'—well, OK, but what else do we actually know about Norval Marley? Not much, apparently, because the film never really tells us anything more about him. We are later introduced to Bob



Marley's half-sister, who met his wife Rita while working at a local dry cleaners; her testimony is fascinating, and says a lot about race and class in Jamaica, but then here comes another clunker: former manager and friend Alan 'Skill' Cole suggests that the song 'Cornerstone' is about Bob's rejection by his father's side of the family, and the song is played to the half-sister, who never heard it before, as a statement of gravity, but anyone familiar with the song will surely know that it is delivered as a boastful ballad to a scorned lover. So some of Marley's assertions are off the mark, but these are minor quibbles, compared to the many positive aspects.

The meat of the film is served up in fantastic quotes from Bunny Wailer, Rita Marley, and art director Neville Garrick, with other fascinating cameos

by producer/manager Danny Sims, bassist Aston 'Family Man' Barrett, singer Marcia Griffiths, guitarist Junior Marvin, singer Dudley Sibley and Lloyd 'Bread' McDonald of the Wailing Souls. The sections of archive interview material with Bob Marley are also well chosen, as is the brief moment when Peter Tosh describes why he left the Wailers. Live footage reminds how brilliant the Wailers always were on stage (and how lacking most contemporary artists are today). The film generally does a good job of showing Marley's slow rise to fame, and the terrible responsibilities that came with it, such as the attempt on Marley's life in 1976 that forced him into a long exile, and the chaos of his live appearances before heads of state in Zimbabwe and Gabon. His commitment to Rastafari is touched upon, but not made a central focus.

One of the things I really appreciated about the film were the portions with Marley's son Ziggy and daughter Cedella, who both mention some aspects

of his deficient parenting. Cedella speaks disparagingly of his infidelities, and both say his competitiveness extended even to his relations with his kids. It points to certain failings of this incomparable icon, which help to remind that he was human, after all, despite his extraordinary qualities.

Throughout it all, we get the sense that Marley was always aware of the bigger picture, and saw his music as a vehicle to better mankind, rather than a spaceship for an ego trip. Chris Blackwell comes across as well-meaning and committed to getting Marley and the Wailers to the widest possible audience, though his assertion that Marley would probably still be alive today had he not 'forgotten' to insist that Marley obtain regular medical check-ups following the initial surgery to his cancerous toe, seems mightily strange when pondered in retrospect (though I do not doubt the veracity of his statement). The death and funeral of Marley are handled sensitively, and I liked that the film ended with

images of children in different parts of the world singing the songs of Marley, as it reminds how his music has struck something of a universal chord.

Considering that the film draws together entities that are not necessarily on speaking terms, and since several high-calibre directors, including Martin Scorsese and Jonathan Demme, bailed out years ago, Kevin McDonald has done a fine job of celebrating Marley's legacy on the big screen. It may not be perfect, but you are guaranteed to feel good when you are exiting the cinema, and you will certainly learn more about the life and times of Bob Marley during the two and a half hours of the film's duration.

Hollie Cook

Prince Fatty Presents Hollie Cook in Dub

A scarily tasty dub album from Hollie Cook.

Review by Erik Magni

One of last year's many musical highlights was Hollie Cook's truly enjoyable self-titled debut album recorded under the tutelage and supervision of the mighty Mike Pelanconi aka Prince Fatty, a British producer and engineer specialized in old school recording techniques.

Prince Fatty has now dubbed her debut album to the bone with extra bass and echo-laid instrumentation and Hollie Cook's enchanting and dreamy vocals floating in and out of the mix.

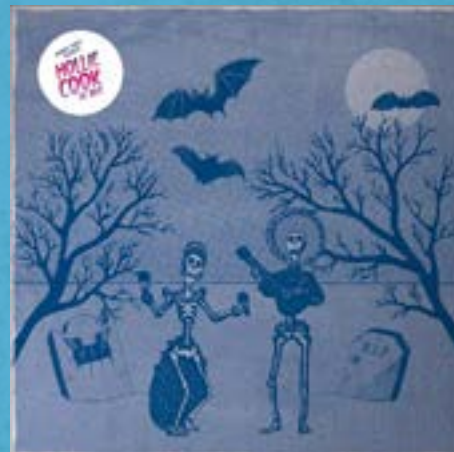
'Prince Fatty Presents Hollie Cook in Dub' has a slightly different track listing compared to the original album and adds fascinating versions of swing harmony singing

group The Andrew Sisters' Bei Mir Bist du Schon [For Me You Are Dub] and The Whispers' funky disco hit And the Beat Goes On along with her own already made classics Milk & Honey and That Very Night.

The dub versions of the tracks highlight some of the instrumentation that was in the background on the original vocal versions. You are hit by pounding percussion, smooth organ work, fine-tuned melodica and beautiful horn arrangements.

Prince Fatty has yet again managed to put out another scorcher, and even though this album is made with vintage recording and mixing equipment and techniques its ideas and influences are very much forward-thinking.

'Prince Fatty Presents Hollie Cook in Dub' is available on CD, LP and digital download. Go get yourself a copy now.



Romain Virgo

The System

More of the same from Romain Virgo.

Review by Erik Magni

Jamaican sweetheart Romain Virgo is back with his second album, the follow-up to his much acclaimed self-titled debut album from two years back, released when he was only 20 years old.

'The System' has been preceded by several strong tunes, among them Wha Dis Pon Me on the Go Fi Her riddim and the infectious first single I Am Rich In Love.

It collects 15 songs tuned both in a lovers mood as well as a more conscious one, with titles such as Food Fi the Plate and Broken Heart.

Recorded mostly at the famous Donovan Germain-owned Penthouse studio in Jamaica and with production helmed by Shane Brown, Niko Browne,

Vikings and Donovan Germain himself, 'The System' is destined to be a first-class set.

And it is, even though Romain Virgo repeats himself. 'The System' is cooked according to the same tasty recipe as his debut, which means powerful energetic vocals on top of contemporary well-produced one drop riddims.

Standout cuts include the smooth rub a dub feeling of Fired Up Inside on a relick of the Beat Down Babylon riddim made famous by Junior Byles, Another Day, Another Dollar with a gentle saxophone courtesy of Dean Fraser and the pop masterpiece Ray of Sunshine, with a synthesizer that would have made P-funk veteran George Clinton of Funkadelic and Parliament proud.

'The System' will probably

not win any awards for being the most unique or innovative album in 2012, but it contains enough strong melodies and captivating vocals to keep me interested.



Zacharri and Roommate

Rootstep

San Francisco and Jamaica unite with reggae and dubstep.

Review by Tomas Palermo

San Francisco has long been fertile ground for both reggae and dubstep. Reggae dance nights like Club Dread and Dub Mission have proffered roots vibes for decades, while producers like DJG, Djunya and Babylon System made their mark internationally early in dubstep's evolution with essential, bass-heavy plates. So it's easy to see why San Francisco's Justin "Roommate" McCauley's new album with Jamaica's Ras Zacharri came together so seamlessly.

McCauley, one half of dubstep production team Babylon System, has been releasing reggae-influenced tracks like Dancing Shoes and Rudeboy Shuffle since 2007 in addition to recording Jamaican artists such as Bushman, Lutan Fyah and Brother Culture at studios

in SF and London. He linked with Jamaican singjay Ras Zacharri in 2011 and quickly recorded a dozen tracks that comprise 'Rootstep', which also features vocals from Junior Kelly, Chezidek and lovers rock legend Susan Cadogan.

The strength of 'Rootstep' is how smoothly its reggae foundation meshes with the album's modern bass sounds. True to its title, traditional roots elements (lhorn flourishes, guitar chops, keyboard and organ stabs) are laid over weighty deep-frequency bass riffs and an undulating, 70-beats-per-minute dubstep groove.

Zacharri's vocal approach is gruff and resolute, similar to Capleton, Buju or Mega Banton, with a wholly conscious lyrical concern. Songs like Jah Rule and Sting Dem make it clear that only Selassie-I

guides Zacharri's decisions. One of the highlights, Gather Your Strength, is sprinkled with organ licks, fiery brass, studio effects and an enormous steam-rolling bass pattern that will put speaker boxes to the test, with Zacharri's militant but righteous chants leading the charge. The album is not just a step but a leap forward.



Anthony B

Freedom Fighter

The best Anthony B album out of Europe since Black Star with Frenchie in 2005.

Review by Angus Taylor

In recent times Jamaican artists have found the propulsive, rootsy but vaguely contemporary rhythms of Austria's Irievibrations a very good fit. 'Born Dead With Life', their album with Perfect, was one of the latter half of the last decade's highlights; 2011's 'Rub A Dub Market' with Luciano was solid enough; and now they have met their match in another 90s veteran - the deejay Anthony B. In a year when Jamaican reggae (the rumours of whose death were always exaggerated) stood up with longplayers by Busy Signal, Tarrus Riley and Romain Virgo, 'Freedom Fighter' is an international collaboration of comparable class.

Starting with minor key calls to attention and ending with major key upliftment, these crisply-produced, summery horn-drenched roots pieces with tasteful hip-hop ingredients, showcase Anthony's striking voice and evocative

lyrical imagery. Only the word-smith from Trelawny could use the verb "gallivant" in the Soul Rebel-inspired title song and it not feel out of place. There are expansive messages of autonomy (Born To Be Free), community (Same Boat) and positivity in the face of suffering (Cry Blood) that will resonate at both a sound system dance or a European summer festival. Yet despite sounding more genial and laid-back these days, lyrically he is still as much Peter as Bob (who he invokes again towards the end of the record for Defend My Own). The rights of the poor and the abuse of the power of the police are recurring themes. And there is sour medicine for liberal-progressives in his disavowal of evolution during the hip-hop flavoured, library sfx littered No One Knows Tomorrow.

Soul Rebel aside, the Austrians have a habit of sailing deliberately close to foundation backings without fully relicking them. The bouncy Born To



Be Free takes elements of Letter To Zion while their now familiar Jungle Skunk rhythm is a simplified edit of the classic BB Seaton/Sly & Robbie I Know Myself (recut by a fellow European fan of Mr B, Frenchie). But room is also made for funky, organic dancehall in single Beat Dem Bad featuring another friend of the producers, Konshens, who has a set with the label in the works...

A quibble with Anthony's albums is that his visceral yet rather unmelodic delivery can sound wearing when stretched across a full length disc. Here this is no issue, thanks to his judicious choice of singing parts and the quality of the production - the vocals softened and not particularly forward in the mix. With his usual strong songwriting and lyrics matched to well chosen rhythms, this is the best Anthony B album out of Europe since 'Black Star' with Frenchie in 2005.

Tarrus Riley and Dean Fraser in Paris

Report and photos by Franck Blanquin

Tarrus Riley is actually on tour in Europe with Dean Fraser and the BLAKSOIL band. They were in Paris on April 18th where they played his hits such as She's Royal, Superman, Wild Fire and many others. French artists Taïro joined Tarrus on stage to perform his song Bonne Weed on the Good Girl Gone Bad riddim. They offered a very good show, full of energy and great battles between Tarrus' voice and Dean's saxophone.



Rootz Underground in San Francisco

Report by Ali Abel and photos by
Lee Abel

On Stage or Back-stage, Always Upfull and Playful.

The crowd could barely contain their enthusiasm for Rootz Underground April 5th as they once again returned to the San Francisco Bay Area on their 2012 tour. With new songs and itinually positive attitudes, the boys shined and brought the crowd to a standing ovation. It was a night to remember, always.



Marley Movie Premiere in Kingston

Report and photos by Steve James

The movie about Bob Marley was premiered in Kingston at Emancipation Park on April 19.

The documentary ‘Marley’ was recently premiered in Emancipation Park, Kingston. The event, which was free and open to the public, attracted thousands of patrons who came to see the latest film. Marley, which is directed by Kevin MacDonald, filled in the gaps to several unanswered questions for music lovers and people who have been following the life of one of Jamaica’s greatest reggae icons. The film highlighted some areas never publicly seen before, for example pictures of his visit to Germany for treatment and interviews with the doctor and nurse who treated him. It also showed interviews with close friends and associates of Bob Marley such as Neville Garrick, Alan ‘Skill’

Cole, Chris Blackwell, the I-Threes and more.

More than any other film previously released, this one tried to portray the type of person Bob Marley really was. Emancipation Park was filled with foreign and local media, members of the Rastafarian community and members of the Marley family. The walkway from the statues at Emancipation Park leading inside the venue was lined with red, green and gold. This did not go down too well with some members of the Rastafarian community and created a bit of controversy. However, when the film started all eyes were glued to the main screen and the other big screens located in the park. In the end it was a proud moment for all to see this man who rose from a humble beginning in Nine Miles, St. Ann. If you are a fan of reggae music or Bob Marley this documentary is a must see.



Tarrus Riley in Antwerp

Report and photos by Andrew Thompson

Tarrus Riley, Dean Fraser and the BLAK SOIL band live at Petrol in Antwerp, Belgium on April 21. Report!

“Tarrus Riley, he’s a young Jamaican with a magnificent message of love, which he’s been spreading globally both on stage and record. He has upheld the traditions of real authentic reggae music with his songs of hope and conciliation. Both for his own country, Jamaica and for the world. With the sad vaguest negativity surrounding elements of Jamaican music in recent years, he has stood out as a beacon of hope.” - David Rodigan.

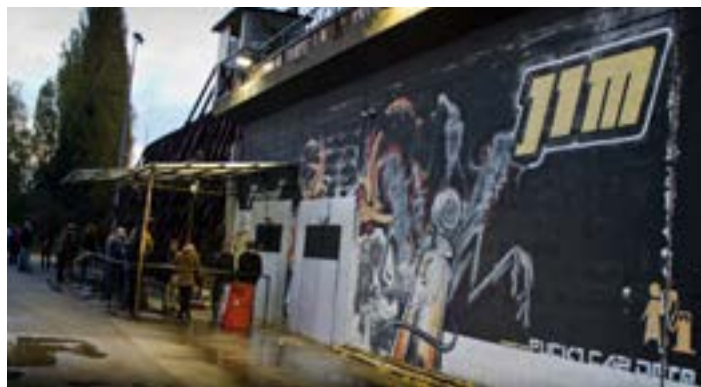
Tarrus Riley, Dean Fraser and the BLAK SOIL band visited Petrol in Antwerp, Belgium as part of their European tour. This was the only show in Belgium and was one not to be missed!

We arrived early at the venue to find there was already a queue of eager fans gathered outside. It was my first time to see Tarrus Riley live, and having been an avid fan of his music for a long time, I myself, along with the other fans, were very excited to finally see the man himself. Initially we had a few problems getting into the venue, however the owner helped us out and we were in! As we entered the first room, there was an easy going, chilled out vibe, with a mix of reggae tunes playing, with sound

system from I & I Sound. Drinks and food were on offer and people casually chatted. It soon filled up, and before long the main room was open and Mr Dean Fraser and the BLAK SOIL band were warming up the crowd. The anticipation grew, until finally Tarrus lept onto the stage, bounding with energy going straight into ‘Shaka Zulu’. He immediately greeted amazed fans that were buzzing from the upbeat entrance, by grabbing their hands, and getting up close. Before you knew it Tarrus was on to ‘Love’s Contagious’, with the crowd going crazy for every hint and sample of the next song coming “Now this one is called, the skate land killer!”. I couldn’t help feeding off the energy and buzz that filled the venue, and the capturing voice of Tarrus.

Tarrus’ interaction with his fans was undoubtedly the best I’ve seen. He projected himself as very humble, and gracious. In a recent interview with United Reggae, Tarrus explained “I’m the biggest fan of my fans! I really am. The fans make the music go on. They come to the concert and buy the records. The fans are family. Fans make Tarrus Riley. Fans make Omar Riley into Tarrus Riley.” This truly reflects how he interacted with his fans throughout the evening show and after party.

I then heard what I thought was a sample from a Michael Jackson song, I looked over at my partner to see her reaction and she was pointing at the stage where Tarrus was moon walking from one side to another. The crowd loved it and joined in word for word with Tarrus for his cover of ‘Human Nature’.



Western Consciousness 2012

Report and photos by Steve James

The event took place in Westmoreland, Jamaican on April 14th.

One of the most conscious reggae concerts on our local calendar, Western Consciousness was recently held at Paradise Park, Westmoreland. Though most of the island received rainfall throughout the day this did not dampen the performances of the artistes. The line-up of artistes was stellar and among those who had the crowd in an uproar were Jah 9, C-Sharp band, Duane Stephenson, Uprising Roots, Prophecy and Capleton. Accompanied by over thirteen British reggae musicians, King Sounds and the Reggae Reggae Sauce Man Levi Roots brought a bit of English flavour to the night.

The queen of reggae Marcia Griffiths, who was dressed in full white, was not to be outdone and was one of the big crowd pleasers. Singer Beres Hammond was his usual self and had the crowd and all the ladies rocking to his every note. During his set he invited Marcia Griffiths back on stage where they did their popular duet Live On. At the end of his performance, president of the Jamaica Broadcasting Commission Cordell Green presented Mr. Hammond with a proclamation from the City of Mount Vernon, New York. Despite the low turnout, Western Consciousness continues to be a great show that seeks to promote positivity in reggae music.





Reggae Splash Tour

Report and photos by Emmy Lou Mai

Wayne Wonder, I-Octane, Queen Ifrica, Richie Spice, Busy Signal, Bounty Killer, Anthony B, Young Chang Mc and Admiral T in Paris

On May 16th, Garance Productions provided us with a show in Paris with an incredible line-up: some reggae, some dancehall, a lot of talent

from yard, a sprinkling of French artists, some top veterans and some new rookies - something for each and everyone's ears.

Wayne Wonder, I-Octane, Queen Ifrica, Richie Spice, Young Chang Mc, Admiral T, Busy Signal, Bounty Killer and Anthony B were on stage: some were better than other, some more generous and charismatic, but as far as I was concerned, it was a great show. Check out the photos!





I-Wayne Reveals his Top Tunes

Report & Photos by Arig Idris

“Revolution from Dennis Brown is definitely a inspiring song, especially in this last days”

I-Wayne is well known for his criticism of the slackness (or nastiness as he calls it) in the music industry and for his love about the topic he dedicates most of his songs to - life.

With his uncompromising stance towards the commercialization of music he inspires fans worldwide. Arig Idris met him at his favorite place in Portmore, just a few steps away from his yard, to ask him about which songs and artists that inspire him. I-Wayne also shared which of his own songs that means the most to him.

Sizzla Kalonji - Black Woman & Child (1997)

“When I first hear this one I just loved the way he spoke about the empress dem. Big, big, big tune! Uplifting women is something I make sure to do in my music aswell. You see how dem portray women in the slacknessmusic, with them nastiness? I-Wayne would never do that.”

Dennis Brown - Revolution (1984)

“First of all the melody is really, really good. But apart from that, the lyrics are life teachings also. When him sing “Do you know what it means to have a revolution? (...) Are you ready to stand up and fight it just like soldiers? Many are called,

few are chosen.” Definitely a inspiring song, especially in this last days. This is a crucial time and people need to wake up.”

Sade - By Your Side (2000)

“One of my favorite songs about love and one of the few truly genuine songs. The part when she sing “You think I’d leave your side baby? You know me better than that. You think I’d leave you down when you’re down on your knees? I wouldn’t do that.” It touches me because it sounds so sincere. It’s a beautiful feeling when you feel that way about a person - you know I’m here for you, no matter what. Real artist, real lyrics.”

Even though I-Wayne loves his songs “like him youth dem” there are still a few songs that are a little bit more dear and special to him.

Living in Love (2005)

“This song here now is the first song from I-Wayne that people really start recognize and embrace. Even though it’s a powerful song that blaze fire and have some serious lyrics it gain a lot of success out there. I know a lot of people disliked it because of the way I’m burning the fire but my righteous people embraced and loved it.”

Book of Life (2007)

“Babylon, or babywrong, are trying to tear up



the pages in the book of life so they can create their own book. These are the things that we as righteous people have to stand up and fight against. That’s what I’m trying to encourage and share with my listeners. Remember that whatever you do should be true.”

Ready Fi Live Up (2005)

“Ready fi live up is about the empress that is gravitating more and more towards righteousness, and I love it. She ready fi live up now mi seh! The feeling you have when you finally meet someone with the same values and interests as you, that is what the song is about. It’s like me singing about it and rejoicing over that! It’s like she come to a stage when she is ready to embrace the righteous rasta livity because “she know the slack livin it not all that”. I love to see those type of women, or empresses as I would call them.”

Bankie Banx and The Dune Preserve... Just Cool!



Report by Emmanuelle Bourlas & Photos by Christian Bordey

Bankie Banx is an Anguillian singer, songwriter and musician with a twist!

Born Clement Ashley Banks in 1953 on the beautiful island of Anguilla, Bankie Banx is a singer, songwriter and musician.. With a twist!

He basically started music in the 60's when he built his first guitar, formed his band The Roots & Herbs and released his first album in the 70's. He toured the world in the 80's and worked with musicians all around the world.

He then moved back to Anguilla in the 90's and created the Moonsplash Festival at The Dune Preserve, a special place on Rendez-Vous Bay, 'a slice of land' that his mom and dad bought 60 years ago, that is now surrounded by some of the most luxurious hotels in the world. The Dune Preserve is as eclectic as Bankie's music, it's a mix of natural elements, in harmony with nature with a rebel state of mind. And Bankie would call his musician friends at Moonsplash. Just to name a few: Cat Coore, Junior Jazz, Sugar Minott, Gregory Isaacs, Jah Cure, Buju Banton, Steel Pulse and many more.

Bankie's music is a mix of genres and vibes, different influences as country music, jazz music.. Orreggae. 'Just Cool', his latest album released in

January, features musicians such as Glen Brown, Sly Dunbar, Robbie Lyn, Stephen 'Cat' Coore.

We were fortunate enough to meet with Bankie at The Dune for a 7am photoshoot with Christian Bordey, check out the pictures.



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!**

Conception, design and creation

Xavier Simacourbe & Camille Monchicourt

Special thanks to:

All United Reggae authors and photographers from all over the world : Ali Abel, Angus Taylor, Andrew Thompson, Anna Thunander, Anthea McGibbon, Ari Sandoval, Arig Idris, Aude-Emilie Dorion, Barbara Blake Hannah, Bartek Muracki, Benjamin Delong, Benjamin Peronne, Catherine Fearon, Charlie Pelham, Christian Bordey, Claudia Berthier, Colin McGuire, Cree, Daddy Matty, David Katz, Davina Hamilton, Demian Hartmann, Doug Heselgrave, Ed Kapp, Emmanuel Parata, Emmanuelle Bourlas, Erik Magni, Flavio Oliveira, Franck Blanquin, Frederic Weinum, Gail Zucker, Geoffrey Philp, Gerard McMahon, Gibsy, Greg Ward, Guillaume Huyard, Horace Campbell, Irie Dole, Ishangophotos, Jan Salzman, Jennyfer Papin, Jerome Forney, Jessica Dore, John Fenwick, Karl Pearson, Kokumo, Kuakea Ali'i, Laura Forcucci, Laura Gardner, Lee Abel, Max-Him, Maral Amiri, Marc Ismail, Marc Marino, Martial Labarthe, Martin Monchicourt, McClain Johnson, Michael Grein, Mick Sleeper, Nadia Bestjamaica, Norman Darwen, Paco Van Leeuwen, Phunked-up Photography, Randolph Fisher, Ras Achis, Sarah Soutar, Sista Irie, Siobhan Jones, Steve James, Susan De Leon, Tom Orr, Tomas Palermo, Valentin Zill, Veronique Skelsey, Viktoria Spratter and Zapo, our partners and all those who help us spreading reggae vibes **every day**.

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