

UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE
#12 - October 2011

Queen Ifrica *INTERVIEW*

**FRANZ JOB
SOLO BANTON
DAWEH CONGO
JOHNNY CLARKE
JUNIOR MURVIN
DON CORLEON, *PRESSURE AND PROTOJE***

Sugar Minott - Dennis Brown - Peter Tosh - Tony Rebel
J-Boog - Ce'Cile - Ruff Scott - I-Wayne - Yabass - Raging Fyah
Bunny Lee and The Agrovators - Sly and Robbie - Junior Reid

★ EDITORIAL by Erik Magni



Discover new music

In the heydays of music magazines in the 90’s and early 2000’s getting a complimentary music CD was a regular pleasure. I for one found several new artists and groups due to this promotional tool. Since then the music and publishing businesses have radically changed. Consumers have taken their reading and listening habits online and this has lead to a dramatic decrease in sold physical units. Several labels and media houses are struggling to stay alive.

The main ingredient in the new business models and strategies is going digital – offering your music or articles on a number of platforms as well as meeting consumers on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and other popular places. And this shift in strategy has paid off for the labels. According to IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) digital revenues was last year up six per cent to US\$4.6 billion accounting for 29 per cent of record companies’ trade revenues in 2010. Services such as Spotify, Deezer and iTunes are helping the shift from physical to digital. United Reggae now follows in the same footsteps and we are proud to offer a digital music sampler together with this issue. The sampler contains songs from several of the artists that are covered in this twelfth issue and you can choose to stream or download it.

I hope that you can – just like I did in the 90’s – discover new music from new artists.

Enjoy!

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Ras Kwasi Presents Bun Babylon Oppression

Heavy Reggae heads should be well pleased when they get a glance at the roster of artists to be found on 'Bun Babylon Oppression', the latest project from esteemed producer 'Da Gold Moor', Ras Kwasi. This wicked compilation features large efforts from some of the most skillful lights currently on the Roots Reggae scene, all singing songs aimed at chanting down corruption and uplifting the oppressed populations of the world.

Like who? Lutan Fyah, Natural Black, the oft-overlooked, but extremely talented Determine, Selah I and even veteran Utan Green all impress on Bun Babylon Oppression with excellent tunes (especially check Determine's sizable opener, Unite Africa). But really taking over on the album is the incomparable Yami Bolo whose two original selections Blood Diamonds and Bloody Coltan are amongst the finest sets to be found on the entire album. Also, be sure to check that the album reaches its end with dubbed out versions of several of the tracks which, again, are sure to grab the attention of well established fans.

Surely you're interested by now, so don't hesitate. 'Ras Kwasi Presents: Bun Babylon Oppression' is available on CD

and in digital stores right now through Basis Interactive Inc.

Rebel Lover Boy by Franz Job



Trinibagoan singer and London-resident Franz Job has teamed up with Necessary Mayhem-producer Curtis Lynch for his new five track EP titled 'Rebel Lover Boy'.

Franz Job is no rookie in the music business and has also recorded for Curtis Lynch previously.

In 2009 Franz Job dropped his very worthwhile debut album 'Babylon is Dead', a set that included dub mixes courtesy of Dougie Conscious.

Earlier this year Franz Job voiced two riddims produced by Curtis Lynch. The Mr. Williamz duet Viva Marijuana on the Gorilla riddim and Special Lover on a relick of the Pass the Kutchie/Full Up riddim.

Special Lover is also included on 'Rebel Lover Boy', a set that

drops on October 4th as digital download.

Ariwa Sounds Back to Africa Music Festival

From humble beginnings in the front room of 19 Bruce Road in the south London suburb of Thornton Heath, Neil Fraser, or the Mad Professor as he is better known, has built Ariwa Sounds into one of reggae's most successful and influential labels of recent times.

The label is now reaching its 30th anniversary and to celebrate this event will be holding the Back to Africa Music Festival in The Gambia from Friday January 20th to Wednesday January 25th next year at the sea side resort of Batukunku in the south of the country.

The Mad Professor has worked on many types of Reggae genres during this time so expect to hear Dub, Dubstep, Lovers Rock, Dancehall and Roots & Culture by a variety of artists like Turbulence, Macka B, Tippa Irie, Earl 16, Aisha, Levi Roots, The Robotiks, Brinsley Ford, the Mad Professor himself plus many more including a selection of local artists. On top of this the festival will also offer workshops, seminars and an exciting Miss Natural Beauty contest.

For more information visit www.backtoafricafestival.com.

Jimmy Cliff: an Unauthorised Biography

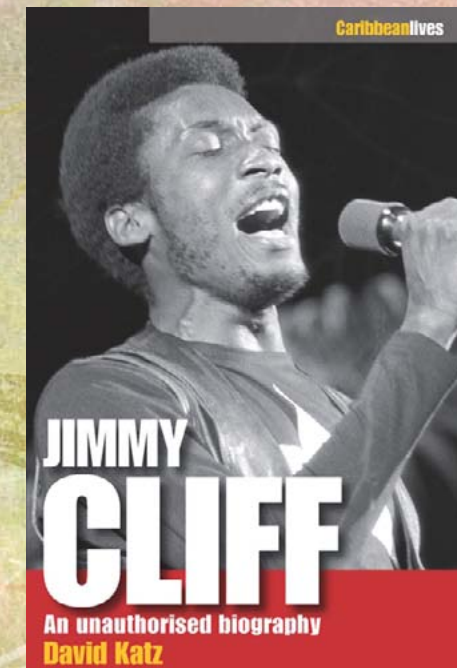
Jimmy Cliff is a recent inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and one of Jamaica's most successful musicians with several hit songs on his list of merits. Many people recognize him for Wonderful World, Beautiful People, Many Rivers to Cross and The Harder They Come, the lead-motive to the motion picture of the same name, a picture where Jimmy Cliff also played the leading role.

Jimmy Cliff has – just as Bob Marley, Desmond Dekker and Toots Hibbert – been hailed as an early superstar of Jamaican music.

His story will now be told in 'Jimmy Cliff: an Unauthorised Biography' written by music journalist and author David Katz, previously responsible for 'People Funny Boy: The Genius of Lee "Scratch" Perry' and 'Solid Foundation: an Oral History of Reggae'.

'Jimmy Cliff: an Unauthorised Biography' tells the tale of how Jimmy Cliff battled poverty, controversy and prejudice to become a world-class musician credited with making reggae popular with a global audience. It is based on extensive interviews with the artist and his peers as well as press archives and other sources.

'Jimmy Cliff: an Unauthorised Biography' is set to be released on 30th November 2011



Leonard Dillon of The Ethiopians Has Died

Leonard Dillon founded, together with Aston Morris and the late Stephen Taylor, the ska, rocksteady and reggae vocal group The Ethiopians in the mid 60's. Aston Morris soon left, and The Ethiopians first hit song Train to Skaville was recorded as a duo.

Other smash singles for a number of acclaimed producers soon followed. Engine 54, The Whip and Everything Crash only to name a few.

In September 1975 a tragic accident occurred. Stephen Taylor was working at a gas station when he was killed by a van while crossing the street.

Leonard Dillon took a break from the music business for two years. In 1977 he was back and put out the excellent roots album 'Slave Call' together with Winston "Niney" Holness.

Since then Leonard Dillon has toured on and off and recorded sporadically both solo and in a new version of The Ethiopians with female backing vocalists Jennifer Lara and Merlyn Webber.

What's Going On by Freddie McGregor and Soul 4 Soul

Reggae veteran Freddie McGregor teams up with soulful reggae and gospel quartet Soul 4 Soul on a cover of Marvin Gaye's classic What's Going On for VP Records' 'Reggae for Lovers' compilation.

Freddie McGregor is head of the McGregor musical family that also comprises well-known producer and singer Stephen "Di Genius" McGregor and his singjaying brother Chino.

Soul 4 Soul has won Jamaica's National Gospel Festival Competition several years in a row and has also been featured on Barry O'Hare's Masterpiece riddim.

What's Going On is available on October 5th both a single and on the 'Reggae for Lovers' compilation.

Bayside Rocks 2011

Bayside Rocks scheduled for November 19, 2011 will be both environmentally and family friendly. The Festival will utilize green vendors and merchants committed to being socially conscious. It will be a day of peace, love & unity.

The concert will be a tribute to music icon Bob Marley and will include 50 years of Wailers music to be highlighted throughout the day. Headliners include Bunny Wailer, Luciano, Warrior King, Wailing Souls, Pato Banton, The Original Wailers, Tabou Combo, Cultura Profetica, Gondwana, Connis Vanterpool, as well as up and coming talent.

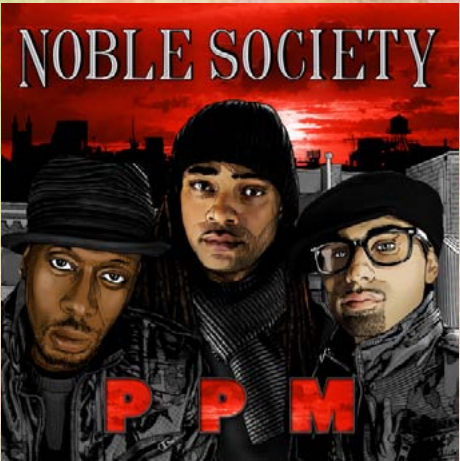
This years festival will also include a farmer’s market, yoga demonstrations, bike valet, skateboard and BMX exhibitions, ecology & social consciousness workshops and more.

Concert proceeds will include a food drive benefiting Curley’s House, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for low-to-moderate income individuals, families, the elderly, youth-at-risk, the abused, and HIV/AIDS infected individuals by providing the nutrition they need.

Through the universal language of music, as well as vi-

sion for arts and cultural media, ROCKAZ MVMT and its president and CEO Alfonso D’niscio Brooks are striving to change the workd for the better by empowering people to make a difference.

PPM by Noble Society



The versatile singer and deejay Jahdan Blakkamoore dropped his sophomore solo album ‘Babylon Nightmare’ in December last year to wide critical acclaim.

But Jahdan Blakkamoore is also part of Noble Society, a hip-hop/reggae group based in New York City. Their diverse debut album ‘Take Charge’ was put out in 2008, and three years later they are all set to drop the follow-up.

‘PPM’ (Powerful, Painful, Music) is produced by Ovaground Productions and engineered by Tony Dawsey, who also worked on Jay Z’ eleventh studio album ‘The Blue Print III’.

The first single For Life is cur-

rently available on Youtube and the album hits the streets on October 21st through French label X-Ray Production.

Brand New Free To Download Release From Renegade Media

‘Echoes - The Remixes Vol 1’ is a collection of 12 of the best remixes submitted for a contest run earlier this year by Dubmatix’s for his Renegade Recordings label. The object of the contest was simply for aspiring producers to choose one of four tracks from any of the artists on label roster which were, Early Worm Crawling From The Roots, Nate Wize Blues Blood, Rolling Lion Studio Rightful Ruler and Dubmatix’s very own Inna Eden and create their own highly interesting and original take on the song as they could.



Remixes by: G31, Edumarron, Selec, Dub Terminator, Dubtrak, The Originator, Commie Dread, SUBSET, ultrabase, Dubstructor, and PhOniAndFlOrE were chosen as the best of the

bunch and now this album that incorporates styles including Dubstep, Jungle, Roots and Future Dub is available for you to download free via Soundcloud.

Hard Time Pressure by Sugar Minott



The late singer and producer, as well as label and sound system-owner, Sugar Minott passed away last summer, and VP Records’ subsidiary 17 North Parade now drops the three disc anthology ‘Hard Time Pressure’ with some of his best work.

‘Hard Time Pressure’ highlights his long recording career that bridged three major eras in reggae – from Studio One to lovers rock to the digital dancehall era, where he earned the title the Godfather of Dancehall.

During his career he managed to record over 60 albums and was also responsible for finding new talents such as Junior Reid, Yami Bolo and the late Tenor Saw and Garnett Silk,

who recorded his first song for Sugar Minott.

This three disc set includes two CD’s with 36 tracks and a DVD with live video footage of Sugar Minott performing at JapanSplash concert in 1986. ‘Hard Time Pressure’ hits the streets on October 18th.

Roots Hitek Music Present Their Latest Vinyl Release

Roots Hitek who delighted us earlier this year with their ‘River Niger Riddim’, a mighty slice of modern roots reggae on 10” vinyl, are now about to do it again with another 10” release.

This time it will feature the vocals of UK roots veteran Tena Stelin, whose first release was the acclaimed ‘Wicked Invention’ way back in 1989 and who more recently came out with Spiritual Kinsmen and Cosmic Session also with Roots Hitek with both these and other tunes to feature on a future album collaboration.

Flip it over and you will find the Reality Souljahs from out of east London with Come Along. This duo released the album ‘Everyday Reality’ in 2008 and since then have been making a name for themselves across Europe and in the roots world in general with further releases such as last years ‘Jah Pon Mi Mind’ for Reality Sound System .

As usual both tracks come with the obligatory Roots Hitek dubs versions Apedmak Vibration and House Of Dub.

City Of Vibes by Brother Culture

British MC Brother Culture has once again collaborated with Swiss music production team Kinyama Sounds for the seven track EP ‘City of Vibes’, scheduled for release on digital platforms on October 24th.

Brother Culture and Kinyama Sounds met for the first time in 2009 and worked on two tracks put on the compilation ‘Reggae Dishes’, an album that also featured artists such as Chezidek and Prince Alla.

Free Download from Patrice's Upcoming Album

German singer/songwriter and guitarist Patrice has started working on his follow-up to ‘Free-Patri-Ation’, released in 2008.

When Everything has Changed is a demo song from the upcoming album due for release in 2012, and should be regarded as a sneak peak of a work still in progress.

“I feel like the verses and the chorus isn’t as one, but I’m still experimenting you know.

Everything I do, I like it to be complete, but it’s nice to share a demo so that you can see the progress and somehow be part of this,” writes Patrice on his website, and asks:

“So what do you think? What do you like or not like?”

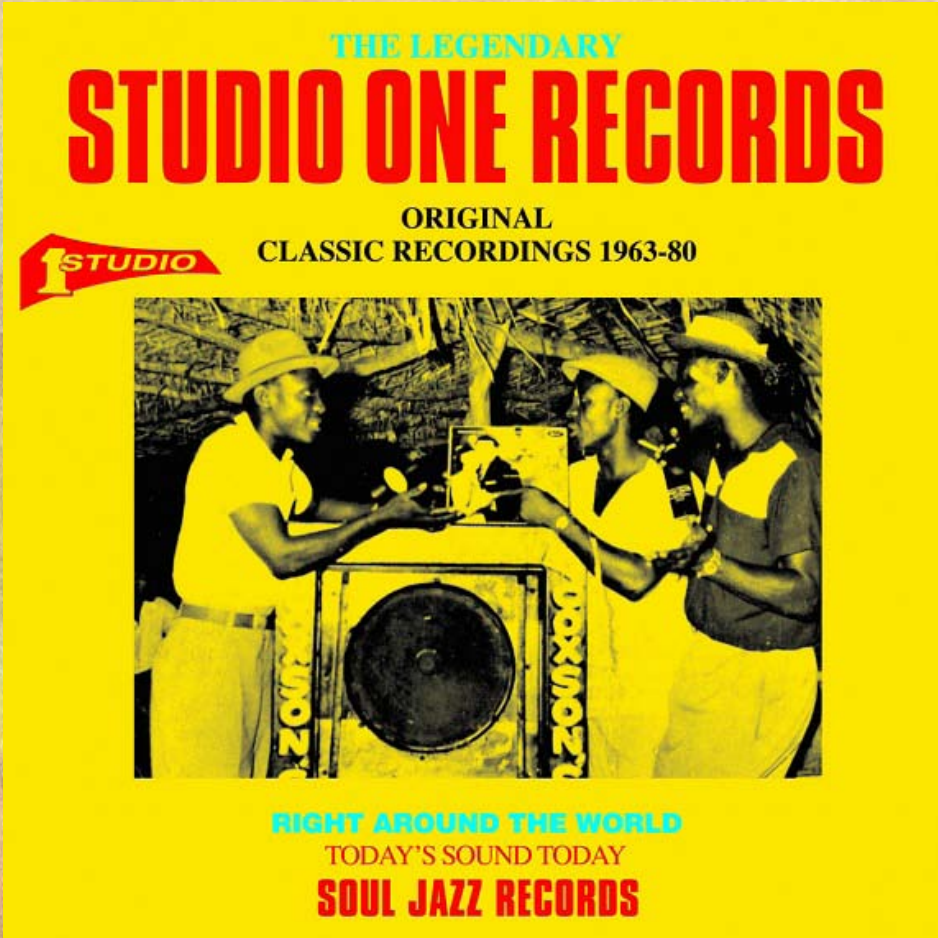
You can download When Everything has Changed for free by signing up to Patrice’s mailing list.

Get Up and Going by Sebastian Sturm

German singer Sebastian Sturm made his album debut in 2006 with the roots reggae and lovers rock effort ‘This Change is Nice’. ‘One Moment in Peace’ followed in 2008, and on October 14th Sebastian Sturm is back with his third album ‘Get Up & Going’, a set recorded together with his new band Exile Airline and producer Philip Breidenbach. Kiddus I – one of Sebastian Sturm’s personal 70’s heroes – makes a guest appearance on the album, an album that is said to “remain faithful to the Sturm sound while incorporating new influences and musical elements.”

The Legendary Studio One Records

It has been three long years, but now it seems that Soul Jazz



Records is back on track with reissuing Studio One material.

In September United Reggae reported about the upcoming book on the cover art of Studio One, published by Soul Jazz Books in November.

To accompany that set is a brand new 18 track compilation featuring both well-known Studio One cuts as well as lesser known ones. It features The Skatalites, Lone Ranger and Horace Andy among others.

‘The Legendary Studio One Records’ comes in a jewel case with slipcase style CD, limited edition gatefold heavyweight double vinyl and exclusive digital download.

The CD and the 2xLP both have all tracks.

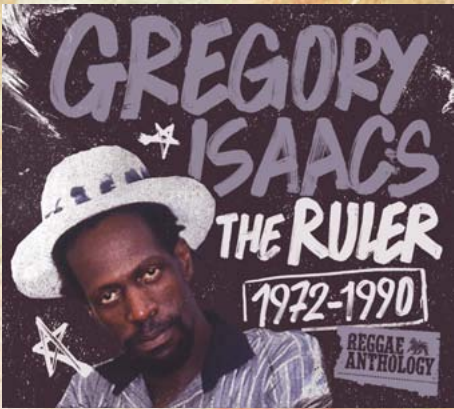
The Ruler by Gregory Isaacs

It has been almost a year since reggae crooner Gregory Isaacs died at the age of 59, and about a month ago VP Records released the Gregory Isaacs tribute album ‘We Remember Gregory Isaacs’, where a number of contemporary singers put their mark on the Cool Ruler.

But VP didn’t stop there. On October 24th the label’s subsidiary 17 North Parade commemorates the life and music of Gregory Isaacs with ‘Reggae Anthology: The Ruler 1972-1990’, an extensive 40-track

collection of Gregory Isaacs’ hits, plus a special bonus DVD featuring the reggae veteran singing on stage at The Brixton Academy in 1984. The set also features detailed liner notes and rare photographs of Gregory Isaacs during his prime.

This set chronicles some of Gregory Isaacs’ most crucial hits from 1972 to 1990 for a variety of producers, including tunes such as My Number One, Let off the Sup’m and Soon Forward.



Merritone Reissues From Dub Store Records

Earlier this year Dub Store Records reissued a selection of Ska rarities on 7” vinyl on the Federal Records’ Kentone label, all beautifully presented with authentic labels and card covers. Now they have shifted their attention to the rocksteady era with no less than 40 songs across 20 singles presented on the Merritone label.

Merritone was founded in 1966



by Ken Khouri with the label taking its name from Winston Blake’s sound system. Although not as well known as the likes of Studio 1 or Treasure Isle it was the largest record company of that time in Jamaica. Many songs were recorded with Ernest Ranglin, and fellow guitarist Lynn Taitt among its biggest stars. However many of these songs only appeared on vinyl records in limited quantities in Jamaica with a small bunch of titles making it to the UK where they were released on the Island label. Due to this many recordings on the label are hardly known and are now considered being ultra rare collector’s items.

Dub Store are now making some of these unreleased, for-

gotten and hard to find gems available again and included in the roster are songs like I’m Coming Home by Eddie Perkins who worked with Alton Ellis as the duo Alton and Eddy. Then there is Lynn Taitt’s remake of the Batman movie theme, Henry Buckley sings Beware Of All Those Rude Boys and showcases his conscious style with If I Am Right plus there is early Prince Lincoln work with Real Gone Sweet and It’s Not Right that he performed as a member of The Tartans along with Devon Russell, Cedric Myton, and Berg Lewis.

If this short list of some of the songs on offer doesn’t whet your appetite for more then check out ReggaeRecord.com.

Paul Fox meets Fullness



First Light b/w No More Fire is the new EP from Paul Fox meets Fullness, released last month on KarnaTone records.

Paul Fox has been actively involved on the UK's Sound System scene since the late 1980s but it wasn't until a meeting with Nick Manasseh in 1992 that he got to record his first release Writing on the Wall b/w African Mask. Since then he has gone on to work with the likes of Michael Rose, Robert Tribulation, from the Great Tribulation Sound System of the 1970's plus roots dub duo Alpha and Omega.

Fullness is multi instrumentalist and producer Gavin Sant who created the KarnaTone studio and record label to produce and release his heavyweight roots and dub reggae recordings.

The music mixes digital and live techniques and his recent works such as the Dub-heart Solid Foundation Rid-

dim and Walk Of Life have been very well received on Sound System circuit especially by Channel One sound.

This release is limited to just 500 copies and is available to order from fullness@live.com or for more details visit www.fullness.co.uk.

Ambassah Presents Rub a Dub Showcase Part II

Spanish producer Ambassah has alongside fellow Spaniard Roberto Sánchez put together the compilation 'Rub a Dub Showcase Part II' for the label Pirate's Choice Recordings.



This 17 track album collects all of all of the Pirates Choice 10" releases as well as no less than eight previously unreleased tracks, where of one from Alpheus and one from Linval Thompson.

The tracks were recorded between 2005 and 2011 and carry some heavy early 80's rub a

dub sound. Featured artists include – apart from those mentioned above – Kenny Knotts, Horace Martin and the late Sugar Minott.

Look out for 'Rub a Dub Showcase Part II' on November 1st.

Know Myself Riddim

French label Heartical has yet another relick of a classic reggae riddim set for release. This time it's the Know Myself riddim, originally recorded as an instrumental by Conscious Minds titled 'Something New' and put out in 1974. The most well-known version is Ernest Wilson's 'Know Myself' that dropped a few years later.

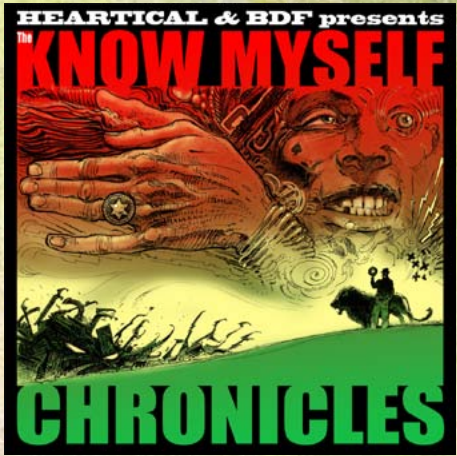
The new version is laid by Heartical's long-time collaborators Basque Dub Foundation along with legendary drummer Sly Dunbar, who also played on the original Know Myself.

The thirteen cuts are voiced by both legends and fresh talents. You might recognize Michael Rose, Dawn Penn and Ernest Wilson himself, who is represented on two cuts. Lesser known artists include the Spanish brother and sister duo Rootsmala, Tiwony from the French West Indies and Original Uman out of Belgium. Included are also a dub version and a melodica cut.

Heartical followers might notice that some of these cuts are

already available on the recent compilation 'Heartical Story'.

The Know Myself riddim hits the streets as digital download on October 14th and as five 7" singles on October 30th.



Greensleeves Dubstep: Chapter 1

Last year Greensleeves Records announced that their back catalogue was to get the dubstep treatment by a number of acclaimed producers from this bass heavy genre. The first release was a remix of Yellowman's classic 'Zunguzugguguzunguzeng' by Horsepower Productions followed by remixes of Busy Signal, Mavado and Ding Dong.

Now it's time for the next step – 'Greensleeves Dubstep: Chapter 1'. This 14 track album contains remixes from producers such as The Bug, Coki and Mala of Digital Mystikz, Goth-Trad and Terror Danjah.

They mix up some of dancehall's most popular anthems

from leading contemporaries Vybz Kartel and Gyptian as well as veterans Yellowman, Barrington Levy and Admiral Bailey.

'Greensleeves Dubstep: Chapter 1' hits the streets on October 24th.

Smokers Delight From Reggae Roast

Reggae Roast Records who have delivered us some essential cuts over the past 12 - 18 months have announced they are about to release their latest offering 'Sensi Skank' on 21st November.

Available as a 5 track vinyl EP the primary cut is a very UK digital roots reggae affair with production by veteran sound system aficionado Murray Man and mixed by one of the most respected DJ / producers in British reggae Manasseh.

Vocals are supplied by Ruben Da Silva, who is quickly becoming a major force in the British roots scene after his recent dance-floor smasher Bless A Sound plus rising young UK rapper Skinnyman, who has been a long time and outspoken advocate of the legalisation of cannabis. For those of you that like a bit more bounce with your ounce there is a hard hitting Drum n Bass remix from Undiluted Records artist Placid.

With more exciting releases

promised from the likes of Linval Thompson & Kenny Knotts Reggae Roast Records is certainly a label that seems to have a hot future.

Alborosie wins MOBO Award and tours Europe

Italian-born Jamaican-resident Alborosie won the MOBO Award – a European awards show to celebrate urban music – for Best Reggae Act on the event that took place on October 5th in Glasgow, Scotland. Last year the prize was awarded to Gyptian.

Among Alborosie's contestants were Khago, Mavado and Damian Marley & Nas. Jah Cure was also nominated, but was disqualified due to his previous conviction of rape, gun possession and robbery.

Among the other winners was Adele for Best UK R&B/Soul Act and Rihanna for Best International Act.

Following the release of Alborosie's third album '2 Times Revolution' – released in June 2011 – he heads out for his second European tour this year.

The 14 date tour kicks off in Hérouville Saint Clair in France on November 15th and finishes on November 30th in Portugal's capital Lisbon.

Fight It by Tony Curtis

Jamaican singer Tony Curtis has collaborated with Greenyard Records – led by Zigo from French group Dub Inc – on his new EP titled ‘Fight It’.

This is Greenyard’s first single artist release. Previous sets include one riddim albums such as My Son, Jah Light and Design. The latter included the wicked Part of My Life by Sara Lugo which was featured on her debut album.

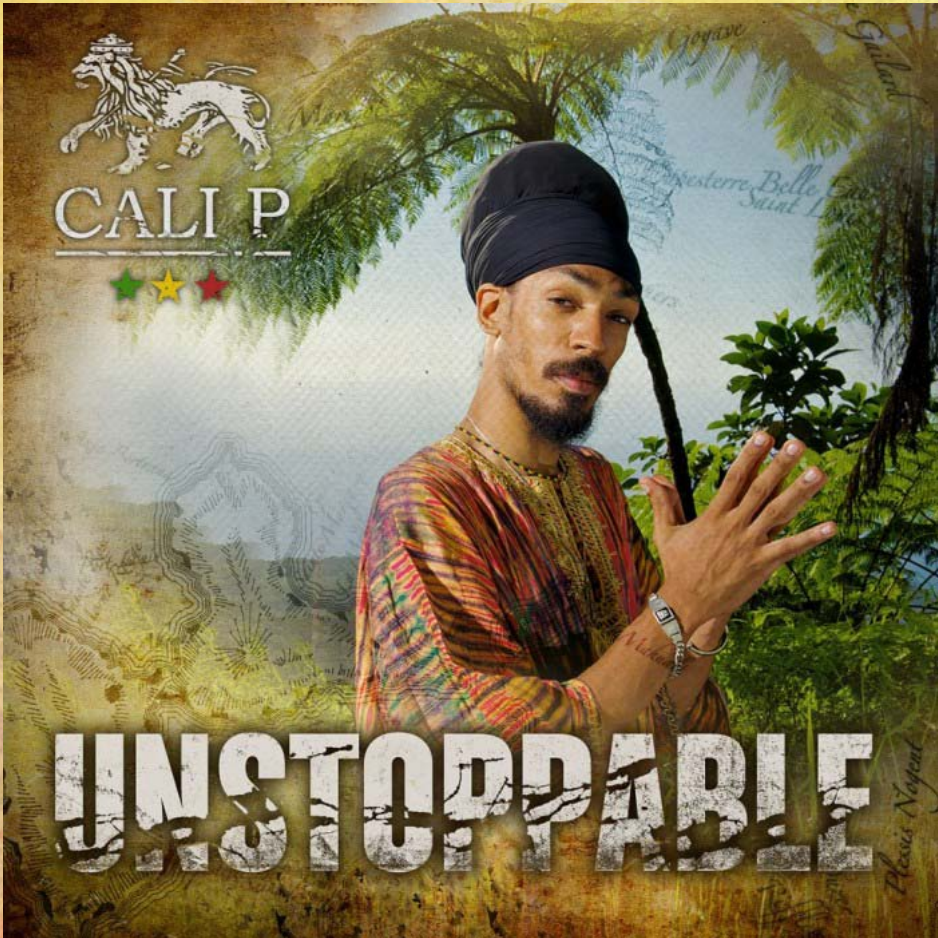
‘Fight It’ contains six tracks, of which two are combinations with two veteran hardcore deejays – Burro Banton and Cutty Ranks. It blends modern roots with the energy of dancehall.

Look out for Tony Curtis’ ‘Fight It’ on CD and digital download on October 25th.



Cali P Is Unstoppable

In stores now is ‘Unstoppable’



the most anticipated second album from wicked Gwada/Swiss chanter, Cali P. The album follows ‘Lyrical Faya’, the artist’s well regarded debut set from 2008 and it features a very very interesting twist. That first album showed Cali P to be an outstanding Roots Reggae chanter much in the same style as several of his more popular peers such as Sizzla Kalonji, Anthony B and the likes. Here, however, Cali P has turned, almost exclusively, into this very fascinating Dancehall DJ, while retaining his most positive and uplifting message.

The album features a variety of hardcore Dancehall and Hip-Hop tracks courtesy of Riga, of Hemp Higher Productions and sounds nothing like what may

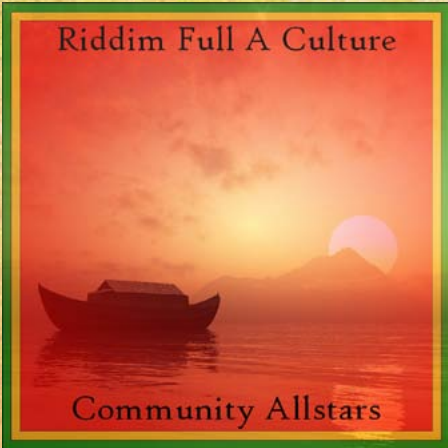
have been imagined from listening to Cali P’s Pow Pow produced debut album. Impressive here is just how skilled he proves to be on teh new style and despite it’s very ‘immediate’ sound, by its end ‘Unstoppable’ proves to be a very complex and mature project.

Hemp Higher Productions along with Inspired Music presents Cali P’s ‘Unstoppable’ which is currently available on CD, Digital and Deluxe Digital release..

Riddim Full A Culture by The Community Allstars

Springline Records present

a new various album from many of today’s budding underground artists. The album titled ‘Riddim Full A Culture’ is touted as being by the Community Allstars but this is not a single band rather a band of many, who through there love of reggae, have been brought together on various community websites and have given a track each for the album.



The artists of this collective come from Europe and the US with the UK giving us the most with artists Digikal Roots a musician and producer who released the album ‘Let There Be Version’ in 2010 and has since followed that with a dub EP and another album entitled ‘Dread Force Dub’. Gadman Dubs one of the foundation profilers at these community sites and a digi dub disciple. There is also El Bib who recently released ‘Revolutionary Dub Vibrations’ an album series that currently stands at 3 volumes plus another dub activist Dub Alchemist who has some heavy duty UK dub fashions. King Dauda adds some thematic dub to proceedings while veteran multi instrumentalist and dub producer Yabass recently released ‘Back

Yard Dub’ on Phoenix City Records and brings his analogue recording techniques, featuring live drums, for a mid seventies Tubby inspired sound. There are rootsy flavours from The Manor with a sound that pays homage to early Wailers and Perry ark style, while Willie Steen broods on a deep digi-roots-dub. Finally wrapping up the UK contingent is David Powell an artist of ‘Multi Genres’ who here gives an up-tempo almost rockers feeling number with some vocal snippets from 80s Toaster Horseman.

From German there is roots and culture in the form of Iditafari Family who are in fact a real family and are well known across these community sites for their love of true roots and conscious lyrics. Another German group are the Droegen Bwoys, a 7 piece outfit that features underground foundation vocalist and Deejay ‘I Rebel’.

From the US comes multi instrumentalist Steve Steppa who has released 5 albums covering a multitude of reggae & dub styles as well as collaborating with dozens of artists and riddim producers; primarily Flow Production and El Bib. It’s back in to dub territory again for Albusark Studios and David Pablo then travelling just up the road to Canada we find Denja with one of his surreal dublike workouts.

‘Riddim Full A Culture’ is an album that highlights just some of artists out there that are going unnoticed by many

but who have shown they can match their better known peers when it comes to making quality reggae and as one ‘wise old’ underground artist has been saying for a while now; it’s “Real People Music”.

Express Yourself Riddim

On Kris Kemist new riddim Express Yourself it’s strictly UK artists – YT, Dixie Peach, Solo Banton, Deadly Hunta and Valorous along with a dub mix by Disciples Russ D.

This smooth, yet bass intense, riddim is currently available on iTunes and will soon hit the shelves on 12”.

Dial M for Murder in Dub Style

Acclaimed reissue label Pressure Sounds will reissue the Phil Pratt produced album ‘Dial M for Murder in Dub Style’, initially released in 1980 and recorded at Channel One with The Revolutionaries. This is the third Phil Pratt album reissued by the label.

The vinyl release contains the same tracks as the original album, while the CD includes five bonus tunes. It is expected to hit the streets in early November through the Pressure Sounds website. It’ll be available through other retailers on November 28th.

KA Records New Single

French label KA Records – specialized in 70's roots reggae – is set to release their new 7". As previous releases they use live instrumentation, live recording and local artists.

The A-side has vocal duo the Maât Disciples in fine form and the B-side sees witty named deejay Woody Allan going Dillinger on his anti-digital tune Natty Don't Want No Digital.

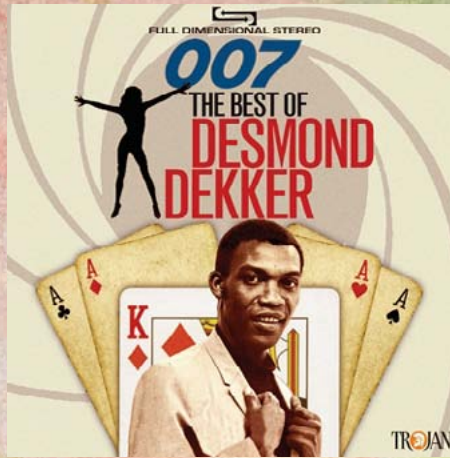
This fine 7" hits the streets on October 21st.

Two New Releases From Trojan Records

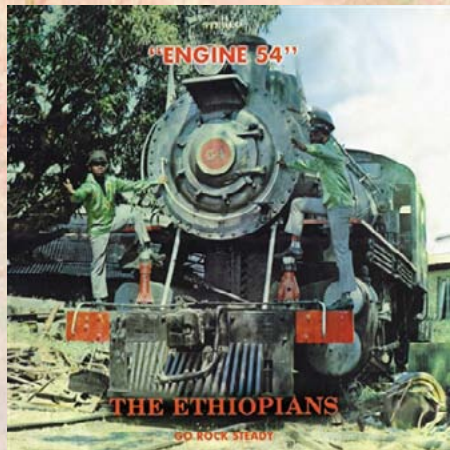
Its been a bit quite at Trojan Records since the release of their 5 CD box set back in the summer, but now as autumn prevails they have announced the release of two CD's that will feature first one of Jamaica's greatest vocalists Desmond Dekker and secondly one of its best loved bands The Ethiopians.

The Desmond Dekker release is a 2 CD 'Best Of' and will feature all of his biggest hits from the '60s and '70s, including the UK chart hits, 007, Israelites, It Mek, Pickney Gal, You Can Get It If You Really Want and Sing A Little Song plus an array of

alternate takes and previously unissued gems from the golden ages of Rock Steady and Boss Reggae.



The Ethiopians release will be in the form of their classic 1968 album 'Engine 54'.



It is now 42 years after its original release and this seminal album is finally being released on CD as part of Trojan's highly acclaimed Originals series. As with other titles in the range, the original artwork has been faithfully reproduced, with the original Jamaican analogue tapes from 1968 used for its mastering and thus making it something of a fitting if unintentional tribute to Leonard Dillon who sadly passed away recently.

Both of these discs are to be released on October 31st but are available to pre order from the Trojan shop now.

Constellation by marie-claire and Bob Andy

It has been 20 years since veteran singer and songwriter Bob Andy penned a song for another artist. Now it's time again, and the artist is Dominican opera singer marie-claire.

Constellation is the title of this smooth reggae tune. It's part of marie-claire's five song EP 'The Dreamland Project', a genre busting set that blends reggae, opera and hip-hop.

Apart from Bob Andy, artists such as Earl "Chinna" Smith, Stephen Marley, Drezion and dancehall deejay Spragga Benz have been involved. The latter contributes on a version of Bob Marley's Rastaman Chant.

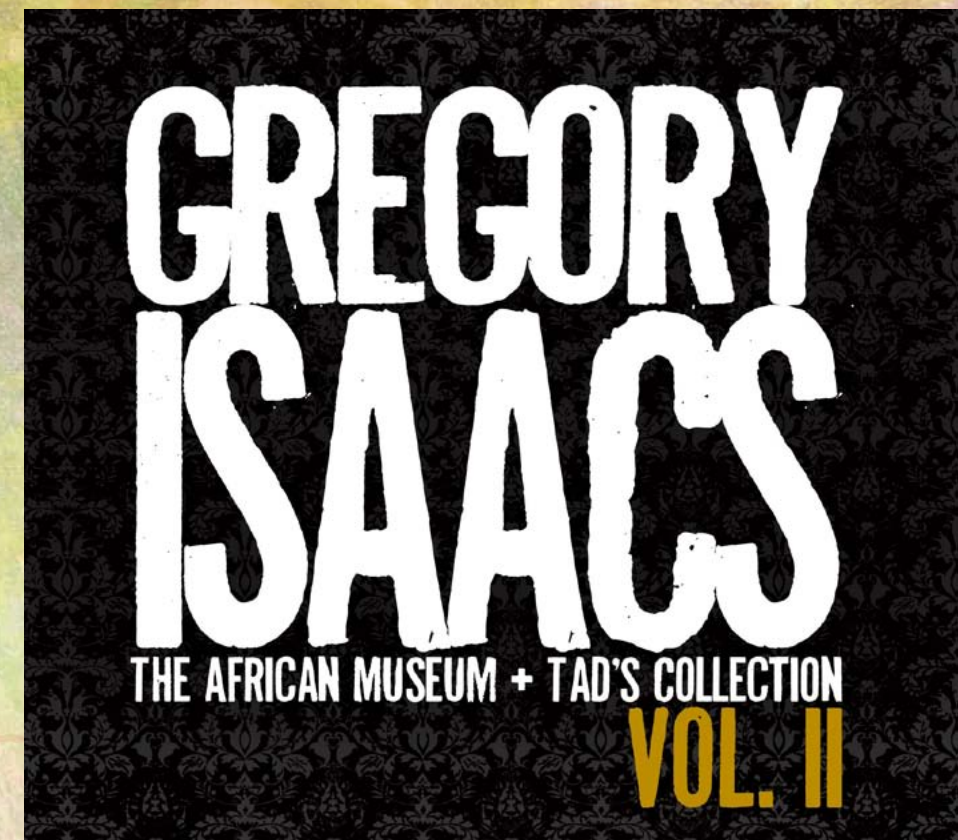
Dubmatix Presents Clash of the Titans - The System Shakedown Remix

On November 7th Dubmatix is to release 'Clash of the Titans' the System Shakedown Remixes, on, CD, digital plus a very limited (500, hand numbered) double 12" vinyl formats.

The album, as you'd probably already guessed, takes tracks from last years 'System Shakedown' and puts them into the hands of an amazing cast of remixers/producers from around the world including Zion Train, G.Corp, Marcus Visionary, Liondub, Vibronics, Victor Rice, Dubvisionist, Mungo's Hi-Fi, Aldubb, Nate Wize, TVS, Subatomic Soundsystem, and Webcam Hi-Fi, with the digital release also including bonus tracks from DJ Shine, Eccodek and DJ Brace. The remixes that this large contingent have produced are very diverse and take in traditional rootsy dub, dubstep, ragga, jungle, future dub and what I'd describe as almost a minimalist funk in one case. You can hear snippets of the tracks and order the digital copy from junodownload.com while the CD and vinyl formats are available for pre order from Amazon.

Gregory Isaacs - African Museum and Tads Collection Volume 2

Once again Tad's Records teams up with the late Gregory Isaacs' own label African Museum for a compilation. " is a two disc collector's item featuring more than 40 singles from Isaacs' illustrious catalogue including My Number One, Front Door, Tune In and Slavemaster. The compilation also includes an extended version of his 1982



international hit Night Nurse. "Gregory Isaacs is one of reggae's greatest artists. In 2008, Tad's partnered with African Museum for Gregory Isaacs - African Museum & Tad's Collection Vol. I. Now that Gregory has joined the ancestors, we will see to it that his music lives on with Vol. II," says Tad Dawkins, CEO and owner of Tad's Record in a press release and adds: "Gregory and I have a long musical history together, and I'm glad to honor him and celebrate his legacy."

Part of the proceeds from the sales of the album will benefit the Gregory Isaacs Foundation, established in July this year by Gregory Isaacs' wife June Isaacs.

"The foundation will be offering assistance to the St. Barnabas Basic School in Fletcher's

Land, the first school Gregory attended," says June Isaacs in a press release. June Isaacs will also utilize the tribute album to launch a drug awareness campaign in memory of her husband, who battled drug addiction throughout his 42-year career. His cocaine addiction caused irreparable damage to his voice and led to several arrests for drugs and drug-related crimes. "November is Drug Awareness Month in Jamaica, I am working on editing some audio statements from Gregory about his own drug abuse to use as a message to stay off drugs," states Ms. Isaacs further in the press release.

'Gregory Isaacs - The African Museum & Tad's Collection Vol. II' will be available in stores and on digital outlets on October 25th.

DON CORLEON PRESSURE AND PROTOJE

"We're all African people and have an African culture. We are all Caribbean people"

A midnite meeting with Don Corleon, Pressure and Protoje.

Don Corleon is one of Jamaica's slickest and most successful contemporary producers with a variety of booming riddims behind him. In his stable of artists is Pressure as well as his cousin Protoje. This trio was on a European tour, and United Reggae got a chat after their performance at Uppsala Reggae Festival.

The evening has turned to night when I meet Pressure, Protoje and his cousin Don Corleon backstage.

This trio was touring Europe and stopped by Sweden and the Uppsala Reggae Festival.

On stage, Protoje did a number

of tunes from his debut album '7 Year Itch', released earlier this year. But he also performed a tune that did not make it onto the album due to some legal issues with a sample.

Our Time Come, as the energetic tune is called, also has the Don singing the hook. But even though it didn't make it to the album, it might still be up for grabs.

"Somehow it's now available on the Internet. I don't know who leaked it," says Don Corleon and smiles. In front of him sits Protoje and beside him is Pressure. It's obvious that Don Corleon is the front man and leader of this outfit. He is well-spoken, polite and gives thorough answers.

Busy year for Don Corleon

It's been a busy year for Don Corleon. An album from Protoje, a European tour in February and the album 'Dub in HD'. On top of that another European tour and several new riddims, such as The Message, Summer

Scheme and Broken Hearts.

The dub album was something of a surprise to many. The release was preceded by video clips of Don Corleon dub mixing in his studio, and got instant attention.

"I videotaped the whole recording procedure. It will be released as a DVD soon," reveals Don Corleon, and continues:

"I pushed my engineering skills when I did it. I did it in Pro Tools. I wanted to do something new."

When learning the necessary skills for mixing dub Don Corleon spent hours watching producers such as Mad Professor on Youtube.

"Mad Professor is my favorite dub producer. He has a crisp and clean sound. I really rate him," explains Don Corleon.

Protoje's new album

Don Corleon got interested in dub through Protoje, and one of his first dub recordings can be heard on Wrong Side of the Law, included on '7 Year Itch'.



"Dub just bit me. Scientist bit me," explains Protoje and mentions Black Uhuru's Guess Who's Coming to Dinner as a big inspiration.

Protoje seems shy and speaks in a low voice. Or maybe he's just cold sitting outside in the Swedish chilly summer night. He explains that he is currently working on his second album, a set probably due next year.

"The music is already recorded and we'll finish the album and then decide when to release it," says Protoje, and continues describing how it sounds:

"It's a new style. More roots and more steppers. It has an international sound, it's experimental and I wanted to explore different styles."

While I sit and talk to Protoje I hear The Heptones playing on the main stage. During their classic Party Time I notice that Don Corleon leans over to Pressure while playing the bass line in the air.

"It's one of my favorite groups," explains Don Corleon, and continues:

"I have this one on dubplate."

Pressure has the whole package

Don Corleon explains that he was introduced to Pressure when he met producer Dean Pond – responsible for Pressure's debut album 'The Pressure is On' – in a guitar store in Miami.

"He told me about Pressure and gave me the album," says Don Corleon.

The rest is, as you say, history.

The Don was hugely impressed by St. Thomas native Pressure, and together they recorded Pressure's second album 'Love and Affection', a set that included the title track, that became a smash hit.

"It will never die. It will be a classic. It's wicked from start to finish," believes Don Corleon, and continues to explain what makes Pressure a great artist:

"He has this great vocal ability. And it's the first thing I'm looking for. He also has the whole package. He can write his own songs and sing."

Pressure almost came straight from the stage to the interview, and he seems to be tired sitting

in a chair with his sunglasses hiding his eyes.

I ask Pressure about the reggae scene on the Virgin Islands (VI), a scene that has been booming in the last couple of years, largely thanks to Midnite, but also artists such as NiyoRah, Dezarie and Batch. It turns out that Pressure has relocated.

"I live in Florida now. There are more musical opportunities there, and a wider audience than in the VI. VI is calypso dominated, and only 30 to 40 percent of the music played is



reggae."

Don Corleon fills in:

"I didn't know about the VI reggae scene until I heard Pressure. And I said 'yo, him bad'. He got so much talent," and continues:

"But we're all African people and have an African culture. We are all Caribbean people."

**Interview by Erik Magni
Photos by Bartek Muracki**

Solo Banton

"There are no artists in the world that are as versatile as UK reggae artists"

The man they call Solo Banton was born and raised in West London and attended Christopher Wren school in Shepherd's Bush a few years behind the athlete Linford Christie and the footballer Dennis Wise. Failing to see the relevance of studying obscure facts about Henry VIII, the young Solo gravitated towards systematic subjects such as computer studies, physics and maths. In addition he discovered sound system through his elder brother and at the age of 12 he selected at his sister's party when the designated sound didn't show, spinning dancehall and lovers rock as well as Rick James and Bob James' Theme from Taxi. Inspired by the child deejays of the early 80s he then began taking the mic - calling himself Professor Brown - first staying up to guest on his brother's sound King Shamma and then in his late teens building his own basic rig with his mates. By 15 he was also getting paid to play in his uncle's steel band. At 19 he became a soul



selector on Majestic Sound and had started learning how to produce at a nearby studio run by a man named Jazzbo. Yet it would be two decades before Solo dropped his de-

but album 'Walk Like Rasta', produced by Kris Kemist from Reading where Solo currently resides alongside friends and scene-makers Deadly Hunta and Mikey Murka. Now he has

a new EP out - Music Addict - with another longtime collaborator German "laptop reggae" label Jahtari. Angus Taylor met Solo in Reading to discuss his music and fill in some of the gaps.

In your song Stronger you talk about being influenced by a particular Rastaman. Tell me a bit about that.

We all went to church rigorously every Sunday. It always seemed to me to be a half truth. It made a lot of sense to me and I believed in it but there was always something missing. I used to see Rastas walking down the road and they just intrigued me for some reason. I met this guy, in Shepherd's Bush. I knew of a lot of Rastas at the time but I didn't really speak to them. I ended up speaking to this guy, to this day I do not know his name but he just called me over "Hey bwoy" and he just asked me what I was doing (we were in the youth club) and I said that I was just playing some table tennis and stuff like that. We just started talking and I asked about Rasta. He asked me if I went to church and I said "Yeah, I go to church every Sunday". He said "How do you feel about church?" and I said to him how I felt and he started to explain some things to me. He just said to me "What they're teaching you is the right thing but they're just missing out a few facts. When you're big enough you should read some books"

and he gave me a list of a few books to read.

What did your parents think about this?

Hahahaha! My dad always said to me from a very young age "If I ever see you with them dreadlocks on your head, I will cut them off!" He wouldn't even allow my hair to get plait. I remember one time my sister plaited my hair, my hair was long in an afro sort of thing and my sister said "Let me see if I can plait it". My dad came in and she'd only done one side and he flipped! I got lash, she got lash. In all honesty I think everybody in the house got lashed apart from my mum, but my mum and my dad had a fierce argument. Once I locked up my mum never had a problem. All my sisters have dreadlocks now as well, I mean they're not Rasta, they're Christian but they all have their hair in locks. It was always like that with my dad but once I got to the age where I could do it... He had no choice. Just to wind him up I'll buy him a red, gold and green scarf at Christmas! Just to get my own back, you know? (laughs).

On your tune Revolution Time you kind of go into a bit of dub poetry at the very end. Do you like dub poetry? Who are your musical influences?

Musically - Linton Kwesi Johnson was the first I think, just because of the play with

words, poetry and stuff. My sister bought an LP and it just mesmerised me, just the fact to hear the spoken word, to hear the poetry over this reggae music. He'd have a slight melody in what he was saying as well, so he did have a rhythm to what he was saying, it wasn't just straight spoken word like somebody like Pam Ayres. It just really, really captured me from a very, very young age. I was in primary school. I remember we had a school party where we were all allowed to bring in some records and I brought in Linton Kwesi Johnson. My teacher was like "Ooh, what's this?" The track that I played at the party was (sings) "The SPG, them ah murderer, them kill Blair Peach, the teacher" My teacher was like "Interesting...". Then Buru Banton, hence Solo Banton. Then from there, most deejays really. I mean I love singers but from that it's mostly deejays.

Obviously it's a very superficial comparison, but you're a deejay, you're quite opinionated. Was Macka B an influence on you in any way?

I used to go to Birmingham a lot and listen to Wassifa and listen to Macka B on the sound. I loved the way Macka B does his thing and has always done his thing, you know? I didn't used to listen to a lot of his recordings, I don't know why that was. You just never used to hear a lot of his songs. I think that's still the problem in

England now where too many selectors don't play English artists. Back then it was terrible. You were lucky to hear an English artist; if you didn't hear them on the sound, to hear the actual recording, you'd be lucky! Tony Williams might play one on a Sunday, Rodigan would usually play about four or five on a Saturday night... But yeah, I always loved Macka B. But I was more appreciative of the English artists then on the sound system, more than their recordings. I thought their skills on the sound system were second to none.

Does that give a clue as to why so late in life you became a recording artist?

Hahahaha! I've no idea! I ask myself that question very regularly. I don't know if it was confidence, I just never thought of doing it. I knew I could do it. I did compèring and stuff like that on stages, talking in front of people is never a problem. I just never really saw me going that way. It was Kris Kemist who pushed me into it really. I was producing at the time and Deadly Hunta introduced me to Kris. I asked Kris to play guitar on one of my tracks that I was producing. While he was in the studio I went into the voicing room and I started deejaying some old lyrics that I used to deejay on the sound, just for a laugh or whatever, to get the vibes up in the studio before people were going to go and record. When I came out everyone was like "You're good, you

know? You should do something, you're good!" I never really paid it any mind, you know? Kris was like "Solo, I want to record you, I want o record you". I was just like "Yeah, whatever" and then he just really pushed me to do it. So next thing you know I wrote the lyrics and I'd done it!

What's Kris like to work with?

He's a nightmare! (laughs). No, Kris is wonderful, he's very good. Me and him we just need extra time because we laugh a lot, we get on very well and we're very much the same, so we end up laughing or getting into a deep conversation instead of working, d'you know what I mean? So we end up having either just great big giggling fits or we just go off on a tangent and start talking about things, but he's the best person I've ever worked with when it comes to producing, without a doubt. He's very particular, he knows what he wants and he knows how it should sound. He's like me in that way in knowing that something sounds good straight away, but I think that he's much better than me at it, you know? He's very particular in that way - once he knows how it's meant to sound, then any other way is not going to be good enough at all. I think that's the biggest thing I can say, but I think that's a great thing.

You released your album Walk Like Rasta end of 2009. Tell me about the inspiration for

the title track. When did the lyrics come to you?

I played a sound in Reading called Classic Wonder. I joined it just as a mic man and I then became the selector on the sound. Then after selecting it for many, many years some younger guys came in and they started playing the sound and I moved into a more managerial level. If they were struggling in the dance then I would go and select or go in on mic. So while they were playing and I was listening to some of the songs that were playing I was like "I really don't want to be here. I don't really want to be on the mic introducing this song when this guy is singing this nonsense!" Especially when he'd started the song saying "Holy Emmanuel-I, Selassie-I" so my ears have pricked up because I want to hear something conscious and then I hear foolishness. I was never going turn around and say to them "I don't want you to play that, I want you to play roots". Classic Wonder had always been a dancehall sound from when I joined it. I went away and I was doing some tour management work and I was away at the time on tour with somebody. I'd just spoken to JD from the sound on the phone and I was contemplating that whole situation when I first came up with the chorus. I phoned up Kris and said "Kris, I've got this tune I want to do and when I come back I want you to write a beat for this song". I came back and then I went by Kris and sat

down and while he was making the beat I wrote, so we both wrote the song and the beat at the same time basically.

You have a new EP out for Jahtari in Germany, who have a very distinctive style.

Mate, I'm just in awe of Jahtari. Every time, he's just amazing to me. When I first heard it I was like "What is this?" This was the sort of music I was making on the Casio keyboard when I was 13 or 14 years old. Remember the keyboards where you used to have the little blue pads at the bottom and each pad had four different sounds? I used to make music on that all day long and some of the stuff I heard I was like "That just sounds like the stuff I was making on these things here. Really?" But the more I've listened to it, the more I've done shows with them, I looked into it. It's a movement and I respect it so much because they're doing their thing. They've got confidence in their thing, they're doing their thing and it's working out for them. So the fact that they're not following anybody, they're being individuals and doing their thing, I've got the utmost respect for.

Tell me a bit about the EP.

It was a great pleasure to do an EP with them. Everything I've did for them before has been released on the Maffi label through Jahtari whereas this is actually going to be on Jahtari. There's four vocals and two in-

strumentals. There's the track called Music Addict which was never released before but was a massive hit which got I think 40,000 views on YouTube within three weeks of them putting it up and is one of the biggest tunes I perform live. Then there are three brand new tracks never heard before. Put It Back which is a light hearted view of somebody trying to burgle my house basically! Remember the days when people used to make you laugh and smile? I try to keep that element in my stuff. There's One Of The Greatest which I wrote at the time of the uprising in Egypt and is all about democracy and stuff like that. Then there's another light-hearted track on there called Kung Fu Master in one of those old styles where when I'm on the mic I'm like a kung fu master and talk about different kung fu styles that are similar to my writing and my singing. I also want to mention the cover where Jahtari enlisted the help of Ellen from My Lord Graphics in Germany and she's done it in the style of the old Scientist albums with a picture for every track on the EP.

What drew you to Jahtari?

They found me. We did a video at Kris' house; there was me, Deadly, Mikey Murka, and we were just freestyling at the time. Kris came to me and said "Look, these guys, Jahtaris, they said to me they liked the video, they liked the lyrics you chatted on the video and they want you to record it." So then

he said to me "They sent a rhythm for you" you know? I went to Kris' and he played it and I went "Kris, what's this? I used to make this 20 years ago!" He was like "This is how they do it, man" and I'm like "Seriously?" I couldn't get my head round it at first and I didn't voice it and I must have had it for about two months and didn't do anything on it.

So what changed?

Kris said to me "Look, these guys are now hounding me for the recording. Are you going to do it?" so I said "Kris, what do you think? Because I don't understand this music at all." He was like "I think this will be beneficial for you". I listened to it and I could get the vibe, I could get the musical vibe to it but it just confused me if I'm honest. I recorded it and sent it to them, they sent it back mixed and they'd rearranged it. They'd taken my second verse and put it over my first verse and swapped my verses around. I'm like "What's he doing?" and I had the hump about it, I wasn't happy about it at all and then I did a show with them. He said to me he was coming to London and would I come and work with them and I was like "Yeah, of course" and it was the craziest show I've ever done in my life!

How come?

Honestly, this guy turns up, whose name's Jan, first time I met him was at this show. He

gets his laptop out, he sets up his laptop, then he pulls out a PlayStation control and he plugs it in.

I'm like "What are you doing? Are you going to play a game?" He's like "No I use this to control...". I'd got my nephew with me and I look at my nephew and I'm like "What is this?" And then he's gone into his bag and he's like "Solo, look this is the gem!" and he brought out a radio cassette player. You must know them, they were flat, about this [gestures] high, you press Eject and the thing comes up, and they had a handle that falls out like that. I'm like "Oh my...Where did you get that from! I haven't seen one of them in years! What are you going to do with that?" He said "I'm going to record the show on it." I'm like "You're going to record it on that?" and he's like "I know it's old but the quality, the quality..."

A little part of me, a naive part of me, was thinking that they were backward, no disrespect but they were backward. It was at that point there that I said to myself "You know what? These guys aren't backward - they're connoisseurs!" So then, we're ready to do the show and I see him pull this big screen down from behind the stage and a guy turns up with these metal fly cases and open it up and he's got an Atari, an original Atari in there! So I'm on stage singing while my man's controlling, mixing the music with his PlayStation thing and there's

people in the crowd playing Frogger and Space Invaders on the special screen behind me! I was like "What the...???" That was one of the best nights of my life. I realised they were doing their thing and people were loving it.



How can the UK scene get as big as Europe?

Believe in itself. Believe in itself, that's all the UK has to do. There's no artists in the world that are as versatile as UK reggae artists. You put them on a reggae night a jungle night any night they'd be able to hold the mic and hold their own where a lot of other mcees would be out of their depth.

Look at what's going on in Europe, look at the UK artists that are working in Europe. Look at the response and respect that they're getting and know that they're getting that because they're from the UK and you

in turn believe in yourself and do you thing. Look at Mungo's from Scotland, absolutely huge all over the world. And Mungo's are just doing their UK thing and being a leader. Not following anybody; being a trendsetter, because that's how the rest of Europe are looking at the UK - to lead and to teach them, so just be a leader, man.

Do what you know. Don't try to be anybody else. Believe in yourself. It's the best way for the UK to go.

Would you say that that's your own philosophy in life? Believe in yourself, be yourself?

Be who you are. That's where the name Solo came from. I'm an individual, I do my thing. I don't want to hurt nobody or disrespect anybody but I'm going to love you and leave you if you want to go that way and I want to go this way. I don't need to go with the crowd, I'll go there on my own. Believe in yourself and do what's right for you.

Interview by Angus Taylor

Johnny Clarke

"I've been surviving all these years and I'm still strong"

Johnny Clarke embraces new technology

Jamaican singer Johnny Clarke was a veritable hit machine for producer Bunny Lee in the 70's. Nowadays he isn't as consistent with his recordings as he is with touring. But he survives, as he says to United Reggae after his show at Uppsala Reggae Festival.

Johnny Clarke was together with producer Bunny Lee a musical pioneer in Jamaica. In the 70's they began versioning or rellick older riddims into something new and at the time contemporary.

Together with Bunny Lee and drummer Santa Davis he also established the so called flying cymbals sound. Tunes such as his breakthrough hit None Shall Escape the Judgement as well as Enter into His Gates with Praise were in the funky and driven drumming style known as flying cymbals.

Today he is independent and works with a variety of producers, such as Gussie P and Soothsayers in the UK. Mostly it seems like he spends his days touring the world and spreading his message.



"I've been surviving all these years and I'm still strong," he says when we meet in the press tent backstage about 30 minutes after his perfor-

mance – a set jam-packed with classics from the 70's.

Johnny Clarke explains that music is history and that people need to realize that there is so

much great music out there.

“Foundation they say. People need to know about us. We’re part of the musical history,” he explains.

New possibilities

Johnny Clarke seems intrigued with the new realities in the music business and embraces the new possibilities that it gives. He is particularly fond of the fact that young people easily can access music that he and his contemporaries made in the 70’s.

“This music is current to them [younger generation]. It’s new music. CD and the Internet make the music sound new again,” he believes, and adds:

“It will never die.”



Several opportunities for artists

But the Internet has meant a great deal of challenges for labels around the globe. For Johnny it’s all about staying positive and he views it from another angle.

“There is lots of piracy. But it’s both positive and negative. There are lots of promotion opportunities for the artists,” he explains, and continues:

“There are so many ways for us artists to earn money – song writing, live shows and publishing. We survive.”

He emphasizes that it’s important to stay positive and to learn how you can use the new

opportunities for yourself.

“I can’t run them [the pirates] down. I can’t travel to the four corners of the world. I achieve what I can achieve. Try and go for it in a legal way. I’m not suffering and I’m not desperate. It’s all about being satisfied. Hold on to what you’ve got,” he concludes.

Several opportunities for artists

But the Internet has meant a great deal of challenges for labels around the globe. For Johnny it’s all about staying positive and he views it from another angle.

Interview by Erik Magni
Photos by Anna Thunander

Daweh Congo

“The sooner we learn to be able to live together in harmony, it’s going to be the better for world affairs”

On Sunday 25th September Camden’s folkloric Dingwalls club was rammed. The tiny Dingwalls stage was rammed too as Prince Alla shared a bill with old producer Tappa Zukie backed by the fullsome arrangements of the Well Bless band. In an exemplary display of cross-capital solidarity London’s reggae community turned out in force for the occasion - including industry giants such as Bunny Lee, Niney, Dr Alimantado, Little Roy, Mikey Brooks, Dennis Alcapone, Afrikan Simba, Nereus Joseph, Prince Malachi, and many more. Jah Youth had strung up their sound and Asher G played a niche roots selection before the show. But just as important a draw was the first marquee live appearance in London by the smoky roots chanter Daweh Congo. Angus Taylor caught up with him at the soundcheck to discuss his works...



Is this your first time playing London?

Yes although I did a cameo one time. I don’t remember where it was. I went there and the people said they didn’t bring any rhythms, but I had one rhythm because at the time I was doing a song. I was doing a song called Fi Years (sings) “Fi years an years, we been trying for years an years” and the crowd went wild and then they said “We want more!” and the was no rhythm track! So what I did was, someone shouted in the audience “Love is real!”. That was from my first album Militancy from 1996. So I just did that a cappella (sings) “Woman of my dreams, the love I have for you’s real, so very real” and the people liked it. I hope they like this one! That was back in 1999, in the summer I think it

was. But I was really here to do an album for JetStar in 1999 - Guidance. I came back in 2003 and did an album Health and Strength. Now I’m here to do a full-fledged performance and I’m liking it!

Your last album release was Ghetto Skyline. Tell me about how you decided to work with Swedish producer Jonah Gold.

I actually was booked for a show in Sweden. It was Uppsala music festival, the promoter was Yared Tekeste, an Ethiopian from there. He took me two tracks that Jonah Gold had given him and said “Could you have Daweh listen to these two?” So I listened to them and I was ready when I went there for the per-

formance in 2004 in the summer. So after the performance I went to Stockholm with Jonah Gold and recorded those two. I went back to Jamaica and he sent me loads of tracks, and I just did like 10 more tracks and sent them to him.

What was it about his productions that made you decide you wanted to do an album with him?

Well, his rhythms were really nice. His rhythms are nice and I found out later on that his mixes, he's a good engineer, the voice came through clearly. And, it's a boyhood thing, I've always had a fondness for Europe, or a curiosity about it. I thought it would be nice to do an album with a European production team for a change.

Where do you think that curiosity about Europe comes from?

Well, it comes from my whole reading, appetite for reading. I'm an avid reader. I like to read. Although I haven't done a lot of that lately. (laughs)

You're known as quite a lyricist, a deep lyricist. Where do you think that came from?

It came from when I was at school and I was thinking about a career and blah blah, and I thought I could really become a writer. I'd write journalism because I saw, in my mind,



journalists were kind of humane. A journalist would go to the frontline, where there was a war going on, just to see that human rights were being preserved. I was thinking "Wow, that's really noble" you know?

But instead fate took you music instead...

What happened, my first job after leaving school was with a journalist who was working on a book called Building and Construction in Jamaica [Tom

Graham, 1989] from the 1950s to the 1980s. I was his proof reader, so I went through and corrected grammatical errors and stuff. He used to work with the Gleaner company of Jamaica and he was actually the Building Page Editor. So I had a stint there and he taught me how to type and stuff. He died after the book was written, after the book was completed he died. I tried to get into the army and then I thought "Look, I'm going to be a writer, be a singer" - but a writer first. When I was at school and I was doing

my essays the teacher used to read them out to the class as an example of what he or she was looking for. It happened more than once and I thought "Oh my! Well, I can write!"

What's your writing process like? Do you write lyrics down? How do you approach what you do?

I like writing stuff down. It makes it easier to preserve it. You might have a thought, a fleeting thought, it sounds really good and you jot it down, right? And you know where you put it. I've made jottings that were resting in the drawer for like five years. Ghetto Skyline, that track is a track that I wrote in 1992! And ended up doing it in 2004! (laughs) 12 years, Ghetto Skyline!

Did a specific incident inspire that song?

Ghetto Skyline came out of my having been raised in the ghetto in Kingston. I remember reading a Time Magazine once and I saw the Los Angeles skyline. Then I thought later on, you know sometimes you've read something somewhere and it just pops back into your mind one time, and I said "Well, Ghetto Skyline..." because the skyline in Los Angeles looks fabulous, you know what I mean? Tall skyscrapers jutting out and stuff, and I thought that ghetto skyline would really look the opposite, there'd be a lot of squalor and stuff. Stacks,

shacks maybe. (laughs)

There's a lyrical reference to Berlin in there.

Right. it's because, as I said back in the Los Angeles skyline there're tall buildings and stuff, so I thought "Hey, Berlin must have a skyline too" but I was thinking more in terms of East when there was an East and West Germany. East Berlin, West Berlin. So I was thinking, you know that the western side was more affluent, so since I'm dealing with ghetto skyline and the squalor and the poverty, so I was saying "A fire engine is heading east of Berlin" rather than west.

Obviously your voice has been compared to the voice of Burning Spear in the past. How do you feel about that comparison?

Yeah, well I like it. I quite like it because it is true and Burning Spear is a big influence on my music. Well, first it was Bob Marley because the first time I heard a song on the radio and thought "I really like that song" it was a song from Bob Marley and The Wailers called Natty Dread. I was like "Wow". I was about six or seven years old and I really loved the song. Then there was a song with Ken Boothe (sings) "You sheltered me from harm, kept me warm". I loved that song, it was a pretty song, a very pretty song. Then I heard one day on the radio (sings) "No-one remember old Marcus Garvey" I was

like" What is this?" It was really nice. It brought me, in my head I started to see African imagery like masks and stuff just jumping out of the woodwork. Like "Man, this is the Ancients" the song is so ancient I thought about Africa. I was a bit older then, by then I was 14 years old when I heard Burning Spear for the first time.

Have you ever met Burning Spear?

Yes, I met him once. That was magical, man! I went to the studio in Ocho Rios, Irie FM Studios. I was doing my first album at the time. I had seven tracks down already and I used to go back and forth from Kingston to do the recording with Barry O'Hare, the engineer. When I reached the studio he said to me "Spear is here!" I said "What!" I was kind of nervous too I said "Man, I'm going to meet the great professor, Burning Spear man, that's good!" So I was in the lobby and then I got up, I mustered the courage to get up after I'd thought about what I might say to him, so I pushed the door to the studio and there he was sitting in the studio. I said "Rastaman" and he said "Love" and I closed the door and I've savoured the moment ever since! (laughs).

What is your next album project that you're working on?

Well, it's completed. All has to do now is to be mastered and the producer is Jah Youth from Roots Ambassadors, who's



promoting the show tonight, and we have 12 riveting tracks. The title though is King of Kings and I'll be doing that one in the show tonight.

You have a long-standing connection with the UK as a supporter of the music.

I love this place, man. I love this place. Jamaica, where I come from, was a former colony of the British and still today is a signatory to the British Commonwealth. I love Britain... I just

love people, man. All these wars and these things that have been fought in the past and probably linger on today and maybe will into the future, I just pray that it all ends because when I look around I see people, yes? And your colour makes no difference to me because I've got colour too, and not because you're of a different hue to me it does it make you able to fly, neither does my hue make me able to fly or walk on water or walk in mid-air. We're just human, that's what we are. Human. The sooner we learn to be able to

live together in harmony, it's going to be the better for world affairs. God bless.

Interview by Angus Taylor



Queen Ifrica

"The sooner we learn to be able to live together in harmony, it's going to be the better for world affairs"

Queen Ifrica is a rebellious daughter

Queen Ifrica defied her mother and became a rasta. Today she is one of the leading conscious reggae artists with two albums and several hit singles on her list of merits. United Reggae has met her.

Queen Ifrica has music in her veins. She's the daughter of ska and rock steady veteran Derrick Morgan. She begun singing as a child and was discovered in the mid 90's by singer and producer Tony Rebel.

Since then she has released two albums – 'Fyah Muma' in 2007 and 'Montego Bay' in 2009 – and has also contributed to several riddim compilations. Her latest hit song is Times Like These, on the City Life riddim, she pleads for the need of more heroes and sings about Marcus Garvey, Bob Marley among others.

Queen Ifrica is a conscious artist. She also a real rasta.

"I am 100 percent rasta," she says when we meet backstage about two hours after her set at Uppsala Reggae Festival, and continues:

"Rasta is who I am. It's the blood that runs through these little arms."

She's a petite singer with a



huge voice, and can easily switch from straight singing to a gruff Buju Banton style. When we meet she seems relaxed and laughs a lot.

The invisible visible

But the Internet has meant a great deal of challenges for labels around the globe. For Johnny it's all about staying positive and he views it from

another angle.

"There is lots of piracy. But it's both positive and negative. There are lots of promotion opportunities for the artists," he explains, and continues:

"There are so many ways for us artists to earn money – song writing, live shows and publishing. We survive."

He emphasizes that it's im-

portant to stay positive and to learn how you can use the new opportunities for yourself.

"I can't run them [the pirates] down. I can't travel to the four corners of the world. I achieve what I can achieve. Try and go for it in a legal way. I'm not suffering and I'm not desperate. It's all about being satisfied. Hold on to what you've got," he concludes.

Defied her mother

It turns out that Queen Ifrica's mother is one of these rasta women, but she didn't want her daughter to travel the same path as her.

"My mother is one of them. She's living deep up in the hills. But she didn't want me to grow locks. She thought that I wasn't disciplined enough," she laughs, and continues:

"But she saw herself in me and understands me and she is the proudest mommy right now. She's an angel. She's a queen, she's seen as the queen mother in her village."

Queen Ifrica's mother is an outspoken person, and the daughter describes the mother as rebellious.

"She's rebellious for the right reasons and she's an independent woman. She wants to be equal to men. Aside from being a woman you are also an individual," she says, and continues:



"It's fun to see her argue with men. Women don't usually have an opinion. Women are seen but not heard in rasta. It's fun to watch her," she laughs.

Stick to positive music

Being a role model is part of being an artist and as a young artist you need to understand what it means to be a role model. Queen Ifrica says you have a responsibility.

"Reggae hails from the poor and poverty. It's a music that will spark a certain type of reaction. You need to encourage the youths," she explains, and continues:

"Stick to positive cultural music, and I know that young people can love it."

Interview by Erik Magni
Photos by Christian Bordey

Franz Job

“We are carnival people. The music we play and listen to must be happy and danceable”

Sing and dance to Franz Job

One of the best albums in 2009 was Franz Job’s debut *Babylon is Dead*. Two years has gone by and now he’s back with the Curtis Lynch produced EP *Rebel Lover Boy*. United Reggae had a chat with this London resident with roots in the Caribbean island of Tobago.

Franz Job was born in London by parents who had just emigrated from the Caribbean islands of Trinidad & Tobago. But Franz did not stay long in England. His parents felt that they could not ensure a sufficiently secure upbringing.

“My folks moved me to Tobago before I was a year old to live with my grandparents. There was strong racial tension in London at the time, so therefore they moved me away. I know it was a tough decision



for my parents,” says Franz over the phone from London.

Church choir is the foundation

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Influenced by 70’s roots

‘*Babylon is Dead*’ – Franz’ debut album – is reggae deeply rooted in the legacy of groups like The Wailers and Black Uhuru. Franz says he cares about the past and pay tribute to the reggae that was produced in the 70’s and 80’s.

“I grew up in the country

side, where people are down to earth and cares about and learn from history. The country is quiet and very different from the city. That is probably why my music sounds like it does,” says Franz and continues:

“I want to show my roots and where I come from.”

At the age of 17 he moved back to London to educate himself and to try his wings in the music business. After a few years he met sound system operator and record store owner Gladdy Wax. Franz got a job in the record store and worked in parallel writing music.

Different sound from Conscious Sounds

It was Gladdy Wax that introduced him to producer and engineer Dougie Wardrop, the mixing engineer on ‘*Babylon is Dead*’.

Dougie Wardrop is best known for his tough steppers-sound and his work with the Bush Chemists, Centry and singer King General. A type of reggae quite different from what Franz does.

“Gladdy had a very good sound system in his shop and Dougie would come by and test his productions there. We became friends and began to work together. I think I’ve managed to get a completely



different sound from the Conscious Sounds studio than others have,” says Franz.

Hooks up with Curtis Lynch

Franz’ latest recordings are done in collaboration with another producer and engineer – Curtis Lynch. Both reside in London, but Curtis had never heard of Franz until he went to Germany.

“Curtis called me up after I returned to London from my annual trip back home to Tobago in July in 2010. Rocket Sound and El Presidente International Sound from Hamburg in Germany played my debut album *Babylon is Dead* to Mr Williamz while he was in Germany for a show, and he told Curtis about me,” explains Franz, and adds:

“Curtis had a good vibe about him when we first spoke, and he sounded very serious about what he was doing. His approach to his music is similar to mine.”

Fearless new EP

The first riddim from Curtis Lynch that Franz voiced was *Pass the Kutchie*, which led to the song *Special Lover*, a track included on the newly issued EP ‘*Rebel Lover Boy*’, described by Franz as fearless.

“I say a lot of things that are not often said on records these days. Plus, every song has a different style and a different brand of word phrasing, so I guess it’s kind of interesting and unique also,” he says, and gives an example:

“Living in the Land of Glory

[A Million Miles Away] tells the black Caribbean story in Britain, particularly in London. Every black artist that rises from these shores of late seems to just deal with the business side of things and not with any serious stand on any issue that affect black people in this country.”

“Sing and dance to our own story”

Franz’ recipe is to marry danceable music with real life frustrations and get the people who suffer from these frustrations to dance to them.

“If they do, in a matter of time, they will eventually realize that the greatest thing to do is really the easiest thing to do - and that is to unite. All we have to do is sing and dance to our own story,” he explains, and adds:

“At night I work in a bus garage, just like the ordinary man. I see his will, his determination and strength to work and feed his family. And his bright eyes that shine with hope for his children. I also see his tiredness and beaten-up feeling, and wanting to escape from it all. I feel the same feelings and that is why I shout about them. It’s simply important to me.”

Interview by Erik Magni
Photos by Niculai Constantinescu



Junior Murvin

In 1976 when Junior Murvin voiced Police and Thieves for Lee Scratch Perry over a rhythm laid by Boris Gardner, Sly Dunbar and Ernest Ranglin, he had no idea it would resonate far beyond Jamaica. It became a hit in the UK following the unrest at the heavily policed 1976 Notting Hill Carnival, and was covered by the punk band The Clash. 35 years later, with a new album, ‘On Stage’, in the works, the man from Port Antonio with the alarming high falsetto returned to London to play a concert with fellow punk

“I will always sing until my eyes are closed”

rock adoptee Willie Williams. At the time relations with the police were again strained in the wake of the death of Smile Culture, and a month after riots would break out across the capital, resulting in calls for the Notting Hill Carnival to be cancelled. Angus Taylor spoke to Junior Murvin before the show and reminisced about his career and many legendary artists he met along the way...

You grew up in Port Antonio. What was your own childhood like there?

I grew up as a Christian and my grandmother was a Christian. I was always appointed to do something. I pumped the church organ and I rang the church bell! For most of my childhood I had to do things in time. My grandmother sent me to church in time, I had to go to school in time

- so I was kind of restricted under good mannership from my grandmother Essie Smith, may God bless her soul.

Why did you make the move to Trench Town via Montego Bay?

While I was living in Port Anthony my grandmother died - she was my great grandmother so I went to Montego Bay to stay with my next grandmother when I was 12-13 years old. I went to basic school in Port Antonio and attended Montego Bay Technical High. Then I left and went to stay with my auntie in Trench Town.

This was in the rocksteady era. What music made an impact on you at the time?

Definitely. I didn't really have favourite singers, not even now. Just the ones that sent something smooth into my mind. The singers that really sent soothing things to my

mind were Nat King Cole, Billy Eckstine, Sam Cooke, Marvin Gaye. Then in Jamaica you had Ken Boothe, Leroy Sibbles, Derrick Harriott.

How big an influence were Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions at the time?

He was the most influential roots singer. Roots that sing all different kind of music. Like Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Dennis Brown.

What was your first break into music?

My first break never went anywhere. It was actually my second break! When I was living in Glendevon there was a Rastaman named Mr Sunny who heard me singing. He called me and said "There's a Rastaman up on the hill in Green Pan. You ever hear of a man name Roland Alphonso? You can audition up there". So I went up the hill and sang

to Roland who said, "Bwoy, youth sound good" so he told me I must come to Kingston the next week to audition. I went to Beverleys where I was auditioned by Derrick Morgan, Roland Alphonso and Desmond Dekker. But then my mother, I'm not sure whether she built up a story saying I had to go back to Montego Bay but I went back home and it never came through.

Then you got your real break voicing for Sonia Pottinger.

Yes the next one which came through was with Mrs Pottinger for the first song I ever recorded called Miss Cushie [sings] "I KNOW A WOMAN BY THE NAME OF MISS CUSHIE... SHE HAD A LITTLE PUSSY CAT... SHE GAVE THAT CAT EVERYTHING THAT SHE HAVE... ONE DAY THE CAT SAT IN THE ROAD... A BOY ON A BICYCLE HE RODE... AND KNOCKED THE PUSSY CAT TO THE GROUND... MISS CUSHIE SAID MI WAN MI PUSSY CAT!" (Laughs) That was my first song for Mrs Pottinger. But I didn't stay with her very long.

Why did you leave to start working as a singer/songwriter with Derrick Harriott?

I was young and I never meant any harm but I was moving around! Derrick Harriot was my mentor. He was a decent chap. He dressed well, was at tired properly, so we usually liked to see him. He was a men

tor who carried us through. He was a good personality. I wrote Solomon for Derrick and Tang Tang Festival Song and Yah Yabba Yah Festival Song by Keith and Tex. I was smoking when I wrote Solomon and I wrote in about five minutes. Right after I drew the weed a heard the song singing in my head.

Solomon was only beaten off the number one spot by Toots 54-46 Was My Number after he got out of jail right?

That year those two songs came out like two horses coming out of gate for a race. But I don't see the difference - they were just two great songs. The only difference was one song can't stay forever. Solomon was number one and then in came 54-46. It didn't take it down, it was just the time was right for him to come down! (laughs) I once did a show as a youth and Toots shook my hand. Years later I reminded him about it.

How did you get the name Junior Soul?

There was a friend of mine named Jackson who used to live in Jonestown who taught me to play the guitar. Then I met Eric Monty Morris and he taught me to sing harmonies. Monty would carry me to different singers yards and I would sing. One day I went to Stranger Cole's home and he said to Monty "Youth here have soul". So when I went



back and told my friend Jackson he said "why not just call yourself Junior Soul?"

Which other singers did Monty link you with?

Monty Morris carried me to Alton's house when I was a little youth and Alton asked me to sing and gave me a spliff first. And when he gave me that spliff it was like a song came to me and just out of nowhere I started to sing! The herb carried me now and started throwing my voice up and in the air and down on the ground! And Alton said "youth you wicked yunno". I met Alton round Coxsone's a couple of weeks before he died and he was talking about how Hugh Griffiths covered his song and said "I told Hugh Griffiths to cover your song because we are close and him love you". And I told him "remember years ago when you gave me a spliff?" and he said

"Wha???" and finally it did bring a joy that we did a special for a sound together.

There was another Junior Soul in America wasn't there?

That other Junior Soul is a liar! Not a good personality. That next Junior Soul he used to trim me. He used to trim me, Busty Brown from the Chosen Few and Derrick Harriott in Jones Barber shop - one of the most popular barber shops in Kingston. His name was Junior too. But when they interviewed him a couple of years after he told them that he heard about the Jamaican Junior Soul. I thought "how can this guy hear about me when he used to trim me???" Crazy man!

What other memories do you have from the Derrick Harriott years?



Now this is one thing I don't remember all the time - The Diamonds. I used to audition for Derrick Harriott and these three guys came to me and it sounded good. So I went outside the shop and called Derrick and said "these three guy a wicked! Come listen to them!" I never knew it was the Diamonds! Whenever I see Tabby and those guys I get a welcome. They respect me to the max.

Is it true that you auditioned for Lee Scratch Perry at Coxsone's in 1967 long before you recorded for him in the 70s?

I auditioned for the Wailers. Peter, Bunny and Bob. But when I sang this song they said they wanted one more verse so I had to go and stand by a big tree at Coxsone's where Scratch would always be but when I went there he never came. Bob, he talked good things about me. Peter Tosh and Bunny too, I was amongst them when Derrick Harriott used to have a shop near Beeston Street. The Wailers and the Heptones and brother Toots.

You were also in bands with Max Romeo and Dennis Brown for a while.

Yes the first band I sang with was the Hippie Boys with Familyman and his brother. Me and Maxie Romeo were the vocalists in my first band. Then we had a band named Falcons.

Me, Dennis Brown and Wil-low who plays trombone and is in America teaching music as well as Busty Brown from the Chosen Few and a good female singer. A lady called Miss Ivy. Then the band was defunct and the members went their ways.

You did just one song for Clive Hunt as Junior Soul, Curtis Mayfield's Super Love - that got reissued by Blood & Fire back in 2001.

Well this one is a joke! (laughs) Clive Hunt came from the army, he deserted the army. He is a great arranger but he deserted the army at a young age and came to Derrick Harriott when all of us used to go down to Derrick Harriott and play my guitar. He had some friends in America who were looking for someone who could sing close to Curtis Mayfield so Clive came to me and said "Gimme a love... we have to dweet yunno. I've made the riddim for you already." Clive knew how to do the vocal arrangement because he is a great arranger, he plays the trumpet and he did horn arrangements for big stars like Peter Tosh, Bob all those guys. And when I went to sing the song it was in my key because he was a smart musician and from playing the guitar with me he knew my key. His friend rolled a big spliff and blew the smoke in the room then kicked me in there and shut the door and said "sing!" (laughs) But it was a good gesture and

a great experience because Clive Hunt is a great arranger.

So with such a lively scene going on in Kingston why did you go back to Port Antonio and join Young Experience?

It was just feelings - nothing outrageous and nothing bad. Just to kind of cool out. I joined my next band Young Experience and started singing in hotels. They were a bunch of talented guys from Port Antonio. A guy named Jerry Harris who usually played guitar and sang. I brought him into the band. Then there was a guy named Earl Jackson who has the Native Studio in Port Antonio who played the bass. Then there was Linford Richards who usually played with Burning Spear, a great guitarist who is now playing with the Jolly Boys. And then Fitzroy Frank on drums who played with Sonny Bradshaw for a little time. And then the vocalist was Carol Nelson who is now living in Canada and the next vocalist who came in when she went away was a young woman called Amanda Care. We went around playing the North Coast when they opened the big hotels there. We played in Cuba for the Prime Minister's wife Beverley Manley's birthday party and we played for Norman Manley.

Why did Young Experience split?

It went defunct again because the drummer had something

with the bass player and he said he was going to sell his drum set! (laughs) So he sold the drum set and then this lady who liked we came to me and said "Murvin, we can't afford fi make this band mash up yunno. I know a bank manager where you can borrow some money and purchase a van." There was a rich Chiney who lived in Port Antonio called Lee who used to manage the band but Lee said he was not going to sign the loan. So the band split up.

Tell me about how you wrote the songs you would record with Lee Perry. You spent some time in solitude didn't you?

About three weeks after the band mashed up there comes the idea for Police and Thieves! I wrote that in Port Anthony after smoking little herbs at a place named Folly. It's an old building that a lady was trying to build but she used the salt water with the material and it fell apart. I used to go up there and cool out, write songs burn a little spliff and get a little vibes. Three weeks after I went to Scratch and he put in a couple of words. Chris Blackwell came in, listened to it, liked it, loved how I sing. He signed me for three albums but I only did one because Lee Perry and him had some disagreeable things.

You recorded a second album with Scratch that was never released.

Yes with the Apostles band that backed Burning Spear. I carried them there. I named the band and everything. They did the backing for me. The Bradshaw brothers from Norwich were the management.

Police and Thieves got big at Notting Hill Carnival 1976 when there were tensions between police and carnival goers. With police brutality still an issue in London is the message still relevant?

Yes they told me it mashed up the festival. It was the big song of the festival. The star tune. The message is still relevant. I never knew it would be relevant now. I never knew about that. I just sang songs and then it coincided. I was young at that time but there came this great musical vibes in my head where I can't really tell you what was going on! Natural.

How did you link with Joe Gibbs? Tell me about Cool Out Son.

After I left Scratch I went to him and did Cool Out Son and some other songs. We were rehearsing with the band and the guitarist got miserable. I said "Patient man ride donkey" and that was how the song Cool Out Son came up. Every time he heard that song the guitarist would look at me because it was his idea the song came out of! I owe him still I should give him some-

thing!

Tell me about your 1982 album Badman Posse for Mikey Dread.

Disastrous! That guy was disastrous man. I didn't get anything for the album. Nothing but a thousand dollars.

After Mikey Dread you worked with Junjo Lawes?

Junjo was a slick guy. Every day he'd change into yellow clothes, white clothes, yellow boots, blue boots, white boots, all form of things. He was kind of a hip guy. The album Muggers On the Street did well. Greensleeves took it and it sold well.

Both you and Willie Williams had your tunes covered by the Clash. What did you think of the punk cover of your song? Did you listen to any punk music at the time?

(thinks) Lee Perry used to play one or two. I really liked the Police and Thieves version. It just crossed over to see it's friends so I'm happy! I'm happy for any band who sings it back. I wish them the best! When people are brutalised by a certain section of society they grasp for songs that teach them reality and good uplifting things to move with. I wouldn't even say Police and Thieves is a song. I would say it has moved from a song to a proverb. A proverb is greater than a song, I would put it that

way. Music doesn't carry a grievance to nobody. It's just in the lyrical content. Music only talks to you when you play it. Music can't say "hey no play me"". Music can't do that! So as long as the man them sing the conscious things we can uplift the nation with it. But if you deal with violence, violent and downgrading lyrics that call the woman "Gyal" and that sort of thing there "Gyal yuh underwear" and "siddung pon it" I have no business with it.

Who is coming out with the right lyrics today?

You have Singing Melody. Singing Melody is special to me because he told me it was my voice that he used to practice. You have the group LUST - they are a great set of singers. I was supposed to sing with Beres Hammond in a group. He sent for me to sing but I didn't go because I heard that he rehearsed very hard! Beres is a favourite friend and a great singer like Dennis and Bob.

Let's talk about your own voice. You are known for your high falsetto but you can also sing in many different registers. How big a vocal range do you have?

I usually sing high but I started taking it down because the notes were getting too fine. A guitar has 22 frets (although some have 25). Usually when I practice my notes I take it to the 18th fret. Every morning I used to go to Folly house and



there was an island across I and could make my voice echo over there. Then one morning I went to the 20th fret and I just left it and didn't go back. I hit a note once at a hotel and I blacked out after I hit the note. That note was near to the 22nd fret of the guitar so I decided to come down. Once I was with Lee Perry voicing a tune and when I hit the note his console got distorted. He said "Blood-claat, Murvin wha you gwaan with man? The console ah disturb on mi four track!" Because in those times when I was singing if your material wasn't good my voice would make it look bad. It can't fit the voice because the voice was too strong for that. I once went to sing a dubplate at a little studio and when I hit certain notes there was a big problem - computer got mixed up! (laughs) But to train my voice I jog hard and don't smoke nor drink. But I took it down because the notes got too high. I like to sing cooler and more relax because I used to get hot you know bwoy!

You're still based in Port Antonio. Why have you kept such strong links there all through your life?

Most of my songs come from my hometown but it's not that that really keeps me there. I love my hometown and I'm planning to do some things for the younger generation. I'm working on the children thing - some basic schools for the children. I'm an educator in that section.

What advice would you have for young artists and your fans?

It pays to be good. In what you're doing just do it good. Live good, that's my saying. Because it will come back for you to enjoy it or it will come back to haunt you. Tell my fans I wish the best for them and love them and I will always sing until my eyes are closed.

Interview by Angus Taylor
Photos by Veronique Skelsey

The Upsessions Below The Belt



An enjoyable ride on some refreshed early reggae sounds.

These self confessed, track suit wearing, rude boys from Holland are back with their third album that contains yet more ska and rocksteady infused grooves that follow on from where 2009s 'Beat You

Reggae' left off with some, at times, crazy lyrics and most importantly that infectious up-beat feel.

The album opens with a shoot out on Mocca Cowboy Rides Again and ends with a Gunfight On The Westbank Of The Mississippi and despite a similar theme in their titles the two songs couldn't be more different with the later being something of a brooding in-

strumental, with sombre trombone while the album opener is bright and vivacious with big spaghetti western style horn arrangements. Sandwiched in between is some traditional sounding ska of Oh Cinnamon and Lucile, the rocksteady breeze of Ease Up, Adina and Cool & Deadly plus the funky reggae aspirations of Prince Naseem and the album title track Below The Belt amongst others.

Vocalist Boss van Trigt is not the strongest, but he has improved since their previous outing but still works best when he's going for a DJ style that has just an inkling of I-Roy about it.

This album offers nothing that hasn't been heard before, but that said with its mix of styles and elements of fun from a band that doesn't take its self too seriously it makes for an enjoyable ride on some refreshed early reggae sounds.

Review by Karl Pearson

J-Boog Backyard Boogie

Flaming soulful singer does as expected and delivers in a big way.

Few names in Reggae music, on any level, have attracted more attention or been on better musical streaks recently than the impressive California born crooner, J Boog. His burgeoning popularity has become very interesting as, not only has he managed to attract more 'mainstream' eyes and ears, he's also experienced a surge amongst the more typical Reggae faithful and hardcore fans and music makers. Besides, obviously, having pretty good management, J Boog's booming might be traced to the fact that he has made some very strong music over the past year or two and, at a nearly perfect time, he delivers his sophomore studio album [following 2007's 'Hear Me Roar'], the much anticipated 'Backyard Boogie' for the Hawaiian based Wash House Music.

This album is really really good.

Casually, it is perhaps to be



known, mostly, as "that album with 'Let's Do It Again' on it" as the huge future classic Don Corleon produced tune is not only present but is also, unsurprisingly, the project's finest moment.

However, with that being said, as previously mentioned, J Boog has been on a great roll as of late and that continues throughout the whole of this boogie. On a similar note to

the album's major hit are other romantic winners such as the infectious She Give Me Lovin, which features Reggae star Tarrus Riley, previous single Sunshine Girl alongside Peetah Morgan [and produced by the Morgans as well] and the very smooth Shane Brown helmed Let Me Know.

All three would, presumably, do a significant amount of damage if afforded the oppor-

tunity, as would the very strong and hard to shake out of one's brain Replay. That song links Boog with the also constantly impressing and supremely talented Swede, Million Stylez.

J Boog also shows a bit of diversity and flexibility within his skills as well. Although he has made his name as [and will likely always be known as] a Lover's Rock singer and it is his dominant strength, he does switch things up and offer listeners a few twists and turns throughout 'Backyard Boogie'.

Almost surely the musical zig-zag which will grab the most attention is Hawaiian Pakalolo on which J Boog blazes with Jah Maoli [who apparently originated the tune] and Spawn-breezie. The song rides the Taxi Riddim and has proven to be an early favourite from the album.

Also check the sterling opener, Give Thanks and Watch & Learn with Jacob Hemphill from the band SOJA - Two very non Lover's Rock and more Reggae-centric compositions - dealing with social, cultural and spiritual topics. Later on, J Boog sets fire again with the mighty Wolves and Let It Blaze, another very impressive ganja tune.

The entire set is very well done. It also shouldn't go without be said that 'Backyard Boogie' is one of the best sounding albums of the year. The sonic



appeal of the album is very impressive and when you fuse over that the excellent vibe coming from the project, the prevailing feel is that J Boog and company really realized and appreciated the magnitude of what they were doing. The results amongst fans have already shown as, reportedly, the album is doing very well commercially and the musi-

cal results were expected as well: Very well done and one of 2011's best..

Review by Ras Achis

CeCile Jamaicanization



Ce'Cile more radio-friendly than ever on Jamaicanization.

Jamaican singjay Ce'Cile is (in) famous for her lewd lyrics and sexy appearance. Tunes such as Give it To Me (about oral sex) and the Sean Paul duet Can You do di Wuk explains it all.

But for her sophomore album 'Jamaicanization' she is cleaner than ever, and this album showcases a sexy yet mature sound.

'Jamaicanization' is a diverse set consisting of 17 tunes (whereof one is a spoken intro by Rory of Stone Love Movement). It ranges from straight modern one drop reggae to ska inspired dancehall, as in Want More.

German Ben Bazzazian has pro-

duced the majority of the album, an album that includes no less than 13 exclusives. Other producers include Stephen McGregor, Tony "CD" Kelly and Shaggy.

Ce'Cile is still outspoken, but her lyrics aren't blunt or lewd. Her singing is seductive, energetic and melodic. And several songs could reach high on both dance charts and radio charts around the globe. Check Up on the Dancefloor to get in a weekend party mood.

But 'Jamaicanization' also offers honey drenched pop melodies, great harmonies and hooks that would make Rihanna and Nicki Minaj envious. OK With You, Cheater or Where You Want Me will hopefully appeal to a urban music fans.

The best highlights are however the Agent Sasco duet Hey with its infectious groove and sing-a-long chorus or Singing This Song with its video game-like keyboards.

With 'Jamaicanization' Ce'Cile has shown that she's a force that could put up a fight with U.S. RnB artists for the top spots in the urban music charts.

Review by Erik Magni

Ruff Scott Roots And Culture

Ruffing Up and Smoothing Out.

If you're a reggae artist and you release an album called 'Roots and Culture', you had best be certain that the music is reflective of such a title and that yours is a voice strong and distinctive enough to overcome a title that's, well, kind of generic.

Ruff Scott hails from Manchester, Jamaica but has spent most of his life in New York City. And as far as his having a distinctive voice, his growling but clear singjay style was one I'd already heard and enjoyed on a few reggae compilations originating in the NYC vicinity.

'Roots and Culture' is the first full length set of Ruff Scott works I've latched on to and he's impressive throughout, handily propelling the opening title track with his bouncing cadences and scoring on the pair

of praise songs that follow, Forward Ever and He is Real, the latter a tight straddling of roots and dancehall. After that conscious threesome, Scott is entitled to veer off into lover's rock territory, which he does on Make You Smile, complete with r & b overtones, female response vocals, and, most importantly, Scott dialing back

just because they can, Ruff Scott fully understands the symbiosis between lead vocals and backing tracks and makes as much clear in keeping his voice complimentary to the varied riddims. So he goes full throttle when necessary, as on the soca grooves of Don't Waste My Time and Good Vibration, but mellows for songs like the lovely Steal Your Joy, a stand-out track with an almost Lusafrican feel to its arrangement.

The musical ground Scott covers -ranging from healthy eating and exercise habits to partaking of a little herb- is nice and wide, and his array of toasts, scats, squeaks, falsetto jumps and straight ahead singing always suits what he's on about. Backed by a crew called the Lystyle Band (which in-

cludes multi-instrumentalist and producer Julien C. Paul), Scott lays expertly into a set of refreshing reggae while holding to the belief that roots and culture includes doses of fun.

Review by Tom Orr



I-Wayne Life Teachings

A lyrically and musically uncompromising work.

Milky voiced Portmore singer I-Wayne's third album is strong medicine. Musically it is consummate modern roots reggae and dancehall music. Lyrically it is equally uncompromising: issuing a series of proscriptions on all aspects of behaviour from the political to the personal, from the social to the criminal. In these times its rare that a reggae album be made with the works of one producer (Sizzla's 'The Scriptures' with John John/Jammys was a welcome recent exception) and for most albums the trick is to ensure some sense of flow. The huge variety of different sources for Warrior King's recent 'Tell Me How Me Sound' used co-producer Bulby's mix to attain a general overall gloss. By contrast 'Life Teachings' relies on a sufficient number of productions for I-Wayne's contracted label Loyal Soldiers to keep a common thread throughout.

The first section, all helmed by Patrick Henry at Loyal Soldiers and mixed by Shane Brown, is straight roots reggae played by

the cream of Jamaican musicians and recorded in the clear crisp contemporary style. The drumming in particular reads like a who's who of reggae trapezoids.

Squidly Cole gets militant on the thunderous rebuke Burn Down Sodom - replete with cuica drum and dubby tape delays. Firehouse Crew's George Dusty Miller drives Herb Fe Legalize - a sequel to his Handcart Band backed classic More Herbs (included on his debut longplayer 'Lava Ground'). Then there's Kirk "Kirkledove Bennett" on the soulful I Care For You and Sly Dunbar (with Robbie on bass) on ideal woman ode Empress Divine. The second segment moves seamlessly into moody "conscious" dancehall. Boardhouse Records single the Fire Song with Assassin gives way to Drugs and Rum Vibes produced by Imran "Fire Peter" Bassard and Brendan Murphy and the Rasta sermon Wise and Fearless for Loyal Soldiers affiliate Ronald "Sonny Spoon" Wright. Finally we go back to Loyal Soldiers one drop (for the scathingly anti Babylonian title track) and the odd hip hop influence (Etana duet Life Joy) - the perfect synthesis of old and new.



Those who expect every album to be a vast progression in sound will not find what they seek here. This is the same I-Wayne: whose cherubic voice still contrasts wildly with the unflinching earthiness of his words (defecation, parasites and venereal disease are common images and metaphors). He still flits between one drop, hip hop and dancehall maintaining his declamatory Rasta message all the while. He targets all forms of perceived wrongdoing from rapists, drug dealers and heavyhanded police to dietary and, more contentiously, sexual practice (although it should be noted that he focuses on the acts themselves rather than singling out any group of people). The result is a subtle refinement of his considerable talents across his strongest set yet - in every sense of the word.

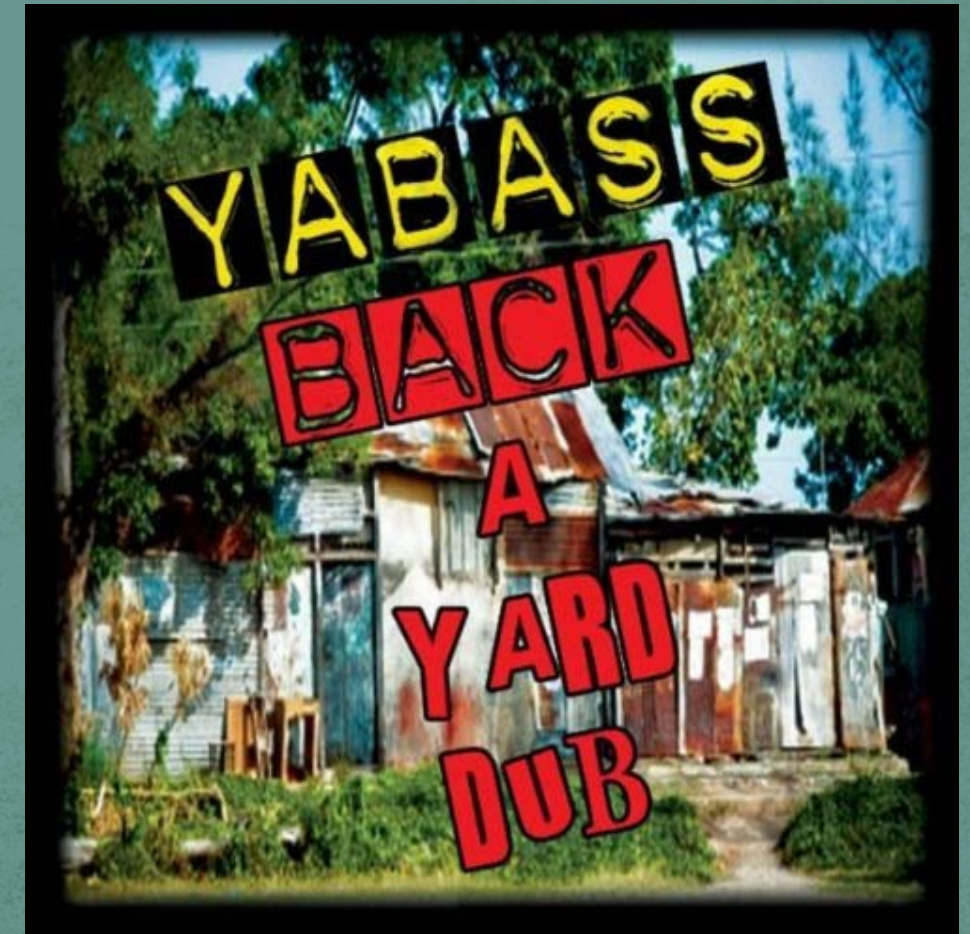
Review by Angus Taylor

Yabass – Back A Yard Dub

A true underground foundation dub engineer.

During the past five years or so dub engineer and multi instrumentalist YABASS has frequented various artist community websites with his foundation dub sounds. He has been in various bands most notably Creation Rockers with fellow producer The Manor and players Drummie Dan, Papa D and Mac although his musical repertoire goes back to the 1970s having appeared on an Alton Ellis single and having played in session with the Skin Flesh & Bones band at Chalk Farm studio to name check but 2 adventures from time and now, right up to date -and surprisingly to many- his first ever album release, a 12 track classic style dub offering entitled 'Back A Yard Dub'.

For those of you who are familiar with and enjoy Yabass' foundation style of dub mixing and style of playing will be delighted to know that he's kept to his trademark by keeping his famous 'ghost reverb' mixing sound on his drum and hi hat channels (Black Bird Hill Dub) and by keeping his early 80s style deep tone piano in compliment to his sharp guitar



skanks (Tectonic Plate Shift) and (Grand Theft Dub) whilst utilizing the famous bleeps, ping fx and filtering so lovingly used by dub engineers back in the day throughout the album, his bass playing ever consistent. Yabass' sound has a distorted clarity yet is ultimately organic and full of warmth with the music pointing to those classic '79 – '83 dub years. Some of you may recognise a couple or three of the tunes presented in this album for he has revisited his foundation style fondly recognised by underground fans circa 2007-2008

indeed he has finally finished some of his early demo works that were first showcased in raw form on the community sites 5 years ago and they now make their official appearance on this debut release. A true underground foundation dub engineer.

'Back A Yard Dub' is available in stores now on Pheonix City Records.

Review by Gibsy

Bunny Lee and The Agrovators Dub Will Change Your Mind



Real gems on King Spinna's first release.

In the press material for the first release on the newly established King Spinna label – founded by Bob Harding and Dom Sotgiu from the legendary Blood and Fire Records – it is stated that the market is saturated with albums of Bunny Lee produced dubs from King Tubby's studio. That's no exaggeration to say the least.

And that is why it is a sheer joy to listen to King Spinna's 'Dub will Change Your Mind'. Here is an album with genuine rarities never compiled on album before.

The cornerstone is dub versions of four little-known Derrick Morgan tracks. Included are also vocals from Bunny Lee's favorites Johnny Clarke and Cornell Campbell, but also Ronnie Davis, Jackie Edwards, John Holt and Joy White.

It is concentrated around the period 1974 to 1978 and highlights the funky flying cymbals style pioneered by drummer Carlton "Santa" Davis. Throughout, the tough riddims supplied by The Agrovators are superbly rearranged with echo, reverb and delay by the talented engineer(s) at King Tubby's studio.

King Spinna certainly follows in the great Blood and Fire tradi-

tion and offers sublime music that many people didn't even know existed until now. Almost not Bunny Lee himself as stated in the press material.

'Dub will Change Your Mind' is initially released on vinyl in a pressing limited to 1,000 copies. Subject to demand a CD issue will follow featuring three bonus tracks. All tracks are currently also available for download from via the King Spinna website.

Review by Erik Magni

Raging Fyah Judgement Day

It's a long
time/I nuh
groove like
this

Autotune and cheap digital riddims seem to have ruled Jamaican dancehalls for way too long now. There are exceptions, of course, but they rather prove the rule. Roots reggae is still alive in Europe, with more or less the same artists touring regularly, performing the very same songs they got famous for two or three decades ago. In recent years though, a roots reggae band scene evolved back ah yard, largely unnoticed to reggae lovers and even journalists outside of Jamaica. Dubtonic Kru and No Maddz are examples of bands that emerged from this scene, both had some impact in Europe recently.

The most brightly shining stars from that context, if you ask me, are Raging Fyah. The group, consisting of six musicians and singers (all attended the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts), came together in 2006. Very

soon, they amazed local music professionals. When Ellen Köhlings and Pete Lilly, the editors in chief of RIDDIM, travelled to Jamaica earlier this year, Raging Fyah got a thorough cover story - before the release of their debut album. Surprised? Press play on 'Judgement Day' and you will not be anymore.

Earthy, groovy basslines catch you instantly. Slow beats catch your attention, with hi-hats and snares getting good workouts. Sweeping keyboards soak you in, there is no escape. Guitars weep, mourn and skank. Relaxed, distinct voices sing lyrics that soothe you, lyrics that strangely seem to reconcile the infinite antagonisms of modern life. Third World, evokes your brain. Bob Marley, says your heart. Something brand new and deeply touching, says your soul.

While 'Judgement Day' contains only eleven tunes - one of them had been recorded live during a concert-, the tremendous quality of each one makes more than up for it. This is pure, classical roots reggae at its very best - yet it has



a contemporary feel, without actually incorporating seasonable urban music. Conscious roots reggae is on the rise again, and 'Judgement Day' is the best prove to that claim one could imagine. Köhlings and Lilly, perhaps lacking the right words as I do right now, coined the term postmodern roots to better grasp it.

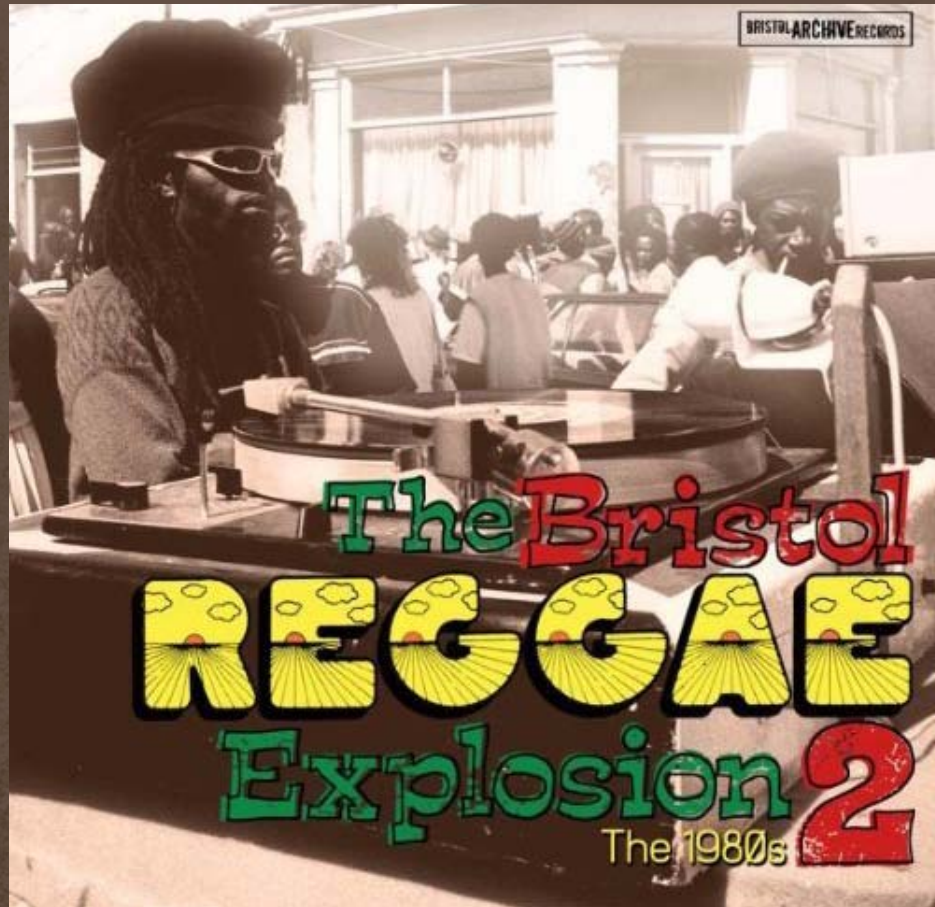
With this sweet-sweet album, Raging Fyah already entered the eternal hall of fame of reggae music. Not having this album in your collection of records would be an unforgivable mistake. I am really looking forward now to Judgement Day - if only to hear Raging Fyah playing music for the rebels, playing sweet in heaven.

Review by Valentin Zill

The Bristol Reggae Explosion 2: The 1980s

Underexposed U.K. Reggae Gets a Go.

I know the British reggae scene has been vibrant for decades. I know that scene includes both homegrown artists and Jamaicans who've made their way across the ocean to be a part of it. I know how particularly strong a force reggae is in London, a city I've twice had the pleasure of traveling to. What I didn't know is how similarly mighty reggae is (or at least was) in the city of Bristol. I've no doubt there was a first volume that preceded 'The Bristol Reggae Explosion 2', but this series is as new to me as most of the names of the singers and bands who created the music therein. Mostly of the roots variety, the tracks here sound at once Jamaican-influenced and U.K.-bred, bearing the same consciousness and pulsating riddims that marked the later roots era in Jamaica. Since it's the '80s being covered, some of the jauntiness of early dancehall can be heard along with hints of the slide toward computerized arrangements that were beginning to invade reggae at the time. Still, apart from



Dan Ratchet and Teknikal's rather inconsequential Ragga-muffin Girl and The Radicals' somewhat better Time Out, there's nothing lightweight about this hour-plus of reggae.

Black Roots and Alfred McIntosh get two tracks each, the latter's a pair of sharply jolting dubs, the former's every bit as black and roots as the band's name suggests. Other highlights include the understated determination of Joshua Moses' opening Rise Up,

the odd but compelling vocal echoes that emerge throughout Bunny Marrett's Times Are Getting Harder, Cool Runnings' poignant Robin Hoods Of The Ghetto and the soul-drenched lead vocal and winding sax solo on Little Eyes by one Lord John Hutchinson. Altogether an impressive set that makes you want to discover whatever further treats might be found at the same source.

Review by Tom Orr

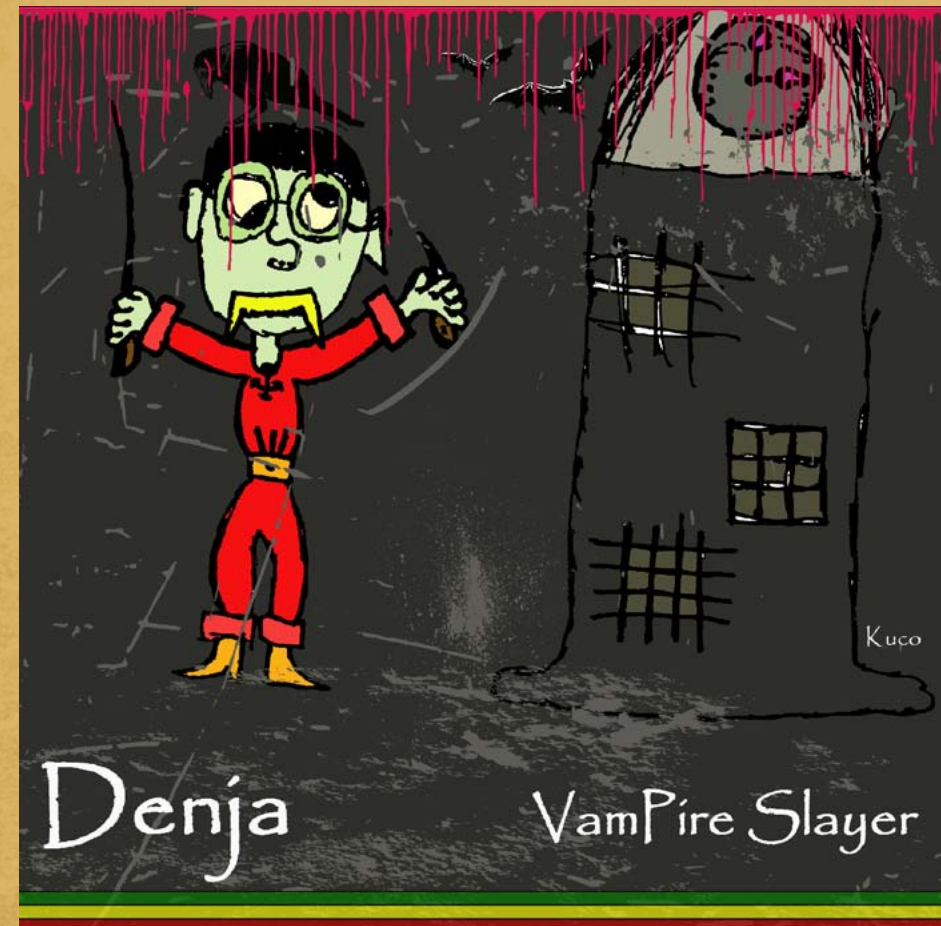
Denja - Vampire Slayer

One of the most obscure albums I have heard in a very, very long time.

The second album from the little known Canadian artist Denja is probably one of the most obscure albums I have heard in a very, very long time.

'Vampire Slayer' takes traditional dub style leanings and throws into the mix some country and folk styling to create something that verges on the unique in a world that seems to be becoming more and more dominated by dub-by-numbers offerings.

It is a very contradictory album in that it's minimalist, yet with every listen I seem to hear something new, it's not full of bass heavy reverberation but is deep in other senses, its short, with many songs under two minutes, but seems longer and despite all the talk of dub its not a true dub album as many of the tracks feature vocals that are more spoken rather than sung and No Fear Of Death, On A Bench, All That Glitters and Stake Through The Heart are played on acoustic guitar accompanied in parts by



some rather erratic percussion.

Its an album that is very idiosyncratic yet very atmospheric and contains many elements of Perry, not classic Ark period that most try to emulate but more on a par with what he was doing just a few years ago. Just the title evokes thoughts of Perry, but is this his take on vampires or more as the cover would suggest just comic book horror....I just can't tell.

It's an album that dares to be different and as such will bemuse as much as it will amuse.

It has many flaws yet still somehow begs to be listened to more and as a reviewer I find it most infuriating that I struggle to explain it. It would be easy for me to dismiss it but if you go into it with an open and adventurous mind you may find something amongst its almost shamanic qualities that you can take from it.

Review by Karl Pearson

Sugar Minott

Hard Time Pressure

A great introduction to the late Sugar Minott.

The late Lincoln "Sugar" Minott is a pivotal figure in the history of Jamaican music.

He started his career as one third of vocal harmony group the African Brothers in the mid 70's.

The group split up after a few years and Sugar Minott went solo and started a new career at Studio One, where he became a pioneer in versioning the label's riddims, originally recorded in the 60's and early 70's. His recordings resulted in the two masterpieces 'Live Loving' and 'Showcase' and earned him the title Godfather of Dancehall.

But Sugar didn't stay at Studio One. He left and started a long and fruitful career as a producer, singer, songwriter, sound system operator and label owner responsible for finding talents such as the late singers Tenor Saw and Garnett Silk.

Sugar Minott's career spans over more than three dec-

ades and he has an enormous amount of albums and productions behind him.

Now reggae giant VP Records' subsidiary 17 North Parade has given it a try to portray him on the three disc compilation 'Hard Time Pressure'. It collects 36 tracks from almost ten different albums from the late 70's to mid 80's and also includes a DVD of Sugar Minott live at Japansplash in 1986.

The majority of the album is made up of self-productions that have Sugar Minott's emotional and honied voice flowing smoothly over laid-back roots riddims.

But producers such as George Phang and Sly & Robbie also turns up on dancefloor fillers 'Buy off the Bar', 'Devil's Pickney' and 'Rub a Dub Sound'.

Included are also some rarer tunes. One of those is the weird Christmas Time with its off-key children choir. It should have been left in the drawer.

It's also a bit unfortunate that it doesn't include any material from his sojourn at Studio One.

Despite one or two shortcom-



ings 'Hard Time Pressure' is an excellent introduction to one of Jamaica's greatest and most important artists. But to get a more comprehensive picture of this maestro I suggest that you also get yourself a copy of the album 'Sugar Minott at Studio One'.

Review by Erik Magni

Peter Tosh Lights Up The Reggae University



The Life of Peter Tosh at Rototom Reggae University.

On the 8th day of the ROTOTOM reggae festival 2011 the eagerly anticipated homage to Peter Tosh was held at the Reggae University. Using his finely tuned presentation skills, the Wailers' guru Roger Steffens brought the legendary Tosh to life for the large and appreciative audience – which included Rita Marley.

Steffens opened his presentation by warning listeners that 'Peter Tosh must not be forgotten'. He can rest assured that this will not happen. And he can take much credit for the fact that it will not happen. To ensure that the show was far from a standard boring college lecture, it was built around 12 rare film clips of Tosh performing and being interviewed. Amongst the best of the clips shows Tosh giving of his very best on a version of 'Legalise It' for U.S. television. Another (most unexpected) clip features him acting in a Brazilian soap opera! This

format was complemented by a selection of anecdotes and insights, many of which allowed Steffens to bring the deceased Tosh to life for the audience. He also wisely used the expertise of reggae authors John Masouri and Colin Grant – both of whom addressed the University earlier in the evening - to add to his commentary on the aforementioned film clips.

Amongst the most humorous of his stories was Tosh's telephone call to the New York police to report his stolen herb stock! Understandably this required the quick intervention of his assistant, who assured the police on their arrival at the hotel reception that the matter had been a complete misunderstanding!

In the heat of the homage it would be easy to forget that Peter Tosh was no saint. Though militant and aggressive, he was not a physically violent man. But being human, he did have his 'blind spots'. For example, Steffens reminded the audience that (early Wailers' coach) Joe Higgs had to take legal action against Tosh to get his rightful dues for the Steppin Razor composition. It was also revealed that some journalists adjudged Tosh to be insane and suitable for confinement in a mental institution! Whatever about that, Steffens correctly advised the audience

that Tosh's judgement was excellent on such matters as racism (e.g. rejecting big money offers to play in apartheid South Africa), equal rights, cannabis legalisation and refusing to accept Bunny Wailer's invitation to open for him on a European tour.

On the issue of the relationship between the 3 Wailers, it was notable that Colin Grant (who claims to 'act the idiot' to disarm people!) pointed out that the most common cause of conflict between Bob, Peter and Bunny related to matters of scripture! Contrary to the impression given in the Steppin Razor film (on Tosh), it was also reassuring to hear that though there had been some tension between these artists, Tosh was genuinely upset at the passing of his soul mate Bob. Notably Grant's work on the Wailers reminds us that though Marley preached inner peace and serenity to the masses, he was so tortured by angst over his race that he actually used shoe polish to blacken his hair!

John Masouri - whose new book on the life of Tosh is imminent - also advised the audience that Tosh had 'the patience of a saint' – which was especially evident in the face silly questions from ignorant interviewers. The author also insisted that Tosh's work 'mattered then and it really matters now' (e.g. on matters

of racism, nuclear war, Palestine). Entertaining the audience with fascinating insights into the artist's life he concluded that Tosh's assassination – which the deceased had a premonition of – was no murder, but a planned assassination.

Earlier in the day the University audience enjoyed a film on trombonist Rico Rodriguez, made by Spanish\Catalan trombonist Jep Jorba (Rico Rodriguez – The Legacy). The film, set in Barcelona, covers the artist's life, where he tells us 'suffering has been my constant companion'. Amongst the many treasures in this legacy is Rico's contribution to the classic Special's song A Message To You Rudy. For all lovers of a live brass section in reggae music this work is well worth seeing, though there will be many who would argue with Rico's suggestion that 'only Jamaicans can play the reggae'. It would also have been interesting to have gotten a reaction to his 2007 award for services to music at Buckingham Palace of an M.B.E. (Member of the Order of the British Empire). Of course given Peter Tosh's comment on Buckingham Palace it most unlikely he would ever have been invited inside the Palace gates!

Closing the evening's proceedings Steffens ran a short clip where he

interviews Tosh in the wake of Marley's passing. On the sensitive subject of who was the 'new King of reggae', Tosh advises that 'they say I'm the new King of reggae, but that's not right, because I'm not new'. Typically fluent Tosh! Steffens, Masouri, Grant (together with author Dave Katz, who chaired the session) have done their bit to ensure that - even if only in spirit and influence – it really is a case of 'Long live the King'.

Report by Gerard McMahon



Celebration Held for Dennis Brown National Heroes Award

Dennis Brown was posthumously awarded the Commander of The Order of Distinction on October 17th.

Twelve years after his passing, one of Jamaica's most loved reggae artistes, Dennis Emmanuel Brown was posthumously awarded the Commander of The Order of Distinction by the Government of Jamaica. The award was accepted by his late widow, Yvonne Brown. The event which was held on National Heroes day took place at Kings House in the capital city, Kingston.

Among others to be recognized from the music fraternity were singer Dobby Dobson and keyboard player Robbie Lyn. Later on that evening the Dennis Brown Trust Foundation held a special celebration in honour of the Crown Prince of Reggae, among those who performed were George Nooks, Freddie McGregor, Bongo Herman, Pam Hall, Big Youth and Marla and Dina, both daughters of Dennis Brown. The event took place at Chasers Cafe, New Kingston.

Report and photos by Steve James



Zion Train in Dublin

The Zion Train pulls into Dublin.

To the delight of their large multinational fan base, the Zion Train (Z.T.) expedition pulled into Dublin station (Ireland) in early October to deliver a blistering one and a half hour set. It is heartening that this European outpost remains on their tour schedule, where they always receive as rapturous a welcome as was extended to their musical predecessors - Bob Marley and the Wailers - back in 1980!

Their show is best reflected in the mass of frenzied youth erupting to the unfolding classic set. Laced with high quality content from their recently released CD 'State of Mind', the show whipped the large audience into a frenzy from the start, and kept them there until the end. The new release is the official follow up to their 2007 Jamaican Reggae Grammy 'Best Dub Album' award winner 'Live as One'. However the set also appropriately tapped into the band's extensive back catalogue, with popular numbers such as Terror Talk lifting the roof, even when it seemed it could go no higher.

The evening's pace was hectic, from the opening provocatively conscious Bloodlines, Forward Ever and Give Me Good Sensi

(all from the aforementioned 2007 award winning issue). By the time the 1999 Beware warning was issued, the crowd had transformed into a mesmerised mass, swaying in trance until the encore prompted the well received War In Babylon - arguably the most popular offering of the evening from the 'Love Revolutionaries' CD - though keenly contested by the Rainbow Children track from the new CD, compiled with the assistance of Aswad's Brinsley Forde.

The Z.T. locomotion has clocked up much mileage since its ignition on the reggae tracks in 1990. Driven by Neil Perch (the band's producer and multi-instrumentalist), with flowing locks he has steered the 'Train' to many stations around the world. His influence has ensured that they are one of the world's most prolific groups, as along with a gargantuan recorded output, innumerable production credits, remixes and song writing collaborations they have also produced magazines, CD-ROMs, Internet sites and even built sound systems.

Twiddling numerous knobs simultaneously, the articulate, multi-lingual, political and philosophical Perch presents as the 'master at the controls', as he steers the multi-carriage Z.T. round many tight corners and through the odd dark tunnel. In the mid 80's, Perch got his Master's degree

in biochemistry and was set to proceed down the doctoral route. However academia's loss was 'psychedelic reggae's' gain, as an evening in the company of the wily Jah Shaka at a sound system dance served as a 'supernatural and spiritual experience'. This was a welcome development as, once again, the evening's show left the audience in no doubt as to who was really running the show.

The Train is conducted by Dubdadda\Johnno - whose vocal deliveries, kiss blowing, manic stage stomping movements, scowling facial grimaces, endless exhortations and perverse postures cum finger pointing would enable him to comfortably pass for the hunchback of Notre Dame! His presence makes for quite the visual spectacle ... don't take your eyes of the action for you will surely miss something novel. Encouraging active participation throughout (e.g. 'show of hands for those who love marijuana?'), a disbelieving audience were advised that they should 'make a granddaddy happy' and erupt even further!

For lovers of a live horns' section, the group make for an ideal evening. A welcome and persistent feature of the Z.T. sound entails the intermittent restraining refrain or lilt of the brass duo, set sharply in contrast with the thudding, echoing bass and provocative, predominantly political lyrics

being belted out by Dubdadda. Practical financial reasons force most touring reggae outfits to pass on the expense of a live brass set ... not so with Z.T., as courtesy of David Fullwood's trumpet and Richard Doswell's tenor saxophone, the audience received full service in the first class carriage for the complete mesmeric trance journey to heaven!

Yet another endearing feature of this band's pioneering dance\dub sound system style is their capacity to effectively mix real roots reggae with a myriad of contemporary styles. Indeed their early albums (e.g. A Passage To Indica), have been cited as primary influences on the techno and dub genres. The oft repeated criticism that reggae has been left behind for its failure to adapt adequately to musical change cannot be levelled at this group. An openness to modern dance styles alongside the staple ingredients of brass, bass, dubwise rhythms and hard electronic beats and strings ensures that Z.T. are welcome at almost any station they should care to pull into.

Unlike many of their musical contemporaries, Z.T. also display a keen awareness of political (mal) practices. Hence they pull no punches in pronouncing on the evils of the world and the urgency required in setting them to right, as themes of Jah, Babylon, war, violence and love proliferate. This consciousness



is significantly fuelled by worldwide touring and collaborations, serving to expose the group to both musical and political developments. As Dubdadda explained: 'we've been round the world ... and now we're back again'!

So the best advice I can offer you is - as good brother Bob sang: if the Zion Train is coming your way ... get on board! No excuses, because we know that: 'where there's a will, there's always a way'.

The Dublin audience had no complaints ... they only wanted more!

Report by Gerard McMahon

Natty King and Ras Zacharri in Paris

Natty King and Ras Zacharri played in Paris on October 15th at Glazar't.

Ras Zacharri performed some tracks from his new album 'New Horizon' released in June.

Natty King did a great performance and the crowd felt the good vibes. It was like 70 minutes full of positive vibes.

For the last track, Ras Zacharri joined Natty King to sing Ruff Road together.

Check the photos of this show at Glazar't, Paris.

**Report and photos
by Jennyfer Papin**



Queen Ifrica, Tony Rebel, Sly and Robbie and Junior Reid in Paris

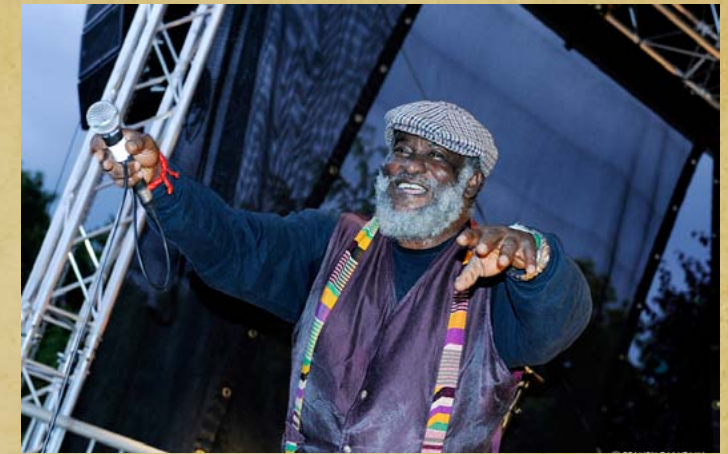
On August 3, 2011 Paris had the great pleasure of hosting Queen Ifrica, Tony Rebel, Sly & Robbie and Junior Reid. They performed at La Plage de Glazart shortly after Garance Reggae Festival in the South of France.

Queen Ifrica entered the stage with vigor and gave a wonderful energetic performance. She was followed by her mentor Tony Rebel who also gave a joyful set for the audience to appreciate.

The first band exited the stage and next came on Rhythm Twins Sly & Robbie joined by Guitarist Daryl Thompson, Nambo Robinson on Trombone and Guillaume 'Stepper' Briard on Saxophone. They played some of their legendary riddims before Andrew and Wada Blood, sons of Junior Reid, entered the stage to sing a Dancehall song. Junior himself then performed and completed this musical evening.

Check the photos of this event promoted by Mediacom.

Report and photos by Franck Blanquin



UNITED REGGAE

MAGAZINE

Artists – News – Articles – Forum
Videos – Photos – Music – Mixes

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

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

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