

UNITED REGGAE

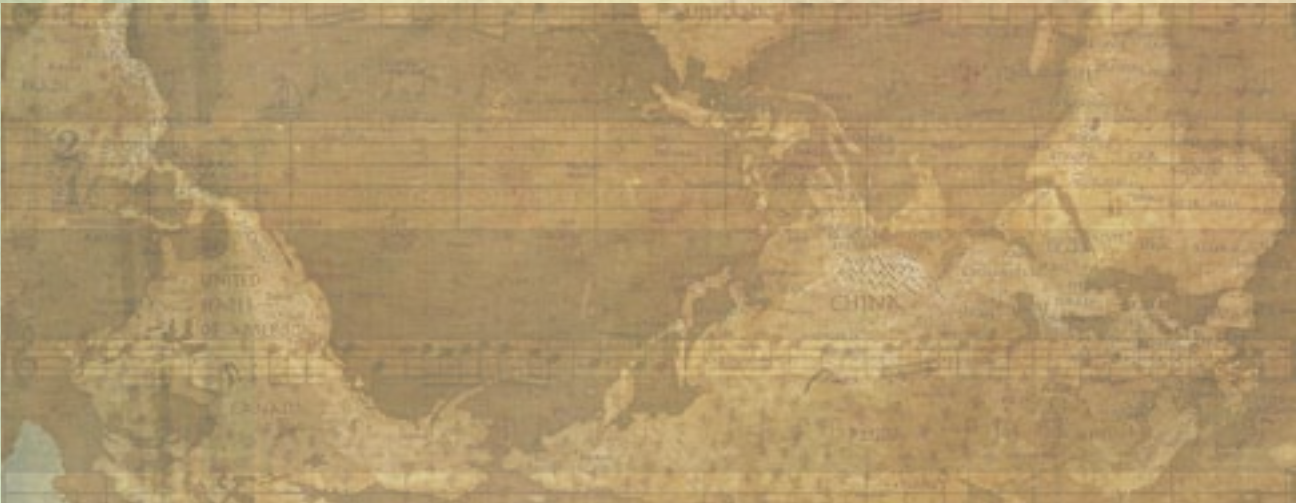
MAGAZINE
#13 - November 2011

INTERVIEW **Leroy 'Heptones' Sibbles**

**MIDNITE
FRENCHIE
DAVID KATZ
CE'CILE
I-WAYNE**

Peter Tosh - Dennis Brown - Glen Washington - Bob Andy
Johnny Clarke - Alpheus - Chuck Fender - Ras Shiloh
Etana - Dubmatix - Kehv - Collie Buddz - Gappy Ranks

★ EDITORIAL by Erik Magni



The world is upside down

In the early 70’s the great vocalist Joe Higgs sang ”They say the world is spinning around, I say the world is upside down.” He wasn’t singing about the state of the reggae industry at the time, but it could certainly be applied to the industry today.

In the eleventh issue of United Reggae Magazine I wrote that there’s a new found interest in authentic reggae in Jamaica. However, according to an interview with Jamaican bad gyal Ce’Cile (page 31) you have to go abroad to find the authentic Jamaican sound. She found what she was looking for in Germany.

And according to Frenchie (page 17) a Swede called Adde is responsible for some scorching dancehall beats that has started to mash up Jamaica.

These reflections are signs of an ever-changing and evolving music industry. Jamaica will probably always be number one in reggae, but the island’s producers are facing an increased competition from around the world, competition that will hopefully gain the industry as a whole.

COVER PHOTO BY MARC ISMAEL

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Brooklyn Bodega by Prince Polo

Prince Polo – a Brooklyn-based reggae and dub producer, musician, and engineer – has recently put out his debut album ‘Brooklyn Bodega’, an eleven track vibrant collection rooted in dub that also incorporates the Colombian music genre cumbia.

The album contains six vocal tracks and five instrumentals. The vocals are handed by Ecuadoran native L.O.ese, the soulful Jamaican singer Kat CHR and rub a dub deejay Daddy Marshall.

Check the aching version of The Godfather theme song Speak Softly Love with its haunting melodica to get the feel of the album.



More King Jammy Specials From Dub Store



Dub Store is at it again with another batch of King Jammy dubplate specials all taken from the original master tapes.

The Japanese company have just released four 7” heavy-weight vinyl records that include some rare dubplate specials originally recorded for Jammy’s Super Power sound-system by artists such as Pad Anthony, Little John, Anthony Malvo, Johnny Osbourne and Thiller U, who recorded their songs at King Jammys Recording Studio, plus unreleased dubplate recordings by Junior Reid and US soul group the Chilites. These dubplates were then played against the likes of Black Scorpio, Killamanjaro, Downbeat, African Symbol and other soundsystems who tried to test Jammys Super Power, at various sound clashes and go some way to show why the Prince became a King.

For more information and sound bites visit ReggaeRecord.com

Chuck Fender and Etana in Europe

United Reggae continues to support reggae music in a variety of ways. The latest initiative is to support Jamaican songstress Etana and U.S. born cultural singjay Chuck Fender on their respective European tours.

Etana toured Europe this summer and made several memorable performances on the festival circuit. The new tour starts on November 2nd in Berlin, Germany, and finishes on November 26th at the One Love Festival in Poland.

Chuck Fender hasn’t toured Europe for some time. Now you have the opportunity to catch him around Europe. The tour started on October 29th in Venice, Italy, and will round off Vienna, Austria.

The Journey by Omar Perry

Lee Perry’s son Omar Perry recently dropped the heavyweight single Love inna Me Heart, a relick of his father’s production Words of My Mouth by The Gatherers.

Now he drops his third album, following the strong ‘Can’t Stop Us Now’, released in 2009.

‘The Journey’ is released through French label Talowa Productions and is produced by Bonfire PR. It contains duets with veterans such as Earl 16 and Anthony B.

‘The Journey’ hits the streets on November 11th on digital platforms only.



Winston Riley Shot



Veteran music producer Winston Riley was shot in the head on November 1, 2011 at his home in Kingston. According to police reports the producer received a shot to the head and arm. He is currently in a Kingston hospital recuperating from the injuries. Over the past few months Winston Riley has been the subject of a several attacks as he was stabbed and shot as recently as September 2011. In September 2009, his studio Techniques Records at 99 Orange street was fire bombed.

He is not the first person in the Jamaican music industry being shot this year. In August Joel Chin - A&R for VP Records - was shot dead and Copper Cat was shot in January, reportedly for robbed for his Blackberry device.

Winston Riley is popularly known for forming the group The Techniques in 1962. After leaving the group in 1968 Riley got into producing and turned out some of the massive hits on his Techniques label. Among two of his biggest successful productions were Double Barrel done by Ansel Collins, the Stalag Riddim which featured the song Arlene done by General Echo, Ring the Alarm done by Tenor Saw, and Bam Bam done by Sister Nancy. He also scored big with Boops Riddim done by Supercat. Both the Stalag Riddim and Boops spawned several hits off those two riddim leading to Winston being one of the most sought after producers in the 80’s. In 2008 Riley did a massive refurbishing of his record shop/studio which is also now a museum and is located on Orange Street in the heart of Downtown Kingston. His son, Kurt Riley, known as the Party Animal is a successful disc jockey on the Jamaican party scene.

A new heavyweight 12” from Curtis Lynch

UK producer Curtis Lynch has issued a new 12” with vocals from Franz Job and the less-known singjay MasSicker. Both tunes come with the respective dubs, with Curtis Lynch himself stepping behind the steel pans on Access Pans.

The riddim is classic Lynch – 80’s and early 90’s digital roots with hard drums and a deep bass line – and will appeal to fans of reggae, dubstep and probably also drum & bass.

Apart from being released as a 12” the four songs are also available as digital download at reggaesoundnetwork.com.



The Cool and Deadly Riddim

Finally, after several billions of years, the leading Reggae producer in the world, Kemar ‘Flava’ McGregor has delivered his latest composition and while, truly, nothing could be worth that kind of a wait, the aptly titled Cool & Deadly Riddim once again reaffirms McGregor’s grand stature in the music - It

is absolutely excellent. The smooth and melodious set finds the producer going in a very familiar direction as it subsequently gives birth to modern Lover’s Rock winners from a variety of interesting sources.



Big Jamaican names such as Marcia Griffiths, Buju Banton [alongside Jovi Rockwell], the incomparable Sanchez and even Ce’Cile feature on the riddim which also includes a roster of full on legendary vocalists from out of the UK. Peter Hunnigale, Janet Kay, Carroll Thompson and Maxi Priest headline a group which also includes the delightfully Jazzy Adele Harley. Sadiki and Kashief & Nikesha Lindo round out of the very impressive lineup of stellar names on the riddim.

Surely you’ve waited entirely too damn long for a new riddim from the genre’s finest, but the wait is over. The Cool & Deadly Riddim from Kemar McGregor is currently available on etailers worldwide as well as on FlavaMcGregor.com.

The iPhone Connection by Lone Ranger

Jamaican deejay Lone Ranger pays, together with French producer Grant Phabao, tribute to the late Steve Jobs – co-founder, Chairman and CEO of Apple and one of the masterminds behind the iPod and the iTunes store – on the brand new The iPhone Connection.

The iPhone Connection reuses some of the lyrics to Lone Ranger’s Walkman Connection, put out in 1984. Both songs tribute applications that has made a change in the way of how we consume music.

It is available on iTunes, and note that it’s not a remix or a commercial. This is a great piece of uplifting reggae music.



Bronco Reissues From Rock-A-Shacka

Rock-A-Shacka has reissued two 7 inch singles on the little known Sonia Pottinger owned Bronco label, on which Boris was credited as the lead artist and producer for the first time.

Boris Gardiner’s musical career started on the tourist circuit during the 1960s where he was a member of Carlos Malcolm & the Afro Caribs and Byron Lee’s Dragonaires.

Towards the end of that decade he started to put out self-produced material and also worked extensively as a session musician/member of The Upsetters, The Aggrovators, The Now Generation and The Crystallites.

The first single features a cover of Groovy Kind Of Love, a song first released by Diane & Annita in 1965, but is probably better known by UK pop group The Mindbenders, who recorded their cover later in that same year and peaked at #2 on the UK charts. Boris’s version is very melodic and features backing by Hux Brown and Keith Starling, among others. On the flip of this is Bobby Socks, which refers to the short socks worn by young girls and uses this as a theme to tell a story of the transition of a young girl to womanhood.

The second single actually features Roy Panton on the A-side, a singer who started out in the early 60s recording for Coxsone Dodd at Studio One with Millie Small, as the imaginatively ti-

tled duo Roy and Millie, where they had minor local hits with We’ll Meet and I Go. The cut here though is the solo outing ‘Endless Memory’, which has appeared on a number of compilations, but never the less the is still a beautifully haunting Rock Steady number with a delicate keyboard motif buried in the perfectly executed hornless backing rhythm. The flip of this single is Boris’s minor key masterpiece I’m Alone from 1969 which again exemplifies his sweet, harmonious vocal style.



The 2012 HELP Jamaica! Charity Calendar

The charity HELP Jamaica! have just released their new wall calendar for 2012. Over the last couple of years this calendar has proved to be extremely popular and sold out very quickly, which when you look at the quality of the photos is easy to see why.

As with the previous two all the



photographers and the graphic designer, who put the whole thing together, offered their photo-material and time for free. Also as before, it is printed on high-quality DIN A3 paper with 100% of all revenues made being ploughed back into helping run and maintain the Education Center in Cas-sava Piece, Kingston.

To grab yourself a stunning calendar (only 1000 copies) and to find out other ways of helping support this excellent charity visit www.helpjamaica.org.

Paris is Burning by Derajah

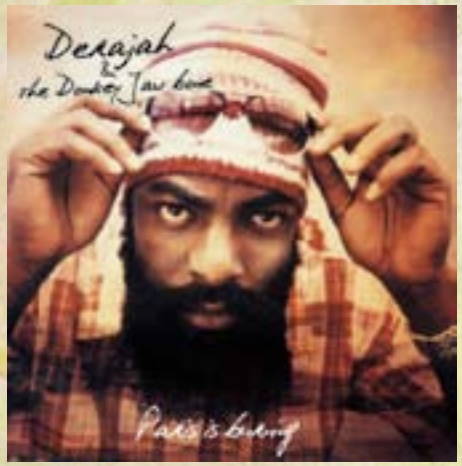
When the now folded French label Makasound did their acoustic Inna de Yard project some years back a talented singjay named Jah Youth was discovered. He sang the deep Who Yeah Yah with great esteem.

Later he changed his name to

Derajah and followed Inna de Yard All-Stars on tour.

Now he is about to release his debut album ‘Paris is Burning’ together with French old school roots reggae rockers the Donkey Jaw Bone. The album collects 13 tracks with a guest appearance by foundation deejay Big Youth, and was recorded in the band’s studio in Paris using vintage equipment.

‘Paris is Burning’ hits the streets through Chapter Two Records on 28 November.



Forward Ever by Mungos Hi-Fi



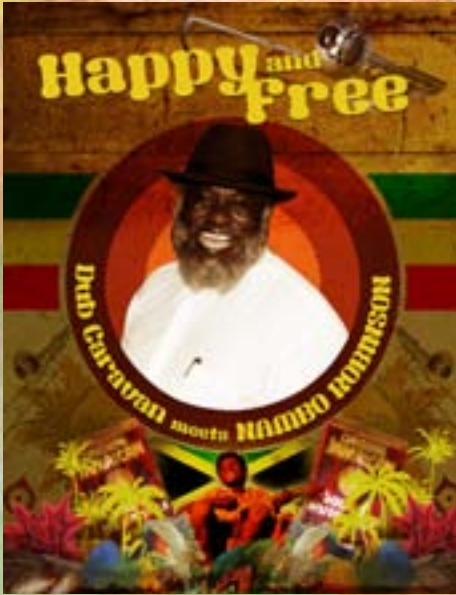
German singer Sebastian Sturm made his album debut in 2006 with the roots reggae and lovers rock effort ‘This Change is Nice’. ‘One Moment in Peace’ followed in 2008, and on October 14th Sebastian Sturm is back with his third album ‘Get Up & Going’, a set recorded together with his new band Exile Airline 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.”

Nambo Robinson Meets Dub Caravan

Jamaican trombone player Nambo Robinson has played on countless reggae songs and worked with several of the is-

land’s most prominent producers. Now he has teamed up with UK-producer Dub Caravan for an album titled ‘Happy and Free’, where Nambo Robinson not only honks his horn, but also takes the microphone and sings on four tracks. ‘Happy and Free’ also holds four dubs/instrumentals as well as two bonus tracks.

Look out for ‘Happy and Free’ on 12” vinyl and digital download on 1 December.



Speaker Riddim

French label 149 Records follows up on their previous excellent riddims – Datta and Brighter Day – with the catchy Speaker riddim, set for digital release on 20 November.

This crisp one drop riddim is presently voiced by no less than 17 different artists, includ-

ing Ras Mac Bean, Mark Wonder, Carl Meeks and Anthony Que, with whom the label has also planned an album due in the first quarter of 2012. Included are also four mash-ups, where the riddim provides the basis for Tarrus Riley & Konshens’ Good Girl Gone Bad, D12 & Eminem’s 40 Oz, Huey’s Pop Lock and Drop It and David Banner’s Speaker.

I-Octane Upcoming EP and Debut Album

Jamaican singer I-Octane – enlisted by Billboard Magazine as one of their 15 Artists Impacting the Indie Scene – has had a steady buzz around him for the last year or so. His breakthrough came in 2007 with Stab Vampire that became the number one song in Jamaica and received the award for Video of the Year at the Excellence in Music Awards (EME).

He has continued with a steady stream of hits songs, such as Lose A Friend and Puff It. He is also represented on the hit song compilation ‘Ragga Ragga 2011’ with Nuh Love Inna Dem and Nuh Ramp Wid Wi.

Now I-Octane is set to release both an EP and a full-length album. The EP – ‘Straight From the Heart’ – includes six tunes and is scheduled for release on

6 December.

Burn dem Bridge is the first single of the EP and is produced by Stephen “Di Genius” McGregor. Other producers include Garry G and Dev Kutta.

‘Straight From the Heart’ also offers a few surprises and the listener will be introduced to a different and more mature I-Octane.

“I’ve been introduced to different sounds and different producers so for me it’s all about growth. I have also matured as a person so you will be able to see and feel some of those things in some of the songs,” he says in the press material.

A Free Gift From Lloyd Brown

November is the traditional time when reggae singer Lloyd Brown drops his annual album releases.

This year, however, due to the special milestone of his 15th album ‘30’, celebrating three decades in the business, Lloyd’s fans will have to wait until February for the project to be completed.

But in the meantime, Lloyd’s production company Riddimworks and JMG Inc. are giving away a free download of the track Private Life (Remix) taken from the new record.



It’s a refashioning of Grace Jones’ 1980 song into a duet with Lloyd featuring the original rhythm by Sly ‘N’ Robbie.

The Free Riddim

Tippa Irie’s Lockdown Productions follows up on last year’s UK Flu riddim with another smooth lovers rock styled riddim.

The Free riddim is a fresh original recorded with live instrumentation and with a host of both known and lesser known singers and deejays.

Tippa Irie himself takes microphone duties on the title track,

where he sings and chats about coming out of a relationship. Other noteworthy cuts include veteran Maxi Priest’s Dance With Me Baby and singer and deejay duo Color T & Leroy Simmonds’ Righteous Love.

The Free riddim includes twelve cuts and hits the streets as digital download on 22 November.



Kemar Flava McGregor and Sinead O Connor

Kemar “Flava” McGregor has produced Grammy Award-winning vocalist Sinead O’Connor’s latest tune How About I Be Me?, a smooth reggae tune that has climbed to number four on the U.S. iTunes chart and set to be included on McGregor’s upcoming compilation Club Dance riddim, scheduled for digital release later this year.

Sinead O’Connor is a longtime reggae enthusiast and plans to collaborate with Kemar McGregor to produce additional reggae tracks in 2012.

The Bellyfull Riddim

After the success in 2010 with the relick of Peter Broggs’ ganja anthem International Farmer, French label Furybass – run by producer Red Cat – versions another 70’s tune.

This time it’s The Gladiators’ tune Bellyfull that gets the Red Cat treatment.

Three artists are riding the riddim. Million Stylez from Sweden, Virtus from Italy and Waterhouse legend Yami Bolo.

The Bellyfull riddim is available on iTunes, Amazon and others

from 16 December. A vinyl release is also announced.



Rare Harry J Recordings Make 7 Vinyl Debut

The latest in the long line of Trojan heavyweight, limited edition, 7” vinyl’s to be released will feature two cuts originally recorded for Harry Johnson.

The first of these is Nora Dean, the one time lead singer of the Ebony Sisters. By 1973 Nora was regarded as one of Jamaica’s best-loved female performers and therefore had many of Kingston’s leading producers, principally Bunny Lee and Harry Johnson, vying for her services.

It was Johnson who struck first getting Nora to record one of her own compositions, Mama, sung over the renowned Liqui-

dator riddim. Despite the popularity of both Nora and the riddim Johnson held back on its release allowing Bunny Lee to jump in record and release his own version over a revamped Liquidator which went on to sell strongly both in Jamaica and the UK. Due to Johnson’s delay his original cut was now a non-starter and plans for its issue were quickly dropped leaving the track to be lost, hidden within an unmarked tape box for almost 40 years.

The flip side of the release sees another unissued cut from a similar period by a band who also worked for Johnson and almost every other producer of note for that matter...the Soul Syndicate. This Kingston-based group, who had been active on the local music scene since the late sixties, featured an array of local talent and soon became one of Jamaica’s most in-demand outfits

The cut that is featured is the instrumental, Natty In Hong Kong which was among a number of sides intended for an album showcasing the group’s talents, but once more saw the producer dither over its release so it to became lost in the mists of time.

Both of these reggae rarities recently saw issue on the ‘Trojan Story Box Set’, but are finally making their debuts as nature intended on vinyl, presented on the revived Harry J imprint and housed in a hand-numbered sleeve.

There are only 500 copies in total so visit the Trojan Store now to pre-order before the November 28th release.

Dubtonic Kru Honored by US Representative and Award- ed the Simba Award



Jamaican band Dubtonic Kru have for the second time in a year been awarded for their excellence and contribution to the music industry.

On the 7th staging of the annual Reggae Culture Salute Showcase they, along with deejay veteran Big Youth, received a Congressional Proclamation from the U.S. House of Representatives.

“I salute Dubtonic Kru for their service and dedication to our community and highlight that their positive and legendary contributions are what make our nation great and I bestow upon you the highest honor as a member of the 112th session of congress,” says Congress Woman Yvette Clarke in a press release.

The same evening Dubtonic Kru received Simba Award from CPR (Coalition to Preserve Reggae), a non-profit organization based in New York with members and affiliates around the globe with a mission to preserve the music. Catch up with Dubtonic Kru at their 4th annual Bands Incorporated concert to be held in Kingston, Jamaica, on their studio grounds on 26 November. The show features five of Jamaica’s top show bands.

Barry Llewellyn of The Heptones Has Passed Away

Barry Llewellyn – one third of the original line-up of the Jamaican rocksteady and reggae vocal trio The Heptones – has passed away, according to Irie-FM. The trio also included front man and bass player Leroy Sibbles along with Earl Morgan.

Barry Llewellyn and Leroy Sibbles have toured as The Heptones during the last couple of years. But the group was at its peak in the late 60’s and early 70’s scoring hits such as Fattie Fattie and Pretty Looks isn’t All.

Even though Leroy Sibbles was responsible for most of the lead vocals, Barry Llewellyn sang lead and co-wrote the

beautiful Book of Rules.

Marvin Gaye's Inner City Blues to Get a Reggae Re- working

Released on 22nd November is a 7” vinyl EP, the first in a series of reggae covers of soul classics from the Zion Gate Music label, which will feature various singers backed by the Zion Gate Players.

The first of these releases will see British based singer Christine Miller give her rendition of Marvin Gaye’s Inner City Blues, which will be backed by 2 instrumentals and a version.

Christine has a fine, strong voice and has previously featured on backing vocals for Tony Roots’ Gift of Life while more recently she did a duet with King Kong on the King Shiloh Records release Rasta Live On. The instrumental cuts see Arnaud Fradin (guitar) and Franck Bougier (trombone) from well known French blues band Malted Milk take the lead. This well regarded band has in the past backed headliners such as Big Joe Turner as well as participated in the finals of the Memphis International Blues Challenge in 2007.

The next release looks to be a Prince Jamo version of Aaron Neville’s Hercules, a song that has been sampled by many in

the Hip Hop field such as Young MC (I Come Off), Biz Markie (A Thing Named Kim) and 2 Live Crew (In The Dust), and due to its rolling nature should make a very good reggae version. As before this will be backed up by instrumentals. Plans are also afoot for an album with all this singers though no concrete details are available at this time.

The idea of reggae versions of soul songs may not be a new one but judging by this first offering and a promising sounding second release this has all the makings of a very good and interesting project.

If you would like a copy of this and the future releases they should be available in most reggae shops as they are being distributed by Oneness Records, Patate Records, Pusher Distribution, Mike Williams and David Dubwise.

Heart and Soul Riddim by Further Notice

Jamaican six piece band Further Notice – previously known as Smooth Expression – started their musical journey at Edna Manley College and have played together for eight years.

During these years they have performed live with major acts such as Damian Marley, Stephen Marley, Nas, Mavado and Bounty Killer.



Apart from live performances they have been working behind the scenes under the name Notice Productions, scoring a hit song last year with Holiday by Ding Dong and Chevaughn, featured on VP compilation ‘Reggae Gold 2010’.

Heart and Soul riddim is Notice Productions latest effort. It’s a smooth one drop riddim with cuts from some soulful emotional singers – Jah Cure, Chris Martin, D Major and Hezron being particularly tasty.

Heart and Soul is available as digital download at the usual e-tailers.

Bazil's Stand Up Strong

‘Stand Up Strong’ is the debut album from the impressive French born globe-trotting Bazil who has linked up with the venerable Sherkhan and Tiger Records to build quite an interest in his most unique abilities. The album follows several very strong singles, including the recently released Dem Fallin’, Don’t You Stop, Celebrate and Critical Situation , which have shown Bazil to be a very colourful addition to the Reggae community and on the full album he seems poised to establish his as an even further reaching type of talent.

Besides the aforementioned tracks, the album also features a slew of potentially big tunes such as Nuh Fraid A Dem, the title track, Walk and others. Tiger Records is really near the top of things when it comes to production and actual musicianship, so you can well expect the music throughout to be world class.

Bazil is still very much a mystery to Reggae fans these days - Get to know him better by picking up his debut album, ‘Stand Up Strong’ - In stores now.

The Land Of Dub

Out now and available as a free download, is an album titled ‘Land Of Dub’ from English musician Edward Reeve, aka Ashley.

Ashley, who has been producing his own music since the age of thirteen has also studied the subject at college and university, where he performed with several jazz and rock bands. He has now put his efforts into roots dub reggae to produce this bass heavy work that is reminiscent of many 70s and early 80s Jamaican dub music. The album has a distinct vibe, which is helped by the use of a wide range of instrumentation which is all played by Ashley, including the sitar, and the use of homemade electronic gadgets and effects.



Premonitions Riddim

Friendly Fire Music drops a follow-up to last year’s Badness riddim. The new one drop riddim is called Premonitions and is just as last time executed by Birmingham’s Friendly Fire Band, with a little help from UB40’s saxophonist Brian Travers.

Several of the contributors on the Badness riddims appear on this riddim as well – Murray Man, Peter Spence and Collie Weed to name a few. The riddim showcases a wide range of vocal styles ranging from roots to lovers to dancehall.

Premonitions riddim is available on CD, digital download and three 7”s.



LEROY SIBBLES

“Jackie Mitto was at Studio One before me and he was my inspiration”

Leroy Sibbles reminisces and reveals favorite contemporary artist

Leroy Sibbles is a bonafide legend in the reggae industry with almost 50 years in the business and countless immortal bass lines and riddims with his name on them. United Reggae met him after a performance by The Heptones at Uppsala Reggae Festival.

It’s a few minutes past 1 o’clock in the morning and I’m sitting in the chilly and damp press tent waiting to interview Leroy Sibbles, front man and lead singer in The Heptones.

The clock keeps ticking and suddenly me, two photographers and another reporter are asked to relocate to a warmer setting.

It turns out an early August night in Sweden is too cold for Leroy Sibbles and he is freez-

ing at the moment. Instead of meeting in the press tent outside we are asked to interview him in a container where Uppsala Reggae Festival’s founder and promoter Yared Tekeste usually has his office.

This is the second time The Heptones perform at the festival. The first time was in 2009 on the tent stage. This time they are headlining the first night of the festival.

“The show was good,” states Leroy Sibbles and fires off one of his many big smiles during the interview session. He continues:

“When I leave Jamaica I know I will have a goodtime. I’d do it for free, but I can’t afford it,” he laughs.

It’s obvious that Leroy enjoys Europe, a place much different from his home island of Jamaica.

“People go all the way in Europe,” he explains.

He’s in a great mood. Laughing and joking around with the people listening in on the interview.

One of them is Barry Llewellyn,

one third of the original line-up of The Heptones. But it’s apparent that Leroy is the front man and spokesperson. Barry sits quietly close to the door during the entire session.

At an early stage Leroy makes it clear that he has probably already been asked all the questions that me and my reporter colleague would like to ask. He seems tired of getting the same questions on legendary foundation producer Clement “Coxsone” Dodd over and over again..

Studio One important

But it turns out he isn’t as reluctant as imagined.

The Heptones – originally a vocal trio that encompassed Leroy, Barry and Earl Morgan – started their journey in 1965. Their early work was for Coxsone Dodd with smash hits such as Fattie Fattie, Pretty Looks isn’t All and I got the Handle. Later in the 60’s and in the 70’s they went on and started recording for other major Jamaican producers, including Harry J, Lee Perry and Joe Gibbs.



“Studio One is important to me. I was just a kid in the ghetto at the time,” says Leroy and continues explaining how the recording process could look like:

“Coxsone was the one with control and he put it out there. Put it on the market. We had no saying and when we worked he wasn’t there. He would come in at night and review what we had done.”

Jackie Mitto an inspiration

According to Leroy, as well as several other sources, the late keyboard player and arranger

Jackie Mitto was in charge at the Studio One recording facility.

“Jackie Mitto was at Studio One before me and he was my inspiration,” says Leroy and adds:

“We were the ones that broke Jackie Mitto. We did Fattie Fattie and he became really popular with an instrumental [Ram Jam] that busted the place up.”

Key role

Jackie Mitto was also the one who taught Leroy to play the bass when he arrived at Studio One as a singer. The pair teamed up with Wayne Anton

in the late 60’s playing jazz as the Jackie Mitto Trio doing club engagements.

Leroy soon picked up the acoustic guitar as well.

But he was not just a musician and a singer. His role at Studio One expanded and he started to help out with auditions on Sundays as well as being an important part of the in-house band at Studio One, variously known as The Soul Brothers, The Soul Vendors, Brentford Road All Stars or Sound Dimension.

“My first recording was a Ken Boothe song and my second was Baby Why with What Kind of World on the flipside [TheCa



bles]. Jackie gave them to me,” remembers Leroy.

He is also responsible for several immortal riddims that have been versioned countless times – The Abyssinians’ rasta anthem Satta Massagana and Full Up (or Pass the Kouchie) are two of the most recognized examples.

Queen Ifrica and Anita Baker two favorites

Even though Leroy and The Heptones haven’t recorded much in recent years, he is up to date with new music coming from Jamaica. And his favorite artist at the moment is a dreadlocked female singjay – Queen Ifrica.

“I call her Queen Africa. She’s no freak. She’s a real rasta”, he laughs.

When it’s revealed to Leroy that Queen Ifrica will perform at the festival two days later, Leroy’s

reaction is instant.

“I’m not going anywhere, I’ll cancel the tour,” he smiles.

He continues describing what makes Queen Ifrica such an interesting artist.

“Her culture, the sound, the lyrics and the way she moves. She’s a total rasta,” he explains and remembers:

“Back then it was a stigma around rasta. You could not enter the premises as a rasta. You couldn’t have a job if you were a rasta,” he states, and adds:

“People today are not rasta. It’s just dreadlocks. Few people have that faith.”

But it’s not just reggae for Leroy. His all-time favorite album is in a different vein.

“Anita Baker’s Rapture. There’s nothing bad about that album. I can play every track. Not skip one. The arrangements, the

production and the tempo. I play it for my bass man. It’s the best album in the world,” concludes Leroy and leaves the room hugging everybody on his way out.

Interview by Erik Magni
Photos by Bartek Muracki
lyrics and the way she moves. She’s a total rasta,” he explains and remembers:

“Back then it was a stigma around rasta. You could not enter the premises as a rasta. You couldn’t have a job if you were a rasta,” he states, and adds:

“People today are not rasta. It’s just dreadlocks. Few people have that faith.”

But it’s not just reggae for Leroy. His all-time favorite album is in a different vein.

“Anita Baker’s Rapture. There’s nothing bad about that album. I can play every track. Not skip one. The arrangements, the production and the tempo. I play it for my bass man. It’s the best album in the world,” concludes Leroy and leaves the room hugging everybody on his way out.

Interview by Erik Magni
Photos by Marc Ismail

FRENCHIE

“Unfortunately we’re just in a receding business”

“Frenchie” got into Jamaican music as a Parisian teen through the Two Tone movement. He and his brother soon cottoned onto the provenance of the best tunes they were hearing and started collecting the vintage ska and rocksteady that inspired Madness, the Specials and co. Regular ferry trips over to London to Dub Vendor and Peckings in the late 80s led to a radio show and sound system as the then small yet determined Paris reggae scene got off the ground. But Frenchie was more intrigued by the bustling culture in London and in 1990, aged 19, got a job as an engineer at Fashion Records via Dub Vendor’s John McGillivray. Under the guidance of Chris Lane and Gussie P he learned his craft in the studio before, in late ‘92, using the £300 he had in his pocket to get UK rhythm kings Mafia & Fluxy to lay a couple of rhythms he gave to Dub Vendor to press. Thus his now world famous label Maximum Sound was born, from which he has put out roots and dancehall albums and singles featuring everyone from Beenie Man to Bounty Killer, from Luciano to his friend Anthony B. Lately he



has created his own UK roots label Calabash and released four new Maximum Sound rhythms, Skateland Killer (based on Eekamouse’s Star Daily News or Gleaner) Ghetto State (Letter From Zion), Sound Extermination and the Fairground rhythm. Angus Taylor chatted to the man who is arguably Europe’s greatest reggae producer for far longer than intended several times over the last year, hence it taking so long for this piece to be edited down into readable - if still rather lengthy! - form...

When you started getting into the music you had to come over to the UK to see the best that reggae had to offer. Nowadays in France there’s a huge scene and in the UK people are wondering what happened. What’s your take on that?

The big difference with France and the UK is that here you have a huge Jamaican commu-

nity. After Jamaica, England is the second capital of reggae, historically. The mass emigration to America came way after and if you listen to most styles of reggae that were prominent in America, even in the 80s, they’re very influenced by Jamaica, whereas over here they really had their own taste, their own music like Lovers Rock. In France, Germany and places like that it’s a fashion. It’s something that the kids picked up, a bit like they picked up hip hop in France. For me it was more interesting to come over here to work in that industry because there was hardly anything going on in France when I grew up.

But at the same time most European people didn’t grow up with reggae in the house so they have the zeal of a convert.

In Europe it’s fresher in their ears because it hasn’t really been there very prominently in

their face, only for maybe the last 15 years. In France I would say that dancehall music really exploded in the mid 90s. Germany's even a bit later than that. At that time reggae over here was slowly but surely fizzling out. And the other thing is the question of generation. Most Afro-Caribbean kids from the third generation Jamaicans, reggae for them is the music of their parents. It's not their own music, they're into grime, hip hop, UKG, R&B and that kind of thing. Music here has evolved into other forms.

The UK has plenty of home-grown dance music...

The number of genres of music that have come from this country is incredible. It was one of the things that always attracted me about coming to live here. In France we've never really invented any genre of modern music, no disrespect to France. The US has with hip hop, rock 'n' roll and jazz and stuff, but most countries in Europe, as far as I know, they've never really invented any genres that have been established as modern popular music, apart maybe from Germany who have pioneered a lot of the electronic music. They've followed what's been happening in Anglo-Saxon countries. My thing was always



that in France for somebody who likes modern Jamaican music, you always used to see the same artists in the 80s. And it was the same sort of music that kept getting pumped by the media because it's a non-controversial, safe sort of reggae, and you can play it on certain stations and feel good about yourself. It's changed now, there's loads of dancehall shows and dancehall showcases and stuff happening now in Europe. There's a big network of shows and the artists have a huge platform now to promote themselves.

You've mentioned non-controversial forms of the music. What's your take on some of the lyrical content that has upset people over the last 15 years in reggae and dance-

hall? Is it a price you have to pay for hearing innovative music?

Any lyrics that you hear from Jamaican artists, they reflect the Jamaican culture. So anything derogatory, anything bigoted, it's literally how Jamaica is. The country with the most churches per capita, more than any other country in the world. Obviously the music is a straight reflection of that. Most of the artists who have been involved in controversy like that, they're not artists with PhDs or who've been to university. They've learned the rough way through some rough streets. That's sort of the charm and the negative of the music. It's very raw, straight to the point, comes from the ghetto life, they tell

it as it is and it's a banging sound straight in your ears, quite aggressive. So it's very hardcore but because it's so unpolished, obviously that message can be quite aggressive to certain people, and not very politically correct.

Some of the lyrics went beyond being politically incorrect though...

I think the media made scapegoats out of the artists but they should have made a statement about the country and the culture. You're not going to go to Saudi Arabia and demonstrate because they'll have exactly the same views, if not more extreme. I would say if you really think about it, it's really to do with each country. There's a world of countries where they might have exactly the same views on a load of things like Jamaica, but they don't get half of the crap that Jamaica gets. The sadness of that is that nobody's really addressed the real issue. They haven't tried to address the real political thing and tried to change it, they just went after artists. The artists aren't going to change shit. They'll stop doing those songs but you put pressure on the governments or you say that the system or the law is wrong then it makes more sense.

Were you surprised by the success of your Luciano album United States of Africa last

year?

To be frank I was surprised more than anything because I voiced the album in literally three or four nights or something like that, so it was a bit rushed. I had to use older tracks and remixed them to finish the album because he had to go to Africa to finish his tour. To me it could have been much better than it was but we did the best with what we could. I went to Jamaica literally for three weeks and when I landed he said to me "Ah, I forgot I've got a tour and I have to leave on Saturday" and I'd landed the Monday, so we had to do everything really quickly. It's a good thing he had some songs written already that I'd sent him the rhythms for, and Duane Stephenson helped us on a couple of tracks, he wrote a couple of songs. The idea to do the United States of Africa song, I came with the title and the concept and I said write something like that and he came up with a really wicked song. He played it for me and then Luci sung it, and Luci then wrote the majority of the songs literally within a week, so he's obviously very very talented like that...to work with Luciano is like a dream, he is just a fantastic human being.

Let's talk about another thing that's still reverberating now, your Skateland Killer rhythm. That rhythm turned up on your last album with Anthony B but it got the big



send-off this year. Is that Eek-a-mouse's voice from the original cut on your rhythm?

I speeded up the record on my turntable and sampled it, and looped it. I cleared it with Greensleeves and stuff. I'd had the idea for it for a while, then we beefed up the drums and played back the rhythm round the loop and that's how it came.. the rhythm was laid about a year before I voiced Anthony on it.

I played it to Captain Sinbad and he said "Oh, you should do a juggling on it" because it was a Junjo thing and he was linked with Junjo for years. So I sent it to Alborosie and to Tarrus Riley, and Tarrus came back with this wicked tune. So I put the horns on it and I mixed it in a different place than the way Shane Brown mixed the original Anthony B one, so that's why it sounds a bit different. The guy who mixes most of my songs is Fatta Marshall. Shane is fantastic with the one drop thing, but Fatta always has that hip hop sound. Sinbad's tune turned out to be one of the biggest as well on the rhythm..

You started out at Fashion which came out of Dub Vendor. How did you feel about the shop closing its doors in September?

It's very sad. There's no other shop in the world who sold more Skateland Killer and my latest productions than Dub Vendor. So as much as things are bad, they can still sell more records than, I reckon, anybody in the world when it comes to reggae. The clients are unbelievable and the knowledge of all the people who work there is phenomenal, so for me it's obviously a big blow. The problem really, and John will tell you this, is that they've got the ability to sell records, but their biggest problem is that they can't get the actual stock to sell - there's not enough good records, quality records, for them to continue to trade and that's why they closed down. Before every week or every two weeks they would have a new set of tunes coming through and they were selling quickly and the next batch would come. The supply of records that used to be quite important for the turnover of the shop wasn't there anymore. So the shop didn't make any sense and the clientele obviously has been shrinking as there hasn't been a new generation of people buying tunes. The clientele has aged with the shop, if you see what I mean? And people after a certain age they stop buying tunes and they have families and they have other preoccupations, so that as well. But they're still

very good on the mail order; they're still there and I hope they'll be there for a while still.



In the past you've been very critical of how the business has changed. Has anything improved this year?

Definitely. It's a changing business that we're in. Everybody has to adapt to what it is today, if you don't adapt you won't be able to survive in it. For me the positive thing is that in the last year there have been quite a lot of decent tunes. I would say that a lot of Jamaican producers the year before last, last year they were trying to do quite a lot of hip hop beats, trying to do some crossover thing that to me sounded really whack. This year I think a lot of people have actually realised and addressed that and a lot of artists are starting to complain on various social networks saying that dancehall is too hip hop, let's go back to the real Jamaican sound, and actually there've been quite good records coming out of Jamaica this year. The problem now being that the way that they're marketed and the way they're

sold, unfortunately we're just in a receding business. It's really downloading that's the medium for dancehall, it's pointless putting any dancehall on vinyl, you won't sell none, so you have to put out a legal download. The biggest problem is that as soon as you put a dancehall rhythm on a legal site it gets pirated about five minutes after it's up there. That's the challenge today.

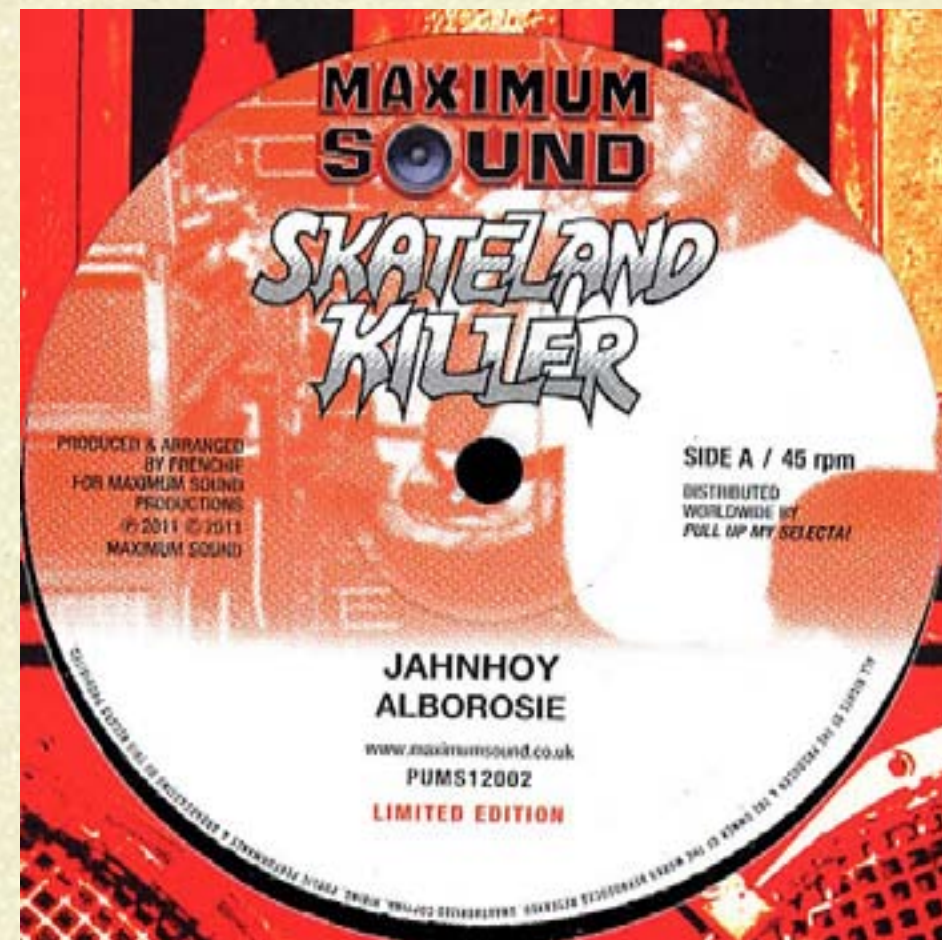
Give me an example of how this has affected your own work.

I put out the Fairground rhythm this year which played quite a lot on the pirate radio stations and community radio stations and stuff. Quite a popular rhythm, it done quite good in Africa funnily enough, which is really good. I put it on download and some of the tracks on download only, I mean you type on Google "Fairground" and you had about seven or eight pages of "Download for free the Fairground riddim". What do you do? The Skateland Killer I put on vinyl, I didn't put on download and even if people uploaded the record and there were a few pages, I was able to take links down from quite a few pirate sites, but I got pirated much less with those releases than with the Fairground. The Fairground has been absolutely pillaged. And every time you find you do a rhythm like that there going to appear more, because the Fairground I would say is more a rhythm for the Jamaican mar-

-ket, for that one drop market, financially it's just completely pointless, you throw your money away. I still had to pay a few artists to voice and stuff on the rhythm but the return is just minimal.

Tell me a bit about your work with iTunes as well...

Well, I've just put my catalogue on iTunes. I've put a compilation called Maximum Sound 2011. It's early days still but I had to move with the times and put my catalogue up there or you're losing sales now and it's a very, very important medium for a lot of people because obviously there's a whole new generation of people for who the 45 is completely alien. They don't buy records at all, so if your stuff is not on MP3 they won't get your music. It's a Catch 22 because then they might source it somewhere which is not maybe legal, so I had to go that way even though since I've done that the surge of piracy of my catalogue has definitely gone up. But you have to chase it, I spent a few weekends taking down illegal downloading links and stuff as much as I can but it's not easy obviously, it's pretty hard. You can see the second half of this year; there hasn't been as much rhythms and tunes released as there was maybe earlier on in the year and last year because people now are starting to feel the full brunt, the economical brunt of the downloading stuff. I see a lot of producers saying to me "Well, it's pointless



putting out records because it's just not making no money now". Even though there's some decent stuff that's come out, and funnily enough there's a lot of good stuff from Europe coming out, a lot of good UK, French and German labels have got some good music.

What would you say the best tunes that have come out this year have been, apart from your own?

The funniest thing is that for the first time, I reckon, ever in reggae the number one dancehall rhythm and the number one producer is getting there is a really nice guy called Adde and he's from Sweden and nobody really don't know about him.

He's done the Summertime tune by Kartel and he's got a new song called Beautiful Life by Vegas as well which is starting to play hard. His dancehall beats are really good and he's not from Jamaica, which for a producer from Europe to build a dancehall beat that is so huge down there I tip my hat to him. He's been doing good, which is a sign of the times to show you that if somebody from out of Jamaica is starting to build Dancehall beats (a non reggae one drop rhythm) which can mash up Jamaica and are as good as what's being made in Jamaica, then things are definitely changing in certain ways that are different...

So final question, what's the way forward? What's the fu-



-ture for the music and how does it get out of this?

I don't know. For artist or if you manage an artist, if you manage a band or if you deejay you've still got a future in the music because you can play out, you get great promotion from all that. So if you go that way... I was thinking of building a sound and thinking of playing out maybe next year or the next two years, maybe take an artist on the road and do all that, but it's a lot of hard work and really and truthfully what I really enjoy the most is making records. That's my passion since... I wanted to be King Jammys when I was 15 years old, that was what I really liked. So it's another business, another trade. So as for the music busi-

ness and the sales of records and everything I would like to be optimistic because I love it and I'd like to do this for another ten years but the reality is that we're on a completely crumbling business and the sales of records are definitely diminishing and the downloads are not picking up enough, the legal downloads to equate the loss of physical and that's the biggest problem. If there was really somebody policing the internet better, if there was much less file sharing and piracy, and the message would be that music is not free and the kids, you have to pay for it, then people would still be in business, still making music. I think that's the biggest challenge now - a lot of kids think that music is basically a free commodity that

you can just go on your PC and obviously it's hard to tell them "You have to pay for this". Up to now no-one been really telling them any different.

Interview by Angus Taylor

Midnite

"It's always about word and sound. These things come together in music"

Message is key to Vaughn Benjamin

Midnite has been instrumental in shaping a new genre within reggae music – Virgin Islands reggae (VI-reggae). They have a strong following particularly within the U.S. and have since their 97'debut album Unpolished put out more than 40 albums. United Reggae got a chat with front man and lead singer Vaughn Benjamin about messages, his inspirations and Midnite's latest album Kings Bell, their fifth in 2011.

Midnite hails from the U.S. Virgin Islands, a small group of islands located between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, neighboring countries such as Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic. The islands have a population of around 100,000 residents and consist of main islands St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas.

Reggae has been present in the VI since the 70's, but it was not until the late 90's that artists from the islands started to get recognition from other parts of the world. And in the front line of this musical revolution is Midnite, a group formed in 1989 with a core of brothers



Vaughn and Ron Benjamin. Their take on reggae is rooted in the 70's with the bass and the drum very much taking the lead. Other ingredients in the VI-reggae formula are low tempo, restrained arrangements and minor chords. And conscious lyrics.

Message is important

“The message solidifies the music,” says Vaughn Benjamin over the phone from St.Croix, and explains why having a message in music is important:

“Message is continuity. Passing on culture from generation to generation. If the parents don’t pass on a skill to their children, a culture could go missing. It’s about telling your story, telling it to the world.”

Vaughn Benjamin speaks in a low raspy voice and gives a contemplative expression. I was actually a bit nervous for this interview since I know that he rarely gives interviews, and his lyrics are sincere and profound, often concerning religion, injustice and the African Diaspora.

“You see, most pop culture is consumerism. It’s subjective egos. Life is about occupation and determination. I don’t want to smoke screen to the people.”

Sources for inspiration

Vaughn was raised in a musical family and says that he learned a lot in his house growing up. His brother takes bass duties in Midnite and his father was a guitarist and vocalist. His external musical inspiration comes from the usual suspects.



“Bob Marley has had a big impact. And the drum and the bass from like Flabba Holt. Sometimes I listen to the bass man alone or the drummer alone,” he says, and also mentions The Abyssinians, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer as external sources for inspiration.

Travels inside

Apart from Midnite’s original sound, they are also known for their enormous output with a total of more than 40 albums in 14 years. To manage this you need to have creative edge and inspiration.

“I don’t fight for inspiration,” says Vaughn, and gives an example:

“The riddim brings inspiration. If the riddim is militant and heavy, you have to fight this battle called life.”

Vaughn also explains that he usually travels inside for inspiration and that he is in a crea-

tive mood most of the time.

“I meditate and go inside. I don’t sing a melody in front of everyone. The music is already there,” he says, and adds:

“I make everything from scratch. It’s not just singing a song. The bottom line is sincerity. I do it for myself.”

Several unreleased albums

With an average of about five albums each year, Midnite might just be one of the most productive groups in music history. And Vaughn reveals that they have more music lying around.

“I hope it doesn’t sound like I’m boasting, but we have lots of albums sitting down, that have not been released.”

I ask Vaughn how Midnite find time to record all this music. I mean, they’re not just in the

studio all the time. They’re also on tour a lot. I wonder if they ever record on the road.

“We sometimes record on tour. The technology allows it today. But I like to be relaxed. My voice needs to recuperate, and it depends on vibration.”

The recipe for the huge production tempo is to be found elsewhere I soon realize.

“It’s just love, you know.”

First album with a Jamaican producer

Kings Bell is the title of Midnite’s latest album effort. It’s their fifth full-length in 2011 and the first with a Jamaican producer and with mainly Jamaican veteran musicians, such as acclaimed guitarist Earl “Chinna” Smith and drummer Leroy “Horsemouth” Wallace.

Prior to the album Midnite dropped the EP single Mongst I&I, for which their first ever music video was shot.

“I never really wanted to shoot the music video, but now I allowed it to happen. We were shooting a legacy. It was an important thing.”

When I ask Vaughn to describe the album his answer is humble.

“It’s pretty good work. The combination is unique and it

was worthwhile doing. As far as reggae music, it has originality.”



Foundation musicians key ingredient

One of the key aspects of the album for Vaughn is the Jamaican musicians for whom he seems to have tremendous respect.

“These foundation musicians are unique in the world and the music speaks for itself. It’s about straight up skill. It stands on its own,” he believes, and exemplifies:

“It’s the patterns in the music and the fact that it comes from the original players of instruments. They’re still here to meet the new generation.”

Speed and patterns

The producer behind Kings Bell is Andrew “Bassie” Campbell, a Jamaican producer who has also worked with VI-reggae artist NiyoRah. Vaughn explains that he targeted speed and patterns, which was important.

When I suggest that Kings Bell is Midnite’s most accessible album yet, Vaughn doesn’t agree.

“I don’t think it is different from our other albums. Just in personality and individuality and in speed and patterns,” he says, and adds:

“As far as being accessible, it’s about word, sound and power. It’s always about word and sound. These things come together in music.”

He is also no stranger to record with Jamaican musicians again. However it doesn’t seem to have occupied his mind for too long though.

“Last night was the first time I thought about it, and it would be good for sure. No reason not to do it. Good spirit and vibration. I’d definitely be inclined again, sure,” he concludes.

Interview by Erik Magni

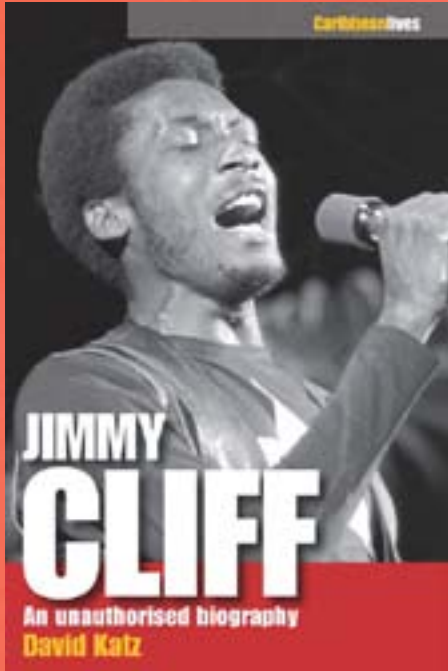
David Katz on Jimmy Cliff

"He is one of the heavyweights of roots music"

David Katz is the author of the biography 'People Funny Boy: The Genius Of Lee "Scratch" Perry' and the interview-based account 'Solid Foundation: An Oral History Of Reggae'. Originally from San Francisco, Katz relocated to London in the late 80s where he was appointed official biographer to Lee Perry by the man himself. As well as a writer, David is a photographer, radio disc jockey, and chairs the Reggae University at Rototom Sunsplash Festival in Spain. His third book, on another of reggae's greatest figures, 'Jimmy Cliff: An Unauthorised Biography' was published this month as part of the Caribbean Lives series. Angus Taylor met David at a London hostelry to discuss the book, its author and its subject. Below is an excerpt of what was said.

Where did the idea to do a book about Jimmy Cliff come from?

It actually stemmed from the series editor of Caribbean Lives, James Ferguson. We both write for the in-flight magazine of Caribbean Airlines, Caribbean



Beat. He got in touch when he was launching the series and wanted to know if I would consider writing a book that would fit. The idea behind the series was short, easily readable biographies of major Caribbean figures, so he asked if I would consider Jimmy Cliff. So really it was his idea!

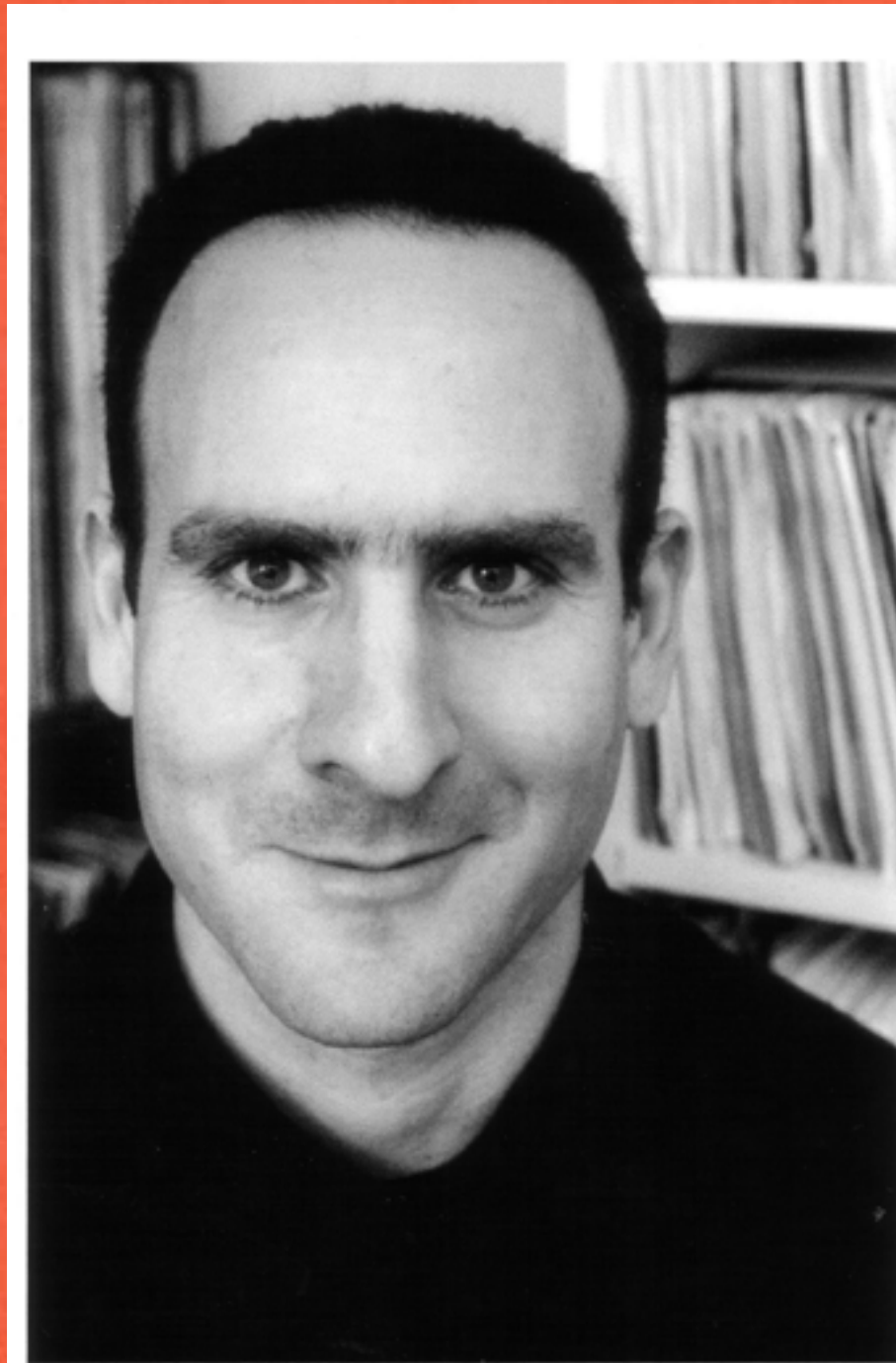
The subtitle is "An Unauthorised Biography." Was Jimmy approached? Did you have some interview material already?

Jimmy was approached, but he just didn't respond this time round. When you write a book about a music figure, my experience is that very little of it

goes according to plan. But I'd met and interviewed him more than once, a number of years ago. That goes back to the time when I was working on my second book Solid Foundation - An Oral History of Reggae. I saw him at a public event and introduced myself, and he gave me his number.

So you had to use other sources...

A lot of the other musicians I've interviewed have worked with Jimmy, so a lot of them had told me about working with Jimmy just because it was something that they were proud of. It wasn't that I had hunted them down to say "Hey, what about this track you did with Jimmy?" They were like "Hey, I did this track with Jimmy Cliff!" or "I worked on this album". They were all very proud of the work they'd done with him and very struck with his input and the way he approached things. When I was working on this book and when we weren't getting any response from Jimmy I did hunt down a number of other musicians after that, specifically to talk about that, people like Squidly Cole. But a lot of the other material is from interviews that I've conducted over the years.



Who would you say was the most helpful source in the process of writing the book?

People like Tony Chin, from Soul Syndicate, gave me a good feeling for what Jimmy was like as a professional musician and also something of his personality, that he had this kind of strong work ethic and didn't get caught up in the

star trip. And Gilberto Gil also told me a lot about this kind of meeting of minds of the two of them, these two very different musical forces that came together for a time, even though they weren't really recording together but they were interacting nonetheless. Gilberto Gil's a very perceptive man so he could kind of hone in on what Jimmy was like, and even

though we were talking about things that happened decades ago he can tell you things from the 70s and 80s like it happened yesterday. And then people like Gibby Morrison who told me that Jimmy introduced him to these amazing books like African [Origin of] Civilization - Myth or Reality? [Cheikh Anta Diop], that he had this amazing library that he would bring the musicians there and they would reason and they would read books. Also people like Aura Lewis, who went on tour with him in Africa. Chinna Smith too.

Even without extensive interviews with Jimmy, one thing that really comes through is how much of his own life he put into The Harder They Come. He is somebody who seems to take experience and feed it back into his own life, his own art.

Definitely. It's often been said that The Harder They Come there was a loose script or there was no script, and it's pretty evident in a lot of those scenes that Jimmy is basically playing himself. That's why he's so believable. It's not to say obviously that everything that Ivan does in the film Jimmy did, but he obviously knows what he's portraying. That's why those scenes like when he's in the market and he goes to try to steal the mango and nearly gets his hand chopped off, that's why they're so believable. There was an edition

of The Harder They Come that was released as part of the Criterion Collection and it has this spoken talk-over with Perry Henzell and Jimmy talking about aspects of the film and that validates that view-point.

Other that things come out of the book are his ingenuity, but also his quite complex relationship with spirituality and with major religions.

He's an intensely creative person and I think he was clear early on that he did not want to be pigeon-holed and constrained by form - particularly once he started to travel. He travelled early, he went to the World's Fair in 1964, so he was barely out of his teens. I think he's one of those people where there's always going to be something good coming out of the pen in his hand and when he opens his mouth you're not going to get something ordinary. I think Jimmy has described himself, and one gets the sense when you consider his evolution and you meet him as a person, he's obviously a deeply spiritual person but he's also someone who's deeply questioning. He's not the kind of person who would suffer fools gladly. In the film Moving On, he talks of himself as a young man in the church community listening to what the preacher's saying and there's some truth in there but there's a lot of things that don't make sense. He's not the kind of person who's going to sit there and think "Well, this doesn't sound right to me but



the preacher's saying it so it must be true" or "My teacher's saying it" or "My parent" or whoever it may be. I think he's always been that way and as time's gone on even more questioning and not less.

Jimmy wasn't as public with his involvement in Islam as say Prince Buster or Muhammad Ali were. In the book you suggest his Pentecostal upbringing expresses itself through his music.

As you say, he had this Pentecostal upbringing but he'd already partially rejected it, but with Jimmy Cliff he doesn't throw away the baby with the bathwater, he says "Ok, there are things in this teaching and interpretation of Christianity that I know aren't right" but that doesn't mean that he's going to outright reject Christianity. So he finds his way to Islam first through the Nation of Islam and then later he gets

more into traditional Islam and then eventually African Islam as practised by the Baye Fall Mourides in Senegal. Even in that time when he was Nation of Islam or between Nation of Islam and traditional Islam he's still travelling with the Bible, he's still travelling with the New Testament as well as the Koran. So he's never rejected one or the other.

He also went through a phase of getting very close to Rasta. What was his relationship with Rastafarianism?

There's an interview with Jimmy where he does say that he feels entitled to claim Rasta as his own and to describe himself as part of Rasta. When he was a young man there was a Rastaman in his community that everybody shunned except his father would talk to him, and this man fascinated him. Then when Jimmy first comes to Kingston he's heavily inspired by the Rasta camp



that Prince Emmanuel Edwards had [the Bobo Shanti order]. So even though he himself was not Rasta at that time and did not identify himself as Rasta, he was already drawing from the Rastafarian influence. He was very close to Mortimer Planno, the Rasta elder and leader. Planno becomes a kind

of advisor, they have a series of reasonings. This is at that time where the Oneness band was led by Earl Chinna Smith. Mutabaruka is involved and Jimmy helps to launch Muta's career and then later people like Ini Kamoze and so on. I think there is that sense that Jimmy is very much a Rasta in his own way,

in the same way that in a certain sense you could say if you look at Lee Scratch Perry and his version of Rastafari is very, very different from any other being on the planet's idea of what Rastafari is supposed to be. So maybe with Jimmy it's a little bit similar.

The way the mainstream paints Jimmy Cliff is that he wasn't a roots reggae artist. But the book mentions two of my favourite of his roots singles - Let's Turn The Table, on his own Sun Power imprint and Under Pressure.

I'm so glad you said that because that for me was very important to bring out in this book, to highlight that because he's done, as you say, he's done a number of these very incredible, very, very deep roots tunes that are up there with the best and lot of people don't know them or if they ever heard them they forgot it or maybe they didn't even know if was Jimmy Cliff. It's like you say, there's kind of a reggae snobbery about Jimmy Cliff, that he isn't really one of the greats because his music's too diluted, it's too focussed on pop but it's really a totally unfair and incorrect assertion. He is one of the heavyweights of roots music even though he has also done records that were pop. The two are not mutually exclusive. Last time I was in Jamaica I went to this place called Little Ochie in a little town called Alligator Pond, the

sound system was playing foundation dancehall, you know early 80s Junjo Lawes type of stuff, then they were bringing them a little more up to date, then for about an hour they played Madonna, early 1980s Madonna. Jamaicans love pop music, and this idea as well that Jimmy's pop records were never popular in Jamaica is also a total myth. Reggae Night topped the charts in Jamaica for months.

The way Jimmy is received in Africa and in Brazil is one of the most compelling parts of the book and, for all those purists, shines a light on what it is about him that was so special.

João Jorge, the leader of Olo-dum, talks about how significant it was for the people in Salvador up in Bahia in northern Brazil, the more African part, the black part of Brazil. For Jimmy to come, for them it was like this huge inspiration that they really drew from. Olo-dum created a kind of revolution in music and also in terms of their own local society, and Jimmy Cliff was part of the inspiration they drew from. Peter Tosh was as well, but Jimmy went there and ended up living amongst them and that for them was another heavily important catalyst. Béco Dranoff, this Brazilian music producer and promoter talks about when Jimmy had returned to Brazil for the first time to go to São Luís do Maranhão, this state

Maranhão in the north-east, close to the Amazon basin, which is where reggae first had a foothold. He said there were so many people at the airport that Jimmy and his band had to be taken out of the place through the pilot's door and put through a side exit to get them out of the airport without the public knowing! And then this just incredible outpouring and the entire community turning out en masse for this free public performance that when a light tower starts to collapse somehow the crowd manage to make it stand back up again because there's so many people there.

Jimmy Cliff has made many trips to Africa including South Africa in 1980.

Aura Lewis talks specifically about when he was in Africa, she's from Johannesburg, how in Senegal everywhere they went entire villages would be lining the roadsides to cheer for Jimmy. Also the guitarist, Trevor Star talks about when they first went to Nigeria that Jimmy was just treated like a god. So you get this sense of how significant he was to those people there. I've had South Africans, both black and white, they have said to me that everyone remembers when he performed at that stadium in Soweto. He faced a lot of flak for that decision. For years after that event he was still facing sanctions and all kinds of repercussions from it, but he said to me that he knows what

he did was right and he knows that the very people who were protesting about him going there, he's on the same side as them. As he says it in the book, they did it their way and he's doing it his way.

In Senegal... entire villages would be lining the roadsides to cheer for Jimmy

Finally there are some very evocative but negative descriptions of Jimmy of arriving in London to work with Chris Blackwell. Would you say any of your own experiences in London have fed into that? Greasy overcooked food and miserable grey days?

(laughs) Yeah. You know in the introduction to my book People Funny Boy I talk about trading my life in northern California for "the grey chaos" of London. And anyone who's ever been an immigrant here, particularly from a very different culture and somewhere where the temperature, the environment and the lifestyle is very different, can probably relate to what Jimmy went through at that time. Yeah, my own experiences weren't quite like Jimmy's and I came decades later. I'm sure it was much harder for Jimmy. But I can relate to what he must have felt at that time from the way I felt when I came!

Interview by Angus Taylor



CECILE

"I've experienced the hostility towards Jamaicans and I want to change the perception of me"

Ce’Cile found Jamaican reggae in Europe

The self-imposed bad gyal Ce’Cile dropped her second full-length album Jamaicanization in August, for which she went to Europe to find the Jamaican reggae sound she was looking for. United Reggae got a chat with her when she stopped by Paris on her European promotional tour.

Ce’cile is a nice breeze in the heavily male dominated reggae and dancehall scene. Just like Lady Saw she has made a name for herself by being outspoken and delivering fierce and risky lyrics over pulsating dancehall riddims.

But Ce’Cile and Lady Saw have more in common. They both have their respective alter ego. Lady Saw sings gospel and more roots oriented reggae under her real name Marion Hall. Ce’Cile has created her bad gyal alter ego for her more equivocal tunes.

On her latest album ‘Jamaicanization’ she is more radio-friendly than ever. But her voice is the same – combining sultry singing with rougher deejay parts.

“It’s another side of me,” says Ce’Cile on the phone, and continues:

“The concept I wanted was truly Jamaican. I wasn’t feel-



ing that hip-hop coming from Jamaica,” she explains, and adds:

“There’s a lot of negativity in music right now. I don’t want to be vexed. I want to feel that love from Jamaica, a sweet island breeze. Easy-listening and fun.”

Change image

Ce’Cile talks fast. Very fast. It’s hard for me to keep up with her pace and understanding her patois at times. But what is perfectly clear is that she wants to change her image, partly due to the general view of dancehall artists as being rude and unreliable.

“It’s not an accident that it’s radio-friendly. I’ve experienced the hostility towards Jamaicans and I want to change the perception of me,” explains Ce’Cile and gives an example:

“One time I was offered a pre-recorded interview. And when we did the interview he [the interviewer] said ‘oh my God, you’re wonderful’. I’m being punished for something I haven’t done.”

Authentic reggae in Germany

Ironically enough she found the Jamaican sound she was looking for in Germany and producer Ben Bazzarian.

“I don’t want a wack hip-hop beat when I ask for a riddim. I don’t know what genre it is”, she says, and continues:

“I wanted something authentic Jamaican. Ben is born in Iran and lives in Germany. He respects the culture and history of Jamaica. It’s a very good vibe in Germany.”

Slackness sells

Ce’Cile says that it’s important to be a well-rounded artist and that she’ll probably do something totally different in the future. But it seems that it’ll still be radio-friendly, even though she is clear about the fact that slack lyrics sell.



“It’s a way of getting fast money and a marketing tool,” she says.

Slackness has reigned in Jamaica for a long time and even though Ce’Cile wants to change the perception of herself she says she doesn’t judge people who sing about guns and sex.

“People are starving and who are we to tell them the way out? It’s a hard life,” she states, and continues:

“It’s good to reinvent yourself.

Have a positive way. Bounty Killer shouldn’t sing another gun song. It doesn’t make sense anymore. His fans are probably also tired of that,” she explains, and concludes:

“I don’t want to be Beenie Man, Vybz Kartel or Bounty Killer. I want to be played. I want to show you what I can. When running a restaurant you can’t only cook what you like. You have to be current and you have to be on top.”

Interview by Erik Magni



I-Wayne

“It’s about sharing life and sharing knowledge”

I-Wayne is a messenger of life

I-Wayne is one of the top conscious reggae artists with hits such as Can’t Satisfy Her and Lava Ground. On his latest album ‘Life Teachings’ he sings about the positive and negative aspects of life – declaring love for wom-

en with an ital lifestyle and rails against violence and consumerism. United Reggae got to talk with I-Wayne about his favorite subject – life.

I-Wayne is a singer blessed with an instantly recognizable voice. His high tone is graceful, yet strong. This trademark has rendered him several hits and three albums for VP Records.

I-Wayne grew up with music around him. He was raised with his aunt and her husband was a musician. Since his early days in school he always found ways to practice his talent.

“I was beating on the desk in school, beating on the phone booth on my way to school. I love this thing,” he says on the phone from Jamaica.

Bringing a positive vibe

‘Lava Ground’, ‘Book of Life’ and ‘Life Teachings’ are all mainly based in the roots reggae tradition. Same goes for his lyrics. On his three albums he deals with the same themes – bringing a positive vibe and share life’s joy’s and messages.

“There is a preference for nastiness. Positive artists don’t get their fair attention,” he states in the press release prior to ‘Life Teachings’.

I-Wayne speaks in a low voice. He almost whispers, and turns out to be a man of few words. And he always comes back to issues surrounding life.

“The album has a great mood, a light mood. When we went to the studio it was an irie vibe,” he explains.

According to I-Wayne ‘Life Teachings’ is much like its predecessor ‘Book of Life’.

“It’s about sharing life and sharing knowledge. Sharing something with the world. It’s about life itself. No slackness,” he says.

“Slackness is not going to take over”

I-Wayne’s lyrics are frank and



he doesn’t hide that he dislikes slackness; or nastiness as he likes to put it. Being open with your opinions isn’t always easy, but that doesn’t seem to stop I-Wayne from sharing his ideas with the world.

“I never get scared. If it’s something good you can’t stop it. Slackness is not going to take over. Just give it a little time,” he says, and adds:

“I could never sing slack lyrics, because that’s not me. I’m working for life. I’m not leading the youths astray. I wouldn’t bother with it. I’m promoting life. Not the nastiness.”

He blames the radio stations for the strong interest in singing about guns, sex and material aspects of life.

“They play slackness more, but there is positive music,”

he explains, and adds:

“A lot of people get a lot of money from people to promote nastiness. They are leading them astray.”

Prisoner of life

I-Wayne on the other hand wants to teach the youths about life, especially about positivity.

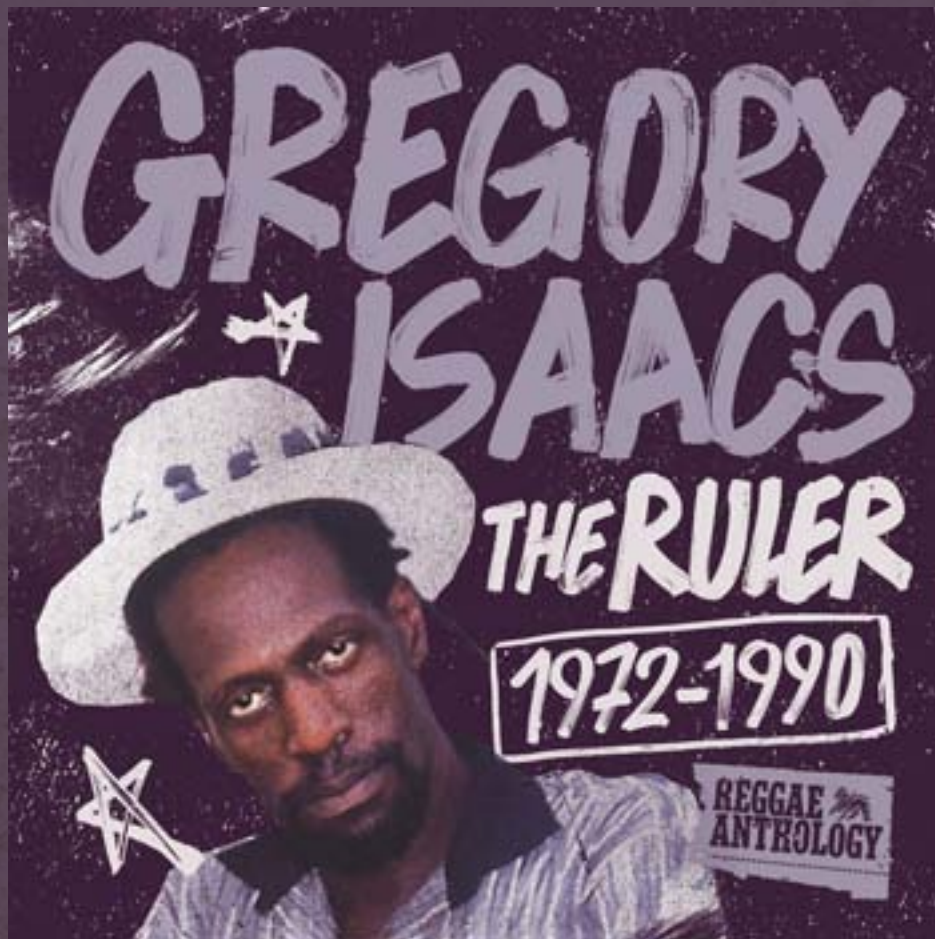
“It’s all about doing the right thing, despite the negativity. I’m a prisoner of life. Love is life and life is love. You have to show respect for life and put life first,” he says, and concludes:

“More life”.

Interview by Erik Magni

Gregory Isaacs

The Ruler: 1972–1990



The Cool Ruler still reigns.

Last year when Gregory Isaacs died of lung cancer only 59 years old I put together a list with some of my favorite songs with the man called the Cool Ruler.

Almost all of these ten tunes – and about another 30 – are col-

lected on the brand new compilation ‘The Ruler’, which also includes a DVD with a live performance at the Brixton Academy in London in 1984.

Gregory Isaacs certainly had one of the most distinctive and most recognizable voices in reggae music. He was vulnerable and intimate and always sounded like he had just been left by his woman for another man.

This smooth and crooning approach was particularly well-suited for heartfelt ballads, and Gregory Isaacs was a pioneer in the lovers rock genre with the gentle *My Only Lover*.

But he had another, more rootsy, side too. And he always sang those songs in the same honest and sensitive tone. Always easy-skanking and mellow, regardless of the lyrical content.

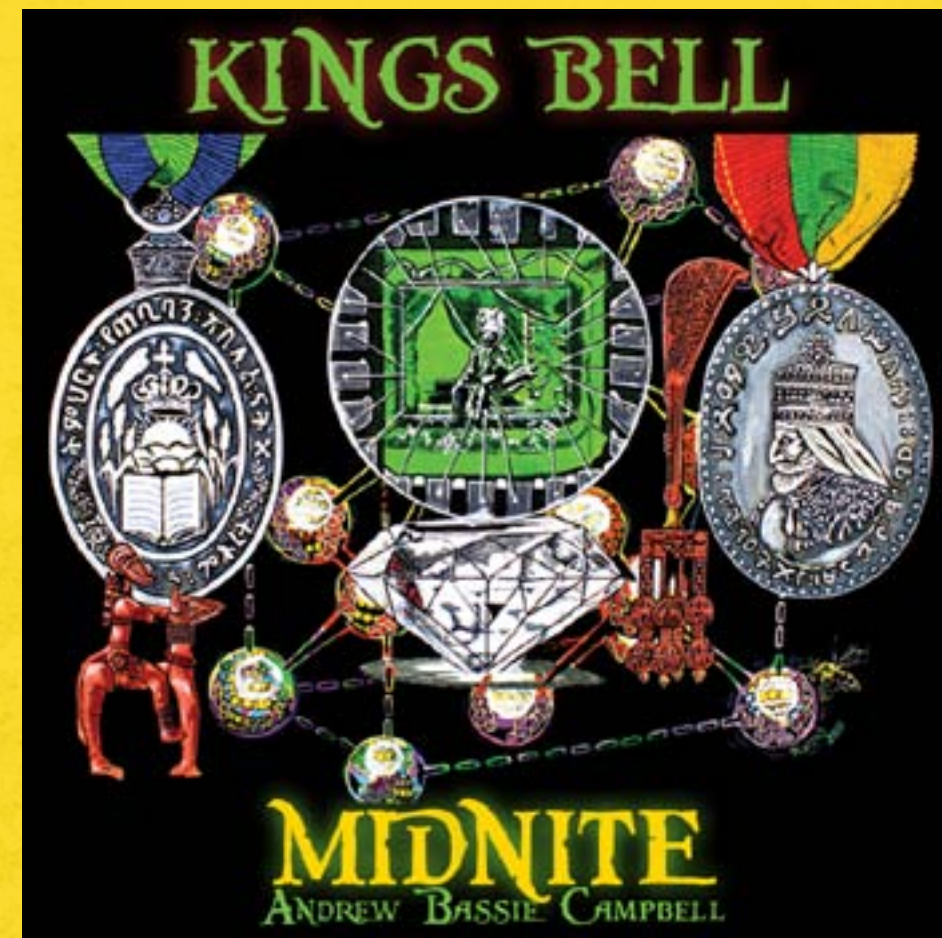
Both of these sides of him are showcased on ‘The Ruler’. It includes material from the early 70’s and his debut album ‘All I Have is Love’ up until the 90’s and his momentous collaboration with producer Augustus “Gussie” Clarke.

During these years Gregory Isaacs managed to work with several of the most acclaimed Jamaican producers and musicians. But he has also made a considerable amount of crucial self-productions. ‘The Ruler’ includes both, which makes this compilation a thorough and worthwhile summary of Gregory Isaacs’ legacy.

Review by Erik Magni

Midnite

Kings Bell



Midnite's most accessible yet.

I must admit I haven’t listened to VI-reggae trailblazers Midnite much at all. They came to my attention only a couple of years ago, even though they have been around since 1989 and dropped their debut album ‘Unpolished’ 14 years ago. Maybe their vast production has been some kind of barrier.

If you didn’t know – Midnite drops an average of around five albums each year. I have found 45 albums with their name on it. And that doesn’t include singer Vaughn Benjamin’s solo efforts. ‘Kings Bell’ is the title of Midnite’s fifth album in 2011. It’s their first full-length with a Jamaican producer, and it’s mostly recorded at Tuff Gong Studios in Jamaica with several acclaimed veteran musicians – Leroy “Horsemouth” Wallace and Earl “Chinna” Smith to

name a few.

Producer Andrew “Bassie” Campbell has made Midnite more accessible than I have ever heard before. It’s still the same raw, hypnotic and weighty sound that Midnite is known for. And they’re still not flirting with the listener. The sing-a-long choruses and grand harmonies are still nowhere to be found. Midnite do their thing whether you like it or not. But the sound is fuller and the melodic hooks are very much present. The punchy bass lines are as usual also included just as Vaughn Benjamin’s intensive and rugged chanting style of singing. He sings with honesty and sincerity about religion and social injustice.

‘Kings Bell’ is perhaps also Midnite’s most varied set yet – the ska-tinged *Torpedo* and the percussion driven *The Quickening* are the two most telling examples, although not the crucial moments of the album. Instead the highlights include *Earth is the Lords* with its relentless bass line that made my kitchen utensils shake and *Black Mamba* and *Jewel inna Africa Horn* with their memorable guitar licks. I’m not sure whether this album will rocket the charts, but it certainly made me discover a new side of this individual band.

‘Kings Bell’ hits the streets on November 1st on CD and digital download.

Review by Erik Magni

Dubmatix presents Clash of the Titans

Last years System Shakedown handed over to some of the reggae world's most talented remixers/producers.

As you will have already gathered from the title this album sees last years superb 'System Shakedown' handed over to some of the world's most talented remixers/producers, namely Zion Train, G.Corp, Marcus Visionary, Liondub, Vibronics, Victor Rice, Duibvisionist, Mungo's Hi-Fi, Aldubb, Nate Wize, TVS, Subatomic Soundsystem, Webcam Hi-Fi, DJ Shine, Eccodek and last but not least DJ Brace... phew that's quite a list.

According to Dubmatix this project was originally only going to be a single 12" vinyl release, but with so many great remixes coming in the material was considered too good to waste and so it has now expanded to this, CD and digital release plus a limited, to 500 copies, double 12" gatefold vinyl re-



lease and I for one am grateful for this as what we have here is a very diverse and interesting take on what was already some quality cuts which have had new and exciting life breathed in to them. Thankfully as well with such great vocalists as The Mighty Diamonds, Tippa Irie, Dennis Alcapone, Kulcha ltes, Jay Douglas, The Ragga Twins, Ammoye, Brother Culture and U-Brown many of the remixes have retained the vocal parts which has only gone to embellish and enrich the futuristic sounds and vibes that have been created and touch on traditional deep and rootsy dubs, hot steppers, dubstep, ragga, jungle, future dub and in the case of Eccodek's Mali to Mumbai Remix of Wobble Weeble stripped back funky touches on a hip hop beat with north African slants!

If you enjoyed 'System Breakdown' you'll very much enjoy this and if you didn't you should still check it out as some of the remixes, like Mungo's Hi Fi's bass shuddering, spacey, minimal take on Gun Down which featured The Ragga Twins, are totally unrecognizable from the original and if that version doesn't do it for you there are two more unique versions of that cut alone for you to try.

As usual with Dubmatix production is crisp and clean with deep bass tones helping to make this one clash where everybody wins.

Review by Karl Pearson

Four worthwhile EP's

Tony Curtis, Brother Culture, Solo Banton and Franz Job recently released good EP's.

In the last couple of weeks four interesting EP's have hit the streets – Rebel Lover Boy from Franz Job, Music Addict by Solo Banton, City of Vibes from Brother Culture and Tony Curtis' Fight It.

All of these are European productions and the artists are also mainly from Europe, Tony Curtis being the one exception.

Franz Job debut album Babylon is Dead was one of the best albums in 2009, and his newly initiated collaboration with UK producer Curtis Lynch has rendered in a partly new sound. Rebel Lover Boy is harder and more electronic compared to the 70's sounding debut. However, High is classic Job.

Solo Banton is no stranger to 80's inspired digital riddims. And on his Jahtari-produced EP Music Addict he flows natural-

ly over Disrupt's and Rootah's bouncy riddims. Two of the vocal cuts are also followed by their merciless dub counterparts.

Brother Culture is a veteran on the UK reggae scene and has recorded with a bunch of rough edged producers – Mungo's Hi-Fi, Dougie Conscious and Ryan Moore to mention only three. His latest effort City of Vibes is however produced by Swiss production team Kinyama Sounds. Their first productions together were for the compilation Reggae Dishes in 2009. Those two songs along with five other organic tunes are collected on the sweet City of Vibes.

Jamaican singer Tony Curtis has been in the spotlight since he won a Jamaican talent contest in the early 90's. Since then he has released solo material as well as being one fourth of the star-studded vocal group L.U.S.T, alongside Singing Melody, Thriller U and Lukie D. On his six track EP Fight It for Greenyard Records he invites rock stone deejays Burro Banton and Cutty Ranks and sings with his usual rich voice about oppression and romance, with

a preponderance for the latter.

Review by Erik Magni



Mungos Hi Fi Forward Ever

New heights reached with their blend of reinvigorated foundation reggae, dub and dancehall.

Scottish soundsystem smashers Mungo's Hi Fi are finally back with their long and eagerly anticipated follow up to 2008's 'Soundsystem Champions'.

The new album, the aptly named 'Forward Ever', does just that and pushes them on to new heights with their blend of reinvigorated foundation reggae, dub and dancehall music. Each of the 15 cuts on display here has already been tried and tested at various gatherings and they slam into you relentlessly with no drop in quality and style, for make no mistake there is no filler here. Also with the album being compiled as if Mungos were playing it in the dance the ebb and flow to album is just right.

It all kicks off with the late great Godfather of Dancehall Sugar Minott on 'Scrubadub Style', ridding on Mungos own Greetings riddim.



The cut was recorded in Scotland shortly before his passing and the lyrical content acts like an introduction to Mungos and is the perfect preface to what you about hear.

The 14 cuts that then follow in this rich vein of form feature some top established and up and coming vocalists. There is the Germany based Rasta Pacey who sings of diversity on a cover of Errol Dunkley's Everyman Differ-

ent, prodigious Southend dweller the young Charlie P quickening the pace on a pumping version of Billy Jean while letting rip on the ultra-infectious Skidip. UK Reggae Performer Of The Year award winner 2008 Mr Williamz fires out the first of two cuts Computer Age, a rough and rugged chat about the advance of technology before dropping big time on a ground shaking bassline for Musically Mad. Another artist who appears twice is the Glaswegian

songstress Soom T who shows her diversity in vocal stylings as she evocatively sings Bad Bad Boy over an updated ska riddim before delivering a rapid fire chat on Soundboy Police, riding a riddim that sounds like its been created on a Casio MT40 that's been working out in the gym for the last 20years.

Another Mungo's stalwart turning up is Kenny Knots with an appeal for more love, on the Bogle riddim driven Gimme Gimme. There are some digital grooves for two of Europe's new vocal talents the softly spoken Pupa Jim, reminding us of the contemporary realities of inequality on the poignant Boat People while French MC Biga Ranx gives us his insight to soundsystem culture on Session On Top. Another enterprising European vocalist YT, backed by the Bad From riddim, tackles complacency on Scream as the steadfast Omar Perry continues the attack on the Babylon system by bringing brimstone and fire on Dem No Like It.

Zeb and Scotty lighten the mood by bring more old school dancehall vibes on Warm Up, a cut that could just as easily be about their native Scottish weather as the dance.

New York Boogie features Ranking Levy's laidback foundation DJ style, sounding a kin to Big Youth. Levy along with his partner, Elen make up My Lord Sound which apparently is something of an institution in Israel. The al-

bum reaches its culmination with the genteel named Gentleman's Dub Club who come with a brassy herb homage in the shape of High Grade Remix that teeters on that rap/reggae crossover style.

'Forward Ever' is an album steeped in the very best reggae traditions, with Mungos immense live work feeding directly into the studio production and despite the riddims being digitally made there is a warmth and depth to them that betrays their stark roots. The art work on the cover, beautifully created by Elen also harks back to those golden days with a cartoon of a dance in full effect, which if you get the gatefold double vinyl opens out so you can really appreciate the colour and life in the picture.

The end of the year is fast approaching and I fully expect to see this album feature in many of those annual top 10's.

Review by Erik Magni

Ambassah

Rub A Dub Showcase Part II

Exquisite rub a dub from Ambassador.

Unfortunately I don't know much about the Spanish reggae scene apart from my encounters with producer and musician Roberto Sánchez. His productions together with Earl Zero and Alpheus are essential in any record collection.

But now my horizon is widened, since another Spanish producer has come forward. Ambassador has collected 17 tunes recorded between 2005 and 2011 on 'Rub A Dub Showcase Part II', a compilation where Roberto Sánchez turns up as co-producer, engineer and musician. Nine of these tracks have previously been released on Pirate's Choice Recordings as 10". The other eight are actually unreleased until now.

'Rub A Dub Showcase Part II' carry some deep early 80's dancehall grooves and the eight different riddims – of which two are relicks – are built on live instrumentation. Vocalists include singers such as Alpheus, Horace Martin and the Godfather of Dancehall himself – the late Sugar Mi-



nott. All three makes impressive efforts.

But the real masterpiece is Breeze and Trees' – DJ's Ranking Forrest and Jah Breeze – Two the Hard Way (Extended), where the DJ duo goes Michigan & Smiley over the skanking Monday Sounds riddim with its lethal horns riff.

Apart from vocals there is a lot of dub going on here as well. Nine of the 17 cuts are dub ver-

sions with a rich texture and three are extended versions with a similar sound.

'Rub A Dub Showcase Part II' is an exciting and accomplished set that builds on the best from early Jamaican dancehall.

Review by Erik Magni

Report and Interview: KEHV in Hollywood



A moment with KEHV at Whateva Works, Hollywood, Florida.

"Rain rain go away- come back another day" Was definitely the mantra for all attendees on Friday October 7, 2011. Heading out on a night like this seemed like a crazy idea, however, the downpour did not dampen anyone's spirit inside Hollywood's best kept secret "Tempo's Music Lounge".

Whateva' Works is a community based organization which focuses on both businesses and independent artists' development and part proceeds is always donated to charity which shows they are focused on giving back; which is a plus! Being that it was the first Friday of the month - Whateva' Works hosted a beautiful open mic night which promised to "bring fresh flavor in a cultural way."

"That's what's up!" was the phrase for the night as the energetic MC Melissa Capo

brought on stage budding new talent from all facets of the entertainment world. We were all fully entertained with hip-hop from Kalcium, Big Fiz, Mareezy, and City P. Spoken word poetry flowed like rivers from Donna Gia Levasseur, Jeremy Cotto, Maru Gonzalez and Damali. Lovely singing from Binghi Blaze, Lucky and Jocelyn Pena and lots of laughs from comedians Nigel Alvarez and Ozzie the Showman which was the perfect warm-up for the main performer for the night - KEHV.

For those of you who haven't gotten the opportunity to discover Kehv yet, you missed out on a real treat. Born in Jamaica, Kehv started singing in the choir at the age of 10 years old. Realizing his love for singing he decided to pursue music as a career. He has gone on tour to countries like Brazil and Germany, worked with Kymani Marley and Wyclef Jean. Also he has shared the stage with Inner Circle, Beenie Man, Shaggy and Sean Kingston to name a few. Now dubbed as the "Prince of Reggae Soul" it is very easy to see why he is compared to such greats as Maxi Priest and Beres Hammond.

Dressed casually in jeans and red t-shirt with his dreads tucked under a Fedora hat,

Kehv took a seat with his guitar and started playing an acoustic set for his audience.

Describing himself as a "Caribbean Sol-Jah" he told us about his music career being a long journey for him - he said that Bob Marley is a major inspiration for him, Kehv joked with the crowd, "Vibe with me tonight, I am NOT Stephen - work with me" as he went into his rendition of Stephen Marley's "Tight Ship" Requests for his song "Masquerade" followed.

The tempo was picked up as a bluesy reggae song called "Addict of You" was sung, the people clapped with the rhythm of the guitar and sang along "Fyah!" with the chorus. He then requested that we light up with some lighters or cell phones and serenaded the crowd with "Love will find a way". Taking his hat off, he opened up to us and explained that the song "Never Too Far" was a song that he wrote when he has lost his mother. "Mama, don't worry 'bout me, everything's going to be okay" although it was an emotional moment for him to sing this particular song. Smiling, he thanked everyone for coming to see his performance.

All in all, it was a wonderful



I could only be humbled by such a comparison. These artists have done what I'm in the process of doing and still today taking it to higher heights. I do however, strive to make the essence I bring to the music felt enough to stand apart from those I might be compared to.

What inspires you when writing music?

Life inspires me. My life, your life, the life of the misunderstood, etc.. People need to be represented

Is there an artist that influenced you the most?

I cannot say that one artist more than the next influences me. I would say good music moves me period.

Whats the most fun part of being a musician?

I love the travelling, though it may get tough on the road, I love to see new faces and places.

Is there a particular message you were hoping to convey when "Simply Kehv" came into creation?

I wanted to introduce myself to the masses simply as KEHV. Give people a taste of where I've been and where I was musically, at the time of the album drop.

What is your biggest challenge in the music industry?

The biggest challenge is finding honesty in the ones I meet along the way. I find that many

only tell me what they think I want to hear to get what they want.. A harsh reality to wake up to everyday but it's sobering despite the bitter sting.

What advice would you give to aspiring musicians?

Find your Why. The reason why you sing, dance, act, paint etc... And never let that go.

Is there any artists that you would like to do a collaboration with? Why?

Etana, I believe our music would be beautiful together. Stephen Marley- I sense we may have lots in common. Jennifer Hudson- Very passionate voice. Jimmy Cliff- I love his vibes. Just to name a few.

Tell us about any plans for the future.

I'm currently working on my second album, Lots of music being made right now as I sang maybe one tune for you that night "Addict of you" It's all about the music right now for me. More shows and appearances but definitely fine tuning my craft preparing for the next level..

Report by Sarah Soutar
Photos by Gail Zucker

Glen Washington in Beverly Hills



Glen Washington played at The Joint, Beverly Hills, California on October.

Glen Washington has been prominent on the reggae scene since 1978, when he recorded his first hit, Rockers Not Crackers, on the Joe Gibbs Record Label. It took another decade before we got a chance to hear his smooth, raspy voice again on his second hit, Kindness for Weakness. Known as the singing drummer Glen has played with many reggae groups including Calabash, who backed many of reggae's finest singers... Leroy Sibbles, Shinehead, Junior Reid, Gregory Isaacs and Sister Carol. Glen garnered eight awards from 1998-2002 for his wonderful voice and music.

Frequently compared to Beres Hammond, Glen's style of singing is mostly romantic and he quite enjoys the comparison... Beres is one of his favorite artists! Glen is a prolific songwriter as well, penning most of the songs that he records on his albums. He has recorded ten albums to date.

This was a much anticipated evening and The Joint was packed with adoring fans. Glen took to the stage starting

off with Jah Glory, then following up with Stranger... the ladies swooning all the while. Next, from the album 'Number One Girl', Glen treated us to Shana Na Na, Consider Me and One of These Days. With so much original material to draw from, Glen had to pick and choose from the requests being called out from the crowd. He did eighteen songs in his set and I was lucky enough to get a set list so you can peruse it and find all of the songs! Glen was brought back for an encore by his thrilled audience and gave us four more songs closing his set with Can't Keep A Good Man Down, the title track to his album of the same name, his waist-length locks swaying to the riddim.

Exhausted from dancing and snapping photos I made my way backstage to capture a few shots with visiting dignitaries including Andrew Bees, actual lead singer from Black Uhuru. Glen was very gracious and obliged all of my snapping photos. He is a great and talented man. Thanks to The Joint and Glen Washington for a fabulous night of reggae music.

Report and photos by Jan Salzman



Chuck Fender in Venice

Chuck Fender began his European tour with a show at Rivolta PVC in Venice, Italy on October 29th 2011.

After a wonderful summer that brought to Europe a rich list of great artists, the Italian massive is already looking forward another great reggae season. And there's no better way to start it with a great artist like Chuck Fender.

Currently touring Europe baked by the House of Riddim band, the "poor people defender", performed on November 29th in Marghera (Venice-Italy). The show took place at Rivolta P.V.C., a self-managed social centre, where the music is the first aim.

Chuck Fender is an American Reggae musician and deejay born in Brooklyn in 1972 but raised in Jamaica. His musical career began in 1996 with the released of his first singles.



His debut album 'Better Days', was released in 2004, two years after his conversion to the Rastafarian religion.

The reggae night at Rivolta begun with the Italian reggae artist Jah Farmer, that opened the show and warmed the audience presenting his first work 'Fearless'.

It was about midnight when the musicians of the House of Riddim band came on stage, and after a while Mr "The Living Fire" Chuck Fender jumped out!!

The Italian massive could enjoy with some of his greatest hits, and also with some tunes he performed on some very famous riddims.

The vibes were great and Chuck was so hyperactive jumping and dancing! It was a great show, and even if the lights on stage were not perfect, we could



enjoy with a great performance.

After the show Chuck Fender came for a little bit among the audience and met his fans! He's not only a great singer but also a great man! Blessed love to the poor people defender...

Report by Nadia Bestjamaica

Peter Tosh Symposium in Kingston

Check these photos of the symposium Peter Tosh: Activist, protagonist and Musical genius, One of Jamaica's Unsung Heroes.

Recently the University of the West Indies (U.W.I.) hosted a symposium on the late reggae singer, Peter Tosh. The symposium focused on how Peter through his music included social commentary on education, politics, social and financial issues of the country. The audience were also informed about the circumstances that lead to the writing of songs like Johnny B. Goode, Where You Gonna Run and Glass House.

Among the panellists were Dr. EF Hutton, lecturer at U.W.I, Dr. Omar Davies, opposition spokesperson on the Ministry of Transportation, Copeland Forbes, former manager of Peter Tosh and son of the reggae legend, Dave Tosh. The audience was elated when Peter's common-law wife, Marlene made a surprise appearance on the panel. The event was also held in celebration of Tosh's birthday.

Report by Steve James



Alpheus and Ras Shiloh in Paris

Alpheus and Ras Shiloh performed at New Morning in Paris on November 4th, 2011.

Mami Wata Association promoted the event and set up a beautiful display this evening with 2 talented artists: the Studio One singer Alpheus and the versatile and energetic Ras Shiloh.

The show opened with JIPS, a young French artist, who gave a nice set. He was followed by Alpheus, who performed with a mix of ska and rocksteady songs. He gave a stellar performance and led his show with energy and precision. He also gave a demonstration of ska dance. The audience thoroughly enjoyed this dance that swept Jamaica back in the day.

Ras Shiloh entered the stage with vigor and vitality. This artist's energy is impressive, and his charismatic presence on stage thrilled the audience. His melodic voice complimented his stage presence and his rootsy blend of music was a delight.

A special big up to the Moon Band that backed all artists throughout the evening.

**Report and photos
by Franck Blanquin**



Bob Andy Unplugged

Bob Andy Unplugged was held Friday, October 25th at the Karl Hendrickson auditorium, Jamaica College, Kingston. The event was well attended and saw over twenty-nine artists doing their interpretation of songs written by one of Jamaica's most prolific songwriters. The show brought out singers both from the era when these classics were recorded to some of our current generation of reggae artists.

On several occasions through the night the audience stood up to pay homage to the man who has helped to shape Jamaica reggae music.

Unplugged which was divided into three segments saw the likes of Desi Jones & the All Star Reggae band, Lloyd Parks & We the People along with backing orchestra led by Peter Ashbourne & Ibo Cooper. Every artist billed performed extremely well. However, those who took it up a notch were Ken Boothe, Chevaugn Clayton, Marcia Griffiths, Protoje, Big Youth, Nadine Sutherland & Freddie McGregor. Before the curtains came down Marcia Griffiths made a surprise announcement that it was also the singer's sixty-seventh birthday. The attentive audience rose to the occasion and joined in the singing of Happy Birthday in Ms. Lou's style.

Report and photos by Steve James



Collie Buddz and Gappy Ranks in Hollywood

It was a cool California evening in West Hollywood, but things were soon to heat up inside the famed Roxy Theatre. Opening the night's musical performances was New Kingston Band, residing in New York the three "brothers", Courtney M. Panton, singing drummer, Tahir Panton, singing keyboardist and Stephen Suckarie, lead vocals and guitar, rocked the house with tunes from their debut album 'In the Streets'. The young trio really drives the reggae riddim! New Kingston are all excellent musicians and vocalists providing all the elements of a great reggae performance including some great flashing dreadlocks! Their energetic performance preceded Gappy Ranks and they would later be the backing band for Collie Buddz set.

Gappy Ranks, hailing from the UK was next up. Born of a Jamaican father and a Dominican mother, Gappy sings and chats great dancehall music. Performing with the sound system and a mix master, he thrilled the crowd with songs from his two albums, 'Put the Stereo

On' and 'Thanks and Praise'. My favorites of the evening were his hit, Heaven In My Eyes, Put the Stereo On and his adaption of Bob Marley's Soul Rebel.

After a brief intermission of about thirty minutes, the curtains came up again. The members of New Kingston trickled back onto the stage. Hypeman, and sidekick to Collie Buddz, DJ Pee Wee came out to rev up the near capacity crowd. Pee Wee directed the crowd on how to bring Collie onstage with the statement, "When I say Collie, you say Buddz! Collie-Buddz, Collie-Buddz," complied the audience. Collie bounded onstage to a feverish pitch with Mister Harper, of course, that's also who he is! With his reggae singjay style, Collie worked all sides of the stage in his oh, so charming ways singing to the lineup of pretty girls who skirted the whole stage. By the third song Collie dipped into the tracks of his much acclaimed 2007 album 'Collie Buddz', with his song Let Me Know. Audiences all over the world sing along with his lyrics and LA proved to be among the best at not dropping a word! This brought lots of smiles from Collie. I was able to retrieve a set list from the stage at the end of the night so all of our readers can check the

list for their favorite songs. Collie closed the main portion of his set blasting out his one drop anthem Come Around. We all brought him back onstage again with the same refrain...Collie-Buddz! Collie-Buddz! The audience was treated to four more songs ending with his mega hit Blind to You. He had everyone in the house hold up the middle fingers to the "haters" of the world. Always a bit controversial, he was speaking to an adult crowd. Collie did a medley at the end of the night of old reggae dancehall hits. I wasn't able to catch the titles, but it was fun for all. Completely satisfied from the show I packed up my photo gear and headed backstage to say hi and complement everyone on the exceptional performances. There was positive vibes all around. I headed home listening to Collie's Playback EP.

Report and photos by Jan Salzman



Chuck Fender and Johnny Clarke live in London

“It’s been five years” said the Living Fire AKA Chuck Fender to an enthusiastic London crowd - some of whom may remember his no show at a luckless promotion at the Stratford Rex in 2007. And although in the excitement, he did refer to the Brixton Hootananny as “Birmingham” there was no doubt in their minds as to where he was – giving the UK due attention as part of a tour that has already taken in Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Poland and Italy with Austria’s hardworking House Of Riddim band.

Dressed in a flannel shirt and black vest the New York-born, Spanish Town-raised deejay delivered fiery fare like I Swear, Jah Is Worthy and All About The Weed, each time prefaced by a blast of Richie Spice’s cuts on their respective rhythms. “They say Chuck Fender you bun too much fire” he then conceded, “so I’m going to sing for the ladies” giving them Good Man In Your Life and his Cherine Anderson combination Are You Coming Over Tonight. Of course,



the biggest reaction came for his hit Gash Dem, which was played both before and after his encore. True to his raw delivery, Fender didn’t sugarcoat the harsh realities that feed his lyrics, telling the story of the six year old girl whose brutal attack inspired the song – noting the irony of it getting banned when such a horror was allowed to take place. The House Of Riddim, who Fender praised saying “They understand Jamaica and they understand fire” typically didn’t waste a note all night.

This time it was fans of billed chief support act Half Pint who were disappointed when his eight-date tour was abruptly cancelled. Yet promoter Cecil Reuben was able to secure the veteran Johnny Clarke at short notice as his replacement – showing it’s not what goes wrong but how you fix it that counts. “We started

the dancehall thing” said Mr Clarke, by way of appeasement. He was in fine voice over five rub-a-dub era recordings of hits including Declaration Of Rights, None Shall Escape The Judgment and King In The Arena, chiding the engineer when they rewound too slow. “Next time, Rastafari” was his parting promise as he left the stage. The opening act was London-based Jamaican singer Soulie Roots.

Chuck Fender returns to Germany, Switzerland and the House Of Riddim’s home of Austria before hitting Jamaica for a Christmas Day bash in St Elizabeth. The Hootananny will be back with another highly prized appearance from the legendary Leroy Smart on December 11th.

Report by Angus Taylor
Photos by Andrew Thompson



Etana in Paris

It was roots, rock reggae at New Morning on November 18 when Etana, the new Queen of New Roots Reggae, performed in Paris and promoted her new album 'Free Expression'. This spiritual and soulful young singer from Jamaica is planting her seed in a male dominated reggae industry.

Meta Dia, singer from Senegal living in New York, USA, was the opening artist of the show. He delivered an acoustic set, and is very talented with original material and fresh compositions. His powerful lyrics and international sound makes him a successful up and coming artist, and Paris hopes to see him in headlining a show in the near future.

After Meta Dia's performance, the members of French backing band Dub Akom Band appeared on stage to back Etana. Smiling with enthusiasm, she gave an exceptional show, performing her big tunes during her set such as Jah Chariot and August Town as well as some covers tunes by Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff such as Rasta Man Chant, The Harder they Come and Simmer Down.



Etana enjoyed herself in France and remarked during her press conference: "On-stage I am sincere and true and that's what the public likes". She finished her set with I am Not Afraid as the audience cheered her on.

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!

Conception, design and creation

Xavier Simacourbe & Camille Monchicourt

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