



FESTIVILLE EDITORIAL 3

MAAD! SICK! REGGAEVILLE

You should know by now that we are barking mad. Also, the sickness called *Reggaemyelitis* has taken firm hold, driving us to extremes. Writing about music just isn't enough anymore, we have to be in the middle of it all! Thus we proudly present the second ever Reggaeville Riddim called, accordingly, **Maad Sick Reggaeville**. It comes with a superhero, so whatever problems might trouble you at the moment – let the music play and watch little **Maadsick** here make them disappear!

To allow YOU to go crazy in the upcoming summer, we have yet again compiled 82 festivals big and small, far and near, exciting and relaxing and full of vibes. Just



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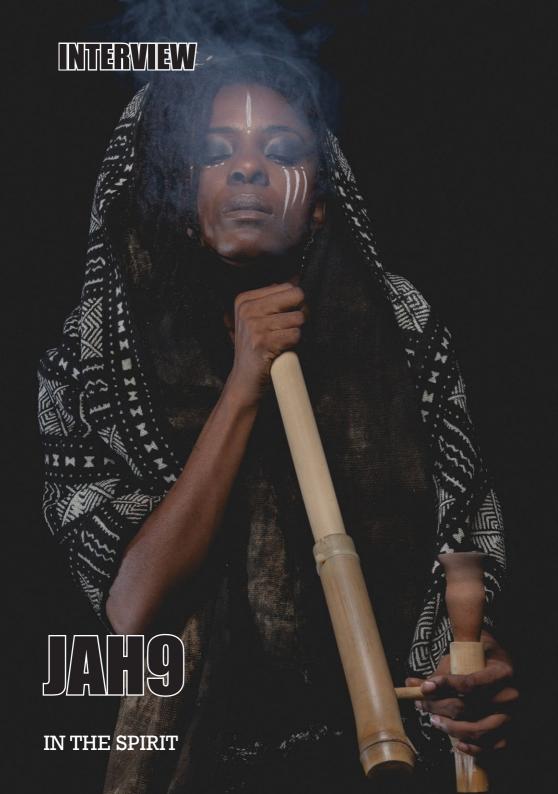
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UNIVERSAL YEAR OF 9 [2+0+1+6]

BY ANGUS TAYLOR | PHOTOS BY EL PURU/HIMAGES & SAMEEL .KUSH-I' JOHNSON

Like many of Jamaica's recent reggae movement, **Jah9** has not been in a hurry to put out music in the traditional fashion.

Following her triumphant debut **New Name** in 2013, there was speculation as to whether she would release her shelved project with **Beres Hammond** or a second record with **Rory Stone Love**. At one point **Jah9** became frustrated by the anticipation, stating she was too busy with her life, her yoga, and community works to think about an album.

Now, three years later, one is finally on the horizon – without **Beres** or **Rory**'s involvement. It is called '9' and comprises nine songs, five of which are produced by **Jah9** herself. The remaining four are collaborations with Jamaicans **Franklyn Ben Up Irving** and **Kevin Campbell**, St Croix's Laurent **Tippy Alfred**, and Belgium's **Puraman Bregt**.

Jah9 sent **Angus Taylor** an exclusive preview of the nine tracks so they could discuss the circumstances that inspired them.



Your album release was originally planned for the summer – how come it's being put back until 9th September?

It's the symbolism of the date. September 9 is the ninth of the ninth. As well as the fact that it will give us some time. I am starting a relationship with my new label. They have channels that they need to fully exploit so that we get the best reception when we finally do put it out.

What's happening with the Beres album which we've talked about many times before?

That is one of the possibilities for the next round coming. But there is also new music, so it is to assess the vibration and see the impact that is made. I don't like planning too far ahead. So while I will be prepared with things that I can do next, I really want to see how this one works, how the relationship works, to see if this is something that I would or wouldn't want to share in that space.

And is there going to be a separate Rory album after this one?

I don't know. Everything is possible. **Rory** is my family too. But I think where my mind is right now is that I am making this music. These are my projects. I am producing most of the tracks. There is more experimentation I want to do, in terms of production. There is lots of life to live, everything is open. But what is for sure is I will be producing more of the music that I am creating.

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Let's talk about the opening song Humble Me – co-produced by Puraman from Belgium. I am interested in the lyric "I used to be so sure of things then life began to change."

At every stage of your life when you're growing up, you think "I have reached that point where I understand this now". "I understand school" and then you reach a different level of school where there is a different approach to teaching you. You learn about life and love and then you realise there is a different thing from what you thought it was. And especially for me because I grew up in such a protective environment where I spent a lot of time cultivating my spirit and my mind. I was not exposed to a lot of the things that people in the outside world were. But I was protected by people of integrity, my mother and father and my family. There was no family drama. So I had to learn the hard way about how man stays, how woman stays, how people stay. Greed and selfishness and pain and hurt. These things.

And then even my own career is just a constant learning curve. It's just constantly seeing the potential expand and thinking "I can do this" and feeling confident and then realising there is so much more you can do. Even learning my own spiritual journey and moving from a place where I used to express my spirituality through Judeo Christianity because

that is what I and most of us expatriates were given (laughs). And then you continue on that spiritual journey until you eventually outgrow the container of religion and you will search and see for yourself. And the more you learn about this world in this universe is the more you realise that you know nothing. So the journey can't be about knowing. The journey has to be about becoming.

Let's move onto the track Prosper – which you produced entirely yourself.

I did that track originally on a different rhythm with a different approach to it. Then it turned out that it wasn't really being organised well. I wanted to do the track because of these people - I loved doing it. But at the same time I couldn't get access to it and make it happen the way I wanted to. If it is going on my record there are particular things I would want to have access to so that I can make changes to it. It just wasn't manifesting in the way that I would like so I opted to produce a version of it myself.

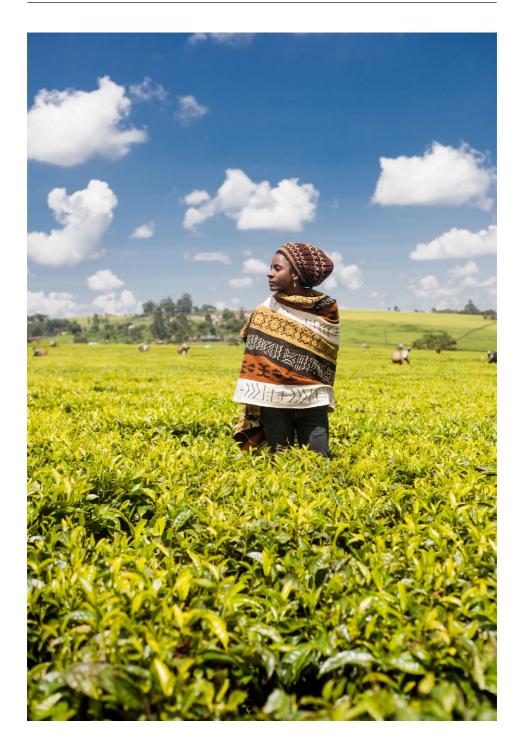
Tell me about the line that says "Do it with all your heart and prosper, do it with just a part and fail".

If you can imagine somebody having the headphones on and working a punching bag or running, it is one of those songs that is supposed to put you forward. To remind you that "It is the effort you put out that is going to determine what you get". And effort can mean many different things. A lot of times if it is physical effort but sometimes it is discipline. And sometimes it is love too. So it's just "Don't half arse anything". "Just put your all into something and have the faith and let your passion and your purpose drive you." "Follow your vision. Follow your spirit."

And that is connected to the line "Service is the worship".

Yes I. Because there is no God outside of yourself. There is no man in the sky. It is all within that you are going to find the strength to do anything you need. Yes it is good when people are around you. We are social crea-

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tures so it is good to have that. But when it comes down to it, you are the one who has to really pull yourself up. Nobody can help you to evolve.

So if you're going to do well you have to see God in yourself. You are the saviour that you are looking for. Or you will always have to be led and somebody will always have to give you something at the end of the month or do something for you. So it's really a challenge in the same way that a song like Jungle is a challenge to step up. To say the worship is yourself. It is what you do. It is your service.

Hardcore is a heavy roots track. If we were to be very superficial about it, it is a connection back to the previous album.

Hardcore is a roots song that is not what you'd expect from a song named **Hardcore**. It's not necessarily the definition of Hardcore that you would think of when you think of Jamaican music either. But remember we are talking about evolution so "What is the evolution of a term like hard-core?" In this life. Not in

the old life when we were depending on religion and politics to help. In this evolved world where people are going to take responsibility for their life and be their own government in this world that we are creating? Hardcore has a new meaning. In how we assess masculinity, how we assess the journey of woman and what it will take to survive.

Things like permaculture. Things like understanding the cycles and the winter plans and how to eat and how to organise the dissemination of water. It's not so much about muscle and brawn anymore. It's moral wisdom. This is a different kind of world we're living in and that is why it culminates with the speech because in it we are saying "Selassie alone can make their hearts sure." It's the same thing I did with New Name where whenever I speak of The King I like to put it in context so it's not just "Rastafari Jah", it is understanding who trod flesh as **His Imperial Majesty**. What kind of spirit? What is the message that he left? What are the instructions? What is the guidance?



JULIAN MARLEY 🏠 BIG YOUTH 🛠 CHRONIXX 🛠 ALBOROSIE TONY REBEL 🔯 QUEEN IFRICA 🔯 TIPPA IRIE 🔯 GENERAL L FREDDIE MCGREGOR 🛠 CHINO 🛠 STEPH _ARKE ☆ SEVANA ☆ GENERAL DEGREE ☆ ADMIRAL TIBET THE CONGOS ☆ TINGA STEWART ☆ 25 YEARS SILLY WALKS SHOWCASE FEAT. PATRICE HARRISON STAFFORD & PROFESSOR CREW☆ GANJAMAN **LUTAN FYAH** The same of the sa RUNKUS JAHCOUSTIX ☆ REBELLION THE RECALLER ☆ HOUSE OF RIDDIM LA FEAT. DER REGGAEHASE BOOOO ILLBILLY HITEC & LONGFINGAH 🌣 SEBASTIAN STURM & EXILE AIRLINE NATTALI RIZE 🌣 SOPHIA SOUIRE 🌣 AMLAK REDSOUARE 🜣 PEPSI BROWN

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KLOSTERPARK - BERSENBRÜCK

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The speech of his at the end of the song was a speech he made to the *United Nations*. That's the same speech that contains the quotes that **Bob Marley** used for *War*. The closing arguments that **His Majesty** put to the world to say that it is a different set of challenges we're going to face. The young people today are not preparing for the past, they are preparing for the future. And they are going to need to put aside those things that haven't served us in the past to take on this challenge that is ahead if we're going to make it out of this thing.

So it kind of brings it all together - that *Hard-core* is what **Haile Selassie** represents. The idea that a man is going to take on the challenge of being Christ and representing that and take on a Dynasty and the legacy like that and say "Yes this is me. I am trodding. I am the Lion of Judah that was spoken of in the Bible." That is Hardcore.

Another heavy roots track is Unafraid on a wicked Gladiators rhythm produced by Franklyn Ben Up Irving.

Yes! If you remember *Steamers A Bubble* - it is the same producer for this track. **Ben Up** is the producer for the original rhythm. **Ben Up** is starting to revive some of those rhythms that he's had for a long time. *Steamers A Bubble* did pretty well, so in releasing this one he gave me the opportunity to go on it. He sent me a few of them but this rhythm stood out to me for sure.

I didn't even let him hear the song until we were in the studio. The first time he heard it was when I was doing the first take. He was a little apprehensive at first because as you know all the Jamaicans are terrified about touching certain topics. But I assured him that this is a topic that every person of every gender and every persuasion can get behind. Because we're talking about protecting the



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children. And I don't know anybody who wouldn't stand behind that.

Tell me about In The Spirit – which is a 9 minute meditation co-produced by Kevin Campbell.

This is a song that we created together, myself and a brother of mine. He is the son of **Al Campbell**. He is one of those people who are serious Rastafari youths. He has turned his home into a space where you could keep Binghi at his house. It is a communal space he created. He's involved his backyard. He's been on this journey with me, someone that I could depend on as well as being somebody who grew up under the tutelage of uncle **Chinna**. He plays the guitar.

So we were round the back of the yard and he played this guitar phrase he had been playing for a few weeks. We came up with the idea in the same way that I came up with a song like *Steamers A Bubble*. I looked around and created the chorus based on what was happening around me.

It's one of those songs where if you notice, I don't mention ganja. It's promoting meditation in the spirit. So it's a song that can play and when you're using that medicine, it won't feel like nine minutes because you just let it happen.

In The Midst is a bit of a departure in that it has got quite an interesting rhythm. Not a one drop rhythm.

In The Midst is another song where I had another rhythm before. But I never did connect with the original rhythm as much. Even when I voiced it I wasn't getting what I wanted from it. It is things like that, that make me know I have to just produce music the way I want. So I went into the studio and I got together a team. **Unga**, **Sheldon**, **Jalanzo** and **Aeon** and we created the music together there. They are the co-producers of the music with me. They were able to follow the instructions that I wanted. I like it when musicians are exceptional because it makes it easier for them to take instructions and still not become too egomaniacal. They'll give me what I need.

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Natural Vibes is a romantic song, a kind of a jazzy soul thing. It's a mixture of very smooth sounds and some slightly jarring sounds as well!

(laughs) The harmonies are going to be a little different when you hear the final version. But anything you hear on that record that sounds disturbing is supposed to be disturbing!

Natural Vibes is another one that I produced. I sat with uncle Chinna on that one. I told him what I wanted and he was very patient to give me what I needed. And then we went into studio and pulled together some musicians again. Some of my people that I trust to give me what I need. Bubbler played the piano on that one and Aeon again on bass and C Sharp, from Chalice, and then Phanso put some percussion on it later.

But that track is supposed to make you feel like it's moving between two vibes. You feel the jazz more in the verses. Because of what she's saying so you want it to feel intimate. But at the same time when you forward to the choruses you feel more of the reggae in there. It's just a natural vibe of balance and feelings that are simple.

Across the album there are recurring themes and metaphors. The metaphor of fruit. The theme of the moon. And in the song Baptised water is very important.

It's about water and the moon! When I used to work on the plantation, when I used to work in corporate. I had a lot of very well-developed rituals to keep my mind balanced. Every full moon I would drive to St Thomas to Bath Fountain. I would climb the side of the mountain to a special place in the rocks, where hot water comes out of the side of the mountain. And they set a bamboo to catch it so it comes down like a shower. It is piping hot water because of the reaction in the chemicals, when vou feel it on your skin it feels like boiling water. But it is highly sulphuric and it has a lot of very medicinal properties and minerals. I found it not just medicinal from my body and my physical but for my mind.

So that song is just supposed to be a depiction of or a description of my journey, my monthly ritual. To go out there. Standing under that water. I remember many times I would go out there and sometimes not even be sure that the trip is worth it. And then just going under the water and remembering "This is why I

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do this". Because there was just nothing to compare.

And I would only make that trod in the night. I don't go in the day because in the day there are a lot of people there from the community that want to give tourists massages and talk about what happened in the mountains many years ago. But I live here so I just go in the night. And that intro - which is also the outro - "I go to the water to be baptised" is something when I'm out there by myself sometimes I will just sing that out in the night.

The final track Spiritual Woman is produced by you and Tippy. I can tell because Vaughn Benjamin is on the track as well. In the past you have denied you are a feminist. This is the kind of song where some of your feminist fans will say "You are a feminist!"

(laughs) Which will allow us to have the conversations we need to have. Because we're not talking about feminism in the song and that is why I feature a man on the track. Of all the tracks why would you put a man on that track? Because you have to show the balance. Because even within the masculine, the feminine needs to arise so when we talk about the feminine when not talking about women necessarily.

In this track we're talking about the system we've outlined and the things that need to change. The greatest hope for addressing and changing these things without resorting to guns and violence that make the scene fail is to approach it with love. With honesty and with the truth that will disturb and break all bonds. With love that only the feminine can bring, the nurturing that only the family can bring, the comfort that only the feminine can bring after the seriousness is happened.

So for **Vaughn** to put a verse was important to me. Because in listening to his music and how he represents woman in his in his music, I know he understands her place. I feel like he understands her place. I don't know his personal life. I only know what I've seen of him

and in what we've spoken on when we met and how I met him. He is a humble individual who always shows so much love and respect to I. And I am the feminine and I don't feel anything but that from him.

You seem fearless in a lot of the things you do. Do you have fears? What are they?

Of course I do Angus. But my fears might be a little different. I don't feel intimidated by the people in this industry.

Most of the things I fear are probably outside of the industry to do with myself and my potential to be light or darkness. So those are my real challenges and my real fears. My own personality and how I will deal with things and just my journey trying to stay in line with this spirit that has been guided me for so long. And just not being too hard on myself and not being driven by anything than the spirit.

Competition has never driven me and I think that's why I am not afraid. I'm not afraid to lose. I'm not afraid to learn. I'm not afraid to fall. I mean, you can't practise yoga and be afraid to fall. I'm not afraid of getting bruised and being dirty. Those are not my fears. And that is the kind of courage that I need to do this work.

Some fears might come because as a woman you have some insecurities about how you look. But these are things that don't even come from inside you. They come from outside you and are put inside of your head, so you know if you don't want you to feel bad about yourself you just stay away from certain visual stimuli. You're not going to watch a whole heap of TV to put things on your mind subliminally that you do not have control of. You protect yourself. Just like you protect yourself when you're driving a vehicle, you have to protect your mind. In your meditation you have to protect your mind the most. I think it's that practice has made me appear fearless.







MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA JULY 17-23, 2016

BEACH PARTY

Sun July 17 Aquasol Theme Park

Presold J\$1,800 / US\$15 At Gate J\$2,000 / US\$17

> BAMBINO CHROMATIC ZJ SPARKS DJ CRAZY NEIL

Hosts: Miss Kitty Yanique the Curvy Diva Gates Open: 4 pm

BLITZ-ALL WHITE EDITION

Tue July 19th Pier 1

Presold J\$2,300 / US\$19 At Gate J\$2,500 / US\$21

KURT 'THE PARTY ANIMAL' RILEY DJ KENTUCKY DJ SMOKE

Gates Open: 8pm

SOUND EXPLOSION

Thu July 21st Pier 1

Presold J\$1,800 / US\$15 At Gate J\$2,000 / US\$17

> STONE LOVE METRO MEDIA BLACK KAT BASS ODYSSEY

Special Guest Performance by:
ADMIRAL BAILEY

Powered by SUPER STRONG Gates Open: 8pm

MAIN EVENTS

DANCEHALL NIGHT

Fri July 22 Main Venue

Presold J\$3,200 / US\$27 At Gate J\$3,500 / US\$29 VIP J\$6,000 / US\$49

COMING: 360° VR FESTIVAL LIVE STREAM

STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS

REGGAE NIGHT

Sat July 23 Main Venue

Presold J\$4,700 / US\$39 At Gate J\$5,000 / US\$41 VIP J\$7,500 / US\$62

CHI CHING CHING
TANTO BLACKS
HARRY TODDLER
MASICKA
VERSHON
DEVIN DI DAKTA
JAHMEIL
DON ANDRE
RAZOR B
RICKY TEETZ
DRE ZEE

Backing band: Ruff Kutt Krew MC's: Ms. Kitty, GT Taylor, DJ Bones Gates Open: 7 pm Show Time: 9 pm

reggaesumfest.com

DSR A DSR ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION

SUPER CAT

BARRINGTON LEVY	CHRISTOPHER MARTIN
LUCIANO	NATURE
CANCUET	D-MEDZ
SANCHEZ	NICKY SILK
TARRUS RILEY	DANN I
BUSY SIGNAL	ADAHZEH

Backing band: Warrior Love MC's: Barry G, Elise Kelly, Paula-Anne Porter Gates Open: 7 pm Show Time: 9 pm

SEASON PASSES

Weekend (Fri/Sat) J\$7,500 / US\$62 VIP WEEKEND

(Fri/Sat) J\$12,500 / US\$103



JULY 22 DANCEHALL NIGHT
BEENIE MAN • BOUNTY KILLER • POPCAAN
I-OCTANE • ISHAWNA • AGENT SASCO • DEXTA
DAPS • ROMAIN VIRGO • NESBETH • SPICE
DING DONG • CHI CHING CHING • TANTO BLACKS
HARRY TODDLER • MASICKA • VERSHON • DEVIN DI DAKTA
JAHMEIL • DON ANDRE • RAZOR B • RICKY TEETZ • DRE ZEE

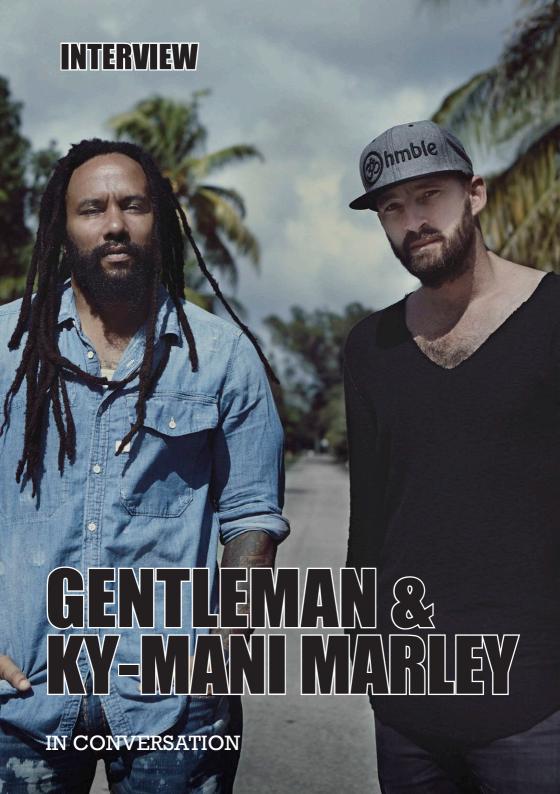
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SUPER CAT • BARRINGTON LEVY
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TARRUS RILEY • BUSY SIGNAL
CHRISTOPHER MARTIN • NATURE
D-MEDZ • NICKY SILK • DANN I • ADAHZEH

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JULY 17-23, MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA



TALK TO EACH OTHER!

BY URSULA, MUNCHY' MÜNCH | PHOTOS BY PASCAL BÜNNING

After collaborating on various occasions the friendship between **Ky-Mani Mar-ley** and **Gentleman** has manifested itself in the production of an entire album.

Conversations bursts with deep lyrics, rich musical arrangements and intimate insights into the communication between the two artists.

For Festiville, **Munchy** got to join the conversation and spoke to both protagonists about the project, its making and the stories behind it all.



We all have seen you doing works together previously, for example for Gentleman's MTV Unplugged album and shows. When did you guys actually meet for the first time and what were the vibes like?

Ky-Mani Marley: I think the first time me and **Gentleman** were backstage at a festival and it was just in the passing, but I was always a fan of his music. So as the opportunity presented itself to hail him up, I gave him a hail and made him know that I am a fan. That was a while back though, like seven, nine or ten years ago.

Gentleman: I am bad with years but it's been a while for sure. I remember it was in France. We met through this promoter girl named Emily. She came to me and said "Ky-Mani wants to meet you" and I thought "Wow, that's nice". We kind of vibed on the same frequency right away. I am also a big fan Ky-Mani's music. When I met him I realized he is such a humble spirit, very down to earth. We had a vibe together. From there we met on again

and again, and Ky-Mani asked me to do a song for his album Maestro together with Matisyahu. After we did that it was my MTV Unplugged recording and I called Ky-Mani to invite him. We did the song *No Solidarity* for that record and this song is also now on the new album but in a different version with a different feel. From there now we met over and over again, did the MTV Unplugged tour together with **Dean Fraser** and the whole crew, which was really nice. On New Year's Eve I wrote a text to **Ky-Mani** to wish him a happy new year and he wrote back "Same to you. What do you think about doing an album?". I said "Yeah man, let's do it" and now we have Conversations.

I was just about to ask when was the idea for Conversations born? Was it actually that New Year's Eve or how long have you been thinking about it, Ky-Mani?

Ky-Mani: We spoke about that while we were on the **MTV Unplugged** tour and so that came to life very, very quickly. **Gentleman**



is a man who doesn't play around. When he says to get something done, he gets it done. We actually finished the album way before I thought we would. It is one of those things that are destined

Gentleman: And the album, or I'd rather call it a project, is never finished. There is a certain moment for you as artist when you need to let go because we have a time schedule, we play festivals together, tomorrow is the deadline for the master. You can always add something. Me personally, I can be happy with something but I am never satisfied. It is a beautiful album, I really love it. It sounds good, it's very versatile and has a lot of different vibes in it. Lyrically it's really deep, but you find some feel-good songs, too, like Simmer Down with Marcia Griffiths, which was Ky-Mani's idea. It turned out very nice and happened very natural and kind of effortless,

even though we put a lot of energy into it. It is much easier to do an album together with somebody than alone because the burden is on four shoulders and not two.

One of the main topics of the album is the current world political situation, the movement of the refugees and how people react to it. You have an interesting collage of news at the beginning of Way Out, and in the song you are singing from the perspective of a refugee who lost his family and is taking on the boat ride even though he cannot swim. How did the idea for the song and the story come about? Gentleman: Every song of the album - and this is also how we came up with the name Conversations - is always based on a conversation. We reasoned a lot, and that was a big issue. When you hear the song you can hear in the intro that 60 million people are on the move and somehow this is just

the beginning. Europe and America need to realize that this world is round. We cannot say "Yeah, well, that's their problem and not ours". But you have the two sides, one that says "Refugees welcome" and another that is concerned about if it's getting too many and you don't know who you let in, that might cause a tension within the society, which I can understand to a certain level too. The song is also talking from the perspective of a soldier, who doesn't want to let in the refugee boy, so it's a dialogue, a conversation between the two. Everything is based on conversation.

The song No Solidarity is another timely issue where we look at the refugee crisis and the lack of solidarity among the citizens of the world. At the same time we had situations, for example in Munich, where people welcomed refugees with so many goods – food, clothes, toys – that the police actually had to tell the people to stop donating because it was too much. Also in Budapest, from where we heard a lot of negative news, others came to support refugees, brought goods, helped them with their papers. Do you think there is still light at the end of the tunnel? That this challenge we are facing now might even help the world move closer together?

Ky-Mani: Definitely there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Humanity, we have proven ourselves over and over again that we can unify. Unfortunately it always takes a crisis for us to show that. It would be good if we could show that same unity without the crisis. Moving forward to a better day there is always hope and yes, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Gentleman: Yeah man, definitely. I personally believe that within every crisis there is a chance. I think what we need is patience. The French Revolution for example took like a hundred years. After the revolution there must be an evolution, but sometimes we take two steps ahead and then we step back, so we need patience. I still believe in the good within us because where there is light, there is darkness. The balance is what really makes

the difference. But it's 2016 and we're still around, we still laugh, we're still making babies, we still have hope. So I also believe that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, even though I know that there is a lot of negativity and a lot of wickedness and darkness, and it seems more complicated than at times before. Back in the days I thought there is black and white, and now I know that there are a lot of grey tones in between. We can definitely make it and music is a wonderful way to give people comfort and strength.

The track Signs Of The Times fits perfectly into the theme of the current political situation as well, and this one also features not only your two voices but someone else. Who can we hear and what is she saying?

Gentleman: That is a refugee girl. She speaks in Arabic and talks about her escape from Syria, how it was in the camp, how they treated her. Clay and me produced the song and we came up with the idea to get some original quotes from the people. In the sound, in her voice alone you can hear the sufferation but you can hear the hope also. To me that is very spiritual. When I heard the girl's voice it shook me all over, I got goose bumps even though I didn't know what she was saying at first. It has a very deep vibe.

One of the feel-good songs you mentioned is Simmer Down, The Wailer's first single from 1963, which is now the only cover version on Conversations. Why did you chose exactly this song, Ky-Mani?

Ky-Mani: There was no definite reason why we picked that one. At the time we were just listening to the album and I said to Gentleman "We're missing something". Something that kind of just gets you up and dancing without even thinking about it. Simmer Down was in the air and Gentleman digged it and so we decided to put it on the album.

Simmer Down features Marcia Griffiths, former member of the I Threes who supported your father and the Wailers as backing vocalists. Is that why she joined this combination?



Or how did she come on board the project?

Ky-Mani: Gentleman made that call! Gentleman: Ky-Mani and I were talking about features in general and the two of us felt that the album doesn't need any features. maybe just one or two. We thought about different people but by the end of the day we had Simmer Down and I felt that Marcia **Griffiths**, the queen would be great as the only feature on the album. So I gave her a call, said "Ky-Mani and I are doing an album and we would love to have you on board" and two hours later I had the vocal recordings. She also came to Cuba, where we did the video together. She is really a great person. Her aura and her presence are amazing. The vibe was just right. We did a wonderful video that I can't wait to see. It was just natural.

Why did you pick Cuba to shoot the video?

Gentleman: That was actually the director's idea. Noël Dernesch made the Journey To Jah movie and he did a lot of videos with me already. First we thought about Jamaica and Miami but then we thought it would be nice to have a different look because we don't know how long Cuba is still going to be like that. Who knows what is going to

happen in the next years. This is history in the making right now in Cuba. You have so many different kinds of people, you have the old buildings, no commercial signs, the old cars and we felt that it is a wonderful place to shoot a lot of different videos. All together we did eight or nine videos in Cuba and they all look different, even though it is just this one place. And we had a great time, **Munchy**, believe you me.

Ky-Mani laughs

Gentleman: ... The rum is nice, it's smooth. Even without herb, because they lock you up and give you a hard punishment, if you have a spliff.

Was it actually as untouched as you imagined it to be?

Ky-Mani: Yes, it was very untouched. It was like going back to the past, like the 1950s, but the atmosphere and the energy of the people were so warm and loving and welcoming. For me the vibes were intense. Nothing like what I have heard of Cuba. I went under one mind frame and experienced something totally different. That was definitely a beautiful moment



NEW ALBUM "SO WHAT" SEPTEMBER 23RD 2016

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Have either one of you been to Cuba before? *Gentleman:* I was there in 2000 to shoot a video with **DJ Thomilla**. So it's been a while.

Let's speak about this island experience a bit more because there is a solo song on Conversations entitled Red Town, in which you, Gentleman, sing of white sand, cool breeze and sunset, the destination is freedom of stress and we dying to get away. Looking at your busy schedule, all the tours, records, it really had me wondering when you last actually got away. Is the song somewhat wishful thinking? *Gentleman:* The thing is that I really like to be in my yard. As much as I love to be on stage, as much as I enjoy music and doing songs, the travelling doesn't get easier. The 22 hours before and after the stage show, the hotel rooms and airports are really rough sometimes. But it's a love song and it's about a change of environment, to escape and get out of the daily things. The songs is full of vibes and pictures and it happened very natural.

Overall the album includes two solo tracks and four skits. What are they about?

Gentleman: The skits actually are the conversations or parts of the conversation. We were really reasoning a lot and that is how we created the songs. Again, every song is also based on conversations. The album title means we should have more conversations, more reasonings, especially in the social media days. I am not against that, I use it too, but we have to use it more wisely and spend more time with each other. If we sat down and talked to each other, we would be better off.

Gentleman: That's the whole idea of the album. The skits are what we think about certain things. There aren't a lot, just four of 20 to 40 seconds each. For example I am telling Ky-Mani "Yeah, I just watched the news and after that I started to feel depressed and heavy and down and I wonder why we always have to repeat history over and over again and I don't know why we don't learn from



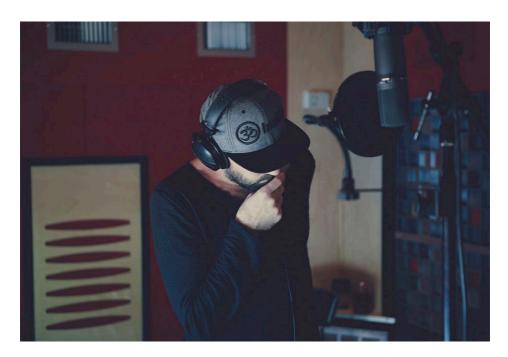


our mistakes. It comes like we're moving in a circle but at the same time there is hope...". We just talked a little bit and it sounded really nice to put that in between the songs. The whole album was produced by **Clay** and me, we did it in my studio here in Cologne. Stephen McGregor did two songs together with Supa Dups, Ben Bazzazian did two songs. When the album was almost finished, we didn't have a title, like always. Sometimes I spend more time finding a title than doing the album itself. Then we thought Conversations is really beautiful because it is a call to say "People, sit down and talk, have reasonings, exchange an experience, exchange your points of view and try to understand each other!" It doesn't matter if it's the refugee situation, the political situation, the music business, envy or greed - everything is based on conversation. If there was no conversation, the world would be such a dark place. The more we speak and the less emotional we get with it, the better we can come out of the thing and that's the whole idea of the album.

You already mentioned who produced it. Which musicians were also on board the project?

Gentleman: Clay is a wonderful musician. I came up with most of the songs, some chords here and there, then he changed them up a little bit to make them sound a little more unorthodox. We programmed the jams together, he played different guitars on it and later on we used other musicians to get a different feel out of certain songs. For example Boris Rogowski, a guitarist who is on MTV **Unplugged** too, did a lot. **The Evolution** Band did a lot too. Dean Fraser played the horns on Simmer Down. Stephen McGregor can play every instrument, so he also played the instruments by himself with **Supa Dups**. The strings were done by **David Menke** from Paris, who did them for my New Day Dawn album. He does a lot of soundtracks even for big Hollywood productions, so he really knows what a song needs.

You posted pictures online in which we could actually see the two of you in the studio together recording. So were the conversations



and the vocal recordings for the combinations all done together?

Ky-Mani: Yeah, we did some songs together in Miami. **Gentleman** also did a lot in his studio in Cologne, while I worked here in Miami. That's just how it goes sometimes because I was also really busy with my album. **Maestro** was just out and I was on promotion, but I am glad that it still worked out.

The cover is a very natural shot of the two of you. Where was this picture taken? Was it a photo shoot or was it really as candid as it seems?

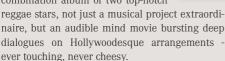
Ky-Mani: It wasn't a photo shoot. Pascal, the photographer Gentleman has been working with for years, he was with us in Miami. He also took the pictures that are in the booklet. It wasn't planned to have a photo shoot but he said "Wow, the light is so nice outside, let's go out for a minute!" and we said okay. We actually had a conversation, he just pressed the thing and it was really a moment, not "Stand like this" and "Here is the light". It was very spontaneous and definitely real.

You will take the album on tour as another mutual effort but at the same time it's not going to be just the two of you. Tell us what to expect from the shows you're going to be playing, especially at Summerjam.

Gentleman: This year we're going to be doing three different type of shows. We have Ky-Mani and Gentleman shows, where we present the album. Then you have **Gentle**man solo shows, although not so many this year. And then we have the MTV Unplugged tour, where **Ky-Mani** is coming as well as Martin Jondo and Milky Chance. Maybe also Marcia Griffiths will come for a couple of shows. For **Summerjam** we will be going into the rehearsal rooms by mid-June and then we will start to work on the programme. **Alborosie** will probably come on stage to perform the song with me. We're going to have the **Symphonical**, an orchestra show in Poland on June 18th, where Alborosie and **Ky-Mani** are going to be, too. **Summerjam** is a big family affair and we never know what is happening.

Gentleman & Ky-Mani Marley - Conversations Universal - June 24th 2016

"We have to go back to the days where music was being used not only to dance but also to inspire and motivate" suggests Ky-Mani Marley in track two, a short skit with fellow protagonist Gentleman and the two lived up to this idea expertly. The end result Conversations is not just a combination album of two top-notch



"We came here to get away from the war. Here there are no wars at all", a little Arab refugee girl tells her story at the beginning of the record in **Signs Of The Times**. The powerful, yet sensitive opening track was released before the album and came with one of the eight videos that were shot by Noël Dernesch in Cuba. The melancholic elegy drags you right into the dense atmosphere of the music with gentle piano, two-dimensional chorals mixed with the stories of the refugees and a monumental strings crescendo by Parisian David Menke who was already on board Gentleman's New Day Dawn and is well-versed in big soundtracks creating even greater emotions. The theme of the current mass migration is a popular topic on Conversations, illustrated with a high-contrast collage of actual news at the beginning of Way Out, one of the strongest stories of the album. Amazingly authentic both artists take on the roles of refugees. **Gentleman**, who has lost his family is going on an uncertain boat ride even though he cannot swim and Ky-Mani is a former musician who cannot feel the groove again: "I wish I could have stayed, but there was nowhere to choose... You have so much to win, when I have nothing left to lose. If you can change perspective, then I'm sure you'll change your views."

But no worries, not all actual **Conversations** are that heavy. **Gentleman's** solo *Red Town* is a romantic declaration of love wrapped up as an invitation to just get away to "white sand, cool breeze and sunset". *Mama*. which kicks in with



an organic one drop after an intro of filtered drums and subtle piano chords, is a fond ode to the artists' moms, and *Simmer Down*, with the only further guest appearance by *Marcia Griffiths*, is a jovial cover version that has the listeners rock, skank and swing from the first sound of the brass.

In any case both singers meet the requirements as mentioned at the beginning. **Conversations** is motivational, encouraging, and inspiring in many ways. *Uprising*, a strong, uplifting track with a convincing deejay part by Gentleman calls the freedom fighters: "Let them know we nuh push over, it's not over 'til it's over!" In the unsurprisingly more rock-like Hey, Ky-Mani's solo of perfectly combines a roaring electric guitar with the roaring vocalist who is not willing to give up: "So when hope is lost, just means it's there to be found. You keep your head above the water, your feet on solid ground!" And first and foremost there is the literal **Motivation** that fascinates with a rather reduced instrumental from hand-claps, horn accents and acoustic guitar, that grooves as it picks up speed.

In general it is not with just the lyrics that this record impresses, but the musical production and arrangements in which fellow artist Clay and Gentleman's Evolution Band played a major role. Acoustic and electric guitars, sometimes picked softly and at other times heavily stroked, are a main force, as are the stunning strings that range from subtle to tremendous. Beats don't just come from organic drums, but massive timpani, simple claps, or even a percussive blend of the sound of bursting glass and shatter in How I Feel. When two superstars announce a joint project expectations are naturally high, but Ky-Mani Marley and Gentleman even exceeded them. 14 songs and four skits, actual conversations between the two brothers, deliver food for thought, provoke mental impulses, leave its listeners inspired, stimulated, with goose bumps, smiles, tears. by Ursula .Munchy' Münch

















FESTIVALS JUNE 2016 31



SNWMF



17. - 19. June

Don Carlos_Toots & The Maytals_ Alpha Blondy_Beres Hammond_ Lee Scratch Perry_Richie Spice_ Sara Lugo_and many more...



Jamaican Jerk Festival - Washington



19. June

Freddie McGregor_ Christopher Martin_Ikaya_ No-Maddz and more...





32 FESTIVALS JUNE 2016



Victoria's Ska Reggae Festival



22. - 26. June

Toots & The Maytals_Dub FX_ Tasman Jude_The Black Seeds and many many more



Reggae Fever Groningen & Utrecht



25. June + 26. June

Anthony B_Tanya_Stephens_ Christopher Martin_Protoje_ Collie Buddz Tydal The Dubeez





FESTIVALS JUNE 2016 33



Marley & Friends Culture Fest



25. June

Ziggy Marley_Steel Pulse_ Maxi Priest Ed Robinson



Groovin In The Park



26. June

Beres Hammond_Duane Stephenson_ Toots & The Maytals_Tessanne Chin and more





34 FESTIVALS JUNE 2016



Reggae Night XV



26. June

Burning Spear_ Ky-Mani Marley_Etana



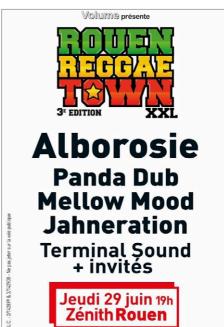
Rouen Reggae Town



29. June

Alborosie_Panda Dub_ Mellow Mood and more...





FESTIVALS JUNE 2016 35



Burning Sun



30. June - 2. July

Assassin_Michael Rose_ Bitty McLean_City Lock Sound_ Steppa Style Mesaiah and more...



Musa Festival

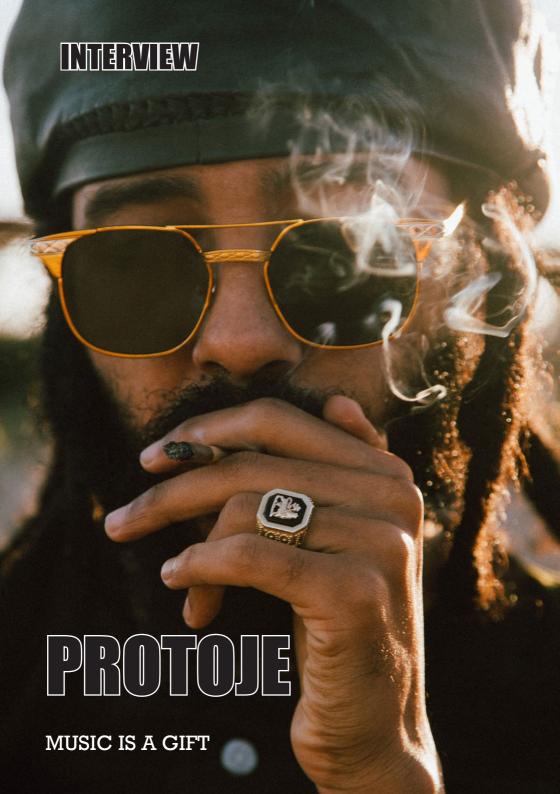


30. June - 2. July

Alborosie_Jesse Royal_Assassin_Dub Inc_Max Romeo_Tanya Stephens_Supa Suuad and more...







ROYALTY FREE

BY ANGUS TAYLOR | PHOTOS BY YANNICK REID

You might think **Protoje** would be resting on the success of his third album **Ancient Future**. But one song that missed the final track-list became the seed of his new project **Royalty Free**: half of which he shock-released as a free download on his birthday, June 14th.

Fortunately, **Proto** tipped off **Angus Taylor** with his intentions. They had the following conversation about the many ideas behind his unusual and unexpected creation. It turns out its various roots go very deep.



Why did you decide not to pre-announce the release of your new album?

Because I never wanted to go about it in the same way I have done all my past releases. Firstly, because it is free so I feel like most of the campaign for it can be done "in post". And, secondly, because it's all about experimenting and as much as I am a student of the music, I am really a student of getting your music out there. Because this is something I have great interest in and want to be able to do for artists that I sign and I look out for. To understand how music is moving and the industry is different in 2016 than how it was in 2010. I just wanted to do something a bit different this time.

The album is called Royalty Free. It's got a lot of samples on it. I know you've had some problems getting samples cleared on your previous albums. So are you just doing this so that you can sample what you want and then give it away for free?

(Laughter) **Angus**, you see right through me! It's funny because when I first let the label who I collaborate with in the UK hear this. the first thing they said was "Wow, this is huge! Let's clear all the samples and get this up on iTunes". So I have access to do this and I may clear all the samples anyway. Just so all the business of the publishing can be sorted out and even the people who sample can get what they are supposed to get. But I still heavily want to keep it for free because I am not short of music right now and I just wanted to give this music to my core following and to experiment with sounds. If you follow my album releases this is usually my year off in between records

If I don't put out this music now, it never comes out. Because the direction of my music is constantly changing and this is the only time for this sound. Because the sound is going to continue evolving and I just wanted to put something in between my next record and the sound of what shall be there.



Were you inspired by people like Beyoncé, Rihanna, and Drake in releasing an album unannounced?

No doubt. I am on top of what's happening in the music, locally and abroad. The same stuff that worked for me for **Seven Year Itch** won't work now in terms of a marketing standpoint. Especially because it's free. Keep in mind that even though **Billboard** premiered the first track *Can't Feel No Way* nobody knew that I had a full-length project coming. I saw what Drake did. I saw what different people did. So I just took something and I put my own twist on it. It being **Royalty Free Side B**. It is a lot more open to what is to come.

Why did you decide to release the B-side before the A-side? Is the A-side coming?

There is an A-side. It is a full-length. It is 10 tracks and what you got is track 6 to 10. I just do what I feel **Angus**. I just decided I wanted this to be what people heard first. I just wanted to release it differently and not release a whole record full. I don't have any rules because I am doing it how I want it. I don't have it on iTunes. I don't have a distributor. I don't have anything. I executive produced it so I can do what I want. If I wanted to put out two songs I could have done it. If I wanted to put it on iTunes I could have done it. But I wanted to do it this way. To release Side B first and see what the temperature is like.

When the first track premiered on Billboard the article talked about an Indiggnation production collective. Can you tell me about that?

It's just the **Indiggnation Collective**. I guess they put production because it was focusing on producers but it is the collective I have been forming for the past few years. It is finally getting a chance to come together in the way I envisioned it and one of the ways is producers that I work with in-house. So this whole project, outside of the **Winta James** track, was done by in-house producers. You could call **Winta** that, except he has his own *Ovastand* thing and we work on a partner basis. **Winta** is obviously a frequent collaborator of mine.

But yeah this is a bunch of young producers including the **Drumkeys** I worked with on *Flight Plans*, 8 Track who did **Sandra Foster** and **Tracker John MD** who did the first two songs. Including myself who co-produced *Flight Plans* and other songs. Basically it's an in-house team that is doing beats for me and **Sevana** and obviously other artists toobut we start in house and then branch out.

The first track is Can't Feel No Way which contains a Dennis Brown sample. Can you tell me the story behind that song and what it's about?







The first idea came to me when the **Grammy** nominations came out. **Ancient Future** obviously didn't get nominated so we were talking about it. But I take everything in a joke if you know what I mean? There was a joke one time where **Twin of Twins** were fake acting like **Bounty Killer** and **Beenie Man** and **Beenie Man** is saying "He's jealous of my Grammy". And the reply they made **Bounty Killer** give was "Yo, Beenie Man, go eat your Grammy with fried fish and bammy". So I always remembered that from 10 years ago.

When the nominations came through and I didn't get the **Grammy** nomination I said to my friends "Yo, I didn't get the Grammy so I have to go eat fried fish and bammy". I just got the idea to be like "Who cares?" I Can't Feel No Way about that. I have life. I am healthy and strong. My music is getting played all over the world. I just came off tour.

It was just a song talking about "Listen, don't be worried about industry recognition. Do music. Feel good about the music you do and just keep working". It was a message to myself and definitely to my peers and more importantly to their younger artists coming up seeing me in a position. They themselves that have come to me and expressed frustration at Ancient Future not getting a nomination.

I am very familiar with the sample used in the second track which is Blood Sisters Ring My Bell. How did you and Tracker John decide to use that track?

He sent me the **Ring My Bell**. I didn't know where it came from and then I asked him and he told me. I heard it and I was sitting with that track for about three weeks. I just fell in love with the sound of it and started to write to it. But that wasn't my idea. I didn't find that sample. The producer did. For *Can't Feel No Way*, I heard that sample and sent it to **Tracker John**.

He is someone I met in 2005. When I first started to work on **Seven Year Itch** he was a producer that was sending me beats. It's funny because one song on the **Side A** he actually sent me that beat in 2005. And it sounds no different from what we're doing now with *Can't Feel No Way*. We had this sound over a decade ago.



Anyway, we didn't get to move on with that work at the time and we lost touch over the next decade. Then about two weeks before we started to work on **Royalty Free** he hit me up online and was like "Yo, man, I am still making beats bro. I see your stuff is blowing up. I really still want to do some work". I was like "Alright, send me something". So he made **Ring My Bell** and then in the space of three weeks we had two songs together. After not talking for 10 years! It was crazy.

He is based in Connecticut. He is a rapper and producer. He doesn't really do reggae stuff like that but me and him - that's how we work. He's just super versatile. He's a genius with producing. He does whatever he needs to do. When I told him what I wanted to accomplish with **Royalty Free** he just fit in and took it to a whole different level productionwise. So it's me and him together trying to formulate a different sound within my sound if you get me? So you will know "Yeah, that's Protoje and Tracker".

Tell me about the track Sandra Foster which contains a sample of Willie Lindo's Midnight. Why did you decide to do a song about a beauty queen?

Sandra Foster is my favourite Miss **Iamaica** of all time. It's the first woman I remember noticing as a nine or ten year old - like "Wow, who is that?" Obviously the most popular Miss Jamaica of my generation is **Lisa Hanna**. But **Sandra Foster** was always my first and my favourite. So this song is just a big metaphor for me meeting a girl right now and her reminding me of me being infatuated with **Sandra Foster** as a little boy. So it's not a song about San**dra Foster** but it's a song inspired by my childhood affinity for her, seeing her in a present-day girl. I found an interview that she did in 1991, when she was reigning, with **Fae Ellington** who is one of Jamaica's most popular TV personalities in the 90s. So I just sampled it in drawing the parallel with my life, being on the road giving up your private life, that sort of stuff.



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And who is the producer 8 Track?

8 Track is a producer from Bermuda. He just reached out to my Facebook page, saying he is a young producer and he really loves my style and he'd really love to do something. My manager told me about it because I get so many emails from people trying to do something. I was sifting through his work like "Alright, he doesn't really have anything I would want to do some music on but he has potential". So I just reached out and told him to keep sending me stuff. He sent me about 20 instrumentals and about number 21 I heard something and was like "This is the direction". And then he sent me the track that turned out to be Sandra Foster

What do you think about beauty contests today?

It has a lot of stereotypes. It has a narrow vision of what beauty is. I guess nobody can claim dominion over beauty to begin with so how can you contest it? How can you do it without having certain people say "It is only for a

certain demographic"? So it's not something I really watch like that. But it was something that I grew up watching. My mum always used to watch, my sister and I would just see it. Until I would be 13 years old saying "I think this person is going to win" and they would. I could always see what judges would be going for. So it was something of a childhood fun for me but it still lingers. Like when Kaci Fennell, the Jamaican that came second last year, was in the top three, I was at my TV watching and thinking "Oh, it would be cool if she would win".

Let's talk about Flight Plans which uses a sample of Horace Andy Baby Don't Go. This melody was also used by Senya for her song Oh Jah Come Now which is one of my favourites. Some artists like Jah9 seem to be really throwing themselves into production. You seem to be approaching production quite cautiously - only producing one track on your last album and co-producing only one track on side B of this one.



DAMIAN "JR GONG" MARLEY & MANU CHAO LA VENTURA & ALBOROSIE & MORGAN HERITAGE
TARRUS RILEY IT DEAN FRASER & ALAINE & BERES HAMMOND & KABAKA PYRAMID & FREDDIE MCGREGOR IT
CHINO & STEPHEN DI GENIUS & MARCIA GRIFFITHS & INNER CIRCLE & ISRAEL VIBRATION & MAX ROMEO & CONGOS
PABLO MOSES & JAH SHAKA & DUB INC & MAGAGO & JUNIOR KELLY & BIG MOUNTAIN & ASSASSIN AKA AGENT SASCO
SUD SOUND SYSTEM & BASS ODYSSEY & STAND HIGH PATROL IT PUPA JIM, ROOTYSTEP, MAGGYVER & MERRY
JAH9 & RANDY VALENTINE & BIGA RANX & MAD PROFESSOR IT SR WILSON & LASAI & ZIGGI RECADO & YANISS ODUA
IT VOLODIA & GREEN VALLEY & WAILING SOULS & GENTLEMAN'S DUB CLUB & THE SKINTS & RAPHAEL & ALMAMEGRETTA
IRATION STEPPAS & JUGGLERZ & CHANNEL ONE & RENAISSANCE DISCO & JAH OBSERVER & FREDDIE KRUEGER
RUNKUS & OLD SKL BAND & BLACKBOARD JUNGLE IT NISH WADADA & EL INDIO ... and more

MAIN STAGE * DANCEHALL * SHOWGASE STAGE * DUB AGADEMY * ROOTS YARD * SUNBEACH * REGGAE UNIVERSITY * SOCIAL FORUM
NON-PROFIT AREA * AFRICAN VILLAGE * ROTOTOMCIRCUS * PACHAMAMA * KIDS AREA * ART SYMPOSIUM * ARTISAN MARKET * GAMPING AREA * RESTAURANTS













Yeah, that's my retirement. (Laughter) I am just preparing for what I want to be doing. What I am most passionate about is being an artist. And to be a producer I want to have the standards in production. To do that, the time I have to dedicate to being a producer, it will affect the time I want to spend in being an artist right now.

Secondly, I have producers around me that are just better than I am right now. I have **Winta** producing for me and I am probably 2/10 of where he is as a producer right now. I can make tracks that are brilliant but for me to produce a whole record for myself, I don't want to rush that. That will come eventually. But right now I just do one or two songs here and there for myself, one or two for other artists, and make sure that in all of them, the standard is very high.

On *Flight Plans* I was able to achieve that in how it sounds. This record, it sounds very cohesive but it still has different types of

sounds. It started with Can't Feel No Way, got a little bit more reggae in *Glad You're Home*, got a little more groovy on Sandra Foster, got into more reggae by *Flight Plans* and then in *Used To Be My Life* it's straight original vibes. So it is done in a way to display different sounds and for me to see what I'm feeling and what works better so I can help push my sound forward.

Who sings on the track?

That is one person who I am very excited about. Her name is **Lila Ike**. I know her through my assistant **Jamila** who was an intern for me in her last year of university. She just graduated and is now my official assistant. She introduced me to **Lila** about a year ago. When I kept my listening session at the studio for **Ancient Future Jamila** put it together and I met Lila and heard that she was a singer. And then later I linked up with her and a bunch of young artists **Grei Show**, **BLVK H3RO**, **Runkus**, I invited a lot of them into studio to hear **Royalty Free**.



I was chilling with her and she started to ad lib and I was like "Yow, you should ad lib on this song and sing on it". She just went in and did it.

What's the song about?

I wrote this song a while back. My girl of the time was living in America. It was a whole long distance thing. I went up to visit her for two weeks and she was like "The longdistance stuff is not going to work and at the end of this two weeks we should just call it off and move on, no hard feelings". So that was just me saying that my Flight Plans are telling me I have two weeks leave and in two weeks she's telling me I have to leave. I just got inspired through that for the first verse. The second verse has to do with somebody different. Another person who I was with and just chronicling what we were going through at that time. So it's 100% all true story. But from two different time periods.

How come you included the only Winta James production Used To Be My Life which contains a sample of John Holt's cover of David Gates' Baby I'm A Want You? This was meant to be part of Ancient Future, right? Used To Be My Life is what started the whole idea of doing Royalty Free. Used To Be My Life was track 12 on Ancient Future and we couldn't get the clearance in time. So we had to leave it off. That track is produced by Winta James with additional production by Prince Fatty. This started the whole concept because I was like "This song is coming out".

Obviously, **Winta** might not have production credits on other songs but they were definitely nights in the studio where we have sessions back to back. Like he would have a session from 5 till 8 and I would have a session 9 till 12. He would sit in and be like "I like how this sounds." Or "Yeah, that's drum sound good". "Yo, your voice could be a little bit more". So it's still the same team. It's like when he does his new rhythm **Mile High**, it's not an **Ovastand** and **Indiggna**

tion project but I am in studio with him and we really work together. His ear is listening to **Royalty Free** and making sure it sounds up to a standard. He is big brothering me as an executive.

Tell me about the lyrics for the song. What used to be your life?

I wrote this when my friend died. My friend who I started to do music with when we were in high school. He died in a car accident. So this was just me reflecting on the time when he died. At the time I was in a bunch of different stuff. I speak about it in **Seven Year Itch** when I say "My herb customers calling me and now my music demanding me". I cannot touch about it again.

Used To Be My Life was written for **Seven Year Itch**. This song is about 10 years old. I wrote this song for **Seven Year Itch** and **John Holt** recorded it with me but I lost the file with his vocals and obviously he passed away a couple of years ago so I never got it back. But this is one of my first, probably the first song I wrote for the **Seven Year Itch**. This is the song that started me doing reggae music. This was the first song that I wrote to say "This is going to be my new journey as an artist".

Is there anything else you want to say?

The whole thing about it being for free and encouraging people to share and spread it? The main thing was arming my fans with the ability to be on Twitter, Facebook, or any media and be able to download this for free. The free download is going to be on my website **Protoje.com**. That was a key thing for me. To really arm my fans to feel like "Yo, the artist give me this and I can email 30 people and say you need to download this and really energise them". That was a key thing I wanted to do. And just to take control of how I put my music out for a bit. But I would really like people to be energised to share it as much as possible.



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CUT THE CLICHÉS

BY ANGUS TAYLOR | PHOTOS BY TINO POHLMANN

Frank Dellé - pronounced "Delay" - is one of the trio of vocalists from genre-hopping German reggae band Seeed. Born in Berlin to a Ghanaian father and a German mother, he grew up in both Ghana and rural Germany, before moving back to his birth city and getting sucked into its music scene. After a decade's mega-success with Seeed, the group went on hiatus, allowing Dellé and his producer Guido Craveiro to create his debut album Before I Grow Old. Following another six years' Seeed madness, on the tide of the solo career of bandmate Peter Fox. Dellé now has a chance to drop second long-player Neo. Reggaeville links **Dellé** in Berlin from London via Skype. He is wearing a Bob Marley T-Shirt, the day after the 35th anniversary of Bob's passing. He speaks quickly, apologising for jumping between topics so fast. Naturally, he compares each aspect of his recently revived project with the juggernaut that is **Seeed**. The new record is far more eclectic than Before I Grow Old. This is because Dellé wants to bring his fans' reggae perceptions beyond what he sees as European stereotypes and clichés. Stereotypes and clichés he has defied all his life - just by existing...



What have you been up to today?

Tomorrow we start preparation for the festival season. The band is rehearsing this record in combination with the old one and integrating the new. Making an album ready for on the stage. I can't wait for that! Because that's why you do all this stuff.

Do you feel at home on stage? Do you feel relaxed?

I feel relaxed with **Seeed** on stage! It's 18 years now with the same guys, who grew up together. The solo **Dellé** thing... that is where

I have to get comfortable. I see my name on a big board saying "*Dellé's going to play*" and I have not even rehearsed one tune! Maybe when I know it's going to be safe and secure - then I have a good feeling.

Let's talk about your roots. You were born in Berlin.

I was born in Berlin. My father came in the early 60s from Ghana. He studied medicine. My mother came from a small town close to Berlin. That's how they got to know each other.

My parents didn't want me and my sister to grow up in the big city. We moved to the German countryside at the age of six and then we all moved to Ghana. My father wanted to go back to his country. My mother always wanted to go to Africa before she even knew my dad. So it was just natural.

I knew uncles who came to study so I knew the family of my father before I went to Africa. But I was expecting an Africa like a European child would think of Africa. So my mother did one very great move. We didn't just sit on a plane and fly eight hours to Ghana and everything was different. We actually moved by ship. Me and my sister were the only kids on this thing. The crew was Ghanaian so we could learn English and go through the whole of the West African coast until we reached Accra. So when we reached there we had the basics.

Why did your family come back to Germany?

My father had infected himself with hepatitis in Berlin during his studies and he was sick. So it was "We better get back to Germany because the health medication system is better". I was in Ghana from '76 to '82 so I was 12 when I came back. And from then we stayed in Germany.

How did you first get inspired by reggae and Bob Marley?

I would say 1980. *Uprising* was out and it was on tape. I couldn't get it on a record. I remember there was one used record in the store and it was 80 cedis and my father said "If it is important then you have to buy it". I saved so much money for it but I couldn't get it and then when I came to Germany they were all there so you could just go and buy! (laughs)

I guess you know he didn't even come to the country but they would fill a stadium with a video show. We were not allowed to go because that was where those marijuana smoking bad guys were! I didn't see him in Germany either. I heard of people who saw him in Berlin and for me it was like "I really missed this!" (laughs)

How did you join Seeed?

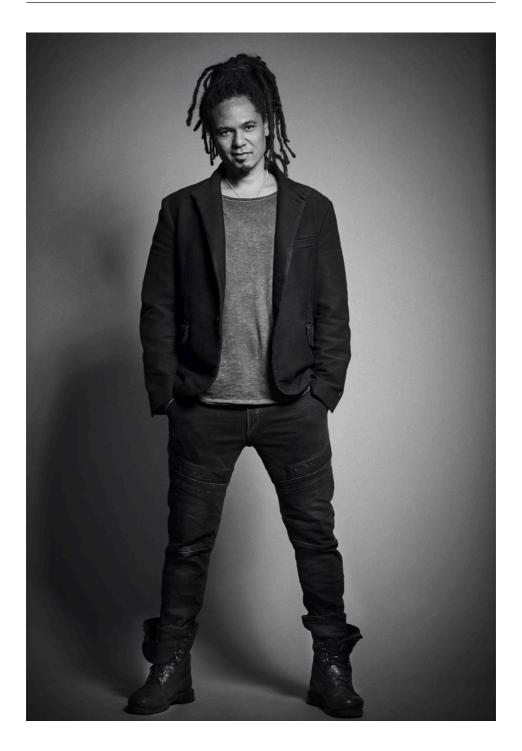
I came to Berlin to Potsdam Babelsberg to go to film school doing movie sound. I met **Pierre** at a party. **Pierre** is **Peter Fox**. There was this guy who had all kinds of instruments on the wall from the didgeridoo to a drum set. Everybody just picked an instrument and everybody could just do what they wanted and nobody would say "*This is uncool*".

Pierre would do this mouth percussion drumming. He would simulate the way a drummer does rolls with double bass but with his mouth. I thought "What the fuck is this guy doing?" He was this redhead, not looking like that kind of guy in the cliché, so that made it even more interesting. I would improvise some made up patois mixture. We had our first connection. At that time he had a band and he was recording in Hamburg and he asked me, would I want to do a song with them together?

I didn't really want to go in a band at that time. And then I met this guy and he was into reggae! We both went to a **Buju Banton** concert in Berlin - and that is where I really clicked. He said "You know what Frank? I would really like to do a band in a certain way. That we're reggae at the base of it but not a reggae band in that sense." And his voice was what fascinated me so I just thought "This guy knows something, let's try it out".

Have you been to Jamaica?

One time. When we produced and wrote **Next** - our third **Seeed** album. As a reggae fan you always want to go - but it wasn't as much as a European reggae fan wanted to go! We went and I just saw "These people are from Ghana - they are from West Africa!" Because the Rastafarians we see here in the movies and all these clichés - this is the minority. It was like "You have to dress neat, dress properly, go to school" you have this whole kind of way in Africa. This cliché here in Europe is always that they are so free and so cool but you don't know how conservative Africa is. Also the connection between patois and Twi.





But on the other side it was the first time I saw a certain racism against whites. I went with **Pierre**, my colleague, and in Ghana he wouldn't be treated that way. People would rather try to show you "Come to our country and see" but there, being enslaved, there is this attitude. That for me was an experience apart from seeing great musicians, recording with **Tanya Stephens** and at that time it was **Elephant Man** and he really blew me away! But on a very big scale I was looking at it from this point of view.

You talked about clichés in relation to reggae. You don't smoke weed.

I am 46 and I have never done it. I guess I'm always surrounded by people who smoke it so I guess I have smoked it many times! (laughs) But it has always been that everybody is so astonished that I don't smoke weed that I just thought it was funny to keep it that way.

There was one situation where I really would have done it. When I held **Before I Grow Old,** my first album, in my hand I said "You know what Guido? I am so happy to hold this album I am going to smoke my first joint with you just to celebrate". And the guy didn't have weed! (laughs)

How often do you encounter stereotypes and clichés in your daily life?

Actually human beings are that way everywhere. In cities like London and Berlin you don't have it as much but you still have to deal with them all the time. You see somebody looking at you or asking you very kindly where you come from or "Can I touch your hair?" Or in Ghana if you are a white person I remember they would be putting their hand on your skin and the blood would go away and be white. It was like magic to the kids!

But in my daily life, to tell the truth, I was lucky and I had advantages about my outer being because I speak German without an accent. I am very German, just like I'm Ghanaian. I was lucky not to meet the wrong people at the wrong places. So this thing about trying to find a flat and phoning somebody and then I'd go there and he says "He is a black guy so he doesn't get the room" - this is never happened to me! Even if we go through customs where they "Pull out the Rastaman". I know so many people it has happened to but it hasn't happened to me.

Now these guys tell me "Frank your face doesn't look like that - that is why". But you know, it could just happen because you meet the wrong people. So I don't want to use my outer form to go into that. Because people want me to be that and I'm not that. I am just a lucky guy who had a good family so I won't write a song about repatriations because it's not my message.

All three singers from Seeed have issued solo work - was it something you really wanted?

No actually, I just had **Seeed** and I loved it. I loved it the way it was. It's just that after 10 years of **Seeed**, **Pierre** wanted to do a break.



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I was told it was important to do a break or you break up. I would have loved to go to new territories like as a German band in England or France. But it was hard for us to get on there. It was kind of not accepted.

I became a father for the first time and so it all made sense that this break was there. And then **Pierre** started with his record and it was like "Wow, this guy! Once-in-a-lifetime somebody who deserves it has people understand it and it worked". And **Demba** has been doing music all the time anyway so we used a break to do that. We took time for family which **Pierre** didn't have. He wanted a break but he went from one thing to another and it worked. I had the chance to have this time with my kids at the beginning where I really needed it.

Then I met **Guido** and we did the first record. I was messing around with my own ideas and working with the drummer of **Gentleman**. But when I met **Guido Craveiro** he gave me

the idea "We can really work fast and get a record together in a period of half a year". With Seeed we need two years to do a record. Then Norbert Rudnitzky was the one who said "Frank I would love to do a record with your voice." So that's how the first thing evolved and there were so many stories and things that I had to say. As soon as I was prepared to do a record I didn't have to invent any stories. But it wasn't like "Now Seeed's over I want to do my solo thing."

How did you meet Guido?

I met **Guido** in Berlin. He was the keyboardist for **Nosliw**. He is actually a good friend and asked me to a show he had in Berlin. I did a song with him and **Guido** was the keyboardist. I met him in the backstage and we talked. If you see **Guido** he doesn't look like what he can do! I would say he is a hidden force! That fascinated me and he said "*Give me some of your songs*". This one song *Fly Away* - that's the one I gave him and he really loved. He pumped up



the beat in the way he heard it and that thing blew me away. From there I said "Come on, let's do it!"

Normally when there's a gap 6 or 7 years between albums you'd ask an artist "What happened in that time?" But it sounds like there was a lot happening, with Seeed coming back!

That was the period of playing the fourth Seeed album. We played South America, France. Then **Pierre** said after six years "Let's do another break". It started with the **Cold Steel Drumline** who play with **Peter Fox** and with **Seeed**. They are actually Americans and he opened the school in Berlin for kids to learn how to do this kind of drumming.

So when I heard that I said "Okay Guido, come on. Let's just start writing new stuff." Writing Neo lasted one and a half years. Then this Lollapalooza festival came to Berlin and Seeed had been called back to play, when we had already said we were going to do a break. But then we had a combination of being able to play in South America with Seeed in four countries. We said "If we open the show big for you here in Berlin so that you can get your festival working... then you've got to take us over". That was the cool deal that we had.

When you play in Berlin and see it is crowded with people - you don't know if they love you because what you're doing at that moment is good or because it's cool to go to go to a **Seeed** concert! If you play in South America it's like "Germans build cars, Germans don't do reggae music". So you are exotic and if you get them into it then you know you are rewarded for what you did! So I said "We have five days off in Argentina let's do the Dellé business". We got **Gentleman** over and were able to combine the **Seeed** tour 2016 with shooting my two videos in South America.

How well did you know Gentleman before you recorded Tic Toc?

Because reggae is not too popular and there is a scene, I knew him for about 18 years. We would always meet at festivals and these award

type of things. But it's not like he comes to me and stays at my house like friends cooking together. It never happened between **Seeed** and **Gentleman** because at a certain point we were maybe kind of rivals! So as a solo artist, I liked him as a person. I thought "This collaboration thing talking about this Tic Toc time, you cannot do this topic with a 24 year old guy". It was perfect for **Gentleman**. I texted saying "It's time now - let's do it!" He loved the song so he just wrote back the same thing! (laughs)

Seeed vocalist Boundzound ended up on the album with How Do You Do. He was on the previous album too.

How Do You Do was actually a song idea by Demba – Boundzound - that didn't make it on the last Seeed record. I loved that "How do you do you do". The basic idea was not even reggae. It was more of a mantra type of didgeridoo thing. So I said "Okay Demba, I want to do it". I wrote the verses, giving it a contrast to the steppers beat, trying to make it the heavy beat and the light way of the electronic voice as a style.

I really like Please Apologise because it mentions Germany's very complicated recycling rules!

(Laughs) It's so good that you understand it! I am in here in Germany where of course people understand English but I wonder "Who else listens to it and gets the little funny part when I say that?" I am very happy that has been understood by somebody who natively speaks English and really listened to the music.

I was thinking about the student talks where you stand in the kitchen and you know it all. This generation will drive and take the plane everywhere and be like "We're going to do everything" but we know we're never going to fucking do it! That was the way I could deal with recycling because I know how to do it but I don't! I mean I separate my waste but, not really! (laughs)

How difficult was it to write a song like Take Your Medicine – which deals with a friend's mental illness?



It wasn't at all because the story was there since when I was 22 or 23. I met this friend of mine, and one weekend four friends were at the house of one of his parents. We had this wonderful day not even smoking or doing anything - just being there as friends. The next morning he wakes me up and gives me this little handkerchief and says "Frank, my mother gave this to me and I want to give it to you because I love you so much and because the time we are having here is so special". It was just normal and you just think "Wow - what a friend" and it was so deep. And then he started saying "Look this is my ID. What is this? It's not important" and threw it away and said "We are important - not this!" And then it would go on over a period of two hours and then in the end he was naked and running around and saying he's Jesus!

So this process of going through this psychosis - I never forgot. It was something I knew could happen to me because this guy was so normal and not some drug addict where everybody thought "One day this just has to happen". So then **Guido** sent me this beat with this chord change - he named it *Hannibal Lecter*! So this thing of knowing that you have to take this medication otherwise you're

out of your mind - it was frightening but just perfect for it.

I've not played the song to him yet. I told him "I have written a song on my new album" and I really want to know how he would react to it. Because now he is a father, they have two kids - everything has gone well. But we will never forget that thing. Sometimes he comes up with his finger and says "I am Jesus" as a joke.

Neo is obviously more diverse than Before I Grow Old... But what do you see as the difference between the two albums?

Before I Grow Old - I wanted to do a roots reggae album with the modern aspects that I'm influenced by. I'm not a Jamaican. I was somebody in the year 2009 who grew up in Ghana and Berlin. It was basically more roots traditional. I always said "I want to do this once before I go back to my roots".

The second one I wanted to be, as you say, more diverse. So a reggae fan would hear all reggae songs but somebody who thinks reggae is **Bob Marley** will hear a lot of sounds and say "*This is not reggae*". I wanted the old **Dellé** fans to hear something where

they could say "There is a development". That I have opened the fan musically. So that they can say "Well we can take it there too. We don't have to only do the traditional".

When I say "Road to Neo" it's about these clichés we used to be talking about in Germany 20 or 30 years ago. When I grew up that was "The blacks have got the rhythm in their blood and the whites are more into the words". With my kids this is completely gone. Growing up in a place like here. You have blonde 12 year old kids who sing like Aretha Franklin. The

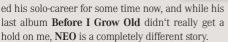
black man with dreadlocks being German and still having all this diversity we have today.

So this thing is about trying to bring **Before** I Grow Old to the next level. Maybe the next album I could try to do something completely different - jazz or heavy metal, dance or whatever!



Dellé - NEO Virgin Records - June 24th 2016

A little brainstorming: which characteristics do you associate with the word **NEO**? Dynamic, new, urban, modern, strong, durable, fast, interesting... maybe some more in case you've watched The Matrix. All of the above somehow describe the sound of a new release straight out of Berlin by the one called **Dellé**. The **Seeed**-member has pursu-



Produced under the wing of *Virgin Records*, it contains 11 songs that aptly illustrate the variety of styles and subjects the artist commands. All of the riddim tracks have been carefully crafted by mastermind **Guido Craveiro**, who, in close collaboration with **Dellé**, managed to create tunes that are at once delicate and powerful, catchy and complicated - the first track **Teach Me** is a good illustration of this. Are you able to identify all the different sounds it contains?

Inspired by Marteria's Sekundenschlaf, Tic Toc is the second single release of the album. For an incredible first time collaboration, Dellé has invited Gentleman onto the speedy track. The same talented drumliners who appear in the impressive video (a formation called Cold Steel) spice up Apologize as well. The only other feature is recorded with band colleague Boundzound, and although How Do You Do is fun listening, lyrically it lacks the conscious depth of other tracks, such as Sleepy Hollow.

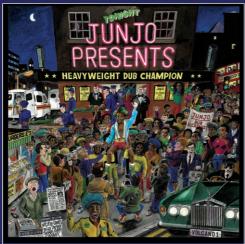


More than one personal story is told as well, reflecting on the turbulent years of **Dellé's** life. *Trisomy 21* for instance, a song written during his wife's second pregnancy, comes to terms with the fear that their child might be born with Down syndrome. *Take Your Medicine* is also based on a true story, dedicated to a friend

of his who, 20 years ago, suddenly glided into a deep psychosis that had to be treated in a mental hospital. This courage to talk about subjects no one else talks about is one of the strengths of the album, but it also demands a lot from his audience. No easy-peasy listening! Ok, there are playful songs, too. Falling in love with the first notes of *Marry Me*, the chorus is an instant singalong, as is the slightly more serious *Tell Me Who You Are*.

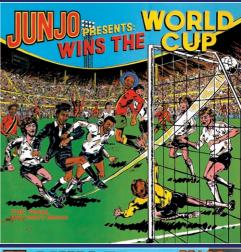
I've been most touched, however, by *Light Your Fire*. Dellé has dared to address the hot iron of religious fanaticism and finds a simple, lyrical way of presenting it that deserves deepest respect. The accompanying video, which puts the central message of the song into focus, is worth watching as well: "*The common motivation of all our religions is love!*"

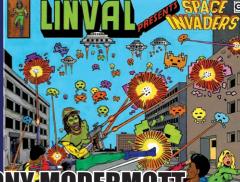
There is not much to be added to this. With **NEO**, **Dellé** redefines urban reggae and audibly shows us that not everything has to be revived - there is plenty of room up front for great, new music! **by Gardy Stein-Kanjora**











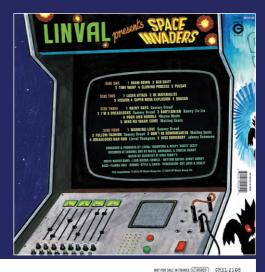
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FESTIVALS JULY 2016 61



Summerjam



1. - 3. July

Gentleman & Ky-Mani Marley_ Alborosie_Raging Fyah_Chronixx_ Sean Paul_Morgan Heritage_Delle and many more...



Couleur Cafe



1. - 3. July

Julian Marley_Protoje_ Bunny Wailer_Morgan Heritage_ Chronixx and many more...





62 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Roots Reggae Festival



2.+3. July

ljahman Levi_Earl 16_U Brown and more...



Vienna Sunsplash



3. July

Gentleman & Ky-Mani Marley_ Alborosie Matisyahu and more...





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64 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Öland Roots



7. - 9. July

Morgan Heritage_Million Stylez_ Jaqee_Silly Walks Discotheque and more...



Dub Camp



7. - 10. July

Johnny Clarke_Michael Rose_Earl 16_Zion Train_Michael Prophet_Iration Steppas_Prince Alla_U-Roy and many more..





FESTIVALS JULY 2016 65



Sardinia Reggae Festival



7. - 10. July

Lee Scratch Perry_Dub Inc_ Michael Prophet_U Brown_ Train To Roots and many more...



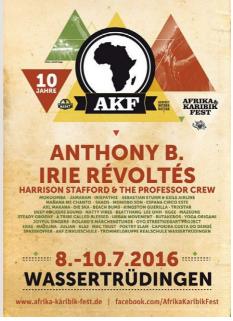
Afrika Karibik Fest



8. - 10. July

Anthony B_Sebastian Sturm_ Iriepathie_Trixstar_Irie Revoltes_ Professor_Jamaram and more...





66 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Reggaeland



8. & 9. July

Sara Lugo_Raging Fyah_ Skarra Mucci_Perfect Giddimani_ Johnny Rockers and more...



Pyrène Festival



8. & 9. July

Ijahman Levi_U Roy_ King Sturgav Sound System and more...





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68 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Reggae Session Festival



8. - 10. July

Anthony B_The Banyans_Tiwony_ Mo'Kalamity_Chalice Sound System and more...



Afro Latino Festival



8. - 10. July

Joss Stone_Sean Paul_ Amadou & Mariam _Plan B_Omar Perry_ Silverbullet and more...





FESTIVALS JULY 2016 69



Enter The Dancehall Reggae Festival



8. & 9. July

Chronixx_Jesse Royal_ Raging Fyah_Etana_Shuga_ Nattali Rize and more...



Island Reggae Festival



9. July

Tarrus Riley_Common Kings_Collie Buddz Anuhea Tenelle and more...

Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose. CA - USA





70 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Gracy's Bash



9. July

Bitty McLean_Denham Smith_ Joseph Blue Grant_Owen Casey_Sofa Connection and more...



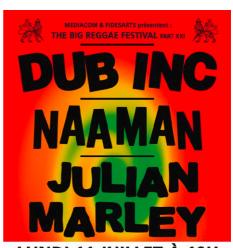
Big Reggae Festival



11. July

Dub Inc_Naaman_Julian Marley





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FESTIVALS JULY 2016 71



Bababoom



13. - 17. July

Freddie McGregor_Richie Stephens_Mad Professor_Train To Roots_Earl16_Macka B and more...





72 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Sunrise Reggae & Ska Festival



15. - 17. July

Julian Marley_Morgan Heritage_ Iriepathie_Toke_Ganjaman_ Wally Warning_Junior Kelly_ Trixstar_Jugglerz and more...

Burtenbach, Germany



Weedbeat Festival



15. - 17. July

iLLBiLLY HiTEC_ Mono & Nikitaman_Toke_ Symbiz Sound Six Nation and more...





FESTIVALS JULY 2016 73



Lakesplash



15. & 16. July

Michael Rose_Assassin_ Cookie The Herbalist_Liquidroots_ Zion Step and more...





74 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



NOWA Reggae



15. & 16. July

Bunny Wailer_Keith & Tex_ Etana_Bitty McLean_Heavy Hammer and more...



Rastaplas



16. July

Micah Shemaiah_Roots Riders_ Anthony Johnson & Dreadless and more...







Reggae Sumfest



17. - 23. July

Super Cat Beenie Man Bounty Killer Poncaan Barrington Levy Chi Ching Ching Ishawna Dexta Daps Spice Nesbeth and many many more...





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76 **FESTIVALS JULY 2016**



Nice Time



Jesse Royal The Skints New Kingston Tippa Irie Brother Culture and more...



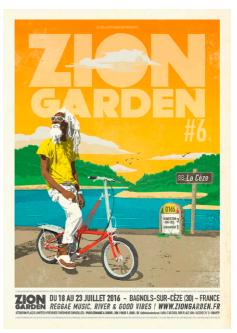
Zion Garden



18. - 23. July

Mike Love_Nattali Rize_Prince Alla_ **Manudigital Joe Pilgrim & The Ligerians** and more...





FESTIVALS JULY 2016 77



One Love World Reggae Festival



20. - 24. July

Chronixx_Lion D_Professor_ Morgan Heritage_Jesse Royal_ Etana and many more...



Rise & Shine Festival



20. - 23. July

Mutabaruka_Aba Shanti-I_ Abassi Hi Power_Askala Selassie_ Max Powa & Kinetical and many more...





78 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Lagata Reggae Festival



22. - 24. July

Mellow Mood_Green Valley_ Malaka Youth_Paolo Baldini Dubfiles and more...



Eastrock



22. & 23. July

Junior Kelly_Iriepathie_ Ohrbooten_Raggbund_Danny Ranks Bassrunner Sound and more...





FESTIVALS JULY 2016 79



Irie Vibes Roots Festival



22. & 23. July

Earl 16_Addis Pablo_ Micah Shemaiah_Cedric Myton_ Anthony Johnson and more...





80 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Reeds Festival



22. - 24. July

Julian Marley_Luciano_Bitty McLean_ Kalles Kaviar and more...



Oroville Rock Reggae Jamfest



22. - 24. July

Akae Beka_Bunny Wailer_Ranking Joe_ Pato Banton_Lutan Fyah_Junior Toots_ LA Guns and more...





FESTIVALS JULY 2016 81



Reggae On The Mountain



23. & 24. July

Steel Pulse_Third World_ Keznamdi_Arise Roots_Quinto Sol and more...





82 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Summer Vibration Reggae Festival



28. - 30. July

Alpha Blondy_Alborosie_Chronixx_ Tarrus Riley_Sinsemilla_Professor_ Mellow Mood_Panda Dub and many more...



Hill Vibes Reggae Festival



28. - 30. July

Julian Marley_Chronixx_ Denham Smith_Iriepathie_ Miwata and more...





FESTIVALS JULY 2016 83



Reggae Jam



29. - 31. July

Julian Marley_Big Youth_Chronixx_ Alborosie_Tony Rebel_Queen Ifrica_ Tippa Irie_Inner Circle_ Kabaka Pyramid_The Congos and many many more...



Afrika Tage Vienna



29. July - 15. August

Julian Marley_Chronixx_Nneka_ Inner Circle_Richie Campbell_ Jamaram_Jesse Royal_Jah9 _ Professor many more...





84 FESTIVALS JULY 2016



Midwest Reggaefest



29. - 30. July

Bunny Wailer_Carlos Jones_ Marty Dread and more...



Black Forest On Fire



30. & 31. July

Uwe Banton_Wally Warning_ Toke Six Nation and more...





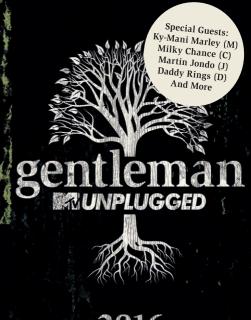


Adamari Caribbean Festival

30. & 31. July

Third World_Cham_Richie Spice_ Supa G Black Chiney and more...





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Aug 27th - Austria, Clam Burg Clam (M, J)
Aug 29th - Switzerland, Zurich Kaufleute SOLD OUT
Aug 30th - Switzerland, Zurich Kaufleuten (M, J, D)
Aug 31st - Germany, Munich Circus Krone Bau (M, J, D)
Sep 02nd - Luxembourg, Luxembourg City Den Atelier (M, J, D)
Sep 03rd - Poland, Lublin -









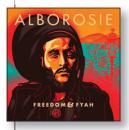
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86 ALBUM-REVIEWS 2016

Alborosie – Freedom & Fyah

IVP Records - May 20161



20 years ago, Alborosie exchanged Bella Italia for Jamrock and has been deeply devoted to the study of reggae ever since. From there, the musician, singer and producer reaches out with his new release Freedom & Fyah, a 13-track-affair that was

produced almost exclusively at his **Shengen Studio** in Kingston (except *Carry On*, a powerful composition by **Winta James**).

The first piece called *Prophecy* is a clerically tainted speech delivered by a certain **Reverend Rohan Treleven.** *Can't Cool* soothes us with the far more pleasant voice of **Alborosie**, singing about Babylon, Rastafarian livity and historical references. **Sugus**, the former backing vocalist of **Dennis Brown** and **Gregory Isaacs**, is featured twice on the album and joins in on *Fly 420*, a ganja-praise-song that is out on video as well, and *Zion Youth*, setting fire on Babylon and even citing **Buju Banton**.

Cry, an outcry against gunman-violence in Kingston on a heavy rub-a-dub riddim which bass legend Flabba Holt fats up, and Strolling have a similar underlying beat to which Protoje adds his unique flow. Starting out dubwise, Rocky Road talks about the challenges of growing up while Poser, fully concerned with the adult world, should be known already since it's been out on video for a year now. Although the examples cited there are quite obvious, Puppa Albo seems to be talking to us from high above, and in the back of my mind I kept hearing "Judge not lest ye be judged."

The last five songs include the poppy love-song Life To Me featuring Ky-Mani Marley and the conscious, vocoder-saturated *Rich*. My personal highlight is *Everything* with the legendary Roots Radics (including deceased Style Scott on drums) and the sweet voice of Pupa Avril. Bim!

It was to be expected that the next **Alborosie** album would be a high quality production, and **Freedom & Fyah** more than fulfils these expectations. The songs are lyrically and musically well-crafted, the general vibe, however, is a bit gloomy – but this might be intentional. His fans certainly can't wait to see the tracks performed live! **by Gardy Stein-Haniora**

Askala Selassie - Warrior Empress

IStingray Records - June 20161



Good news from the UK: The London-based reggae singer, Askala Selassie, has put out her long-anticipated debut album titled Warrior Empress, on Stingray Records, and released by VPAL Music of VP Records. Askala enjoys performing on stage as

much as freestyle chanting on dub sound systems, and so the versatility of her music is reflected in **Warrior Empress** in a diverse set of 15 songs, with a variation of styles ranging from One Drop, Roots and Dub to Lovers Rock.

First, the killer tunes of this LP: My Life and Hard Work, plus each dub version, could not be more inspiring. These must be selling like hotcakes on the dub market! While listening to them, you just know for sure that Askala's lyrics and vibes come from the heart. But there are even further treasures among the songs. The title song Warrior *Empress*, a catchy one-drop single, in which you have the pleasure of enjoying her powerful and voluminous voice, is one of them. She dedicates it to the women of this world by proclaiming her greatest respect for all the lionesses. It was recorded at *Tuff Gong Studio*, played by the **Fire House** Crew band, and is enriched by the horn-playing of no one less than Dean Fraser. The video of this song premiered on *Reggaeville* a few months ago, and was shot in Askala's hometown London, with a cast comprising family and friends. There are two feature songs with male colleagues from Jamaica. One is *Rise Up* featuring her good friend Ras Charmer. The second is *This Love* featuring **Ginjah**. For the loving and romantic moods, this album provides Rocky Road, I'll Wait and Love You Always, through which she confesses her eternal love for her partner. The song Jamaica reveals her great desire to be on this particular island, and in **Rebel** on the great Moulding Riddim. she urges all Rastaman and women to hold together and rise up.

If you haven't heard **Askala Selassie**'s music so far, you should immediately catch up on this. **Warrior Empress** has something to offer for everyone! **by Lena Pletzinger**

Jahcoustix - Seriously Positive

Unievibrations Records - June 20161



Serious and positive don't have to be diametrically opposed concepts, as the new release of **Dominik Haas** aka **Jahcoustix** shows. **Seriously Positive** is the name of his 5th studio album and as with its predecessors, we are showered with serious-

ly conscious and positively uplifting music. The release is the outcome of a fruitful collaboration between the artist and Vienna-based Irievibrations Records. At their studio, all tracks were recorded and mixed by **Syrix** himself, with the notable exception of the trademark Hammond organ which was played by **Frank "Pollensi"** at *Planet Earth Studio*, as well as drums & bass by **Magic Touch** (Sven "Rimshot" Koop and Jonas Hesse), recorded at *Lovelite Studio*.

13 tracks plus 3 dub-versions have thus been crafted, all of them celebrating the warm, organic roots sound that is re-emerging in some current productions. *Attack and Release*, one of the sweetest songs of the album next to *Old Tongue*, the bittersweet ballad *When We Part* and the laid-back *Youniverse*, opens the bill of well-conceived musical advice: "If you can't take heat, don't stand next to fire!"

An ode to new beginnings and different places, *Change Of Scenery* speaks to any itchy-footed person. In the subsequent *Open Skies*, as in a few other songs including *Pressure Drop, Clear and Soul Steady*, the exaggerated use of backing vocals subtracts slightly from my listening experience - sometimes, less is more, especially since the singer's voice is so pleasant on its own! Not on his own, but with **Uwe Banton** he sings *A Blink Of An Eye*, and while this feature was predictable, the appearance of **Akae Beka** on *What Makes Someone Leave* is a complete surprise.

No surprise is the variety of subjects the artist sings about – from love to gratefulness to political issues as in *Too Brutal*, he touches serious topics without drifting into pessimism. As **Jahcoustix** says in the latest episode of **Wha' Gwaan Munchy**: "You have to be seriously positive in these times to not lose hope!"

by Gardy Stein-Kanjora



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88 ALBUM-REVIEWS 2016

Maad Sick Reggaeville Riddim Ioneness Records - June 20161

Reggaeville.com is the driving force behind the Maad Sick Reggaeville Riddim project, but the riddim was actually built by Munich-based reggae label, Oneness Records. Oneness is also responsible for the riddim from the 2012 Reggaeville juggling, Reggaeville Riddim. The newest Reggaeville album differs from the last



release in that **Reggaeville Riddim** was a re-lick of **The Paragons**' *Riding On A High And Windy Day* while **Maad Sick Reggaeville** is a completely original creation, though both have similar roots reggae appeal. **Maad Sick**, which is mixed by **Umberto Echo**, achieves this with a simple yet powerful bass line, majestic horns, crisp drums, and a bevy of filter effects and atmospheric sounds, as well as Nyabinghi drums that provide the backbone. These elements gel in a style that is both contemporary and timeless, setting the stage for a talented and diverse cast of artists to take selection to the next level.

There are several young artists on Maad Sick Reggaeville who seem to be on their way to big careers. The multi-talented, songwriter-turned-performer known simply as Clay is one of these up-and-comers and he proves himself with Rudeboys, a classic "rudie" narrative delivered with a smooth, expertly wielded tenor. Runkus, the son of esteemed dancehall veteran, **Determine**, has also been making noise recently, combining forces with another young Jamaican, Royal Blu, for their Maad Sick version, How Mi Sound, Marla Brown, daughter of the legendary Dennis Brown, is yet another young singer who is destined for a great future. Her contribution is called *Champion* and it perfectly showcases her unique and beautiful voice. Kelissa also brings a youthful feminine energy to the juggling with her tune, Ites, Green and Gold.

Grammy award winners, **Morgan Heritage**, and the Canadian-based singer, **Exco Levi**, who has several *Juno Awards* to his credit, elevate the tracks with both their musical pedigree and their killer versions. **Levi**'s tune, *Siren*, is another "rudie"-

style song and also has one of the most infectious hooks on the album. Caleb Hart, the lead singer of Tasman Jude and perhaps the least recognizable name from the compilation, is also from Canada and enjoys a good showing with his offering, Always Remember. There are many more veterans such as Anthony B.

who lends his fiery brand of vocals to the project with a rasta anthem called *Jah Jah Be Praised*. Equally notable is the distinctive voice of **Perfect Giddimani** and his version, *Reggae Village*, which is as close to creating a musical representation of *Reggaeville.com* as a songwriter could get. Other familiar names including **Macka B**, **Cali P**, **Richie Stephens**, **Skarra Mucci**, **and Yaniss Odua** bless this juggling with great music as well, but my top selection is from UK-based deejay, **Gappy Ranks**. His titular song, *Maad Sick*, combines an understated singjay style, street-wise lyrics, and a catchy hook, creating a roots-raggamuffin masterpiece and one of the tunes most congruous with the album's theme.

Julian Schmidt, the man behind Reggaeville.com and the Reggaeville riddim-albums, tasked me with reviewing this riddim with instructions to be brutally honest. He does not want "a press release for our riddim." As a devout reggae fan with a particular fascination with riddims and riddim culture, I took the assignment to examine this project seriously and I have vigorously put Maad Sick Reggaeville Riddim through all my standard paces. The riddim track is hot and the cast of contributors has a nicely balanced ratio between popular names and lesser-known artists. The lineup includes entertainers from many parts of the world, creating a musical microcosm of the global online village that is *Reggaeville.com*. Most importantly, the artists on Maad Sick Reggaeville all put forth great efforts, resulting in a tracklist that you can trust on shuffle. I'm sorry, *Julian*, but this album is absolutely Maad Sick, and that's about as brutal as I can get with this one.

by Dan Dabber

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90 ALBUM-REVIEWS 2016

Vybz Kartel - King Of The Dancehall

[Adidjaheim Rec./TJ Records / Zojak - June 2016]



King Of The Dancehall, the title of Vybz Kartel's newest album, would ring hollow if it were not for the incredible music that comprises the release. Perhaps the most amazing detail about the music from this project is that eve-

ry track was recorded BEFORE the artist was imprisoned in 2011, vet they all sound unbelievably contemporary. Not every song is for every listener, but the production is rock solid and Kartel is as brilliant and dynamic as he has ever been, cementing the inevitable fact that this album will have a large impact on dancehall in 2016. Of course this is nothing new for Kartel, whose talents, charisma, and larger-than-life persona have elevated his status to God-like levels in Jamaica and within the global dancehall community for the better part of the last decade. Even five years behind bars has not curtailed his dominant influence on the genre, and self-appointed appellations from Kartel's past like Dancehall Hero. Di Teacha, and World Boss are as relevant now as they were when he first uttered them. So why not King Of The Dancehall as well?

Though some listeners may have reservations about Kartel's right to the throne, King Of The Dancehall has a variety of extraordinary heat to convince them otherwise. For those who would prefer their Kartel with an R&B/pop flavour, check out the raunchy gyal tune, Lipstick, or a personal tale of ghetto life called Open Di Door. Perhaps you prefer an edgy, yet playful Kartel? Then try out his nasally, whiny approach on tracks like the frantic Every Girl and Like Google. And for his stalwart fans looking for some of those aggressive original Kartel vibes, he satisfies with a few high quality bangers like the sexy narrative Hey Addi or Most Wanted - possibly the coolest tune on the album. With so many styles and ways to mix and match them. Vvbz Kartel is lightvears beyond any possible rivals to the dancehall throne. He is not just the King Of The Dancehall, he is the whole damn roval family.

by Dan Dabber

Rebelution - Falling Into Place Leasy Star Records - June 20161



Rebelution evolve seamlessly on their new album, sourcing the greatest producers, engineers and recording methods to build from the foundation that leader Eric Rachmany starts with: great songwriting. For this

Dups and Don Corleon, both of whom represent the best of Jamaican reggae and beyond. The album begins with a lead single, *Know It All*. The tempo has a rock feel but the reggae horns and guitar skank are there. It serves as commentary on the US election and a certain candidate who has been spouting negativity, but as the lyrics proclaim positivity will trump them all, nothing good to say don't say it all. The herb tune *Inhale Exhale* features **Protoje**. The groove centres on a wicked bass line reminiscent of those of **Ronnie** "Stepper" McQueen from the original Steel Pulse. American states (Oregon, Washington, Colorado) that currently have the legal supply are cited.

For *Upper Hand* relationship drama is the theme, the bridge has a dancehall influence with a rapid fire mixdown that echoes the cadence of a lover's quarrel. It's one of two singles chosen for radio. *Pretty Lady* is a seduction plan that carries a solid one-drop with some dancehall sound system sound effects under vocals, reminiscent of a lover's rock tune from the '80s **Santa Barbara** is a love story based on meeting a wild-eyed girl in Santa Barbara...an ode to the band's roots in the California town, and genesis of the group. *Those* Days reflects on the time when Eric began to realize that the system is inherently corrupt and found his way as an artist. Free up Your Mind uses a patois term to promote eliminating doubt about one's dreams. It has a dubwise instrumental portion, part of varying tempos on the track. The four man force that is **Rebelution** have created an album that has all the musical elements that they want at this point of their careers; thus the title - it seems it is all now falling into place for them. by Justine Ketola

Rocker T - The Return of the Tru Ganjaman (Luvinnitt Productions - June 2016)



The album reflects the release of **Rocker** T's '90's tune of the same name. At 19 tracks, the traditional reggae style producers on the album are primarily **Royal Order Music**, the Bay Area crew affiliated with the **Jah Warrior Shelter** sound system that

Rocker T founded in Brooklyn, NY and Dynasty, the Seattle, WA based team. The later part of the album finds Rocker T chanting in a modern EDM style over trap, drum and bass styled riddims. The album starts out with Yankee & Yardee: Rocker T's bona fide immersion in Jamaican & Rasta culture. with its deep patois rhymes it's an example of his credibility trailblazing as a non-Jamaican toaster. The weed tune Need Some is a combination with Gappy Ranks and they are well-matched - it's fire! Mykal Rose & Mr. Williamz burn out Babylon for Disgrace. This song exemplifies the artist's ability to conjure the energy of the live dancehall session, three artists taking their turn in their own style that complement one another. A sweet combination with Northern California artist Mama T, Herbalist finds her singing the chorus, "Leggo the herbalist ya let him be, free to do Jah Works". For Man A Warrior, Rocker T sends the message to his colleagues that he's been on the battlefield, "Man a bruk down fence and barrier" setting the pace and making the ranks on Brooklyn's streets. Full of vibes, with its playful tuba and piccolo, sounds so original and fresh, the riddim melds seamlessly with the wicked lyrical flow. Prezident Brown joins the session for Blazing Everyday; an ode to blazing the chalice. Live drums drive Life Over Death; a crucial antiviolence tune that showcases Rocker T's infectious singing voice for some of the best punchlines out there. A sparse drum and bass version of the Sleng Teng Riddim drives Ganja Slengin, it introduces the EDM styled segment of the album in an effort to reach the typical listener. Militant and Real, with its trap sounds, provides a barometric reading on the artist's militancy with the potent lyric "Militant and real, just through the energy we feel, I no come fi harm ya, I come fi heal, hungry ghetto youths dem searching for a meal". Peaceful warrior Rocker T aims to heal the world with this potent strain of reggae mixed with hybrid blends.

by Justine Ketola



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92 ALBUM-REVIEWS 2016

Various Artists – We Remember Dennis Brown

IVP Records - June 20161

Although he only spent 42 years on Earth, **Dennis Emmanuel Brown** left us a catalogue of classics that have shaped reggae music like few other artists. He recorded two albums, his debut album **No Man Is an Island** and **If I Follow My Heart**, in just two days – at the tender age of twelve. No wonder that in the 30 years of his career, he recorded almost 80 albums. His untime-



ly death ended a highly productive career.

The Crown Prince of Reggae ranks, alongside **Bob** Marley, Peter Tosh and Gregory Isaacs, as one of the most covered reggae artists of all times. **Bob** Marley named him as his favourite singer. VP Records now pays tribute to him with a collection of 30 of his songs on two CDs, sung mostly by young Jamaican talents well on their way to establishing themselves, and a few legends like Freddie McGregor, Maxi Priest, Mutabaruka and Mykal Rose. Many of the participating singers have worked with Dennis Brown, or feel that he was an important influence on their own sound. The first CD gathers songs that fall in the category of social commentary, the second is dedicated to lover's rock. Although super hits like Money in My Pocket naturally found their way into this collection, the selection of songs isn't too obvious overall, keeping things interesting.

The concept behind We Remember Dennis Brown is the same VP used for Our Favorite Beres Hammond Songs and We Remember Gregory Isaacs: respected singers choose their favourite song of the artist in question and record their own version of it. Each artist adds their own touch to their interpretation, but the original character of the song tends to still shine through. Clive Hunt, who produced **Dennis Brown**'s 1981 album **Foul Play** and worked with him regularly and extensively, produced this major effort with an all-star band of musicians and meticulous attention to detail. The musicians featured include, but are not limited to: Kirk Bennett, Lamont "Monty" Savory, Aeion Hoilett, Carol "Bowie" McLauglin, Franklin "Bubbla" Waul, Tyrone Downie, "Bongo" Herman,

Daniel "Axe Man" Thompson, Dean Fraser, and "Nambo" Robinson.

The first track, *I Need Your Love* (*Rasta Children*), features **Iba Mahr**, **Jesse Royal**, **Chronixx**,**Keznamdi**, **Exco Levi**, **Kelissa**, **Jahmiel**, **Kabaka Pyramid** and **Rockaz Elements** on vocals – now that's what you call a combination. It's a musical relay

race, so to speak. The last track of each CD, respectively *To the Foundation* and *Silhouette*, are instrumental versions.

The compilation is entirely void of fillers, but quite a few artists stand out and really kill it. Bushman is one of them, he tries and excels at the somewhat unwieldy *Don't Want to be No General*. Raging Fyah tackle *Milk and Honey*. Christopher Ellis reinterprets *Created By the Father* beautifully. Dennis' daughter Marla Brown teamed up with Mutabaruka for a stunning rendition of *Words of Wisdom*. Freddie McGregor delights with *Little Village*, as does Shuga with *Liberation*.

The lover's rock part of **We Remember Dennis Brown** shines brightest with British R&B singer **Marsha Ambrosius** taking on *Have You Ever*, and **Maxi Priest** sugar-coating *Love Me Always*. **Jamelody** and **Ikaya** croon *Love Has Found Its Way* at the perfect temperature. **Ikaya** also sings *For You*. Furthermore, **Katchafire**, **Etana**, **Jah Cure** and **Dalton Harris** deserve a special mention.

While **We Remember Dennis Brown** is available on iTunes, of course, buyers of the physical edition will be rewarded with deluxe packaging and extensive liner notes. Whatever edition you might prefer, this extensive collection of newly interpreted classics is a masterpiece that deserves to be a part of the collection of every serious reggae lover. It reminds us once more of just what a terrible loss **Dennis Brown**'s untimely death meant for the reggae world. His music lives on though, and the singers united here prove that they are a part of his legacy, to a surprising extent. And his songs sound just as catchy, fresh and up-to-date today as ever.

by Valentin Zill

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94 ALBUM-REVIEWS 2016

Tippa Irie - Living The Dream (Lockdown Productions - June 2016)



Tippa Irie is so rich, he can ride a 100-dollar bill as if it were a flying carpet, use a bundle of bills as his mic while more banknotes circle around randomly and a magical glistening light illuminates his figure, judging from what the cover art-

work of his new album **Living The Dream** tells us. But it's not money that makes him rich. In more than 30 years of his musical career, he is still rich with ideas to create lyrics that blow you away, rich with melodies that make you move, and rich with power to invent his musical style all over again.

All this is found in Living The Dream, released June 1st on his own record label Lockdown Productions. The set of 15 songs opens with the hip hop track **Big People**, reminding us that we have the responsibility to watch over the younger generation and set an example for them. Motherland is one of the strongest tunes on this album. While the riddim produced by Ga-Pi, Prince Fatty and Horseman is a killer in itself, the lyrics enhance it: "We're gonna step it, gonna step it out of Babylon, I'm gonna move it moving forward to the motherland. I'm gonna step it out a step it outta capture land. 'Cause every day we are chant and we are sing, but dem just nah change the system". This is a modern interpretation of repatriation. The title track Living The Dream is a slowerpaced song and a declaration of his gratitude for his life and his career. The British artist with Iamaican roots honours and hails Jamaica in several songs such as I Felt Home, Morning Come, and Jamaica Way.

There is no room for the classification of musical genres here. Everything from reggae to dancehall and from hip hop to pop and soca is well-mixed and then reconstituted with a constant good vibe from **Mr. Irie**. Those expecting **Tippa Irie**'s old-school digital raggamuffin style will be surprised to hear a new-school touch with highly pinched effects on his voice and modern riddims.

by Lena Pletzinger

Ziggy Marley - Ziggy Marley [Tuff Gong Worldwide - May 2016]



For the first time in a career spanning over thirty years, **Ziggy Marley** has released a self-titled album. **Ziggy Marley**, the seventh entry of his solo career, is a slight turn towards politics from the reggae superstar's more recent output. With

this eponymous album, **Marley** alters course a few clicks, addressing the world around him more directly and intently than ever before.

The set opens with *Start it Up* and a call for revolution. It's more a benign request than radical, with **Ziggy** encouraging participation and contribution rather than aggression. *Weekend's Long* rides a theme of duality, and features an on-the-nose use of pan drum that evokes toes in the Caribbean sand and heads in the clouds. Next, the upbeat inflection of *Ceceil* lyrically recalls the blues, but with a rhythm hybridizing new wave punch with echoes of ska.

Marley drops *The Regiment* horn section into *Amen* to wonderful effect. Brother **Stephen "Ragga" Marley** lends his voice to the album's most condemning offering, *Heaven Can't Take It*, with an homage to **Bob Marley**'s *Zion Train. Better Together* plays like an offering of reconciliation until the scope widens. Then *Butterflies*, perhaps the dozen's finest cut, with a foreboding bassline and snapping horns on a minor-key bedrock, supports a metaphor that not only imagines but realizes peace.

Marley dips back into swivel-hips '60s pop for *We Are More*, before the charging *Love Is A Rebel* recaptures the roots rock. Like a companion theme to his graphic novel, *Marijuanaman* smiles and swings in promoting the versatile and vindicated herb. Closing out the string is *We Are The People*, as **Ziggy's** reminds his audience of its power to create change, before *I'm Not Made Of Stone*, and its confessional humility signal the end.

This is an appropriately self-titled effort. It is an on-the-record accumulation of intrepid and unfiltered thoughts and opinions, advice and concerns, optimism and urgency, life and love. This is **Ziggy Marley**.

by Larson Sutton

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SILY WALES DISE

25 YEARS 1991 - 2016



SMILE JAMAICA

BY GARDY STEIN-KANJORA
PHOTOS BY PASCAL BÜNNING & JONAS SCHAPER

They are a ministry, a movement, a discotheque, a label and a soundsystem, but most of all they are two people doing what they are passionate about: Silly Walks. For 25 years they have worked hard to build a reputation that is internationally renowned, stands for high-quality productions and reflects the most recent movements in reggae music. After Songs Of Melody and Storms Of Life, they now present a jubilee gift to the world that will hit you without pain. Reggaeville met Oli and Joscha in Hamburg for an exclusive preview session of their album Smile Jamaica, as well as an in-depth talk about their history, road-trip impressions and the stories behind the songs:

25 years of Silly Walks and you are still on the way up. Can you tell us how you got to this point?

Oli: Yes, sure. In 1991 I teamed up with my colleague **Kai Jürgensen**. He was living in an office building in the inner city of Hamburg and had occupied a floor of the building, turned it into a party location and called it *The Ministry of Silly Walks*. It was clear that our first party would take place there, and we simply named ourselves after the house, that's how Silly Walks was born. It grew very quickly, we did other parties and linked up with **Pensi Ire Hi-Fi**, who's been my reggae socialisation so to say. We worked closely together, I was the DJ on tour with his band **Di Iries**, their drummer **David Meyer** joined us, and a bit later another early member, Tobias Nagel joined, so it was four of us. Tobias and Kai both left in 1994. That same vear we met Gentleman and he became our MC until the end of the nineties. By that time



he started his artist career, so timing was an issue. In came **Barney Millah** for some time, then **Lobstarr** from Munich. About 12 years ago **Joscha** entered the game. On the day of our big annual **Antifa-Soli-Party** our MC couldn't come, so I had to find a substitute. I called **Joscha**, who had caught my attention before, and since then he is part of it!

Joscha: Yes, it's been quite a while now. I grew up in Hamburg and started Bushfire Sound. Of course I knew who Silly Walks was, I was a regular guest at their parties since the mid-nineties, and then Oli called that night. More than a thousand people were expected, that was quite something... Suddenly I was to be a part of THE sound – that was thrilling. And since then we do it together!

Oli: In the nineties, we had a studio with **Ire Hi-Fi** and **Di Iries** and **Dub Me Ruff**. We
also had a small label called **Sound Naviga- tor**. Back then, **Silly Walks** released almost
exclusively remixes which were assigned by
the German music industry. In 2000 we left
and decided to set up a new studio together

with **Ire Hi-Fi** to focus on our own music. We signed a record deal with **Four Music** and released our first artist sampler **Songs Of Melody** in 2002, and shortly after that, an album with **Patrice** in 2003

But then, unfortunately, the phono industry had its breakdown and they didn't continue their work, so we stopped for a while. **David**, our engineer, left us because the format of the music had changed and he wasn't happy with the sound. But there was no way back, because not all releases were available on record anymore, so you had to adapt. Since 2007, **Joscha** and me are doing it on our own, basically.

Joscha: David had also done the bookings and the office work, I took over when he left, and as a consequence we renamed the Silly Walks Movement to Silly Walks Discotheque. We were looking for a perspective then, because that was the time when the big reggae-boom with the likes of Sean Paul and Shaggy was over, the dances weren't full anymore...

Oli: The big hangover in Reggae-Germany! (laughs)

Joscha: We were searching for new shores to sail to, and then, despite the bad omen concerning music sales, we decided to take up producing. We linked up with Jr. Blender, and the rest is history!

Oli: Blender had done some remixes for Songs Of Melody, and since then we had the link to this super guy. We did the Aspire Riddim together in 2009 for which we had about 20 recordings in the end, 16 of which have been released. After we had already started to voice the next riddim, we thought it would be better to do a full album. We kept working on it for two years, we did riddims like crazy. That's how Storms Of Life was crafted and finally released in 2012. It really took some time to re-establish the connection to the artists, it was different from 2002 when we went to Jamaica with a budget from the record label. This time we had to finance everything ourselves!

But your releases were quite successful, right?

Oli: Songs Of Melody did really well for the times. Also because there were German songs on the album and Four Music was wellestablished. It didn't really leave Germany though. The 7" we did from that went really well, in Germany and internationally. We sold 1,000 copies per song, that wasn't bad for the time. Today you press 300, and if you manage to sell that, maybe another 200 again...

Joscha: If it's not **Smile Jamaica**! (laughs)

Oli: So, yeah, after **Storms Of Life** came out, the bookings were soaring, we did a lot on the road. When it came to sales, though, it wasn't that successful. But because producing had become our focus and we had built a new studio and all, it was a good decision to say "Fuck the market, we want to do this!"

Joscha: It's also a unique feature for Sil-

ly Walks, something that sets us apart... Sentinel had won the *Soundclash* in 2005, and a lot of sounds at that time were into the Dubplate thing and into hardcore dancehall. We focused on production, that's what gave us a face. Storms Of Life was released, but it was an expensive project and we had put a lot of money in...

Oli: The Honey Pot Riddim from Storms Of Life was received extremely well. We had Torch and Jah9 on it already, and we had voiced some other artists, like Ginjah and Lutan Fyah. We flew to Jamaica to shoot a video with Torch and voice some more artists on it. That's when we met Chronixx and recorded Smile Jamaica, and that actually changed everything. Before we released the Honey Pot selection and the videos with it, we had separated from the record label because it wasn't possible to work with them in a reasonable way.

Joscha: That's when we founded our own label, in 2013, and then step by step things were looking up. The Honey Pot selection was released in March 2013, and it took a while before we realized "Oh, something is happening!" And through the first success, other artists realized "Look, it's good for us when we record with the German producers! Maybe I should put an effort because this could be good for me, too." This opened a lot of doors for us. The international perception had changed because of these productions!

Oli: Exactly. We have a good standing now, we are some of the producers in Europe that people turn to. That's what we want to proudly declare and built upon, so 25 years is a great occasion to bring out an album and go on a jubilee tour.

And get your own soundsystem, too! Was that ever the case before?

Oli: Well, we had a little one in 1993 with which we did a few parties on the beach, but it was actually too small... so, no. After 25 years we finally are a real soundsystem (laughs).



When did you start to think about that?

Joscha: Well, the idea was there already two years ago. Julian from I-Livity bought parts when Kai from Shantytown stopped his sound, and already then we thought it would be nice if Julian could fix it up for us so we have our own sound. But he sold it...

Oli: When we stopped our Level The Vibes regular this February, we thought about what to do next. The idea to start a monthly regular in Hamburg on the weekends was there for some time as well, and then the Volt Club was mentioned to us. We went to take a look and when they showed us the first floor we knew that's it. There was no soundsystem yet, so we said "Ok, we'll bring one". Then we called Julian and he and Blacky from Crucial Vibes built it. It actually consists of old parts from I-Livity and Shantytown and Crucial Vibes, amps and speakers, and some elements have been added new.

Nice to continue the legacies!

Oli: Yes, we were really, really happy about that. And I have to say this is one of the best moments of this year so far, the first time hearing our own songs on our own system in a club that we find pretty cool, too.

What about the tour, how is it so far?

Joscha: It kicked off just before the Easter weekend. We had a block of five shows with **Gentleman**, because he of course was supposed to be a part of the celebrations. We wanted to have a special time for the Jubilee Tour, but we can't set it up like a band and play 30 gigs without a break, so we have to stick to the weekends.

What were highlights so far?

Oli: Cologne! And Wien, that was good too.

Joscha: Yes, Cologne was great. It was Easter Saturday, during their yearly Easter Bash up in Stadtgarten.

Oli: 1,500 or 2,000 people came. The sound is great there, and **Gentleman** and **Patrice** were part of the show, **Daddy Rings** too.

What about Istanbul?

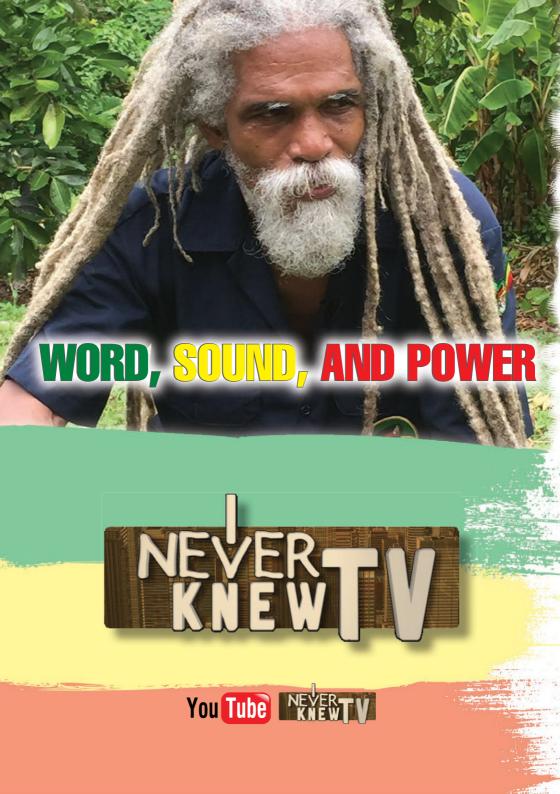
Oli: It was a nice stay and we met nice people, but party-wise it wasn't the best. You realized it wasn't really a reggae crowd. Surprisingly, Afrobeats worked best!

Joscha: The tour is coming along great. It is fun, it's a lot of places. And then we'll be at the festivals, of course, and there we'll link up with some of the artists who are on the album. We do two shows with Assassin, three with Patrice and one with Marcia Griffiths. We'll meet Micah Shemaiah and Samory-I, Jesse Royal is there, too...

Which brings us to the album. Let us in on some of its secrets!

Oli: Where do we start? (laughs) Well, since Smile Jamaica and Dreams Of Brighter Days both haven't been released on an album as yet, they are included, and that's where the name comes from, too. When it became clear that Blender will go through the roof with Major Lazer, we sat down with Josi, the drummer of the Evolution Band, and we talked. He offered us to work with their riddims and we chose some, this is one of them (plays Patrice).

Joscha: There are three components to the album. For one, riddims that the Evolution Band had ready, then again riddims that we let them record, and then tracks by Jr. Blender. A noticeable exception is a dream that we made come true in Jamaica... We had the idea to do a cover of Mikey Dread's Roots And Culture, and we wanted Jesse Royal on it. When we went to Jamaica last year, we met



him at **Big Yard** and said "Let's record something!" And he was like "Yes, cool, let's do it" and we said "Let's listen to some riddims, but we have another idea, too."

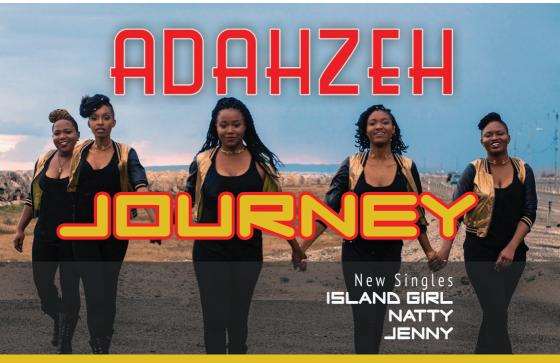
Oli: We approached the issue very carefully...

loscha: We were not sure how he would take it, so we said "We thought about doing a re-lick from an old song, Roots And Culture by Mikey Dread." And he was like "Serious? That song? Last year on tour this was the song that was played up and down in the tourbus. So, yes, it has to happen!" That was a Tuesday, and on the following Thursday we booked a session at Tuff Gong and decided to bring our dream team in. **Jesse** was like "I gotta bring my drummer and my guitarist and Uncle Dean will sort out the rest." And since vou need horns for the song. Dean Fraser brought Nambo Robinson and Dwight Richardson along, then Glen Browne on bass, Unga Barunga on drums, Nico Gros**kopf** on guitar, **RiffRaff** as keyboardist... The band was like, "*Damn, what's happening?*" We were standing at **Tuff Gong** and they started playing, and it was so unbelievable how quickly it was done. That was an amazing experience. (plays **Jesse Royal**)

Wow, and he is the perfect match for the song... *Oli:* It is definitely one of the highlights of the album. The musicians were happy to do it too, they had never played in this formation before. It was a bit *young meets old* and everyone was so full of respect... There will also be a making-of-video.

Joscha: We were there with **Til Maier** and **Henning Weskamp** from *Typeholics*, who is doing our artwork. It was his first time in Jamaica.

Which other songs were recorded in Jamaica? Joscha: Chris Martin, Assassin, Bugle... (plays Bugle)





Oli: And Marcia Griffiths! We also finished filming a video that we started to shoot 2 years ago... She is such a great woman!

Joscha: Yes, it's really fun working with her. The song Holding You Close is a remix of a song she did with an Austrian band called Dubblestandart that was released by Echo Beach. Oli talked to Nicolai and we did a remix with Blender. And then we played it to Marcia, and at first she was like "What is this? Where did you get it from?" She didn't remember the track!

Oli: "This song is beautiful!" she said, and since then she keeps telling me to treat it carefully. So, we thought we'd shoot a video for it, and now, years later, it's done and it will be released next, after the **Assassin** video. We are also very excited because she is a great performer and has the brightest clothes of all.

Joscha: She really rummaged through her wardrobe for this video and it's basically Marcia and her clothes (laughs). (plays Marcia Griffiths)

You often work with newcomers as well. Who do you introduce to us this time?

Oli: We have two of our favourite roots-newcomer on it, Micah Shemaiah and Samory-I, both did great songs. And then there is Dalton Harris, an amazing talent who won the Digicel Rising Stars five or six years ago. He was the youngest who ever won it, he was 16 at the time. His track is dope, too. (plays Dalton Harris). And Shuga, she has a wonderful piece on the album...

Joscha: My favourite tracks keep changing, but **Shuga** is always on top!

Oli: Then we have **Ikaya**, her track is number one. We thought it's perfect to introduce the album. (plays **Ikaya**)

Apart from the riddim producers, who else was important behind the scenes?

Oli: The mastering was done by **Stefan Flad** at **Red Kitchen** in Hamburg. For the mixing now... with **Blender** we had someone who not only produced and recorded the riddims, but







who also mixed his tracks. For the others, we wondered who can do it, who can mix these great tracks that the **Evolution Band** had recorded? **Shane Brown** and **Niko Browne** each did one, **Greg Morris** who mixed the **Protoje** album did two, **Josi** did two and the great **Russ Disciple** from England did five. He is a classic dub person who does everything analogue, so he is also amazing, and we might work closely together in the future. He also sent a dub remix for every song, and all of them are so great that we actually have to release them somehow.

Joscha: He is like "Look, I've done a few mixes of the tracks!", and then you have one or two which are quite straight, but then from mix 3





to mix 11 it's becoming more and more dubby. At the end it is really great, analogue-sounding dub, and actually we're thinking about doing a "Silly Walks meets the Disciples" record with him.

Oli: Classic reggae material... (plays Micah Shemaiah). He does also very modern dub stuff, but we asked him to mix Shuga because some riddims, including hers, were recorded in a studio in Berlin called Joy Sound where you only have analogue vintage studio equipment, and that's how the riddims sound, too – trashy but great and old-school. That's not easy to mix, but Russ did a wonderful job. (plays Shuga)

It's a joy indeed to follow your works, and I can't wait to listen to the songs in more detail. Apart from the anniversary tour and the album promo, what is your plan for the next few years?

Oli: We will continue to build up our sound-system!

Joscha: During the last three years so many things happened and so many possibilities opened for us German reggae nerds (laughs). With most of the international artists we can really work on an eye-level now. We have a

great band which might be the best reggae band of Europe with whom we can always record new stuff. Yes, so the jubilee is rolling great, we are in a good flow. And where the journey will lead us, we'll see. We do have some ideas, so there will always be some follow-up projects.

That's good to know. Thank you so much for this intense interview!



Silly Walks Discotheque – Smile Jamaica Dune 10th 20161

25 years of **Silly Walks** – in marriage, that would be a silver jubilee. Occasion enough for the diligent soundbwoys to put out a new album which actually deserves gold: **Smile Jamaica**! But wait, don't we know this title? Exactly, it's the name of the **Chronixx** track that propelled **Silly Walks' Honey Pot Riddim** to every corner of this

world a few years ago and, as **Oli** and **Joscha** unanimously agree, "changed everything". Since it was never released on an album, it became the title track of this one. Likewise, **Dreams Of Brighter Days** by **Busy Signal** and **RC** is one of the sixteen tracks contained.

Other songs you might already be familiar with include a cover-version of Roots And Culture, gloriously recorded anew at Tuff Gong Studio with the characteristic, slightly cheeky slur of Jesse Royal. They couldn't have found a better interpreter for the Mikey Dread original. And there's another one that has seen the light of day before: Marcia Griffiths' Holding You Close, a really extraordinary piece that was originally recorded with Austrian Dubblestandart, now shines in new glory on a Silly Walks remix. Another great female voice (and another great remix) is Queen Ifrica on the Clocktower Riddim who will Make You Rock. Also, the beautifully crafted instrumental of the Evolution Band which already took my breath away on Clay's Hold On makes my heart skip a beat again when Romain Virgo sings Unbreakable.



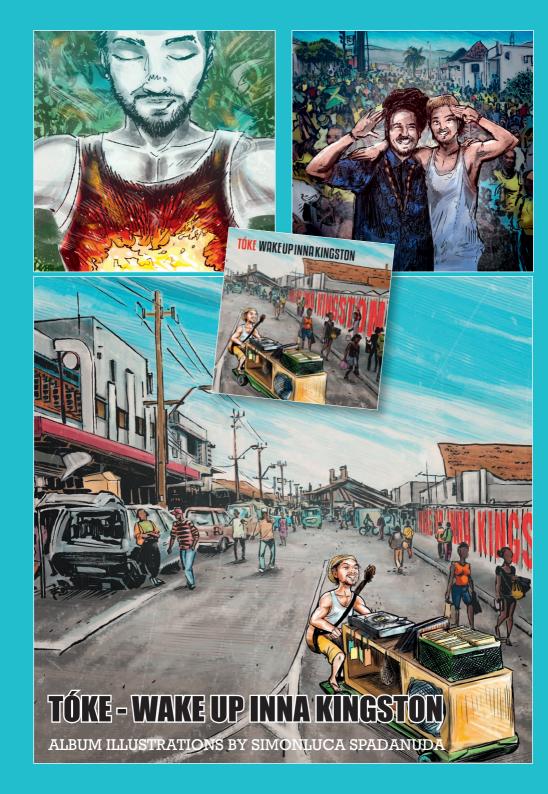
The other tracks are brand new material for which Silly Walks, the Evolution Band and Jr. Blender take responsibility. Perfect opening track, newcomer Ikaya tells us a few good things about our beloved music in Reggae Love. With Micah Shemaiah and Samory-I they present two more relatively new artists who deserve a whole heap of airplay. Especially the way the deep dub re-

mix of **Russ Disciple** ends both the latter's song *I Am Gad* and marks the end of the album, is a revelation. My discovery of the release, however, is **Dalton Harris**. A name I've never heard before, this amazingly talented young singer manages to bring back the magic of grand, soul-tinged regae vocalists with *Whisper In The Wind*, a magic that is definitely evoked by the analogue recording equipment of Berlin's **Joy Sound** studio, too.

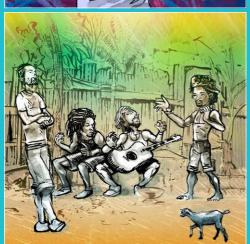
The album is bustling with more well-known names including **Patrice**, **Bugle**, **Christopher Martin** and **Shuga**, who lives up to her name with the sweet *Joy*. **Agent Sasco** holds the honour of the first visual release – his powerful *Never Let Them Break You Down* is out on video already. And, of course, **Gentleman** can't be left out on a **Silly Walks** production. He joins powers with **Torch** to deliver the urgent, uplifting message *Keep On Moving*. Niceness!

More than an hour of sonic bliss is coming your way with **Smile Jamaica**, so make sure you get a copy and join the anniversary celebrations!

by Gardy Stein-Kanjora

















BAGING FYAI

GOOD VIBES



Interviewing a band is always a challenge, especially when they are busy touring and promoting their new release, so Festiville was happy to catch two of the five bandmembers of Raging Fyah on their return to Jamaica. Delroy "Pele" Hamilton and Kumar "Kumz" Bent granted us an insight into the creation process of their new album Everlasting, their connection to Haiti, and what they think about non-Jamaican reggae artists:

EVERLASTING MUSIC

BY GARDY STEIN-KANJORA PHOTOS BY WILLIAM RICHARDS

You just came back from a full US tour, and I read that you had 34 shows in seven weeks... how was that?

Pele: It was a good vibe, but kind of hectic, too. We enjoyed it though. We toured with Stick Figure and Fortunate Youth, two American reggae bands. It was a very good tour for us and we learned and saw a lot!

How did the people in America react to your music, did they know your songs?

Kumar: I would say a few. Not many of them knew who we were. Just breaking ground in the US, you know. But nonetheless, after ten minutes they caught the groove (laughs).

Pele: The reception after the show was wonderful. We got some nice feedback from the audience, from writers and promoters across the board, so it was definitely a successful tour!

Was there any place that sticks out, that was special?

Pele: A few of them! Chicago and Boston...

Kumar: Orlando was a good show as well.

Pele: And the West Coast side, California... the California shows were great. Nice vibe!

Did you introduce some of the new songs?

Pele: No, not yet. We'll have the **Everlasting** album tour later this year.

Kumar: We will start out at some festivals in Europe in July and then go back to the US.

Congrats on your new baby Everlasting, let's turn to that. My first question concerns the co-

ver – it almost looks like a clock with the gearwheels and all. What's the significance of it?

Kumar: It symbolizes time, because time is really everlasting. So the clock was just a physical symbol for that. Time doesn't really exist, it's there forever and ever, and **Raging Fyah** likewise will be there...

Pele: For eternity!

Kumar: From **Judgement Day** we realized it's our **Destiny** and we are **Everlasting**.

Who did the artwork?

Kumar: It was done by an artist named Andrew. Actually, **VP Records** got it done and we were really happy with it. We liked the process of getting that artwork done. It was looking way different at first, so we asked for some changes and that's the result.

How is it to work with such a big label now? The last two albums were self-released, so is there any difference in the way you work?

Pele: No, it's a similar vibe. The only difference we had was that we were working with **RiffRaff, Llamar Brown**, the main producer. We had him on board. But we felt at home, **RiffRaff** and I we went to school together, so we know each other comfortably. We have a good working relationship, it just felt like us doing the album by ourselves, we weren't under any pressure from the label in terms of directions, so it was really what we were feeling that came out on the record.

Did you come to RiffRaff with the finished tracks and just recorded it in the studio or did you compose together?

Kumar: We actually rehearsed for quite some time before we went to the studio, so **RiffRaff** was in those rehearsals and gave his input as well. So when we got to the studio, it was just recording what we had prepared.

RiffRaff said in an interview that you had a session where you recorded seven songs in one night! How did you manage to do that? (both laugh)

Pele: Yes, that was at **Tuff Gong**. Like we said, we had done the rehearsals before, so we knew exactly what we were going into the studio to do, so yeah... it came out smooth.

Kumar: We are really being ourselves and we've done this album with all these collaborations: from the record label to the producers to the featured artists. And even the musicians, the horn players, Nambo Robinson and Dean Fraser... give it a listen, because there is a lot of great talent on one CD, so if you are interested in reggae music or even music at all you should get it.

When did you decide on the features?

Kumar: We've always been working alongside these musicians, not in the studio yet, but on stages and so. We know each other! Jesse Royal is a good friend, and we had always talked about making music together, so this was the time. J Boog now, we met him some time ago and he expressed interest to do some work, so we just linked him when the right opportunity came around. And then Busy Signal - this was just pure magic!

Pele: His energy was amazing!

Kumar: He was just at the right place at the right time and said "I wanna work with you guys, so let's do this!" and now he is on two tracks. So it's just good vibes, good energy, you know. Very pure, so we love that about the album too.

About the tracks, can you explain what Dash Wata means? Is it a saying in Jamaica?

Pele: We use it as a saying...

Kumar: Dash Wata is really an expression of... you know, giving love. It's kind of a sexual expression still, because sometimes in Jamaica, when you are with a woman, you'd usually say ,dash fire'. But for us, you know, water is life, and dash water you are going to dash life to a woman and she can give you a son or a daughter (laughs), so it's really just playing with words!





Wondering is a song that is very deep in meaning. What is its connection to Haiti?

Pele: We went to Haiti for a festival in September last year, and just being there and seeing the environment that we were in, instantly we just got that feeling, it just got up on us.

Kumar: What happened, you know...

Pele: Yes. The first country in the Caribbean to gain their independence, and the state that we are still in right now is... we just question, how did we get here? So the idea of the song came up right there.

Ok. A few days ago it was announced that Haiti is the first Caribbean country that joins the African Union? What do you think about that?

Kumar: Yes, definitely, in the future! I mean, we are from Africa, you know. There is no hidden agenda in terms of that African nations should unite. That's the goal of reggae music, that it can actually unite the peoples of this world, you know, in oneness and positivity. So Haiti is another first again. They really stood out back in the day when they gained their independence and face it. We feel that and a lot of other countries in this world have a similar story, so... Wondering is just a question to the worldwide leaders, how did we get here? They have to answer some questions, because the revolution is going to come. There have been many and it is going to happen again.

What do you think could be the long-term benefits of a membership in the African Union for a country like Jamaica?

Kumar: Trade is a probably a good possibility, I think. Maybe we could get some trade agreements and services, get some things we need, and probably it could increase the economy in Jamaica as well. We need to get some help from the Motherland rather than... you know... Babylon system still.

If you could choose one country in Africa where you'd like to live, which would it be? *Kumar:* Bwoy, there are so many wonderful places...

Pele: From what I've read or seen it's probably Ghana.

Kumar: Yes, Ghana, but Nigeria is also a nice country... but I just love people everywhere, so this is hard to answer.

You were just on tour with two American reggae-bands. Reggae now has more and more non-Jamaican artists springing up, and I see a lot of discussion about appropriation of culture, about people taking over the music from Jamaica and are successful in other countries with it and such... What's your point of view on that?

Pele: I don't think reggae music or any music at all really has any colour. It's a feeling and a



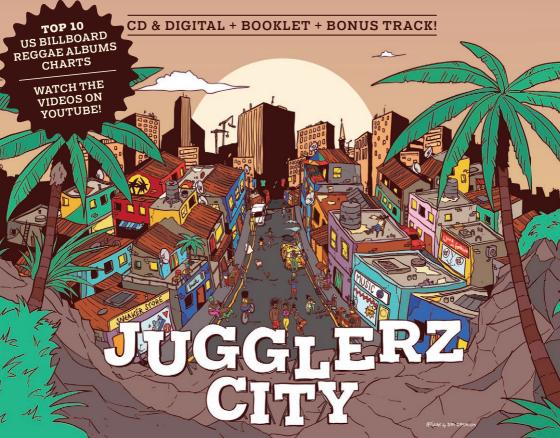
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RUDEBWOY · DA'VILLE



vibration and anybody can feel it. It's actually a good thing that the music was originated in Jamaica, a lot of people worldwide are feeling this vibration and this energy and it's now reproduced in what they are feeling. And I think that's how we should look at it, to say that regae has grown into a worldwide thing now and really and truly these artists are not trying... I don't think they are trying to duplicate what we are doing.

Kumar: They are not trying to steal anything, it's just what they feel! I mean it's the same in Europe, you have bands there as well, so it's across the board. And Bob Marley said that there will be a time where reggae music will reach its rightful people, and rightful people never mean colour, it means to have a good heart, you know. So it's truth, rights and justice, and who wants to come and tell you to not play truth, rights and justice? There's a million others who oppress people and sing slackness that we don't need to hear, so at the end of the

day, the more people that play reggae music, just play reggae music! Black, white, brown, Chinese, and aliens from space, just do it!

From your experience from Wickie Wackie, who would you say we have to watch out for, who is an up and coming artist out of Jamaica right now? I know that you do a lot in terms of giving people a cultural place to perform, so... who has the potential to reach far?

Pele: On the last two **Wickie Wackie**, **Earth-Kry** performed.

Kumar: EarthKry is definitely a band to look out for!

Pele: And then **Notis**, **Unga Barunga** and the **Heavyweight Rockaz**, you have to keep an ear out for them, they are really strong right now.

Kumar: Xana Romeo! As a female artist, Max Romeo's daughter, she is coming out strong now. So there are really a lot of musicians and good artists, so we would love to see them become big.



Are you already planning this year's edition of the Wickie Wackie festival?

Kumar: Midway through. It will definitely happen!

Any acts already set?

Kumar & Pele: Raging Fyah! (laugh) 100% sure.

Kumar: We are working on some really interesting artists.

Pele: The space is already secured for the 2nd

and 3rd December, so get ready. Everlasting Raging Fyah, everlasting time!

I'll try to be there. Have a safe tour!

Kumar: Thanks. Just check out our album. It's available on all the big platforms. You'll find us on the social media, it's a support thing. We'll be in Europe and America and are looking forward to interact!



Raging Fyah - Everlasting Dub Rockers - May 2016

Everlasting is the name of their new masterpiece, and everlasting indeed is their music: Raging Fyah are releasing their third studio album, and as with its predecessors, the connection is instant, deep and intimate. Listening to the 13 tracks is like reconnecting with old friends, which doesn't mean that the tunes resemble former releases! Quite to the con-

trary, this time the band's five artists (**Anthony** on drums, **Pele** on bass, **Gizmo** on guitar, **Demar** on keys and **Kumar** on guitar and lead vocals) invited illustrious guests.

Jesse Royal is one, adding his flow to the rocky *Humble*. And while J Boog seems a likely choice for a reggae track like *Live Your Life*, the other feature is a real surprise: dancehall-artist Busy Signal collaborated with the band on a surprising two tracks! The second one, *Would You Love Me*, is a funk-tinged plea for love with synthie-effects and drum-programming that throws us back to the eighties.

The dab hand behind all this greatness is Llamar "RiffRaff" Brown, who in tight collaboration with the band, made their visions become aural reality. Recorded at the legendary Tuff Gong Studio, the sound is immaculate, and the inclusion of guest musicians such as Dean Fraser, Nambo Robinson, Dwight Richards, Denver Smith, Sheldon Palmer, Everol Wray and Hector Lewis adds to the warm, organic feel of the album. The fact that it's the first time the band is working under a label other than their own (Dub Rockers from VP Records) did in no way limit their creativity. Next to deep roots as in Getting



Dread or the classically introduced **Get Up**, we find Raggamuffin vibes ("You came here to live long and not to make a next hitt") alongside more pop-oriented pieces like **Ready For Love** as well as the optimistic, making-you-feel-good tracks that the band has a knack for, namely **Dash Wata** and **Happiness**.

The traditional *Raging Fyah* magic, however, unfolds in the title track *Everlasting* and the subsequent *Justice*. Instant earworms, you'll end up singing along the choruses upon second hearing, and I can't wait to experience these live. The lyrics, though! While the former tells us that *Jah Love* is always and forever accessible for everyone, the latter covers the gamut from *Christ* to *Marcus Garvey* to the treatment of equal rights and justice in our present times.

Wondering, another gem, was written in Haiti and is a question to all the leaders out there – "How did we get here? Wondering where we went wrong..." asks **Kumar** in his haunting voice, announcing that a change is going to come.

The same touching vocals caress us in my personal favourite, *Try Again*, an uplifting, inspiring piece that tells us to never give up and keep trying. What brought tears to my eyes wasn't the words, however, but the melodica played by **Demar** from min. 2:08 to 2:37. This is pure, beautiful, heart-rending musical bliss!

Ah well, just get a copy and find out for yourself. With **Everlasting**, **Raging Fyah** once more managed to make this world a bit better, simply by doing what they love: creating everlasting music! **by Gardy Stein-Kanjora**



FESTIVALS AUGUST 2016 117



Reggae On The River



4. - 7. August

Sizzla_Yellowman_Jah9_Gappy Ranks_ Protoje_New Kingston_Jah Sun_ Big Youth_Lion D_Dubtonic Kru and many many more...



Ruhr Reggae Summer



5. - 7. August

Damian Marley_Protoje_ Tarrus Riley_Dub FX_Anthony B_ Marcia Griffiths and more...







Reggae Sun Ska



5. - 7. August

Damian Marley_Dub Inc_Alborosie_ Tarrus Riley_Inner Circle_ Mellow Mood_Alaine_Dean Fraser and many more...



African Music Festival



5. - 7. August

Julian Marley_Nattali Rize_ Mokoomba_Tokame and many more...











Reggae Geel



5. & 6. August

Sizzla_Popcaan_Beres Hammond_ Keznamdi_Kabaka Pyramid_Gentleman & Ky-Mani Marley_Lee Scratch Perry and many more...



Reggae In Wulf



5. & 6. August

Randy Valentine_Perfect Giddimani_ Mr. Vegas_J Boog_Trixstar_Bugle_ D-Flame_Warrior Sound_ Pow Pow Movement and more...





FESTIVALS AUGUST 2016 121



Nomade Reggae Festival



5. - 7. August

Biga Ranx_Dubmatix_ Mardjenal_Dub Silence and many more...



Afrika Karibik Festival



11. - 15. August

Sean Paul_Beginner_Adel Tawil_ ASD_Sebastian Sturm_Miwata and more...









Ostroda Reggae Festival



11. - 14. August

Tarrus Riley_Alaine_Jah9_ Nattali Rize_Kabaka Pyramid_ Alborosie_Dellè many and more...



Boomtown



11. - 14. August

Damian Marley_Morgan Heritage_ Inner Circle_Junior Kelly_ Tanya Stephens_Kabaka Pyramid_ Mad Professor and many many more...





FESTIVALS AUGUST 2016 123



Keep It Real Jam



12. & 13. August

Tarrus Riley_Assassin_Konshens_ Randy Valentine_Jahcoustix_ Kid Gringo and many more...







No Logo Festival



12. - 14. August

Damian Marley_Dub Inc_ Morgan Heritage_Alborosie_ Kabaka Pyramid_Young Lords many more...



Langsta Rasta



12. & 13. August

Junior Natural_Ska N Ska_ Comandante Cricket and more...





FESTIVALS AUGUST 2016 125



Afro C Festival



12. & 13. August

Israel Vibration_ Meta & The Cornerstones_ Pura Vida_Krema Kawa_ Shanty The Dubbez and more...





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website: www.CharlyB.com

@Charlybmusic



Rototom Sunsplash



13. - 20. August

Alborosie_Marla Brown_Manu Chao_ Damian Marley_Green Valley_Runkus_ Jugglerz_Shanty_Jah Shaka_ Morgan Heritage_Jah9_Congos_ Tarrus Riley_Dean Fraser_Skarra Mucci_ Dub Inc and many many more...



Reggae Sundance



13. August

Shabba Ranks_Julian Marley_ Tiken Jah Fakoly_Congos_ Bounty Killer and more...



















Jamaica Sound Fest



13. August

Bass Odyssey_Stone Love Fire Links and more...





This is K'Coneil's debut EP which seeks to establish his brand of masterfully blending the genres to create a masterpiece of sonic perfection. Rooted in the foundations of Reggae, from his birth country Jamaica, K'Coneil expertly taps into the grit and grime of his homeland of New York City to tell stories of "Love and Lust." With romantic punctuation's of bedroom trysts, K'coneil seeps in a raw accented Caribbean dialect anchored in simple RnB melodies to visually provide glimpses of his current state of mind. With contributing production from Billboard charting, Seanizzle and New York Radio DJ Cali B, "Love/Lust's" songs, subject matters, and inspirations, is truly a masterpiece of genre fluidity.



Watch "Hot Like You" Video On Vevo!







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BIOGRAPHY PRESS PHOTOS MEDIA FEATURES













Reggae Fest Chicago



13. August

Toots & The Maytals_Lee Scratch Perry_ Derrick Morgan_Keith & Tex_Iration and many more...



Casalabate Music Festival



14. August

Assassin_Sentinel Sound_ Silly Walks Discotheque_ Rankin Lele & Papa Leu_ One Love Hi Powa and more





FESTIVALS AUGUST 2016 129



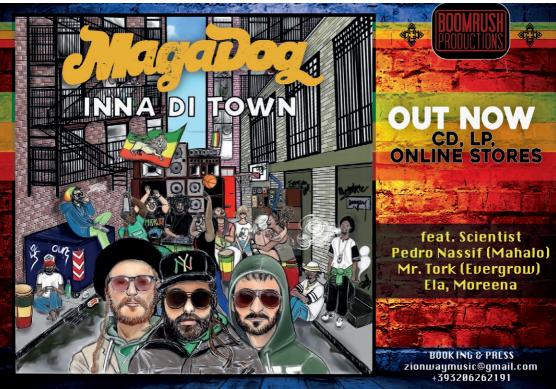
Overjam



16. - 19. August

Tarrus Riley_Congos_Marcia Griffiths_ Kabaka Pyramid_Soom T_Assassin_ Stylo G_Cali P_Iniman_Mungo's Hi-Fi feat. Solo Banton_ and many many more...







Regalowisko Reggae Festival



18. - 20. August

Richie Campbell_Mo' Kalamity_ Congos Pura Vida and more...



Chiemsee Summer



24. - 27. August

Damian Marley_Jamaram_I Fire_ The Prodigy_Moop Mama_ Mundwerk Crew and many many more...





FESTIVALS AUGUST 2016 131



One Drop Reggae Festival



26. & 27. August

Max Herre_Tarrus Riley_Anthony B_Dub Inc_Junior Kelly_Katchafire_Randy Valentine Jahcoustix and more...



Uprising Reggae Festival



26. & 27. August

Alborosie_Tarrus Riley_The Congos_ Dean Fraser_Etana_Ras Muhamad_ Silly Walks Discotheque_Warrior Sound and many more....







Reggae Summer Night



27. August

Kabaka Pyramid_The Herbpirates_ Top Frankin Sound and more....





Smile!



27. August

Jah9_Million Stylez_High Grade and many more...





Reggae On The Rocks



27. August

Iration_Steel Pulse_ Morgan Heritage_311_ The Werks and more...







Reggae Lake Festival



27. August

Alpha Blondy_Anthony B_ Luciano_Freddie McGregor_ King Shiloh Soundsystem and more...



Irie Revoltes Open Air



27. August

Irie Revoltes and more...







PRESENTS







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01. FEBRUARY 2016
LIMITED EDITION - ONLY 300 COPIES

PEFFE

FEATURING

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KABAKA PYRAMID
ETANA, IBA MAHR
SIZZLA, TARRUS RILEY

SKARRA MUCCI & KIP RICH

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DJ HYPE MAL	A DUB PHIZIX & ST	RATEGY CALIBRE	KODE 9
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MAD PROFESSO	R TWINKLE BROTH	ERS ZED BIAS KA	BAKA PYRAMID
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EGOLESS	ELEMENTAL DIGI	TRON KANDŽI	JA I GOLE ŽENE
HORNSMAN COYOTE & SOULCRAFT DUBBLE BAMWISE			
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Outlook Festival



31. August - 4. September

Damian Marley_Jah Shaka_ Twinkle Brothers _David Rodigan_ Kabaka Pyramid _ManuDigital_ Mad Professor and many many more...



One Love Festival



2. - 4. September

Lee Scratch Perry_Macka B_I Kong_ Congos_Capital Letters_Junior Reid_ Kabaka Pyramid_Jah 9_ Jamie Irie_ Max Romeo and many more...





FESTIVALS SEPTEMBER 2016 137



Yoga Reggae Festival



24. September

lba Mahr_Pressure Busspipe_ Jah Works_Ras Slick & DBC Band and many more...



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ROMEO REC

HORROR ZONE



THE SOUND OF WAR

BY ANGUS TAYLOR
PHOTOS BY NICK CARO

Max Smith, better known as **Max Romeo**, has been recording since the 60s. He is still among the most consistent of reggae's veterans when performing live.

At his shows, fans can hear everything from the ska that inspired him as a youth to his Rasta social commentary recordings with **Lee Scratch Perry**. He even brings on his children, who are talented singers in their own right.

But **Max** isn't just about serving up past glories. He has a new album out, **Horror Zone**, voiced for English producer **Daniel Boyle**. It's a dark and moody affair, with scant upliftment in its lyrics. **Max** believes the world is going to hell – and he's not keeping silent any more...

One of the songs you perform on tour is Uptown Babies Don't Cry. That is something you actually lived. You lived on the streets for a while when you were a child.

Yes, that is a fact. I have been to hell and back. Most of my songs I sing reflect my life.

That song actually came about through something that was quoted to **Ken Boothe** by one of the **Khouri** guys, who owned **Federal Records** at the time, which is now **Tuff Gong. Ken Boothe** was on to him about some money and because he was from uptown he told **Ken** "Uptown babies don't cry, they don't know what hungry is like". I picked up on it right there and wrote the song.

What gave you the strength to keep going when you were young and life was uncertain?

That's a hard one. It is always that wanting to survive. I'd tell myself that there was something out there for me that was going to

change my life one of these days and await the time. Overnight success doesn't come overnight. I was also encouraged by people around me that saw my work and told me "Look, it's out there for you. Just be patient".

One of the people who inspired you when you were young was Derrick Morgan. He had that very tough sound.

Right. **Derrick Morgan** was one of my mentors. Even until now we are still friends. We communicate a lot. We talk about each other's projects and things like that.

What was it that actually made you start singing?

That wanting to survive. That wanting to be somebody. I always told myself that real hard work, manual labour was not my thing. I've got to find some spiritual way of surviving. Music was the only thing that I saw right there.

How did you join the group the Emotions – with Kenneth Knight and Robbie Shakespeare's brother Lloyd?

Me and **Kenneth** and **Lloyd Shakespeare**, we were friends together. They loved music and I loved it as well. We had a little box guitar that we would sit down with in the evening time. **Lloyd Shakespeare** could play a little guitar and I could play a little as well. That's how we started the whole thing. We went to *Studio 1* and were rejected and then we ended up at the *Caltone* label. A very small label. *15 Mark Lane*. I started out distributing samples to the shops in order to generate orders for the little company. The whole thing transpired from there.

It was Buy Me A Rainbow that was your first hit?

That's right. That was my first recording and it was very successful so even that helped give me the urge to pursue.

Why did you break off from the Emotions and go solo?

Kenneth Knight migrated. I think he left and went to Canada. **Lloyd Shakespeare** died at

some point so the whole thing just went like that. Then I met **Bunny Lee** and these guys and started to do solo **Max Romeo**.

Didn't you also do some stuff with the Hippy Boys for a while?

Yeah, I helped put the band together. It was **Web Stewart**, myself and the **Barrett** brothers, who I introduced to the music business - **Family Man** and **Carlton**. We started out doing covers at hotels. But the band broke up. In this world nothing stays together. (Laughter)

How well did you know Bob Marley? He was from the same parish as you.

I knew him fairly well. We were living in the same community for a while. Before he became the great **Bob Marley**, actually we actually did a little farming as friends to occupy the time as we were in the same area. We were very close as friends. He was a good guy. I didn't know anything negative about **Bob** to be honest. He was always that guy who tried to portray the positive image. He was always about positive things. As his songs will tell you.

Tell me how you met Bunny Lee and how you came to sing your scandalous hit Wet Dream?

(Laughter) I moved from West Kingston to East Kingston and ended up living in Greenwich Town. That's where I met **Bunny Lee**. We go way back. I think this was 1967. He was working as a desk clerk at an auto place and I was at *Caltone*. He was interested in the music thing and he had a session at **Duke Reid**'s studio. **Derrick Morgan** did a song called *Hold Yuh Jack*, an old Jamaican folklore thing. **Bunny Lee** figured that I could ride the rhythm and came up with these lyrics which were subtly suggestive.

It was banned by the BBC. I think that was the greatest thing that ever happened to me in my whole life when the BBC banned *Wet Dream*. Because that is what made it the megahit that it was. (Laughter) It went as far as number two in the charts. And it was about to make the number one when the **Beatles** came along





with a song from nowhere called *Get Back*! It was in the top 30 for 26 weeks. Which I was told was two weeks longer than **Frank Sinatra** who had the title for 24 weeks. It was the first reggae record to enter the *Guinness Book Of Records*. So it was a very historic thing.

Did you receive appropriate compensation for that record?

Let's not go there! (Laughter)

Do you ever sing that song when you perform now?

It has to be demanded. I did it in Italy when it was demanded by a bunch of skinheads. (laughter) I thought I'd got away with it when this guy came over and said "Wet Dream!" He was a skinhead so I just did it!

How did Rasta come to you?

Well, this was 1971. I went back to Jamaica and after a whole stream of records like that I didn't really want my career to head into that direction. So I started searching around for alternatives and that's when I came upon my uncle who was a Rastafarian and he actually pointed me to the faith. I took it on from there

on and started singing about Rastafari and social comments and became a protest singer. I never stopped protesting!

Your Maccabee Version was also banned also but for different reasons!

I will tell you what. Most of my songs were banned in those days. Because, like I said I am a protest singer so everything I saying was about the ills of society because they were more ills than fills. So that's where I fell into a problem with the system. If I had a song that sounded good and they heard one line that they didn't understand I was contacted to explain it before they give it a play! Otherwise they would stamp it "Not fit for airplay". But all that changed when Michael Manley came about and they started playing my songs then.

Because Michael Manley used Let The Power Fall as his 1972 campaign theme?

That's right. That was a big song too. Give thanks to **Tony Spalding** and **Michael Manley**. They were the guys who questioned why certain songs were not being played and forced them to play my songs.

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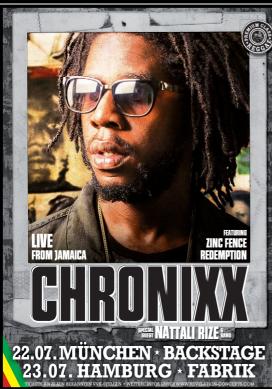
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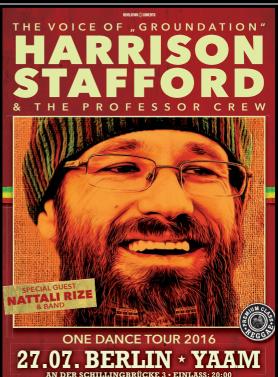
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Tell me how you started working with Clive Hunt on your classic 1975 Revelation Time album?

We were with a company called *Soundtracks Limited* and they wanted us to do an album but the production costs were a little too heavy. I saw danger coming towards the company so I went to the boss and said "Look, I want to produce me out of myself. I will do a minimum production album". And I went into Lee Perry's studio with minimum funds and came out with that. I opened the *Iron Gate*!

How did you first start working with Scratch?

It was after some years with **Bunny Lee**. I think there was a feud. In Jamaica there was always jealousy if a producer is on top. The others are always jealous of the situation. You can't just walk out of one camp and into another. You had to use tactics to perform for the **Upsetter** at the time because I was known as a **Bunny Lee** artist. But in my own self, I was a free agent because I didn't sign

any agreement with any guy. So I could go around to all of them. So I ended up with **Lee Perry** which was a good thing because he gave me the number one of my life which was *War Ina Babylon*.

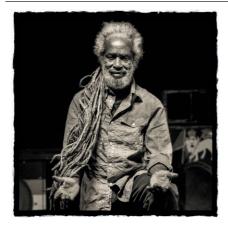
And that brought you into contact with Island records.

That's right. We did our contract with **Island Records**. A joint agreement with me and **Lee Perry** for the album. But the situation wasn't good because there were no funds coming to me. Each time I would go to the company to find out what happened they would tell me **Lee Perry** took this, **Lee Perry** took that, so I decided "I'm not working with this company no more". I had to get mad at these people to get that contract out of the way. They decided to free me from the contract but they still held onto the production.

So years later when the Prodigy sampled I Chase The Devil did you see anything for that?



INTERVIEW MAX ROMEO 145



Yeah, give thanks to the **Prodigy**. Give thanks to **Jay-Z**. These were the guys who actually gave me a break financially so I can do things.

Tell me about going to the USA and linking up with Wackies. You rode on the Birth Of Reggae music rhythm, which was licked over by Winta James and voiced by many of the new generation of Jamaican reggae artists...

That's right. That product was actually for a Japanese company called *Tachyon*. That company doesn't exist anymore. They were the ones who I was recording for. But they had a guy named **Sonny Ochiai** who operated from the *Bullwackies* camp. So that's how come the whole *Bullwackie* thing came into existence. We did about five albums.

In 2007 you said that Jamaica was no longer the centre of reggae music. Now the Jamaican media are very concerned about foreign people taking away the reggae. Why did it take so long for people to catch on?

If it wasn't for the foreign people reggae would be dead. 25 or 30 years ago. Everybody condemned reggae and started on the dancehall bandwagon. And dancehall hasn't left the airport yet. It's still waiting at the airport to get a flight out! (Laughter) The French people knew the value of reggae music and they embraced it and that's why I became successful in Europe.

Your children are doing very well. They are very talented singers. When did you first notice their talents?



It was **Azizi**, who is **Ronaldo**. Me and **Jalanzo** who is my keyboard player and arranger were working on a project. And '**Naldo** came in the studio, he was about five years old then and his brother **Romario** was seven. And he said "Daddy I have a song. Every time I come and say I have a song you always tell me "Boy, we're busy now - we are not in to that." I want to do my song now! Right now!" (Laughter)

So I said "Alright, let's see". So he called his sister and his brother and they went in the studio. I was sitting on a stool and I had to hang on to the stool when they started the first line of the song called **Singing The Blues**. I said "Oh my God. This is what I am sitting on here". They've already done an album. They got a lot of works from that age coming up which are not exposed yet.

I don't understand the Jamaican people with child artists. I remember child artists like **Dennis Brown, Freddie McGregor** and **Delroy Wilson**. They were appreciated but now they are not paying attention to kid singers. I took my children to Europe on tour and Europe loves them. They are highly rated. There is a problem there.

I've seen your sons perform in Europe. But I saw Xana perform live in Jamaica.

She is great. She tears down the place. It is pure wheel up. I tell you man! They really make you feel proud. They make me feel like a father should feel.

146 INTERVIEW MAX ROMEO

You also discovered another singer who is doing very well now - Iba Mahr.

Iba Mahr came into my studio one day. The same situation. Me and Yellow were doing some project in the studio. He said he had a song and he would like to record. I said "Okay, not much I can do for an artist because the media is not open to us as it was. But I can let vou do a song". He started it but Yellow wasn't into it because he didn't like that "uh uh uh" thing. I said to Yellow "Look you remember an artist called Jacob Miller? That is a replica. Jamaica loves the "uh uh uh"-give him a break!" So he did the song. "If you have it and you lose it," I said "I can't do much for you. But here is a CD of the song. Take it. It is yours. Do what you want to do with it". And he made me feel proud man. Because he took it and he made himself big!

So finally, let's turn to your new album Horror Zone. How did you meet the producer Daniel Boyle?

I met him through my children. He came to Jamaica and came to the house. He called me and said "I wouldn't mind doing a project with you". And I said "You know what you're doing. I don't work with fools. And you're not stupid". Because I can't work with stupid people. But **Daniel** turned out to be a wise guy. He sent me some brilliant rhythms and it took me two weeks but we did the project together.

He's releasing it on vinyl. The vinyl market is coming back. You can't make money off CDs. You make one copy and a thousand copies come off that one and you know nothing about it. It is a rip-off. I hate CDs.

Max Romeo - Horror Zone Rolling Lion - July 2016

"What if I tell you that the world is in trouble?"

At age 71, veteran **Max Romeo** throws out an album that is not only a direct continuation of the issues he addressed in his highly celebrated 1976 release **War Ina Babylon** (unfortunately, 40 years later our world still suffers from the same evils he criticised back then), but also of his

legacy in terms of musical and vocal delivery. Horror Zone is a rather gloomy affair, as the cover suggests, and songs like the title track or *The Sound Of War* aptly capture the constant threat of armed conflicts, innocent suffering and senseless killing. The album was conceived as a tribute to the golden era of roots reggae and dub, and producer Daniel Boyle did all he could to let the glory of *Black Ark* productions shine again. Apart from vintage recording equipment and the re-unification of original members of The Upsetters (Vin Gordon on trombone, Glen Da Costa on saxophone and Robbie Lyn on keyboard), the Superape Lee ,Scratch' Perry himself has participated in the project on percussions, special effects and backing vocals.



And as if that wasn't extraordinary enough, **Tony Wright**, who had created the **War Ina Babylon** cover, hand-painted the artwork again, thus making it an album that *"is designed to be owned as a physical product"*, as the press release suggests.

Next to the thematic treatment of war and suffering, **Max Romeo** turns to

the meanness of people in general (*Scammer Jammers*) and destructive living in particular in Cigarette: "*Instead of smoking a cigarette, try making love!*" Faith has its place as well, of course, and in *Give Thanks To Jehovia*, the last track, the artist leaves us with a glimpse of hope.

The dub-versions of these nine songs are another piece of art that should be enjoyed with sufficient bass, as should the whole album. **Horror Zone** is an amazing project that, even though it doesn't leave us with a new **Max Romeo** hymn, brings to our attention the work of a concerned, critical mind, and skilful artists.

by Gardy Stein-Kanjora

What do you think about Daniel's productions?

He is roots. He goes out of the way to make the product sound like roots. The original roots sound. Even in the studio that he mixes, he purchased a board for that analogue to digital sound. And he's got it because it sounds good.

You really go in hard on the lyrics for this album. You don't sugar-coat it. You really think bad things are happening in the world.

That's right. The world is full of scammers. It is a heavy album. It's the sound of war. It is not a *War Ina Babylon*. Although it could be because it's a heavy album.

Do you have any positive solutions for the world? How are we going to turn things around?

It's impossible. It is virtually impossible. Because the world is being run by crazy people. All the leaders of the world are mad. What's happening in Syria. The debasement of innocent people drowning in the Mediterranean Sea. It is consuming more life than any wars put together right this minute. All the leaders of the world are selfish and crazy. And it's virtually impossible to change that.

But you're still on tour, performing your music for the people. Is that what you're going to keep doing?

I am just trying to give them a little hope. You try to keep them away from despair. At the end of my concert each night I sing some ska tunes to alleviate the stress before they go home. So they can face their home in a different light. Because you can see stress on people. All stressed out because we don't know where the world is going.

Now these people are making their homes in outer space. We don't know the reason why they are so into space exploration? Because they already polluted the earth with so much poison and destruction that they want to make themselves prepared. They're crazy. They are planning to live on Mars and we're ducking bullets down here! They want to duck meteorites! (Laughter).





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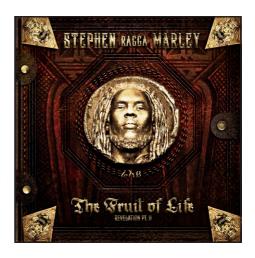
A VISION SO FLAWLESS

BY ANGUS TAYLOR

Back in 2011 *Festiville* interviewed **Stephen Marley**. That spring he had released his critically acclaimed album **Revelation Pt1: The Root Of Life** - a traditional roots reggae record that sailed deliberately close to the sound of his voice-sake father, Bob. The more ambitious follow-up **The Fruit Of Life** was set to arrive in autumn of the same year.

Fast forward to 2016 and after many delays, a record company change, becoming a grandfather and lots besides - **The Fruit** is finally ripe for a July 22nd issue. It's a celebration of reggae's interaction with other music – especially hip-hop.

Alongside family members Damian, Jo Mersa and Ky-Mani, it features guest appearances from a heaving crew of rappers, singers and dancehall deejays. These include Dead Prez, Junior Reid, Rakim, Rick Ross, Wacka Flocka, Busta Rhymes, Wyclef, Iggy Azalea, Shaggy, Bounty Killer and Pitbull.



Angus Taylor spoke to **Stephen** about reggae's relation with hip hop, music vs politics and why his next album could be concept free.

Have you been enjoying your tour in the US? When do you think you'll be coming to Europe?

I hope soon. I love coming over there. Europe is more rootical with the music. The Europeans have a longer relationship with reggae. So they are really in tune to the rootical vibes a bit more. Some of the old reggae acts that don't really tour here, you would be surprised how much they are touring in Europe. Europe always shows them a greater love.

So would you say that the USA needs to learn a bit more about The Root Of Life and Europe needs to learn a bit more about The Fruit Of Life?

(Laughs) Yeah, I mean, time is the master. Every child is different and grows in a different way. Every child takes a different technique you know? So that's how it goes! (laughs)

How do you feel knowing that your album Revelation Part II: The Fruit Of Life is finally coming out after 5 years?

I am ready for the next album actually! But **The Fruit Of Life** is in my opinion a nice offering. Like it says, it's the fruits and it is a little bit sweeter than the roots. It is a little more easy listening and a little more fun. Not as militant as **The Root Of Life**.

It was originally scheduled to come out in 2011. What happened? Perfectionism or politics?

Well, it was a little bit of everything. I was on **Universal Records** for **The Root Of Life** and I just never really felt like they knew to market I man and my music in the best way that could benefit me and the music. So I left that situation and had to find my own footing now. So that took a little while to get organised

again and find the right team and all of these little things. Other than that, **The Fruit Of Life** has a lot of combinations. I think it's only one or two songs that are just me. All of the songs have some guest artists and that took a little time as well - that concept of bringing in others from different genres of music and so forth.

I was also still touring on **The Root Of Life** and the people appreciated that record so much that I was still performing those songs. So a lot of little components were in there that took a while to get it out. But we're here now - we're ready.

You've said before that you don't really strategize in your career. But it did seem like you were deliberately getting the purists onside with Root Of Life, then dropping Rockstone which was a rootical tune in a dubstep style and saying "Follow me into tomorrow with The Fruit Of Life".

Yeah. I mean, as you say we don't really strategize certain things but this particular record was a concept coming from part one to part two. And having this concept and being stuck in the concept - that was a new thing for me as well. Like "Yo, it has to be done this way because this is the way I said I was doing it". (laughs) It kind of kept me in a box.

Do you prefer to be free to follow your artistic spirit?

Yeah, I like to be free. I mean, I am better free. At the same time some things have to take consideration and strategy, yes. We can't just be throwing things up in the air and what comes down, comes down, all the time. Sometimes you have to strategize so it was a new thing for me to be kept in the concept. But yeah, I love being free. I am better free.

There are a lot of rappers on the album. How did you link with all these rappers?

(Laughs) Everyone on the album and I are friends. Or at least most people are friends. So I just went about it song by song. Each song speaks to me in a different way and these are the people that came to me. And when

I say they came to me it was just naturally. "Oh, Wyclef is in town and he wants to pass through". Clef passed through and said "What are you doing?" "Oh you know, working upon a project". "Oh, let me hear some stuff". I played him one and he went straight in the booth and did this thing. So some of it happened that kind of way where you never really planned for it to happen. And then some of it was like, I did one with Rick Ross where definitely hearing the track I was like "This sounds like a Rick Ross style. I wonder if he would come out and do something?" So my bro Rohan checked him and he was ready. So that was another one in the bag there.

You were born in America, grew up in Jamaica and live in America. So you probably understand the interaction between reggae and rap music better than most people.

Of course.

The great U Roy has said in the past that he felt that that he didn't feel he got the credit for how Jamaican music influenced rapping. What's your view?

Yes, definitely. It is not even views. These are the facts. They are cousins and definitely from the whole culture, from the way the hip-hop community used dress to the smoking blunts. Just the whole thing is across. We are cousins. It goes beyond just the music. It is a whole culture where Jamaica has so much influence that we are literally cousins.

Do you think people will listen to your album and get a better understanding of this link?

I don't know. Who listens to my record is for the love of music in general. I didn't really make the album saying "This is going to solidify a link". This is my music and this is the concept of the record. I hope you like what I did. I hope you like it. I don't get political.

One person who is very involved in the album is James Bonsai Caruso who did a lot of the engineering and coproduction. Another is the executive producer Salaam Remi. Tell me about their involvement...



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I first started working together with **Bonsai** when we were getting ready to do the **Chant Down Babylon** remix record. **Bonsai** is just a great person. We have a relationship since then. And that was the early 90s coming into this time and he is such a great engineer, he knows me and **Damian** very well and that chemistry just always works.

Salaam Remi is a close friend. Actually, he was the one that solidified the concept. What happened was I was recording The Root Of Life and still just kept on kind of vibe, coming up with more songs that I needed for the Root. And he said "Well, you might have to go from the root to the fruit". So it was really Salaam that sparked this concept here now. He is such a close friend, he advises and he is always there, helping me when it gets difficult or I kind of run up in a little stagnant vibe, he always comes and talks back the fire. "Well, you know, try this or try that". Salaam is such a great friend and very intricate. I trust his ears so he's a great asset.

The track Revelation Party is co-produced with Touter from Inner Circle. Inner Circle played on Stir It Up. So there is a nice link there.

Yes man. Those are my uncles. So much love and respect for them man. They show us so much love and respect as well. And they are nurturing. They're very nurturing. And the youths need that from the elders. As well as they are highly respected.

I really like the old school flow of Rakim on So Unjust. How did you get Rakim on board?

I was always a great admirer of **Rakim**. What he stood for and how he carries his music and himself. I met him when **Damian** and **Nas** were doing their project, **Distant Relatives**. We had a symposium at the *National Geographic* speaking about that same thing, about the relationship between reggae and hip-hop and our whole history. That's where I met him. I told him "Yow, we have enough love for you and one day I hope we can get something together". And he said he would be honoured. That is where it started.





During your single Scars On My Feet with Wacka Flocka Flame you say "I've got a vision so flawless". And that made me think about the way you use space and clarity in your productions. Do you kind of see sound in your head before you produce it?

Yes, yes, yes! Yeah man. Exactly! Right. In my sleep. I am serious. And I get up out of bed. You see, where I live where I sleep is maybe 100 yards from the studio. I live in the studio. So every morning I get up and that's the first place I go. I don't brush my teeth yet! I get up, I go in the studio, I turn on what I was doing last night and then I start going about my day. I go back and brush my teeth while the music is playing, so I can hear. It's just fresh. I am always getting inspired a lot in my sleep, in my rest. In my vision. A lot of things come to me.

We've already mentioned your collaboration with Wyclef. You just said you don't like to get involved in politics. He is somebody who went into politics for a while. The song also contains a sample by Nina Simone, somebody whose career suffered because people didn't like her getting so political. Is there a danger in trying to be political when you're a musician?

There is a danger. There is a caution in everything. Me personally, I have had a bad experience with politics going from what happened to my parents. My mother got shot in her head box. And my father got shot, it

grazed his chest and got lodged in his arm. This was politically motivated. So you are speaking to someone that from a young age had a bitter taste, it was a bad taste. Especially where I come from. So that's why we kind of stay away from politics in that sense. But I mean, I am not afraid to be opinionated and stand up for what I believe in. If that gets political then that's how it is. We are not running away from responsibility as a human being. But to class it under politics, I just don't like that word.

On the tune So Strong with Shaggy there is another nice link because you sample Jerry Butler who was in the Impressions. And of course Curtis Mayfield inspired One Love. Was that a deliberate link or did it just happen?

A bit of both. Because I was just going through records and I found it. And as you say, it is such great artists and musicianship. But being who it is as well I was like "No, no, no. I have to not be afraid and use this interpretation and do something with it". So it was a bit of both.

How did you link with Iggy Azalea? She is probably the most controversial choice on the album!

(Laughs) I linked with **Iggy Azalea** through the distributor, through the company putting out the record. I had that track and we just kind of needed a balance and it was a female balan-

ce. And she stepped up. I don't run, I don't get political like that. Who is controversial? It is who steps up and has the right thing to say and the right vibe - we just deal with it.

I don't try to get too deep into that world like that. As long as it's nothing too crazy that I wouldn't associate myself with - but you can't judge anybody at the same time. People grow. Maybe these people who see or collaborate with I will uplift themselves in life. Who am I to deny that? That is what I'm here for. So who comes, comes. Come what may or who may.

Iggy Azalea has been accused of culturally appropriating hip-hop music. At the same time in Jamaica there has been a lot of fear reggae music is being taken away by foreigners.

Reggae taken away by foreigners? They have to go and read the Bible man. Some of these people need to read the Bible. And read how God prophesied. What Jah tells you say. And what Jah tells you say is "If who him choose to do this work don't do the work, he will turn stones to do this work". Reggae music is for everyone. Through and through the music and the influence grows and grows and it is a great thing. We as Jamaicans and as originators of the sound and vibration we have to know ourselves. We have to appreciate the music. Or others will come and do that. That's all I have to say.

On Rockstone you do some verses that are inspired by Papa Levi Mi God Mi King. Do you remember that tune coming out when you were young?

Yeah man. Of course. When we were young **Ziggy** bought a turntable for his birthday. And because he bought the turntable he bought some of the latest records. He didn't just buy some records - it was the latest records. And that one was one of them that time. I remember (chants fast chat verse). **Super Cat** was there. *Cockney Translation* and those tunes. That era there.

The intro and the outro to the album come from the speech from Charlie Chaplin's The Great Dictator. What drew you to sample that?

Just the words. I didn't know who it was. I just pounced upon it. When I found it, it was just audio. So it was really the words that this man was saying I was like "Yow, people need to hear this". And especially because it was and is so relevant, I decided to venture into using it.

Was it relevant to the world or relevant to you personally?

Generally to the world. Just to all these leaders and these power strugglers. Hear the man talk. "I am sorry. That is not my business. I don't want to rule anyone. As a matter of fact I would like to help everyone." And I was like "Yow, who is this?"

This big power struggle thing going on in the world right now. Who has the biggest balls and all this. We don't want to rule man. Love and live together. That's what we want to hear. That is what we want to fight for. That is what we want. Not who is the richest. No. We just want to have peace and love so everyone can live irie and have respect. These things I want deal with, man.

You showed us how rootical and how broad reggae can be. What's coming next? What's this next album you're looking forward to?

For the next album we are just looking forward to being free. And expressing myself in any which way comes. No concept. I don't want to go into a concept. But at the same time I have been writing, I have been growing and getting more mature with the music so it's always exciting to me to get that going.

Like I said, **Revelation Pt.II** was definitely a laid-back vibe and I never tried to get too heavy. I just produced this vibe where we could crosspollinate genres and have a nice body of music that people appreciate. It can go down in my history as the next record, an achievement that was a good record, with the concept understood and it is what it is. But I am ready to move on.



Stephen Marley - Revelation Pt.II: The Fruit Of Life

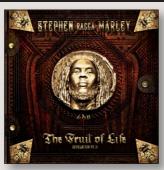
IGhetto Youths International - July 20161

After five years, the long-awaited follow-up to **Stephen Marley**'s vast and sprawling collection that won a Grammy for Best Reggae Album in 2011, **Revelation Pt.1** - **The Root of Life**, is finally here. It can be written with certainty that **Revelation Pt.II** - **The Fruit of Life**, in what one hopes is the middle chapter of a trilogy, is not only a worthy next entry of epic proportion,

but even more ambitious and immense than its predecessor. With over two dozen guests scattered through 21 tracks and three bonus songs, **Marley** is doing his part to further both the legacy of his own successful solo career, as well as add to the family empire, all while promoting and propelling the spirit of reggae into a variety of voices and genres.

First, let's talk about the guests. Without devoting the entire review to listing each and every one, though they are all deserving of mention, it's fair to say that this is an A-list of artists Marley has assembled. From the family alone, there are Damian Marlev, Ky-Mani, and Jo Mersa. From the universe of schools old and new, there are Capleton, Shaggy, and Sizzla; Pitbull, Iggy Azalea, and Dead Prez; Wyclef Jean, Busta Rhymes, and Waka Flocka... the list goes on. A virtual anthropological collection of modern music that chooses not to assimilate this myriad of personalities and styles into one, but rather simmers them together in the melting pot allowing each ingredient to shine within the mix. It's much the same way reggae music itself blended in its origin bits of mento, ska, folk, and American R&B.

Which brings us to the music. One look at the number of tracks and the correspondent number of guests, and the concern could be that the depth of the effort in the individual performances may be lost in the sheer volume of work being put forth. Call it a 'too much of a good thing' syndrome. Not to worry. Taken one by one, each has a unique distinction separate from the others, yet the record overall craftily avoids fee-



ling like simply a string of singles. The album opens with a foreboding, almost martial, drum beat under a spoken sampled declaration of its intent. From there, themes both past and present begin to cohabitate. Babylon utilizes a looping acoustic, while *Revelation Party* provides the record's most retro reggae vibe.

There are social critiques and sug-

gestions of 9/11 conspiracy in **So Unjust** that slide into a home recording of just **Marley** and guitar, at maybe his most bare and vulnerable, in a prelude to **Walking Away**, a '60s ballad juiced up with cutting saxophone. Talk of street hustles and the ghetto collide with samples of **Bob Marley** speaking of revolution; clavi and Spanish guitar sit next to cycling hi-hat and affected auto-tuned vocals and injections of hip-hop. The attention to detail on every cut is conscientious, respectful, and impressive. Nods to '70s blaxploitation funk on **Music is Alive** play as neo-retro irony. This music is abundantly alive as it reaches back 40 years for a jolt, or even 50 years, as on **So Strong**, whose female harmony vocals recall **Motown** soul at its height

Most of the cuts deploy the guests at their finest, often carving out space for free expression in a bridge section between verses. The most stunning example may be Jasmin Karma and Twista's appearance on *Paradise*. A rapid-fire barrage from Twista comes like an earthquake over the sultry-in-the-shadows Karma, in a shift so abrupt it works both as a jarring juxtaposition and as a reminder of how Marley can make us comfortable, but never complacent.

Revelation Pt.II - The Fruit of Life is a masterwork the breadth of which cannot be appreciated without repeated listens. It is an album that can and perhaps will be dissected for all it says and does, but what it really should be is enjoyed as an incredible bounty of art and life. If there is a Part 3 in Marley's future, this one will be incredibly difficult to top.

by Larson Sutton



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