

FESTIVILLE 2023

REGGAEVILLE FESTIVAL GUIDE



INTERVIEWS

RISING TIDE
BUJU BANTON
INNA DE YARD
TYDAL KAMAU
BURNING SPEAR
ROOTZ RADICALS
HEMPRESS SATIVA
JAH SUN & SAM GILLY
GENTLEMAN'S DUB CLUB

114
FESTIVALS

36TH FESTIVAL

SUMMERJAM

THE SPIRIT OF PEACE

PETER FOX • POPCAAN • PROTOJE
TARRUS RILEY • TRETTMANN
ALBOROSIE • JAN DELAY & DISKO No.1 • SOJA
KABAKA PYRAMID • NINA CHUBA
BARRINGTON LEVY • KY-MANI MARLEY
ANTHONY B • BLACK SHERIF • YAKSTA
CHARLY BLACK • HILLTOP HOODS • KIDI
FOUNDATION • TANYA STEPHENS • KWAM.E
THIRD WORLD • MONO & NIKITAMAN
INNA DE YARD • MAL ÉLEVÉ • JAZ ELISE • MORTIMER
BLAIZ FAYAH • LA PEGATINA • TREESHA • NATTALI RIZE
THE SKINTS • EDO SAIYA • NAOMI COWAN • DISARSTAR
TATIK • SAMORA • IL CIVETTO • AWA FALL • INTI • JIZZLE

DANCEHALL AREA WITH JUGGLERZ • WARRIOR SOUND • POW POW MOVEMENT
FREAK DE L'AFRIQUE • JUNIOR CARL • BAY-C

30. JUNI - 2. JULI 2023
KÖLN - FÜHLINGER SEE

INFO & TICKETS: SUMMERJAM.DE



Photo: Christopher Mattis



Photo: Kate Simon

„SOUND THE TRUMPET, SOUND THE HARPS!“

Summer is here, and the above quote by **Hempress Sativa** rings like a rallying cry to call every off-beat soldier, all spiritual Kings and Queens, to gather around for this year's dose of live Reggae music. Listing **114 Festivals** from June to September, our 2023 edition of the **Festiville Magazine** gives you ample opportunity to join the ranks of like-minded freedom fighters, dancing and singing along to the sounds we all love.

To make sure you are well-equipped for discovering what's out there, we present several reviews of exciting albums that provide this year's sonic ammunition, including **Alborosie**, **aDUBta**, **INTI**, **Jah Tung**, **Glen Washington**, **Little Roy** and **Perfect Giddimani**. And, since your vigilant minds certainly crave for further information, you'll also find enlightening interviews - in addition to their associated reviews - with **Gentleman's Dub Club** (*On A Mission*), **Inna De Yard** (*Family Affair*), **Jah Sun & Sam Gilly** (*Return To Balance*), **Rising Tide** (*Pixel Prison*), **Rootz Radicals** (*Together As One*) and **Tydal Kamau** (*I Become A Man*).

As you can see on the splendid cover, lioness **Hempress Sativa** receives special attention, talking about her new album **Charka**, its creation process and deeper meanings in our first ever interview with her. Flanked by the one and only **Buju Banton**, who releases **Born For Greatness** in September and tells us about its genesis, as well as veteran **Burning Spear**, granting us exclusive in-depth insights into

his upcoming oeuvre **No Destroyer** (THE most anticipated Roots Reggae album of the last few years!), you have some first-class, premium intelligence right here.

Keeping the **Rebel Music** alive, we also feature a preview of photographer **Kate Simon**'s book **Bob Marley & Roots Reggae**, who says in the accompanying press release: „(...) *I often heard the Wailers say that they were on a mission. Their tour felt unlike any other tour; it felt like a charge of good energy. It was powerful.*“

It is exactly this powerful charge of good energy that we look forward to sharing with you, dear readers, on the following pages and before festival stages this summer. In case you are not among the lucky ones who received a print edition of this **Festiville Magazine**, the online version awaits your eager eyes on our homepage, and, while there, you can also browse our event agenda on **REGGAEVILLE.com** for first-hand news and updates.

While we're usually not bragging about our achievements, the double accolades of receiving the **JaRIA Honour Award** in 2021 and the **IRAWMA Award** in 2023 makes us really proud, as it confirms the quality of our continually growing output. Thank you for being part of this success story!

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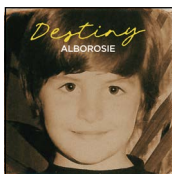
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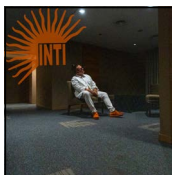
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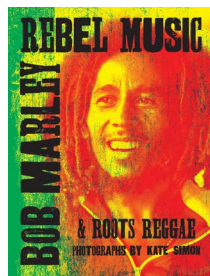
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INTERVIEW

**HEMPRESS
SATIVA**

BEAUTY OF SIMPLICITY

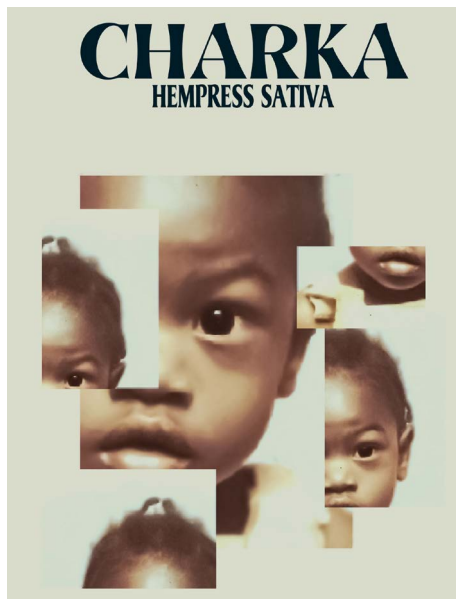
THE CHARKA INTERVIEW

BY GARDY STEIN

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MATTIS

While female Reggae artists have become more visible than ever during the last two decades, it is only a few pivotal figures that have combined this public visibility with a quest for empowerment and conscious enlightenment. One of these powerful queens is **Hempress Sativa**, an artist who has steadily built her international career with fierce dedication, firm spiritual convictions and impressive talent, all of which flowed into the creation of her celebrated debut release **Unconquerebel**. She now presents her sophomore oeuvre **Charka**, a deeply touching album that continues her artistic journey on diverse levels.

While being busy preparing the release of **Charka**, **Hempress Sativa** took the time to answer **Reggaeville's** questions about the creative process, deeper meanings and featured artists, for which we are very grateful:



When first did you consider pursuing a career as a singer?

My initial fascination sparked during my early twenties, around the ages of 23 and 24. Originally, my aspirations revolved around becoming a choreographer, as dance held the primary position in my heart. However, even at the age of 12, I found myself singing in a school group, despite my deep affection for dance. Together with my friends from All Age School, **Nicole Brown** and **Christina Dunn**, we formed a musical trio. Every Friday, during intermissions on movie days, we would sing. The raw essence of music flowed effortlessly through my veins, an inheritance nurtured within the vibrant tapestry

of my familial abode. My father, a selector, producer, musician, singer, and songwriter, constantly thrived in his artistic endeavors. Moreover, my sisters formed a group with two other talented siblings, collectively known as **The Tajai**, lending their background vocals to esteemed artists such as **Tinga Stewart**, **Mikey Spice** and **Jahmali**, as far as my memory serves. The inspiration to write music unexpectedly struck me while lying in my room in 2007, nestled in my bed. I could distinctly hear the captivating melody of **No More Illusion**, and from that moment, **Judgement** was born. However, life's journey took a turn as I embraced motherhood, and I dedicated myself to raising my son.



Who were your early musical inspirations?

Within the rich tapestry of my musical journey, my creative spirit finds solace and inspiration in the luminaries who have paved the musical path before me. Among these are my father, **Albert “Ilawi Malawi” Johnson**, whose musical abilities and soul-stirring melodies have ignited the fire within my soul. The indomitable presence of **Burning Spear**, with his resonant chants and profound messages, has left an indelible imprint on my artistic spirit. The ethereal vibrations of **Ijahman Levi**, weaving tales of spiritual awakening and social consciousness, have captivated my heart and mind. The enchanting melodies of **Sade Adu**, with her mesmerising voice and soulful ballads, continue to resonate deeply within my being. Ms. **Lauryn Hill**, a true force of musical brilliance, has ignited my spirit with her raw authenticity and lyrical prowess.

Sister Nancy and **Sister Carol**, fierce voices of Reggae music, have been instrumental in shaping my own artistic vision and fearlessly speaking truth to power. And let us not forget the captivating presence of **Dezarie**, whose

soul-stirring harmonies and empowering lyrics have become a guiding light in my creative journey. Even my own sisters, with their unique talents and boundless creativity, have been a constant source of inspiration and support. These musical guardians, both known and dear to my heart, have illuminated my path and continue to fuel my artistic evolution.

Who are your favourite artists right now? What’s on your playlist?

At this very moment, I find myself deeply drawn to my own artistry, making me my own favourite artist. My playlist consists of my album, **Charka**, which currently occupies the forefront of my musical meditations. This body of work holds a profound significance in my heart, as I am fully immersed and engaged with its essence. It is my sincere aspiration that this collection of songs serves as a source of inspiration and motivation for others, particularly for women who sing conscious music, encouraging them to embrace their dreams with unwavering integrity and self-respect.

Speaking of the Charka album... please explain the title and tell us about the photo used on the cover artwork.

My parents being of a Rastafari and Pan-African foreground gave me the nickname **Charka** meaning 'Life', which carries significance as I was born prematurely at 7 months. I call the album **Charka** as it is an expression of different stages of 'Life' as I've experienced it, for example, on the album, **Give Me Loving** speaks about love and relationship, **Ghetto Life** speaks about growing up in the ghettos of Mona Common, **Wisdom** is about my personal experience and views about the music industry. I wanted to create sounds and feelings that tell a story.



The image adorning the album cover portrays a significant moment in my personal history, capturing a poignant snapshot of my three-year-old self. Deliberately chosen, this photograph symbolises the genesis of my journey into the realm of music. It was during this tender age that my father initiated the practice of recording our voices and orchestrating collaborative renditions. It was also during this formative period that I discovered a profound sense of purpose and a profound affinity for the intricate interplay of sounds and melodies, establishing an enduring connection to the world of music.

Who was involved in the production of the album? Please introduce the different creators of the 12 tracks.

All praises to the Most High for the divine inspiration. The overall album is a **Conquering Lion Records** production but also features collaborative efforts between **Jallanzo** production (Jamaica), **Sonovic/Izreal Records** (Jamaica), **Lenky/Bulpus Production** (Jamaica) and **Cienfuego** from Italy. The album consists of four featured tracks which are a combination between myself and other artists such as **Sister Nancy** and **Sister Carol (Top Rank Queen)**, **Kelissa (Take Me Home)**, **Keida (Ganja Hustling)** and my father **Albert Malawi (Give Me Loving)**.

Both of your parents are part of the album, your father as you already mentioned on Give Me Loving, your mother on The Best. How did it feel to include them in the creation process?

I am immensely honoured to count both of my parents among those who have left an indelible mark on the album. My father's career in the music industry has been a testament to his unwavering passion and perseverance, despite enduring exploitative practices and the unjust withholding of his well-deserved royalties by unscrupulous producers. In light of his profound influence on my own artistic journey, it is my sincerest aspiration to honour him by embarking on the ambitious task of reimagining one of his remarkable compositions.

Equally deserving of recognition is my mother [**Doris Ray Ricketts**], whose incredible talents as a wordsmith and poet have shaped my attention to detail when it comes to crafting songs. Her evocative and inspiring writings have had a profound impact on my creative process. Each morning, she sends me heartfelt voice notes, showering me with blessings and affirmations that permeate my existence. It was of paramount importance for me to showcase the deep bond between myself and my family, and how that profound connection resonates through my music. The love, support, and inspiration I receive from



my parents have become a powerful catalyst for my artistic expression, infusing my songs with a genuine depth and meaning.

How did you connect with the other featured artists, Keida, Kelissa, Sister Carol & Sister Nancy? Did you create the songs together?

My father, being that he was the original selector for **Jah Love Muzik**, had a long-standing friendship with **Sister Carol** and **Sister Nancy** since their youthful days at the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Growing up, I had the privilege of witnessing their performances at dances and watching their tapes with awe. As a young girl, I had the opportunity to meet

them on a few occasions. It is through this deep connection and mutual respect that the idea of collaborating on a song together was born. Initially, I had a song that had never been released, but when I sought to bring it to light, there was a shift in the energy of one of the girls I had originally worked with. In that moment, I approached **Sister Carol** and she graciously agreed to join me on this musical endeavour. I shared with her my vision of including **Sister Nancy**, and **Sister Carol** encouraged me to approach her directly. To my delight, **Sister Nancy** also embraced the idea, and thus, a historic collaboration came to fruition.

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august
'23

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BURNING SPEAR * **MASEGO**

TARRUS RILEY * **KABAKA PYRAMID**

MARCIA GRIFFITHS * **RICHIE SPICE** * **MR. VEGAS**

JOHNNY OSBOURNE * **TANYA STEPHENS**

JESSE ROYAL * **CHI CHING CHING** * **LONE RANGER**

LINVAL THOMPSON * **MAD PROFESSOR** * **DENNIS BOVELL**

SEANI B * **KING ADDIES** * **CODE RED** * **YAKSTA** * **KING SHILOH**

MICAH SHEMAIAH * **RASI** * **YOUNG ISRAELITES** * **AND MANY MORE**



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MAIN STAGE >>> DUB FOREST >>> BOUNCE DANCEHALL >>> MOBILE SOUND SYSTEMS

**Stu
Bru**

Cristal
-ALGERIA-



payconiq
by Bancontact

OXFAM
Wereldwinkel
Geel

Coca-Cola

Geel
Ja Geel is ja Geel is ja

Kelissa is a person whom I hold in high regard, as she has consistently shown immense support for my artistic pursuits. Whether it's attending my events or collaborating on a song, her beautiful spirit has been a much-needed presence within the industry. In 2019, I conceived the idea of creating an Afro-Reggae inspired song centred around Jamaica. I approached **Kelissa** with this concept, and while she was intrigued, she suggested shifting the focus to Africa instead. I fell in love with her vision and added my verse after receiving her powerful chorus.

Keida, much like **Kelissa**, has been a pillar of support and strength for me. When I expressed my desire to collaborate with her, she readily embraced the opportunity. We met by the beach near her home, where we sat together and crafted the chorus, followed by each of us writing our individual verses. The creative synergy between us flowed effortlessly, resulting in a song that exudes

our shared energy and passion. The coming together of these remarkable artists in collaboration has been a testament to their unwavering support, and I am forever grateful for the magical moments and history we have created together.

Was it a conscious choice to only include women, apart from your father?

I made the conscious decision to collaborate with those whose music resonates deeply with my soul. It was important for me to join forces with individuals whose energy aligns harmoniously with mine, fostering a profound chemistry in our creative endeavours. This intentional approach allowed me to forge connections with like-minded artists whose music I wholeheartedly admire.

In *Freedom*, you sing that every generation has to win their own freedom again and again. Who do they have to win their freedom from?

BACO MUSIC & INDIGNATION COLLECTIVE PRESENT

PROTOJE

OCT 20 FESTIVAL NANCY JAZZ PULSATIONS..... NANCY (FR)
 OCT 21 OLYMPIA..... PARIS (FR)
 OCT 22 VOLKSHAUS..... ZÜRICH (CH)
 OCT 24 ALHAMBRA..... GENÈVE (CH)
 OCT 25 VOORUIT..... GENT (BE)
 OCT 26 PARADISO..... AMSTERDAM (NL)
 NOV 02 EVENSTAR FESTIVAL... MOUILLERON-LE-CAPTIF (FR)

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JOHNNY OSBOURNE
 « RIGHT RIGHT TIME »



TWAN TEE
 « INNERGY »



VANZO
 « VANZO »



**GROUNDATION MEETS
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From the oppressors, who else could they win their freedom from? The specific oppressors can vary depending on the context and the historical circumstances faced by each generation. Oppressors can take many forms, including oppressive institutions, social structures, ideologies, or even individuals who perpetuate inequality and restrict the rights and liberties of others. They can be political, economic, or cultural forces that seek to maintain control and exert power over others.

Elaborating on the answer, the oppressors may include authoritarian governments, oppressive regimes, dictators, oppressive social norms and traditions, systemic racism, sexism, religious intolerance, economic inequality, and other forms of discrimination and injustice. Each generation must confront and challenge these oppressive forces, seeking to dismantle them and create a more equitable and just society.

It is important to recognise that the struggle for freedom and liberation is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. As societal structures evolve and new forms of oppression emerge, each generation must continue the fight for freedom, ensuring that the hard-won rights and liberties are preserved and expanded upon. By recognising and challenging the oppressors of their time, each generation can contribute to the collective journey toward freedom and social justice.

What is the “spiritual war” you talk about in *Sound The Trumpet*?

It is an ongoing individual struggle, a perpetual clash between the forces of malevolence and obscurity, relentlessly vying for supremacy over the realms of enlightenment, positivity and virtue, ultimately aiming to assert dominion over humanity as a whole. As a sentient being, you exist as a spiritual entity within a physical vessel. The notion of a spiritual war alludes to a profound conflict

Caribbean Airlines
SUN. JULY 16
FAMILY FUNDAY
 COMMUNITY FEST
 CATHERINE HALL STADIUM

Caribbean Airlines
MON. JULY 17
STREET DANCE
 OLD HOSPITAL PARK

Caribbean Airlines
TUE. JULY 18
ALL WHITE
 PIER ONE

FESTIVAL NIGHT 2
JULY 22
 MINISTER MARION HALL
 KING JAMMY'S TRIBUTE
 (ADMIRAL BAILEY
 LT. STITCHIE • PINCHERS
 BUNNY GENERAL
 AZA LINEAGE
 CHAKA DEVIUS
 CHUCK TURNER
 LEROY GIBBONS)
 MORGAN HERITAGE
 KABAKA PYRAMID
 ROMAIN VIRGO
 FREDDIE MCGREGOR
 CHINO MCGREGOR
 STEPHEN 'DI GENIUS'
 TANYA STEPHENS
 RICHIE SPICE • D'YANI
 BONAFIED BAND
 JO ARCHER
 JAHRICAN
 MACKEEHAN



Caribbean Airlines

JULY
16-22
 MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA



REGGAE
Sumfest

DOWN SOUND ENTERTAINMENT



FESTIVAL NIGHT 1
JULY 21

TOMMY LEE
 VALIANT • MASICKA
 CHRONIX LAW • GYPTIAN
 JAH VINCI • 450
MIGHTY CROWN
 BAYKA • STALK ASHLEY
 JAHVILLANI • ROZE DON
 VANESSA BLING
 TOPMAN DONZLIFE
 SHANE O • PABLO YG
 90'S BOOM BOX
 (HARRY TODDLER
 GENERAL B • JIGSY KING
 BOOM DANDIMITE
 MEGA BANTON
 SILVER CAT • TONY CURTIS
 NITTY KUTCHIE)
 MOYANN • DILLGIN
 DAVIANAH • RION VENICCI
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 WINNER??

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 HARBOUR CITY

GLOBAL SOUND CLASH
THU. JULY 20
 PIER ONE CARPARK



between the opposing forces of good and evil, operating at a metaphysical and ethereal level. While chemical warfare employs chemical substances as weapons and biological warfare employs germs and biological agents, such as bacteria and viruses, as tools of destruction, spiritual warfare takes on a more symbolic nature. In this battle, you engage in combat against negative thoughts and emotions, as they pose a formidable threat to your soul. Succumbing to this battle would render you a host for the harmful elements of malevolence, perpetuating their destructive influence.

Is *Ghetto Life* an autobiographical song? In Jamaica, what could the government do to improve the life in the ghetto you sing about?

The song *Ghetto Life* draws inspiration from my personal experiences and observations, capturing the realities of life in marginalised communities. While it may contain autobiographical elements, it also reflects the

broader struggles faced by many individuals living in the ghetto.

In Jamaica, the government has a crucial role to play in improving the lives of those in impoverished communities, especially the ones by which are referred to as Garrisons which are strongholds for these political parties. They rely on the votes of these communities to maintain their power, and this includes bribery, corruption and other political tactics to achieve their success. I am a creative, I don't have all the answer to solve world affairs, yet I can speak to what I have experienced and give my opinion. I think better economic opportunities would help, like investment in job training programmes and small business support, as most people in the ghetto don't have access to proper education, so more education and skills development is needed, perhaps have some sort of vocational training options to empower residents with the skills needed for employment.

BLAIZ FAYAH

On Tour

28/05/23 ROTTERDAM (NL) | BORGEE MEETS PARBO PARTY
02/06/23 SAINT PIERRE (RUN) | SAKIFO MUSIC FESTIVAL
09/06/23 NYON (CH) | CARIBANA FESTIVAL
17/06/23 HANNOVER (DE) | PAPI CHULO OUTDOOR
30/06/23 KÖLN (DE) | SUMMERJAM
09/07/23 SAINT-NOLFF (56) | LA FÊTE DU BRUIT
15/07/23 LA HAYE (NL) | PAL MUNDO

17/07/23 DOUR (BE) | DOUR FESTIVAL
21/07/23 SELESTAT (67) | SUMMER VIBRATION
05/08/23 VERTHEUIL (33) | SUN SKA FESTIVAL
06/08/23 ANGLEFORT (01) | NOMADE REGGAE FESTIVAL
11/08/23 SAINT PÈRE MARC EN POULET (35) | NO LOGO BZH
12/08/23 FRAISANS (39) | NO LOGO
27/08/23 MARSEILLE (13) | DELTA FESTIVAL



FEAT BUSY SIGNAL,
JAHAYNAI, NESLY



NEW ALBUM
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PRODUCTION

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X-RAY
PRODUCTION

CREEPY
MUSIC



One of my personal favourites, *Top Rank Queens*, comes on that sweet 80s / 90s Dancehall vibe. Is there a chance for an early-Dancehall revival in Jamaica? Do people still listen these kinds of tunes?

Glad you fulljoy it. Respect. Growing up in the sound system culture, with my father as a selector, I witnessed first-hand the passion and dedication to discovering exceptional tunes. It is disheartening to see how mainstream radio has played a role in shaping people's perceptions, often neglecting certain genres and declaring them as dead, simply because they refuse to play them.

The reality is that artists and enthusiasts are still creating and preserving these genres in their authentic form, and it is a great disservice to them as they have fought to preserve these genres. To label this phenomenon as a "*revival*" would undermine the ongoing efforts of these artists who have fought tirelessly to preserve and evolve these genres. They are not resurfacing from a dormant state; they have been alive and evolving all along. People indeed listen to and appreciate the authenticity and cultural significance of these genres, embracing the timeless beauty they offer.



So, in response to your question, a resounding yes, people continue to connect with and enjoy the music that holds true to the heritage and essence of genres like Ska, Mento, Reggae, and others. Their influence and significance persist, perpetuated by the unwavering dedication of musicians and the genuine appreciation of their listeners.

Strickly Roots creates an almost nostalgic picture of Roots Rock Reggae events. At least over here in Europe, those musical celebrations have become rare, as most Reggae events have turned Afrobeats. How is it in Jamaica? Do you think that the current popularity of Afrobeats might endanger Roots Reggae in that it absorbs the next generation of listeners?

In recent years, Afrobeats has gained popularity worldwide. This rise in popularity has led to a noticeable presence of Afrobeats in various music scenes and events, including those traditionally associated with Reggae. However, we have to recognise that music is

dynamic and constantly evolving. Different genres rise and fall in popularity over time, influenced by money, changing trends, cultural exchanges, and the preferences of the younger generation of listeners. This does not necessarily mean that one genre will entirely overshadow or endanger another. Roots Reggae holds a unique place in Jamaican culture and the global music scene, with its powerful messages of social consciousness, spirituality, and cultural identity that are relevant to this day. Its timeless appeal and significance have allowed it to transcend generations and continue to resonate with people around the world. The Roots Reggae movement has a dedicated fan base that cherishes its authenticity and actively seeks out opportunities to engage with and celebrate the genre.

While Afrobeats may attract a significant portion of the younger audience, it is important to note that there are still listeners who appreciate and gravitate towards roots Reggae for its distinct sound and profound messages. The coexistence of different genres within the music landscape allows for diversity and offers listeners a range of choices and experiences.

Rather than seeing Afrobeats as a threat to Roots Reggae, it can be viewed as a testament to the ever-expanding musical influences and global connections within the industry. Roots Reggae will continue to thrive. The ability of Reggae to connect with listeners on a deeper level, both musically and philosophically, ensures its enduring presence and relevance. Its rather interesting too, in Africa, Reggae music has significant impact, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Reggae festivals and concerts draw large crowds, showcasing local and international Reggae artists.

“Wisdom is better than silver and gold”, you sing in *Wisdom*. For you, what is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

Knowledge is the gathering of information and understanding, Wisdom encompasses a deeper level of insight. Wisdom involves the



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- 15.07 | Wassertrüdingen (DE) | **Afrika-Karibik Fest.**
- 22.07 | Sélestat (FR) | **Summer Vibration**
- 28.07 | Lanuza (SP) | **Pirineos Sur**
- 29.07 | Uppsala (SE) | **Uppsala Reggae Fest.**
- 04.08 | Wiesen (AT) | **One Love Reggae Festival**
- 05.08 | Angletfort (FR) | **Nomade Reggae Festival**
- 06.08 | Milton Keynes (UK) | **Reggae Land**
- 11.08 | Sao Vicente (CV) | **Baia Das Gatas & more...**

BLAIZ FAYAH



- 30.06 | Köln (DE) | **Summerjam**
- 09.07 | Saint-Noff (FR) | **La fête du bruit**
- 15.07 | La Haye (NL) | **Pal Mundo**
- 16.07 | Dour (BE) | **Dour Festival**
- 21.07 | Sélestat (FR) | **Summer Vibration**
- 05.08 | Vertheuil (FR) | **Sun Ska Festival**
- 06.08 | Angletfort (FR) | **Nomade Reggae Festival**
- 11.08 | Fort de St-Père (FR) | **No Logo BZH**
- 12.08 | Fraisans (FR) | **No Logo & more...**

HORACE ANDY

& *Dub Asante ft. Matic Horns*



- 25.06 | Berkshire (UK) | **On The Mount at Wasing**
- 29.06 | Loulé (PT) | **Festival MED**
- 30.06 | Belfort (FR) | **Les Eurockéennes**
- 01.07 | Beuningen (NL) | **Down The Rabbit Hole**
- 08.07 | Varel (DE) | **Gracy's Bash**
- 14.07 | Montmartin s/ Mer (FR) | **Chauffer dans la Noirceur**
- 29.07 | Rotterdam (NL) | **Reggae Rotterdam Festival**
- 05.08 | Wiesen (AT) | **One Love Festival**
- 11.08 | Fraisans (FR) | **No Logo & more...**

KY-MANI MARLEY



- 24.06 | Essaouira (MA) | **Festival Gnaoua**
- 01.07 | Köln (DE) | **Summerjam**
- 02.07 | Amsterdam (NL) | **Sun Splash Reggae**
- 08.07 | Burtenbach (DE) | **Sunrise Festival**
- 14.07 | Sandbergen (SE) | **Öland Roots**
- 21.07 | Sélestat (67) | **Summer Vibration**
- 22.07 | Pfaffikon (CH) | **Reeds Open Air Festival & more...**

QUEEN OMEGA

& *The Royal Souls*



- 23.06 | Bologna (IT) | **Refugees Day**
- 30.06 | Hensie Plage (BE) | **Roots Reggae Festival**
- 01.07 | Dunkerque (FR) | **Jamaican Dock Days**
- 07.07 | Twann (CH) | **Lakesplash Festival**
- 08.07 | Anneyron (FR) | **ERVA Festival**
- 22.07 | Plouhinec (FR) | **Le Chant de l'Eucalyptus**
- 28.07 | Malmesbury (UK) | **Womad**
- 04.08 | Angletfort (FR) | **Nomade Reggae Festival & more...**

SOOM T

& *The Stone Monks*



- 21.06 | Aix en Provence (FR) | **Fête de la musique**
- 23.06 | Levron (CH) | **Saint-Jean Rock**
- 29.06 | La Teste-de-Buch (FR) | **Fêtes d'été**
- 30.06 | Marmande (FR) | **Garorock***
- 21.07 | Chézery-Forens (FR) | **Cri de la Goutte**
- 22.07 | Plouhinec (FR) | **Chant de l'Eucalyptus**
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- 07/07/23 SAINT-MALÔ-DU-BOIS (FR) | **FESTIVAL DE POUPEL**
- 08/07/23 SAINT-COLOMBAN (FR) | **FESTIVAL MEGASCÈNE**
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- 22/07/23 SÉLESTAT (FR) | **SUMMER VIBRATION**
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- 04/08/23 VERTHEUIL (FR) | **SUN SKA FESTIVAL**
- 06/08/23 TRELINS (FR) | **FOREZTIVAL**
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- 19/08/23 BENICASSIM (ES) | **ROTOTOM SUNSPASH** 🇪🇸
- 25/08/23 BRATISLAVA (SK) | **UPRISING REGGAE FESTIVAL** 🇸🇰
- 26/08/23 KELMARSH (UK) | **SHAMBALA FESTIVAL** 🇬🇧
- 08/09/23 LA PALMYRE (FR) | **PALM'FEST**

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use of knowledge, experience, and judgment to make sound decisions. It is to apply knowledge in a meaningful and beneficial way. Wisdom guides our actions and choices.

Does the number of songs on the album bear a special meaning?

In numerology, 12 is considered a powerful number associated with abundance, spiritual growth, and manifestation. However, there isn't a real significance for the number of songs that was selected.

What do you look forward to most this summer?

I look forward to life continued, I look forward to touring the US this summer. I have East Coast shows beginning June 21st in New York, then off to Ardmore which is close to Philadelphia, we'll be in Maine, Vermont and then forward to Los Angeles.

What does Hempress Sativa enjoy doing apart from music?

I find joy in the simple pleasures of life. Reading and painting bring me great satisfaction allowing me to express my creativity and explore new worlds. The roles of being a mother and a wife bring me profound joy and purpose, nurturing a loving family and fostering meaningful connections is truly fulfilling. Spending quality time with my family and close friends, creating cherished memories together, is pure happiness for me. As someone who appreciates the comfort of home, I find solace in the gentle warmth of the sun, embracing moments of relaxation and allowing my creative spirit to flow through activities like writing. In essence, I find delightment in embracing the beauty of simplicity and nurturing my creative soul.

What else would you like to let your fans know?

I want to express my appreciation to my supporters for their unwavering strength and continued presence in my journey. Whether it's their support at shows, their purchases of merchandise, or simply their kind words of well-wishing, I am truly grateful for their unwavering dedication.

As I eagerly await the release of my album, I am filled with anticipation for the response it will receive. I invested a great deal of love and thought into its creation, and I hope it resonates with listeners. The upcoming album launch party on June 16th presents a thrilling opportunity for me to showcase my work, perform the songs, and connect with the audience. I am filled with excitement for this special occasion and look forward to the overall success of the album, to meeting and greetings supporters and well-wishers on the road, so many have become extended family and I am just in awe that I get to have these beautiful experiences with others.

Once again, gratitude to my supporters for their continuous belief in my artistry. It is their presence and support that fuel my creative journey and inspire me to keep pushing forward.



HEMPRESS SATIVA - CHARKA

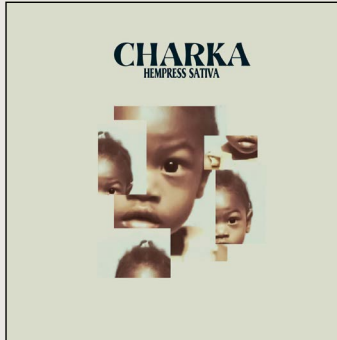
Conquering Lion Records - June 16, 2023

With her debut album **Unconquerebel**, she has made a bold statement: **Hempress Sativa** is an artist that stands up for herself, for her African heritage, for the feminine gender - and for reggae music! Six years later, her sophomore album **Char-ka** is released on an equally fierce note, combining excellent musical creations by executive producer **Chris Lion**

(**Conquering Lion Records**) and **Jallanzo** with fiery lyrics. Those are not easy to digest, as she often addresses circumstances or practices that we resign ourselves to, questioning the status quo we have come to accept.

The opening track, **Freedom**, is a prime example of this militancy, confronting us with her own vision of what the track's title means to her. „*Freedom will never come light... every generation has to win their own freedom, again and again!*“ Despite (or in addition to) these challenging words, it is a joy listening to her songs, as every single one of them is such a masterpiece of sonic art. Already the first is a powerful, decelerated instrumental that will grab your attention from start to finish, and the subsequent **Sound The Trumpet** continues this vibe. Mighty bass, steady drums, sparse guitar as well as melodica and synthy highlights lay the foundation here, and when the dub parts take over in the second half, it's pure meditation. The experience is made complete by **Hempress'** richly modulated voice, telling us to get ready for the spiritual war we're in.

Ghetto Life, in part autobiographic, is licated to all ghetto youths. It comes on a very different instrumental, as does the subsequent **The Best** - more modern, but somewhat less impressive music-wise than the preceding tracks. Worth mentioning is the voice of **Sativa's** mother that we hear on the latter, a fact mirrored by the inclusion



of her father **Albert „Ilawi“ Malawi** as guest vocalist on **Give Me Loving**.

On an Afro-Pop-infused beat, **Take Me Home** expresses the old yearning of displaced people for their place of origin, of leaving Babylon in search of a better future, and both the singer and featured artist **Kelissa** mention several places that are definitely

worth a visit in the Motherland. Reflecting on the wrongdoings of greedy world leaders, the Babylon theme is again elaborated upon in **Time Has Come**, set on a pacy steppas riddim.

True to her name, there is a herb anthem as well, a relaxed guitar, bass & drum conversation called **Ganja Hustling** on which compatriot **Keida** picks up the mic, too. More female power comes in on **Top Ranking Queens**, an instant favourite. Featuring **Sister Nancy** and **Sister Carol**, the riddim floods us with sweet nostalgia as it comes on a groovy 90s Dancehall vibe. Together, the three queens just take the tune to another level. „*See what I mean?*“

Original same way, **Strickly Roots** brings „reggae in a rub-a-dub style“, conjuring images of joyful outdoor sessions with a big soundsystem set up and people skanking in unison. Good thing summer is here and this vision becomes a reality very soon!

With spiritual teachings, **Wisdom** and **None But Jah** round off the album, the latter shining in the glory of a splendid riddim produced by **Marco Aiello**. Delivered with a cover image of her three-year-old self, **Charka** represents in a nutshell what **Hempress Sativa** is about - firm convictions, Rastafarian faith and undeniable talent!

by Gardy Stein

INTERVIEW

TYDAL KAMAU

NO BAD VIBES

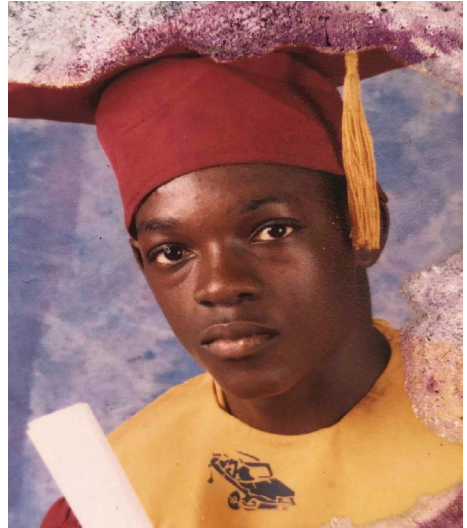
I BECOME A MAN

BY SHRIK KOTECHA

PHOTOS BY BENJAMIN ZECHER

Navardo Graham is artistically known as **Tydal Kamau**. A St Mary born native; he took the journey from the north coast of Jamaica into the bustling streets of Reggae music's capital city **Kingston** two decades ago. Even though his previous musical projects were released almost ten years ago - the EP **Journey Of A Young Warrior** and album **Mission Incomplete**. Musically, he has been far from quiet - unlike the name of the Kenyan Warrior **Kamau (Quiet Warrior)** which he has adopted. Previously, he has released singles with the likes of **Ghetto Youths International**, Grammy-winning producer **Frankie Music** and Austria's **House of Riddim**.

During this time, he started collaborating with Munich-based **Oeness Records** on riddim projects including **Nice & Easy** and **Bambu**. The musical relationship expanded into the creation of the ten-track album



I Become A Man. As the title track suggests, **Tydal Kamau** expresses growth and maturity in this latest release both as a person and in a musical sense.

Shrik Kotecha spoke to **Tydal Kamau** about the new album scheduled for release in September.

How did the musical journey evolve in recording this new album? Why did you choose to work with Oeness Records?

Well, I've always been in contact with them and working with **Oeness** throughout the years. The first song we did was **My Paradise**, a couple of years ago. We keep that link going, and we been back and forth with beats. They're always sending beats. I actually brought the idea to them to say yes, we could do some works, and **Moritz** agreed on it and we started working. The ideal thing would have been to be in a studio with them. But being so far away, they send me some beats and I chose, and I did what I did. It turned out to be something nice. There's a lot

of people involved, different artists featured on it, and I'm very grateful for the outcome of it. It's been a while coming though.

At the same time what I hear is consistency and quality throughout the album. You mentioned the song *My Paradise*, that was on a riddim juggling that Oeness put out in 2018 called *Nice and Easy* - some of the other artists on that juggling included Luciano, Iba Mahr, Sara Lugo & Randy Valentine, Macka B, and more, it was a heavyweight production. I kind of see where you have evolved because then there was another single with Oeness called *Don* on the *Bambu* riddim too.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, and we did a video for it. It did well and people are still respecting it everywhere I go and perform that song. People were actually giving me a good vibe to that song.

So, really your collab with Oneness started out working on some of their riddim juggling projects and then that progressed into a full-length project?

Yes, me and **Moritz** have always been talking back and forth, I don't quite remember if I was the one who suggested it or he suggested it but somewhere along the lines, we started working - there is a chemistry. We had so much songs, it's good to have a body of works that represents. I think they see value in my work, and I see value in their works, so its mutual respect on that ground and we think that it would be good.



Let's explore the new album in more detail, I was struck by the opening song *One World* and the relevancy in the message of the song, "I and I just think there's too much things in this world really separate us, created by a system, you know sometimes I pray and I just don't do the normal prayer that people pray every day, no, maybe I just see things are different"- that's such a powerful opening.

Yep, and it's natural for me because that's who I am and that's how I think. I'm always thinking out of the box. I see things from a perspective of realness. It doesn't matter who's doing it, it could be my brother, it could be a close friend, I'm going to try to be as real as possible. There's a lot of things happening in the world, and it's not being highlighted, or people are scared to talk about it. I'm not one of those persons who are scared to go into that topic and talk about things that are happening. I guess that's why that song came out because there's a lot of things on your mind when you see things happen when you have been travelling all over the world to different places. I've seen countries faced with different issues, there are so much things that are created by a system that I would love to just... erase and free up our people.

True, true. One thing that I really love about that song is the contrast of the serious topic you sing passionately about and the soothing melody of the kids choir throughout the song.

Yeah, they are quite effective and it's a great idea put together by **Moritz** again and his **Oeness** team. I really love it.

It works really well. Last year we had over 30 million refugees around the world. That's probably an escalation of what was already the highest number of refugees on record. Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine come to the forefront of my mind. What do you see as the first steps in finding a solution?

What's the solution for me...? The first step is giving the people what they deserve. There's so much things taken from the people and if you take what the people own, they will come back to you for it. Because they don't have.

It's natural. Like if you should take something from me and I don't have it anymore and I need it, then I will come back to you for it. So, over the years things have been taken, especially from Africa, the resources there and brought to these first world countries and they have been taken away in some other way by a trick, by people selling out. But I just think that a lot of it has been taken away unfairly and the people need something to hold on to. They have to find it and it's natural they will come back to you for it. So, I think that they should give back to the people some of what they deserve and help them along the way and let this world be a more level playing field. Because it's not level, it's a system that said that if you have a piece of paper that has some numbers on it you are rich, and if I don't have it, I am poor. It's a system created by mankind. If it's just money to free up this world, then a piece of paper is just easy to make. Give them. Have a level playing field, have one currency, why not? Do you get me? So, there's a lot of things that can happen. As I said, give people back their resources and help them along the way.

I hear you. Now, the title track *I Become A Man* is delivered over a solid drum and bass riddim section and is the first of three collabs on the album, Randy Valentine absolutely smashes his verse while you ask for acceptance.

(laughs) Yeah, it's a song that I deeply meditate because over the years there's a lot of changes, especially my growth in everything and people would say, you have changed. You have become like a Rastafarian, and you have been doing things different. Your family may look at you different and people won't accept you because of who you are or how you look and stuff like that. By the way, when I heard the riddim, I just started singing and it was a complete song, but I had in mind to have a nice feature - having somebody who's down to earth and grounded. I link up with **Randy Valentine** and he say yeah, send it forward, and I sent it to him and as quick as possible he recorded a solid verse. I'm saying that's it and **Oeness** loved it!

That song *I Become A Man* gives us the title for the album, what is the thought process around that?

I just think it's growth and making people understand that I've grown. I represent consciousness, me, my family, it's a growth process and I've grown. You know, that's how I see it. People should look at me as a human being and not as a person who has changed. I won't change to please anyone. Accept me for who I am. That's just the thought process in the whole song creation and I want this to stand out as well as the album. We had different songs that could have been a title like, *One World* is a strong song and I had *Modern Generation*.

...That's the one I was thinking of.

Modern Generation was always a name that I want to put on a project. So, we had to choose and between me and **Oneness** we think the strongest one was **I Become A Man**. It represent a whole lot, it represents me, my growth.

Let's talk a little bit about songwriting, I know that you have worked with some real heavy-weights like the Marley family previously on songs such as *Carry On* and *Babylon Can't Get Away*. Did you write all the songs yourself on *I've Become A Man*?

I wrote all the songs and I tried to do my best. I don't just sit and write; I mostly just have





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a good measure and concept of what I want to say, and I just start sing. I try to construct it in a way that is presentable. I always hope my songs are always going to turn out to be something that represents me, something uplifting, something conscious, something that's going to be like healing to other people. I'm always happy to present things like this to the people. I'm never one to follow others writing. I like my style and I write about different things. I have a variety of things; I don't just do one topic. I'm not like a one-track artist like who just sing about one concept. I sing about different stuff that people want to hear.

It's interesting that you say that because I think that one of the things that works so well on the album is the range of themes that you cover. Social commentary, songs of upliftment, relationships and of course the patriotism that you express for Jamaica in the single *My Paradise*.

Yeah, and even about the music and we touch on the youths too. It's a variety and I think it's a good feel to be able to absorb that kind of vibration, to not sit and listen to one song, one concept, you know it's a good feeling. I can't wait for people to give me their feedback on it.

The song *My Paradise* was the first project that you worked on with Oneness Records. I know it was a few years ago, but thinking back, was there a particular event or something that happened in Jamaica or in the press that made you write that song?

Like everywhere I go, if I ever travel overseas people will say Jamaica is bad. Sometimes it hurts because I'm from St. Mary, close by to Portland and there are places in Jamaica that are very peaceful, where you could leave your door open. It's kind of an unfair statement to class the whole of Jamaica as bad and like there is no future. So, I was thinking that I need to



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do something, and when I heard that rhythm, I thought that was the perfect moment for expression.

Growing up, home was St. Mary in Jamaica. Is there a childhood memory of a spot in St. Mary's that you will always cherish?

My birthplace! I was born in a one-room, like a ten-by-ten room. I wasn't born in a hospital. I think that's the spot in a community called Forty One and that's where I'm from. It's around Enfield, St. Mary but there's a district called Forty One and it's very peaceful, very loving people, very vibrant. Everyone is just loving, everybody would say hi to you, so that's the place.

And growing up, who within your family was the source for your musical inspiration? To me it seems like music runs through your DNA.

My inspiration? My father firstly. He played bass in the church. He had a guitar and he played vinyl every Sunday on a little turntab-

le. We used to put his speakers out and play a lot of **Bob Marley, Buju Banton, Mega Banton, Leroy Smart** and a lot of **Dennis Brown** in those times. And then my uncle was an artist called **Dennis Lovelock** from back then. He was getting some attention and then he went behind bars for some time. So, if you search on YouTube, you could find some nice songs from **Dennis Lovelock**. Also, I don't know if you know **Navino**, he's my cousin, my big bro. He was the one doing music before me and then I joined him. That would be basically it as a family and close people around me. But other than that, it's just that I was drawn to music by listening and connecting to **Bob Marley** songs and when I was going to school, there was **Sizzla Kalonji** that break out. And then there was **Buju Banton** and there was a **Beenie/Bounty** war, so we used to clash back in school with their songs. But the songs that really get me going and getting me really focused on a conscious level was music from **Sizzla Kalonji** and people like **Capleton** and those people.



...The 1990's?

Yeah, and **Spragga Benz**, I really love the way his songs are constructed and people like **Louie Culture**. That really got me going after doing those clash songs in school, I started to pen my own songs and I said yeah I could do this. So, when I started penning my own songs, people like my friends were saying to me that's not your song, I've heard that song before. I was thinking then, I'm on a good level if people are saying they are hearing those songs on the radio because I know it's my song. I just continued doing my thing and here I am.

The musicians throughout the project have really delivered solid productions, one that I particularly love is the simplicity of the riddim behind *Modern Generation*, and I love the melodica in the opening bars as well. What do you see as the future of this modern generation that you sing about?

They have so much to fight for. It's going to be rough on their side, but it needs people like us trying to kind of bridge that gap, like my generation, to help them along the way and keep them grounded. The future is bright

for them technology-wise. We didn't have certain things back then like in schools, we didn't have access to information that easy as them and even music now. People can just record from their home, and they don't even have to go to the studio. I mean it may work for them, it may not work, but there's a lot of possibilities and that has been created by technology. Some of it, I don't know what to say, it's kind of hard to think about what's going to happen. But I know that things can happen if we help them along the way and good things can happen if we guide them. As I said in the song, most youths are like overgrown. So, it's like a 12-year-old will be acting like a 20-year-old right now. Back then, we couldn't say certain things we couldn't do certain things in front of the elders. And so, it's a different world. Youths are being coached by social media; they've been governed by social media.

It's a different world but there is endless possibilities for them. But sometimes it's scary when I think about it because every single day, we're seeing more chemicals that are hurtful and we are seeing more weapons. It's scary, but I know they will find a way.

Let's talk about some more of the tracks on the album. *No Bad Vibes*, features **Anthony B and has a really traditional Reggae feel to it. How did **Anthony B** become involved in this project?**

It's been coming for a while, me and **Anthony B** are good. I have so much respect for **Anthony B** from the get-go. If we are on a show, I will show him great respect and he show me great respect. So, he was one of them I was thinking about having a collab with. And the perfect the moment presented itself when I got that beat and I sang on it. I was thinking this is **Anthony B** and when I sent it to him, he was like I'm ready and he recorded it. He sent the file back to me and I'm saying to him this is wicked, everyone loved it. I think after Covid struck back then, you kind of want to give the people a little vibe to free up and get back to music. Music really freed me up

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Horace Andy Yaksta **Naâman**

with Dub Asante Band
feat Matic Horns

Nattali Rize **Sean Paul** Jaz Elise

Maracujah **Barrington Levy**

The Congos **Etana Vanupié**

Blaiz Fayah HK-Danser encore

Marcia Griffiths Blacko

with Akabu Queens

Hollie Cook **Queen Omega**

Lila Iké Fab I&I **Capleton**

Sara Lugo **Tiken Jah Fakoly**

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carte blanche **Irie Ites : Chezidek** **Stinging Ray**

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and do everything for me, so I kind of want to give the people something to free up their mind and get moving and forget about a lot of the things going on with Covid all over the world. So that was the song for me to free up the minds of the people. Reggae music you know (laughs), from I hear the beat that song just came to mind. *No Bad Vibe*, we just got to do it.

And I think Anthony B was the perfect choice.

He killed it. Yeah man, (sings) *"long time wi nuh bun dung the place"* it's a nice vibe, it's powerful. **Anthony B** is powerful. We have to salute people like that, I give thanks to people like him, always encouraging me. It's not every elder artist that would be real with you and down to earth and say certain things and give you your props, do you know what I mean? It's very few. A lot of people have so much ego that they're so into themselves that they can't find time to acknowledge another person's work. And **Anthony B** is not one

of them, he's very straightforward and very encouraging to many young talents. I've seen it. I've seen him have other persons under his wing and I'm very happy that a person like that could give me the strength every time we link, he always will.

One of the other collabs you have is *Rich Problem* featuring Turbulence. That's probably the only song that's strays away from the traditional Reggae riddims found on the album.

When I think about that song, nobody wants to be poor and when they talk about real riches, it's not just about money. My riches is not necessarily just about money. In this world, they've made it so that you want to accumulate as much of that paper to feel comfortable, to be able to pay your bills and feel like you live a good life. People probably may think that hearing a song like that, especially from two Rastafarians like, people would think it's a money thing now. No, it's

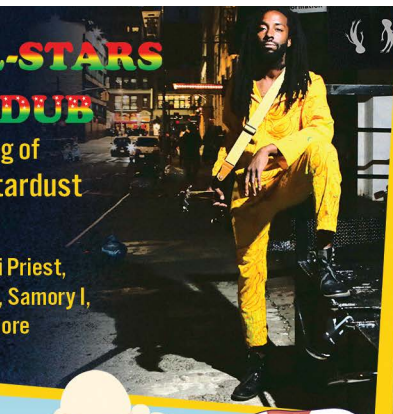
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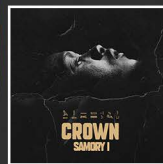
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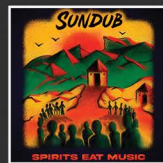
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not a money thing now. It's about survival also, and I could feel his energy because he has been through a lot too and I'm fed up of the poor life and I could hear. So, when I heard the track, I'm saying, "*Yo Turbulence you have to find something for this*" and everything just flowed and it was a good vibe.

I think one of the other things I really love about the album and credit to Oneness here is that all of the riddims are originals. There's no do-over riddims.

Yeah, all of them are original. That's what I like about them. They have a variety of sounds which I really like. If you are really creative, you could get some good recordings, some good projects from their works. Give thanks to people like **Oneness** and a couple more people who are doing real live original Reggae music and all in the banner of Reggae music and not straying from the live sounds. I love live music. I really love live music, so they have a sound that I love and it's authentic, its real and I give thanks.

I feel that you've hit the nail on the head there, as the live instrumentation is something that has come back again in the last ten or so years and I feel that's what makes the album, and the productions stand out.

And I think the more we do it as artists and producers, more people are going to accept it again and push it again. We need to do a lot more of it. A lot more live Reggae albums so that people can get back that live feel. We had a lot more live shows, especially in Jamaica. There were a lot of live shows that have gone, we just lost them. I don't know why. The music has changed a lot, the vibe has changed a lot, so we need to get back that.

In terms of recording your vocals did you use any particular studios in Jamaica?

I recorded at a variety of studios, like at a friend's studios and I think I did a couple songs at **Big Yard** and some at my home studio, I have a nice setup, like a mini studio and it takes vocals well.

And I'm pretty sure that I recognise Sherieta Lewis doing some of the backing vocals?

Yeah. Sherieta and there is also NVT3L on *Modern Generation* and the kids choir on *One World*. I have to give thanks to everyone who take part in this project. Big respect to everybody and I'm loving the effort from everyone and appreciating everyone.

To close, when I reflect back on your previous EP *Journey Of A Young Warrior* and the album *Mission Incomplete*, I really see that you've matured. I guess that you'd expect that, as both of these projects were nearly ten years ago and it's a natural progression, but from your perspective, how do you feel about the new album itself?

I'm kind of waiting and anticipating the feedback from the people and leaving it up to the people. But I feel confident that it's a strong project that will touch a whole lot of people in different ways. It's a vibration of many different concepts, topics, different feel and so I feel good about this project. Give thanks to **Reggaeville**, the whole **Oneness** team. We've been doing some work on the road, like on this side and in Africa and making people aware of who I am and my musical journey. Sharing my space with them so give thanks to everyone who is a part of my journey.



TYDAL KAMAU - I BECOME A MAN

Oneness Records - September 2023

Almost a decade after his debut album, **Tydal Kamau** teams up with Munich-based **Oneness Records** to deliver his second album **I Become A Man**. It's a ten-track album which explores the depth of his creative abilities as a songwriter, which are perpetually evident throughout all of the tracks, tackling a breadth of topics ranging from the worldwide refugee crisis to tales of relationship woes.



Over the years, **Oneness Records** have built a reputation for world-class productions focussing predominantly on reggae as opposed to dancehall. This new album keeps with that tradition to deliver a tight set of authentic one drop and reggae rhythms with a little experimentation into dancehall as well. As a genre, with an increase in the use of 'beat makers', many people within the music industry have commented on the somewhat lacklustre productions in recent times. Rest assured; the musicians involved in this project have excelled to deliver a first-rate project.

Tydal Kamau has previously contributed to **Oneness Records** projects including the rhythm projects *Nice & Easy (Paradise Lost)* and *Bambu (Don)*. Both songs feature on the new album with *Paradise Lost* demonstrating the strength of **Tydal's** patriotism to the land of his birth - Jamaica. Incidentally, Indonesian Reggae Ambassador, **Ras Muhamad** co-produced the instrumental of the **Bambu Riddim**.

The album instantly captures the listener with the snare drum featuring in the intro to *One World*, accompanied by a heartfelt plea from **Tydal Kamau** singing about the refugee crisis. This is all beautifully backed by the **Cantabile Children's Choir** who capture the innocence of the crisis.

"I and I just think there's too much things in this world really separate us, created by a system, you know sometimes I pray and I just don't do the normal prayer that people pray every day, no, maybe I just see things are different"

The title track **I Become A Man** explores the growth and maturity both from a personal and artistic perspective. It's the first of three

heavyweight collabs on the album with **Tydal Kamau** joined by the UK's **Randy Valentine** over a militant drum and bass rhythm.

Affairs of the heart are in abundance on *Si Mi* and the heart-warming *A Love Like This*, complete with a rhythm that's ripe for a juggling project! Tales of living in a 21st century society filled with gadgets, virtual clouds and social media are plentiful on *Modern Generation*. I absolutely love **Mathieu Bost** on saxophone for the rebellious *Trouble*.

Bobo Ashanti sing-jays **Turbulence** and **Anthony B** are featured respectively on *Rich Problems* and *No Bad Vibes*. The song *Rich Problems* is the only song on the album that departs from the more traditional reggae beats we have been accustomed to from **Oneness Records** as **Turbulence** and **Tydal Kamau** exchanges verses with ease over this dancehall beat. *No Bad Vibes* is a high energy combination featuring **Anthony B** and a sure-fire hit guaranteed to be played in dances for years to come!

With this release, **Tydal Kamau** cements his reputation as an accomplished singer and songwriter. In a time where we continue to observe a generational shift in music and the fusion and creation of new musical genres, **I Become A Man** is firmly rooted in the sounds of real authentic reggae.

by **Shrik Kotecha**

INTERVIEW

**ROOTZ
RADICALS**

TOGETHER AS ONE



POSITIVE ROUGHNESS

BY GARDY STEIN

PHOTOS BY JANA ZELLMER & MARCO SEITZ

Eight years ago, a posse of youngsters, connected through friendship and music, decided to form a band project called **Rootz Radicals**. After a first EP in 2015, followed by diverse singles and a riddim compilation, they have now matured into a group that not only found its own sound and rocks stages across Europe, but is also very successful in establishing links to well-known fellow artists for their musical output. Their debut album **Together As One** is set for release in Septem-

ber, and we can look forward to an exciting mix of Reggae, ska, and other genres as well as a fine pick of features.

In a video call with guitarist **Chris** and lead singer **Uno, Reggaeville** has learned a lot about the band's history, the vision behind their upcoming album and the many connections they have cultivated over the years – knowledge we are more than willing to share with you!

Greetings! As this your first interview with Reggaeville, could you introduce the Rootz Radicals to us? What's your foundation story?

Chris: Basically, it's because we had the same guitar teacher. We all met because the teacher put us together when we were still youths, around 14 or 15. He told **Henry**, our bass player, and me, „*You have to play with Uno, because he can play all the Bob Marley songs, he can play the solos and he can also sing!*“ So, we started meeting with **Uno** and then we founded a band when we were still teenagers. We had some side projects before, a band called **Steel String** with which we had a reasonable amount of shows in 2006/07, and then we met **Tom**, who plays keyboard, organ, flute, sax, synthies and melodica, and **Tommy**, our drummer. The **Rootz Radicals** developed from this connection in 2015.

Uno: That's why our shirts say, established in 2015.

How did you decide on the name?

Uno: It was because of a song from the Punk-band **Rancid**, the song is called **Roots Radicals** written with an ‚S‘, and I just came

upon this song on the internet and I thought we sound like them, because we love the rootical sound so much, so I simply chose it. It came to us.

Chris: It was there already!

Uno: But there is nothing radical or fanatic about us, except the love for Reggae, so we want to express that we are really rooted in the love for Reggae, that's what it is supposed to say.

Are all the band members coming from a Reggae background?

Chris: At least four of us grew up with Reggae musically. I don't know about **Tommy**, he was basically raised as a drummer in many genres. But since he is very young, he was also raised with Reggae.

Uno: In my case, it was my mama, she gave me the first Reggae compilation, it was called **Magic Reggae** and it had all the famous artists like **Jimmy Cliff**, **Toots & The Maytals**, **Bob Marley** etc. on it. She gave it to me when I was a child and I fell in love with the sound immediately. When I grew older,

I thought this is a universal message and it's packed so well and it's spiritual music, the coolest form of spiritual music you can imagine! That's why I love Reggae music so much, because the message is so spiritual, the sound is so rough, a kind of positive roughness you can put into the sound, and nothing compares to that.

Did you start out with your own music straight away or did you do cover versions first?

Uno: In my opinion, there is always input and output... To answer the question directly, no, I did not start out with my own songs. I don't think anybody does, because if you don't have the input, you don't have the output. You need some teachers, some idols to create your own music, it's like when you want to create a hit song, you have to copy a hit song, work around it and break it down, and so you create your own sound. We were cover musicians long time, right **Chris?**

Chris: Yes, we played Rock and Reggae at first, and then we played more and more Reggae, and then we became a Reggae cover band with some original songs. Now we are basically an original band with some covers, just for the fun of it.

What was your first recording, the first single or album you put out?

Chris: It was an EP in 2015 called **Lian Outta Den**, as opposed to a lion *in* a den what you usually find, with some weird spelling. It's our first major release. It was followed by a dub version called **Dub Outta Den**, and then some singles, more Dancehall, we just tried something new. Then we released two singles, **Gal Weh In Deh** and **Fresh Weed** which was a double single, we released two singles on the same day. One of those was already part of the Jamaica project, there were three videos which we shot in Jamaica, one was **Gal Weh In Deh** and the other one was **August Town Sound** which is more like a mixtape combined with a music video which we shot in August



town. Then there was the **Israel Riddim Sampler** which was our first compilation which we put out in May 2017 which also was partly done in Jamaica.

When did you go to the island? Did the whole band go?

Chris: No, just **Uno** and me. The first time when we spent a longer period of time, almost seven months, was in 2015/16. That's when **August Town** came into existence, in 2016, and **Gal Weh In Deh...** and the **Israel Riddim**.

How did you manage to establish the links necessary to do all that in Jamaica?

Chris: I had the opportunity to study at the Reggae Studies Unit in the course of my studies at the University. I was able to go to



some classes at the University of the West Indies, the Caribbean Institute has a department called the Reggae Studies Unit, which is very nice and very attractive, so I recommend everyone who loves Reggae and is interested in some academic learning about it, or just going abroad during university, to go there. People hardly know it because the application process is not so easy, and you have to get some funding to go there, but I was lucky and got that, and that's how we ended up there, basically. It was all centred around the University, because August Town is really like an island next to the University, it's right next to the campus, and from there we expanded our connections. We had one very close link with **Charlie** from **Toots & The Maytals**, he used to play keyboards for **Jacob Miller** and **Inner Circle**, too. He

showed us many places and introduced us to many people, to **Dean Fraser**, **Earl Chinna Smith**, all the veteran Reggae musicians... he brought us to the Twelve Tribes of Israel centre, too... yeah, through him we met many people.

Did this visit influence your development as a band?

Chris: Yes, definitely! Because we could experience everything from our own perspective, you know... of course, you can never say that you have the 'Jamaican Experience', because you never know how it really feels to live there as someone who grew up in Germany, but you can have your own experience in Jamaica and then you can make music about it or tell someone about it, which we did in the songs we just mentioned.

How does the writing process work anyway, who is the songwriter, who writes the lyrics?

Uno: Basically, **Chris** and me, we do it together. Sometimes I write a song on my own, sometimes **Chris** writes it, sometimes we do it together in a session, sometimes the band gives us a riddim and we have a topic. But for the lyrics, it's **Chris** and me, and the instruments, it's the rest of the band, it's a good symbiotic process. It works really well! Last week, **Tom**, our organ player, sent us a riddim and, I think it was yesterday, he was so inspired, he sent me the construction and then we worked on it, together as one! (laughs)

Chris: We like to build songs around a certain meaning that we want to express, and not necessarily construct it by artificially putting parts together but have one meaning in mind that we want to convey. Then finally, you find a way to convey that meaning, and maybe it's around one sentence, or just one or two words... we have that song called *Kingston Elite*, which basically developed just around a word. And then we construct the song, the song grows around it, you have the seed and then it grows. We bring it to the rehearsal, we send it to the other musicians, somebody adds this and somebody adds that, usually you notice when it's growing into a song, and when it's not.

Which brings us to the album Together As One, coming out this year. How long has it been in the making?

Chris: Well, we have... a long time. Many songs are very old, but some are also very recent, so we really... we worked on the playlist of the album for a long time, and some songs we decided not to put and others we decided to put, so... how long, **Uno**, what would you say? It is our first album, so of course it took some time.

Uno: It's like, you have your list of all the songs you created in your life, and you choose different songs and you put them together. You think, this one fits here, this one doesn't,

but most of the songs have been created over the last year, while we were touring last year. Some songs have been created in song-writing sessions where we really got together in one apartment in the countryside, just chilling and meditating about the topics, like, what do we want to say to the people? What is our dream to create as musicians and as artists, to share with the people? So, this is our collection of favourites that we want to share on the album.

Chris: The album is now almost done, you can show it and the songs are basically finished. As **Uno** said, it's mostly been created during the last year. But the seeds I was just talking about go back way further... for example, there is one song we have about free education, the one with **Queen Omega** called *It Must Be Free*, and this idea developed from the Jamaican experience directly. We saw how big the problem is over there, of having to pay so much for education, not just in Jamaica, but in so many countries, and we as Germans are just not used to seeing that, so we wrote a song about that. The song itself only manifested about a year ago, and then when we worked with **Queen Omega** on it and developed it further, and **Tom** put a melodic hook on it, and so it grew and became final, and when we realised "*Now they are really so final we can finally release an album!*", we decided to do it.

Speaking of this song, how did the link to Queen Omega come about?

Uno: It was very easy! It's just about the music, actually. We wrote a message to **Queen Omega** because we've been fans of hers since we were youths, and we just decided "*Let's write her!*", and she immediately responded! „*Yeah, I like the idea, greetings!*“ I was like, wow cool! And then it just became true, she liked the song, she contributed her part, and then she organised all of her family, many children, so we could shoot the video. We wanted to do it in a school in Trinidad and she was excited about the idea

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and simply loved it, and immediately it got done. A few months after the first message we were in Trinidad, making a video and recording with **Queen Omega**, it was very simple! The music speaks a language, and if the sound is speaking to her, if she likes the sound, she doesn't care about *"Oh, this band comes from Germany, I don't know them. I really like the song, I like the spirit, I'll do it!"* And that's why I respect her so much, it's all about the music... It's all about the music with **Queen Omega**, all about the realness.

When will the video come out?

Chris: I can tell you the very exact date, it's the 25th of August.

Speaking of the sound of the band you just mentioned, Uno, do you have any producers on board or is it really just the band?

Uno: It's the band that plays the songs on the album, but we are working together with

Josie Coppola, also known as **BigFinga**, it's the drummer of **Gentleman's Evolution Band**. We are mixing the stuff in **Planet Earth Studios** in Berlin where a lot of Reggae artists come together. **Josie** is mixing it with **Ganjaman**, and it's like the centre of Reggae in Germany there, it's a really cool studio and we work with them and we are really grateful to be part of that movement, of this Reggae hotspot in Germany. The **Planet Earth Studios**, they make such a good sound, we are really happy to be part of it, this is how we work. We send the files to Berlin, and sometimes we even go personally to Berlin, for example we recorded the drum set in Berlin. Some of the instruments were recorded at home, because in 2023, I don't want to say this, but sometimes it's more easy to record the vocals or the guitar in your home studio (laughs), you don't have to drive so far... but for the drum set it's very important, so we go to Berlin, and for the mixing also.



RIISING TIDE

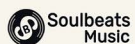
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Let's talk about some of the individual songs... The album starts with *Identity*, which is a strong song, because 'identity' is a strong subject in the global discussions right now, it always boils down to "Who am I?" When was this song conceived, did you write it together with the featured artist from Headcornerstone?

Uno: In this case, it's an old song! I think it was six years ago, I wrote it because one of my bigger struggles in life was to find my identity, to find my spirituality, to find my perspective on the world. Who am I, what am I going to do with my life? But it was not finished, I didn't feel like it was finished. Then we met **Conscious Fyah** from **Headcornerstone**, and it was the same as with **Queen Omega**, we shared the topic, he loved it, and the message became stronger through his part. Then I thought "Yes, now it's finished, now we have to do it!" We had to re-produce it, because we only had an old demo version of this one, in really bad quality. We re-recorded the whole

thing and then we said "Yes, let's do it like this!", and **Conscious Fyah** was on-board and we were very happy, because when I was a youth, I also listened to **Conscious Fyah** music and to **Headcornerstone**. I was really happy that he is in our backyard now, in the studio recording with me, and we made a video together, it was a big fulfilment for me and the other members.

A great track to open the album for sure! There is another great feature, Rebellion The Recaller, on the track Kingston Elite, you already mentioned that one. How did you connect with him?

Uno: This is a long friendship! (laughs)

Chris, do you remember?

Chris: I think the first time we met **Rebellion** was at the release of a riddim called **Pineapple Kush** riddim in Regensburg, where **Uno** was featured and **Rebellion** too, so they had a concert on the same stage. That's where we met him and basically

became friends with the whole band, and we have very vivid exchanges with him sometimes. He stayed at our place for a couple of days to record, we did *Make Hay* with him, and he's also on the *Israel Riddim*...

Uno: *Grounded* too!

Chris: And *Grounded* of course! That was another single we did with him, and we did a video too...

Uno: With *Rebellion* it's like being friends, we just chill in the kitchen and watch Netflix sometimes or just go back to

the studio when we feel like it. When he says he has an idea we just hit the record button, he's coming out with some lyrics, and then I just go to the other room to write my part... beautiful vibes! With *Kingston Elite*, we did it during Corona times, so it was a struggle... *Rebellion* is a person that really grows his spirit when he is there in person and you vibe with him. So, this was a hard one, but it worked very well, with the circumstances in Corona, with video conferences and always sending files from Germany to Norway, where he lives. It was hard but it was a good experience, it made us stronger. His energy is awesome!



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Chris: The collaborations with **Rebellion** really live from the energy when he is there, so that's why it was particularly hard in this case with the collaboration, because he wasn't here.

The last feature I want to talk about is Gentleman, of course, with a song called Brighter Days Ahead. It's one of the first singles that were released... this one was a personal connection, right, because we see Gentleman on the cover picture, surrounded by you. So, how did that happen?

Chris: Basically, also the same. (laughs) We had these shows and we were opening for **Gentleman** as a support band and just sharing the stage at a festival, and he liked the lyrics in this particular case. We asked him of course, check this song out, you want to work with us on this one? So, he said "I will do it, I want to become a part of it". And he said yes, he loved the lyrics, he always kept repeating that, so...

This is a big push for the whole album, right?

Chris: It's going to be the main single. As you just mentioned, **Identity** is already out, it was the first single, and **Brighter Days Ahead** is going to be the main single for the album, and then we will release video singles only. The next three single will be videos. The next single is released on June 23rd which is **Kinky Paradise**, we did a very nice video for that one. And then, on the 21st of July, we'll release the title track, **Together As One**. We did that video in Lisbon, Portugal, and then comes **It Must Be Free** in August.

Speaking of Kinky Paradise, I didn't think about decolonisation, art theft etc. when I first heard it, until I saw the video. Was this subject conceived of in the lyrics already or did this idea come up when you planned the video?

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Chris: It was conceived while I was writing the lyrics. I thought about the expression *Kinky Paradise* it's like „*You took me away to a Kinky Paradise...*“ Many people in the Caribbean are craving for materialism, for driving a big car, to go to the USA and everything... The people have the goal to run after materialism and go to the West, and live that kind of lifestyle, but in the end it doesn't really make you happy. You take away the wealth from the sufferer, and somebody else has to suffer for it. So, for the prosperity of most people in the Western world, we take it away from other people, we take it away from other continents, that was the message that was originally conceived like that.

What about the *Maggie May* song, why did you include this cover?

Uno: This just happened because my voice fits **Rod Stewart**'s voice. And I just love that song, it's about a young guy who fell in love with an older woman, I think she is end of thirty, but he doesn't care, he's a young guy of like twenty. I liked the idea of the song and I liked the stops, the arrangements (sings), I just liked the idea. It's the only cover song on the album. I think there are a lot of people above 50 or so, the fans of **Rod Stewart**, a lot of older people can also listen to our music, and if they cannot relate to modern patois songs or whatever, they can relate to this. It will make the album more open for a diversity of ages and people.

Talking about diversity, there are a lot of styles on your album as well... so people who are not into laid-back Reggae, they might like the song *Get The Action* which is a bit more Ska, so you do have a lot of styles. Does this come from the band as such, from the different tastes of the members?

Chris: That's a very good question! I can say it is not calculated, it's because we also like all the styles, we love the diversity! Reggae and Caribbean music have a lot of styles and we just try to express

ourselves in all of these styles we love. It just happened!

Vision now, the song sounds a bit drunk, a bit slurry, a bit dirty... will it stay like this?

Chris: The first line of the song goes „*Pass me the herb and a cup of mango juice, I got an empty pot a liquor...*“ (laughs)

Uno: You are going through different stages in your life and sometimes you are in this kind of stage.

Chris: It's about imagining and having visions, not like hallucinations, but ideas of something which become a reality, often times through music or through meditating on a certain subject, that's what the song is about. But it's not the final mix, it's not supposed to sound dirty! (laughs)

Oh, me, sometimes I prefer the dirty quality, the raw material, over the too slick, too clean, too perfect songs, I find that sometimes a bit boring. Last question, with the summer coming up and the festival season starting, what are you looking forward to most?

Chris: Definitely the shows in summer! Like the **Hill Vibes Reggae Festival** in Austria, it's on the 28th of July, and the next day we play at another festival in Regensburg. So, we are really looking forward to performing live. And then the album release of course, in September, we are working on a release party right now. We love and appreciate all the people who support our music, we are really grateful for that. It's really beautiful when you can put your visions and inspirations and meanings into music and share it with the world!

Thank you for putting out great music and for keeping the spirits of the world high and positive!

ROOTZ RADICALS - TOGETHER AS ONE

September 29, 2023

Oneness, solidarity, unity... there are many words that describe the concept of being mentally or physically close to fellow human beings, a kind of ideal state that, alas, mankind has still not fully embraced. The voices that keep this utopia alive are manifold, however, and the German band **Rootz Radicals** add their album **Together As One** to this choir.



After a first EP called **Lian Outta Den** (2015), a subsequent dub version as well as the **Israel Riddim Sampler** (2017) and quite a few singles, this is their debut album, announced for September. Consisting of **Uno Jahma** (vocals, lyrics & production), **Christian Moll** (guitar & lyrics), **Thomas Eibl** (organ, keys, melodica, sax), **Henry Shell** (bass) and **Thomas Salvermoser** (drums), the five musicians have jammed together since their teenage days, and the current release presents the **Rootz Radicals** as a mature group who play some serious Reggae music. Let's dive into their sound!

Identity is not only the first single released, but also the album opener, setting the off-beat pace for the pieces to follow. Featuring **Conscious Fyah** of the Roots Reggae outfit **Headcornerstone**, the two singers elaborate on the subject provided by the title, stressing the need to find out who you are, other than material things and society's indoctrinations.

Second track, second single, completely different vibe: **Brighter Days Ahead** comes on a fast-paced instrumental that almost sounds digital, „a celebration of life and the endless possibilities that lie ahead“, as the press release informs us. When **Gentleman** heard it by a lucky coincidence, he liked both riddim and lyrics and im-

mediately agreed to join **Uno** on that vibe.

Other featured guests are **Rebellion the Recaller**, a long-time friend who adds some strong vocals on the ghetto-youths-empowering **Kings-ton Elite**, and **Queen Omega**. The Trinidadian singer is a perfect ambassador for the message delivered in **It Must Be Free**, which talks about the need to provide free edu-

cation, especially in poor countries. Washing over us on an infectious beat built around the **Answer** riddim bassline, we can even look forward to an accompanying video soon to be released in which the **Queen** rocks a school in Trinidad along with friends and family members.

Two more visuals are just about to be released: **Kinky Paradise**, which thematises materialism, excessive greed and colonial art theft (chapeau to the wild organ solo there!), and the title track **Together As One**, a balladesque call for unity that was inspired by the passing of a close friend.

Uno's vocal versatility is probably most pronounced in the **Rod Stewart** cover **Maggie May**, which has been beautifully translated into a relaxed, bass-heavy one-drop, shining with melodic highlights. Followed by the ska-infused **Get The Action**, the album then closes with **Vision**, the slightly slurred delivery contributing to the „positive roughness“ the **Rootz Radicals** stand for.

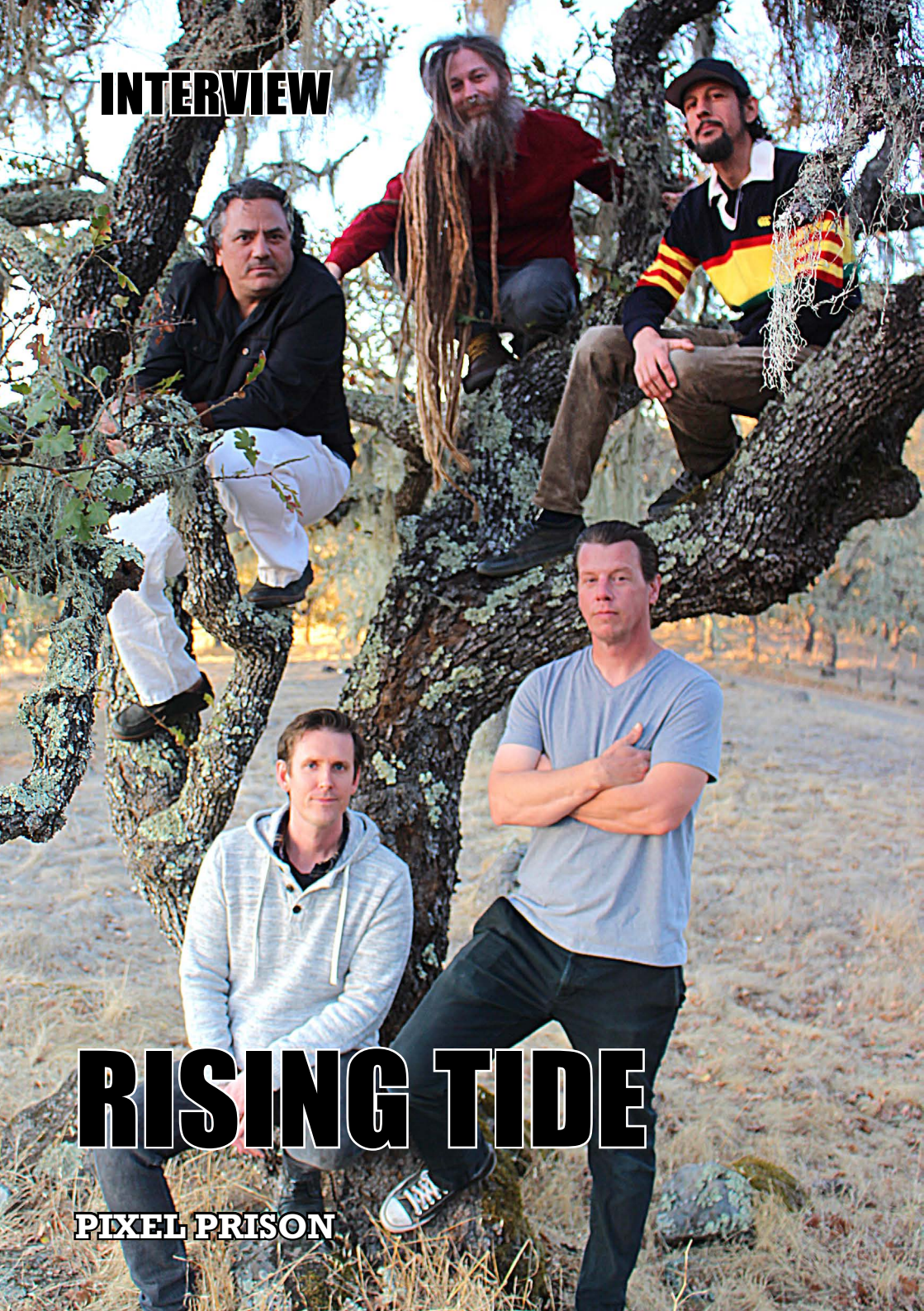
Recorded, mixed and mastered at Berlin's prestigious **Planet Earth Studios**, you can rest assured that **Together As One** comes in top-notch quality, and, since the track list wasn't final by the time of writing this review, you might well be surprised by one or two bonus tracks. Watch out for this!

by **Gardy Stein**

INTERVIEW

RISING TIDE

PIXEL PRISON



MUSICAL COMMUNICATION

BY GARDY STEIN

PHOTOS BY SOFIA SPINA & PHILLIPE BOYER

Life is a journey. Its ups and downs, wins and losses, meetings and partings make it a constant challenge to manoeuvre, but if this challenge is met with optimism and curiosity, if we manage to see the open doors in every situation, even in the tough ones, the outcome will be positive. The **Rising Tide** is a fine example for such a mindset. After the surprising break-up of **Groundation** in 2015, with all the difficulties such a separation entails, the band members decided to continue the journey started in 1998, and thus **Marcus Urani, Ryan Newman, Paul Spina, Kim Pommell** and **Sherida Sharpe** reformed under a new name. Inviting other musicians to the project, 2016 saw the release of their debut album **Rising Tide**, and while it has become a bit quiet around them recently, the energies kept bubbling under the surface. This September will see the release of their new album **Pixel Prison**, a collaborative effort that brings to our attention not only the fabulous musicians involved, but also the voices of **Mike Love** and **Clinton Fearon**.

Reggaeville has contacted **Marcus Urani** in his forest home in California to ask how that connection came about, and, next to exciting stories of musical creation, we were told about biology, sociology and musicology as well. Jump aboard!



Since you released the debut album *Rising Tide* in 2016, how did the band develop? What happened during the last seven years?

In the beginning, we just wanted to get stuff out there. **Groundation** was coming to an end, so we were like “*What are we going to do?*” We got together with the girls to start

writing, it was great to put something out right away. We had just made **A Miracle** a year or two before that, and I had a studio, I had all the gear at my house, so I was like „*Come on everybody, let's do this!*“ At first, we were just going to do an album with **Kim Pommell**, backing her. We had some



Jamaican musicians coming in, drummer **Unga Barunga** and **Monty** on guitar, and we produced some of the music that was on that first album, that was such a cool session! We did a bunch of songs but only included some of them on **Rising Tide**, and then we ended up getting back to the studio with **Paul**, our drummer with **Groundation** and many other bands, and **Yotam Silverstein** on guitar, he is from Israel but lives in New York. That was such a great experience! Some of those extra tracks we recorded from both these sessions are on the new album. I always record extra, you know, I mean, you fly people in, you have everybody in the house, I have a studio, it's me recording, I'm the engineer... I would stay up late and write more little grooves and things we can improvise on, so I had a bunch of tracks laying around, and listening to some of them, we were like *"Wow ,why did we never use that, that's great!"*

In that time, we did a few tours in Europe too. In retrospect, we probably should have waited, let the music get out there, let people get to know **Rising Tide**... They knew us as **Groundation**, but it's basically still the same band, it's all of us minus **Harrison**. Around

2017/18, we weren't sure what we were going to do, which direction we would take, so we kind of held back a little, we didn't do much. Then I started working with **Mike Love**, he called me up saying *"Hey, I want to record with you on organ and Jim Fox!"*, that's our engineer in DC who did many of our albums, in **Prairie Sun Studio** next to the city I lived back then in Sonoma County. So, **Mike** called me up, and I was like *"OK, you know, I have some tracks I've been wanting to do, what do you think about putting some vocals on?"* And he was like *"For sure, are you kidding me, I would love to!"* That's how everything kind of started. He did one song, I think it was **To-gether**, it was on the EP we released last year, and I was like *"Oh wow, that came out great!"* and he was like *"Send me more!"* So I started sending him files, as I said I recorded a lot of riddims, and he ended up doing five tracks. We put four on the EP, and then I had a few for the girls, we had songs for them that we created, so this album started coming together like that. Our sessions with **Mike** were really fun, his album will be coming out this year too, and so we just started putting the album together. The girls are in Jamaica and we are out here in California, so it's been a bit hard to



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get them out here... that's why we've been doing some shows instrumentally. I play all the vocal parts on organ, that's been really great actually, it's been fun to get into that instead of just backing a singer. We spent so much of our lives shaping our parts around a really dense atmosphere, I mean we had nine people in **Groundation**, a lot of things happening, and you had to kind of stay in your lane and be careful not to step on other people's parts, not to play too much, so it's been really great to do it instrumentally, it was just four of us, so there was a lot of space. But we are looking forward to get the girls back out here, we are talking about how we could do some tours with them... I mean, when Covid happened, of course we didn't do anything, but we were getting going, so when everything clears up we'll start doing those shows. We also talk with our European management about how we can get back over there, we're ready! It's been so long now, I just want to play! (laughs)

Are there any new members now that you didn't have back then? How many are you in total?

It's basically the same it was in 2017. It's me and **Paul Spina** and **Ryan**, our bass player, we've played together for many, many years, we had four or five different bands together through the years! It's great, we don't have to discuss, we know each other so well, I feel really grateful to have these guys in my life, as close friends, but also as musicians. We know each other so well, when we improvise and stuff, we know each other's inflections, we can feel like where we're going, so that's the core of **Rising Tide**. **Cameron Peterson** is a guitarist out of Santa Rosa that we used to play with, we brought him into **Rising Tide** in 2017, he came for a couple of tours in Europe with us, and we've been playing with him ever since, he's been a great addition. And then of course there's the girls! **Kim Pommell** and **Sherida Sharpe**, and **Faith Waltson**, who we added, and she did all the tours in Europe,

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so all the stuff we did it was with those three. We tried to add **Mingo Lewis Jr.** as much as possible, our percussion player, but that's kind of hard right now, so hopefully we can build up to where we can get all of us on stage.

How did you meet Mike Love?

We played Hawaii for many years, that was one of the first places to embrace us, way back in like 2003, that was our first off-shore tour... it was so funny, we didn't have anything set up, we just got on a plane and got there like „*I guess we should rent a van!*“ (laughs) But it was fun, thinking back now, and the Hawaiians they were so supportive... they loved the music, and we went there every year. **Mike** was out there, he would come with his friends when he was younger. In fact **Sam**, his old drummer, engineered one of our shows, and **Mike** helped him bring all the gear, so we met him a long time ago. By then he was still learning, becoming an artist, and we kind of influenced him and his trajectory in music. Then we did a tour in 2013, and he did his first tour on the mainland, he was with **Paula Fuga** and **Sam** back then, if you don't know **Paula**, she's a great singer from Hawaii. They opened for us on that tour, so we were together every day and that's where we really got to know each other, we really got to talk.

Was the album part of the plan when you started collaborating with Mike or did that develop while working on the EP?

The album was the whole plan from the beginning! I mean, I guess it features a lot of **Mike** because he did five of the songs, one of them is instrumental, so it's really only three songs with the girls, but the way the music all came together, I love how it came out. And there is also a song with **Clinton Fearon**, it's great, we'll definitely collaborate more, he's such a legend we all know, and he's a great musical powerhouse, but he's also such a positive person! He is on one of the tracks with **Mike**, too, he did some vocals on *Medicine Man*.

When did you decide to reach out to him for the project?

Just because I love his music! You know, we would see him on the road, I asked him when we played with him at a festival in the middle of France. **Clinton** was playing, we were playing, and we were on stage watching him, and when he was coming off we talked a bit, so I said „*Hey, we are working on this new project and I would love to have you!*“, and he said „*Yes, let me know, if I'm available I'll do it!*“ Because he gets asked a lot of course, so since that time I had him in my mind, and now the time was ripe.

The first track he does, *Welcome To My World*, is a perfect way to go into the album, a beautiful song really...

I love it! You know, the funny thing is I didn't tell him that it was the first song, I just sent him the track, and he says "*Welcome, welcome, welcome to my world!*" (laughs). It's the best way to start off the album, he says "*It's a musical ride, you will have a good time!*", so the lyrics couldn't have been any more perfect for the beginning! I said to him afterwards „*I didn't tell you but you just magically said the most perfect thing!*" He has those brilliant three-part harmony too, the way his voice is leading... Since now we've been playing instrumentally, I'm learning all the vocal parts on the organ, and the way he stacked his harmonies, they are just perfect on organ, it sounds really good, the melody, the way he structured the voicing, that's great. I look forward to definitely working with him in the future!

Did you in any way influence in any way the lyrics that were written by Mike or Clinton?

No, I always try to stay really open! Even with the band, when I write stuff, I try not to write too much, I try to leave it more like a structure or outline to be filled. Everybody brings something to the table, their own experience, their own lives, and for me, that's what lifts music to another level, that's what grabs all of us. So, even if I write a lot of it and put the arrangement, when I listen back once everybody put their thing on it, I'm thrilled, it's so cool what they brought to that structure I made. I really try to be as vague as possible... I mean, you need the basics of it, like, here is the tempo, I might say I want it to be a back beat, or one drop, or steppas, I have those basic things, but beyond that, I try not to interfere, and definitely not for the vocals. I didn't want to give them any parameters or anything, who knows what they are going to talk about, what they are going to say? It's fun for me too! It gives them more freedom to be creative.

When did you decide to call the album *Pixel Prison*? Does this subject have a special importance for you?

It was about ten seconds after I heard the track... **Mike** sent me the songs, I put them all on the studio, I spent like 20 minutes getting a basic mix, and then I listened to it all, and I almost cried. I was just like "WOW!" It was so good! I would have never guessed that song... you know, we had that riddim for a minute, and when I wrote that, I was actually writing it for the girls. I wanted it to be up-tempo, with a part in the middle, like a breakdown, thinking "*Oh the girls could do a cool little vocal thing, a call-and-answer theme.*" I was imagining all this stuff for the girls, and then **Mike** came in and in that breakdown, he wrote that awesome three sets of backgrounds (sings), and I just loved the writing and the performance. It was **Paula Fuga** and **Keilana Mokulehua** and **DeAndre Brackensick**, the people that work with him in Hawaii, they are all amazing artists in themselves, all of their voices, so... they did those three parts, three or four harmonies all happening at once, and I loved that breakdown. But I also loved his concept of the lyrics, it's very relevant, we all live in this ***Pixel Prison***, but now with AI it's even more, it's about to get 10x that, right? So, I loved the concept, I love what he wrote and it made perfect sense to put out an album in this time what we are all living in, talking about that.

Social media is great, there is a lot of good things about it, but also a lot of bad things. I study a lot of biology, and there are certain chemical processes our body goes through... There is a really great book called **Dopamine Nation**, it speaks about that we have one processing centre for the input that we get, whether it's food or alcohol or social media or even relationships. All those things that happen to us, the way we are driven to keep doing, it is all based on dopamine, we have one chemical that reacts to all of that. You have a bank, a dopamine account, and you choose how you spend it. If you go crazy and spend it on a few drinks every day or you smoke weed every day or you are addicted to sugar, every time you do one bit of that stuff, it takes a little dopamine away...

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Really? And is it restituted, refilled?

Yes, but not within a certain period. So, the social media thing, it's great of course because we can all communicate, we all get closer, but it's also... you have to be very careful how much you take in. I feel like this work, *Pixel Prison*, it embodies that, it lets all of us think about it in a certain way. What he's saying is bringing awareness.

It does! I like the „downward spiral“ metaphor he uses...

It's a little scary, there's a lot more suicides and stuff since social media, I think because of the picture it paints of peoples' lives being this perfect thing. It's not like something we have to stop, but I think we need to be aware of it, just like any drug. If you are doing 15 minutes of that, you are getting a lot of input first of all. And it takes you away from real life, it's depressing in the end. I think it's really important that we are at least aware of that. So, that was a big part of it, but of course I love

that song, too. Those two things together, I knew right away when I listened to it, I knew that's the album!

Who created the album cover?

Tokio Aoyama is the artist, from Tokyo. He's amazing, I had seen some of his stuff, he's just a really great creative artist. He does a lot of psychedelic stuff, which he didn't do that much on our album... He was very cool to work with us, he sent one thing, and I was giving him simple suggestions, and he came back with a work that was perfect, and I was like *"That's exactly what I meant, thank you!"* I sent him pictures of my instruments, like the big drum that's on the front there, and most of those he recreated in art. We've been playing music for so long that the artistic depiction of music, of the instruments themselves, I wanted that to be part of it. We told him about *Pixel Prison* of course, and that's represented too, there is this musical and natural world that is juxtaposed to this digital vault, that's



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how that came about. As soon as I saw it, I was like *“Oh my God, thank you!”* He is a really humble guy, an amazing artist.

It’s a great cover indeed! Another inspiring part of the album is that some of the songs, they really flow into each other...

Yeah! I’ve always wanted to do that! Back when we did **We Free Again**, our fourth album, I was like *“Can we do a suite? Let’s do a suite!”* I had put that suite together for **Cultural War**, I spent a bunch of time intertwining each song to the next song and then having a transition to that, I’ve always wanted to do that. I love writing like that, so on this album, that came from **Mike** coming over to my house to record his vocals for **Together**. He had played a gig, he had travelled, and he came over like 11 at night and said *“Let’s do my lead vocals!”* So, I set up a mic and we were doing it, he just killed it, he’s such a talented artist. It’s great to be in the room with him, hearing his voice, it’s really powerful! When I was in there, right in front of him, I got taken aback by his power, he has such command over his voice, his technical prowess is amazing! So anyway, at the end of it, he went *“Together... together... together”* (fades). The first time he only did like two or three, but I said *“Wait, let’s do that again, can you do like four or five of those, make it like a delay?”* And then he sang more, and as

he was doing it, I was imagining like *“Man, I want to take that one word, forget four, I want like 50 of those!”* Take one word and dub it out, not just dub it, but have that going on and on. Of course, I grew up on **Pink Floyd**, so it was my tribute to... I think it was **Animals**. I was busy, Covid happened, I moved, but I had in my head the whole time that I want to create a whole interlude after **Together**, and lead up to the next song...

Yes! Onward is an extremely interesting piece. I love it, there is so much to discover sonically!

Thank you! I was up here in the mountains, the guys were down south, so at first I thought there is going to be a lot of keyboards, just like *„woing woing woing“* (makes low-pitched noises), and when I started getting into it, I put the bottom keyboard part, it’s setting the tempo. Well, actually **Mike’s** *„Together...“* is setting the tempo, and then I started. I was learning some new rhythms, there is the classic 12/8 African rhythm, you know (claps in demonstration), and I was like, I don’t want to do the classic ones, so I learned a bunch of new stuff. I mean, they must have like a billion variations on that 12/8 that we all know, so I learned like four or five, and I chose the one that I thought fits best. When I did that, I was like *“This is not going to be keyboard at all, this is going to be percussion!”* Then I got my binghi drum out, I made it like a Nyabinghi 12/8 which I haven’t heard a lot, I’m sure that they exist, but I was like, I never heard a 12/8, it’s a rhythmic beat (demonstrates). It’s African music, but a lot of popular artists have borrowed it, it’s just a groove that’s out there, it’s great. It became like my **Floyd** tribute dub session electronic kind of vibe with that percussive Nyabinghi pulse. I think I recorded it all in one or two days, layering percussions and filling in specific things, and then after I was done with all that, I dubbed each, and at the end I just loved it. I knew all along that I wanted it to build into the next song, which is great because the girls come in with *„Get up!”* It’s awesome, it builds up to that, it starts as if we are already in the middle of the song! With that transition it was perfect to build into that



beginning of *The Race*. I was very happy how that came out, it was something I conceptualised for a few years.

Speaking of *The Race*, we hear the vocals of Denver Feluké Smith, who has sadly passed away. When did you record him, it must have been a couple of years back?

Like I said, we had been doing tracks back in 2017, and every time the girls went to the studio, you know that's Jamaica, it's just an amazing amount of talent around, it's crazy. And all the people in the reggae scene know each other, so... the girls were good friends with **Denver**, with **Feluké**, and he went to the studio when the girls were recording several different things and they had him do those tracks back then, so I had a lot of stuff in the vault, as I said. We had met him on the road out there doing tours, he was playing with **Jimmy Cliff** at the time, and I remember we were at the back of the stage, actually it was in Germany at a big festival, and he was set up sideways. He was also singing background

vocals as well as playing percussion, and I remember we could hear his voice so good, because where we were standing, he was facing us, and it was so powerful! And I was like "*We should get him some time!*" and then, a little later, it happened. And he was a great guy too, a really positive spirit, it's so sad that he passed away, he fought that cancer for a long time... it was really fun to hang out with him and talk to him after the shows.

It's great to hear his voice carried on in a project like this!

Thank you, yes, and I think it's really great how it worked out. It's so sad that he passed, but it's awesome to release something new, so he's coming back to the world in 2023! And his voice is amazing, the way he sings on that piece...

The credits mention a whole lot of Jamaican musicians: Unga Barunga, Monty, Horsemouth, and some others. When and where did you work with them?



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With **Unga** and **Monty**, I flew them out to California, we had our first session with them, and in the beginning, we were not sure if we were even going to do **Rising Tide**. We were going to do an album with **Kim** and some Jamaican artists she knew, so I flew them to my house and we recorded a bunch of tracks. When they went to bed, I would stay up all night writing more, just because I was like “*They are here now, we’ll record every second!*” (laughs). I still have some more tracks from that session! We used some on the first album, some on the new one, and I might even have one or two left for a next one. So, they are there from that first session, and then **Horsemouth**, I had him record in a studio in Jamaica, he’s doing percussions on the last song **Work It Out**, and it’s a great one too! I don’t know why we didn’t put it on the first album... you know, songs have a way of all connecting, and that one didn’t really fit in. I already had the songs that went together best for the first album, so this one I thought would be a great way to finish, after starting from **Welcome To My World** and you go through some different styles and instrumentals and by the time you get to the end, **Work It Out** feels like a really nice way to end it up.

I know this might be a tough question as creator of such an oeuvre, but do you have a favourite piece in terms of lyrics and / or music?

It is tough! (laughs) I like it all! Of course, **Mr. President** kind of takes it to the next level lyrically, and musically! Well, musically, I like them all, it’s hard to say favourite because for me, I’m always looking at the macro, at the whole album. I want to go to different universes, I want to explore, I want to go around and not just stay in one place... I usually have a general idea in the beginning, and if they are a collection of songs like this, I look at them like “*This specific groove, this could go into that...*”, so it’s hard to decide on a favourite because I’m looking for a ride through each one, it’s not just one song. Singles are great, but when I make an album, I always ask people “*Please listen from front to back, because it’s meant to listen to it that way, it’s*

a journey!” It’s our journey, and I really love how **Pixel Prison** came out!

I love every song, to be honest, I also like **The Rising Tide** instrumental, that was really fun to play, when I wrote that I was like “*We need a ska kind of vibe!*”, I love how that came out. And **Work It Out**, I love the lyrics too... Going through every song, I will tell you I love it. (laughs) They are great! **Clinton’s Welcome To My World**, wow, I cried when he sent me that tune...

Do you plan further collaborations with Mike and Clinton?

For sure! **Mike** is a good friend and another great human being. We’ll definitely collaborate again, we’ll always be making music together.

What does your summer schedule look like?

The guys are out with **Mike** right now, so they are gone. We are going to do more local instrumental shows, we are talking about doing some shows with **Mike** in September and doing a little tour with **Clinton** in October. This summer I wish we could have made it back to Europe, but hopefully next year in spring or summer we will be there.

Will you have a release party for the album?

We need to! There will be, yes.

Anything you’d wish to add?

Like I said, we’ve been playing music together for a long time, me and **Paul** and **Ryan**, and the music on here, what you are hearing, is a long friendship and communication of people who have known each other for a long time. I am very proud of it and it’s inspiring for me to know that there is so much more that we can do, we are definitely making a lot of more music, and much more quickly, we took a long break. So we are all ready to make a lot together, I already wrote some and we recorded a little and it comes really fast cause we’ve been playing together for so long, so I look forward to coming out with more albums, that’s our path for sure!

RISING TIDE – PIXEL PRISON

Old Growth Records - September 30, 2023

„It's a musical ride, free your mind and you will have a good, good time!“

Approaching new experiences, unknown places or people with a free and open mind is always a good idea – and music, especially when it is as innovative and genre-transcending as that of **Rising Tide**! Founded by the musicians that defined the sound of **Groundation**, they continue their trademark fusion of roots reggae and jazz. **Pixel Prison** is their third release after the debut **Rising Tide** and the subsequent EP **Together**, recorded with Hawaiian singer **Mike Love**. This collaboration worked so well that both he and the songs of the EP made it to the new album, along with **Clinton Fearon**, another important figure in its creation.

He kicks off the ride with **Welcome To My World**, a perfect opener introducing the band's oeuvre with beautiful melodies, powerfully inhabited by **Fearon's** warm vocals. While both verse and chorus are charmingly harmonious, the last part is all jazz, with wild drums, high-pitched guitars and energetic keys. Remarkable: **Medicine Man** starts on the last note of the previous song's heavy crescendo, initially flowing on a relaxed reggae drop, but then building into another multi-instrumental frenzy. Lyrically, it describes how musicians should act as healers and teachers, and both **Mike Love** and **Clinton Fearon** contribute to the expressionism of the song.

The title track **Pixel Prison** talks about the addiction to the visual world of social media, the constant need for self-portrayal to get likes. „It's a downward spiral!“ From self-reflection to politics: **Mr. President** doesn't call any names, but its critique is clearly directed to the former



US ruler. The dynamic of this piece is amazing, with smooth chord transitions, the rise and fall of **Mike's** voice... a true singer's craft! The subsequent **Dollar** picks up the harsh criticism of capitalism, extending it to diverse life realities, presented with distorted voices that create an almost creepy atmosphere.

Talking about the tendency of mankind to put things off and blame others, **Together** calls on us to take responsibility for our (past) actions and fix what's not right. A multitude of wondrous sounds invades our ears in the subsequent **Onward**. Although it's not a „full“ song, it is an important transitional interlude, combining the preceding with the subsequent track **The Race**, a duet between the band's female singers and **Denver 'Feluké' Smith**, thus preserving a voice gone too soon.

Bringing the vocals of **Kim Pommell**, **Sherida Sharpe** and **Faith Waltson** to the fore, **I Arise** encourages us to do our best, despite circumstances that make it difficult. Another instrumental, **The Rising Tide** introduces each band member with an extensive solo. The skills of **Cameron Peterson** (guitar), **Ryan Newman** (bass), **Paul Spina** (drums), **Jason Robinson** (sax & flute), **Mingo Lewis Jr.** (congas) and **Marcus Urani** (everything else) get a well-deserved highlight here.

With **Work It Out** and two dubs, the album closes. From the musical quality of the recordings to the exceptional vocal deliveries, from important subjects touched in the lyrics to the intelligent and creative arrangement of the songs, **Pixel Prison** is a wonderful addition to post-pandemic 2023 – a companion for better times ahead!

by **Gardy Stein**



„I can't be sure but I think Neville Garrick took this picture of Bob and me. Whoever it was, I'm glad that they did because it's the only one I have.“

Kate Simon

REBEL MUSIC

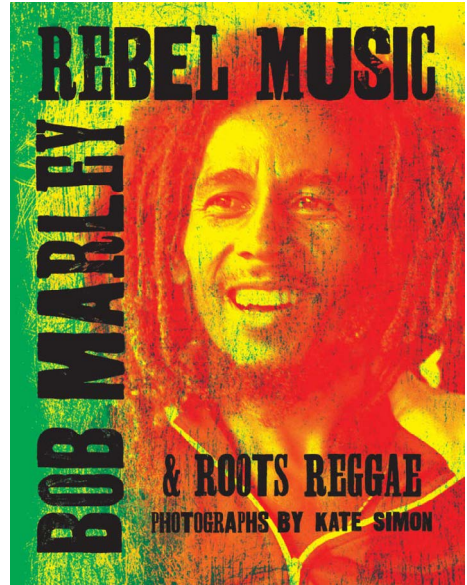
“Rebel Music: Bob Marley & Roots Reggae” first released by Genesis Publications in 2004 as a signed limited edition of only 2,000 copies (which has long since been sold out).

The book features some of Kate Simon’s most captivating images of Bob Marley and his closest collaborators in the reggae scene. In September 2023 the new book store edition re-release will be published. Available from MARLEYBOOK.com

‘Have no fear for atomic energy ’cos none of them can stop the time.’

So often over the years, a lyric of **Bob Marley**’s will come into my mind and help me. He made the truth sound familiar. But this book is not just about **Bob**, it’s a chance to bring a special era back to life: Jamaica and her musicians from the mid-Seventies until just before the mid-Eighties. Like in a photograph where you have to pull back to get perspective, you need years to realise the value that some things have had on your life. Time ripens the memory. So once more you have a chance to see **Carly Barrett** playing the drums, to see The Wailers together. To see **Jacob Miller** swinging in the hammock. To hear **Peter Tosh** proclaim ‘Jah Rastafari!’ like only he could. It’s hard to describe what an opportunity it was for a photographer. These personalities were mythic, every last one of them. I’ve never seen anything like it since. Inevitably, as I was working on this book, it became their tribute.

Certain people, certain times take some of your soul, stay in your soul, are forever part of your soul, and nourish your soul. As a photographer, these subjects encouraged me to grow. They showed me who I could



be. They inspired me to do my best. They showed me to myself. The confidence that I gained photographing them was a real part of my growth as a photographer. I was responsible for all the technical stuff myself, whether I was in Jamaica or on the road with **The Wailers**. This was a real gift. Now when I think of **Bob**, I think of many things. I think of how his music doesn’t sound dated, how it’s still so current. I can still see **Bob** in my mind, walking down 57th Street right near my studio that day in September, 1980, when he waved at me and exclaimed ‘*Kate Si-mon! Wha’appen?*’. That was the last time I saw him.

When you’re working on a book like this, you not only think about it in your waking hours, you think about it while you’re sleeping. It becomes part of your psyche. After looking at thousands of negatives of **Bob**, some of which I had never printed before, I had a dream that **Bob** was still alive and that he was playing that night. Can you imagine if you could have the chance to see **Bob Marley** today? What would he be singing about?

BY KATE SIMON



'What can I say about the Lyceum show? It was shocking. The beauty of his voice; the brilliance of his band; the hypnotic power of the music. For me, it was calling to reggae. I wasn't prepared for it.'

Kate Simon



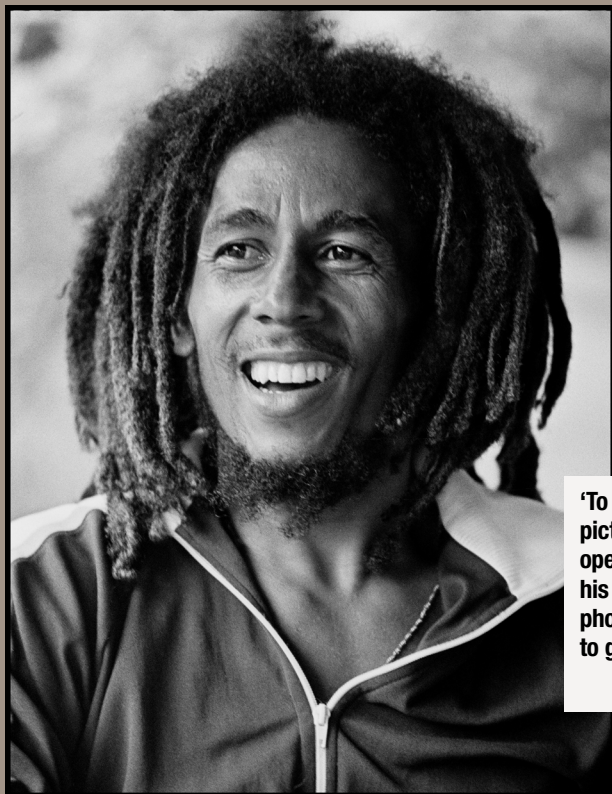
'I met Bob for the first time after that show when my friend Anna Capaldi introduced me to him. After that, I'd see him around Fulham where I lived and I'd wave at him and he'd wave at me so I think he got to know my face.'

Kate Simon



'It was one of the first concerts where the people couldn't get in. I remember watching from the dressing room when they had the fire department come and haul people out the door, 'cos there was more people than the place could hold.'

Neville Garrick



'To me, it's a very special picture. Bob's face is so open, his smile is so big, his gaze so sharp that the photograph almost seems to give off light.'

Kate Simon

'This shot was taken in London. There was an Ethiopian fundraising function going on. Bob gave them a whole bunch of money. Bob was very, very generous, he'd always give money to people who needed it.'

Junior Marvin





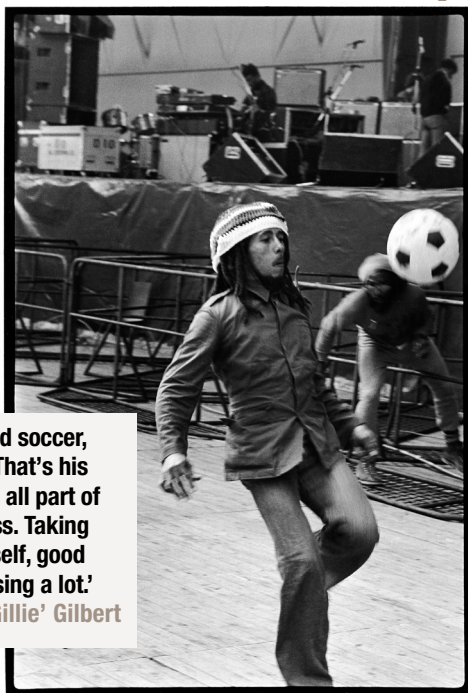
'We went to Brazil and we played soccer with some of the world's best players. Jim Capaldi, the drummer from Traffic was there and we made up a team and won a tournament. It was Bob's dream to play soccer in Brazil.'

Junior Marvin



'That man have the blues, ya know? Bob Marley, full up of the blues. And it's the same music, just played in a different way.'

Junior Delgado



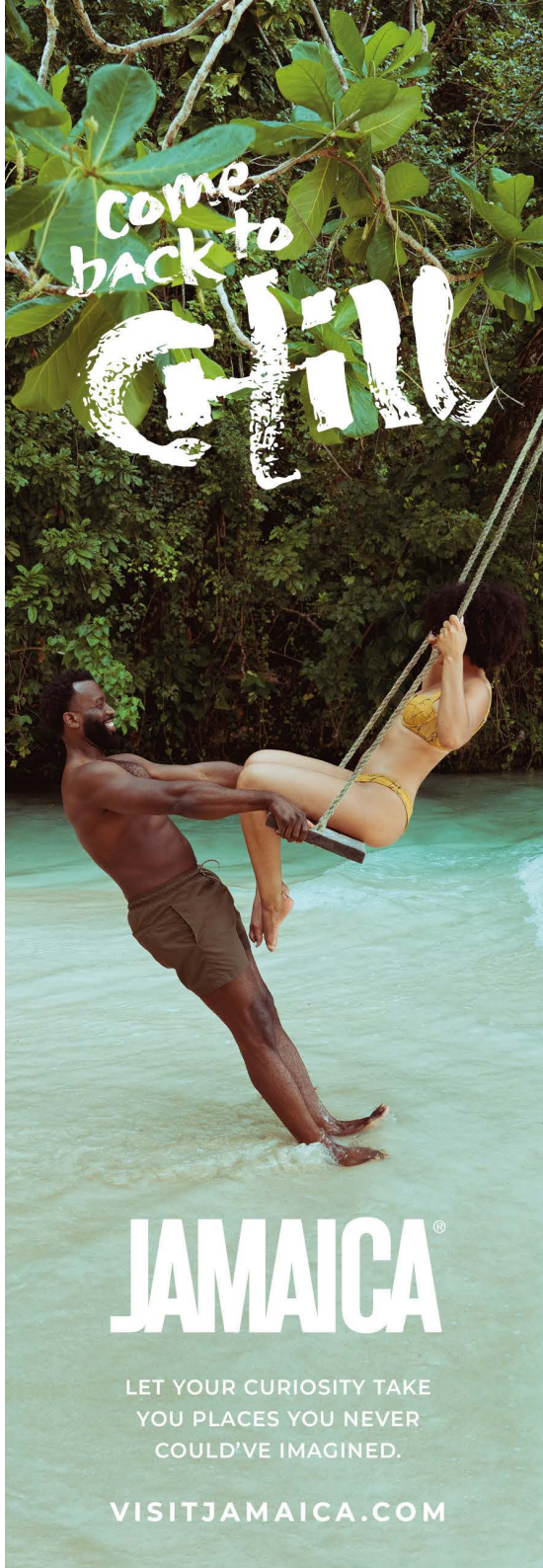
'He just loved soccer, and music. That's his thing. It was all part of the greatness. Taking care of himself, good food, exercising a lot.'

Antonio 'Gillie' Gilbert



'That's another interesting thing about reggae: it's like a musical newspaper. It's talking about what affects the people. It's about personal mindsets. It's about humans and what they have to suffer, rather than just: I love you, you love me...'

Paul Simonon



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'On the night, he stands up in front of 40,000 people at the end of an eight-hour concert, and finishing his set he makes the prime minister and the leader of the opposition come on stage and shake hands as he stands between them.'

Roger Steffens



'It didn't look serious when he first did it, but after they did all kind of stuff with him - the doctors did their stuff - that's when everything went crazy... They took the life away but the spirit is still alive. It's like prophecy; you see Bob's face all over the world now. They can't get him out of the race.'

Antonio 'Gillie' Gilbert

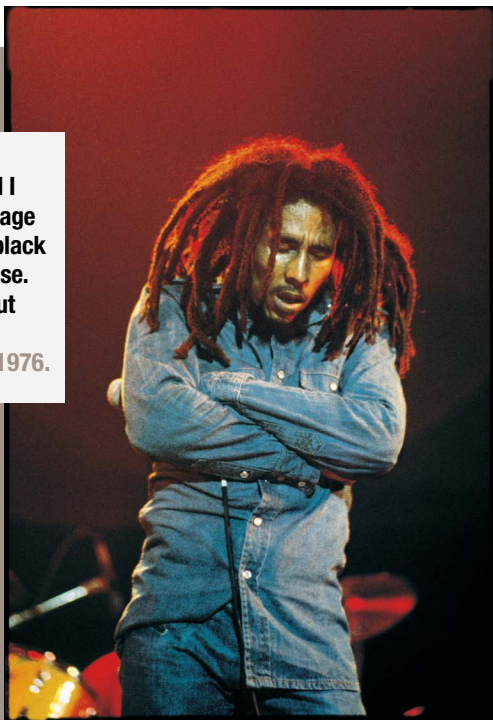
'The I-Threes were always a very special part of Bob's concerts. The way they moved together, the way they really related to Bob and of course the voices. They had a great blend.'

Randall Grass



'I have a duty to tell the truth as I have been told it. I will keep on doing it until I am satisfied the people have the message that Rastafari is the Almighty and we black people have redemption like anyone else. Not for the money will I do anything, but because I have something to do.'

Bob Marley, 1976.



'Beautiful, beautiful pictures; bring back memories by the score. Everybody firing in their prime... Yeah, primetime. It's wonderful. She did a good job. The public needs to see these pictures, I know that.'

Aston 'Family Man' Barrett





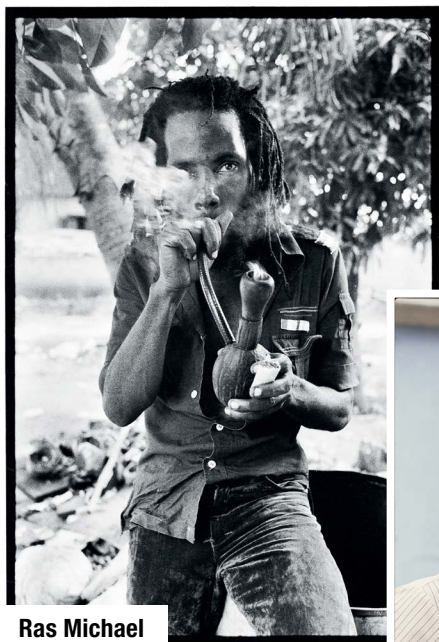
Jacob Miller



Bunny Wailer



Lee "Scratch" Perry



Ras Michael



Gregory Isaacs



Peter Tosh

Photos by Kate Simon

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HONEYWASTA • POKYMAN (SK) • AKIRA

GENERAL LEVY

LOIS DE WIND • PAT EAST • VOS HANSEN • BASHA FIAN
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Luciano	Bones Hammond	Burning Spear
Katika Pyramid	Tonio Riley	Phonte
Kemal & The Original Fyah	David & Marjorie	Lila Fall
Wamwo Sound International	Johnny Clarke	Roscoe & Kroyatis & Nigari Bâ
Jah Warrior	Soul Syncretic	Nemes Frazar
Skuller HFI	Blk. Lion	Wesley The Chordancers
	Rory Stone Live	The Steady 455
	Soul 212	
	Breakbeat Social System	
	Alabaster Oubled Ft. Juan G	

Plus Mus. TBA

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 CAPLETON
 BARRINGTON LEVY
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JUNE 2023

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 KOFFEE PATRICE ROBERTS VALIANT SKILLIBENG
 GOVANA BYRON MESSIA GRAND MASTERS BAND



22 to 24 JUNE 2023

FESTIVAL AGENDA 2023

The following pages list 114 events. For lineups, changes and newly announced festivals, please check the daily updated festival calendar on REGGAEVILLE.com

The posters are clickable and will take you straight to the event on our calendar. The QR code takes you to the complete overview.

PLEASE NOTE:

We take reasonable care in compiling this list, but we can't guarantee that everything is accurate!

Please check the official websites before you go and make sure to get your tickets only from official sources.

Caribbean Sunsplash



June 2 - 3

Festival Center Brievengat in Willemstad, Curacao

One Blood Family Fest



June 3

Plantation Cove in St. Ann, Jamaica

Cultural Reggae VibeZ



June 15 - 17

Festival Area in Horice, Czech Republik

Sunshine Reggae Festival



June 16 - 17

Camping du Staedly in Roeschwoog, France

Sierra Nevada World Music Festival



June 16 - 18

Mendocino County Fairgrounds in Boonville, CA, USA

Reggae Love Fest



June 16

Barclays Center in Queens, NY, USA

Reggae Mix Plate



June 17

Pioneer Sq. In Portland, OR, USA

Reggae Festival Am Kiez



June 18

Gaswerk in Augsburg, Germany

Victoria Ska & Reggae Festival



June 21 - 25

Various Locations in Victoria, BC, Canada

St. Kitts Music Festival



June 22 - 24

Basseterre in St. Kitts & Nevis

Bergamo Sunfest DAL 2 AL 6 GIUGNO

HORACE ANDY CHARLIE P FORELOCK
REAL ROCKERS ROOTICAL FOUNDATION
THE OROBIANS CHRISKEE FIASKA VUOTA

DUB AREA by BG SOUND FOUNDATION ROLL CALL

BANCARELLA AREA CHILL WORKSHOP DI DANZABALL BERGAMO REGGAE UNIVERSITY

COULEUR CAFÉ

23.24.25 JUNE 2023



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MYKAL ROSE
MIGHTY MYSTIC
LIZANO - EL DUB

DUBBYAH - DJ TREETZ, MIC CROTCHES, LAKE ANTHONY - STAY POSITIVE SOUND

SATURDAY JUNE 24TH 2023
 KEE RIVER OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATER TRUCKEE
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5TH FESTIVAL **SUMMERJAM** THE SPIRIT OF PEACE

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 ALBOROSIE • JAN DELAY R&B • SOJA
 KABAKA PYRAMID • NINA CHUBA
 BARRINGTON LEVY • KY-MANI MARLEY
 INNA DESAYO • MALI ELIYE • JAZZ ELIYE • MORTIMER
 BLAZE PAHAN • LA PEGATINA • TRESSHA • NATTALI RIZE
 THE SKINKS • EDO GARY • YAKOBI CROVIAN • DRYBROTHER
 TATK • SAMORA • IL CAVETTO • AWA FALL • INTI • JIZZLE

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30. JUNI - 2. JULI 2023
KÖLN - FÜHLINGER SEE
 INFO & TICKETS: SUMMERJAM.DE

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 THE TEARDROPS • KING & JOHNNY COSMIC • YANA LITA

LATER
DAMIAN • MARLEY • KOFFEE
 COLLIE BUDDZ • THE MOVEMENT
 THE TRINOS • HIGHWAY • GROUND LAST
 FORWARD • FUBAR • JOE SAMBO • SHAWTEE

SUNDAY
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 WAYNE WONDER • BABY CHAM
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LAGANA REGGAE AZUARA XX EDICION FESTIVAL

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/Ky-Mani Marley / The Toasters
 /O.B.F. r Junior Roy & Sr Wilson
 /Jahsta & Conscious Vibes Band
 /Freedom Vibration r Roberto Sánchez, Inés Pardo,
 Muscle Voice & Purple D'lyte
 /Dr Dubwiser r Sista Livity,
 Nupah & Neleh Vibes
 /Chata Flores
 /4Bob / Kei B & Diamond Ex
 /Acampada / Actividades

12. **AFROURH FESTIVAL**

23.6. - 25.6.23
 Dietrich-Koenig-Haus Dortmund

IMONTI & DRUSSEN

ITHACA REGGAE FEST

FRIDAY & SUNDAY

SCIENTIST
 DUBS CAYUGA LAKE TO SAVE DEMOCRACY
 SATURDAY JUNE 24

GIANT PANDA GUERRILLA
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DOUBLE TIGER MIXED BY SCIENTIST

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SUNSHINE DEADLY HUNTA UPEE GOCOMAN ELLYZ
 MESSJAH BRUKARY SAX DORSEY SIS ELO PLUMATA
 RISING SPIRITS FEEL WAU BALDRK PIPPA YHANO
 LIQID A GENERAL KRIFTEEN DJ HERBY ELAOR
 ONE HEARTMAN J.B. ADMIRAL KOLIBAL YUKIMURA DJ BUCI
 REGGAE FETE MAL MARRONERO DR. LANTANA DUAL P. WERTMAN

ROOTS REGGAE FESTIVAL

30/06 & 1 - 2 JUILLET 2023

CLINTON FEARON • QUEEN OMEGA
 LINVAL THOMPSON • CIMARONS
 CLAIRE ANGEL • PANACHE CULTURE
 REBEL JAM BAND • BONGO WHITE
 YOHA AND THE DRAGON TRIBE • LAMBZ
 MYSTICAL MAN - LETOVO & POODJ MADRIGAL
 CAPITAL SOUNDS & MANY MORE

Bergamo Sunfest



June 22 - 25

Edoné in Bergamo, Italy

Reggae Rise Up – Maryland



June 23 - 25

Peninsula in Baltimore, MD, USA

Afro Ruhr Festival



June 23 - 25

Dietrich-Keuning-Haus in Dortmund, Germany

Couleur Cafe



June 23 - 25

Parc Ossegem in Brussels, Belgium

Point Reggae



June 23 - 25

Thomas Point Beach in Brunswick, MA, USA

Ithaca Reggae Festival



June 24 - 25

Stewart Park in Ithaca, NY, USA

Truckee Reggae Fest



June 24

Truckee River Park Amphitheatre in Truckee, CA, USA

Groovin In The Park



June 25

Roy Wilkins Park in Queens, NY, USA

One Love Reggae Reunion



June 27 - July 2

Maso Mandrea in Mandrea, Italy

SummerJam



June 30 - July 2

Fühlinger See in Cologne, Germany

Reggae at the Pier



June 30

The Pier at Port City Marina in Wilmington, NC, USA

Jahmusic Twenty Years Fest



June 30 – July 1

Beach Park Mlékojedy in Neratovice, Czech Republic

Lagata Reggae Festival



June 30 - July 2

Festival Area in Azuara, Spain

Roots Reggae Festival



June 30 - July 2

Montroeuil-sur-Haine in Hensies, Belgium

1&2 JULY 2023

SUN Splash

AMPIRO-REGGAE-DEFO

KY-MANI MARLEY • MUSA KEYS • MR VEGAS
 FLAVOUR • MORTIMER • RICHIE SPICE •
 DALIWONGA • YOUNG STUNNA • TARRUS RILEY
 LYMIC MURRAY • BOOLE • KARANA PYRAMID
 TANJA STEPHENS • AMANSEA

BRANNO • POKS • QUINTER • PARTYWIVES •
 ANTONES • TANJA • LE PRINCE • JAH • MRA

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KUNST IN DER NATUR

MUSIK FESTIVAL

IRIE IN THE WOODS

SA.1.7.23 AM WACHTBERG

START 14:00

NORRIS MAN SPARKY RUGGED
 PACHECO MAAMA GANJA
 DELJMAN & THE ROCKERS DAZZY NOSH

ROYAL MAXX SOUND - DJ SMO - DJT-GER-
 KINGS CROWN SOUND - LIME - JAH POWER SOUND - THE

BEREICHUNG MIT FETTERMANGROVE WELDENBERG

15th **SUNRISE**
REGGAE & SKA
FESTIVAL

SKANK! INTERNATIONAL REGGAE FESTIVAL

6-7-8 JULI 2023 CANTABRIA

WILLI WILLIAMS
 LINDAL THOMPSON
 LONÉ ARK

MESSAGE

INÉS PARDO (SHANTI YALAH)
 DALWIT I-MAN CRUZ

RAS TWEED, PURPLE D'LYTE
 RARELYA, MUSCLE VOICE
 BOMB BASS HI FI

DASHKADI ONKONE IMA CHOLO
 IMA RANKA REGGAE ROMBI SEKTOR

WWW.SKANKFESTIVAL.COM

JULY



13°

INTERNATIONAL REGGAE FESTIVAL
SARDINIA REGGAE FESTIVAL
SORSO

7/8 LUGLIO 2023

SORSO (SS) MARINA DI SORSO SARDINIA

OSTRODA REGGAE FESTIVAL

01.07.2023
 TIGERBARBANDA
 OLEO & FOLLOW THE RIDDIM
 SUVRANG
 DAMIAN SVYONPAM
 ETHA KONTRABANDE
 SHASHIMANE

02.07.2023
 REGGAE EDUKACJA
 THE DJANGUS
 HANMUEL
 REBEL IRENS
 VOO VOO
 KABAKA PYRAMID
 DREADZONE

03.07.2023
 REGGAE EDUKACJA
 PARALIZ BAND
 MASSIVE SOUNDSYSTEM
 TOTAL HIP-REPLACEMENT
 ANANKOED
 KAPELA ZE WSZIW SZAWALI
 TABU
 ZION TRAIN

04.07.2023
 REGGAE EDUKACJA
 THE VVO
 DUBSKA
 JAMNERATION
 NATTALIZE
 DUB PISTOLS

LE **BIG-REGGAE** FESTIVAL 2023

PATRICE
KY-MANI
MARLEY
YANISS ODU

PYRÈNE FESTIVAL

MALIKAL
 BRAIN DAMAGE
 LES HURLEMENTS D'LEO
MAX ROMEO
 FEAT XANA ROMEO & AZIZI ROMEO
BABYLON CIRCUS
 JOHNNY OSBOURNE
 LES SALES MAJESTÉS
 KOMBO LOCO

AFRO LATINO FESTIVAL 2023

THE MOST TROPICAL & EXOTIC FESTIVAL IN BELGIUM

July 7-8, 2023
 10th **BOSTON JERK FEST**
 spice, fun & food

bostonjerkfest.com

LEVITATE music & arts FESTIVAL

JULY 7-9 2023 MARSHELEDDA

Friday
 STICK FIGURE
 RIPE LUCIUS • COLLIE BUDDZ
 THE CALIFORNIA HONEYDROPS

Saturday
 TREY ANASTASIOS BAND
 GOOSE
 PEACH PIT * CELISSE
 THE ELEVATORS • G. LOVE • SPECIAL SAUCE
 LIME CROQUETTE • JOHN CRABBLE • THE HEAVY HEAVY
 BRICK CRABBY BAND • FI JAHN JAHN

Sunday
 BRANDI CARLIE
 REBEL LITEN • ZIGBY MARLEY
 SHAKY GRAVES • LARIN POE • CELISSE

7-8 Juli - 2023. Twann

OPREU splash

opreusplash.ch

Sun Splash



July 1 - 2

AFAS Live in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Irie In The Woods



July 1

Am Wachtberg in Gars am Kamp, Austria

Sunrise Reggae & Ska Festival



July 6 - 9

Open Air Area in Burtenbach, Germany

Skank Festival



July 6 - 8

Barcena de Pie de Concha in Catabria, Spain

Ostroda Reggae Festival



July 6 - 9

Festival Area in Ostroda, Poland

Le Big Reggae Festival



July 6

La Pinede Gould in Juan Les Pins, France

Sardinia Reggae Festival



July 7 - 8

Marina di Sorso in Sorso, Sardinia, Italy

Afro Latino Festival



July 7 - 8

Thor Park in Genk, Belgium

Boston Jerk Fest



July 7 - 8

Harvard University Athletic Complex in Boston, MA, USA

Pyrene Festival



July 7 - 8

Festival Area in Bordes, France

Levitate Music and Arts Festival



July 7 - 9

Festival Area in Marshfield, MA, USA

Lakesplash



July 7 - 8

Festival Area in Twann, Switzerland

IT'S A TARD THING!

GRACY'S BASH

Friesland's Reggae Fest

HORACE ANDY
with special guests: **THE BROTHERS**

FRESHA
IRIE MANSIONS ROOTS
CONNECTION with special guests: **THE BROTHERS**

JOSEPH BLUE GRANT
OWEN GREEN
THE BROTHERS
STANISLAW PAUL

Sa. 8 JULI **Linde - Yard**
Banusters: 967-26316 Varel

OPENING GAMES WITH **RAINEY POLLARD**

SAN DIEGO

BAYFEST

WATERFRONT PARK

JULY 8TH - 2023

DAMIAN MARLEY
with **COMMON KINGS** & **KOFFEE**

PROF. D DENIM & KEITHAL WASH
with special guests: **THE BROTHERS**

1100 Pacific Hwy - San Diego CA 92101 - www.bayfest.com

DUB CAMP

FESTIVAL

OLAND ROOTS
20th Anniversary

KY-MANI MARLEY

CLEO & **TWINKLE BROTHERS**
HELT OF SYSTEM SUN
SVENSKA AKADEMIEN
HETZIA & **VIVIAN JONES**
RAS DANIEL MALCOLM
ROTOND'S & **NAVY SEAL** & **ALFARRET**
EPHRAIM & **SOL** & **ANTHONY** & **THE BROTHERS**
WILDMAN SOUND & **AMANDA WARREN**
THE BROTHERS & **THE BROTHERS**
THE BROTHERS & **THE BROTHERS**
THE BROTHERS & **THE BROTHERS**

12-15 JULI 2023 **SANDBERGEN**

Reno Splash

FESTIVAL - ANTI RAZISTA

13-14-15-16 LUGLIO 2023

MONTE SOLE - MARZABOTTO (BO)
FOGGIOLO RIFUGIO RESISTENTE

AKF

ALBOROSIE & SHENGEN CLAN
MONO & NIKITAMAN
CHE SUDAKA & **GREEN**

HANS SÖLLNER & BAYAMAN'SISDEM
WALLY & AMI WARRING & **ORANGE** & **TRESHIA**
GANJAMAN & **THE MAGIC MUMBLE JUMBLE** & **TASHEENO**
RAUM27 & **WILDCAMPING** & **FINTON** & **SUTCLIFFE**
WAAGAL & **KING INOAH** & **WHO DEH A** & **UNOJAH**
DOKEETHONK COMPANY & **KOPHARNO WALTER**
DUKINGO & BAND

4th of July

Rasta Plas

Weedbeat Festival

- Banda Senderos
- Total Hip Replacement
- Conscious Culture
- Sebastian Sturm
- Passepartout
- Luisa Laakmann
- Colah Colah & Peace Development
- Crew | Ska-T | Tuff Sound

PLEIN WATTS FESTIVAL
15th Edition

13-14-15 JULIET 2023

PARC NAVAZZA - LANCY, GENÈVE

KY-MANI MARLEY (HEAD)
IJAHMAN LEVI (HEAD)
SINSEMILIA (HEAD)
CHEZIDEK (HEAD)
NAOMI COWAN (HEAD)
META (HEAD)
HUMAN DROP (HEAD)
ASHRAFF30 (HEAD)
JAHNATON (HEAD)
SAMORA (HEAD)
WHYDAH (HEAD)
NAHAKA (HEAD)

HOWA REGGAE

MACKA B & THE ROOTS RAGGA BAND
ROOTS SYMPHONIC SOUNDWARRIORS
INES PARDO, **SHANTI YALAH**, **I-MAN CRUZ**
DARVIT, **PURPLE D'LYTE** & **MUSCLE VOICE**
ALPHA STEPPA, **PAULO BALDWIN** & **FORELICK**
CHARLTONS & **MATAH** & **HEAVY HAMMER**
BORSALINO CRUIZ FEAT. **COOKAN P & SULA**
THE PHENOMENES & **DI ALICIA**
GENNA GENNA DANCAHELL CREW
JUSTICE SOUND & **PURPLE ROCKETS**
MUSICAL SISTERS & **HEMI SILLAH**
PETER CHAVES & **HARRY DE LA ISLA**
LA TRINXERA REGGAE & **ENDRY FYAH**

14-15-16 JULIET 2023

REGGAE THERAPY

MORGAN HERITAGE
ROMAIN VIRGO, **YANNIS DOUG**, **QUEEN OMEGA**
LOTUN FYAH, **NUTTER**, **TIWONY**, **NORRIS IRAN**
RAS SHILON, **E.S.Y KENNINGA**, **LYNNIS JEAN**
YERMANH & **DAVID ORRADO** & **LEGAL VOTG**
HIGH WOLVES, **ROYAL JAHN'S** & **ARTURAL BAND**
KAPRISSON, **SEKTELALI**, **GIL**, **KIVYE**, **TUG**
ART W & **SPRIT SOUND SYSTEM** & **BLACK OUT SOUND SYSTEM**
SOUTH CLASH SOUND SYSTEM & **more...**

STADE LOUIS, **ACHILLE**, **MARTINIQUE**
4th JULIET - 08:00 60 00

Mighty Crown Entertainment Presents
SPECIAL GUESTS FROM JAMAICA
SAMCHEE, **FREDDIE MCGRORY**, **WILNIE WOODLEY**, **TOXIC**, **PUFF KOTI** & **BAND**

MIGHTY CROWN & **BORISTONE LOVE** & **MASSIVE BROTHERS** & **DA Puffi** & **more...**

Mighty Crown The Final!
FAR EAST REGGAE CRUISE 2023

日本初!!
日本最大規模の音楽イベント
MSCクルーズ船に乗りこえ
ヨーロッパ一環
ヨーロッパ一環

7/15(前夜) 7/16(本夜) 7/17(後夜)

www.fareastreggaecruise.com

REGGAE IM HANFFELD

15. JULI 2023 - 14.00 UHR
Eintritt 13,00 UHR - www.reggae-im-hanffeld.de

Tickets: **VVK 15 € - AK 20 €**
Lippst Tor 6, 32389 Steinheim

MIT: REBELLION THE RECALLER
ANDREW MURPHY & **SINGING GOLD**
UWE BANTON & THE TOUCHTUT BAND
NAVIGATION SYSTEM & **BANJOORY**
YAN MECK & THE UPRISING
ROCKERS INC FEAT **MANDINGO**

REGGAE ON THE WAY
2023 TICKETS NA

SATURDAY JULY 15 **REBELLION**
JBOOC & **TRIBAL SEEDS**
THE GREEN & **ARTURAL SOUND SYSTEM**
JUST ADDED: **IAM TONGI**

SUNDAY JULY 16 **STICK FIGURE**
PEPPER & **MATISIAHO**
THE BROTHERS & **CLINTON FERREN**
CITYMANS

www.reggaeontheway.com

Gracy's Bash



July 8

Die Linde und der Yard in Varel, Germany

Bayfest



July 8

Waterfront Park in San Diego, CA, USA

Dub Camp Festival



July 12 - 15

Lac de Vioreau in Joué-Sur-Erdre, France

Öland Roots



July 13 - 15

Sandbergens Festplats in Mörbylånga, Schweden

Reno Splash



July 13 - 16

In Monte Sole, Italy

Afrika Karibik Fest



July 13 - 16

Volksfestplatz in Wassertrüdingen, Germany

Plein les Watts Festival



July 13 - 15

Parc Navazza in Lancy, Switzerland

Rastaplas Festival



July 14 - 15

Nord AA in Zoetermeer, The Netherlands

Weedbeat



July 14 - 15

Speicher in Nordstemmen, Germany

NOWA Reggae



July 14 - 15

Parc de Ribes Roges in Vilanova I la Geltru, Spain

Reggae Therapy



July 14 - 16

Stade Louis Achille in Martinique

Far East Reggae Cruise



July 15 - 20

Cruise Ship in Yokohama, Japan

Reggae im Hanfeld



July 15

Hanfeld in Steinheim, Germany

Reggae on the Way



July 15 - 16

LeMay - ACM Haub Field in Tacoma, WA, USA

THE 17TH ANNUAL
Reggae & World Music
FESTIVAL

KONSHENS LUCIANO STEPPES ALISON HINDS

DEED LORAK BOPT WHITE DI SOUND OF FINE

SATURDAY JULY 15, 2023

12PM - 10PM
GATES OPEN AT 12PM RAIN OR SHINE

WELCOME TO THE FESTIVAL! WE'VE GOT THE FOOD, BEER, MUSIC, AND SO MUCH MORE!
ROCKETS PARTY KITCHEN SERVES THE FOOD! (SEASIDE RESTAURANT)
PERFECT SOUND OF DUBBY BITTES • YOUNG AND ASSOCIATES

32nd EDITION

Festival de NEOULES
20-21-22 JUILLET 2023
Basile de Chalcaudin-Neoules

KY MANI MARLEY DUBIOZA KOLEKTIV
INNA DE YARD ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION
MB14 • KT GORIQUE • MANUDIGITAL R. CAPORAL NEGUS
SMOKEY JOE AND THE KID • BOB'S NOT DEAD
PICON MON AMOUR • FREDDY'S • BABOU BOY
+GUESTS

1800 11000 STANDS EXPO-CAMPING INFO & BILLETTERIE SUR WWW.FESTIVAL-DE-NEOULES.FR

20 YEARS

IRIE VIBES BACK TO THE ROOTS FESTIVAL
21-22 JULY 2023

LINVAL THOMPSON (JAM)
• THE MYSTIC WARRIORS
• ROD ANTON LERU • THE LEGENDS
• JAH YOUTH SOUND SYSTEM (UK)
• KINGSTEP SOUND SYSTEM
• ROOTS WARRIORS SOUND SYSTEM (FR)
• RAS DIGBY LOUK • JAHNIB
• MARJIAN • THE ROOT SCENE
• MASSER SOUND SYSTEM (NL)
• CHALICE SOUND SYSTEM (FR)
• UNIFICATION SOUND • JAH MY VIBRATION
• BLACKBURN SOUND SYSTEM • JAZZMAN

NORTHMAN CORLE • 20 JULY - FREE ENTRANCE
BY SEAN BOGGA • TEDDY'S JAZZBOO
FRANCIS STROHSTEN
RUPELSOLDATEN

NORTHWEST WORLD REGGAE FESTIVAL

The Itals Reemah
Prezident Brown
Marlon Asher Alika
Junior Toots
Tribute to Toots & The Maytals
The Lambsbread Kava Jah
Mista Chief Ras Gabriel
w/ Rising Buffalo Tribe & The 4word Band
Pedro World Citizen
James E Greeley Irie Rockerz
Iron Prophecy De Solution
Yankulk Ohnl! Dog Butte Singers

Caribbean Artists
REGGAE SUM FEST
DONORCOURT ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

JULY 21, 2023
TOMMY LEE, MASICKA, VALIANT, CHRONIC LAW, EGYPTIAN, JAH VINCI
BAYLA, TOPPAMM, PABLO YE, SHANE G, ROZE BOW, STAR ASHLEY ASOL, MIGHTY CHRON
YANCKA RUSSELL MANN, ROMBER OF S BUNNERS, JAHMY YOUNGER, NITTY HOTCHIE, MEGA BANTON,
MAYELIAN, JESSE KING, BORN BORN BORN, GRENADA & THE GRENADA SOUNDS CULT.

JULY 22, 2023
MINISTER MARION HALL, MORGAN BENTHALES, KARAKA PYRAMID,
ROMAN VIGOR, FREDRICK MCGREGOR, ONE LANE JAHMY, JAHMY STEPPERS, BUCKLE UP,
AND THE BIG STRIP CREW FEATURING CHIM MCGRONIN,
STEPHEN J. GEORGE AND THE LORE REG BAWL & LAM.

DI/SOUND SYSTEMS
SOKAYE, JASO WISSEY, COLE REG, JAH MYSTIC, TITANIC SOUND, DJ COURTNEY, DJ FRANCO & WOLFE J,
DJ JAH, DJ MATHY, TROY PATTON, LONE LANE, DJ JAHMY, DJ JAHMY, JAHMY,
DETA PAPPAL, BARRY BANG, CRAZY CAROL, TRIPPER X, DJ BANTON, DJ KEZ, DJ COLLECTOR,
THE SKAVLA DJ TROUPE

HOSTS
THE WHITE HORSE & A WILD HILL THE PUBS

MADINA PALMERSE (FERMO) ITALY

19-23 JULY 2023

BABABOOM
FESTIVAL
— peace through music —
TICKETS ONLINE

***** www.bababoomfestival.it *****

15TH ANNUAL
MAMMOTH REGGAE FESTIVAL 2023
FREE ENTRY - ALL-AGES REGGAE

FRIDAY JULY 21
ELI-MAC
PACIFIC DUB
EUREKA SOUND
LENNALA & DA JAH

SATURDAY JULY 22
THE ELOWATERS
KYLE SMITH
THE WIDE EYED KIDS
CLAIRE WRIGHT

SUNDAY JULY 23
ARISE ROOTS
INNA VISION
GONZO & ZEB

HOSTED BY DJ METS

REEDS FESTIVAL
21.-23. Juli 2023

8TH ANNUAL
LAKE TAHOE REGGAE FESTIVAL 2023
PASCADIS TRAOE

SAUNDAY JULY 23
REBELLION
TRIBAL SEEDS • THE GREEN
HIRE • THE EXPANDERS
BUMPIN' DUBIES • PIPE DOWN

SUNDAY JULY 23
STICK FIGURE
PEPPER • DISPATCH
J'BOOG • IVA TERRA
THE EQUIVATORS • CLAIRE WRIGHT

LAKETAHOEREGGAEFEST.COM

THEY'VE GOT THE LAST ONE
SEASPLASH FESTIVAL

DAY 1: JULY 16 @ 12:00PM • 20 HOURS OF ENTERTAINMENT
IRATION STEPPAS
ABOP • BAMBICE • CROMACIANZ

FESTIVAL 20-23 JULY 2023 • MARITIMSA, OSERIK
CHANNEL ONE • ZION TRAIN • HEADMIX • PITCH BLACK
STILLNESS • ANEMAT • FILIP MOTOVINSKI • RAHMANEE

SUMMER VIBRATION FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 21ST - SUNDAY 23RD JULY 2023

WILKSWOOD REGGAE FESTIVAL

WILKSWOOD FARM • SWANAGE • DORSET

2 DAYS OF SWEET REGGAE MUSIC
WORLDWIDE THE LARGEST REGGAE MUSIC

HORACE ANDY • HOLLIE COOK
FATE SOUND SYSTEMS PERFORMING WITH THEIR OWN BASS:
ABA SHANTI-I • CHANNEL ONE • JAH SHAKA

TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT
KIKO BUN • IRATION STEPPAS

TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT
ROOTS DAUGHTERS • JAHNA SHAWWAS • FEATURING
MORTY ANJAN • JAH PAUL & BROTHER IN
DUB • JUDAH • THE VIBE • EVIDENCE MUSIC • BROTHER CULTURE

23. FESTIVAL
Reggae na Piskach

21-22 lipca 2023 r.
Ostrów Wielkopolski
reggaenapiaskach.pl

MÁLAGA REGGAE SALUTE FESTIVAL

INNER CIRCLE • THE WAILERS
JAH NASON • CULTURE • KANYAKA ILLI • TURBULENCE
AL CAMPBELL • ANTHONY JOHNSON • GARI DANKINS
JAHKE • DJ LONN (Dubstep) • MARY MURRAY • TALL SKATE

Bayfront Reggae & World Music Festival



July 15

Bayfront Festival Park in Duluth, MN, USA

Reggae Sunfest



July 16 - 22

Catherine Hall Stadium in Montego Bay, Jamaica

Seasplash Festival



July 19 - 23

Festival Area Martinska in Šibenik, Croatia

Festival de Neoules



July 20 - 22

Festival Area in Neoules, France

Bababoom Festival



July 19 - 23

Marina Palmense in Fermo, Italy

Summer Vibration



July 20 - 23

Festival Area in Sélestat, France

Mammoth Reggae Festival



July 21 - 23

Festival Area in Mammoth Lakes, CA, USA

Wilkswood Reggae Festival



July 21 - 23

Wilkswood Farm in Swanage, UK

Irie Vibes Roots Festival



July 21 - 22

Kortemark in Handzame, Belgium

Reeds Festival



July 21 - 23

Lake Pfäffiker in Pfäffikon, Switzerland

Reggae Na Piaskach



July 21 - 22

Festival Area in Ostrów Wielkopolski, Poland

NW World Reggae Festival



July 21 - 22

Festival Area in Bull Run, OR, USA

Lake Tahoe Reggae Festival



July 22 - 23

Palisades Tahoe in Olympic Valley, CA, USA

Malaga Reggae Salute



July 22

Autocine Málaga Cesur FP in Malaga, Spain

KCRW FESTIVAL

REGGAE NIGHT XXI

BERES HAMMOND

STEEL PULSE

THIRD WORLD

JULY 23

1827

Reggae Camp

2023

2023. JÚLIUS 25-29.

HILL VIBES

Reggae Festival

INNER CIRCLE - PATRICE ANTHONY B - MR. VEGAS

KABAKA PYRAMID - JAZ ELISE

NATTY KING - JAH SUN - SAMDRA

RECALL - STRANGER COLE - THE STEADYTONES

REBEL MUSIC - ROOTZ RADICALS - TASHEENO

KITOLE KENDA - TOMMY SHERBS - LUKASCHER - MOBY STICK

MORTAL KOMBAT - INVASION SOUND - SPLENDID SOUND - BASSINING SOUND - B.A. NYRAK

SOLETA CHRISTIAN - JOHN RIZZY - FINE JAHN - JOHN TONIC - HOUSE OF HOON - SOLETA CLEO

26.-30. JULY 2023 TELFS-AUSTRIA

SPORTZENTRUM

27 JULY - 1 AUGUST 2023 * TISNO, CROATIA

OUTLOOK ORIGINALS 2023

OUTLOOK ORIGINALS 2023

HIPPIALA REGGAE FESTIVAL 2023

28-29 JULY

Lineup FRIDAY 28TH

Kabaka Pyramid & THE DODDIE ROCKERS BAND

Johnny Osbourne & TONY LO

Seun Kuti & TONY LO

Jaz Elise & DANIELLA TORRES

Natural Rockers & BIEN DYNAMQ

Lineup SATURDAY 29TH

Inner Circle & ALBOROSIE

Lila Iké & DUANE STEPHENSON

Natural Way & DIEGOJAH

Silly Walks & MILLION VIBES

KARAMEE

BLACK FOREST ON FIRE

REGGAE FESTIVAL BERGHAUTEN

INNER CIRCLE & **FANTAN MOJAH**

NATTALIE RIZE & **CULTURE** feat. **KENYATTA HILL**

JAHNERATION & **MARLEY'S GHOST**

BENJIE & SINGING U & **MALAKA HOSTEL**

BACKED BY RUDM & CHIP BANO & **ROOTSMAN FVYAH** & **E.N.R.**

DUSTDOWN HI-TEI & FLOWIN VIBES & CABAN HUIDE

FAMILIENFREUNDLICH • CAMPING AREA • BÄDER • INTERNATIONALE • VEGAN KÜCHE

28.-30. JULI 2023

#20YRS

REGGAE IN WULF

28. - 29. JULI 2023

REGGAEBOA FESTIVAL

28 - 30 DE JULIO 2023

BALBOA, EL BIERZO

12A EDICIÓN

THE CARIBBEAN'S LARGEST VIP PARTY EXPERIENCE

CAMPARI Dream Week 2023

JULY 28 - AUGUST 1 2023

Reggae Jamaica

EAT AND DRINK FREE EVERYONE'S A VIP 8 PARTIES + 9 DAYS

SHENSEEA - STALK ASHLEY - WAYNE WONDER

CHRONIC LAW - VALIANT - DING DONG - SKENG

FEATURING WORLD CLASS DJs

BANKA • ROOM ROOM • BRUCH • F. FRANCO • CHROMATIC • CODE RED • COMPARTMENT • CRAZY WEL

DEWON • DODDIE ROCKERS • FRODOLO • FRODOLO • FRODOLO • FRODOLO • FRODOLO • FRODOLO

FACE, PLAY • KATE • MIKA PIRMA • POLINA • REDD HEAD • ROCKY PLAYBOY • SHIBOLEE BUS • SHIBOLEE

SHAWA WOLFE • THE CARIBBEAN CONNECTION • THE LEGEND

4 MORE TOP ARTISTS AND LIC

SPECIAL 45 YEARS TRIBUTE TO BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS - LIVE IN AMBY

JULIAN MARLEY & THE WAILERS

SEAN PAUL

STEFLOH DON

BIG SURPRISE ACT

BENNIE MAN

TARRUS RILEY

BIG MOUNTAIN

EK & MOUSE

DON CARLOS // STYLO G

SISTER HANCOY // ANTHONY B

HORACE ANDY // MAD PROFESSOR

TRAFASSI // DJ MOORTJE & FRIENDS

MC PESTER // ICLEBER // IMHO // D'KAYA

DOUBLE TROUBLE // BLACK JOKER

SHIWA & THE YUFF SOUND BAND

AND MANY MORE...

HASTINGS LEAH 29TH JULY

UB40

FT ALI CAMPBELL

HOLLIE COOK

REGGAE ROAST FT NATTY CAMPBELL

GENERAL LEVY

THE MARLEY REVIVAL

TICKETS VIA SKIDDLER.COM

belize festival

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC AND FOOD

SAVOUR THE RHYTHM

JULY 29th - 30th

SIZE CITY

MORGAN HERITAGE

SPICE

BACKED BY MARY HATTY BAND

BUSY SIGNAL

SKINNY FABULOUS | LYRIKAL

ADAM O | JADEL | ERPHAAN ALVES

ROTHMI

Reggae Night XXI



July 23

Hollywood Bowl In Los Angeles, CA, USA

LB27 Reggae Camp



July 25 - 29

Tőserdő Autós Kemping in Lakitelek/Zalán, Hungary

Hill Vibes Reggae Festival



July 26 - 30

Sportzentrum in Telfs, Austria

Outlook Origins



July 27 - August 1

Garden Resort in Tisno, Croatia

Uppsala Reggae Festival



July 28 - 29

Festival Area in Uppsala, Sweden

Black Forest on Fire



July 28 - 30

Papelwaldsee in Berghaupten, Germany

Reggae in Wulf



July 28 - 30

Festival Area in Wulfertshausen, Germany

Reggaeboa



July 28 - 30

El Bierzo in Balboa, Spain

Dream WKND



July 28 - August 1

Negril, Jamaica

Reggae Rotterdam Festival



July 29

Ahoy in Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Hastings Reggae Festival



July 29

The Oval in Hastings, UK

Belize International Music & Food Festival



July 29 - 30

Marion Jones Sports Complex in Belize City, Belize

Reggae Jam

August 4 - 6

Klosterpark in Bersenbrück, Germany

Reggae Geel

August 4 - 5

Festival Area in Geel, Belgium

Sun Ska

August 4 - 6

Domain de Nodris in Vertheuil, France

Ruhr Reggae Summer

August 4 - 6

Am Ruhrstadion in Mülheim a.d. Ruhr, Germany

One Love Reggae Festival

August 4 - 5

Festival Area in Wiesen, Austria

Nomade Reggae Festival

August 4 - 6

Chemin du Manson in Anglefort, France

Reggae Land

August 5 - 6

The National Bowl in Milton Keynes, UK

Jamaica Independence Festival

August 5

Lappis Beach in Stockholm, Sweden

Roots & Yam Jerk Fest

August 6

Exposition Park in Los Angeles, CA, USA

Boomtown

August 9 - 13

Matterly Estate in Winchester, UK

One Love Festival

August 10 - 13

Higden Estate in Worthing, UK

No Logo Festival

August 11 - 13

Festival Area in Fraisans, France

No Logo BZH



August 11 – 14

Le Fort De Saint-Pere in St. Pere, France

Afrika Tage – Wien



August 11 – 28

Donauinsel in Vienna, Austria

Regalowisko Bielawa Reggae Rock Festival



August 11 – 12

Festival Area in Bielawa, Poland

Reggae Sundance



August 12

Karpendonkse Plas in Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Culture Fest



August 12

Lallo's in Lauderhill, FL, USA

Jamins Reggae Fest



August 13

Catholic Health Amphitheater in Farmingville, NY, USA

Overjam Reggae Festival



August 16 - 20

Sotocje in Tolmin, Slovenia

Rototom Sunsplash



August 16 - 22

Festival Area in Benicassim, Spain

Turnpike Reggae Festival



August 18 - 19

Landgasthaus Lönne in Herzebrock-Clarholz, Germany

Reggae On The Rocks



August 19

Red Rocks Amphitheater in Morrison, CO, USA

Roots in the Woods



August 24 - 26

Ski Resort in Trije Kralji, Slovenia

Reggae Lake



August 19 - 20

Gaasper Park in Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Paxos Reggae Festival



August 24 - 26

Paxos Island, Greece

Uprising Festival



August 25 - 26

Festival Area in Bratislava, Slovakia

P&U

BOMB LAT

25 August
26 August

25/26 August

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AKA AKA LUGATTI & 9INE

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August 25 - 26

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September 9 - 10

Festival Beach Area in Torcy, France

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September 29 – October 1

Pelican Park in Carencro, LA, USA

Reggae Rise Up

October 6 - 8

Downtown Event Center in Las Vegas, NV, USA

INTERVIEW



GENTLEMAN'S DUB CLUB

THEY'VE GOT THE ANTIDOTE

CONTINUE THE MISSION

BY STEVE TOPPLE PHOTOS BY FATTY 35MM



Gentleman's Dub Club (GDC) are one of the most well-known and popular bands to emerge from the UK Reggae scene in the past 20 years. Having earned the respect of audiences, music critics, and DJs alike – they're a solid feature of the culture. Now, they've returned with a new album, **On A Mission** – featuring a host of col-

laborations and a mixture of club tracks and conscious music. The album is a rich melting-pot of styles and genres and showcases **GDC** at the peak of their powers. So, **Reggaeville** caught up with **Toby Davies** from the band, to discuss the album, **GDC's** evolution, the UK Reggae scene and more.

On A Mission is a superb album – we didn't expect anything less! It's very eclectic in terms of genres as well. When GDC bring an album together, is this diversity intentional, or intuitive?

I guess we've been going for quite a long time now. With that, comes the experience of trying stuff and seeing what you like, and throwing away what you don't like. So, we're at the stage where those calculations are going on in the background while we're making songs. We don't sit down and say "This one has to be a Ska tune" – it's a case

of tempos, the general vibe and so on. A lot of that stuff we used to deliberate over is now in our pocket. It's quite liberating as we used to umm and arr a lot. Experience has brought us to this point.

I guess when you've worked together so long, it now must be natural.

I think one of the things in general is that we had some overviews of what we were looking to do. **Luke**, our keys player, has a great sense of harmony and taste – and we encouraged him to bring that out. So, there's some tracks



where the chord sequences are juicy – not really what you’d expect from a Reggae tune. We’ve done a lot of A minor to D minor and back again, all the trademarks that when done right is the best music out there – but we wanted to push that further.

The other thing we wanted to do is our past four albums have been concept ones. This one, we threw concepts out of the window and made every song on the album a banger.

Well, that worked – because every track is! So, your label is Easy Star. You’ve been with them ages. How did the label feel about it not being a concept album?

Easy Star are the most supportive, lovely bunch, and they have full confidence in us. We sent them the demos and they said they sound great. They’re just really confident in what we’re doing, which brings a real sense

of positivity when you don’t have a label that wants to put its stamp on things – they’re really hands off.

But they are really involved in the process for getting momentum behind it. If we have any questions, they get back to us quickly, which is rare, and they’re astute with their observations of music, where we sit in the culture. They’re very experienced, and we just completely trust them. We wouldn’t want people messing with what we’re doing.

Production on the album was from Brad Ellis of The Nextmen. How did that come about?

You have to go back more than ten years. Our keys player at the time, **Ed**, was writing with **Brad** when he was doing writing sessions with lots of different producers. **Brad** told **Ed** he liked **GDC** and what we do. He sent us a remix of a track – and we really connected with it. Then we did **Pound For Pound** with them

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about five years ago. Working with **The Nextmen** was brilliant: they're funny, easy to work with – we hit it off. We then released **Down To Earth**, which I produced, and we were happy with it – but I thought let's send it to **Brad** to see what he can do to finish it. He's in the studio next to us – which makes it even easier. For **On A Mission**, **Brad** built the beats, working with samples as he's from Hip Hop – so when you've got that foundation to start with, it's another thing that propels you forward. He gets an amazing sound every time.

Then, you've got all these collaborations on the album. Did you know these artists already? How did these come about?

We sat down at the start and said who shall we get? Names bounce around, but the people on the album we rate highly and know: **Eva Lazarus**, **Hollie Cook**, **Gardna**... Often, if you get a feature from someone you've never met there's a long and sometimes difficult process. But we knew everyone, and we

knew we'd get good appearances. Then, **Sara Lugo** is someone we've been watching but also really rate. We had a few Zoom calls, I sent her the instrumental – and she recorded the draft audio while she was lying in a park waiting for a plane!

One of the collabs is *Antidote*, with Gardna and Josh Waters Rudge from The Skints. It's a fresh sound – vocal and Rap mixed with Ska. Is it important for GDC to keep evolving musically?

I think that track, *Antidote*, one of the things we considered was recognising that guitars had been absent from music for a while – but more recently, they've become more used again. We zeroed-in on that, and we wanted to make it sound like a Rock-Metal track. We consume music from all areas, all walks of life – you can dip into anything with music how it is now. There's a lot of stuff which brings inspiration. Pop is a weird, nebulous concept now – young kids will know loads



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of genres and periods. It's not us wanting to be up to date, but we wanted to celebrate the return of guitars.

You also traverse this line between club and conscious tracks – with some interesting political narratives. Is it important to tread that line of giving the audience what they want, but also what they need?

The deeper tracks, that's where Reggae came from - expressing things that weren't expressed by main, populist music. It was resistance music, empowering music. Obviously as middle-aged white guys we need lots of empowering (laughs).

(Laughs) At least you admit it...!

Making an album, it gives you a chance to explore different areas, vary the textures and subject matter. **Jonny** wrote the lyrics to *Sleepwalking* in lockdown - when we were all powerless, stuck in this Hades holding bay.

That was something we felt very strongly. When you're making these kinds of songs you need to have lived experience. A lot of music we listen to from the 70s is from impoverished areas of black Jamaica - and we're not going to write about that. So, the pandemic was something we can get our teeth into. Having said that, we couldn't write a whole album of that, as it would bum people out - and that's not our function as a band. Our function is as an uplifting entity, to make people smile and dance. But doing an album gives us room to express those darker thoughts.

How has the UK Reggae scene changed over the past 15 years since you've been active?

I think it might be harder to break through now than when we started - I'm not sure how you'd start out, playing quite niche music now. But there's also such a saturation of stuff, I don't know what you'd have to do. We just slogged, gig after gig after gig, for no money, driving



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around playing random places on a Tuesday night. Now, lots of venues have closed, social media is the way people consume things – and I'm sure it's more difficult to get out there.

There's still a massive scene though. The people in the UK who are into Reggae are so devoted, so consistent – it doesn't seem to be something that falls away that much. We still message people on Facebook we were messaging 15 years ago. Those people are then bringing their kids to gigs – so, it's a strong scene we're proud to be part of.

On A Mission is out now. So, what's on the agenda for GDC for the rest of the year?

We're about to head into festival mode – we're playing **Glastonbury**; supporting **Fat Freddy's Drop**; playing other festivals, and then in November we're going into the **On A Mission** album tour, across loads of cities in the UK. We're touring our asses off for the

rest of the year! We just did a tour with **The Skints**, it was so good and we're looking to make this next period as good, if not better, for the rest of the year.

So, do you prefer being in the studio or performing live?

Performing live, hands down. The stuff around touring can be messy and tiring, but there's no better feeling than being up on stage in front of a big crowd who are really into the music. Hardly anyone gets to do that, and we remind ourselves of that all the time. It's important to do that otherwise you get complacent and will probably get sick of doing it. We're grateful to all our fans who've stayed with us and are still supporting the music – we owe so much to them.

Toby, thanks so much for talking to Reggae-ville. On A Mission is superb. Respect!

Thanks so much!

GENTLEMAN'S DUB CLUB - ON A MISSION

Easy Star Records - June 9, 2023

Never let it be said that **Gentleman's Dub Club (GDC)** don't know how to please their fans, as well as a wider audience. Because they're latest album does just that in droves.

On A Mission, released via **Easy Star Records**, sees **GDC** do what they do best: mix up-beat party tracks with a smattering of slower, more con-

scious cuts - all done while breezing through styles and genres. Produced by **Brad Ellis** of UK production outfit **The Nextmen** (who **GDC** collaborated with on 2018's **Pound For Pound**), the album is slick, engaging and effective - with some superb guest artists to boot.

Reggae-laced Dub, with a focus on the party, is the order of the day. The opener, **Sugar Coated Lies**, sums this up: slick Reggae grooves laced with some flourishes of Dub, across a melancholy look at a deceptive relationship. **Long Time** featuring an impressive **Sara Lugo** lifts the mood somewhat, honing in more on Dub. And **Right Place, Wrong Time** takes the Reggae-Dub sound to something slightly Pop-laced with reflections on an ended relationship. But **GDC** then swerve to full-on Dub across **Run For Cover** - a delicious blend of heavy bass and electronic wizardry.

However, **GDC** also infuse other genres into the Reggae-Dub mix. **Play My Games** featuring the glorious **Hollie Cook** is one such example. While Reggae pervades, there's something distinctly Soul-based in the winding drums and forthright, punchy horns - as well as pleasing strings. Then, renowned **Eva Lazarus** comes



in for **High Hopes** - a veritable 21st century Lover's Rock track. Both these two cuts focus on the romantic/relationship elements of the human experience.

Of course, a UK-based, Reggae-influenced band wouldn't be complete without some club-pleasing Ska. **GDC** bring those vibes on the briskly-moving **Gone** - discussing the

end of a relationship, with some proper British lyrics and delivery. The brilliant, Ska-heavy **Antidote** gets a British 2023 makeover with the inclusion of the up-and-coming, Bristol-based **Gardna**, and **Josh Waters Rudge** from Reggae-Punk band **The Skints**. Its Ska with a modern twist - and quite superb.

Aside from the lovers and party tracks, **GDC** also drop some political and social bombshells into the mix. **Sleepwalking**, a brooding Ska track, sees the band talk us through how the system effectively turns us into zombies: trudging through life, barely making ends-meet, and for what? Then, **High On Nothing** is classic Roots - minor key-led and unsettling. However, its critical look at how the system leaves most of us with an emptiness that pervades our daily lives, driving the longing for escape so many of us experience, is moving and highly pertinent.

Overall, **On A Mission** is a strong, solid, and entertaining offering from **GDC**. They know their audience, and they know their sound - however what's so good about the album is they're not afraid to think outside the box, either. The result is classy perfection.

by Steve Topple

INTERVIEW



**JAH SUN &
SAM GILLY**

FINDING BALANCE

A LOT HAS CHANGED

BY STEVE TOPPLE
PHOTOS BY CHRIS ARSON

US-based Reggae artist **Jah Sun** has once again teamed up with legendary Austrian collective **House of Riddim**. The new album, **Return To Balance**, is a delicious melting-pot of genres and styles, all done with the usual finesse and high-quality – and of course, made to be infinitely listenable.

But the album poses more questions than it provides answers to – as it sees **Jah Sun** deviate from **Roots**, finally collaborate with other artists (after not doing so on his last two albums), and also just how this special relationship with **House of Riddim** came about. So, **Reggaeville** caught up with **Jah Sun** and **Sam Gilly** from **House of Riddim** to discuss all this and more.



Greetings Jah Sun! Greetings Sam! Thanks so much for speaking with Reggaeville. Jah Sun – we meet again!

Jah Sun: Yes bro! A lot has changed since we last spoke!

It has, but what hasn't changed is that your music is superb; not least your new album Return To Balance. It's not the first time that Jah Sun and House of Riddim have worked together, though. So, what caused you to renew the partnership for this release?

Sam: **Jah Sun** called me in October last year, and we were chatting, and then he came up with the idea of doing another album...

Jah Sun (interrupting): No, I need to tell the whole story! Back around ten years ago, I was on my first winter European tour and I was booked to play the **Uprising Winter Edition**, with **House of Riddim** as a backing band. I'd never met them before. So, I sent them

the music, and we had a morning rehearsal scheduled.

The short end of the story is I had a late night the night before, and I missed the rehearsal. So, I showed up to the venue, still tired from the night before; we took to the stage never having of met and played to a packed crowd. For me, it was one of the highlights of my career – it was almost telepathically happening with **House of Riddim**. The support was so cool – and I think we all left like “*Wow, we shelled that down*”. And that was the beginning of the relationship.

Then, **Sam** and his son produced the riddim across my track **Never Give Up**. Then, we put out the album **New Paradigm**; we then did a follow-up tour with that – just great experience after great experience, and we became good friends after that. So, I hit **Sam** up and said “*Hey, let's do another one*”.



I must ask, Sam, how did you feel about this musician you'd never met, not showing up to the rehearsal, and then just rocking-up on the night?

Sam: (Laughs) It's not a big deal, because we're used to working like this: practising the riddims and then going on stage without meeting the artist. But for me, that gig with **Jah Sun** was one of the nicest experiences I've had on stage.

And look what's come out of it! The new album, Return to Balance, is fantastic. But it's not what I was expecting: I was expecting Roots, with some diversification, as it was House of Riddim. But for you, Jah Sun, both your last two albums were Roots albums. However, on Return to Balance there's curveballs: Afrobeats, Dancehall, Soft Rock, Pop. Was it a conscious decision to make this an eclectic record?

Jah Sun: From my point of view, I love the Roots - Reggae changed our lives. But I have always been a sucker for a good song. At the end of the day, I'm a songwriter and a poet - not a producer. For a long time, I thought "*I can't put this or that out - I only do Roots*". I want to do an album called **The Other Side of the Sun** which is all different stuff. But I

love writing songs. So, with this record, we started off with Roots as usual. I think it was **Sam** who said "*There's some tracks I did with my son - if you feel anything, let me know*". So, yeah - we've gotta buss the youth, y'know? Tracks like **Leave A Light On** and **Best Of Your Years**, they're some of my favourite tracks.

So, we didn't set out to do this kind of album. **Sam** sends me a folder full of songs, I listen, then he starts to narrow it down, says "*Let's mix it up with some RnB*" - but me, I'm just writing what I feel.

Was there any concern with your core fanbase not liking it?

Jah Sun: Yeah, I screenshotted one of the first comments that said, "*Is this what Jah Sun has become?*". You can't please them all. But me personally, as a people and society we don't have to stay in one box. That song, **Best Of Your Years**, is to my son - it's personally, heartfelt. What am I going to do? Suppress the vibes because I'm worried about being criticised? But I'm grateful for the supporters who encouraged us to be free and express ourselves.

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Yet the album still feels like you, it's not some sudden revelation – it still feels like a Jah Sun album. Sam, from your point of view, I know usually you send a selection of riddims to an artist, and they then decide. Once the artist has recorded their vocal, do you have to tinker with the arrangement afterwards to fit with them?

Sam: After recording, we change a lot of things. For example, instruments, or melodies, or take away some things. We did it on **Return To Balance**: after he recorded his voice, we added things like saxophones.

What also stood out is there's collaborations on this album, unlike the last two: Peetah Morgan, Lutan Fyah, Jesse Royal. Why did you decide to do collaborations on this project?

Jah Sun: The first few albums were heavy on collabs, then I just wanted to put out a couple of albums to stand on my own. This time, it just felt good – it started with the **Peetah** Afrobeats track, I recorded it about two years ago then contacted **Peetah**. So, some of the

collaborations I heard the artist in the track, others we linked up at a show - like **Jah Fabio**, I met him at a festival in Costa Rica – others I'd been wanting to work with for a while, like **Lutan**. So, we decide to go with this **New Paradigm** formula, bring some guests into the mix and it happened organically.

Then, the lyrical content and narratives: all conscious. Do you think that since we last spoke in 2020, has society, our existence, and what the system does to us all, got worse? Or is it no worse? Just a continuation?

Jah Sun: For me, classism, war, poverty, the ruling class – this stuff is timeless. It does feel though, through technology, media – it feels more intense, in our face. It's hard to get away from it – they've figured out how to inundate our daily lives with it. But it's always been there., it's part of the human experience. More people are feeling the anxiety, the stress. So, it's always important



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SAM GILLY IN ACTION

PHOTO BY HORO

to keep those messages, those reminders, out there – and to remind people not to turn on each other, to have community values, to try and find balance.

As an artist, you sometimes want to do the popular stuff: “*Oh everyone’s doing the Trap thing!*”. There’s nothing wrong with having a wider audience, but on all my records I want to at least have a portion of those reminders, the stuff that hits. **Sam** was on this, too. He was always saying “*Bro, we need more, gimme some more deep Roots*”. But yeah, the world is always tough, but it feels harsh now – and it plays a part on how we chose to put this album together.

Sam: It seems bad in the media now, but as far back as I can remember it’s always been war, and bad things. But it’s a huge thing now because Ukraine is close to Europe. There’s war in Africa and Asia every day – but it’s far away from the West, now it’s closer to it. I try not to pay attention to it too much.

Back to the album, and there were two interesting tracks: *Financial Freedom* and *Life Worth Living*. They felt like a part one and a part two to each other. Is that correct?

Jah Sun: (Laughs) There’s no right answer – but I wrote *Life Worth Living* before *Financial Freedom*. Music is a thing where people hear it, interpret it, and then feel something. But the song *A Life Worth Living*, I wrote it looking at some of my brethren who are talented but can’t make a living in this business despite their skills. That was the inspiration. What it meant was trying to stand on your own, make it off your craft, and make a life worth living, can be dangerous. People who weren’t given the chance to have a big education, nor given chances in life, yet are naturally gifted with music – when they can’t make a living off it, they find other ways, and it can be dangerous. So that’s really the basis of that song.

Then, *Financial Freedom*, is a little bit more rooted in my new perspective and understand-



ding of money and how it works. I really think it's not something that's taught in school, financial aptitude, and literacy, and how to make money work for us - we're stuck in this cyclical pattern of working to make money to pay bills.

House of Riddim's output is huge. How do you maintain that as well as the sheer quality of your work, Sam?

Sam: It's music - and all of us love to do it. If you love to cook, your food will be good, y'know? We have a lot of riddims on a back catalogue, which is growing and growing. But it was never planned like this. In 2004, we did an album, and that was it - that was the plan. Everybody loves doing it, and everybody loves doing music.

Jah Sun: Part of the reason I think **House of Riddim** are so successful is because musicians that aren't from Jamaica who attempt to play Jamaican music, often miss the mark - and maybe it's intentional. I'd like to say there's a big US Reggae scene, Cali Roots - and I think they intentionally want to put some of their Rock in there, and their Pop, and their vibe - and from an artist's standpoint, I

find it hard to find musicians here who have studied and made the sacrifices, have the discipline, and properly studied the real principles of Jamaican Reggae music - and **House of Riddim** has.

They work hard as a band - and that's why Jamaican artists trust them with their sound, to represent their culture. In my opinion there's a part of their success which comes from an unwavering discipline to be able to do the music right - and they're just working all the time. They've built trust with people, and that's how they're able to do the output they do.

Sam: We don't sound like a Jamaican band - because we're not one. We know how to play and perform the music...

Jah Sun: There's fundamental dynamics in Jamaican Reggae in terms of how they play the music - the drums, bass, the rhythm section...

Sam: Someone said to me years ago "*Hey guys, you're a Reggae band, but you don't sound like a Jamaican Reggae band*" - and of course, I'm not Jamaican. But at the end of the day this is the kind of music we like to do.



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Jah Sun: But you sound tight enough, and close enough, that iconic artists like **Anthony B** have trusted their music with you, live on stage.

Sam: (Laughs) Probably because we're nice guys too...!

Jah Sun: (Laughs) That too! But if you can't chop it wicked on stage, it's a pain – it hurts for artists if they can't have a supporting band behind them who can deliver. I think that's why you guys are considered one of the top production outfits and backing bands in Europe.

Sam: Maybe, I don't know...!

Jah Sun: Take your props, man!

Exactly! With Cali artists, you hear it sometimes – that Surf Rock guitar often comes in and so on. But you listen to a House of Riddim track, and it doesn't not sound authentic Roots.

Sam: For me as a drummer listening to people like **Sly Dunbar**, and for us, we didn't want to sound like anyone. There's no reason for us to. Everybody's watching how to play this, and that, but at the end of the day, when we started to practicepractise, for example the last **Jah Sun** album, we play it like it sounds on the album – we try to sound like the band on the album; chameleon style...!

Jah Sun: But this also goes to the other type of songs, the Pop songs. **Miles Davies** had a great quote: "*It sometimes take a long time to sound like yourself*". There's always an artist that inspired you to get into music – so you start off by mimicking that artist. I remember as an American man, trying to catch the patois and the vibes – and I listen now and cringe. But in those early moments I loved it. Now, even **Sam** on this new album was like "*This doesn't sound like the old Jah Sun*". It's more relaxed, you can hear the Texan coming out sometimes. I'm slowly evolving into who I am. And some of the earlier inspirations I'd try and replicate, are falling away. So, let me share it all.

Sam: And this is what I meant before. At the end of the day, it's music. And if you catch one person in a good way or in a bad way, that's good. Look, I know I'm not the most popular artist, the highest streaming – but I've had countless emails from people saying the music has affected their life. These positive message songs, full of good vibes, make people who are struggling, going through hard times – it makes them feel better. It may sound cliched, but I've got tonnes of emails to prove it. It's what it's all about. It's what **Bob Marley** and **Burning Spear** did to me.

So, you're both touring Europe with the album. When's that?

Jah Sun: My first show is July 27th in Austria, and I'll be back there at the start of September. There are about ten shows so far and we'll probably pick up some more.

And is there another album in the pipeline yet?

Jah Sun: Yes and no – I always have enough material. I would like to put out a non-Reggae record: singer-songwriter, World Music stuff, and I have a lot of material for that.

But the next big thing is 2025 – that will be 20 years since my first release. So, in 2025 I want to put out something meaningful and pair it with a documentary. I'll team up with people I've worked with along the way. So, some things in the works.

Sam – what other projects, or rather how many, have House of Riddim got in the pipeline?

Sam: In the summer we're touring Europe, the Caribbean, Africa. Production-wise we've got a lot of singles coming out – it's easy in modern times. And we're always busy as studio musicians.

Guys, thank you so much – that was brilliant. The album is amazing – you both should be very proud of it.

Jah Sun: Respect, Mr Topple!

Sam: Thank you!

JAH SUN & HOUSE OF RIDDIM - RETURN TO BALANCE

July 7, 2023

What comes to mind when you think about a 'match made in heaven'? Strawberries and cream? Gin and tonic? Well, now you can include 'Jah Sun and House of Riddim' on that list - because their new album together is just exquisite.

Return To Balance, released via **House of Riddim**, is quite the revelation. The quality of both **Jah Sun** and **House of Riddim**'s respective skills and input is extremely high, as expected. However, the direction the album takes is the surprise - because we see almost a rebirth of **Jah Sun** as an artist.

Roots undoubtedly dominates (like **Jah Sun**'s previous two albums). **Reverence** and its ethereal, almost heavenly sound is contrasted by more guitar-led Roots tracks such as the title track **A Life Worth Living**, and **Seek Him**. There's a more forthright example of the genre to be found in the **Jesse Royal** duet **Water And Oil**, with its stomping beat.

Then, a richer sound enters on **Clean Hearted People**, featuring a pointed **Lutan Fyah**, while **Financial Freedom** provides brooding, incessant, yet often sparse tones. Dub gets a look in via **Put Some Love In the Universe** featuring **Mellow Mood** - while **Jah Fabio** comes on board for **In This Together**, where the sound is stripped-back again to something unfussy yet effective.

Lovers Rock tracks also feature: **Crazy Love** and its whining, unsettling minor key, and **Fool For Loving You** with its Cali Rock influences across the whimpering, bending electric guitar. Straighter, mainstream Reggae is even dabbled in with **Mr Music** - a breezy and up-beat cut that would do well on the charts.



However, the finest moments come when Reggae is strayed from. **Breathe** is an Old Skool Dancehall track, complete with the rhythmic clave, a brilliant keys line but overall, a softer touch that would usually be seen. **Peetah Morgan** graces us with his presence on **Miracle** - which is bang up to date Afrobeats in all its glory; infectiously so.

But **Return To Balance**'s best bits are both actually not what **Jah Sun** fans will be expecting.

Best Of Your Years feels like an 80s/90s Soft Rock throwback brought up to date, complete with superb melodies, a stark piano line, and peaking and troughing arrangement. And **Leave A Light On** is pure Pop-RnB perfection: a stark acoustic guitar line dominates the verses, before the arrangement builds into a robust chorus. These tracks show a whole, new side to **Jah Sun** - and prove just what a talent he is.

The album is also filled with pertinent lyrical narratives - from the title track's call to all of us to unite to undo Babylon's destructive ways, to **Clean Hearted People**'s rallying cry for conscious people to resist. **Financial Freedom** and **A Life Worth Living** are interesting reflections on how monetary systems impact us, while relationships come to the fore in **Leave A Light On** and **Crazy Love**, and spirituality is dissected in **Seek Him** and **In This Together**.

Overall, though - and it's the musical direction travelled on in **Return To Balance** which truly shines. Bold, ambitious, and faultless - it's probably **Jah Sun**'s best work in recent years, and that's of little wonder with **House of Riddim** involved.

by Steve Topple



INTERVIEW

INNA DE YARD

A GROOVY SITUATION

FAMILY AFFAIR

BY ANGUS TAYLOR
PHOTOS BY BAGHIR



The success and resilience of acoustic ensemble Reggae project **Inna De Yard** has been a pleasant counterpoint to an increasingly digital world. Formed in the early 2000s, around the front yard strumming and Nyabinghi drumming sessions at guitarist **Earl Chinna Smith's** St Andrew Park home, **Inna De Yard** has survived the departure of founder **Smith** and the collapse of French record company **Makasound**.

With **Makasound** reborn as **Chapter Two**, and the collective now orbiting core veterans **Winston McAnuff**, **Cedric Myton** and **Kid-dus I**, the group recorded two albums, **Soul Of Jamaica** (2017) and follow up **Inna De Yard** (2019). The latter was accompanied by an openly **Buena Vista Social Club**-influenced documentary directed by **Peter Webber**.

June 2nd saw the release of third post-**Chinna** album, **Family Affair**. The revolving door of veteran and younger guest talent swaps out heavyweights **Ken Boothe** and **Horace Andy** for the equally legendary **Johnny Osbourne** and Rocksteady duo **Keith & Tex**.

Even for **Inna De Yard**, the choice of songs reinterpreted in acoustic Binghi instrumentation is packed with musical history. **Cedric Myton** brings **Humanity** by his old **Tartans** and **Rasses** colleague **Prince Lincoln**, and his own group **The Congos' Days Chasing Days**. **Winston** contributes his **Sun Setting In The Sea** and appears with **Johnny on Randy Newman/Nina Simone's Baltimore** (covered back in 1980 by the **Tamlins**).

Keith & Tex unplug their **Derrick Harriott**-produced classics *Tonight* and *Stop That Train*, the lesser-known *Down In The Street*, and **Rowe's** solo work for **Lee Perry**, *Groovy Situation*. **Kiddus** revisits *Fire Burn*, first recorded at the start of his career as *Be Careful How You Jump* (which inspired one of **Bunny Wailer's** biggest songs, *Armagideon*).

The younger artists also cast their voices into the past. **Rootz Underground's Steve Newland** lends his grainy tone to the **Wailers' Touch Me**. Long-time collective mainstay **Derajah** adds new lyrics to the **Gaylads' Cuban-inspired Africa We Want To Go**. And

in true family style, **Winston's** son **Kush** dives into deep roots connoisseurs' tune *Come Away Jah Jah Children*, originally by the **Black Survivors**.

Reggaeville caught up with **Winston McAnuff** and new, if musically senior, member **Keith Rowe**. They discussed their shared history with **Derrick Harriott**, how **Baltimore** was a surprisingly controversial choice, and the importance of the original **Makassound** team's obsessive nature in driving the project. (The topic of **Chinna's** departure has been raised in previous 2017 and 2019 interviews so was left aside this time around).



Keith, how does it feel being part of Inna De Yard? And how did you get involved?

Keith: I was invited by **Winston. Romain** from **Chapter Two** sent me an email wondering if we were interested. And of course we were. We are very excited. It's a different experience for us. These days when we appear live, we're doing the music we're known for. We're not just Rocksteady singers. We sing everything but it's generally those songs we did back in the 60s that these young people come out to see us for. We just got off a tour a few days ago, doing a revue with **Rudy Mills** and we're singing most of the songs that we did for **Derrick Harriott**. The **Inna De Yard**

experience will give us the opportunity to reach a whole new audience.

Winston, how does it feel to be back doing this project?

Winston: It's great to be back - especially with **Keith & Tex**. Because maybe you don't know, **Angus**, but the foundation I'm standing on, **Keith & Tex** were instrumental in building.

You both share a common link in having worked with Derrick Harriott. Can you each tell me how you started working with Derrick?

Winston: **Keith** was before me with **Derrick Harriott** so he made that foundation without even knowing it was being made. This foundation that not only me but many other artists came and benefited from.

Keith: Well, **Keith & Tex** started out as a five-man group.

Winston: I didn't know that!

Keith: We used to sing **Impressions, Platters, Drifters**. On the block. You start with two and another guy comes in and another guy comes and we totalled five. We were told we sounded so good that we should see if we can do some recordings. We went to **Prince Buster**, we got rejected. We went to **Duke Reid**, got rejected. And the reason was guys were nervous. They were supposed to sing their harmony part but when they got in front of **Gladdy [Anderson]** who auditioned musicians at **Treasure Isle** they panicked and start singing something else! So the five-man group whittled down to two. **Tex** and I, we stuck with it. So we still went to auditions. One day we went down to see **Beverley's** but they weren't available. So we said "*We're downtown, we might as well go check Derrick Harriott*". So we went to **Derrick's** shop and we had a cassette tape and the lady in the shop said "*Let me hear the music*". And she said "*Oh the boys sound good. Derrick is not here but he is coming later. Soon come*".





And ‘soon come’ in Jamaican time could be forever! It was two o’clock and **Derrick** didn’t come until seven o’clock. Anyway, once he listened to our music he said “*You guys sound pretty good. And you’re in luck because we’re going to Federal Studios on Tuesday*”. So four days later we recorded *Tonight*. That’s how the **Keith & Tex** story came to be.

Do you feel you’ve come full circle starting as a five-man group, becoming a duo and now joining this bigger Inna De Yard ensemble?

Keith: We have not had this experience before so we’re basically becoming a part of the family. No expectations on our part, we want to join in. So **Winston** and **Cedric** and the other guys are going to set the pace and we’ll follow.

Winston, you literally went to Derrick Harriott as a songwriter out of school.

Winston: I’d usually go to auditions in the evening. Just to check some producers to see who would be interested. I was doing some auditions with **Derrick Harriott** and

writing some songs for **Derrick** himself and for **Kim Harriott** too. I played four or five songs with my guitar and we started recording. How I started singing professionally was I went to record a song for **Earl Sixteen** to sing, *Ugly Days*. But **Earl Sixteen** wasn’t present at the studio so I did a guide vocal. I came outside and told them I wanted to go back to do a better one. They said “*No, no. You can’t. There’s no way you can sing that song again the way you sang it*”. And that was my first recording. But as well as **Derrick Harriott** we went to **Joe Gibbs**. That’s how I’m still working with **Bubbler Franklyn Waul** [who plays on the *Family Affair* album] up until this day. I carried him to a session because I went to do an audition with me and **Hugh Mundell**. I was playing the guitar to do the auditions and **Joe Gibbs** told us to come back on Thursday to do the recording. So we skulled school that day, me and **Bubbler**. I brought him because I was always telling him he is playing better than the guys in [**Derrick’s**] studio.

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Another song that you wrote for Earl Sixteen was *Malcolm X* – which you redid on the previous Inna De Yard album in 2019. The original 70s song ended up being recorded for both Derrick and Joe.

Winston: When we recorded the song I wasn't able to sing it. My singing level wasn't at the standard at the time. So I went for **Earl Sixteen** because he was my friend. He was sounding just like **Dennis Brown**. **Dennis Brown** was his idol. So we recorded the song for **Joe Gibbs**. One day we were on the road and we heard the song playing but it was **Dennis Brown** singing. We said "What is this?" The same rhythm but they just overdubbed **Sly Dunbar** on it. Because it was **Dennis Brown** we were happy and sad at the same time. **Dennis Brown** told me "Winston, that is my biggest song in all my career". I said "What?" So because of this anger we re-recorded the song for **Derrick Harriott** in **Federal Studio** too. And the

bass player didn't turn up, **Val Douglas**, the bass player for **Skatalites** now. So do you know who played on that version for **Derrick Harriott**? **Willie Lindo** played bass. But I was telling **Keith** the other day, I love **Derrick Harriott**. At first many people were saying "Winston, *Derrick rob you and rob you*". But I found out I can't find ways to pay this man after seeing the good coming out of the works.

Keith, you mentioned *Tonight* and you do a rendition of the song on the album. Tell me about the recording of the original *Tonight*. Because this is a song that's been redone by others many many times.

Winston: It's a cornerstone song.

Keith: Back where we rehearsed there was a gentleman who lived close to the soccer field where we practised. He said "You little boys are going to sound good. I have a piano if you want to practise at my house".

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So we went there and I started banging. Because I'd learned a little organ as a child. I could play some chords. I started playing a G Minor to an F and working the song out. So when we went to **Derrick Harriott** the song was already formed. When we went to **Federal** we had **Hux Brown**, **Lyn Taitt**, the bass player from the **Vikings** and three other guys from **Vikings**, the band **Derrick** was the MC and singer for. Back in those days it was one take. If somebody made a mistake you'd got to start over again. There was no overdubbing of musicians. The only overdub was vocals. So we were in the middle of a semicircle, singing softly "*Tonight, tonight*" and **Lyn Taitt** and those guys were working on it. And before we go further, I need to make sure everybody who reads this understands how important to Rocksteady and Reggae music **Lyn Taitt** was.

Winston: Do you know what **Derrick Harriott** told me? He said "*Winston, every song that Lyn Taitt play for me was a hit*".

Keith: When you talk about *Stop That Train...* once you play that introduction everybody in the world knows it. **Lyn Taitt**. *Tonight* was written about a girl who wasn't upfront with me and I was walking home from her house and wrote that song. (laughs)

Let's talk about *Stop That Train*, which you also do on the album. It's a cover version of the Spanishtonians. The ska original is a collector's record. I don't want to disparage it in any way, but you guys remade it and brought it worldwide.

Keith: Yeah, I had heard the song. **The Spanishtonians**, I think were three guys and a girl. **Merlene** and **Winston Jones** and I forgot the names of the other two. But I saw **Merlene** one day in front of **Derrick's** shop. I said "*Hey Merlene, that song, is it ok if I do it?*". Back in the days it was "*Yeah man, No problem*". So we did some things with it, changed some lyrics, added some lyrics and it is what you hear today. It's lasted over 50 something years. It's our calling card song.

Winston: It's evergreen music.

Winston, was the new album recorded in the same house in Stony Hill where I visited you in 2017?

Winston: Because you see **Angus**, we wanted to change certain things. They don't want to do everything at the same place. There is so much more about Jamaica. So we found this place in Jack's Hill. This place is **Bob Marley's** first house that he bought. I heard the story that they bought this house just above Kingston. But it's owned now by **Junior Reid**. It's like a villa and we went there to do the whole project. On the top of the mountain. It's like almost heaven.

Keith: On the rooftop.

Cedric redid the Prince Lincoln song Humanity on the new album. Cedric and Lincoln go back a long way from being in Tartans and you can hear Cedric's voice on that first Humanity album by Prince Lincoln and the Royal Rasses. Did you know Prince Lincoln well, Winston?

Winston: To be honest, no. Because he was living in England. But I grew up with **Cedric** and **Cedric** is a friend of his. **Cedric** told me it's out of respect for **Lincoln** why he's doing the song.

Keith: It's a beautiful song.

Winston: It's global.

With that Humanity song Lincoln achieved success with the Reggae audience. After that he pushed Roots Reggae into new areas mixing it with Philly Soul and Disco. Do you see any parallels between what Lincoln did pushing the boundaries and your own career Winston?

Winston: Yes. Because when I went to France I carried **Derrick Harriott** for my first concert. I have to tell you this story. When I went with **Derrick** from the hotel in Paris they sent a car for us. An old **Bijou** to take **Derrick** to the concert. I asked the guys if they have a limousine service? I said "*I'm going to pay*

for the limousine to carry the Chariot to the concert!" We carried **Derrick** in the limousine there out of respect. And the concert was wicked, you know? Then after the concert I took off my pants because I was wearing leather and it was very hot. I was sitting there and this beautiful lady came backstage. So I said "*Why you come to the backstage by yourself? Who you came to the concert with?*". She said "*My boyfriend*". So I said "*Bring your boyfriend*". She went outside and she brought back **Camille Bazbaz**. Actually **Kidduis I** just finished a project with him. A beautiful project. You're going to hear about it soon **Angus**. But when this guy came backstage he said "*This is awesome. Could you come to my studio to see if we could do something?*" So I went to his studio and he started to play some Reggae. I told him "*Stop. My first album was done by the Revolutionaries. Before Sly and Robbie. So it's an insult for me to do Reggae with you. Play your creation and if I connect with something we can work*". And the rest is history with me and **Bazbaz**. It worked beautifully. We had a song in a movie called **Hors De Prix. Sort Me Out**.

This was the A Drop album (2005).

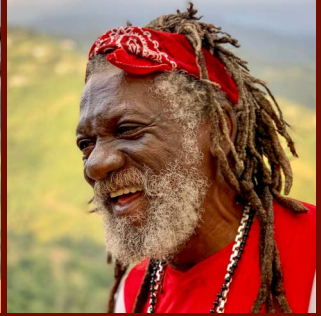
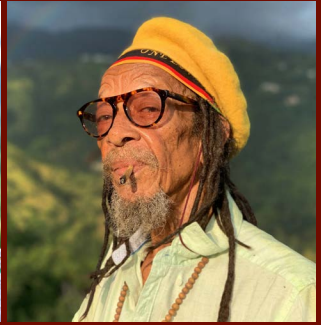
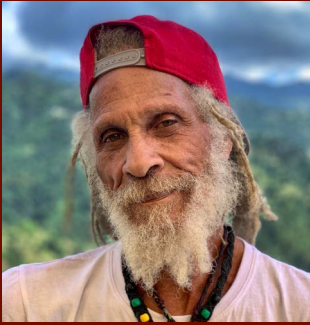
Winston: And then I did this other project with **Fixi**. With the accordion.

The Paris Rockin' album (2006).

Winston: Because my dad is an accordion player. And it's my biggest project. We're going to do a concert, **Keith**, on the 27th in Paris. I'm going to invite you there. It's just two musicians. It's my biggest and most successful project so far. I did like 200 concerts. And it's just a beatboxer and a keyboard player with some effects. So [I'm] gathering this audience. Like the Maloya people.

The A New Day album (2013).

Winston: From Reunion which is a whole other history. Because it's 6-8 timing they play with, just like the Ethiopians. It's not four-four like our thing. But I found a way to enter this, and it was a glorious feeling.





Keith, you do a rendition of your song *Groovy Situation* on the album. That song has a history...

Keith: So initially I wrote the song for a young lady in New York. **Audrey Hall**. She recorded it on my label.

I own the record.

Keith: You have it? So that was done. I went to Jamaica because I had won the New York Reggae Festival song competition. The prize was a first-class trip to Jamaica on Air Jamaica. My grandmother lived in Maverley. And right across the street from Washington Boulevard was **Scratch [Lee Perry]**. So I

went over there just to big up **Scratch** "*Wha gwaan*" and check in. He said "*Wh'appen? You have any music?*". I said „*Yeah man. Singer always walk with a song*". Well, 15 minutes later we had a session going on. He sent a little youth for... I forget the names because I was not accustomed to those guys...

Winston: Boris Gardiner?

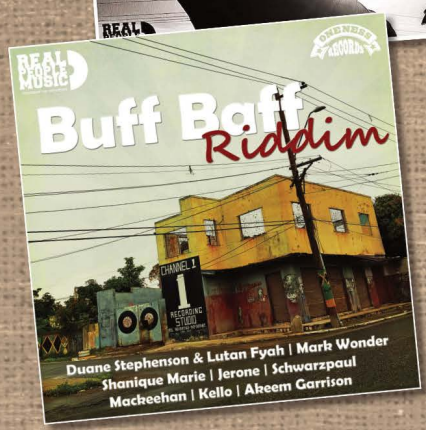
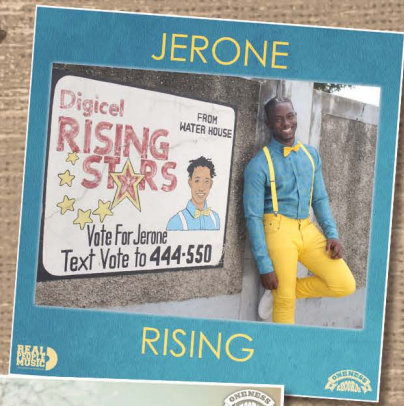
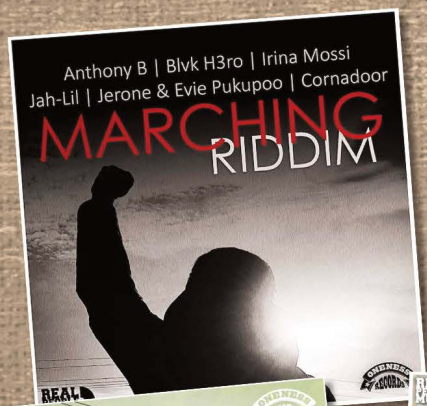
Keith: No man, **Boris** wasn't there. [**Boris** was a key musician and arranger for **Der-rick Harriott**]

Winston: Mikey Boo Richards?

Keith: I don't remember. But those guys were local. Living in the same area. It took 15 minutes for the little youth to get them. Anyway we did three songs. Now the thing about *Groovy Situation* was the vibe in the **Black Ark**. I think I played organ on that session. **Scratch** was mixing while we were playing and you'd look at him and just start getting into the song! That was one of the best, most memorable sessions I have done. And that's why *Groovy Situ-*



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ation has lasted so long too. Because of the vibe and **Scratch's** genius. To make four tracks sound like sixteen. That's his genius.

Because I'm a fan of the Audrey Hall record, can you tell me a little bit more about that?

Keith: Audrey and I, our paths always crossed. I played with a band called the **Realistics** in New York for a few years with **Lester Sterling, Ron Wilson, Glen Adams**, a bunch of good musicians who all emigrated to New York. **Patrick McDonald** on guitar. I learned so much. But **Audrey** was always on shows that we were playing. So we became friends. And I said to her one day *"I'm going to write a song for you"*. We went to studio in Brooklyn and recorded it there. **Sparrow** who plays drums with the **Skatalites** now, he was on that session. I played guitar. **Tyrone Downey** who played with the **Wailers** played organ.

I love the guitar and that organ intro.

Keith: Tyrone and I went to the same high school so we had a Kingston College connection. But it didn't do much. So when I went to see **Scratch** I said *"You know what? Let me lick it over"*.

How did you reapproach these classic songs in this rooftop Inna De Yard setting?

Keith: We let the vibe rule the day. We were in an accepting vibe mood. Welcoming the vibe. You've got great musicians, you've got the environment. You've got people like **Winston** and **Cedric** and **Johnny Osbourne**. You get motivated. You want to be a part of it. So the vibe was totally different. Look at the song ***Down In The Street***. It took on a whole new life, man. Just because of the vibe of the guys and the musicians.

Winston: The Binghi. The beat.

Keith: The Binghi, yeah man.

Winston: It's magic.

Keith: And we were willingly accepting of it. So of course the result is going to be good.

There's no Ken or Horace on the album this time but as well as Keith, Johnny Osbourne brings a lot of weight to the lineup.

Winston: You see **Angus, Inna De Yard** is not just the people you see on stage. Because I have a lot of brethren. **Horace Andy** is a godfather. But I was in France recently. I went to Corsica and Mali to do something with **Tiken Jah Fakoly** for the launch of his new album. Some guys came to me in Paris at the show. They know my record company. They said *"Winston, we'd like to get Johnny on Inna De Yard"*. They said *"We spoke to the guys already but if we talk to you it certainly will go through!"* But these guys don't know the love that my record company has for **Johnny**. So it was sealed man. I told them *"Don't worry. It's an honour to have Johnny among us"*. Because I was listening to **Johnny** from a little boy. (Sings) *"Come back darling"*.

Keith: Yeah!

Winston: So to be doing a project with **Johnny** is bigger than people imagine because we know the 'diamonds in the rough'. We know all the great people. And some people feel it's done and over with, you know? But the thing has just started man. It's new life because we play under the Binghi order. The heartbeat we work with. And once your thing pure upon that? There is a completely different magic frequency.

Keith: Totally different man.

Winston: It's God frequency we work with.

You redid Randy Newman's song Baltimore with Johnny. Was this a tribute to the Tamblins?

Winston: In a sense but it goes deeper than that. Because when we say **Baltimore** we



say **Nina Simone**. Because we're not from **Baltimore** but we share the struggle. With all struggling people all over the world. So we put ourselves in others' positions for understanding the plight of who is involved. So **Baltimore** it has never been done under this Iya Binghi order. **Johnny** said to me as well it's many years that he would love to have the opportunity to sing this song **Baltimore**. So it was pure joy.

Keith: And that's a heavyweight song man. It's a heavyweight person. **Nina Simone**. Way up way before time.

Winston, your own compositions have appeared on Inna De Yard albums - you redid **Secret** on *Soul of Jamaica* (2017) and **Malcolm X** on *Inna De Yard* (2019). This time it's **Sun Setting In The Sea** which was included on the *Makasound* compilation *Diary Of The Silent Years* (2002).

Winston: My first album with **Makasound**. It was not my decision, you know? Because sometimes I just float like a leaf on water, **Angus**. The record company said "**Winston**" - **Keith** was there too - "*You should do Baltimore*". And it was a big argument about the **Baltimore, Angus**.

Why?

Winston: Because some people started to say "*We don't need that song*".

Keith: "*That song doesn't belong on this album*".

Winston: So I keep my mouth shut, you know? And then **Cedric** said "*No, that song is a wicked song man. What are you talking about?*". So they said "**Winston**, you do that song" so I just go with the flow. And they said "**Winston**, we want you to do this song **Sun Setting In The Sea**". And I said "*But I*

have so many songs". I always wondered why they wanted this song? One time I questioned them about the song and they said "**Winston**, *to see this song you have to be high on like LSD to see the sun setting in the sea!*"

Keith: That's the view from Negril you know? ***The Sun Setting In The Sea!***

Winston: See what I'm saying? You see the sun and you get this illusion like the sun is going down on the horizon. You get this illusion like it's going in the sea.

Another song with history is *Fire Burn* which Kiddus redoes on the album. Originally in the early 70s he did it with Familyman [Barrett] as *Be Careful How You Jump*. Familyman and Bunny Wailer and did *Armagideon* with it.

Winston: Yeah, because at the recording he was hesitant. He wasn't sure that he wanted to do it because he was saying "*No, this song like...*" and he brought up something about **Bunny Wailer**. So I said to him "*No, Kiddus, [it's] beautiful. I love that (sings horn line)*". I said "*I love that song and I endorse it*".

We just mentioned Bunny Wailer and, as you said, there is a connection between the house recorded at and Bob Marley. And of course there is a Wailers song on the album that Steve Newland did.

Winston: (Sings) *Touch Me*.

How did that song end up on the album?

Winston: I'm not sure you know because I'm not the person who's responsible for A&R. But I know it's **Nicolas** [from **Chapter Two**] because **Stephen Newland**. **Nicolas** loves this youth. And **Steve** loves **Bob Marley**. And so we are always for it to have something from **Bob Marley**. Because if you don't know where you're coming from you ain't gonna know where you're going. So we have to respect the elders. So it's good to have that spirit with us still. In the form of a song.

Keith: And he's a younger guy too.

Winston: Yeah, he's a sweet youth, man. A sweet spirit youth man. Love **Steve**.

Winston, what about your son Kush singing the Black Survivors' *Come Away Jah Jah Children*? Because again that's a very deep song, a bit like Kiddus' *Fire Burn*.

Winston: It's the same nerd man! **Nicolas!** I keep calling his name! **Angus**, the guy who suggested this song is **Nicolas** from **Maka-sound**. This guy, he went up to Switzerland, before they knew me. They were looking for this album [by **Winston** from 1980] **What A Man A Deal With?** The **Inner Circle**-produced album. And they went up in the hills in Switzerland to a collector's house. They searched up the man's storeroom, pull up all the records and they found the one record they wanted **What A Man A Deal With?** And in the end the man said "*It's just that record you guys want?*" They said "*Yeah*". And the man said "*Never come back to my house!*" (laughs) That's how far they went to get this tune. So this is the same guy who came to me when I went for the **Derrick Harriott** show. The next morning my door knocked because I went with a show for **Alton Ellis** and it's the same two guys appear at my door with an album that was pirated for six years. And I got no money from **Esoldun**. It's a long story, that one. So it's the same **Nicolas**. He is the guy responsible for artists and repertoire. And one of the guys we started **Makasound** with. He is the guy who suggested that song. For **Kush** to sing it.

Kush really sounds like the original singer on it!

Winston: Yeah that's why I'm telling you how this guy is. Listen. I'm going to tell you how this guy is. I did something for **Usain Bolt**. A Puma party in Paris. And when the show was finished he came and said "*You got like 5% of Usain Bolt's time. Because he was here for two hours*". I said "*But you went to check out how much percentage?*" Same guy I'm telling you about, who suggested the song. So he could tell you. He's a nerd! (laughs)

INNA DE YARD - FAMILY AFFAIR

Chapter Two Records - June 2, 2023

After a pandemic-led hiatus, stalwarts of the Roots Reggae scene **Inna De Yard** are back with an album of revisited tracks.

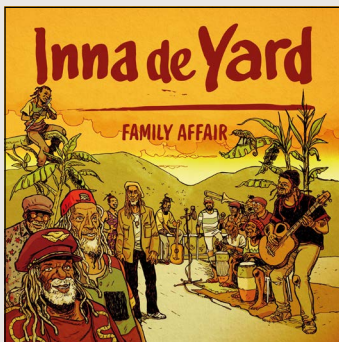
Family Affair, released via **Chapter Two Records** and **Wagram Music**, sees the collective bring us some Reggae classics. Sadly, since their last, eponymous album in 2019, they lost guitarist **Bo Pee Bowen**, trombonist **Nambo Robinson**, and **Wesley Tingle** and **Neville Ingram** of the **Viceroy**s. However, **Inna De Yard** still shine - as **Family Affair** shows.

Legendary **Cedric Myton** opens proceedings with **Humanity**, a classic originally by **Prince Lincoln** of the **Royal Rasse**s. **Myton** and **Inna De Yard**'s interpretation honours the original, with a rich arrangement filled with soulful vocals.

Rocksteady masters **Keith & Tex** reinvigorate their classic, **Tonight**, with its swaying horn section and alluring lyrics. Then, **Winston McAnuff** and **Johnny Osbourne** take on **Baltimore**, one of **Randy Newman**'s classics. The duo moves closer to the **Tamlins**' interpretation though, which was in **Nina Simone**'s style: jazzy and funky.

Keith & Tex are back for **Down The Street**, which was originally done for **Derrick Harriot** in 1968: a gloriously evocative and almost South American-tinged **Lover's** track. **Johnny Osbourne**'s **Studio One** standard, **Truth and Rights**, is redone by the man himself - showing he's lost none of his spirit and talent over the years.

Kiddus I reworks his 1970's hit **Fire Burn** with its clever horn arrangement and sparse instrumentation. Then, **Stephen Newland** reinterprets the **Bob Marley** classic **Touch Me** - not an easy thing to do, however **Newland** is faithful to the original, while putting his own stamp on it.



Derajah brings us **Africa**, originally by the **Gaylads**. The haunting, provocative arrangement and forward-moving rhythm has lost none of its power, and **Derajah** does a sterling job of reworking it. **Myton** is back with **Days Chasing Days**, originally performed by his former band the **Congos** in 1980. It's jazzy and meandering and is perhaps **Myton** at his skilled best.

Keith & Tex revisit another one of their own songs with the funky **Lover's Rock** cut **Stop That Train**, while **McAnuff** does the same on **Sun Is Setting In The Sea** - a pleasing, fresh, and breezy cut.

Kush McAnuff provides **Come Away Jah Jah Children**. It's a little-known track by the **Black Survivors**, originally recorded for producer **Jack Ruby** in 1975. Here, **Kush** and **Inna De Yard** have produced something moving, thought-provoking, and memorable - one of **Family Affair**'s strongest cuts.

Keith Rowe originally recorded **Groovy Situation** for **Lee 'Scratch' Perry**. Here, **Family Affair** closes with his updated version: jazzy, smoky, and wholly sensuous - a great conclusion to the album.

What stands out about **Family Affair** is the inflections of **Jazz** that run through the **Reggae** vibes - from the horn and vocal arrangements to the artists' own performances. This elevates these classic tracks beyond mere reworkings. **Family Affair** also shows this group of veteran artists are, via **Inna De Yard**, still at the peak of their powers - as is the music that was written decades ago. Classic tracks, and classic artists, never truly die - and **Family Affair** is testament to that.

by Steve Topple

A close-up portrait of Buju Banton. He has dark skin, a full beard, and long dreadlocks. He is wearing a blue and black plaid jacket over a white mesh shirt and a gold chain necklace. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

INTERVIEW

BUJU BANTON

FROM A PLATE OF LOVE

HUMBLE SERVANT

BY URSULA 'MUNCHY' MÜNCH
PHOTOS BY JAMIE CRAWFORD-WALKER

There is no doubt that **Mark Myrie**, better known as **Buju Banton**, was born for greatness. He is one of the giants of this industry, has constantly and diligently developed, nurtured, strengthened his skills and versatility to master his craft. His fourteenth studio album entitled **Born For Greatness** is a testament to his lyrical talent, an opus with 17 pieces. Songs about love, about relationships, loyalty but also observations of society, experiences, emotions. With this record coming up in September, **Buju Banton** gives us a deep and a personal insight. Even though he shares so many words on this album already, **Reggaeville** still pulled a few more out of him for this interview to find out about the feelings, memories and stories behind his tracks and also what the singer was moved by since the release of his last album **Upside Down 2020** three years ago.



Born For Greatness, your brand new album is coming up in September. This is your 14th studio album, you're in the business now for almost 40 years. Do you still feel excited when you present a new release to the fans?

I am excited whenever time I enter the studio and go around the microphone. The very thought of making music has always been a thrill and when that spirit leaves me then I know it's time for me to step away from it.

Born For Greatness is also the third track of the album, on which you sing "*Superstar, supercar, supermodels, I am beyond that level*" and "*I don't follow your rules, I guess am lawless, still making big moves*

regardless". Have you always been that confident or is that a mindset you've developed over the years?

In this life that we live, if you're not confident in you, no one else will be. The first confidence to have is in you because all things are created twice: the mental creation and the physical creation. So, yes, I've always had that confidence to know that I'm up against a mammoth, a giant. But regardless of what I am up against, I'm going to do me. I'm going to get the message across to the people. I'm going to swim across the ocean. It's going to happen.

What advice do you have for people who doubt themselves and have little self-confidence?

You can never doubt yourself. And you must be confident in yourself because your ability depends on it. Your success depends on it. And if you fail to plan, then you're planned to fail.

So, is it really just to have that state of mind?

It's a state of mind that cannot be relinquished. It must always be cultivated, always be nurtured, kept sharp. Because there are always people trying to beat you down, to demoralise you and let you feel like your value of yourself is less because their value is material things. Their values are things that you can see with the eye. But an innate value exists that you cannot see, it's inside of you. So let no one beat you down! Rise up and above!

The album starts with a track I love very much, the deep, touching, thoughtful *Ageless Time* in which you wish to remember "the way things was when all was all wrapped up in love". You sing about "financial depression, legal oppression, government overreach, all cloaked in black with a sinister plot". Is this how you view the world in recent times? How can we escape this situation you're talking about?

How I view the world in recent times is not really important. What has the world been, is what's important. Me alive in the situations that pervades and fill our society and breed up an era of nothing but selfishness, greed and wickedness must be highlighted because it is the foundation of Reggae music. Now what can we do? Love each other.

So, you think we can go back to that state when all was wrapped up in love?

It's the only right course of action. To cultivate the very aspect of what it means to be human, to be humane again, to love each other, to have empathy, to be kind to our brothers and sisters regardless of where they're from or how they look but the content of their character. It's a far stretch but it can be achieved. I'm an optimistic soul.

In what period of time did you write the songs for this album?

The songs were written over various periods of time because music is something that flows. And when it flows it flows and you can't fight music because if you fight music then it's going to be fighting the masses. If the music flows to you, it's going to flow to the masses. So, as the music flows, the music grows. It was a period of twelve months to get the whole album, if that's your question. To get the whole album completed and delivered it took us a period of twelve months.

Do you still walk with a book where you have all your lyrics in?

Yes, I do still write. I believe in the pen and I believe in the paper. I'm old school, sorry.

I love that. I still have pen and paper same way, too.

When the ink is dried, it is there. The ink is dry, it cannot be removed.

In *Life Choices* you sing "allow me to think for myself, too important to leave that to anyone else". Do you think that is also part of a problem that many don't think for themselves or are not allowed to think for themselves?

Whatever I think at this point will only infuriate a lot of people. The song speaks for itself, but the evidence is everywhere.

How do you stay away from outside influence?

I try to think for myself. We use reason and we use logic and common sense, above all things common sense.

In *Yard And Outta Road* you revisit the past. You sing about people you didn't "see the days when everything was a mess", that you lost friends which wasn't "really a loss". What are "all those days" that you are singing about in the chorus, what did you have in mind when you wrote that song that sounds pensive and wistful?

For eight and a half years I was locked up in a United States federal prison and those were dark days. However, through those dark days I was able to project myself in a uncanny way. Not only internally but externally. To be light not only to myself but for those who are also in the darkness or are covered by this great darkness. That was a musical composition to share with the world that path and that walk and that journey.

This is a very personal aspect of your life. Would you say in general the lyrics on this record are maybe more personal than previous works of yours? Because I think it seems very personal. You have many love songs, songs about relationships...

My experience must be documented and a musical documentation is the best way I know. The microphone is my only defence.

You don't mind sharing your personal stories and feelings with the world through your music?

That is what music is. If you have no personal stories, it's going to be fictitious and bubble gum music. I don't make bubble gum music. All of my music is personal. *Not An Easy Road*, personal. *Buried Alive*, personal. I Rise, personal. Innocent, personal. All these songs are songs that come from a deep place where the common man who is wrapped up into his mind set would not understand. But the man who is able to feel music beyond just dancing and joyration but on a spiritual sense, on a soul sense can connect. And that is what we seek to re-enact in the global community where music is concerned. Because right now a lot of music don't inspire I. I want my music to inspire people.

Would you say all your music and all your previous albums are that personal or is this one more personal?

I wouldn't say this album is personal. This album is made up of songs that are very, very near and very, very far but they have

all something in common: people can relate to them. And I like to make relatable music. That's what **Buju Banton** does. I don't just sit and create a fiction in my mind, so that you sing along.

What I love about this record is that it shows your extraordinary lyrical talent, because the lyrics are so strong on this one. That's why I picked a lot of lines for this interview because they really touched me.

I am at a stage in my life musically where it's a turning point for me. I been doing this music since I was 16 years old. I recorded the first song on August 18, 1986 for **Robert French at Penthouse Records** on 56 Slipe Pen Road. It's a turning point again musically for me because I'm here and I'm seeing the direction the music is going. I'm seeing what's happening in the global community geopolitically as well and how the music from various other enclaves has somehow put ours to a side. Now, it's not any fault of those music why ours is not on the forefront like it should be. But it's more so a fault of ours because our production somehow stepped back from what it ought to be. And the essence and the forces we supposed to bring along with the message and the entertainment has been diminished. So, this record you have and you listen to, that's what I was trying to convey. This is what this record is trying to convey to bring back those Reggae music lovers and to attract new adherence to the culture because it's necessary.

For Born For Greatness you created this blend of Dancehall, Reggae fused with R&B and Pop, and you're not following any hype trends, you're presenting your own personal musical mixture. Is that always your desire to make music independently and individually, beyond expectations?

I have never been a follower and sometimes you hit, sometimes you miss. But then that goes back to your confidence level. You have always be breaking and

setting new norms. Reinventing myself musically is always something good. I have no problem with that challenge because I don't want to present myself in a cyclical fashion. It creates monotony. And I don't want to be monotonous. So, you can never play twelve **Buju Banton** albums and all twelve sound the same.

Right! Let us talk about the female feature on the album: Victoria Monét. She is on the sixth track, the sensual *Body To Body* and you have also been a guest on her single *Party Girls*. How did this whole link come about and how was the song writing and production process with her like?

Victoria Monét reached out to me via Instagram and I responded to her. I didn't know who she was or anything like that but I said to her "*Send me your track*". I took a listen to the track and she was elated. I listened to the track, we did a little fixing up here and there, and we sent it back to her and she was happy with what we did. And I said to her "*Ok, well, send me something from you for myself, for my record*" and she sent that and we did the same thing and changed it the way we wanted to do it and sent back to her for approval and there we go. It was total chemistry. I didn't know who Victoria Monét was but I been around for so long, she must have known who **Buju Banton** was.

Of course, of course!

And our music turned out to be something the universe wanted and when I'm moved to do something I act. As simple as that.

Are you always that reachable for fellow artists even if you don't know them?

I'm never that reachable but this is something that the universe put together and I never question it.

A next feature guest is your very good brethren Stephen Marley, who is featured on *Feel A Way* but is also involved in the production of the first track *Ageless Time*. We

spoke about your guys' relationship already in a previous interview but tell me, how are the vibes actually like when the two of you are in the studio together?

Let me simplify that question for you and give you a next metaphor. If **Bob Marley** did such a great job of promulgating Reggae music across the world and planted a seed, isn't it wise for us who love Reggae music to sit under the shade of that tree?

Of course, naturally!

So, such a man couldn't walk on the face of this earth and I wouldn't know him. We have been brethrens now since we were like in our teens. Many years of friendship, many years of brotherly love, many years of togetherness and many years of grief and sorrow because he grieved for me when I was locked away and I grieved for him at the passing of his son. And this is what brotherly love is about and good friendship is about. But the music speaks for itself because our music - if you should listen to all the works we ever done, I don't know if you ever had a chance to do that - you see that our friendship and our music is uncanny. It's different.

So, did the two of you ever think about doing an entire album together?

We talked about it and we thought about it and we have a lot of songs together but because of our busy schedule... but we're going to get it on. It's something that we have to do. It's a necessity.

Right! I definitely think so, too. I'm going to look out for it. The third feature guest is Snoop Lion or Snoop Dogg, who is featured on the recently released *High Life*. The song is not just a ganja anthem, you also added lyrics such as "herb is now an household name them say it commercialise, still my homie up top doing twenty for life, still marginalise though them sell legalise", so would you say...

(Laughs) Did you listen these lyrics or you read them?

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I read them and I listened to them... but let me tell you one thing. The one song I didn't get the lyrics of is *Trial By Fire* and this song is my favourite and I know the lyrics already even though I never got them. So, I promise, even if I didn't have the lyrics, I'd still know them.

Thank you very much. I appreciate your honesty because now you let me appreciate my work even more because you managed to pick apart the essence of what I was trying to convey and I told you in our earlier conversation that the lyrical content has elevated to show another level of growth in my disposition and also as a musical creator. Also the music behind the lyrics is at another level again.

But tell me, what do you think of the state of ganja globally now with many countries or regions having it legalised or decriminalised, and also in Jamaica in particular because it sounds like you think there is still a lot of hypocrisy?

There is a lot of hypocrisy because the people who suffered the most for marijuana, especially those original farmers right in America, right in Mexico, right in Jamaica, right all over the world, nowhere is immune, they are not the beneficiaries of these new laws that has been enacted. The same oppressors now assume their role, having the licence, keeping it on cronies and take over, and the small man's farm is still being destroyed to make sure that the man who have the dispensary herb is being sold. It come to a point even in my country that they were talking about importing marijuana from Canada and all these things. These levels of hypocrisy that we as citizens of the global community who see marijuana being commercialised in this time which we know that is a sacred herb. We just see it as wrong. It is wrong.

I absolutely agree.

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It is something that is sacred to I and I as a Rastaman. I remember the days when herb was just herb, now herb have a million different names, you don't even know what you smoking. I don't like that, I want herbs. High Life, you nah mean?

Definitely. Especially what you mentioned that Jamaica imports weed when there are so many farmers dealing with that for so many years. That is crazy.

Crops being destroyed... I can't deal with that because in a churchical way we nuh want sell no ganja. In a churchical we just want smoke some herb and give Jah thanks. Rastaman right, him suffer fi it.

Yeah man, for so many years, in terrible ways...

We mentioned Stephen Marley being the producer for *Ageless Time*, Michael Brun is the producer for the track with Victoria Monét. But for the majority of tracks on the album Jermaine J'August Reid is mentioned as producer. Tell me a bit about him.

Jermaine Reid is an engineer that came on to my studio when he was a little youth and I grow **Jermaine** as one of my sons. He learned the tenets of this music when it was analogue, before it moved into a digital fashion. So you're going to see his name now that he has earned a name to master the craft of being a good engineer and a good record producer according to Reggae standard and the world standard that I and I try to achieve. You're going to see his name more often.

So, you know him since he was a youth and he is in and out of your studio for so many years, right?!

He is not in and out. He is consistent. From **Jermaine** comes here since he was like 16 years old, he never leave I.

So, the whole creation of this album sounds pretty intimate and personal

since it was this same person involved in almost all of the tracks...

No, not almost all of the tracks, but he did a lot of work. A lot of the work was done by I myself, too, because I man make music, you know. I don't just sing like a bird, I man really and truly make music in a creation. So, we work together to make the music right.

Which musicians contributed to *Born For Greatness*? Who played for the significant saxophone on several tracks, who laid down the e-guitar for example?

A whole lot of musicians contributed to **Born For Greatness** but most of the musicians that I use are youths who are young, innovative and talented. You won't see the usual great fancy names that a lot of people are used to because I believe that there is room for all to grow.

You support young talent!

How else will the music grow? How else will my culture advance? If there's not a new trumpet player, a new bass player, a new keyboard player, a new guitar player. I'm sure you do your homework and you see the names are not familiar names. Hence this question, right? So, hence this answer.

So, people can look out for these talents in the future more often.

Can look out for these talents across the globe more often because musicians must be highlighted. The singers and players of instruments the Father said, you know...

Definitely!

***We Find A Way* is a very strong track, as the title suggests giving hope, encouraging, positive music produced by DJ Khaled. "Let us start with love that bond that heals the nation". Can you recall when you wrote the lyrics of that song?**

About six months ago, one year ago, while working on the record.



Jo Archer



[ONCE UPON A TIME]

Jo Archer, Richie Spice & Dean Fraser

Produced by: Jo Archer Music &
MINING Gold Studio

June 2023



Was there a particular situation, a particular mood that motivated that?

Absolutely! I was in a marvellous mood. I was in a lovely state of mind. And hence, I was blessed with a tremendous offering of musical renditions so I could share with the world and the global community.

The world that we are living in in recent times, we are surrounded so much by hate, by anger, war, crisis, is it hard sometimes...

That is why we have to inject love! We can't focus on the negativity. We have to overwhelm it with a stronger force, a stronger force, a stronger force, a force of love. Yeah! So I don't want to hear about what they are doing. We want to know what we are doing. And we're going to love each other or we going to stand by and watch each other die.

As I already mentioned, my favourite track is Trial By Fire. This is another track

where you give the people hope. Another so strong, hopeful, comforting tune... You sing "they're all counting on me, so I must take the lead, who am I to question the plan designed, when it's written in the stars". Do you consider this your mission as an artist, as an individual or would you say this is everyone's mission to unify?

In the knowledge about my culture and what my culture has done, that question will be totally relevant. But then, let me shed some light. This is Reggae music, this is the music that gave you the likes of **Count Machuki, King Stitch, The Gladiators, Joseph Hill The Culture, Burning Spear, Peter Tosh, Bob Marley**, countless others... What does all those forerunners have in mind? They're uplifting the people, educating the people. Positive vibrations were flowing! What I think is irrelevant. What I know, is what I deal with. That this music ya come fi teach the world a lesson. And Jah rise us up! And don't call all of we, he call a few. Why do you

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think they put the forces and the powers to be at I man with such venom if they didn't know that this man is here to do a work. They don't fuck with people who are careless and idle because there are countless out there doing nothing more than what they want them to do. But like I said: I don't follow your rules, I guess I'm lawless, yeah?! So, I and I see I-self as a servant who come to do what the previous servants did. Yes, which is uplift, educate, and irradiate negativity from the minds of the people globally. Knowing the advantage of technology, where my forefathers never have Outstagram and phone book and all these other devices, we in this dispensation have it and we still have the word and we still have Reggae music and we still have to teach them a lesson. But now it shall be wide spread because remember, you know, it is written: "*Touch not the Lord's anointed and do people no harm.*"

But with this as your mission... that also results in a responsibility. Do you think all artists out there understand the responsibility they have?

Listen. When you say artists, you have to be specific. Because these words "artists"... I don't particularly dig them kind of phrase, you know. I man is a singer. Me come fi sing down Babylon. You sight? If a guy come inna Reggae music and him come inna Reggae music because him see **Buju Banton** drive a car and him feel say him can get a nice one, I say that's off to you. When my brethren come inna Reggae music fi help and support and strengthen Reggae music with good, encouraging, uplifting, positive music for the woman dem, the pickney dem... we go through things in life and all we want is a song to feel like somebody is listening to us or I can identify with what I am going through. That's all we need to do. Continue serve the people. Yeah? So, if a guy don't see his mission as a servant, I can't make him see it. Him have to see his role. Because it is you the people who sacrifice buying a bread and buying a pair of shoes and coming to a concert.

You make the choice, you're coming to the concert. So, I and I work fi serve you, the people, the masses. And I don't serve them from a fictitious point of view, where the things that we are saying are unfathomable or is just this great illusion and when you're done listen to it and you come back to reality, it don't add up. True?

Yeah man, yeah man! You are serving, you are presenting to us Born For Greatness, the new album coming up in July.

I like to serve the I dem some music as a humble servant of the universe. I want serve the I dem some music from a plate of love. And this offering I offer to the I dem is called **Born For Greatness**. Fulljoy! Fulljoy it from my heart! Fulljoy!

Definitely, they will. What do you plan for the promotion of this record? Will you also tour this album?

I want to do a whole lot but the system and the powers that be... you nah mean... so, whenever I can, I will but for the moment I do what I can with the grace of Jah, seen. And I don't quarrel about that. I man music, **Buju Banton's** voice will always be heard! Just put it that way.

Definitely, it will. Can't wait for the people to hear what you put together for Born For Greatness. Is there anything about this release coming up that you want to add that I did not ask you?

Well, I want to say to the masses, you're going to experience **Buju Banton** in this time, in this I-wah in a different fashion, a different style, through different musical compositions, with different musical flows, different lyrical content. None of it is offensive, it's all music aimed at stimulating your consciousness. I am here to serve you, humbly. Your loyal servant, **Mark Myrie, Buju Banton**. Peace and love.

BUJU BANTON - BORN FOR GREATNESS

Roc Nation Records - September 8, 2023

That you can never listen 12 of his albums and they all sound the same, is his claim and so it's not surprising that **Buju Banton's** new upcoming long player **Born For Greatness** appears quite different from what we're used to from the superstar.

He takes us on a journey, wants to be reminded "*of the way things was when everything was wrap up in love*" in the **Stephen Marley**-produced opener **Ageless Time**, a musically stripped-down rendition with acoustic guitar, one of **Ragga's** typical abstract vocal samples and a subtle saxophone that melt into a melancholic vibration.

A brisk beat with claps and striking punches, flashy electronic guitar and swelling strings boosts the catchy chorus "*I don't follow your rules, I guess am lawless, still making big moves regardless*" of the title track **Born For Greatness**. And the minimalistic synth beat sprinkled with alienated vocal samples, brief string arrangements and a few single keyboard chords blends hypnotically with **Buju's** "*sip, sip, sip*", the sound you hear when he drinks his clean coconut water while watching his friends just to find out who is real and loyal, and who is not worth turning up at their funeral, for the recently released **Coconut Wata (Sip)**.

The sensual **Body Touching Body** that features R&B singer **Victoria Monét** was produced by Haitian **Michaël Brun** and leads to a whole segment of ladies and love songs including the Latin-infused **Turn Up Tonight** narrating about a woman that makes his "*whole head hurt*" him, the **Stephen Marley** combination **Feel A Way** or the more classical Reggae track **Nuff Love For You**.

The third feature welcomes **Snoop Dogg** for the



previously released **High Life** that is not just a ganja anthem but a critical track about the hypocrisy in the legalisation process of marijuana where it is no longer about smoking the sacred herb in peace but turning it all into a commercialised business with fancy names, big profit margins and little pity for those who suffered when weed was still illegal.

The compilation is crowned by powerful and moving anthems, hymns like the **DJ Khaled** production **We Find A Way**, a positive, encouraging musical composition using elements from **Whitney Houston's My Love Is Your Love**, or the massive **Let My People Go**, a rather classical **Buju Banton** carol combining the Bible narrative of Moses who led the Exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt with the problems mankind is facing in the 21st century like "*chaos on a global scale*" and "*tribal war created for money*".

17 tracks are a mellow, contemporary blend of Dancehall, Reggae fused with R&B, Pop and a pinch of Hip Hop. Primarily programmed beats are decorated with live instruments such as acoustic or electronic guitar, saxophone, sometimes strings. Dreamy synth sounds, abstracted vocal samples, more times minimalistic, tricky beats amount to a non-ostentatious, but light, free, sometimes sensual, sometimes meditative and of course other times also powerful, yet never overloaded soundtrack that provides the perfect platform for **Buju Banton's** amazing lyrics.

He is a story-teller, a lyricist and a Reggae poet extraordinaire who achieves his goal of "*stimulating your consciousness*" with flying colours with **Born For Greatness**.

by Ursula 'Munchy' Münch

INTERVIEW

BURNING SPEAR

INDEPENDENT LIVING

NO DESTROYER

BY SHRIK KOTECHA

PHOTOS BY JAN SALZMAN, ROBERT FLAKE & JULIAN SCHMIDT

There are some events in the music calendar which will spark attention instantly and one such event is the long-awaited release of a new **Burning Spear** album. The world has been patiently waiting for nearly two years after **Winston Rodney** (aka **Burning Spear**) announced a new single *Mommy* from a forthcoming album **No Destroyer**. Given that his last studio album release was way back in 2008, the Grammy-winning **Jah Is Real**, the wait is finally over. The twelve-track album on **Burning Music Productions** is due out on August 18 and is sure to delight his fans.

In 2022, **Spear** spoke to **Reggaeville's Gerry McMahon** for the 2022 edition of **Festville** when he made a welcomed return to live venues after an absence of over ten years. These saw **Spear** performing to sold out venues across the States as part of the **Fan Appreciation Tour** before heading over to Europe to bring sheer delight to his fans worldwide, yearning to see him perform live on stage. Here in 2023, he's heading back on the road once again.



This year also celebrates the 50th anniversary of **Studio One Presents Burning Spear**. The reggae legend's first album produced by **Clement 'Coxsone' Dodd** and **Winston Rodney** reminisces on the earlier parts of his career, spanning more than five decades, as well as discussing future plans for a documentary.

Shrik Kotecha spoke to **Burning Spear** about the new album **No Destroyer**, the magical live shows throughout his career and his musical legacy.

Your new album No Destroyer has kept your fans worldwide patiently waiting since it has been almost 15 years since the Grammy-winning Jah Is Real album was released. Why has it taken this long?

Well, you see when you're putting something together, especially music, you know it's going to take time before I as the artist think that the time is right to do this, to come with another album or another album or another album. So, everything has been done orderly and timely. The time's right now for the album **No Destroyer**.

Your beaming smile tells me that you're very happy with the new album.

Yeah. I think it's a very strong album dealing with a lot of things where people can relate to things which people see every day. You know, all these things I've been saying through the album. And I think my creativity working on this album was really outstanding with the help of my wife, **Mrs. Sonia Rodney**. She gave me a lot of strength when I was going back and forth in the studio. She might just hear something, and if she think that I could do better than that then I just get right on

top of it and do what needed to be done. So, with the help of her influencing me to go to a distance I never been to before it worked. As I said, I think it's a strong album, one of the best **Burning Spear** albums I ever come forward with, in my time doing my own business, **Burning Music Production**. Of course, **Marcus Garvey** and **Man In The Hills** were some strong albums that were for different people. Now, what I do now is for me, and I think that it is one of the most outstanding albums for **Burning Music Production - No Destroyer**.

And the time felt right to release No Destroyer here in 2023. Is there anything specific or particular that made you make that decision to release this in 2023?

Yeah, the time is right. This album going like 12 years now since I record it and never release it. The time was not right at that time to release the album. Now I think the time is right to release the album **No Destroyer**. Moreover, the fans been asking what is going on with **Spear**, how come **Spear** not releasing no songs, no album, no nothing? I have to remember the people, for I'm a people person. Without the people, maybe today I wouldn't be able to talk to you, maybe I wouldn't be **Burning Spear**. So, the people play a big role in what I do musically, So I say OK they been asking and waiting for a long time, why not release the album.

Your fans had a glimmer of hope of an imminent release when the single Mommy - an ode to "the woman that holds a family together and prevents her children from fall" was released late in 2021...

(Laughs!) Yes, I also thought that it was good to release a single from the album so people could get a grasp of what the album sound like. I think **Mommy** was a good strong track sinking in with what is going on around the world, with the virus and so many people have lost their jobs. Some people never get called back and will never get called back for the job. So, I think it was the right time, you know, let it be known daddy lose his job,

mommy get laid up and it's going on and on and on. That's a very strong track. It's like a nursery rhyme, something like a bedtime story you could tell your kids about it.

The challenges you talk about in that song are challenges faced by parents of every race, religion or creed in all four corners of the globe. Do you see the challenges being faced changing in today's modern society, especially with Covid, the war in Ukraine, and the rising cost of living?

Oh yeah, you see so many things is within the song **Mommy**, which parents and people in general could relate to. But I'm just saying it as it is. I'm just saying what I see people live and all these things are reality, things happen when people never thought these things would happen. I myself didn't think these things would happen. But here comes the inspiration what comes to me so I could present a song like **Mommy**. Where do all these lyrics come from? They come because I was open to receive lyrics and working on a song's lyrics take a long time. Sometimes it takes a short time and sometimes you have to throw away lyrics and replace lyrics to have this story telling the story the right and proper way so listeners could get that understanding about what I'm dealing with.

What does the title track No Destroyer mean to you as the creator, Winston Rodney, and what message do you want the world to receive?

Well, the message is within the music and the listeners will grasp the message for what I'm saying lyrically is the message, and as I did say before, the time is right. Lyrically, throughout the whole album I think people will see the point, not just listening to the music, but see the point. The point's what I'm getting across to the people, especially my fans.

The album has a very dubby sound throughout the 12 tracks, when you are recording songs for a new album do you go in with a specific concept in mind?



No, there's no specific concept in mind, but that's music. Music is not specific; you have to go with the flow. As I say, sometimes you might be working on a song and it can take you a long time because what you need is not coming and lyrics is not something you go there and look for. It's just like melody, you have to relax, and these things come to you. When it come to me, I know what to do.

For me, the album portrays a sense of being autobiographical in a number of songs including the album opener *The Spear* which gives us an insight into exactly what happens when Burning Spear performs live on stage.

(Laughs!) That is exactly what I'm singing about, jump around not like a clown, talk about *The Spear*. I think so deeply when putting a song together, but I always try to remember the people, you know, and people been supporting **Spear** for many, many years and they know when I hit the stage what I do. I hit the stage and I do what I go on the stage to do, for the people. Without them the energy not going to rise up, so the energy from

the people, the energy from me and the band we correspond with the audience. So, we can feel the audience and the audience can feel us. That's *our* duty.

For me, the real magic of your live shows is that with the Burning Band you create an extraordinary live experience, things like the extended versions of songs, sometimes running into 6 or 7 minutes and the crowd never tires.

It's the energy! I could feel the people digging in and they just want to go on and on. I don't mind go with them. You know, it's all about the energy. As an artist, you hit that stage your duty is to make sure the people be happy. That is all it's about. You hit the stage, the people out there waiting to hear you deliver, when you deliver, and they receive and accept how those two energies cling together and a lot of good things happen on stage. It get really exciting; you can see people just open up saying "*Give it to us Spear, give it to us, you know we want it, we need it*" and that's my duty.

Last year, you gave us the ‘Fan Appreciation’ tour, initially announcing 10 shows in 10 countries which then rose to over 20 shows. It seems like you’re going to be doing it all again this year with dates scheduled for some of the biggest music festivals worldwide like Rototom Sunsplash, Reggae Geel and Reggae Jam to name a few. What has made Burning Spear come out of retirement?

Yeah, I wouldn’t say I came out of my retirement. I’m still in my retirement, but I use my discretion. I got to remember the people who were there and still be there for me for over the past years, those are some strong supporters. Those are some strong fans, die-hard fans who never turn back, never gave up, never change their direction. They are there for **Spear**, just like I am here for them. So yes, I use my discretion. Go out there and do something for the people to let them see that I’m alright and I’m strong and healthy so why not go and do something?

Well, I think that the fans worldwide are never going to say “No” to more dates from Spear on the live circuit.

(Laughs) They always want more!

Let’s focus again on the new album. Cure For Cancer has a beautiful flute intro where you push the medical scientists to dig a little deeper to find a cure.

Oh yeah, for they are the ones who doing that kind of medical work to assist patients or people. Medical scientists dig a little deeper so it might be possible, you might just find something for the cure for cancer, it’s very important. I also think they can give it a little more attention also for there are so many things can happen, but we just don’t know when some of these things are going to happen or how some of these things are going to happen, but as long as it’s a good thing it’s no problem. So medical scientists dig a little deeper, just see if we could find a cure for cancer.

Whilst we continue to live in hope for a cure, do you think that we, as a population, should

be doing more ourselves to prevent these things from happening to our bodies?

Yes, but things happen where we just don’t know why these things happen, where it’s coming from and a lot more to it. It’s the people who are in control of this kind of situation to really take a deeper look and be careful and create more security in their health situations. So, when things like this come about, they’re ready to deal with it and to stop it and to prevent it from spread and going from one place to another place. That’s their responsibility, to make sure when it comes to health, they’re right on top of it. It’s like security. I believe in security 100%, you know for that safety. So, it’s the same thing like a virus out there, here and here. And you go at the wrong place at the wrong time, and you know you pick up this thing and you just don’t know where you get it from, or you just don’t know what it is. So here comes all these medical scientists to really take a deep look, as deep as they can and come up with stuff to prevent things like this from happening.

You’re looking very well. What do you do to keep yourself healthy?

Well, I try to eat right. I was an exercise freak. (Laughs!). I don’t mess around and I try to do things where I can benefit from what I’ve been doing, and I just do a lot of good things for me. What kept me going is all those years when I was an exercise freak and those exercises pay off now. I’m in age and I’m still feeling strong.

So I think what you’re saying is that some of the things that you did earlier in your life are now reaping their rewards now.

Oh yeah, exactly.

There is also a song on the album called Independent, I was struck by a line “Many times I question Jah about what’s going on, but I keep moving”. That’s really powerful. When you speak of being Independent, what challenges have you faced both in a personal and artistic sense?



MARCIA GRIFFITHS

KABAKA PYRAMID

BURNING SPEAR

TARRUS RILEY

CAPLETON

MYKAL ROSE

MR. VEGAS

YAKSTA

CALIP

NATTY KING

STRANGER COLE

SHERIFF

INTI

KENYATTA HILL CULTURE

REKALL

SISTA GRACY

DR. RING DING

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You see independence is not an easy thing. Independence to me or for me it's not as soft as the cotton what was so antique by our people before us. Independence, it's a struggle, it's a journey and it's a rough road and it's a lot of competition within independency with record companies. Some business people don't like that, they feel that you always have to come to them. You always have to ask them about this and ask them about that. They have to say yes, they have to say no. So, when you bypass that and start to live on an independent level based upon your business, it's not an easy road to travel.

From your earliest experiences in the music industry, things have somewhat changed. We live in this modern world of technology and within that comes its opportunities and challenges - copyright and trademark, bootlegging, piracy, artificial intelligence, how do you protect yourself? What processes are in place?

Well, to be honest, all these things you talk about you will always have these things in the music business. But it's our duty to come up with something and to counteract it and to create a wall. So therefore, some of these things will really come and rest on you. You can still go along with your business but in the music business, especially at an early time before the business take a dive it was hard. It was really hard for a person who decided to do their own thing, because you up against a lot of sharks.

They must be the "musical sharks" you refer to in the songs Talk and No Fool where you sing about some of the underhand and deceitful aspects of the music industry that you, like many others have had to face. I feel a sense of anger or resentment in your voice. Are they the emotions that Burning Spear feels when thinking about a song like Talk or No Fool?

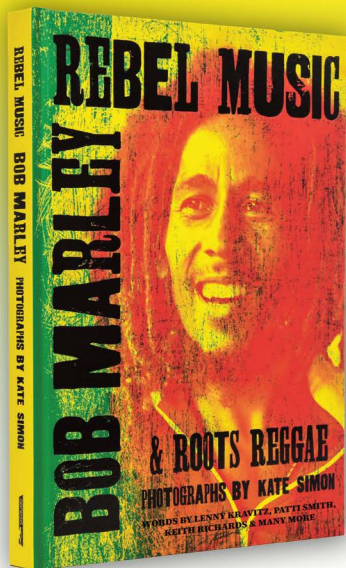
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Oh, you're talking about the song *"I've got my Talk, I'm not afraid of no musical shark"*. Yeah, here goes again. In the business there's a lot of sharks, you know, musical sharks. People in the business think that maybe you shouldn't be doing what you're doing and *how* you've been doing what you doing. Why are you not doing it for them or doing it with them? So, all these musical sharks, they are coming from East, West, North and South, you got to be strong, you know, going up against the sharks.

And I presume that's the reason why your musical output has come through your own Burning Music Production label for a number of years, to rightfully protect what is your intellectual property?

Oh yeah. You see, I learn a lot and after learning a lot, I have to also learn how to present me. There's no company who going to present **Burning Spear**. That was a long

time ago. I'm presenting myself and I have to present myself in the right and proper way so people can see what we've been doing, and people can get their understanding about our direction and the things that we've been standing up for and the things that we have no intention of standing up for.

The album was recorded at the legendary New York City studio Magic Shop. That studio has been quite a legendary spot for singers including Norah Jones, Lou Reed and David Bowie.

Magic Shop was a very good recording studio and I think I did like three to four albums at **Magic Shop**, if I'm not wrong. This studio really have this sound what I need and that's why I kept going there and do all these works and I don't regret anything. It was like a family at **Magic Shop**. We go and do what we have to do and do it the best way we can.

What has that studio given to you that made working there so special?

It's a studio where the owner of the studio is a down to earth person. He is an open person, and just gives you your space. When you're in the studios you know there is nobody looking over your shoulder and stuff like that and **Steve Rosenthal** is such a good guy, a really good guy. I enjoy going to the studio and I think the studio have a sound where it convince me to keep going there - the sound from the studio is very important towards the recording.

Talking of recording studios, you've done extensive works at studios in Jamaica as well. Are there any particular studios in Jamaica where you really feel at home?

Studios back in Jamaica is really different from studios in the States, but yes, I work in some good studio back in Jamaica. I work at **Harry J**, I work at **Tuff Gong**, I do a lot of work in different studios. But back in Jamaica, my number one studio, I would say **Tuff Gong**.

The song Jamaica talks about the history and the importance of the teachings and philosophies of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, do you see the school system in Jamaica doing enough to preserve those teachings for future generations?

Oh yeah, I'm looking forward to see that before I even get more older and can't move around to see them lift the ban on **Marcus Garvey**, for **Marcus Garvey** did a great job for Jamaica. But talking about the song I think it's a very strong song., When this album release, I think it's a song Jamaican people need to listen to, not just listen to the album, but listen especially to that song **Jamaica**. For it's telling you about everything, telling you about the culture, the roots, the history, the livity, the love, the oneness, the works what take place by various people - Rastafari, **Marcus Garvey**, etc, etc. This song has been telling you everything.

It's definitely a song that the Jamaican fans need to listen to...

...And do you know it's my favourite song?

Oh wow!

Yeah, **Jamaica**, that song is my favourite song (laughs!). I think I put everything in that song. I can't explain how strong that song is and how much that song means to me as a Jamaican African descendant, that's a beautiful song. Really beautiful.

As human beings, giving back through charitable works has always been something that we generally don't like to talk about. As humble people, we don't like to 'blow our own trumpet' so I'm going to do it for you because I have learnt of your involvement with Zazan Zazan's Spread The Love A Move charity.

Sometime in life you have to hear out other people for people have lots of good ideas. **Zazan** is a full man, **Zazan** is strong and he believe in what he's doing and he's honest and he cares. He always feels something from people who need, people who would like to say, can I have this and just don't know how to say it. And the person who don't need it always saying give me this and give me that and when he or she get it they don't really need it, they just want it. The needy people are the person who just don't know how to ask for it. So, to them, they prefer not to ask and not get more than they ask for. If I'm going to ask and I'm not getting anything, I'm not going to be asking anything. And you know, it really hurt to know that you need something, but you just don't know how to ask for it. And here comes **Zazan**, he is there for a lot of people. He know the needs of people. He feel the struggle of people. He see children need help, elderly people need help and people in general need help and that's his role. He's playing a strong role, a clean role, a role where it going to keep him healthy for the more good things he does, then he going to look better every day and look stronger every day. That's his pay for the good things what he been doing for people today.



For the Lord is our defence,
and the Holy One of Israel is our King
Psalm 91 Vv. 1-2

Alas I will praise him my generation,
higher than the Kings of the earth.
My mercy will I keep for him
for evermore, and my covenant will
stand fast with him.
Psalm 138 Vv. 1-2

For thou preservest him with
the knowledge of his path, thou settest
him a crown of pure gold on his head.
Psalm 21 Vv. 1-2



Give me some examples of the charitable works you are involved with.

Number one, Marcus Garvey High School, I support that. The infirmary, I support that. The infant school, I support that. I support a lot of things wherein people wouldn't understand or realise what I've been doing as **Burning Spear**, giving back something. I'm not a millionaire. I'm not a rich man. I'm just an ordinary man, an ordinary Rastaman who believe in the right thing and can identify people who really need something, and I'm here to give as much as I can to the people who need something.

Moving from St Ann's Bay to Westmoreland and Hanover, let's take a stop in Negril. Is that a place that you get to visit frequent?

Oh that's a nice song. *Negril* is a beautiful song. I've been going to Negril for many, many years before that song came along. You know, me and my wife were always going to Negril, like maybe every other week when I was living back in **Jamaica** and I see a lot take place in Negril. Way before Negril develop and be what it is today. I've been going there before all these hotels built up, before there were no hotels, they were more like cottages so you can see how long I've been going to Negril. The song came about based upon my back



and forth to Negril. The inspiration came and my wife played a big role in the song *Negril* too. But when I thought I have the right lyrics, she was saying no, you need to go back and do some replacement and some changes and stuff like that, and I continue until I get the sound the way the sound should be. It's a very beautiful, calm inspirational song.

We're here in 2023 celebrating your newest album *No Destroyer*, but I also feel that we need to recognise another huge achievement - this year celebrates 50 years of the release of your debut album *Studio One Presents Burning Spear*.

Yes, that's something else! You know that is cool, as a matter of fact that shot with me playing the guitar was taken across the street from the studio in **13 Brentford Road**. I'm not a guitarist but you know, **Mr. Dodd** say only guitar on pose as if we're playing guitar. **Studio One** was good, **Studio One** was like the first musical college, we all meet there, we have fun. After I start to feel the music like in the late 50s, the 60s then I decided to look at connections towards **Studio One**, so how I ended up at **Studio One** was by meeting **Bob Marley** for the first time. I met **Bob** in the opposite part of St Ann, **Nine Mile** and I asked **Bob**

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DUB CONDUCTOR | EQUAL SOULS COLLECTIVE | MYSTICAL HI FI LIVE
DANCEHALL CHI CHING CHING | BASS ODYSSEY | KING ADDIES ^{40th ANNIVERSARY} | CODE RED SOUND | DYNAMO
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where I could get studio time and he asked me if I know Kingston? He said tell **Mr. Dodd** I sent you. Yes, I went there and here come the song:

“Door peep shall not enter this a holy land

Where wise and true man stand sipping

From this cupful cup of peace”

So therefore, I and I did have to chant down Babylon. Yes, **Mr. Dodd** is very musical. Is **Mr. Dodd** an honest man? No, but he knows the music and that’s the key and we want to learn the music and learn how we go about dealing with the music. So that’s why we always be there for over that period of time so, I could do my first album with **Mr. Dodd**. That album, the pictures were taken, as I said before, across the street from the studio, which is 13 Brentford Road.

Share some memories of your time down at 13 Brentford Road?

When I first went to **Studio One** it was a Sunday, I think I went there and they were doing the audition and they like my song and as a matter of fact it was me and **Rupert Willington**. He was my background vocalist, and when I sing this song, I didn’t think **Mr. Dodd** would like the song and then he said he liked the song and then he give me a day to come back and when I went back, I actually record the song *Door Peep Shall Not Enter*. But it was fun at **Studio One**, all of us meet, you can see we very anxious even though we just want to sing and have fun. It was all about the beginnings, but there were no salary. There was no payment there. There was nothing. You were on your own, you’ve been on your own for a long time and you’re not getting anything from **Mr. Dodd**. **Mr. Dodd** don’t care anything about the singers but through we want to be something, so we always keep going there.

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BURNING SPEAR

Winston Rodney Delroy Hines Rupert Willington

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ISLAND
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Photo credit: Kim Gottlieb

You explore some of these musical connections on a song called *Open The Gate* on the new album where you sing about your personal connection with Robert Nesta Marley and also namecheck some of our musical icons like Delroy Wilson, The Skatalites, Dennis, Gregory, and so many more - like yourself, they all have this very special musical talent, almost like a gift.

That's a strong song *Open The Gate*. *Open The Gate* is a lot of us going through the gate or coming through the gate, you know, so open the gate for reggae music. And I name a couple of those who've been opening the gate and going through the gate, and I'm doing what we have to do and do it the best way we can.

Your first recordings were for Coxsone Dodd and then you teamed up with Jack Ruby. What made you record with Jack Ruby?

Well after **Studio One** as I said before, I been going back and forth, going back and forth and nothing really happened. I then started to hang out on the beach, and I start to grow my dread and after having my dread and still going back and forth to **Studio One** I start to think that maybe because I'm a dreadlock, he's not going to be doing anything. So, I ended up cutting my dread at one time and he still didn't do anything. **Willington** walk away and leave me, and I hang around for a short time at **Studio One**. Then I myself walked away too, ending up on the beach, still maintaining my creativity. So here comes **Jack Ruby**, he heard about me on the beach, and he wants me to do business with him. So, I said OK, let's do it and so comes the album **Marcus Garvey**, but I was a solo singer and when working on the album **Marcus Garvey**, I still see myself as a solo singer. But at the end of the day, **Jack Ruby** need to do

business with the company and the company prefer if **Jack Ruby** will present me to them as a group. So, we ended up as a group based upon the album **Marcus Garvey and Man In The Hills**. They were the two albums I did for **Jack Ruby**. After I did the two albums for **Jack Ruby** and there came a time **Jack** have has to go about his business and I have to go about my business. Then I start to exercise **Burning Music Production** doing recording for myself, albums like **Hail HIM, Farover, The Fittest Of The Fittest** and it goes on and on and on and on for **Burning Music Production**.

You made the journey back to your home in St Ann's Bay where you hooked up with Jack Ruby, who had a name as a sound system owner rather than a musical producer as such. Did you feel that you were taking a chance with working with an up-and-coming producer back then?

No, no, **Jack Ruby** is properly musical. **Jack Ruby** knows the music. You know there are some things within the music business **Jack Ruby** just don't know. But he was a good guy, pretty musical. And here comes again the record company, they knew Jack just didn't know certain things in the business, so they utilised that, you know, and they give Jack a face which didn't belong to Jack and you know people start send the wrong message about **Jack Ruby**. But **Jack Ruby** was a clean guy, talking about music, I'm not talking about his personal way of living I'm not responsible for that. But musically I can tell anyone **Jack Ruby** was a clean guy, was a good guy, very musical. You know him love the music, he loves people and he believe in what you are doing musically.

And it was around that time 45 years ago when we saw a young Winston Rodney and Leroy 'Horsemouth' Wallace in one of the most iconic scenes from the Rockers movie. Rockers movie. That was a good movie too, you know. I play a part. They want me to play a part and I play a part. Did I benefit anything from the part I play? No, I didn't benefit

anything. Nobody paid me a salary or give me some money and say "*OK Spear*". They gave me nothing and that movie is such a strong movie and the world see that movie and they saw **Spear** singing *Jah No Dead*. You know, for **Leroy 'Horsemouth' Wallace** was the main guy, he was the star of the movie, and I don't even know what became of **Leroy Wallace** in a sense, hopefully he's still alive and in the best of health. Most of us who play a role in the movie, we don't get anything. But the movie came out good and it was good.

Talking of movies, I must ask you about the Burning Spear documentary I MAN which has been in the making for a similar length of time to the new album No Destroyer - when can we expect a release of this documentary?

The documentary is going to release. I'm going to go back and I'm going to start to do some strong work on the documentary, for I know a lot of people have been looking forward to seeing that documentary. And I've got all the parts, the pieces, is just [need] to settle down and find the right person, and then we put things together and so therefore the public, especially the fans, can really see a **Burning Spear** documentary. That's gonna going to take place for real.

It seems like there's lots of exciting things on the horizon. The tours, the new album No Destroyer and a documentary in the making as well. You are definitely not a retired man.

No, no, no, no! In a sense, no. And in another sense, you know, sometimes we take a break, and you know, let things pass by or pass over. But I am who I am, I'm a musician. I've been called upon to do what I've been doing. This is not about talent; what I do is a gift and I have to exercise my gift. There comes a time when people like we have to have to take it easy, of course I retire. I'm not going to say I'm not retired. I retire with discretion. I use my discretion and that's why we go out there, we do a couple show here and there, the people feeling good, feeling happy. I appreciate it and what more can I do? We have to just keep moving.

BURNING SPEAR - NO DESTROYER

Burning Music - August 18, 2023

After over a decade of speculation, perhaps the most important living Reggae artist **Burning Spear** is finally releasing a new album.

No Destroyer, released via **Spear's** own label **Burning Music**, has been ready since around 2012. **Spear** first spoke to **Reggaeville** about it in 2011, saying then there was “no deadline”. Then, in 2022 (and after much public speculation) he said: “*This album... was recorded [and mixed] in the Magic Shop... and mastered at Sterling Sound, New York. So, the people, especially my fans, they just have to have a little patience and they will receive this album when the time is right*”.

The time is clearly right, as the wait is over. **No Destroyer** is classic **Spear**: richly arranged orchestration, strong vocal performances, and compelling lyrics.

The album's opener **The Spear** is a piece of winding, funky Roots with his signature, swaying horn section (**Greg Glassman's** trumpet, **Jason Jackson's** trombone, and **Jerry Johnson's** sax). **Spear's** strong vocal about him as an artist is compelling, too.

The title track has an intricate percussive arrangement across **Karl W. Wright's** drums, plus **Spear's** narrative about having to go up against others in life. Then, **Independent** winds the pace back with a focus here on a pleasing lead guitar line and electric organ. **Spear's** hail to his musical and spiritual independence is powerful.

Jamaica is an immersive, funky yet brooding ode to the island's history and culture. The fluid pace is driven by **Laurence Lewis's** bubble rhythm keys plus inflections of Dub engineering. Next **Cure for Cancer's** upbeat vibes contradict the narrative of



science's inability (or unwillingness) to solve cancer. The strong backing vocals, the flute line, plus bird samples are glorious.

Obsession changes **No Destroyer's** thrust, focusing on a more Soul-led arrangement, with detailed, complex chord progressions and funky guitars and electric organ.

Spear's vocal here is particularly strong - running complex riffs - about a person's unhealthy infatuation with someone. The previously released **Mommy** is a moving ode to Babylon's neglect of the youth, and parents' response, while **Open The Gate** shows **Spear's** musical dexterity: an arrangement drawing on Blues, with its lilting, dampened guitars - plus pattering drums cementing this musical ode to **Bob Marley**.

No Fool is punchy Roots, with a focus on Dub across the drums and stark reverb, some pleasing additional percussion, and minimal instrumental layering with pointed breaks (enhancing **Spear's** lyrics about his resilience). Then, **Negril** takes **No Destroyer's** sound back to a rudimentary Roots vibe. **Talk** is driven by **Linford „Lenny“ Carby's** rhythm guitar as it swaggers and sways as a backdrop to **Spear's** forthright vocal narrative about people diminishing him.

No Destroyer concludes with **They Think**. It's an evocative chant-like piece, with unfussy chord progressions, **Dave Selim Reichley's** relentless bass and **Spear's** well-constructed three-tone melody - coupled with lyrics of self-determination and strength: a fitting conclusion.

Overall, **No Destroyer** is well worth the wait. A highly competent, engaging, and attractive project that shows just why **Spear** is the legend he is: glorious, endearing, and deft.

by Steve Topples

ADUBTA & THE BLACK OAK ROOTS ALLSTARS - SOUNDS FROM THE ATTIC

June 23, 2023

aDUBta's rise to prominence has been quite something to watch. With over 20 years in the music industry, being **Headcornerstone** band's second-generation drummer to a producer for **Oneness Records**, and in his own right, he's now released a fresh album with the **Black Oak Roots Allstars**, a collective of musicians focusing on an authentic, 70s-driven

Roots Reggae sound. The record shows his infinite talents once more.

Sounds From The Attic, released via **Oneness Records**, is a delicious, perfectly formed exploration of Roots Reggae – focusing on classic vibes, with production and engineering to match. It should be noted the quality of the **Black Oak Roots Allstars'** musicianship is brilliant – evoking an authenticity of sound. The individual artists have also delivered strong performances, and lyrical narratives – traversing politics, spirituality, and love as well.

Distant Drums featuring the legendary **Earl 16** is a fluid, choppy piece of Roots-Dub, with some glorious attention to detail in terms of the use of synths – notably the well-arranged horn line. **Letters To My Love** featuring **Var** changes the tone of **Sounds From The Attic**, moving it into something far more soulful. There's a gorgeous flute line, the rhythm section flows like water, and **Var's** vocal is impressive.

Then, the title track features **Vin Gordon** and **Stepper**. It's a brilliant throwback to an earlier time in Reggae, complete with swaying horns, a fluid drum line and superb central instrumentals from **Gordon's** trombone and **Stepper's** sax.

Tribulation featuring stalwart **Ranking Joe** is brooding, unsettling Roots with inflections



of Dub. The arrangement is unfussy but effective, the guitars being particularly well-placed, and **Joe** is on point. Then, **Not Easy** sees UK-based **YT** return to **Oneness** after 2021's **Moment For Change** EP. Here, the sound is choppy, edgy, and forward-moving – with a rich arrangement and some decent breaks.

Mi Deh Yah featuring **Brother Culture** winds the pace back slightly, deepens the resonance, and brings in further Dub elements to create another classic sound that is both haunting and evocative. Finally, **We The African** featuring **Cedric 'Congo' Myton** is pure class: that positive, uplifting Roots that **Myton** himself does so well. The strutting horns complement the gloriously stark Dub breaks, and the lilting guitars coupled with **Myton's** rich vocal finish the track, and the album, off perfectly.

Then, the vinyl release provides four Dub versions of tracks. **Distant Dubs (Umberto Echo Version)** is impressive: focusing on the synth horn line. **Dub To My Love (Umberto Echo Version)** keeps parts of **Var's** vocal in but compresses and decays them for that 'other room' effect. **Mi Dub Yah (aDUBta Version)** with its centring of the drums almost feels Steppers. Finally, **African Dub (aDUBta Version)** is lightly done Dub, with elements of **Myton's** vocals retained.

Overall, **Sounds From The Attic** is a slick, well-executed, and infinitely listenable affair. aDUBta shows his skills at composition and production, while the **Black Oak Roots Allstars** are excellent, as are the guest artists. One for anyone's collection.

by Steve Topple

ALBOROSIE - DESTINY

VP Records - May 26, 2023

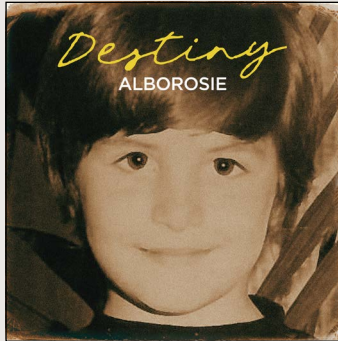
Alborosie has returned with a new album, two years after the critically acclaimed **For The Culture** – and here, he well and truly cements his status as a leading light in Reggae.

Destiny, released via **Greensleeves Records**, **VP Records** and **Shengen Entertainment**, sees Italian-born, Jamaica-based **Albo**

move further forward with his sound. Contrary to the vibes seen on **For The Culture**, with this album **Albo** focuses on Roots, but with some interesting digressions and intersections – once more though, all expertly constructed by him, and mostly him alone.

More traditional Roots is well-represented – from **Rastazeneka's** smooth, swaying horns, tinkering piano riff beyond the bubble rhythm, and the slick backing vocals, to **No Good Again's** more soulful take on the genre. **I Got You** is then an open tribute to an earlier Reggae sound – particularly mid-70s **Bob Marley**. Then, Dub gets a look in via **Focus** and its Old Skool slant, **Dubalist** featuring **Sugus** (**Albo's** step-grandmother) and its electronic-heavy yet richly layered arrangement, and **Give It To Them** featuring **Burro Banton's** modern take on a Rub-A-Dub sound, with its unfussy chord progressions.

However, **Albo** mixes all this up too, to very good effect. Revival Reggae (mixing Hip Hop beats with Reggae sensibilities) is present. **Nah Sell Out** featuring Grammy-winning **Kabaka Pyramid** and **Viral** utilise the genre well, with that latter heavier on the traditional Reggae. Then, the style gets an upgrade with **Over My Shoulders** featuring **Buju Banton**, as older-style Hip Hop drums are replaced with a Trap arrangement. **Faith** featuring rising star **Jaz Elise**



takes this sound further, bringing it into 2023, where Trap elements meet a grimy, swooping bass.

Destiny also gives **Albo** the chance to provide us with some surprises, too. Turkish-born rapper **Ezhel** ups **Albo's** Middle Eastern credentials across **Royal Throne**: a blend of 20th century Reggae and 21st century

Trap. But **General** is the most unexpected cut of the album. **Albo** has taken an Old Skool Hip Hop freestyle drumbeat, layered it with some Reggae instrumentation – and delivered a cut where his vocal and lyrical skills lead.

Speaking of lyrical, and **Albo** has also delivered plenty of strong narratives across **Destiny**, too: from **Viral's** take-down of our modern obsession with vacuous celebrity, to **Rastazeneka's** delicious dig at Big Pharma – proclaiming natural medicine (i.e. weed) is better. **No Good Again** discusses how **Albo** stays true to his beliefs against Babylon. **Focus** is perhaps the natural progression of this – saying ignore the haters – with **Nah Sell Out** reminding us money is the root of all evil.

Spirituality is dealt with via **Over My Shoulder**, while **Faith** also does similar. But **Albo** also deals with themes of love, too. **Royal Throne** is a glorious tribute to the sanctity of a spiritual relationship – but also a person's own, inner royalty too. And **I Got You** is **Albo's** tribute to the person in his life who has made it complete.

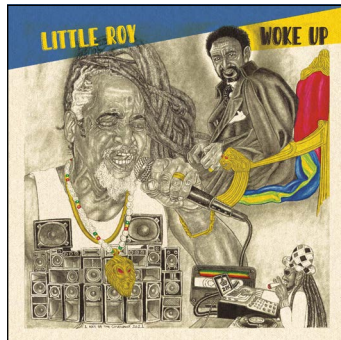
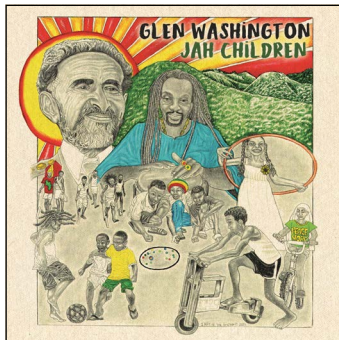
Overall, **Destiny** is pure skill and class from **Alborosie** – a highly competent release that transcends styles and genres, showing this artist in all his creative glory. Wonderful.

by Steve Topple

GLEN WASHINGTON - JAH CHILDREN / LITTLE ROY - WOKE UP Zion High Productions - June 16, 2023

The two latest EPs from **Zion I Kings (ZIK)** are glorious. They're one of the foremost production outfits working in Roots Reggae, so both records are the sumptuous quality we'd expect.

First, **ZIK** has teamed up with **Glen Washington** for **Jah Children**.



Power Hungry People is a slick and interesting piece of Roots. The chord progressions are of note, as is the percussion, plus pointed horns bring colour to the edgy arrangement. Then, the Dub version adds some spic, with heavy use of reverb and breaks darkening the mood further. **No Limit** moves this sound to the side, with the reverb coming onto the main track, and a feeling of foreboding across the drums and horns. The Dub accentuates this - with brilliant engineering across the drums, as well nice touches on the vocal.

Jah Children featuring **Chet Samuel** is swaying, pronounced Roots, focusing on the rhythm section, call and response vocals, and staccato horn riffs. Its Dub is stark and foreboding, honing in on the drums with great reverb across the horns and vocals. Finally, **Good Ole Days** changes the mood of the EP; gone is the ominous brooding, replaced by an upbeat, light, and brightly arranged, fluid track with a very pleasing flute line. The Dub is lovely, accentuating the airier feel of the original perfectly: not too heavy on the reverb, but big on the breaks.

Then, **Little Roy** and **ZIK** give us the **Woke Up** EP.

My Friend almost has something of the Steppers, with its spinning hi-hats and dominant kick - coupled with gorgeous horns and backing vocals to match. The Dub version is a pleasing foray into

ambient, heavily engineered music - particularly across **Roy's** impressive vocal. **Separate** winds the sound back to something smoother, yet more ominous - with its stark arrangement contradicting the fluttering flute. Here, the Dub focus on rhythmic reverb as a musical device - accentuating the ambience of the original.

Don't Ring My Bell shifts **Woke Up's** tone somewhat, into brighter, more soulful Reggae with some well-constructed and interesting chord progressions and good use of synths and samples. Then, its Dub version takes a scattergun approach to proceedings - with instruments and **Roy's** vocals dipping in and out. Finally, the title track is harmonious, flowing, and smooth Roots, with the inclusion of an electric organ at the fore, plus whining, bending guitars, and major to minor chord progressions, being lovely touches - creating something almost Soul. It's the strongest track of the EP - with the Dub cementing this.

Overall, these two EPs from **ZIK** are great pieces of work. **Washington's** offering feels like a complete package, compounded with lyrical narratives about spirituality and Babylon - but ending on a brighter note. **Roy's** EP is equally competent - peaking and troughing in terms of tonal light and shade, as well as a strong message running throughout. Of course, all of this is expected from **ZIK**, who never fail to impress.

by Steve Topple

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INTI - INTI

cesaraugusto Music - June 23, 2023

German artist **Inti** has already had some success with his band **Memoria**. Now, though, he's branched out on his own - and his eponymous debut album shows the full potential of this talented artist.

Inti, released via **Cesaraugusto Music**, is a sophisticated and very well-executed journey through Reggae, as well as **Inti**'s own talents. His European influences are clear - as the presence of electronic music, notably 80's Synthwave, is heard throughout. However, what the album also does so well is stay authentic to the Jamaican sound.

Inti serves as a compelling platform for the artist's very strong voice. His tenor is rich and rounded, with a controlled tone that makes good use of techniques like vibrato, and a skill to interpret music and lyrics in an attention-grabbing way.

Open Your Eyes featuring **Akeem Garrison** is classic in its arrangement with some pleasing Dub touches, like the rhythmic reverb. **Set Your Priorities Right** picks up the pace, with a brisk and breezy horn section, decent breaks, and a vocal from **Inti**, and a string section, which are more Soul than straight Reggae.

Then, **Times Like This** featuring **Ras Python** is very classic Reggae - with its siren samples, synth instrumentation, and strong breaks. **Nature** featuring **Chezidek** has a gorgeous piano line and some evocative drums, while remaining authentic to Roots Reggae. **Loyalty** moves Inti into more experimental Reggae - with its whining, screeching guitars being Rock-like, juxtaposed with a delicate flute fluttering around Dub breaks.



Trample Dem Down featuring **Inti**'s brother, **Chaski** (also a member of **Memoria**) continues the Rock guitar vibes, along with some provocative horns, heavy elements of Dub, and a stark drum section. **I'm Vibing** is a curious creation - the chord progressions are inventive, while the arrangement is stark - reflecting the lyrical content. The track **My Queen** is perhaps a more reserved

musical experience, staying true to Lover's Rock with some good use of 80's style synths.

U and I then moves Inti further to a synth-heavy sound, with its focus on electric keys, as well as the welcome appearance of a Hammond organ - but with a smooth, soulful overall arrangement. **Ungreatful** featuring **Kapital Stone** continues this theme with a heavy dose of haunting synths across Dub breaks, and some inventive engineering. The album concludes with **Music**, going full circle on the sound - back to an authentic Roots vibe, providing a swaying and mesmerising conclusion to the album.

Lyrically, **Inti** tackles various subjects throughout the album and delivers compelling narratives to deal with them. From **I Vibing**'s discussing around cannabis, to the Lover's nature of **My Queen**, **Inti** takes on the lighter subjects well. But he's at his best across cuts like **Trample Dem Down** - discussing Babylon and its proponents, **Open Your Eyes** which provides a stark narrative on how the system impacts us all, and the gorgeous **Nature** - a tribute to the natural world.

Overall, **Inti** is a superbly constructed piece of work from its namesake - with some very engaging music and lyrical content. However, it serves best to demonstrate the skills of **Inti** himself, who is going to have a bright future as a solo artist.

by Steve Topple

JAH TUNG - DIGITAL DEGENERATION

Evidence Music - June 23, 2023

From Australia to the world! In comes **Jah Tung**, who, after **The Soul Food EP** in 2015 and a constant stream of singles, now presents his debut album by the title of **Digital Degeneration**. Most remarkably, this work is an almost single-handed effort of an artist who is so determined to get his music out there that he just *did* it, despite many odds. Released under the Swiss label

Evidence Music, the twelve tracks included were written, produced and recorded by **Jah Tung** himself, with the occasional input of other musicians such as **Dubvisionist** (drums), **Jack Shepherd**, **Julian Steel**, **Ward Hancock** and **Michael Iannotti** (guitar), **Tomas Fisher** (horns) as well as backing vocals on all tracks by **Yasmin Forrester**, and mastering done by **Douglas Wardrop**.

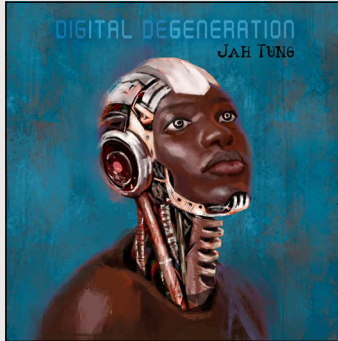
The beginning:

Upright & Bless, which starts on a heavy Nyabingi percussion by **Jideh High** and contains an Indian-sounding instrument (the natural beauty of which is a bit diluted by the needless synth strings), introduces the firm convictions of the singer, lyrically delivered in „*word, sound and power*“.

The mindset:

Thus introduced, **Jah Tung's** Rastafarian faith shines through in many other songs, whether presenting himself as „*diligent disciple*“ in **Come Back Stronger** or singing about dietary preferences and healthy lifestyle in **Ital Generation**: „*Think of your meal as medicine, 'cause energy is everything!*“

Special importance is attributed to the title-track **Digital Degeneration**, felt both in the urgent warning of „*progress without balance*“, AI and our dependency on technology, and in the doom-and-gloom video animated by **Digital Crow**.



Fascinating, and an important subject to raise indeed!

The features:

The impressive list of featured artists on this album deserves a special mention, not self-evident for upcoming creatives, and a proof of **Jah Tung's** well-established global network. In **Fly Away**, we hear the voice of **Tamika** who is based in Spain, while US/VI

vocalist **Pressure Busspipe** joins in to sing about the world-wide revolution of an **Indigenous Government**.

From Jamaica, the conscious Dancehall artist **Bugle** delivers in his usual immaculate style on **Alright**. The accompanying video, created by **AutoBars Ent. & Triple 4 Vision**, features another artist: dancer **Nanni Ruutz**, who embodies the song's message of self-discipline and spiritual balance. Probably the biggest surprise is the inclusion of Grammy-winner **Kabaka Pyramid**, who seamlessly combines his lyrical skills with the smooth flow of **Jah Tung** on **Behave Your Mouth**. Produced by the same team mentioned above, the visuals take us on a journey to 1978, the year the cult movie **Rockers** was released. Grand!

The closing:

After the up-tempo **Hold On**, a vibrant, positive piece that encourages us to keep trying and not give up, the album closes with **Guidance**, my personal favourite. While some of the other tracks lack the analogue warmth of a full band, the decelerated sound on this one fits the emotive vocals of **Micah Shemaiah** perfectly.

Digital Degeneration is a ruminative album, a promising piece of work by a gifted singer and lyricist, brought to us cloaked in a beautiful cover by **Elie-Ah**.

by Gardy Stein

PERFECT GIDDIMANI - AH MI YARD

I Grade Records - June 23, 2023

Perfect Giddimani is one of the most consistent artists in Roots. Now, he's teamed up with the equally consistent **I Grade Records** and **Zion I Kings (ZIK)** for a brand-new Album.

Ah Mi Yard, released via **I Grade Records**, sees **Giddimani** collaborate with **Laurent 'Tippy I' Alfred's I Grade Records** and production collective extraordinaire **ZIK**, as well as the latter's **Andrew 'Moon' Bain**. Across the album, renowned session vocalist **Sherida Sharp** provides the backing vocals. So overall, it means the project is of an optimum quality: that classy, rich, and well-executed Roots Reggae everyone involved is known for.

The album opens with **Never Give In** - a rich, sumptuous, yet brooding Roots affair, with keen attention to detail across the additional instrumentation like the horns. **Giddimani's** use of his falsetto range is particularly pleasing, as are the soulful chord progressions.

The title-track switches the tone up to something warm and dulcet. There's a nice touch with an expanded keys line and a delicate electric organ - and **Giddimani's** vocal feels, at times, like a Nyabinghi chant. **Same Boat** sees the warmth increase, but also the pace picks up across an Old Skool arrangement: the root to seventh chord progression dominates, the instrumentation is choppy, and **Giddimani** is forthright.

Hard Ears sees **Ah Mi Yard** change tack again - moving into Soul-driven Roots, with a smooth, flowing string section and some starkly arranged, rasping guitars and synth horns. **Woosah** heads to Old Skool Roots Rock, but deceptively so - with more complex chord progressions, some nicely arranged call and response horns, and a



choppy, funky rhythm section complementing **Giddimani's** equally funky yet gnarly vocal perfectly.

Give Me My Flowers starts to wind the pace down, with the introduction of acoustic guitars - making this feel almost Country-inspired. The wah-wah'd guitar is particularly nice, and the Doo-Wop backing vocal arrangement

inspired. **Ah Mi Yard** concludes with **How Many Mornings**. It's a sobering ending, with its Funky Soul opener leading into a melancholy production. A deep arrangement, with multiple instrumental lines playing-off against each other, compounds this - and **Giddimani's** reflective yet angry vocal cements this.

Then, each track has a Dub version to complement it. All these are well-arranged and focus on the key musical and thematic elements of the originals - moving them further forward, to create individual cuts that are homages to their forebears.

Giddimani showcases the breadth and depth of his vocal skills throughout - displaying what a versatile artist he is: equally at home in singjay as straight vocal, which verges on the Soul at points. Lyrically he's concocted a powerful set of narratives: for example, from **Never Give In's** message of resistance in the face of Babylon's mendacity to **Same Boat's** dissection of classism and call for unity.

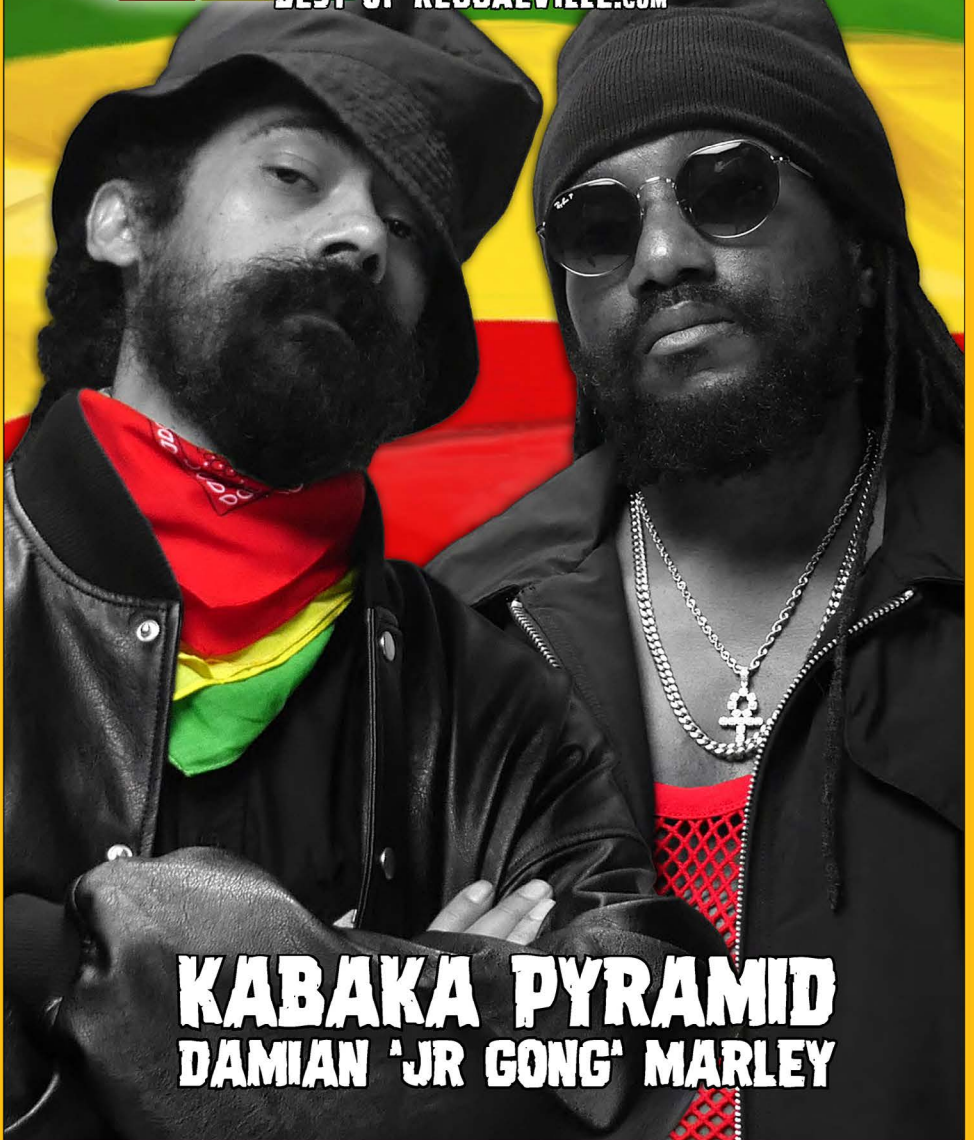
Overall, **Ah Mi Yard** is an extremely strong release from **Giddimani**. Teaming up with **I Grade** and **ZIK** has created a record which is highly inventive, extremely well-constructed, and infinitely listenable. Kudos to **Giddimani** - one of his best releases in recent years.

by Steve Topple

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