

# Reggae

As Brixton is to London and Hansworth to Birmingham, so St Pauls is the black heartland of the southwest English city of Bristol. It was here that the first black people arrived, in chains, in the 16th century.

It is also the home of Black Roots, a band now four LPs old and still bubbling under, unlike its colleagues Aswad and Steel Pulse. However the band is blessed with a keen manager, keen enough to travel all the way to London to see Jayrem's Jim Moss and do a deal to release the band's material here.

Their latest effort, *All Day All Night*, is already available. It's a crossover bid for commercial success and doesn't settle as well on these ears as its two predecessors, *The Front Line* and *In Session*. The title track of the former was used as the theme for a BBC comedy series. The latter is a compilation of sessions done for John Peel's radio show. Both albums are mellow and meditative in approach, with *The Front Line* featuring some extended dubbing that should delight spliff rollers everywhere. A worthy group and no lightweight.

Black Uhuru, now in its fourth incarnation, drifts further and further away from its roots, as displayed on the debut LP *Black Sounds of Freedom* (the literal translation of the group's name). Originally released under the title *Love Crisis*, this features Errol Nelson (later replaced Puma Jones), Michael Rose and Ducky Simpson. Rose's voice dominates, Jammy mixes and the cover of Marley's 'Natural Mystic' is a bonus. Well crucial.

On cassette only are the Mighty Diamonds' *Reggae Street* and Max Romeo's *Holding Out My Love to You*. The Diamonds are reggae's most enduring and consistent vocal trio and their sweet harmonies are unmatched. *Reggae Street* includes such gems as 'Illiteracy' and 'King Kong' and needs no more recommendation from me. The Romeo album is another of those one-off reggae ventures undertaken by the Rolling Stones, featuring Keef on the LP cover and somewhere on the album. It's not Romeo's best (check the Lee Perry-produced *War in a Babylon* for proof), but it has its moments, especially 'Vow of a Nazarene.'

Due out this month is Judy Mowatt's latest, *Love is Overdue*. Mowatt still performs as a member of the I Three, although she outshines both Rita Marley and Marcia Griffiths as a singer and turned on a blinder of a solo set at Sunsplash last year. Vocally she's often compared to Aretha Franklin, and she certainly has some of the tone, if not the sheer power. *Love is Overdue* is a soul crossover with American producers and covers including 'Try a Little tenderness' and UB40's 'Sing Our Own Song.'

Duncan Campbell

## SHAKE SUMMATION

Goblin Mix  
'Birth & Death of...'  
(Flying Nun 12")

Goblin Mix take something oddly Gaelic (reflected in guitar, violin and lyrics) and mix it with a bottle of port and sometimes melodic, sometimes brashly discordant, aggressive pop.

Chris Sheehan's production makes it all about as heavy as it will possibly go (a much worthier effort than the lightweight job on the Bird Nest Roy's *Whack It All Down*), and hey presto ... messy as it is, you'll love it. Doesn't matter that David Mitchell can't really sing, doesn't matter that they ain't around anymore: 'The Drinking Man's Curse' and 'Fruit of the Womb' will be among the best things on NZ vinyl this year. A period piece.

Sticky Filth  
'At Least Rock & Roll Doesn't Give You Aids' (Imahitt 7")

This comes wrapped in some "erotic literature" of dubious taste, but inside are three good tracks recorded live at the White Hart Hotel. Sticky Filth are the hottest thing in New Plymouth, and the mutant blues himmer 'Lobotomy Baby' shows why; an understated amalgam of Chuck Berry with a hardcore attitude, spoilt only by a rotten live mix.

Wild Poppies  
'Stare at the Sun' (Skank 7")

Side one, 'Stare at the Sun,' works well: tight and warm, recorded at Wellington's Frontier Studio. Side two's 'Where is Wellington' suffers some odd production choices though. If they had shorter, maybe a little tighter, arrangements, they'd be Chills songs: the talent must definitely be there.

All Fall Down  
'My Brand New Wallpaper Coat' (Flying Nun 12")

Christchurch's All Fall Down appeared on the *Weird Culture*, *Weird Custom* compilation last year, contributing the rather sprightly 'Holding Tide.' Since those days, they've added Steve Macintyre (once of Ballon D'essai), who contributes half the songs on this record. The clean but quiet recording from the Audio Access eight-track means that the quieter songs among the six sound best; with the Go-Betweensy 'Black Gratten' wrapping everything around an acoustic framework. 'Eastern, that Eastern song' is where the violin takes off; elsewhere it cuts through the mix a bit harshly. Very listenable though, and lots of fun.

Paul McKessar

## OFF THE RECORD

### Submission

28 packed A4 pages from fourth issue of Wellington fanzine, with Nazgul and Oi Polloi interviews, Tom Thug cartoon strip, punk and thrash discussion, stacks of witty anti-Royalty stuff, interview and review of Flesh D-Vice, Jack the Ripper story, and a piece on connections between feminism and anarchy. \$2, incl p&p from PO Box 6516, Te Aro, Wellington. CB

### Rigormortis: issue anti

Packed, compact Dunedin zine that really reflects and encourages the network and DIY ethic. Interviews with Bygone Era, Magazine's De Voto, Buzzcock's Pete Shelley, the Retards; articles on Aotearoa peace movement; Greenpeace and the Fiji coup, in depth coverage of Skank Attack & Records, some of it courtesy *R/U*, and plenty of Dunedin live and other NZ reviews. \$1 plus 60c p&p from Garpy, 4 St Kings Ave, St Kilda, Dunedin. CB

### Manic Magazine

Witty, A5 mag lithographed on good paper by Tim Housden (who wrote the liner notes on the Pterodactyls' EP) and Colin Livingston, with articles on masturbation ("The Secret Vice"), tapeworms, lunar conquest, a psycho advice column and lotsa great cartoons. There are some live wire minds behind this. \$2 from Manic Corporation, Box 33-496, Auckland. CB



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