

way he works the audience. It's their show as well as his and he exhorts them to sing, dance, clap and generally satisfy *him* that they're enjoying themselves. His stage craft owes plenty to the American soul reviews of the 1960s — Sam Cooke, Otis Redding and James Brown. It delivers, but to these ears, there's something missing. The sound is thin, the rhythm having almost no offbeat, the essential reggae counterpoint. Too much USA, not enough JA. Pam and Audrey, the two American girls brought in to do the high harmonies, have good voices, but they don't match the ecstasy of the Gordon-Mathias combination. Old Raleigh is still there, pounding the congas, but he doesn't look happy. The rest of the band is a well-seasoned collection of session musicians. People like Hux Brown, Winston Wright and Jackie Jackson have played with Toots for years and he wouldn't feel comfortable with anyone else. The jarring note is lead guitarist Carl Harvey, whose loud, flashy solos (some played with the teeth, Hendrix style) just grate on the nerves. A few days later, at a sound check, he's fooling around with some cliched soul licks, showing where his heart really lies. Verdict: adequate, but they weren't really trying.

The pressures of constant touring during the early 1970s began to take their toll on men who had spent all their lives on a tiny island in the middle of the Carribean. The pace was too hectic, the audiences and the business people very demanding. In 1976, Toots recorded *Reggae Got Soul*, a patchy album that included a trite version of Van Morrison's 'I Shall Sing' and a remake of 'Six And Seven Books'. The saving grace was 'Premature', one of his best ever, about the dangers of letting girls marry too young. The banal title track, written with co-producer Warrick Lynn, remains ironically one of Toots' best-known songs. The overall impression is of an album he had to, rather than wanted to make. Toots was turning back to religion more and more to find solace and strength, evidenced by the album's opening track, 'Rasta Man'. It's actually a remake of an old single, 'Bam Bam' and is perhaps Toots' most overt statement on Rastafari. Most of his conversations at the time concerned this topic, and it was not long after the release of *Reggae Got Soul* that he dropped out.

"I was praying then. All my time was in prayer. I wanted to know the way of Rastafari, the right way to praise God. So I just stop singing, live off my income and pray more regularly wid my bredrens and my family.

"Then Bob Marley die. He was a good friend of mine and so I say 'OK, I'm gonna start singing again'. Maybe if he was still singing I wouldn't sing so often. I don't wanna get in no competition, I just wanna be popular with people. But since he died, I say OK, lemme give the people somethin', y'know? Cause they need it, and he died, so I have to develop my musical career."

Since his re-emergence, Toots has recorded three albums, though only the latest, *Knock Out*, comes close to the early standards. It took him a long time to get his voice back in shape, and even today, he has to be gentle with it. His religious themes have become more diverse, but there is still a strong God consciousness running through many of his songs.

"I'll never change. I'll always be Rastafari. Rastafari mean 'Man of God', but you have to understand it, why God named Rastafari, y'know? You wanna call God 'God', or you wanna call him Rastafari, is jus' a name. You gotta know why you call it that. It's not a name for everyone to call every time. You have to have time to think, how to do good. And when you do it right, and you live right with people, then is Rastafari. It's quite different from what other people believe, y'know? You have to look within yourself and see the t'ing that you are doing. And if it is right, then is Rastafari. Is not a name to talk every time, and make it commercial, like a joke, you know what I mean? Is the Father name. So if you choose to call him that name, you have fe live the life to suit the name and to suit the word that you speak.

"All I do is call my Father name when I want to call his name. I call him Rastafari, I call him other names, because he have a lotta names. So I don't haveta say I am Rastafari, because people know, they see my work is clean and they say: 'That Toots is Rastafari'."

This vehement declaration of faith ends in laughter. Faith may be a serious thing for Toots, but it is also a joyous thing. He has found his own peace, and can get on with his life.

Mainstreet, February 2: The sound check is meticulous and painstaking. Winston Wright moves back and forth between the stage and the mixing desk, advising local sound man Doug Jane on how things should sound. Mixing reggae is as complex a task as playing it. The bass must be solid enough to feel, but not at the expense of the rhythm guitars. The keyboards are also mainly a rhythmic instrument, but you have to get the right blend. Wright plays a Yamaha piano and an original Hammond organ he's used for donkey's years. Very cumbersome when touring, but nothing else would sound right.

Toots doodles around on a clavinet, one of several keyboard instruments he plays. The other gradually pick up on the theme he's playing, until it builds into a quite intriguing little instrumental, that would cause no shame as a dub mix. Toots enjoys dub and even did a version on the flip of 'Beautiful Woman'. But he prefers to "Sing joyful sounds to God", as he puts it.

The magic moment comes when Toots begins to check the vocal mix. First on stage, then standing out on the floor, mike in hand, he listens to himself singing and makes sure Pam and Audrey can be heard properly as well. The song they use for this is an unreleased track called 'Spiritual Healing'. Toots actually wrote it more than 15 years ago, but never got around to recording it. Now, he's going to release it, in response to Marvin Gaye ("It is full of strength, y'know?").

'Spiritual Healing' is one of the most heartstoppingly beautiful songs I have ever heard. A ballad that simply oozes soul. Its chord progression resembles Gaye's 'Let's Get I On', but predates that by several years as well (If Toots is being truthful and I have no reason to doubt him). Sadly, the band didn't know it well enough to play it on this tour. But watch for it as a single. It will floor you.

The show that night hammers the Sweetwaters performance into the long grass. The rhythm penetrates your bones, lifts you up, shakes you about and finally drops you into a limp, sweaty and inarticulate heap. 'Get Up, Stand Up' and '54-46' take on more of the old rock steady grace. The pace is murderous, as Toots swings the band through 'Spend A Weekend' and 'Funky Kingston'. The audience is not large, but it's nice to have some breathing space to dance down front. The bonus is another unrecorded song, the very moving 'Marley's Gone Away'. Getting Toots to speak about Bob at all was very difficult. This is his statement about his friend and there is nothing more to say ("He was my good friend and he died. I don't think about it."). Verdict: Oh yes. This was the one.

POLL RESULTS

group of '82

- 1 Simple Minds
- 2 The Fall
- 3 The Jam
- 4 Duran Duran
- 5 Siouxsie & the Banshees

album

- 1 'New Gold Dreams', Simple Minds.

- 2 'Hex Enduction Hour', The Fall.
- 3 'Kiss in the Dreamhouse', Siouxsie and the Banshees.
- 4 'Lexicon of Love', ABC.
- 5 'Rio', Duran Duran.

single

- 1 'Promised You A Miracle', Simple Minds.
- 2 'Come On Eileen', Dexys Midnight Runners.
- 3 'Glittering Prize' (Simple Minds), 'Save A Prayer' (Duran Duran).
- 4 'Love My Way', Psychedelic Furs.
- 5 'Poison Arrow' (ABC), 'Do You Really Want Me' (Culture Club).

vocalist

- 1 Jim Kerr (Simple Minds).
- 2 Siouxsie (...and the Banshees) / Mark Smith (Fall).
- 4 Paul Weller (Jam).
- 5 Martin Fry (ABC).

new artist

- 1 ABC
- 2 Hunters and Collectors
- 3 Culture Club / Yazoo
- 5 Psychedelic Furs / Romeo Void

nz album

- 1 'Luxury Length', Blam Blam Blam.

- 2 'If This is Paradise...', Screaming Meemees.
- 3 'Time and Tide', Split Enz.
- 4 'Cool Bananas', DD Smash.
- 5 'Dunedin EP' / 'Show Me to the Bellrope', This Sporting Life.

nz single

- 1 'Victoria', Dance Exponents.
- 2 'Rolling Moon', Chills.
- 3 'Marsha', Blam Blam Blam.
- 4 'Oi Oi Oi', No Tag.
- 5 'F is for Fear' (Screaming Meemees) / 'Getting Older' (Clean).

enzed group

- 1 Screaming Meemees
- 2 Blam Blam Blam
- 3 DD Smash
- 4 The Clean
- 5 Hip Singles

nz vocalist

- 1 Dave Dobbyn
- 2 Dick Driver
- 3 Tony Drumm
- 4 Tim Finn
- 5 Chris Knox

new nz Artist

- 1 Dance Exponents
- 2 Hip Singles
- 3 Chills
- 4 Diehards / My 3 Sons

nz bassist

- 1 Peter Van der Fluit (Meemees).
- 2 Tim Mahon (Blams).
- 3 Nigel Grigg (Split Enz).
- 4 Lisle Kinney (DD Smash).
- 5 Robert Scott (Clean).

nz guitarist

- 1 Michael O'Neill (Meemees).
- 2 Mark Bell (Blams).
- 3 Dave Dobbyn (DD Smash).
- 4 David Kilgour (Clean).
- 5 Neil Finn (Split Enz).

nz keyboards

- 1 Eddie Rayner (Split Enz).
- 2 Peter Van der Fluit (Meemees).
- 3 Rachel Phillips (Chills).
- 4 Nigel Russell (Danse Macabre).
- 5 Sonya Walters (Instigators).

nz drummer

- 1 Peter Warren (DD Smash)
- 2 Don McGlashan (Blams).
- 3 Yoh (Meemees).
- 4 Noel Crombie (Split Enz).
- 5 Steve Ward (Hip Singles).

fave concert

- 1 Split Enz
- 2 The Fall
- 3 Simple Minds
- 4 Clash
- 5 Icehouse



10 der moments.