

SLEEVE NOTES FOR CHILDREN OF JAH

CHILDREN OF JAH

The Chantells & Friends 1977-79

In 1977 Roy Francis started a label called Phase One; from the beginning it gained a reputation for quality productions, scoring big reggae hits with the Chantells, whose classic "Waiting In The Park" was massive in 1978; the vocal trio's "True Born African" and "Children Of Jah" also sold strongly at the time. But for the most part, the other artists Roy chose to record were unknowns, apart from Tabby Diamond and the Heptones, who both cut singles for Phase One; Dean Fraser also recorded a sax cut of Tabby's take on Ken Boothe's "Gonna Take A Miracle", and made a vocal under the name Jah Devon. Nevertheless, unknown singers like Lopez Walker and Errol Davis made superb sides for Phase One, while the releases of Leebert Bennett, Steve Boswell, Paul Powell, Leroy King, The Terrors and Untouchables were not far behind.

The three tracks here by The Chantells feature them on roots material; although they are known for their sweetly soulful love songs, they were well capable of tackling roots themes. On "Children Of Jah" they are joined by deejay U-Brown, then poised on the threshold of his most successful period; in 1978 / 1979 his "Weather Balloon" and "Please Doctor" were amongst the definitive deejay records of the time. The Chantells - Samuel Bramwell, Tommy Thomas and Lloyd Forrest - were a superb harmony trio. Lloyd Forrest had also sung with The Royals and The Jayes, and Sam Bramwell made solo records on Wait A Bit and other labels; their high point was at Phase One. Sadly, the lyric of "Desperate Time" (utilising the "Waiting In The Park" rhythm track), with its line about a 'turn to crime', proved all too prophetic. Lead singer Sam Bramwell was shot dead by the police while attempting a robbery at a bauxite factory in 1983. The group had actually split before, after a planned UK tour had to be called off when group members were arrested with herb as they flew into the country.

The Terrors were a trio comprising Donovan Brissett and his brother Edmund and L Lewis. They made titles under various group names; as well as The Terrors, they were also The Black Terrors, Kutchie, and Classic Example. They cut "Don't Bother Me" for Lloyd "Spiderman" Campbell around this time, on the other side of an Ital's release; Donovan Brissett was briefly a replacement for Lloyd Ricketts in the Ital's, prior to David Isaacs. He later lived in St Louis for about nine years and fronted what became the most popular local band there - Reggae At Will. He currently resides in Las Vegas; Edmund still lives in Kingston. Donovan was lead singer and primary songwriter, with Edmund Brissett & Lewis singing harmony. "Assemble Not Thyself" is a powerful warning to the youth to stick to the righteous way, with excellent lyric imagery.

Steve Boswell made one other record for Phase One, the enigmatic "I Am Getting Bad"; on the propulsive "Cool Rastaman Cool" he is joined by deejay Jah Berry, who raps effectively in then current dancehall style. He also cut sides for Joe Gibbs and Tuff Beat.

Lopez Walker made a 45 for Joe Gibbs before cutting the four titles here. Walker came from Bog Walk above Kingston; he played guitar and sang these songs beautifully. "Send Another Moses" and "Jah Jah New Garden" use the same rhythm. "Trial Days" and the superb Spear-style "Fly Away" were released back to back as a 12" single. After releasing a slightly different 7" version of "Trial Days" in 1979 Walker vanished from the scene.

The rhythms - all original - are played by the Channel One studio band the Revolutionaries with drummer Sly Dunbar and bassist Lloyd Parkes as foundation. These tracks - representing the cream of Roy's roots catalogue - make their first appearance since their original issue over twenty years ago. By Jamaican standards, the Phase One catalogue is relatively small - an excellent Chantells album, a couple of dub sets, and around thirty single releases but the quality is remarkably high and deserves to be far better-known. Although he occasionally releases new productions, today Roy is better known as owner of Mixing Lab studio, where he continues the high production standards already evident in Phase One.

Steve Barrow / July 1999

Produced & Arranged by Roy Francis
Recorded at Channel One Studio and Joe Gibbs Studio
Engineers: JoJo Hookim, Errol Thompson
All tracks taken from original 12" singles except tracks 2, 3 & 5 which are edits of the A & B sides of 7" singles.

Musicians:

Sly Dunbar, Devon Richardson / Drums
Lloyd Parkes / Bass
Bertram 'Ranchie' McClean, Winston
'Bo-Peep' Bowen / Guitar
Ansell Collins, Winston Wright / Organ
Franklyn 'Bubbler' Waul / Piano / Synthesiser
Uziah 'Sticky' Thompson / Percussion
Junior 'Chico' Chin / Trumpet
'Deadly' Headley Bennett / Saxophone
Vincent 'Trommie' Gordon / Trombone

Compiled by Steve Barrow
Digital processing by Andy Walter at Room 63, Abbey Road Studios, London
Mastered and edited by Kevin Metcalfe
at The Soundmasters, London
Design by Dave Smith at Intro, London

Photography by Brian Jahn

Brian took the photographs of children used in the booklet in Trenchtown during 1993-1998. They are the modern-day 'Children of Jah'; the music and messages on this CD are for them and all children everywhere. Brian Jahn's book "Reggae Island" is published by Da Capo, New York and available via www.amazon.com and good bookstores.

This album is dedicated to the memory of
a dear friend and teacher
Roger Eagle 15th July 1942 - 4th May 1999

Thanks to Roy Francis, Silbert Walton, William Just, Al Katz, Steve Lindley,
Colin Moore and Robert Schoenfeld
(the Terrors info) for their help with
this reissue.

CHILDREN OF JAH

Children of Jah cannot suffer
more than what they
can really bear
so all you have put on
on your pressure
Jah children
will have no fear
When you see I, you see Jah Jah
only Jah children can live on yah
when you see I, you see Jah Jah
only Jah children can live on yah
Forever, ooh yeah, forever
Yes forever, ooh yeah, forever
You try to make friends
Just to get us in the pen
Just like a lamb I and I walk in over Jah Jah
(ooh yeah)
Give us power and the glory
(Ooh yeah) to recover
When you see I, you see Jah Jah
Only Jah children can live on yah
When you see I, you see Jah Jah
Only Jah children can live on yah
Forever, ooh yeah, forever
Yes, forever, ooh yeah, forever

{The Chantells}

PATH I HAVE TAKEN

Because of the path I've taken
it seems I've been forsaken
Jah is collecting his children
to give them free speech and movements
woe unto you, heathen
your death you have chosen
deliver them Jah Jah
deliver them Jah Jah
they took all for themselves
and taught us to be covetious
to know the truth
I was curious
yes yes curious
because of the path I've taken
it seems I've been forsaken
Jah is collecting his children
to give them free speech and movements
woe unto you
heathen
your death you have chosen

now you're on the go
experience teaches a lot
remember you tell I so
surely you'll reap what you sow

{Errol Davis}

SEND ANOTHER MOSES

Seventy thousand heathens coming down
to mash down this little town
seventy thousand heathens coming down -
we'll throw them on the ground
oh Lord give I the power
to stand up and fight
yeah
fight for I right
yeah
with all I might
yeah ay
send another Moses
to free his children
send another Moses
to free his children
to whip them with the rod of correction
to throw them in a pit of destruction
I sing unto the Conquering Lion
forward I children
onward to Zion
yeah
onward, forward,
marching on to Zion
onward, forward,
I've got to reach the promised land
yeah.

{Lopez Walker}

JAH JAH NEW GARDEN

Jah gon' to prepare a new garden
Jah gon' to prepare a new garden
Jah gon' to prepare a new garden
for his children, yeay
for his children, yeay
for his children, yeay
if you no humble
you can't enter
if you no humble
you can't enter
only the meek and the humble shall enter
only the meek and the humble shall conquer
he'll wake you in the darkest night
and if you don't right
you wont see the light
yeah yeah
yeah yeah
yeah yeah
yeah yeah
Jah gon' to prepare a new garden
to free his children out a Babylon
to free his children out a Babylon
to free his children from trials and temptation
woah oh
Jah gon' to prepare a new garden
Jah gon' to prepare a new garden
Jah gon' to prepare a new garden
for his children
for his children
if you no humble
you can't enter
if you no humble
you can't enter
only the meek and the humble shall enter
only the meek and the humble shall conquer

{Lopez Walker}

FLY AWAY

Mister pilot, mister pilot
can you take one more

I've got to leave the ocean
I've got to leave the ocean
the ocean ain't mine
then why should I drown'd
fly away with me
fly away
no delay I say
fly away

my happy home is there to receive me
brothers and sisters I know won't deceive me
oh yeah
fly away with me
fly away
no delay I say
fly away

my happy home is there to receive me
brothers and sisters I know won't deceive me
woh oh
fly away with me
fly away
no delay I say
fly away

I'll fly away home
I'll fly away home
I may not be so lucky
to be spit out on the shore
like brother Jonah
from the belly of the whale
I may not be so lucky
yeah yeah...

{Lopez Walker}