

# ROOTICAL VIBES

Vol. 5 # 2

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## Berlin Reggae Runnings

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Yes I, this one came and pass with more or less than our usual apocalyptic hopes being fulfilled. Same story again... and this time the big surprise was that there was no big surprise. The bug did not bite the millennium computers but 'I love you' sent files crashing out of order. It was a good year for reggae music but the players and singers still have a long way to go before any real changes can be seen. The usual big names did pass again and mash it an' crash it but the Berlin shows are always limited to large halls a la Columbia. No open green space to set up a decent festival in this city. Chiemsee and Dortmund always feature heavy-duty vibes in summer with the top boys.... then they take the berlin trip for the final attack...Beenie, Ziggy, Buju...all passed and delivered. Big crowd & big P.A. so you just have to imagine the rest. In the smaller Pfefferberg, nice vibes also flowed. JA independence celebrations were the usual mash up crowdwise, but the stage was not all that vibrant this year. Still, nuff respect to 'Alfie' the long-time organizer of this event. A nice little scene was beginning to be set up once a week in 'Acud' in the East section of town. Nice reggae and jams used to be the order of Thursday nights until... Lord knows what happened...Tie Face (a local band) might have some answers. All year long the same question is being asked.... where is there good reggae tonight, or this weekend? And it's always the answer that cannot answer the question!! All in all it was not too bad a year for reggae and music and the Berlin vibes in general. The fact still remains that in spite of whatever ups and downs there are, the music continues to survive, even though for us over here it amounts to only two and a little more hours of contained bliss at a price that would make most Caribbean islanders shudder if they ever knew that it costs so much to be entertained. But we love it and I am sure that as soon as there is a next year, things will go on in a positive and fulfilling direction.

# Other Caribbean Musics

Yes I, greetings to one and all. Sometimes we never stop to think and consider the fact that the Caribbean is basically a Spanish-speaking region. Throughout colonial times fight was on to conquer and impose. So now we find the Spanish language dominant, but English is such an international and global force to be reckoned with that as a result the non-english lyrics have hardly a chance to go wide or hit billboard or top charts business. So the larger listening public may not know about bands like Tabou Combo or Frères Dejean from Haiti. This music style is known as 'compa', and many a creole speaking folk will tell you how they love to dance to these riddims. When calypso gave way to the incoming Soca, nobody knew that Shorty had just been to Dominica and heard the cadence and went back to Trinidad and started to record and exploit the beat The rest is history. Rudder and the rest push it to the heights!! All the while, there was still no outlet for the boys from DA who had a fiery riddim under control. It took long trips to Martinique and Guadeloupe and lots of patience and Bands like Exile One and Gramacks pushed Dominica cadence to the end of where it could go no further and it never really made it big like the zouk. Needless to say, the French 'Départéments' had all the technology from Europe to deal with their stuff and also the contact that remains up to today. Yes I, Kassav took the zouk around the world and although it's not sung in French, they managed to make the world dance to their beat. Soca, cadence and calypso were not so lucky. Maybe that's where their true values lies. Try asking for the latest Compa CD from any music shop and you will be surprised by the answer. It's always a question...what is???



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Rootical Vibes checks on  
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## Reggae after 2000

The same thing or what?

Yo... one thing that we must all agree upon is that 'things are not the way they used to be'. An eternal truth, with which the invention of years and months comes a time when we see things different. We are now long past the days of 'wine and roses' and a different element now 'run things' in whatever section of society we look. Dubwise used to be heavy on the Bass and Drums but nowadays we hear about drum and bass and the pulsating trickno beats that pound away all night... nonstop!!! Reggae bands tend to have a simple line-up that always includes Bass and Drums. How many keyboards and guitars always vary according to the rules of logistics and dollars. Recording is something else. What we hear, or are allowed to hear, depends mostly on lawyers and office people, not the artists themselves. In a fast moving world like ours, the next challenge will be to wonder if we are really seeing the artist or some cyber replica or clone, forever touring etc.; we will see by 3000.

# DREADITORIAL

The ninetens are gone but now we are in the twenty-first century!!! Should be an exciting prospect but if we had to believe the 'tell lie vision' with all the news that get confused, you would not be reading this paper. Lots of improperganda hit us from all directions and in the midst we are still supposed to enjoy and create artistic forms of beauty. Players and singers learn their job to the max, but in our market orientated world, no reasonable process can be made without talking dollars and trying to make sense out of it. Thus the manager and promoter are there to bridge the cap between artist and public. Easier said than done. Most managers sometimes turn out to be the most damaging of people to deal with and their main interest always seems to be the 30% or how much. In this issue we will try to see what can be done to improve good vibes between artist and the promoters/managers. We also take a look at other musical styles that have come out of the Caribbean after reggae. The smaller islands do have their musical voice and those interested will find these musics in perfect counterbalance with the more widely known and accepted reggae. Music as an art form is definitely linked to culture and language so we will give or readers a second lesson in the Creole language. Widely spoken in the French speaking Caribbean, this 'tongue' has always been alive among locals. For most people in Dominica over 80 years of age, the English language is a foreign one. Bands like Kassav sing only in Creole and 'Zouk' has now

## Kwéyol lesson #2

We have already touched a little bit on the creole language in a former issue and to help those who have may missed out, it must be emphasised that this language is spoken in the French speaking islands

**Eureggae**  
And why not?

All over the world today there are people playing music that has been directly influenced by reggae. Some just admit it forthright and say that just want to play the music without getting too much involved in all the isms and shisms that came with reggae and its purveyors, Rasta...In America today, there are lots and lots of formations and the world famous RAW (Reggae Ambassadors World-wide) has its roots in the US. Jamaica is an English speaking country so there was no language barrier to prevent it making its way into North American ears. On this continent, only the British have the English for them. Lots of bands in Poland, Italy and elsewhere have recently 'taken up arms' and delved into the mystic riddims that reggae seeks to carry across the world. I have heard some crucial dubs coming outta Poland and the Reggae scene in Italy is as healthy as can be. Some bands just sing the straight original Bobs and some do have their own original tracks which their public know by heart and sing along merrily with. So it can be rightfully said that such an artform exists. Eureggae? Why not???



The return of Dub...in full force

Reggae and Vegetarism...do they go together?

The Flight of the High-Flying Birdies.

Why are Blacks so disorganised?

The medicinal uses of Marijuana

Racism in Post Wall Berlin Who are the real racists?

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