

# ROOTICAL VIBES

Vol. 5 # 8

BERLIN REGGAE RUNNINGS

FREE ZERO EURO

## 2002 in RETROSPECT

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*Yo!!! A warm and heartical welcome back to the reading pages of the "VIBES". Sorry to have been away so long, but sometimes there's a period to reflect, charge up and come again...so, here we are again!! To be honest, it was just another one of those years that just fly by and we really take stock when the Xmas traffic is at an all time high in the consuming departments. We now wonder what to promise ourselves for next year because we had already fallen out long since February and now the "pledge" has been all forgotten. New ones will be surely forthcoming. Less and less acts are coming to the nation's capital, and when they do make the trek, the turnout is sometimes disappointing. The shows are never really well promoted and scattered in different places all over the city. There is no one place where you can always check to see who's coming next. Summertime is the time of the outta Berlin big reggae concerts so we only get the rest of what's left of Summer Jam and Chiemsee Vibes....a pity!!! Those who do not travel outta Berlin just have to wait a couple of months and then the Chiemsee artists are featured and can be taped off the Tellivision!!!*

*After years of trying, the Monday nite Kato Kultural vibes had to come to a halt. New spots open and close before their existence was ever known to the public, and the soundsystems keep dragging their stuff from one basement to the other. The "new" idea is free open jam sessions, but you will hear a good dub when all the soloing has gone weary and the drummer is maybe tired, or the singer keeps on asking for a roots riddim to accompany his lyrics.*

*More than one "big name" reggae shows has had to be cancelled this year because of poor advance ticket sales. Even the critics and Tellievision hosts now chip into the "musiclipropagandidea". A song and video clip with the political leader of this country mockingly taunting the citizens about the tax reform was pushed up to the charts by anyone's guess. Another showed a popular politician extolling the freedom that "hanf" (ganja) should be allowed to have. Love and Hanf parades went by smoothly as usual... 'til next year!! Some guys did make it to Berlin though.... DUB SYNDICATE showed a packed Knaack Club that the vibes are alive and well in these so called modern times. This was one of the best shows in Berlin for the year 2002. Give thanks all the time.... Rastafari.*

# DREADITORIAL

*Hail up.... So we are back again to a point where everybody is waiting to see what happens next. All over the planet people are voicing their concern about the fact that conflict does not mean more entertainment or sports or whatever. It just mean more hatred and killing, and the vicious cycle of making war to stop it will surely eat away the chances of art and culture having any place in world affairs. The only drums that can be heard nowadays are those of a "possible" bomb up of the Mid East region. What can the artists and the peace players of the world do? Starvation hitting Africa heavy again and all we hear everyday is about the heating up of the situation. Reggae music has always defended the poor and downtrodden, and in these trying times we must all let our voices be heard to show our non-agreement with what is going on globally. Innocent citizens (call them tourists) now have to pay the price for the nasty ways of the people who are elected to take care of them. History will tell coming generations of the madness of today's leaders. They seem to forget that there was no mass communication in bible times so we don't even have a hand written note of Jesus. The world tomorrow will see and judge the remains of today's fast talkers. New words have now been added to our globalised intellectual palette...Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and so forth and fifth. Here in Berlin, we live in a country whose leaders give the world the impression that war vibes are not welcome here as solution to problems.... Despite all the preparation for possible conflict, I an I will still keep on spreading the vibe that no matter what politicians or other top rankers say, no one will benefit from the madness being planned very far from here. We have to go into deep meditation and get new ideas to bridge the gap that separates the two kinds of people of the world, (the haves and the have-nots) from one another.*

## IMPRESSUM

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## ROOTICAL VIBES

*A timely paper  
checking on reggae  
and related music  
scenes in and around  
Berlin.*

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*I remember a joke about a promoter who was vexed that we advertised on the poster that "Ital Food" would be available at the gig. He was furious because he did not want us to have a large Italian crowd munching away at whatever we had prepared for them and that his own kitchen would suffer. "You guys should be selling Caribbean food!". We had to go at length to explain to him what we meant by "ital" had nothing to do with the various dishes associated with cuisine from Ferrari land. Rasta always checks the body like a holy temple and so what keeps it in shape must be of the best quality. It is hard to consider animals as food because they always try to run away to escape the forced transformation. Still the slaughter continues. As if to compound the problem even more, those who choose to go the ital way have to be prepared for the new and dangerous risk of tomorrow...genetically manipulated ital. So it looks like we lost before we even start. Unless you know exactly what you eat, do not be surprised at the effects because no one knows what they will be.*



## **SURVIVING THE DAILY AND YEARLY HYPE.**

*Yes I, Hi and greetings to one and all.. after a long chill out. So many things to say and so much has been said, that words become a problem nowadays when we have to deal with a certain version of reality that is being constantly bombarded to us the people, by those who are responsible for what we see, hear; eat, believe or even ignore. It has to come to the point where the slightest opposition to the mainstream will not get into it. Most human beings' lives today are like cogs in a giant grinding machine called life and the mechanics simply take a lot of time before they service it. Rich or poor; it doesn't really matter because true happiness cannot be bought or sold at any price. A little bit of reflection will make us realise how vulnerable man is to "natural" shakeups that just alter the face of the planet in hours. When floods or quakes or whatever shake up a country, that is usual followed by a silent and unpublicised healing process within the affected communities...life is then realised to a certain degree to be what it really is. Most religions have the concept of a "Holy Period" when fasting and other rituals are held to...and then?*

*Crucial decisions are to be made if man is prepared to leave a decent planet for those coming. Things like environment and health take second place to "New-Clear" weapons or guns/bombs/army/war or "the market". No matter how much cry the poor cry, there still is no help. On the contrary, advertising today has the power to ignore science and advertise even more fully the very same products that have just been proven to be unfit to be consumed by people. Where this all leads to, we will all see.... every powerful nation always thought that it was invincible because of its perception of the world. By the time they realised that it's actually much bigger than they had originally considered, times had already changed...*

## **POLITICS AND REGGAE LYRICS up to what point?**

*Yes, this may be a sensitive subject, but most of today's so called reggae chart toppers have nothing in common with the message that made people listen twice after they had danced or checked out the riddim. Years ago when the vibes were hot and basic human rights were being grabbed by force instead of being begged for, there then was a kind of militancy that few of the surviving artists dare come out with today. Lots if not all the conscious dancehall artists today do chant out against the oppression, but sometimes the anger tends to drown out the message and most goes from one ear to the next. The music itself has changed with time, and what comes to the ears is rarely the sweet mellow sound of how it used to be, but the harsh angry and threatening sounds of today that simply accost our sense and challenge us to listen if the next one is the same or better. Since the survival of almost everything today depends on its ability to sell or be sold, certain lyrics are naturally off limits to certain areas where mass audience is involved. Record companies say that they are there to make money and not to "finance the pipe dreams" of aspiring "talented" people. No sah, is money that talks in the world today and if the shit "sells", then it must be o.k. Lot's of times it comes down to the fact that people tend to buy things that they do not really need. Twenty years ago it was like the songs were full of protest that seemed to be legitimate and we waited and waited, but up to today nothing really happened. The message boys got pushed over to the side and the slick types full of girls in the clips just MTVed their way into the mainstream `s hearts, minds and also wallets. Like Christmas presents, they appear every year; and are very well expected to.*

# THE INTERNET AS "PROPERGANDA" MEDIUM

*Yo...I am sure that few people will find anything new being said here because almost everyone knows about e-mail and website nowadays. Even though one may not actually own a computer. Offices respond quickly to e-mail enquiries than they do over the phone or other means of communication that are fast becoming outmoded. Every imaginable discipline has its place on the World Wide Web and it is not surprising that a lot of funny happenings do take place where we choose to refer to as "cyberspace". Cases of pedophile rings beings targeted and broken up are now part of the prescribed dosage of news to give us the impression that things are under scrutiny and there is no need for panic. Much more seems to be going on in that world than the one we used to know as "real". While one set of people go surfing all day and night in the quest of whatever they think they will get from the web, some others cannot even dream of going to school much less learning to use a P.C. No clean water; and others necessities missing, but the experts always want to send computers and think that the misery will be over. Lots of small dotcoms, as they were known, are now dotgones.... so much traffic, and it looks like no one has the power to prevent or even track down the owners or sponsors of sites that clearly pose a threat to humanity's idea of living together in one peaceful world. The anonymous nature of cyberspace makes it easy for anyone or group of individuals to stay hidden behind nice popping banners and lure the inexperienced and/or knowledge-hungry to ends that leave sorrow and regret, always when it is all too late.*

## THE RETURN OF DUB *In full force*

*Boom Boom Boom and we know that they dubbing!!! Those who love dub do not really have time for other forms. It is a rich and uplifting experience to "take in" a good session either through the headphones or taking the vibes live and direct. Dub is a creation of the engineers, originally, and few bands have mastered the craft of delivering the studio vibe to the stage. Two schools of Dub seem to be emerging from the fact that since the key player is the one who does the engineering "tricks", the soundman has to be the controller; or the musicians must do it on stage. With a genius like Mad Professor on the boards, any good trio will surely deliver. On the contrary, bands like Dub Syndicate have the engineer onstage with all the tools to soup up the drums, keyboards and still deliver the samples. Tight going business.. Respect to Style and his posse. So far today, **ARIWA** has been responsible for a large volume of the creative dubs to come out over the last years. Since the teaming up of Lee and Mad, lots of interesting sounds have come to our ears. It may take a while before the greater part of the music listening public gets to be acquainted with the deepness and expanse contained in a good Dub.*

## Tips & Quips

*"Saddam Hussain has again come up with another big lie"*  
US State Secretary  
Colin Powell

Teacher: Can you spell Mississippi?  
Student: Yes Miss.  
Teacher: Spell it.  
Student: "eye tea"!!!

*A man walked into his friend's house and was surprised to see him playing chess with his dog. "That's a pretty smart dog you got there", he said. "Oh, he isn't so smart", replied the owner; "I've beaten him three games out of four"!!!*

*A wise man keep a cool head.*

## NEXTISSUE

**THE BIG WINNERS**  
*How they play and what they're up to.*

**THE CHANGING ATTITUDE OF MASS MEDIA** towards reggae and other lesser-known sounds.

**KWÉYOL LESSON #5**

**BERLIN'S TOP** Reggae/Dancehall Artists and Soundsystems