

BAFCD/LP 022

Artist: Impact All Stars

Title: Forward The Bass: Dub from Randy's 1972-1975

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All tracks produced by Clive Chin at Randy's studio 17 North Parade Kingston, Jamaica.

Mixed by Errol Thompson / Clive Chin / Karl Pitterson

Digital restoration by Andy Walter at Room 63, Abbey Road Studios, London

Edited and mastered by Kevin Metcalfe at The Soundmasters, London

Reissue produced by Steve Barrow

Design by Michael Williams Intro London

Archive photography by Beth Lesser

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Musicians:

bass: Lloyd Parkes, Aston Family Man Barrett, Val Douglas

drums: Sly Dunbar, Carlton Barrett, Mikey 'Boo' Richards

guitar: Ranchie McLean, Errol Tarzan Nelson, Michael Chung, Karl Pitterson

keyboards: Ansel Collins, Robert Lyn, Earl Wire Lindo

harmonica: "Chicago" Steve Wiest

melodica: Ansel Collins

tenor saxophone: Tommy McCook

trombone: Vin Gordon

percussion: Eric 'Bingi Bunny' Lamont
also: Tyrone Downie (keys), A.Pablo (keys)

"Randy's version, kinda drum 'n bassin up the place, y'know...."
Jah Woosh, 1975

"..the man called Errol T in console, from 16-track to 2-track, man called I-Roy on
microphone, man called Dennis Thompson in the cuttin' room in Studio 17..."
I Roy, 1974

Randy's Studio 17 was only in operation for nine years - from 1968 until 1977 - but during that period it became a key recording location in the development of reggae. The amount of music recorded there is staggering, including much of the prolific output of men like Bunny Lee, Lee Perry, Niney, Rupie Edwards, and Glen Brown, as well as dozens of smaller producers. Most of the Wailers/ Lee Perry material, Bunny Lee's hits with Delroy Wilson, John Holt, Pat Kelly and Slim Smith, Niney's hits with Dennis Brown, and Burning Spear's epochal Marcus Garvey set - all were recorded in the small studio at 16/17 North Parade, close to the junction with Chancery Lane. It was an ideal location; that corner was known as 'Idler's Rest', the favoured hangout for many of the Kingston music fraternity.

The studio was owned and operated by Vincent 'Randy' Chin, founder of the Randy's shop and label; Vincent opened the studio above the shop in 1968. Randy's was already a power in the expanding Jamaican record business through retail, wholesale distribution and jukebox interests. By the end of the 1960s, the room above Randy's Record Mart had become the first choice for most of the leading reggae producers, especially after the studio had been rebuilt by the newly-installed resident engineer Errol 'ET' Thompson. ET had begun his career at Studio One after leaving school - he had attended Kingston Choir School, It was there that he first met Vincent's son Clive Chin, a pupil previously at Kingston College:

"I went to school at Kingston College with Augustus Pablo - he wasn't in my class, but the same era. Tyrone Downie was below me, a class or two. This was Kingston College, North Street. After KC, I used to go to a school where Errol use to go, yunno? An' after Errol get fi know I, Errol get fi realise that 'im can come 'mongst mi family. But before he did that, Errol was an apprentice engineer 'mongst Coxson - string up mike, under (Sylvan) Morris.

There was a guy name Gordon, who use to tune our organ. It wan't me who recommend Errol to my father, it was Gordon. So after Coxson, Errol use to work at Randy's, as a youth. An' I wan' tell you something - regardless of youth, an' youth, Errol was a damn good engineer."

Certainly one of the greatest Jamaican recording engineers, ET's dub style at Randy's was simple, involving dropping tracks in and out of the mix, using minimal reverb and delay effects, and occasional sound effects. The two cuts of Lloyd Parks' "Ordinary Man" included herein offer a striking illustration of Thompson inventiveness in the mix,; on the two instrumental versions of "Java" he is also at the board.

Clive Chin had begun hanging out on weekends at his father's shop; by 1972 he was ready to start producing his own music; although Randy's had a well-earned reputation as a hitmaking studio, not so many had been produced by the Chin family, at least not since the ska days. Clive Chin's first effort as producer was an organ instrumental by Soul Syndicate; his second was another instrumental called "Java" by the then unknown Augustus Pablo. Pablo was only drafted in to play by Clive when the original singer couldn't make his vocal fit on the rhythm, but "Java" still became one of the biggest reggae hits of 1972, spawning versions galore. In addition to the Tommy McCook and clavinet cuts included in this compilation, there were also deejay cuts by Dennis Alcapone ("Mava") and I.Roy ("Hospital Trolley"), and several dub cuts. During late 1972 and 1973, Clive produced a string of top-quality vocal hits with Alton Ellis (a recut of "Too Late To Turn Back Now"), Dennis Brown ("Cheater"), Lloyd Parks ("Ordinary Man"), Gregory Isaacs ("Lonely Soldier") and Errol Dunkley ("Created By The Father"). Also in 1973 Clive released the excellent debut album featuring the young melodica player, "This Is Augustus Pablo", as well as "Java Java Dub", one of the very first dub sets - only 1000 were ever pressed. By 1974 Clive was also beginning to gain a reputation as a young producer who understood the 'rebel' vibes of roots groups like the African Brothers, the first incarnation of Black Uhuru and the Gladiators. But although Clive was sympathetic to the cultural sounds of these outfits, and would later record hardcore roots music with unknowns like Sweeny and Ta-Teasha Love (backed by the 1975 Wailers band), no big hits came from these sessions.

Through his connection with Lloyd Parks, Clive was able to secure the services of Parks' band, Skin Flesh & Bones from 1974. The band - Sly Dunbar on drums. Ansel Collins on keyboards, Bertram, 'Ranchie' McClean on guitar and Parks on bass - played on three major hits with vocalist Carl Malcolm. Both "Miss Wire Waist" and "No Jesting" were massive sellers in the reggae market, but the combination also scored in the British pop charts with "Fattie Bum-Bum", licenced to Jonathon King's UK label.

But behind these successes lay setbacks for the studio; in spite of personal appeals by Clive, Errol Thompson left Randy's to work with Joe Gibbs in his new premises on Retirement Crescent. For a short while Clive worked with George Philpott as engineer; it was Philpott who recorded the Burning Spear album "Marcus Garvey" for producer Jack

Ruby, although, prophetically the record was mixed by E.T at Joe Gibbs'. During the same period other studios had opened - indeed, Lee Perry, a major Randy's patron since 1969, had opened his own Black Ark studio at the beginning of 1974 - but when the Hookim Brothers' Channel One Studio became fully functioning in 1975, the further eclipse of Randy's studio was virtually guaranteed. It was sealed when Channel One secured the Revolutionaries as house band, with former Skin Flesh & Bones members Ansel Collins, Ranchie McClean and Sly Dunbar on board, and Lloyd Parks began his session work at Gibbs' new studio. Most of the leading producers began using Channel One for recording; by 1977 Randy's Studio 17 was no longer operational.

Randy's Dub" - the 10-track album that forms the core of this CD - was originally released on the Impact! label in 1975. Less than 200 were pressed, even fewer than "Java Java Dub". It was mixed by Clive Chin and Karl Pitterson, the man who replaced Philpott at the legendary Randys board. A gifted engineer, Pitterson had mixed Bunny Wailer's brilliant "Blackheart Man". After engineering a couple of minor hits - John Holt's soulful version of the Isley Brothers' smash "For The Love Of You" outstanding among them - he left Randy's in 1976 to take up engineering duties for Chris Blackwell's Island Records, including work for Bob Marley and the Wailers.

Clive Chin currently resides in Laurelton, Queens, New York. He reissues his 1970s material on his Above Rock label; details of some of these sets follow these notes. Future projects still to come from Clive's days as producer include an unreleased instrumental set by master trombonist Rico Rodriguez, a Carl Malcolm set, and a full album on the Java rhythm, featuring as-yet-unreleased cuts of this classic rhythm. In the meantime, as ET says:

"I man a go show you how fi operate..."

Steve Barrow / April 1998

Riddimography:

Jaro - Tommy McCook's mellow sax version of the Pablo hit. This mix has additional percussion.

Maro - clavinet version of "Java", originally the b-side of Tommy McCook's instrumental.

Ordinary Version Chapter 3 - this is the cut that appeared on the "Java Java Dub" set. Just to mix things up further, Errol 'ET' Thompson plays the aspiring engineer, the late Bingy Bunny taking the part ET did in reality.

Extraordinary Version - originally issued in the US only as the b-side to Lloyd Park's "Ordinary Man"

Wire Dub - second dub cut to Carl Malcolm's "Miss Wire Waist". A deejay cut (by Jah Woosh) called "Shine Eye Gal" soon followed. Skin Flesh & Bones

play the tough rhythm; "Chicago" Steve Wiest the blistering harp.

Shining Dub - dub version of Sweeny's "Sun Won't Shine For Me", rhythm by Family man and the Wailers band.

Easy Come Dub - dub version of Sweeny's "It Won't Come Easy", again with the Wailers

Dubwise Situation - dub version of "What A Situation" by Winston Morris, soon to rename himself Tony Tuff . Rhythm is Skin Flesh & Bones, again with "Chicago" Steve Wiest.

Last of the Jestering - dub to "No Jestering", again in a slightly different mix to the 45. The song was Carl Malcolm's follow-up to "Miss Wire Waist", just before the UK crossover success of "Fattie Bum-Bum".

Ta-Teasha Dub - original 45 b-side mix, with remnants of the vocal - "Oh Jah Come" by Ta-Teasha Love. Rhythm built by Family Man

Oh Jah Dub - LP version of above

Sabotage in Dub - the only thing Clive can remember about this song is that had the word "Sabotage" in the lyric; the Wailers band in full flow.

S-Corner Dub - dub version of the Skin Flesh & Bones instrumental "Spanish Town Road", with Ansel Collins' melodica prominent featured.

Just Another Dub - drum & bass style on this dub of Sabrina Williams' version of the Ken Boothe classic "Just Another Girl", retitled "Just Another Man" for obvious reasons. In Crowd is the band.

Upbeat Version - original 45 b-side mix of "Just Another Man"

Verdict In Dub - version of Carl Malcolm's "Judgment Come" with Skin Flesh & Bones.

Clive Chin / Randy's productions - further recommendations:

Jimmy London - Bridge Over Troubled Water Above Rock CD ARM 2000

Excellent soulful performances - including "Just My Imagination" - from the former member of the Inspirations.

This Is Augustus Pablo Above Rock CD ARM 2001. Essential Pablo

Various Artists - 17 North Parade Pressure Sounds CD PSCD 17. Top quality compilation with two superb instrumentals, a dozen top-notch vocals and one deejay piece by an uncredited Jah Stitch.