

## Darker than Blue: Soul from Jamdown 1973 - 1980

01. The Boris Gardiner Happening feat. Leslie Butler - Ghetto Funk (3:09) 02. The Chosen Few - Collie Stuff (2:52) 03. Carl Bradney - Slipping Into Darkness (3:06)  
04. Ken Boothe - Is It Because I'm Black? (3:28) 05. Freddie McGregor - Get Involved (3:34) 06. Al Brown - Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City (3:26) 07. In-Crowd - Mango Walk (3:22) 08. Ken Boothe - Ain't No Sunshine (2:15) 09. Milton Henry - Gypsy Woman (3:01) 10. Junior Murvin - Give Me Your Love (2:07) 11. John Holt - For The Love Of You (3:40) 12. Alton Ellis - It's A Shame (2:48) 13. Jimmy London - I'm Your Puppet (3:38) 14. Delroy Wilson - Get Ready (12" mix) (5:40) 15. Lloyd Charmers - Darker Than Blue (2:59) 16. Tinga Stewart - Why Can't We Live Together? (extended) (7:00) 17. The Tamlins - Baltimore (4:01) 18. Welton Irie - Hotter Reggae Music (3:50)

When Arthur Conley asked the immortal question 'do you like good music, that sweet soul music', maybe he didn't exactly have the island of Jamaica in mind; nevertheless, the answer from that quarter was a loud and clear 'yes'. The cultural relationship between the USA and Jamaica had been in place long before, from jazz through r & b, and on into the age of soul. A whole generation of singers, players and mcs had grown up in thrall to the sounds of 1960s black America; indeed, in the 1950s Jamaican dancehall music itself had evolved by adapting shuffle-based r&b and boogie, with deejays like Count Machuki freely borrowing slang & lyrics from Harlem journalist Dan Burley's 'Jive' magazine, using that language to introduce and pep up their selections.

The link continued through the early 1960s, with singers and vocal groups - Ken Boothe, Slim Smith & the Techniques, the Melodians, Roy Shirley - all engaging in impromptu cutting contests in ghetto locations like Back O Wall, in which the material they sang was drawn from the catalogues of such as the Drifters, Clyde McPhatter, and the ever-present Impressions. When 'soul' replaced 'r & b' in the affections of black American listeners, so rock steady and later, reggae, developed as Jamaican music kept pace with innovations on the US mainland.

Through the 1960s, as US soul began increasingly to reflect the social concerns and political aspirations of the black working class, the same phenomenon began to register in Jamaican music. By the end of the 1960s, Jamaica could boast the presence of several singers who equalled in emotional intensity their US cousins, among them such as Ken Boothe, Alton Ellis, John Holt and Delroy Wilson, as well as groups like the Techniques with Slim Smith, Pat Kelly and others. Similarly, instrumentalists like the Meters, Booker T & the MGs and James Brown's band also had their influence on the development of reggae.

This compilation celebrates that cultural exchange during the period 1973-1980, emphasising the fact that roots music doesn't have to be overtly Rasta inspired for the message to get across; indeed several of the songs here proved to be as suitable for Jamaican conditions as they were in the USA.

### **Ghetto Funk / The Boris Gardiner Happening feat. Leslie Butler**

This instrumental is more in the way of a homage to Hammond maestros Jimmy Smith et al, rather than a direct cover version. It was first released as the b-side to Boris' original vocal piece 'Every Nigger Is A Star', from the movie featuring Calvin Lockhart, and featured on the ultra-rare soundtrack LP. Big Youth's version of Boris' song is on 'Natty Universal Dread' [BAFCD 034]. Here organist Leslie Butler shows he's no stranger to the B-3 cookbook, jamming faultlessly while the rhythm section - Billy Johnson [guitar], Larry McDonald [conga], Alvin Haughton [percussion] - bubbles under him, anchored by Boris' ferocious bassline.

### **Collie Stuff / The Chosen Few**

The Chosen Few - Noel Brown, Busty Brown and Franklyn Spence - always had a predilection towards 'soul' - see for example their version of 'Don't Break Your Promise'. Here they version Kool & the Gang's

'Funky Stuff'; they also did it as 'Reggae Stuff', but this herb version is the best. The original appeared on Kool's excellent 'Jungle Boogie' set in 1973.

#### **Slipping Into Darkness / Carl Bradney**

War's subtle warning against ghetto violence covered by the [unknown] Carl Bradney; it appeared on Scratch's 'Orchid' label in 1975, with the b-side a cover of the Chi-Lites' 'Oh Girl'. Could that be the Barrett brothers on drum & bass ?

#### **Is It Because I'm Black? / Ken Boothe**

Syl Johnson's thoughtful song - released in 1968 on Chicago label TwiNight - here gets a definitive reading by Ken Boothe. This version is the original Jamaican 45 mix, without the horn overdubs added later for the UK LP version.

#### **Get Involved / Freddie McGregor**

The gifted Memphian writer/singer George 'Soule' Jackson's plea for voter registration [cut for the Fame label in 1973] evidently struck a chord with Freddie McGregor who recut it with Soul Syndicate for producer Alphonso Bailey's 'Super Champ' imprint in 1974. Bailey produced a handful of records in the mid-seventies, including sides on Fay Bennett and Milton Henry, before withdrawing from the music business. Freddie's vocal ranks alongside his handling of George Benson's 'Love Ballad', Thom Bell & Linda Creed's 'Sweet Child' and Norman Connors' 'You Are My Starship' [retitled as 'Natural Collie'].

#### **Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City / Al Brown**

Al Brown [b.1947] had recorded a few sides for Studio One - 'Ain't Got No Soul', 'No Soul Today' - as the 1960s turned into the 1970s. By 1973 he was fronting Skin Flesh & Bones at Dickie Wong's Tit For Tat club on Red Hills Road, Kingston. In April 1974 he enjoyed his biggest hit with the group, a cover of Al Green's 'Here I Am Baby', the success of which enabled him to tour the UK with the group. Al was a cover version specialist; following his hit he scored again with a cover of Neil Diamond's 'Stones'. Here, backed again by Skin Flesh & Bones he delivers a fine version of the 1974 Bobby Bland hit 'Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City' from the veteran bluesman's 'Dreamer' LP.

#### **Mango Walk / In-Crowd**

A funky version of a tune also done by Mandrill, complete with excellent organ, clavinet and wah-wah guitar. Bullwackies Allstars revived the tune in the mid-1980s. In-Crowd went on to greater success when they added vocalist / drummer Fil Callender for tunes like 'His Majesty Is Coming', 'Back A Yard', 'Ethiopia' - all serious roots anthems, and the proto-lovers rock 'Baby My Love'.

#### **Ain't No Sunshine / Ken Boothe**

In the hands of Bill Withers, this song - produced by Booker T and originally released as the b-side to Withers' 'Harlem' on US independent Sussex before appearing on the singer / songwriter's debut LP 'Just As I Am' in 1971 - received an understated, meditative treatment. Ken Boothe's version is more upfront, with Boothe in familiar crying mode, and was released as a 45 on producer Lloyd Charmers' 'Splash' label, before surfacing on Boothe's own 'Black Gold & Green' set in 1973.

#### **Gypsy Woman / Milton Henry**

Although others have essayed this Impressions chestnut - it had been versioned by Derrick Morgan in the mid-1960s, and the Mighty Diamonds also cut a version for Joe Gibbs in 1977 - this cut is the deepest Yard version. Milton Henry had been a member of the Leaders with Prince Alla, before cutting solo discs for Lee Perry [as King Medious]. He produced the rhythm - played by Eric 'Fish' Clarke [drums], Errol 'Flabba' Holt' [bass] and Vin Gordon [trombone]. The distinctive rhythm guitar is by Milton himself, as are the backing vocals.

#### **Super Soul [a.k.a. Give Me Your Love] / Junior Soul [a.k.a. Junior Murvin]**

Produced and arranged by the multi-talented Clive 'Azul' Hunt, this is Junior Murvin before 'Police & Thieves'. The song was originally written and performed by the late lamented Curtis Mayfield for inclusion on the 'Superfly' soundtrack album, where it played memorably under the slow-motion bath scene. Hunt contributes the flute obligato; the rhythm was also used for the late I-Roy's toast that took the film title as its own, available on our I-Roy set 'Don't Check Me With No Lightweight Stuff' [BAFCD 016], and in extended form on the Blood & Fire sampler '2 heavyweight' [BAFCD 017].

#### **For The Love Of You / John Holt**

A beautiful reading of the Isley Brothers song [released by them in October 1975, and also included on their 'Heat Is On' album] from a definitive Jamaican stylist. Produced at Randy's Studio 17 by Clive Chin, with backing by In-Crowd, this is a masterful interpretation and the epitome of Jamaican soul. Shortly after this John Holt enjoyed a run of success at Channel One with tracks like 'Up Park Camp', but this track has never been reissued until now.

#### **It's A Shame / Alton Ellis**

First done by the [Detroit] Spinners at Motown, this song, written by Stevie Wonder, his then-girlfriend Syreeta Wright and L.Garrett, proved an ideal vehicle for the man often styled the 'godfather' of Jamaican soul, Alton Ellis. The Spinners catalogue also provided two more songs popular in Jamaica, their 1968 VIP release 'Message From A Black Man' and 'I'll Be Around', a hit in Jamaica for Otis Gayle at Studio One [see the Soul Jazz compilation 'Studio One Soul'].

#### **I'm Your Puppet / Jimmy London**

A soul and pop hit in 1966 for James & Bobby Purify, this is another classic written by the Muscle Shoals team of Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham. Jamaican producer Lloyd Campbell utilised Skin Flesh & Bones for the rhythm track, laid at Channel One studio and showcasing the fragile vocals of former Inspiration Jimmy London. From here it would be a short step to the 'rockers' sound developed by drummer Sly Dunbar with his subsequent band the Revolutionaries, also at Channel One. Delroy Wilson recut the song for Jo Jo Hookim a few months after, but this is the better interpretation.

#### **Get Ready / Delroy Wilson**

First issued by Motown legends the Temptations in February 1966, this features another Jamaican soul giant, the late great Delroy Wilson. This version - Delroy's second rendition of the song - released on a Channel One 12" single around the same time as another Jamaican version by Gregory Isaacs, available on 'Mr. Isaacs' [BAFCD 035]. It maintains the upbeat premise of the original before sliding into an extended dub portion. Musical backing is by the Revolutionaries.

#### **Darker Than Blue / Lloyd Charmers**

This song - first heard on Curtis Mayfield's debut solo set 'Curtis' in 1970 - proved a brilliant vehicle for producer Lloyd Charmers' persuasive falsetto. In fact Lloyd sings all the backing vocals, and plays the haunting melodic part as well; the rhythm was played by Third World and was recorded in early 1975, just before that group signed to Island Records.

#### **Why Can't We Live Together / Tinga Stewart**

The original - by singer/organist Timmy Thomas - was a monster US hit for the Florida-based TK Records in 1974, and featured Thomas's singing over a sparse organ/drum machine backing track. 'Tinga' Stewart recut the song in 1977 at Channel One for sound system operator Virgo, with backing by the Revolutionaries, and an excellent horn arrangement by the late I-Roy.

#### **Baltimore / The Tamlins**

Randy Newman's song made its first appearance on the writer's 'Little Criminals' album in 1977, but the Nina Simone version - cut for Creed Taylor's CTI label in 1978 - took it to clubs and dancehalls worldwide. In 1979, Sly & Robbie did their version with the Tamlins [Junior Moore, Derrick Lara, Carlton Smith]; it was arguably the Tamlins' biggest hit, although they continue their [underrated] career to this day. It features Sly & Robbie's then new style, as they told the authors of 'Reggae Routes': "We did like a

slowed-down Motown/Stax kind of beat, but still keeping the backbeat happening on the guitar chord. That shook things up down in Jamaica a bit”.....

### **Hotter Reggae Music / Welton Irie**

Archetypal ‘dancehall’ deejay Welton Irie adds his argument to the preceding track, incorporating into his rap the lyrical style then current on US rap records by such as the Sugarhill Gang, the Furious Five et al. The rhythm was revived in the mid-1990s by Star Trail producer Richard Bell, who used it on sides by Anthony B and others.

### Credits

Compiled by Steve Barrow & Mark Ainley  
Booklet notes by Peter Dalton; additional info by Joe Lister.  
Digital restoration by Tony Webster @ CEDAR Audio, Cambridge  
Mastered by Kevin Metcalfe @ The Soundmasters, London  
Design by Nima Falatoori @ Intro

For links, suggestions and help with sourcing original 45s for this project, Blood & Fire would like to thank the following people:

Mark Ainley, Jake Behnan, Bob Brooks, Rae Cheddie, Jeremy Collieweed, Peter Dalton, Bunny Lee, General Lee, Duke Neville, Adrian Talbot. Last but not least, thanks to the Soul Jazz Posse, who indirectly gave us the inspiration to make this long-cherished project a reality. Check out their ‘Studio One Soul’ compilation, and Westside’s ‘The Music Got Soul’ and ‘The Music Got Mo’ Soul’ for more of these soulful vibes.

Special thanks to all the artists and producers for their co-operation in licencing the tracks, and to Ben Osborne at Magnum Photos for first bringing the crucial images to our attention.

This compilation is available in a double vinyl edition on PK Records.

Original photographs by Chris Steele-Perkins and Alex Webb, courtesy Magnum Photos. Chris Steele-Perkins photographed the crowd on the booklet cover at a Reggae festival in Brockwell Park Brixton 1974, and the photographs on pages 6-7, 12-13. The remaining photographs are by Alex Webb.

Magnum is a photographers’ co-operative, founded in 1947. Its aim is to protect the ownership of its members’ work and provide them with some control over what they photographed and how it was used. It has been said that it was their guiding principles that first asserted the concept of photographers owning the copyright of their work. Since its foundation Magnum has been at the forefront of reportage and documentary photography; its photographers have been key witnesses and interpreters of the world’s events and players, their images bridging the divide between journalism and art. Both Chris Steele-Perkins and Alex Webb have been kind enough to provide us with brief comments on their work which we have used to illustrate this booklet.

Chris Steele-Perkins :

“I moved to Brixton in 1971 and used to go to the Coach & Horses which was run by George Berry at that time. Chubby Mullins and the All Stars used to play regular weekends - it was the best pub I ever went to. Black and white, old and young all crammed into the back room listening and dancing to his soul, reggae, blues mix. I photographed a bit in Brixton at the reggae festivals, and covered the Notting Hill Carnival and riots.

Black music was often involved in my work - ska and bluebeat when covering Mods, gospel when working on the Pentecostal churches, and reggae on the sound systems in Wolverhampton, when I did a story for the Sunday Times covering black youth following Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of blood' speech".

Alex Webb:

"In 1976 I was 24 and just beginning to photograph in the Caribbean. Intrigued by the links between music and politics in Jamaica, I flew to Kingston to photograph the presidential elections. I travelled with the candidates [the late Michael] Manley and his JLP opponent Edward Seaga; I poked around the streets of Trench Town, intensely aware of the grinding poverty and seething anger of the populace. And I photographed the street disturbances that erupted, particularly on election day, along the dividing line in Trench Town between PNP and JLP territory. I discovered just how raw politics in Jamaica could be".

1. Ghetto Funk

The Boris Gardiner Happening feat. Leslie Butler

Written by Boris Gardiner. Copyright Control. Licenced from Boris Gardiner; a Leal production

2. Collie Stuff

The Chosen Few

Written by Bell / Bell / Brown / Mickens / Smith / Thomas / Westfield. Published by EMI Music

Publishing (WP) Ltd. Licenced from Franklyn Spence; produced by Tony Robinson & Chosen Few

3. Slipping Into Darkness

Carl Bradney

Written by Dickerson / Miller / Allen. Published by Universal Music Publishing Ltd. Licenced from and

produced by Lee Perry

4. Is It Because I'm Black?

Ken Boothe

Written by Johnson / Watts / Jones. Published by Ichiban Publishing Corporation. Licenced from Lloyd

Tyrell; produced by Lloyd Charmers

5. Get Involved

Freddie McGregor

Written by Jackson / Moore / Williams. Published by Screen Gems - EMI Music Ltd. Licenced from

Freddie McGregor; produced by A.Bailey

6. Ain't No Love In The Heart Of The City / Al Brown

Written by Price / Walsh. Published by Universal / MCA Music Ltd.

Licenced from and produced by Al Brown

7. Mango Walk

In-Crowd

Written by Wilson / Wilson / Wilson. Published by Warner Chappell Music Ltd. Licenced from Clive

Hunt; arranged by Clive Hunt; produced by Geoffrey Chung

8. Ain't No Sunshine

Ken Boothe

Written by Bill Withers. Published by EMI Music Publishing Ltd.

Licenced from Lloyd Tyrell; produced by Lloyd Charmers

9. Gypsy Woman

Milton Henry

Written by Curtis Mayfield. Published by EMI Tunes Ltd.

Licenced from and produced by A. Milton Henry

10. Super Soul a.k.a. Give Me Your Love / Junior Soul a.k.a.  
Junior Murvin

Written by Curtis Mayfield. Published by Warner Chappell Music Ltd. Licenced from Clive Hunt;  
Arranged and produced by Clive Hunt

11. For The Love Of You  
John Holt

Written by Isley / Isley / Isley / Isley / Isley / Jasper. Published by EMI Songs Ltd. Licenced from and  
produced by Clive Chin

12. It's A Shame  
Alton Ellis

Written by Wonder / Garrett / Wright. Published by EMI / Black Bull / Jobete M.C. Inc. Licenced from  
Lloyd Tyrell; produced by Lloyd Charmers

13. I'm Your Puppet  
Jimmy London

Written by Dan Penn & Spooner Oldham. Published by Warner Chappell Music Ltd. Licenced from and  
produced by Lloyd A Campbell

14. Get Ready  
Delroy Wilson

Written by Smokey Robinson. Published by Jobete Music (UK) Ltd. Licenced from and produced by  
Joseph Hookim

15. Darker Than Blue  
Lloyd Charmers

Written by Curtis Mayfield. Published by Warner Chappell Music Ltd. Licenced from Lloyd Tyrell;  
produced by Lloyd Charmers

16. Why Can't We Live Together Tinga Stewart

Written by Timmy Thomas. Published by Peermusic (UK) Ltd  
Licenced from Neville Stewart; a Ronnie Virgo production

17. Baltimore  
The Tamlins

Written by Randy Newman. Published by Warner Chappell North America. Licenced from  
Taxi Productions; produced by Sly & Robbie

18. Hotter Reggae Music  
Welton Irie

Written by Welton Irie. Copyright Control. Licenced from Taxi Productions; produced by  
Sly & Robbie