

Jimmy Cliff - Rebirth (2012)

Written by bluelover

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1. *World Upside Down* 2. *One More* 3. *Cry No More* 4. *Children's Bread* 5. *Bang* 6. *Guns Of Brixton* 7. *Reggae Music* 8. *Outsider* 9. *Rebel Rebel* 10. *Ruby Soho* 11. *Blessed Love* 12. *Ship Is Sailing* 13. *One More (Alternate Version)* Jimmy Cliff - Composer, Nyabinghi Drums, Quotation Author Scott Abels - Drums Aimee Allen - Vocals (Background) Tim Armstrong - Guitar, Guitar (Rhythm), Mixing, Producer Kevin Bivona - Guitar, Mixing, Piano Dan Boer - Organ Michael Bolger - Trombone, Trumpet Nicki Bonner - Vocals (Background) The Engine Room - Percussion Ashli Haynes - Vocals (Background) Dash Hutton - Vocals (Background) Tim Hutton - Vocals (Background) Jordan Katz - Trombone, Trumpet James King - Flute, Sax (Baritone), Sax (Tenor) Jean McClain - Vocals (Background) David Moyer - Saxophone Liam Philpot - Saxophone Jordis Unga - Vocals (Background)

If the reggae legend's 2004 effort *Black Magic* was like Frank Sinatra or Tony Bennett's *Duets* albums --late-era, star-filled, and somewhat flat -- *Rebirth* is Jimmy Cliff's *American Recordings* (Johnny Cash) or *Praise & Blame* (Tom Jones), where a veteran artist goes raw and relights the fire with the help of a kindred spirit/knowing producer. For Cash and Jones, it was Rick Rubin and Ethan Johns respectively, while here it's a bit of a surprise with Rancid frontman and Clash devotee Tim Armstrong delivering something well above the expected punky reggae party. "Guns of Brixton" is a natural, and Cliff's take on Rancid's "Ruby Soho" is a ska recreation to behold, but when the sometimes poptacular reggae singer dons a wild, Lee "Scratch" Perry persona for the carnival song "Bang" ("I came into this life, I came in with a bang/I'm living my life, I live it with a bang"), deep reggae fan Armstrong knows what to do, surrounding his man Upsetter-style with a whirling dervish of ska while adding a searing guitar solo as well. When the singer gets nostalgic on "Reggae Music" ("1962, Orange Street, Kingston Jamaica/I sang my song for Leslie Kong, he said...") the backing track is alive with that roots based magic and one drop power, yet Cliff's the one who seals the deal here and throughout the album, performing like a young buck while packing his years and wisdom into the songwriting. On that front, there's the Occupy Movement theme "World Upside Down" and the powerful single "One More", while the sweetness comes from the sentimental "Ship Is Sailing", a nautical metaphor so warm it could be slipped into a Jimmy Buffett set easily, even as the tinkling keyboards honor reggae legend Jackie Mittoo, thus nominating Armstrong's loving recreation as one of the most loved.

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It's a return to form and just what fans of Cliff's early work could ask for, but it's vital too, putting it on the man's top shelf, somewhere in the vicinity of The Harder They Come soundtrack and Wonderful World, Beautiful People. --- David Jeffries, Rovi

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