

Black music show goes on the road

London gigs a smash hit

by JAH

SCORCHER

with You're Lying — DJs Lorna Gee and Rankin Ann, Sister Audrey, Slim Linton and the Mad Professor

To round-up the four nights of music, King Sounds and the Israelites, Junior English and Pato Banton appeared at the All Nations Club in Hackney.

DJ Pato Banton's delivery and charm melted the hearts of the people in the hall.

Junior English and his backing band, known as Amlack (from Birmingham), were tight and Mr English changed from soul to reggae with the utmost professionalism.

King Sounds and the Israelites closed the show with their usual dynamic performance.

The main objectives of the Road Show are to provide an opportunity for black promoters to manage and market black music; to provide a platform for young black musicians to perform and to train a number of young black people as stage managers, publicity officers, lighting and sound operators and promoters.

THE GLC Race Equality Unit launched the Black Music Road Show, with a series of live gigs around London.

The first was at the Town and Country Club (formerly the Forum) with Linton Kwesi Johnson, Abacush and Awaara.

The performances were of a very high standard, especially from LKJ who had the audience responding to every poem he delivered.

With the Dub band providing the music, his first delivery was Dread Beat And Blood. Then he went through titles like Bass Culture, Raggaie Fi Peach (a song dedicated to Blair Peach) and Di Black Petty Booshwah.

The following night at Acklam Hall, Ladbroke Grove, there was a combination of Afro-Asian music, featuring Hi-life International, Heera (Asian group) and Dade Krama.

Then it was the Apollo Club, Willesden, with the Ariwa Posse, featuring Sandra Cross — at the No 1 spot in the Reggae charts

Dynamic action from King Sounds

Sounds

LONDON Kentish Town Town And Country Club (01-267 3334) Linton Kwesi Johnson/Abacush/Awaara

LONDON Kensington Acklam Hall (01-960 4590) Hi Life International/Heera/Dade Krama

LONDON Willesden Apollo club (01-459 4509) Ariwa Posse with Sandra Cross/Lorna Gee/Rankin Ann/Mad Professor/Sister Audrey/Slim Linton

Melody Maker

16/11/85

LONDON Dalston All Nation's Club, 4, Martello Road, E8: King Sounds And The Israelites + Junior English + Pato Banton + deejays, etc

LONDON Ladbroke Grove, Acklam Hall, Bay 63, W11: Hi Life International + Heera + Dade Krama + deejays

LONDON Willesden Apollo Club, 375 High Road, NW10: The Ariwa Posse + deejays

LONDON Kentish Town Forum, NW5: Linton Kwesi Johnson + Abacush + Awaara

Black Echoes 30/Nov/1985
On the road again

THE GLC's Black Music Roadshow continues with the following events.

Rappers Meet Toasters with Krew Sound, Sista Culcha, Dizzy Heights, Cinderella, Live To Break, Cherry Lickshot, Sweet Perfection, Pepi Irie, Freshski, Olive Rankin, Human Beat Box and Horseman at Municipal Hall,

Tottenham N15 (December 6).

Bob Andy, Winston Reedy, Blaze, at The Upper Cut Club, 18-20 Stowston Road, London E7 (7).

Miss Mehvish, Bali, Mahmood Jamal, Ahmed Faraz at the Havelock Centre, Havelock Road, Southall, Middlesex (8).

BLACK MUSIC ROADSHOW is a training scheme set up by the GLC's Race Equality Unit in conjunction with Wilf Walker of Black Productions. It's basically a series of London-area concerts promoting black and Asian artists which, at the same time, gives young black Londoners the chance to be trained in all aspects of the music business — press and publicity, stage management, lighting and concert promotion. Among artists who have so far participated in the project include Linton Kwesi Johnson, Abacush, King Sounds, Junior English and Pato Banton. The next series of concerts is: "Rappers Meet Toasters" at Tottenham Municipal Hall with Krew Sound, Dizzy Heights, Sweet Perfection, Sista Culcha, Cinderella, Pepi Irie etc. (6 December); Bob Andy and Winston Reedy at the Upper Cut Club, E7 (7); Miss Mehvish and Bali, plus poets Mahmood Jamal and Ahmed Faraz at Southall Community Centre (8); and The Cool Notes and LW5 at Brixton The Prince (9).

Nov/30/85 NME

Marketing for London

The Prince

ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

Sound troubles

Bob Andy,
Winston Reedy'
and Blaze 7/11/85
Uppercut Club.

LIVE

ON a night when there wasn't much else going on in the way of live reggae, the turnout at this cavernous venue in east London for the sixth night of the Black Music Roadshow was, in a word, miserable.

Maybe the pre-show promotion wasn't sufficient or it could be that this was the wrong place to stage these particular artists.

The fact remains that it was a disappointing crowd for such an attractive package; and if the Roadshow is to do any positive service to London's black owned venues over the next three months, promoter Wilf Walker will need to have a serious rethink about who to put on where.

Blaze, a group of young Brent Black Music Co-op affiliates, did not appear to be the least bit dismayed by a stage that struggled to accommodate them or a PA system which gave everybody trouble. Their refreshing, catchy and commercial soul repertoire, shiny visuals and charismatic vibes, certainly entertained the lucky souls who caught 'em. They were a bright advertisement for BBMC and 'Search For A Star' which produced three of the group's members, including this year's winner Lloyd Aaron. If they tighten up the right nuts, and come up on the right opportunities, they should travel far.

Neither did Winston Reedy flinch from the task at hand, despite the fact

that his year old recording deal with UB40's DEP label has recently been terminated. Fronting a first rate band (Professor Larry Bassie Alan Weekes, Locksley Gichie etc) Reedy's voice was in maximum fettle, as he took us through heartfelt renderings of long time gems like 'Daughter of Zion' and 'Dim The Lights', a tight and inspired 'Is It Because I'm Black?' and selections from both his albums to date. I can say that without reservation that Reedy overcame all difficulties with rope to spare.

Bob Andy found the going heavier; he just couldn't contain his anger at the soundmen, frequently haranguing them throughout his slot. Who could blame him? For whatever reason, they were cramping his style. But good sense prevailed, and encouraged by the boisterous nature of his fans, he persevered to turn in a show that strengthened the hope that he'll be back in some serious recording real soon. 'I've Got To Go Back Home' was one of many fine moments and the message from the crowd was, keep it burning Bob! The same applies to the Roadshow — but let's make it burn even hotter.

Mark Kamba



Winston Reedy in maximum fettle.

Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
GLC
1981-1986

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Roadshow dates

THE BLACK Music Roadshow trundles ever onwards with a performance by the Cool Notes at Brixton Hill's The Fridge on December 9. LW5 are supporting.

All tickets are £3.00 and the night starts at 7:30 p.m.

On January 15, a Martin Luther King Day Celebration is to be held at the Town & Country Club (AKA the Forum). The bill has yet to be confirmed, but some big names are promised.

On January 19, you can catch Gaspar Lawall at Deptford's Albany Empire with support by Somo Somo.

A Soca Night at Dougies, Lower Clapton Road, is due to take place on January 24. In attendance will be Len Homer's Band, Bachaks, Ebony Steel Band, and three top local calypso singers.

A week later, on January 31 Dollar Brand's Akaya will be playing the London Dominion.

Finally, Manu Dibango plays South Bank's Queen Elizabeth Hall on February 5.

Party for peace

MELODY MAKER, November 30, 1985



A GLC Party For Peace is being staged at the Town & Country Club, Kentish Town, NW5 (formerly the Forum), on December 17.

Acts so far confirmed are Misty In Roots, Amazulu and Somo Somo. Tickets are £4.00 (£2.50 with UB40) available from the box office or usual agents.

There is wheelchair access at the side entrance — but the toilets are not wheelchair accessible.

ARIWA POSSE Apollo Club, Harlesden

WITH the Mad Professor at the mixing desk, The Ariwa Posse demonstrated their clever way of combining artifice and biology by mixing fluttering hearts and sexual politics, showbiz glamour and hard reggae rhythms.

Slim Linton was the Master of Ceremonies and he proved to be the last word in contagious charm combining the best bits of Cary Grant and Frankie Paul. Whenever the show started to slow, Slim kept things bubbling with a ready wit and a sharp tongue and in the process demonstrated that you don't have to be severe and sexist in order to be sexy. The acceptable face of reggae masculinity.

Ranking Ann was next on the mike. With a snappy delivery that made verbs ring and nouns breathe, she laid into the Mr Bit Stuffs of the reggae world and their misogynist ways. Sister Audrey followed and continued the attack on the men with "Populate". Backed by two singers (a Florence Ballard and a Weather Girl) she combined chowbiz razzmatazz with feminist affirmation.

Lorna Gee has a voice that brushes the back of your neck as it passes but a stage persona that is reserved, perfectly chilled and subject to fits of remoteness. But it's the voice that remains with you in the end, its subtle shading, its dynamics, its brilliant modulation.

Number 1 on the reggae charts and number 1 in my heart, Sandra Cross finished off the night with a set of sheer inspiration exhaled. Sandra plays the sort of lovers rock that fits neatly into your everyday life, giving ordinary gestures and banal emotions a sort of grandeur. She may still be a bit gauche on stage but tonight's version of "You're Lying" brought the house down.

FRANK OWEN

LADIES' NIGHT

Nov 30/1985

Ariwa Posse, Apollo Club, 15/11/85

THE Mad Professor's Ariwa stable has been rapidly churning out lover's rock records this year but don't let it be said that the studio's musical output is restricted to that kind of music; if ever proof of that was required, we got it at the Apollo Club on the third night of the GLC/Wilf Walker Black Music Roadshow.

Technical hitches aside (the sound-check was late and thus the whole show was knocked off schedule) the flow of talent was impressive and un-interrupted. Black Steel, a group which gets its name and dynamics from its leader, (a multi-instrumentalist-cum-vocalist) laid the

ground for Slim Linton (Sandra Cross's brother) to voice a smoother-than-smooth version of Slim Smith's 'Falling In Love' (so nice he started it twice!).

The crowd was thick on the dance-floor, when lady emcee Ranking Ann took up the running; for some obscure



Lorna G.

reason, she's never been a fashionable name to call, but skanking in deadly black and venting her ire with a song called 'Wha Do Men' she earned a deserved rousing reception. Performing with two backing vocalists, elegant Sister Audrey played a brief but

entertaining set which she topped off with her latest single, 'I Love You'. Lorna Gee, a toaster who can sing, cut a brash and confident figure as she ran through a brace of songs including 'Got To Find A Way'.

But it was left to Sandra Cross to climax the show; sure, she needed time to settle into her stride, but when she did, she let rip with that ever so certain voice of hers, rounding things off with 'You're Lying' and 'Country Living' — definitely a singer who's progress ought to be monitored. It was a triumphant night for the Ariwa ensemble. MK.



Black Music Roadshow

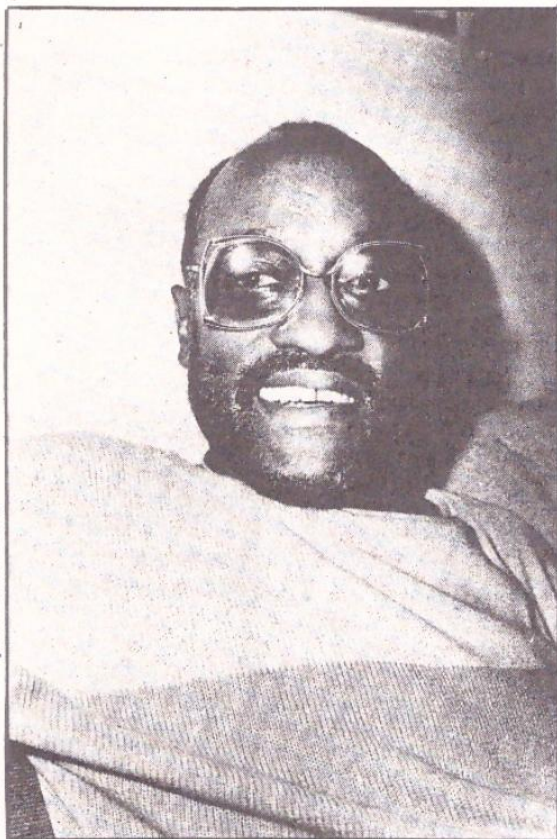
Wilf Walker (front row centre) is pictured on the steps of the GLC County Hall at the launch of the GLC Black Music Roadshow. A series of black music concerts organised around the Capital. With him are trainees, who will be learning some of the basic requirements of concerts promotions along with people who will be providing the expert tuition and artists who will be performing on the Roadshow.

CARRIBEAN TIMES 6/12/85

GLC

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ENVIRONMENTAL BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE



Billy Paul's two UK nights

RESURGENT PHILADELPHIAN Billy Paul is coming to the UK in January for two shows.

The first takes place at Croydon's Fairfield Halls as part of the Black Music Roadshow on January 16.

The second, promoted by Wilf Walker for Black Productions, will be happening at the Hammer-smith Odeon on January 17. Tickets for the Odeon show are £7.50, £6.50 and £5.50. Check with the box office for Fairfield Halls prices.

LINTON KWESI JOHNSON *Sounds* 30/11/85 Kentish Town Town And Country Club

LINTON KWESI Johnson — known simply as LKJ to those with the correct proportion of streetcred flowing through their veins — is preaching to the converted tonight. Surely no one here really needs to be told of the evils that take place in the backs of police vans or awakened to the cavemen prejudices which still poison the streets. They are young and they know.

That doesn't diminish the power of what he has to say, though. The words in themselves are important, and the way Linton strings them together is nothing short of genius.

In the foreground is the man himself, looking sharp in a suit and talking sharper in that angry sermonising voice of his. In the background, Dennis Bovell's Dub Band pounds out precisely the right music — supporting, not suffocating the words. This is poetry come alive; not the dusty old rhymes that are taught so dryly in schools.

Which is why it is sad that this was one of his last few gigs before retiring from performance and recording. In times like these, there is a need for a voice like Linton Kwesi Johnson's, to give expression to emotions which millions feel but cannot explain. They need the reassurance and always respond with grateful applause. It's just a shame that the people who really need to have their eyes and minds opened are always absent.

GEOFFREY S KENT

Pioneering music path for women

"I'M YOUNG, black and female and I hope to inspire a lot of other females to follow me into the music business." These strong, but quietly spoken sentiments were expressed by Maxine Gilmore as we sat talking at the launch of the Black Music Project at County Hall last week, writes *Anthea Matthison*.

Maxine, who is 20, determined and single-minded, is one of seven young black Londoners chosen by the GLC-funded project to spend five months training for behind-the-scenes work in the music business. She will work for Star Hire, a local company near to her home in Westbourne Park Road which specialises in lighting and sound.

"It's like engineering," she said. "White and male dominated. It involves a lot of hard, physical work, sometimes until three or four in the morning. But it's worth it." Maxine will be paid £90 a week while she is on the project.

We were interrupted by the opening of the launch before Maxine could tell me what had led her into the record business.

There was a lot of excitement in the room overlooking the cold, windy River Thames as we listened to the speakers — Ken Little, chairman of the Ethnic Sub-Committee, and Wilf Walker, former Notting Hill carnival chairman.

An opportunity for young black people to train in all aspects of the music business — performing, promoting, stage managing — this was what the scheme would provide. I wondered what had drawn Maxine to sound and lighting.

"Pioneering the way for other women," she replied calmly. "That's my main reason for doing it. I've always been interested in music — playing, performing and arranging."

When she was seven or eight, her father bought her a piano and she began to play. "I've never had a music lesson and, frankly, I don't really think you need lessons," she said.

After O-levels at Holland Park School, she went straight into working for a recording studio. She has played with the Mangrove Steel Orchestra in North Kensington for the last three years.

15/NOV/1985

MELODY MAKER

LONDON Tottenham Municipal Hall, N15: The Black Music Roadshow

7/12/85

Junior headlines king celebrations

ECHOES 11/1/86



MARTIN LUTHER King's birthday is to be celebrated in style at the Town & Country Club on January 15.

The impressive line-up is headed by Junior Giscombe, who hasn't performed any concert dates for at least three years.

Also on the bill are Gaspar Lawal's Africa Oro Band, the Inspirational Choir, Mint Juleps, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Benjamin Zephaniah. Sounds by Messiah and DBC.

Tickets are £5.00 available from the box office (01-267 3334), Rough Trade, Rhythm Records, Sterns and usual outlets. The night starts at 7.30am.

Billy plus Joanna

BILLY PAUL, who, as previously announced, is to play two UK shows, will be joined by Joanna Gardner for the Hammersmith Odeon date on January 17.

Tickets are £7.50, £6.50 and £5.50 from the box office and usual ticket agencies.

The other date is Croydon's Fairfield Halls on January 16 and is part of the GLC-sponsored Black Music Roadshow.



WILF A WALKER FOR BLACK PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

BILLY PAUL
P.A./JOANNA GARDNER

HAMMERSMITH ODEON
FRIDAY 17 JAN 8.00

TICKETS £7.50 £6.50 £5.50 FROM ADVANCE BOX OFFICE (748 4081)
THE CAGE / KITH PROWSE (741 8989) / ROUGH TRADE (229 0341)
RHYTHM RECORDS (267 0123) / PREMIER BOX OFFICE (240 2245)
LONDON THEATRE BOOKINGS (439 3371) / STARGREEN (437 5282)

TOUR DATES

Billy Paul Croydon Fairfield Hall, Jan 16 (£3-£4). Hammersmith Odeon, Jan 17 (£3-£4). + special guest Joanna Gardner

Abdullah Ibrahim's Ekaya + Akimbo, Dominion, Jan 31 (£4-£5).

Tickets for all concerts available from box offices, ticket agencies or by post.

BILLY PAUL: NEW SINGLE AND CONCERT DATES
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Entitled "Lately" b/w "I Search No More", the single is taken from his recently released album also titled "Lately" and will be available in both 7" and 12" format, the latter featuring an additional track "Sexual Therapy".
Tickets for both concerts are now available at the box office and all usual agents.

JOANNA GARDNER
Gaspar Lawal + Somo Somo, Deptford Albany Empire, Jan 19 (£3).

NME 11/1/86

LINTON KWESI JOHNSON emerges from his self-imposed retirement, far more quickly than expected, for a one-off London appearance to mark a special occasion - Martin Luther King Day.

The event has been celebrated annually in New York for some years, by means of an all-star concert, and now promoter Wilf Walker of Black Productions has joined forces with the GLC's Racial Equality Unit to present an equivalent tribute show over here.

It takes place at the Town & Country Club (previously The Forum) in Kentish Town, on Wednesday January 15, with a 7.30pm start. The official headliner is Junior together with his band, and among others on the bill are Gaspar Lawal's Africa Oro Band, Benjamin Zephaniah, The Mint Juleps and The Inspirational Choir, plus various DJs. Tickets are £5, available from the box-office and usual outlets.

WEDNESDAY 15

ROCK TIME OUT 15/1/86

* Junior + Gaspar Lawal & The African Oro Band + Inspirational Gospel Choir + Mint Juleps + Benjamin Zephaniah + Linton Kwesi Johnson Town & Country Club (formerly the Forum), 7.30pm; £5.

TIME OUT 9-15/1/86

GIGS

1) **Junior & a cast of thousands** (Town & Country Club, Wed)
South London's best (er, only) contribution to Brit pop-funk heads up a massive afro, funk and soul binge to celebrate Martin Luther King Day.

■ Junior & His Band + Gaspar Lawal's Africa Oro Band + Inspirational Gospel Choir + Mint Juleps + Benjamin Zephaniah + Linton Kwesi Johnson Town & Country Club
Electric billing from the GLC of some fine black music. Junior has been quiet this last year, his soulful pipes not being aired since his support slot at the Wembley Black music bash but should be worth the fever alone. With afro, gospel, the Mint Juleps entertaining a capella and poets of different generations and styles Zephaniah & Johnson, this should be an eventful night indeed. 7.30: £5.

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VOICE 18/1/86

JFW/14/86
BLUES & SOUL:

LAST year, January 15, the birthday of civil and human rights fighter Dr Martin Luther King was recognised as a public holiday in America after a long campaign by singer Stevie Wonder.

As a tribute to Dr King's birthday this side of the Atlantic, a Martin Luther King Day Celebration is being put on in London. Ola During looks at the achievement of Dr King and the way his teachings continue to provide a source of inspiration.

Dr King once said, "I have the audacity to believe that the peoples everywhere have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity and freedom for the spirits. I believe that what self-centred men have torn down, other-centred men can build up."

Dr Martin Luther King was born on January 15, 1929 and by the time of his assassination in 1968 at

the age of 39, he had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and had led millions of people in a non-violent protest against racial segregation.

Eighteen years after his assassination Dr King's fight for equal rights and justice for black people in America is still remembered and continues. His speeches and writings have been a living memorial to his philosophies and ideas, and the message his words convey are still as inspiring today as the time when he made them. Dr King is being remembered as a great man who fought for equal rights for black people all over the world.

As part of his birthday celebration The Voice asked a few peo-

ple who hold Dr Martin Luther King in high esteem to pay a few words of tribute to him.

Rev Hewlette Andrew, Methodist Minister for Clapham and St Johns Methodist church spoke of his great respect for Martin Luther King and the work he did for black America.

Rev Andrew said, "No one will doubt the fact that Dr Martin Luther King Jnr, were he still alive, would have made a substantial contribution to education in America. The tradition of the black Church in which he was firmly rooted had long been characterised by a commitment to education."

He continued, "Dr King spent 21 years without a break in formal education, earning a PhD in Philosophical Theology at Boston University in 1955 —

one of the world's most famous Theological Schools. He was described by one of his professors as a 'scholar's scholar'.

Musician Spartacus R who runs the cultural awareness centre in South London said about the recognition of Dr King's birthday.

The organiser of the Martin Luther King Day Celebration Wilf Walker told The Voice, "We are trying to have a celebration like the one they have in America."

"It is good to see that one of our freedom fighters have been recognised for his contribution. It will be even better if we can look forward towards a time when without any kind of apology appreciate the more monumental contribution of people like Malcolm X."

● The celebration will take place at the Town and Country Club tomorrow, Wednesday January 15 at 7.30pm.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CELEBRATION ✓

PROMOTER Wilf Walker for Black Productions and GLC Racial Equality Unit presents a special Martin Luther King Day Celebration concert at the Town & Country Club in Highgate Road, London, NW5 on January 15th featuring Junior & his band, Gaspar Lawal's Africa Oro Band, Inspirational Gospel Choir, the Mint Juleps, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Benjamin Zephaniah plus deejays Messiah & DBC.

Tickets are £5 and are available from usual agents and selected record retail outlets in London.

BLUES & SOUL 14/Jan/86

TIMES . SAT 11-85

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY:

British soul star Junior Giscombe, reggae poets Linton Kwesi Johnson and Benjamin Zephaniah, Gaspar Lawal's African ensemble and the Inspirational Gospel Choir celebrate Dr King's birthday — now, thanks to Stevie Wonder's lobbying, a national holiday in the United States. Wed, Town and Country Club, 9-17 Highgate Road, London NW5 (01-267 3334).

BILLY PAUL: "Me and Mrs Jones" was this American soul singer's big hit, a gem from the heyday of his



The newly designed Black Music Road Show accelerates into its third night on Friday when Harlesden's Apollo Club play's host to the Mad Professor's ARIWA POSSE, a multi-talented crew which includes singers Sandra Cross, Sister Audrey and Slim Linton, singer/m.c. Lorna Gee and full time first degree m.c. Ranking Ann. The ethos of the Road Show—launched last week by the GLC Race Equality Unit—is to open up markets for promoters and musicians, establish a black concert circuit in London and in an innovative twist, train black youths in different areas of show promotion by placing them with related companies for the duration of the project. Between now and March '86 while we take in a musical diet that stretches from Taj Mahal and Billy Paul to Misty In Roots, eight trainees will be learning the ropes of PA and lighting, stage management, promotion and publicity. Hopefully the placement of the trainees and the promised impetus for London's black music scene will last well beyond the eventual demise of the GLC. (Mark Kamba)

producers, Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, a dozen years ago. Thurs, Fairfield Halls, Croydon (01-688 9291); Fri, Hammersmith Odeon, Queen Caroline Street, London W6 (01-748 4081).

Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
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Commonly, the style of black American soul singers is rooted in and honed by gospel singing. *Billy Paul* (Fairfield Halls, Thur, Hammersmith Odeon, Fri) is an exception, his modes of vocal expression showing few traces of the church but clearly influenced by the smoother jazz and pop singers of the 50s and early 60s. In 1972 'Me & Mrs Jones', a ballad describing the pleasures of an adulterous affair, established his name. Its flip, an inventive version of Elton John's 'Your Song', was, like 'Jones', re-released as an A-side in 1977 when Paul was enjoying one of the periodical resurgences of interest which have typified his somewhat roller-coaster career. (Well, there've been a good few turkeys among the swan-like hits.) He's presently on a good streak following his switch from Philadelphia International to Lonnie Simmons' Total Experience label. His current LP 'Lately' is a likeable enough mix of new tunes by producers Jonah Ellis and Oliver Scott plus, inevitably, a couple of standards. On stage expect to hear 'Jones', his other, later hits and a selection from 'Lately', possibly including Ellis's 'Sexual Therapy', a very tut-tut rip-off of Gaye's 'Healing' of that ilk. (Geoff Brown)

TIME OUT JAN/16-22/86

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WILT A WALKER FOR BLACK PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

BILLY PAUL

PA./JOANNA GARDNER

HAMMERSMITH ODEON

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1) Junior & a cast of thousands (Town & Country Club, Wed) South London's best (er, only) contribution to Brit pop-funk heads up a massive afro, funk and soul binge to celebrate Martin Luther King Day.

■ Junior & His Band + Gaspar Lawal's Africa Oro Band + Inspirational Gospel Choir + Mint Juleps + Benjamin Zephaniah + Linton Kwesi Johnson Town & Country Club. Electric billing from the GLC of some fine black music. Junior has been quiet this last year, his soulful pipes not being aired since his support slot at the Wembley Black music bash but should be worth the fever alone. With afro, gospel, the Mint Juleps entertaining a capella and poets of different generations and styles Zephaniah & Johnson, this should be an eventful night indeed. 7.30: £5.

Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

GLC

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VOICE 18/1/86

Billy Paul live at the Hammersmith Odeon

One tiny five-letter-word more than adequately sums up Billy Paul's concert at the Hammersmith Odeon last Friday, cheap!! While acknowledging that the 1972 Grammy Award winner has not had a major British hit, or even a minor one for that matter, since *Bring The Family Back*, sometime back in the mid-70s, and even then that was not a bona fide national hit, on the strength of his all-time classic *Me And Mrs Jones*:

For one reason or another, a few of which I could mention, but I won't bother, in a venue that seats some 3,000, the auditorium was only three fifths full.

When I arrived, Joanna Gardiner and whoever else were doing PA had already done their business. At approx 9.50 Billy was introduced. His six piece band consisting of two keyboard players a guitarist, a bassist and a drummer were made to look as if they were a trio on the huge stage, that was subjected to a basic minimum amount of creative presentation. Though their playing couldn't really be faulted, their appearance left much to be desired. They actually looked as if they had just walked off the street and onto the stage. Though competent musicians, they performed as though they wished they were else-where - they looked that

pissed off!

Had a curtain been pulled down in front of them I doubt if the audience would have noticed the difference they were that visual. Billy however was attired as a star should be and strangely enough he performed



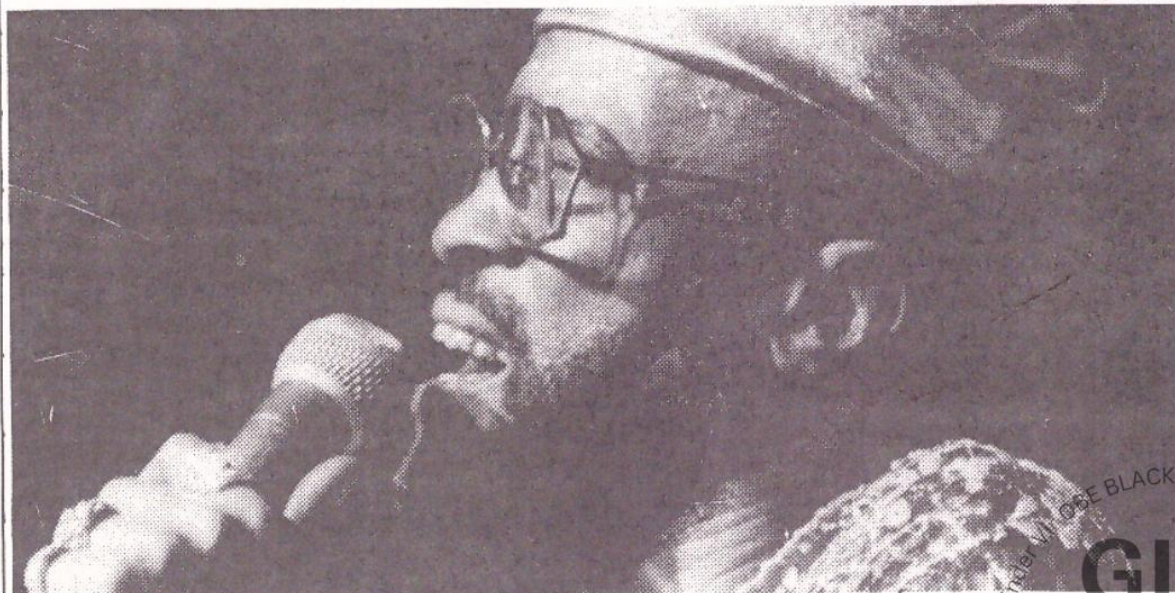
Billy Paul

like a star albeit a fading one.

He opened with *Only The Strong Survive*, followed by an unmemorable number, probably from his new album succeeded by a highly commendable version of Lionel Richie's *Hello*. He then introduced his protege, as he called her, Bernessa King, who also provides some of his background vocals. Bernessa performed a tepid version of Jocelyn Brown's *Somebody Else's Guy*, which the crowd clearly appreciated, but then they probably hadn't heard Jocelyn's or even young north Londoner Derede Williams' rendition of the same song.

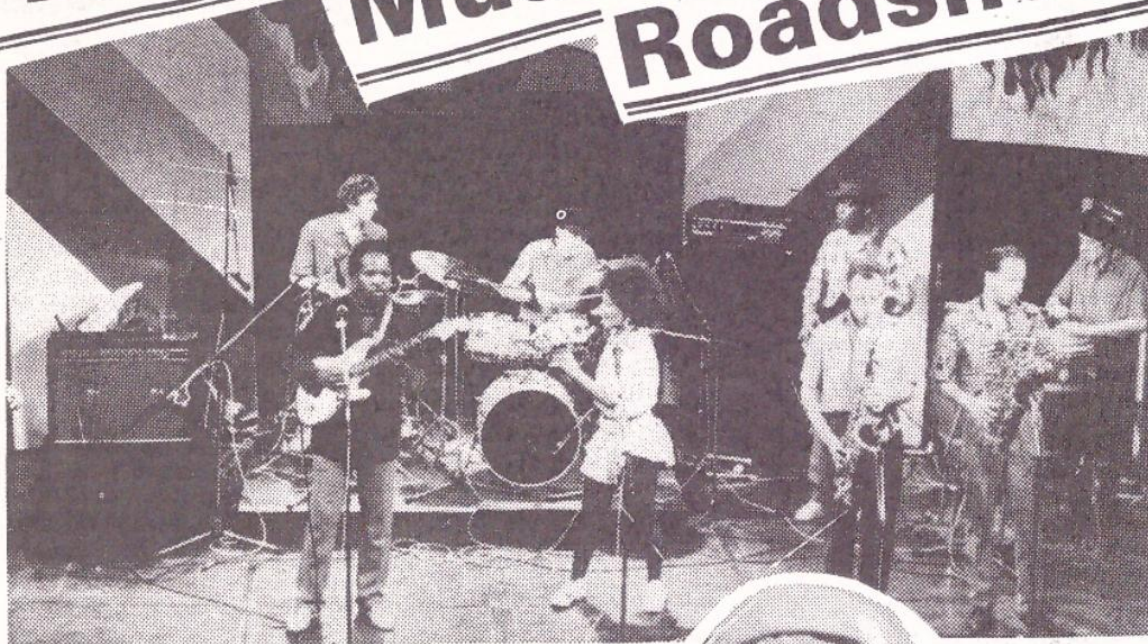
Billy then returned to perform *Let's Make A Baby, Lady (No More Love)*, or what ever is the correct title, *Let Them In, Me And Mrs Jones* and an absolutely appalling and totally inaudible *Because Of You* to close the show. For an encore he performed Harold Melvin And The Blue Notes "If You Don't Know Me By Now, a duet with Bernessa.

Bring The Family Back was the song he chose for his final encore and though the result was pleasing I would have preferred it if he had sung it accompanied by the band rather than having the whole front row of the audience doing so in time to a solitary drum beat. The whole thing however collapsed when he decided to switch from *Bring The Family Back* to *USA For Africa* appeal song *We Are The World*. But by then I don't think the audience cared two hoots. They'd enjoy themselves.



CARIBBEAN TIMES 24/1/86

Black Music Roadshow



Somo Somo

The latest in a series of concerts co-ordinated by Wilf Walker of Black Media Presents for the GLC under the banner of the Black Music Roadshow, was staged at the Albany Empire in Deptford, south east London last Sunday.

The evening's compere was Heather Prendergast of the GLC and the bands featured were two of the finest from the African Continent, *Somo Somo* from Ghana and Nigerian percussionist supreme *Gaspar Lawal*.

The two group succeeded in putting on possibly the best performance so far witnessed on the Black Music Roadshow as the compact venue came alive to the sounds of African music with a strong tinge of American and European influence.



Gaspar Lawal

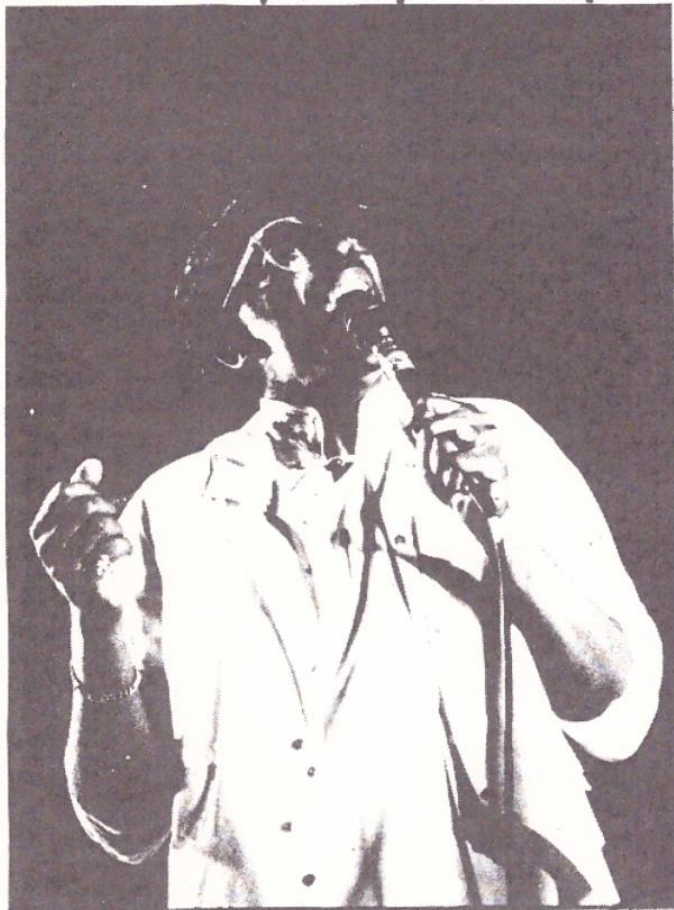
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PARMINDERVIR OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE



MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CELEBRATION

Town And Country Club, London

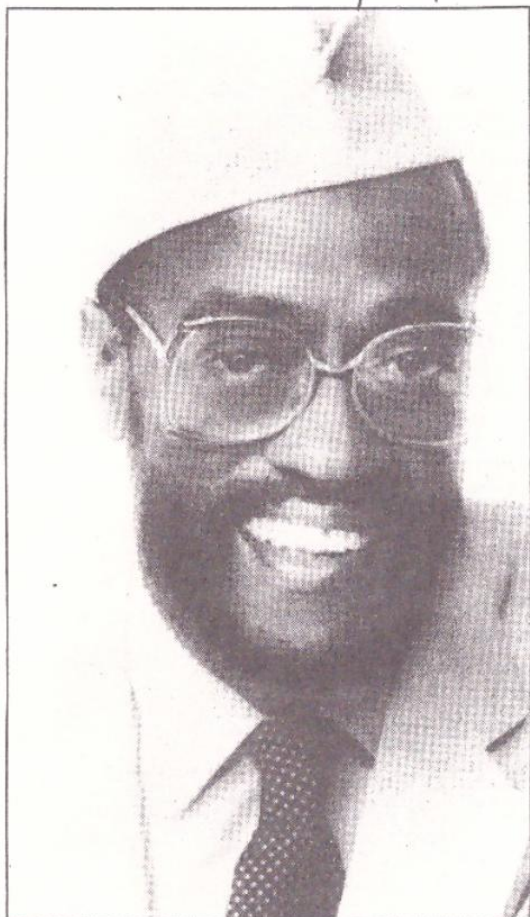
AS an acknowledgment of Martin Luther King's birthday, tonight's celebration really wasn't much to shout about - The Mint Juleps (six unaccompanied, finely-tuned female voices) were forced to confront a mere slither of the audience they should rightfully be commanding by opening the proceedings. Skipping joyously through a brief set of cheering doo-wop, roots rockin', soul, and gospel numbers with admirable accomplishment, they climaxed with a dynamic rendition of Lulu And The Luvvers' "Shout".

A shame MLK's birthday never falls on a sunny day. If it did, I'm sure I'd be more enamoured of percussionist Gasper Lawal's Africa Oro Band. It's carnival stuff, his elaborate high-life tribal rhythms feature a pair of exotically-clad dancers, but in this dark hall, it all seemed too long and too tedious.

Ranting poetry. Now there was a phenomenon. Where on earth did that amusing assortment of spotty, crude, and ugly verbal crusaders go? Benjamin Zephaniah was the first, and probably the last poet I ever danced to. The rhythmic ranter sounded off in customary fashion this evening, but his familiar protestations, of which "Mandela Must Be Free" remains the most relevant, are in desperate need of revitalisation.

It's been a long time since Junior Giscombe ventured on to a stage. Poor boy. If ever anyone suffered from the winds of commercial change, it was Junior. However, still plodding the mainstream funk trail, he and his seven-piece band come and go again tonight with the minimum significance. Quite disappointing really, since his larynx is sweet as ever. Same old story - a voice can never retrieve sincerely *dire* songs from mediocrity. WILL SMITH

CITY LIMITS JAN/16/86



Soft and furry as certain lewd dreams, BILLY PAUL's voice should stir the memory—if not the loins—of all those who accurately remember the early '70s as a weird suburban dream. The merest glimpse of that putrid green Philly International Records label still sends me into paroxysms of nostalgia for church halls, throwing up and snogging. There's been a barren life who have not felt their trousers snag and their breath tighten to the Hoarse Whisper Of The Apocalypse; 'Me And Mrs Jones', 'Thanks For Saving My Life', 'Let's Make A Baby', 'Your Song'. Actually, nobody has ever hit a note with such fanatical disregard for conventional western tuning as Billy, so the Live Situation could well rapidly dissolve into a thoroughly Avant-Garde situation, with musical boundaries shattered—not to mention the pearly dental work of south London's soul fraternity. The comeback album 'Lately' (RCA) was a severe disappointment, but we keepers of the faith will be there to shout the man on to his inevitable triumph on Wednesday. Heavy-ish support comes courtesy of a PA from nouveau gospel/funk apparatchik Joanna Gardner. Be there. (Nick Coleman)



LIVE

Not so silly Billy

BILLY PAUL/JOANNA GARDNER: London, Hammersmith Odeon

WHAT AN odd evening. Was it an oldies show? Was it a comeback show? Was it even a good show? Well, in a strange sort of way, the answer is 'er... yes' to all three questions.

To begin with the running order was significantly altered. On

the reverse of my ticket it had 7.30pm as the hour of commencement. As it never actually works out that way, I arrived at eight o'clock, only to find a newly chalked up schedule of 'Support, 8.00pm; Joanna Gardner's PA, 9.00pm; Billy Paul, 9.20pm.' OK, OK, not the end of the world when you're buying drinks on expenses, but a little irritating nonetheless.

Blaze, unexpectedly added as openers, turned out to be a fairly entertaining act fronted by two girls and one young guy who seemed to have put some effort into their choreography. (Not many support groups do). A couple of them could sing too. Then things took a turn towards the embarrassing.

Responsible for the recorded music between acts was somebody from the Brent Black Music Co-Op — no doubt a worthy organisation — who just couldn't MC. He had nothing amusing to say, yet never ceased talking over the records that were playing. He hadn't a clue how to introduce anybody and, worse still, he possessed the timing and subtlety, of an intoxicated Leon Brittan. Who in their right mind would say of Joanna Gardner, 'She's large...' and not be aware of the gaff he was making? Yes, I'm afraid it happened. Why would anybody hang around on stage after re-introducing Billy Paul and try to strike up conversation? Oh what a clumsy chap.

As it was, Ms Gardner was doing her level best not to seem like a fish out of water, waddling about on stage to the muffled rhythm of a backing tape that sounded like it was being relayed direct from Philadelphia. On the other hand, you couldn't fault Joanna for her voice, which delivered 'It's Friday Night', 'Pick Up The Pieces', 'Spooky' and



'We Can Make It' quite beautifully. You could see immediately that Ms Gardner must be a producer's dream in the studio, so effortlessly is she able to produce vocals of recording quality.

Startime brought on Mr Paul to an enthusiastic reception from the half-filled house. And straight into the Philly oldies we ploughed, 'Let's Make A Baby', 'Only The Strong Survive' and numerous other classics, culminating in 'Me And Mrs Jones', keeping his listeners well satisfied. I couldn't quite see why Richie's 'Hello' got the treatment (though it was handled inventively), and Billy's loosely fitting gold trousers

did keep slipping down to reveal his underpants, but the man did put some effort into it. (Only 'Lately' figured from the new album though, perhaps indicating the artist's real regard for said collection).

At the end of the show, questions still remained to be answered. If Billy Paul can still sing — and there's not many hearing him tonight who would insist otherwise — is he ever to get a convincing push as an Eighties artist? Surely a repeat of the Total Experience formula cannot be good for either party. But has Gamble now got enough ammunition left to restore the pride?

Chris Wells

Party people

MINT JULEPS, GASPAR LAVAL, BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH, JUNIOR, ANGELICAL VOICE CHOIR — MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CELEBRATION: Town & Country Club, Kentish Town

WHILE THE rest of London's population sat at home watching Dynasty or some other mind-numbing soap, the faithful few were celebrating Martin Luther King's birthday. When I realised how thin on the ground the black folks were, Leroi Jones' immortal lines ran through my head: 'The revolution will not be televised'. Or, as Last Poet Jalal so eloquently put it — 'black folks will be caught with chicken hangin' from their mouths when the revolution comes'.

Having got that gripe out of the way, let's get down to the business at hand.

First on stage were the Mint Juleps who managed to warm the scanty audience with their finger-poppin' acappella, giving us rousing renditions of 'Shout', 'Think' and 'No' amongst others.

To ears steeped in funk, acappella in large doses can be a bit tedious, but I found myself whooping and cheering along with the rest of them after a particularly spine-tingling version of 'Jesus Take My Hand'. The Juleps were on form that night, make no mistake.

After a short interval with sounds supplied by DBC, Gaspar Laval and his African Oro Band took to the stage playing selections from his two brilliant LPs — 'Ajomose' and 'Abiosunni'. Needless to say, Gaspar's 'Afriki' sound soon had the floor filled. Gaspar's special guest that night was Ghanaian sax player George Lee.

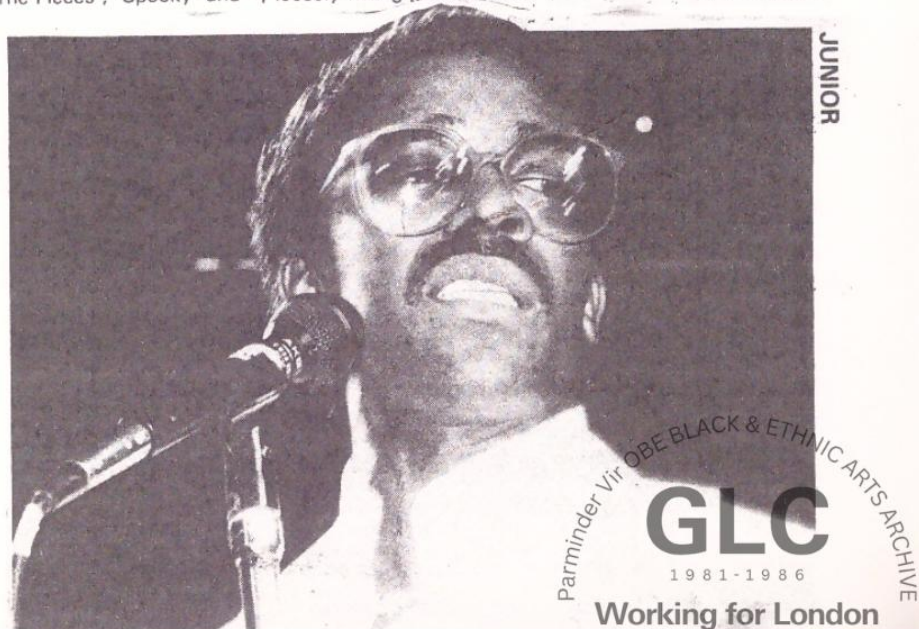
If the intervals between acts had been a bit shorter then I'm sure Benjamin Zephaniah would have been on for longer. But the wave of general fatigue sweeping through the audience curtailed his lively performance somewhat. Oh, by the way, Linton Kwesi Johnson didn't show. He sent his apologies instead.

Much to my surprise Junior turned out to be the highspot of the whole evening — energising the by now weary punters with his distinctive Brit-funk fused with rock 'n' roll. The show was slick and effortless. Songs like 'Too Late', 'Oh Louise', 'Do You Really Want My Love' and of course, 'Mama Used To Say' were done to perfection. The only low spot was a rather boring ballad entitled 'Together' (from his new album) dedicated to Phil Lynott.

Considering they were a last minute replacement for the Inspirational Gospel Choir, the youthful Angelical Voice Choir fought valiantly with a dodgy PA system and soon had the whole place rocking, with Shirley Fenty turning in an admirable performance. I have a feeling that the Inspirational Gospel Choir et al will soon have to look to their laurels.

Unfortunately, I had to leave before the end in order to catch the last tube home — no doubt there was an encore. In spite of the poor turn-out, it was a memorable evening.

Evie Arup



JUNIOR

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HAMMERSMITH ODEON

Clive Davis

Billy Paul

IT'S difficult to strut across the stage like a sex symbol when your well into middle-age and you're shiny gold trousers are threatening to fall down. Billy Paul struggled manfully for 20 minutes or so before giving up the fight and changing to a different outfit. It says something for his appeal that, at the end of a thoroughly disorganised evening, the audience was still prepared to respond to the ritual call to get up and dance.

This was the singer's first visit to London in four years, a period in which his career languished while he continued his search for a song to match his 1972 hit *Me And Mrs Jones*, one of the earliest Philly Sound successes.

His current album, lately, a relaxed piece of late night listening, doesn't reach those heights, but demonstrates his skill at bending ordinary songs into new shapes, as befits a man whose jazz apprenticeship included singing with Charlie Parker. Paul's approach has always had less in common with orthodox soul performers than with a jazz improviser like Betty Carter. He self-consciously manipulates his voice like an alto sax and gets by on nuance and inflection rather

than sheer emotion.

Backed by an efficient five-piece band, Paul concentrated on past hits interspersed with cover versions and new material. Lionel Richie's *Hullo* was given the outrageously schmaltzy treatment it deserves; with an up-tempo *Your Song* Paul managed to do the impossible, making it sound fresh and original. His version of *Me And Mrs Jones* was, if anything, more passionate than the studio version.

Sadly, as soon as he struck up a rapport with the audience, Paul immediately shattered it by launching into a bizarre mid-song commercial for the tour souvenirs on sale in the foyer. The concert never really recovered — it's hard to be moved by a salesman singing love songs.

Things picked up a little during the re-working of *If You Don't Know Me By Now* and a mid-tempo funk tune, *I Search No More*. Both would have been more impressive though with a horn section to give them some bite.

After barely an hour on stage, Paul moved on to a chaotic encore, apparently without informing half of the band, who had to be retrieved from the wings by a frantic MC. As the band floundered and the stage filled with friends and hangers-on, Paul switched abruptly to a version of *We Are The World*, then left the stage for a few moments, only to return waving a souvenir jacket as a last minute reminder. There wasn't a moist eye in the house.

THE GUARDIAN

TOWN & COUNTRY

Robin Denselow

Junior Giscombe

JUNIOR Giscombe has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most unfairly ignored singers in Britain. Nearly four years ago he recorded his one big hit, *Mama Used To Say*, and was hailed as a youthful soul sensation, and the performer who would establish Streatham as an unlikely centre for great black music. As expected, his work has been well received in the United States. He can even be heard in Beverly Hills Cop — but back home his career has apparently ground to a halt, with even songs like the excellent *Oh Louise* receiving far to little air-play.

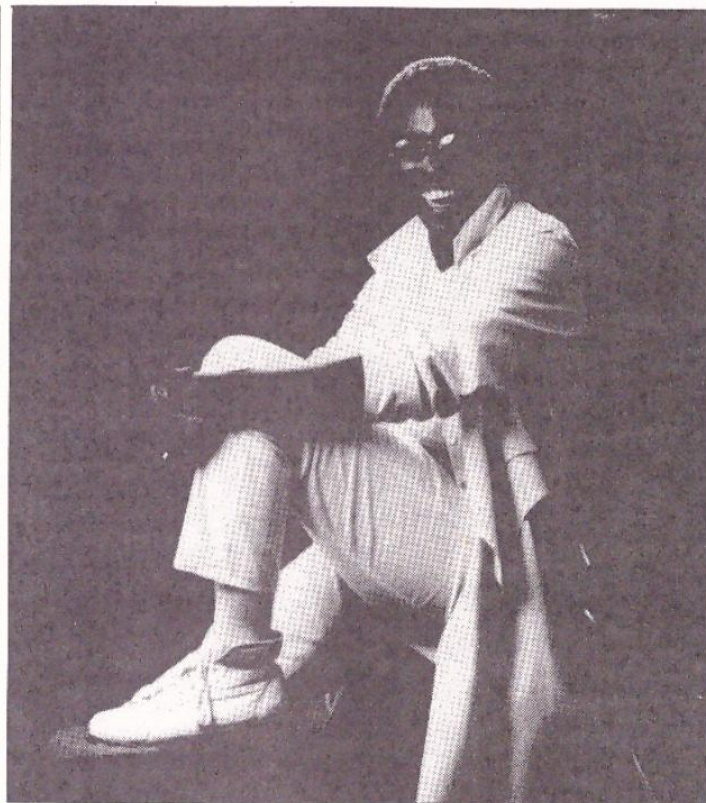
Now he is at least back on the road, if not back in the charts. At the end of next week he joins Paul Weller and Billy Bragg in the Red Wedge campaign to politically activate pop audiences

and win support for the Labour Party. And, as a warm-up for that, he headlined another politically-inspired event, a celebration for Martin Luther King's birthday.

For one who has been away so long, he tackled the set with surprising energy. A diminutive figure, looking like a juvenile professor in his glasses and long white coat, he crashed into the opening *Come Over To My Place* as if he was a rock singer, not a soul artist. His guitar and synthesizer band bashed out a rock riff, but from this Junior eased through into a funk section, throwing in his easy falsetto, and then into a rap-influenced chant with his two back-up singers.

Then he moved off to dance songs and a delicate new ballad, *Together*, as further proof that his style is anything but limited. On this showing, he is surely the best soul exponent we have.

The King Day celebrations also included a gospel choir (not the one advertised), poems from Benjamin Zephaniah, and a strong instrumental set from West African drummer Gaspar Lawal, whose expanded band mixed brass and synthesizers with African percussion.



I clearly recall south London's Junior Giscombe being awed by the Stateside success of his debut 45, *'Mama Used To Say'*, after no more than modest UK sales. He ended up on *Soul Train*, the first English artist to appear on the famed US TV show since Bowie had his 'soul' period. Four years on and the occasional Linx background singer's never quite capitalised on that extraordinary start to this solo career, mostly because he emerged at a time when live gigs for black pop solo singers were rare due to record company parsimony. Ghostly mimed PAs were the fashion and besides being cheap to do managed to comprehensively debunk a singer or band's talent. Still, Junior's continued to release well-structured pop sides which wear their influences on a lapel badge but are no less likeable for that. He headlines (live!) a Martin Luther King Day celebration this Wednesday at the Town & Country Club on a varied bill corraling gospel, afro, alt-cab, poetry and, of course, Junior's bright mix of lightly skipping pop and funk. (Geoff Brown)

TIME OUT

JAN/16-22/86

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MUSIC

17/1/86

Feb/6/1986



There's no African musician—except maybe Fela—as controversial as **MANU DIBANGO**. I'm of the opinion that the level of sophistication he's taken African music to is as listenable as it is technically intricate. The contrasting view is that Bernie Worrell's DMX and Bill Laswell's digital delay mixing has swerved Dibango's makossa—the beat of his native Cameroons—too far under the relentless shadow of The Electro Factory. But it's too easy to jump to conclusions. Right from the early days—when classical piano and wacky Parisian avant garde jazz were important twin influences—it's been hard to predict what Dibango will do next. His '73 hit 'Soul Makossa' had him playing the tenor sax in an R&B mould, in fact rather like Junior Walker; his best selling LP, the '74 'Super Kumba', was lush African big band swing; whilst last year many a seasoned funkster expressed shock when they discovered they'd just been gyrating to 'Abele Dance'. 1986 is a new year. Maybe Dibango's getting bored of the Laswell courtship. Certainly the LP 'Electric Africa' (Celluloid) didn't have the thump of 'Abele Dance'. So, as there is no telling what he and his six piece will do, it's best to give in to the unexpected and make every effort to go along to the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Wednesday and find out. (Charles de Ledesma)

New Musical Express 1st February, 1986

HITCH ME, I'M FALLING

BILLY PAUL

London Hammersmith
Odeon

"Hello."

So here he is, the cashmere croon; small and athletic, every inch a funky chicken (*please* God, not a turkey) and only a five-piece band who somehow look slightly old-fashioned.

I can't wait. Billy Paul's singular husk of a voice has delighted me in diverse ways ever since 'Me And Mrs Jones' tapped the nation's deep-seated weakness for the blushing clandestine all those (14?) years ago.

"How are you...?"

Billy plugged his new album, his record company, his wife, his backing singer and "protege" Vanessa King, Gamble & Huff, the British Isles, the merchandise

in the foyer, Elton John, God, Glenda Jackson and Georgina Hale. Honest. Between adverts he delivered a motley set that culminated in an acappella, impromptu mingling of 'Bring The Family Back' and 'We Are The World'.

"Is it me you're looking for?"

On the fast tunes the band had exhibited a rather dismal tendency to sink earthwards in emulation of Billy's Bacofail trousers (these exotic vestments required continual hitching once the terrible realisation had dawned that the white boxer shorts they concealed were determined to grab several inches of the limelight), and though the players worked hard, they unquestionably missed the fizz and extra power that a razor-sharp horn-section always brings.

My head was in my hands after

two numbers—and then a masterstroke:

"I've been alone with you inside my mind..."

Gulp. Billy Paul sang Lionel Richie's 'Hello', turned it inside out, and made every single hair on my body stand out like wire. I don't care if you don't believe me. This was simply a perfect demonstration of how great singing can transcend triteness, semiology and trouser-difficulties. I very nearly cried and felt all the more pissed off that the rest of the set—except, perhaps a rousing 'If You Don't Know Me By Now'—was altogether chaotic.

I nursed 'Hello' all the way home like a precious egg, and it sits, even now, on a shelf reminding me of why I love soul music.

Nick Coleman

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ARMED AND DANGEROUS: THE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE



Awowowo! A Lawal dancer at hi-life

BILLY PAUL Fairfield Halls, Croydon

MELOD MAKER
1/FEB/86

WITH the renewed interest in early Seventies sophisto-soul on the dancefloors of some of London's more trendy clubs, it looks like Billy Paul has chosen the right time to make a come-back.

Opening the show with an epic version of Jerry Butler's "Only The Strong Survive", Paul quickly reminded the audience of the quality elements that went to make up the Philly soul standard of excellence – elegant lines of eloquent articulation in the verses, sweeping mood-elevator choruses that combine power and delicacy and a perma-polished surface with a hard rhythm below.

Paul proved that he's still in full possession of that bizarre soul tuning that made his records that bit special. He still has that knack of being agitated with perfect flow, of summoning up mighty emotions without disrupting the song's motion and coming up with a near-perfect blend of artifice and passion. He can combine Nat King Cole smoothness with jazz-inflected dissonance and soul-man eroticism and, in the process, make standards sound something special.

His versions of his own hits like "Let's Make A Baby" and "Bring The Family Back" demonstrated a cool jazz alchemy that turned potentially slushy sentiment into a sensuous workout, while the one we'd all been waiting for, "Me And Mrs Jones", showed Paul at his most schizophrenic – one minute in a deep croon, the next trilling and turning.

The only reservations I had about the night was Paul's recent material. "Sexual Therapy" is so close to Marvin Gaye's "Sexual Healing", it's indecent.

FRANK OWEN

DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CELEBRATION London Town & Country Club

YOUTHFUL, FRESH and with that vital ring of confidence, the **Mint Juleps'** brief set proved they're the best of the accapella outfits around. Presenting 'Think', 'Nerve' and the fine roots-rocker 'I'm So Sorry', followed by a vigorous 'Shout', they showed the enormous progress they've made as live performers over the last year. Not a whiff of the tedious 'Da Doo Ron Ron', but I wish they'd bring back 'One Black Stud'.

Next up, **Gaspar Lawal's** talking drummers – supported by Teejay's intricate guitarwork and George Lee's sax blasts – fair whipped the buttocks into motion; particularly on 'Kokoroko' from 'Abiosunni' (featuring cock crowing from Gaspar). The male/female rivalry, enacted by two tribal dancers to the fiery percussion of The African Oro Band's 'Awowowo', capped another quality hi-light from the drum major.

It's hard to be enthusiastic about **Benjamin Zephaniah**. His staple diet – South Africa, police brutality, Deptford fire – has been dealt with more effectively elsewhere (not least by Linton Kwesi, who failed to appear tonight). His dub-ranting rhythms are repetitive; his rhymes often embarrassingly obvious. Having said that, in tonight's small dose he was simply effective. "You don't riot if you've got a good job and a home to come home to at night." You've got me there.

And what of **Junior**? Well he's been perfecting that Groucho Marx look and he seems a good guy, neat soccer player, smashing frock coat etc. But 'Come On Over To My Place', performed twice here, is a heavy Trogg-like terrace dirge; while 'Mama Used To Say' rocked out burying those beloved keyboard breaks. And the trouble with an event such as this is that everyone feels obliged to say their bit about MLK. Junior's tribute topped the lot, performing 'Too Young' – a song about alcoholism – for Dr King. Well relevant. Well done too, as was 'Together', dedicated to that other latter-day saint Phil Lynott. But, sad to relate, Mr Giscombe's band really let him down. Full marks for voice and stage presence, but nowt for the bozos on bass guitar.

Finally, a question of relevance. Latecomer to the King ball was the massive **Angelic Voice Choir** with cherubic smug smiles, amazing vocals, and seraphim sweatshirts. "We're here to tell you that Jesus is the baddest man in town" thundered their archangel, and it must be said they were bloody impressive, especially on 'Lift Me Higher' and 'I Won't Give Up'. In fact they were so convincing that I had to do a runner in case they signed me up. Amen.

NME 1/FEB/86

Len Brown

THE TIMES JANUARY 11-17 1986

JAZZ

THE return of the South African pianist **Abdullah Ibrahim** (Dollar Brand) next week should provide one of the highlights of the year. For the first time, Ibrahim is bringing his seven-piece band **Ekaya**, which includes saxophonists **Carlos Ward**, **Charles Davis**, and **Ricky Ford**.

There are four British dates: **Sheffield (Leadmill)** next Tuesday, **Birmingham (Triangle Arts Centre)** on Wednesday, **Edinburgh (Usher Hall)** Thursday, and **London (Dominion Theatre)** Friday. As a result of the Birmingham concert, a donation will be made to Artists Against Apartheid.

Pete Martin

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BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY 1986

In a league of his own

THE Queen Elizabeth Hall is the last place anyone would choose in which to enjoy modern African music, not because of the acoustics but on account of the formality. It feels all wrong, somehow, to be sitting in a numbered seat, and it makes the musicians feel awkward too. But, if anyone can overcome this handicap it is Manu Dibango, who made one of his rare British appearances there on Wednesday night. I last heard this superb Camerounian saxophonist and his band a couple of years ago, in the more congenial surroundings of Hammersmith Palais, but this time they surpassed even that memorable show.

I can't claim to have heard every major African band now performing, but I have heard enough to know that Manu Dibango is in a league of his own. This is judging, of course, with European, jazz-trained ears, but that's what most of his potential British public have got, after all. The thing that makes his music so special is its sophistication. Combined with the frank indulgence in sensuous dance rhythms which is the mark of all African popular music, Dibango's musical inventiveness is irresistibly thrilling.

With a six-piece band and two undulating singers, he produces a flowing and endlessly changing performance; it's amazing the variety of textures that such a small group can create. As he prowls around the stage—half walking, half dancing in a dignified kind of way—he directs the course of each piece, bringing in new riffs, indicating breaks and tempo changes.

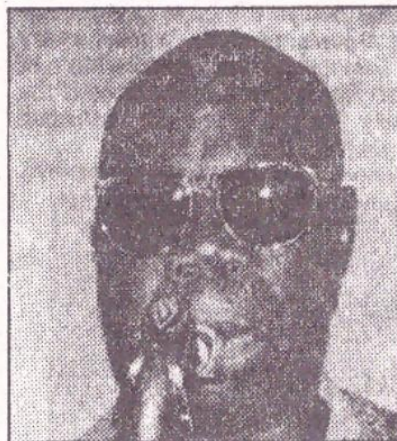
It all looks thoroughly casual, but it isn't. Manu Dibango has as much grip on his band as Count Basie had on his, and the comparison doesn't end there. They may not be wearing uniforms and sitting behind music stands, but the structure of what they play is startlingly similar to that of big band swing. The ensemble has a series of set patterns,

JAZZ

DAVE GELLY

which can be combined in various ways; the soloist improvises above and between them. In this case Dibango is the only soloist (except for that other swing speciality, the drum feature), and his improvisations are the focal point of the whole thing.

It's obvious after the first few notes that this is not your average



Dibango : Thrilling inventiveness.

dance band saxophonist—African or anything else. As jazz musicians say, this is someone who has paid his dues. You don't get a technique or a sound like that by standing in front of a band and striking poses.

In fact, Manu Dibango, now aged 52, is a veteran of the European jazz scene, in Paris and Brussels, and even worked in New York for a couple of years. He was musical director of Abidjan television and had an international hit single with 'Soul Makossa,' which explains how he has managed to produce this richly satisfying amalgam of American jazz and African dance music. It does what jazz music is supposed to do—charms you with its skill and generally raises the spirits.

Fri / 7th / Feb / 86

The Black Music Roadshow hits Dougie's

The last but one in a series of concerts, organised by Wilf Walker for the GLC Race Equality Unit, was staged at Dougie's Night Club in east London last Friday. Some 300 people were in attendance, a slightly disappointing figure as Dougie's is capable of accommodating in excess of 500. I also had preconceived ideas that the line up of acts would have easily guaranteed a full house.

The show's line bill was carefully conceived so as to appeal to those people whose musical preference strongly favoured soca. Due to other commitments, by the time I arrived at the venue, I had already missed the performance of one of London's hardest working street orchestras, **Ebony Steelband** and **Wounded Soldier**, which is led by **Leslie Palmer**, who is largely responsible for making Brent Black Music Co-op one of the most impressive organisations of its kind in the country.

As for **Bachaks**, the youth group who has had tremendous success in the Notting Hill Carnival competitions, I saw only the last five minutes of their show. I was however thankful that, that was all I had to endure as the atrocious quality of mix they recieved from the mixing engineer did them no favours at all. For one reason or another the quality of their playing was also very uncohesive.

After a short break of recorded music played by DJ **Smokey Joe**, it was back to the live action. **Len Homer's Carib Odyssey**, augmented by a five piece brass section, threatened to send everyone to the bar area with their loose, uncoordinated adaptation of vibrant Trinidadian soca hits.

Some 15 minutes after they had been on, the

Samantha Fox, possessor of a rich, powerful and very adaptable voice.

superbly proportioned figure of **Ms Samantha Fox** was introduced. Though not as top heavy as Miss "Page Three" Fox, she was no less visually dynamic and when she opened her mouth to sing, she was dynamite. Samantha is the owner of a voice that is rich, powerful and very adaptable. Her heavy rock rendition of **Proud Mary** and **Millie**



Bachaks suffered from an appalling mix

De Man Solo - inaudible

Luckoie - ending the show on a high

Jackson's Back In Love By Monday. Samantha is definitely a lady to watch out for in '86, and remember where you read so!

De Man Solo followed here, but proved a bit of a disappointment as he was virtually inaudible.

Finishing off the show was the 1985 Notting Hill Carnival's Calypso Monarch, **The Mighty Luckie**. His first two songs, one relating to Caribbean unity and the other the abolition of the GLC, failed to generate much positive reaction.

His interpretation of **Charlie's Roots Kalabash** however had everyone on the floor rocking along to its jovial Caribbean beat. It also succeeded in ending the show on a definite high.



Burning Spear

Burning Spear live at the Town & Country Club

Review and picture by Dan Harriott

If my memory serves me right, it was some two years ago that Burning Spear last performed in London. The venue then was the inhospitably cold Brixton Academy. Though I have yet to see the Spear produce a performance that could be described as unmoving, penetrative and his stage presence and distinctively piercing vocals he was a trifle to static for my likings on that occasion.

This time around the Spear was no less magnetic. He seemed to project an aura of magisterial presence that engulfed the capacity filled venue. While at the Academy he gave the impression that he was an intensely bitter individual with a potent, uncompromising and unyielding message of resistance, defiance and black cultural and historical awareness, to spread the message at the Town and Country was no different though the anger seemed to have been less apparent.

The reggae industry is currently starved of artists who are truly world class and are in possession of the ability to establish themselves at heights that the

late great Bob Marley achieved for the music. However, after watching Spear's performance I was moved to the point where I believe he is among a tiny and very select group of cats who now are showing signs of being able to re-inject high levels of acclaim and respectability into the music.

Spear was backed by a nine piece band that included a three piece, all female, horn section, that was one of the brightest, sharpest most musically discerning that I have heard on a reggae stage for an awfully long time. The blonde haired trumpet player was particularly outstanding.

While paying credit to the people to whom it is due,

the remaining members of the band must not be excluded. They were solid and faultless. The drummer, using an increasingly popular electric kit, must also be singled out for individual honours.

One of the most pleasing things about attending a concert by any of the reggae greats is that you can rest assured that a fair selection of classic tracks will be reactivated. The Spear has recorded so many that it is inevitable that some people's favourites would have had to be omitted from his set. The **Marcus Garvey** album alone contained a dozen of the Spears best loved song.

It was also fitting that it was a track from that set that he chose to open his performance with. His musicians, **The Burning Band** set the atmosphere buzzing, as they warmed up by teasing the packed venue with crisp, sharp snatches of the intro to some of the Spears many gems. Having accomplished the desired mood of eager anticipation throughout the building, the Spear was then introduced.

The band opened with a masterful introduction to *Resting Place*. When the drum rolled the vocals in, great cheers and whistles engulfed the hall, as the

Spear's voice came blasting out of the twin columns of speakers. He was however nowhere to be seen, as the use of a radio mike allowed him to start his performance from way behind stage.

When he eventually emerged the cheering increased by several decibels.

From a powerful start the Spear got even stronger as the show progressed. The technical mixing was superb and Spear's performance was fascinating to the point of almost mesmerizing. He was far more active than I have ever seen him. He danced enthusiastically, during the instrumental breaks. And delighted the audience with one of the finest reggae performances by a reggae artist so far witnessed this year. His selection of songs spanned his entire career, from his days with Studio One to his most recent works. The song that however received the largest, most pronounced indication of approval and recognition was the excellent **Colombus** from his *Hail Him* album.

After doing something like a half hour encore I seriously doubt that anyone could have left the Town and Country Club without feeling that they had attended a magnificent concert by an exceptional group.

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ROBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

CARIBBEAN TIMES
14 / MARCH / 86

Southall's first Black Music Festival

Unity of Afro-Caribbean People with the assistance of the Black Music Roadshow, will be staging the first Southall Black Music Festival on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th March at the Southall Community Centre, Merrick Road, Southall, Middlesex.

Masquerade, Britain's top soca band will be performing on the first night, along with Ebony Steel Band plus a special PA appearance by BBMC's Wounded Soldier.

The following evening, March 30th, Misty In Roots, Europe's most active reggae band, will be live in concert along with top female reggae outfit Abacush Kurt and Leacock. Recorded music will be played by LWR Radio's reggae squad, featuring Fuzzy D, Zack and Daddy Ernie.

The event is a fundraiser and all proceeds will go towards the setting up of a Trust Fund for building a creative and educational centre for the Afro-Caribbean community in Southall.

Tickets for the "Soca Night" are priced at £5 in advance and £6 at the door. For the Reggae they are £4 in advance and £5 at the door. On both nights the show will go on from 8pm-1am. Tickets and information can be obtained from UACP 01-574 4433.



Jonesy and Sam of Masquerade

Competition Time

The organisers of the above Music Festival have kindly offered Groove Sheets six pairs of tickets, three for each night of their two day spectacle, to be given away as competition prizes. To receive a pair of these tickets all you have to do is provide us with the correct answers to the following questions.

- A) Arrow was the last person to have a soca hit in the British charts, what was the name of the song?
- B) Misty In Roots' last album Musi-O-Tunya is the original name for which famous waterfall in Africa?

Send the correct answer, accompanied by your name and address to Groove Sheets, Music Festival Competition, Caribbean Times, 139/149 Fonthill Rd, London N4 3HF.

MARCH 15/86

Paul Blake

boom time

PAUL BLAKE



GET FLAT! Paul Blake And The Bloodfire Posse are returning to these shores for their first full tour of England. The band, who hit big with 'Every Posse Get Flat', 'Posse Are You Ready', 'Rub-A-Dub Soldier' and have their debut album 'Are You Ready' in the shops now on Synergy, are playing the following dates:

London, Goldsmiths College (March 14); London, Hammersmith Palais (16, with Steel Pulse); Manchester, University (19); London, Camden Dingwalls (20); Leicester, Highfields Community Centre (21); Northampton, Roadmenders (22); Brighton Savannah Club (24); Bristol City Centre, The Studio (25); Birmingham, Tower

Ballroom (28); London, Lewisham Concert Hall (29); Leeds, The Phoenix (30); London, Marquee Club (31).

The posse will be there with their unique brand of electro reggae so be ready...

MARCH / 15 / 86

Dread beat

BURNING SPEAR: London, Town And Country Club

MAN DREADER . . .

Last minute arrangement left this show half-full; the word just didn't pass on the grapevine quickly enough, which is a shame as it was just fine.

The band: a drummer capable of taking the sections of dub just that bit further by doubling up and syncopating. A bass player given one of the heaviest mixes ever heard by myself. Two guitarists, one playing a fluid lead, the other supplying a crisp, chippy rhythm and backing vocals. A keyboard player remaining unobtrusive most of the time and then swelling right over the top to make a flood of chords that wash over you like a sea. A percussionist firmly anchoring things in the roots and then letting some tropical effects come through with chimes rattles and other percussive devices.

A three-woman horn section consisting of tenor sax, trumpet (lyrical) and a trombonist that played us right back to the music's first tentative, wild steps back in the Fifties. At the front, some congas for the lead guitarist to double on, or for Winston Rodney, from St Anns, from roots, The Burning Spear, the living reggae to play on.

The Burning Spear sang from his past and his present as it seems only he could do. Certainly, there are other singers with a past, but precious few who could release 'Door Pepper' as a stunning first release, and then play it some 17 years later (count them; it's true) as an encore (albeit in a different style) and still have it as a totally vital, timeless, energised song. The man also played 'Resistance', and it took on new life, a new civilization in the flesh, it's rock-beat drumming counterbalanced by the reggae bass and skank guitar. The mix is furious, tight and muscular.

They swing through 'Rocking Time', and altered 'What A Happy Day'. 'Slavery Days' gets a reading that receives a roar of recognition, and 'Old Marcus Garvey' will have had the crowd taking the 'Marcus Garvey' album out of the wraps when they get home. I was surprised at the lack of familiarity amongst the audience for much of the set, but perhaps it was simply that it was so small a crowd that those who made a noise felt conspicuous.

There was enough noise made at the end though. He was in fine voice, and I, for one, left like I had seen a man who is unique. A tougher roots, a harder show, better yet.

Ian McCann



BURNING SPEAR pic: Eugene Maynard

Melody Maker
15 / MARCH / 86

BURNING SPEAR
Town And Country
Club, London

A REAL Rastas night out, this one. The air hung heavy with 'erb and the sense of expectancy was acute. It seems Mr Spear (aka Winston Rodney) is something of a living legend and the embodiment of Jamaican 'roots' music. Personally, I prefer my reggae poppy and plastic and all this chat about spiritual songs and metaphysical rhythms is just another brand of mystificatory claptrap. Haile unlikely, as John Lydon once punned.

As expected, tonight's performance was punctuated with the usual calling upon of Jah this and Rastafari that. But cutting through the dimly enunciated rhetoric there was still the extraordinary voice that is as much his trade mark as the rootsy, blood and thunder routine. The voice is not as magnificent as some critics make out. Personally, I prefer the sob-tones of that other spiritual prophet, I Jahman.

The nine-piece band provided a measured, stately skank with the horns particularly attractive. But it did seem a little lethargic for these fast-chat days and the West Coast acid rock guitar did little to dispel the impression that here was a music whose time had long since past.

FRANK OWEN



NO BURN OUT

Reggae ancestor Burning Spear played London recently, showing no compromise to his roots. In the audience were music lovers I hadn't even seen at a reggae stageshow for ... well, I won't embarrass them by telling you how long exactly, but suffice to say the last time Burning Spear played in London was in early 1984!

This time the Town and Country Club in Kentish Town, full as it's never been full before, roared a welcome to the man, and he responded with a 90 minute performance of customary passion, drawing on an apparently bottomless reservoir of song, chant and rhythm that served as a reminder of how real, meaningful and massive an artist Spear is and always has been.

As for the band, don't even ask about them. You ought to know he wouldn't entrust the task of backing to any but the super-equipped - that would be like surrounding a £2 million striker with inept support players and asking for goals galore! Admittedly the horn section lacked Bobby Ellis and 'Deadly' Headly Bennet from the last visit, but the replacement trio (three white players, two of them female) were equally uplifting.

Even while taking a breather on the fringe of the action (because the closer you got to the stage was the greater the likelihood of your frying alive) there was no escape from the spellbinding intensity of Spear's mystic music. He'd arrived in England straight from a series of sell-out concerts across Europe, and before he opened the English leg of his tour, we conferred in his hotel room on

various topics.

"When I perform, it takes a good while before the people start to see that performance as far away," remarked Mr. Winston Rodney, alias Burning Spear. "Even for three to four weeks after, they still see it as a near thing."

Until his 'Resistance' album came out on import from America last year on the Heartbeat label, little had been heard from Spear since he parted company with EMI. But he has been active, touring in America. How does he check the prolonged domination of reggae by the new dancehall sound?

"What's really happened is that a younger set of people, younger than I, are into a more commercial sound - something that could be in for two or three months. But that sound that you're likely to hear for years and years, most of the younger people aren't really into the sound. Sometimes the changes come from the thoughts and the minds of the people - even though they may just like it for a time because it's not teaching them reality. The dancehall thing don't get no international credit."

"I am working for the people, which means working internationally, universally - not just working for the few people. Out of my

music, any person, any people or any nation can find their spot. That's why you find so many different people say 'SPEAR' - because something is there in the music that they can feed off."

So how is his sound received in his own back-yard?

"Well, the people in Jamaica know that I am dealing with the right sound, the right music and the right time, but most time my music doesn't sell the way it should in Jamaica - most of my sales are in the States and Europe. Then again, in Jamaica people don't buy reggae - I would say they hip more to foreign music. So it's after leaving Jamaica and going to foreign countries that I get recognition."

The next album from Spear will be called 'People Of The World', containing sentiments such as 'This World Relationship With Africa Should Be Reconsidered'. This led to his expressing strong views on South Africa, where his music can't sell under the name Burning Spear ("too revolutionary", they say).

"The music business has become a weapon against our people now, even if you take, for instance, South Africa. Because a lot of this music money, some of it even ends up in South Africa, buys arms and things like that, which in turn destroys our people. A lot of us still don't know what's going down."

Let's hope that Spear will be on hand for more fruitful years to set the record straight - there's no-one else quite like him! **MK**





Burning Spear - "It's after leaving Jamaica and going to foreign countries that I get recognition."

VOICE

MARCH 22nd 86

Black music show goes on the road



Dynamic action from King Sounds

London gigs a smash hit

by JAH

SCORCHER

with You're Lying — DJs Lorna Gee and Rankin Ann, Sister Audrey, Slim Linton and the Mad Professor

To round-up the four nights of music, King Sounds and the Israelites, Junior English and Pato Banton appeared at the All Nations Club in Hackney.

DJ Pato Banton's delivery and charm melted the hearts of the people in the hall.

Junior English and his backing band, known as Amlack (from Birmingham), were tight and Mr English changed from soul to reggae with the utmost professionalism.

King Sounds and the Israelites closed the show with their usual dynamic performance.

The main objectives of the Road Show are to provide an opportunity for black promoters to manage and market black music; to provide a platform for young black musicians to perform and to train a number of young black people as stage managers, publicity officers, lighting and sound operators and promoters.

THE GLC Race Equality Unit launched the Black Music Road Show, with a series of live gigs around London.

The first was at the Town and Country Club (formerly the Forum) with Linton Kwesi Johnson, Abacush and Awaara.

The performances were of a very high standard, especially from LKJ who had the audience responding to every poem he delivered.

With the Dub band providing the music, his first delivery was Dread Beat And Blood. Then he went through titles like Bass Culture, Raggaie Fi Peach (a song dedicated to Blair Peach) and Di Black Petty Booshwah.

The following night at Acklam Hall, Ladbroke Grove, there was a combination of Afro-Asian music, featuring Hi-life International, Heera (Asian group) and Dade Krama.

Then it was the Apollo Club, Willesden, with the Ariwa Posse, featuring Sandra Cross — at the No 1 spot in the Reggae charts

Sounds

LONDON Kentish Town Town And Country Club (01-267 3334) Linton Kwesi Johnson/Abacush/Awaara

16/11/85

LONDON Kensington Acklam Hall (01-960 4590) Hi Life International/Heera/Dade Krama

LONDON Willesden Apollo club (01-459 4509) Ariwa Posse with Sandra Cross/Lorna Gee/Rankin Ann/Mad Professor/Sister Audrey/Slim Linton

Melody Maker

16/11/85

LONDON Dalston All Nation's Club, 4, Martello Road, E8: King Sounds And The Israelites + Junior English + Pato Banton + deejays, etc

LONDON Ladbroke Grove, Acklam Hall, Bay 63, W11: Hi Life International + Heera + Dade Krama + deejays

LONDON Willesden Apollo Club, 375 High Road, NW10: The Ariwa Posse + deejays

LONDON Kentish Town Forum, NW5: Linton Kwesi Johnson + Abacush + Awaara

Black edges 30/Nov/1985
On the road again

Nov/30/85 NME

THE GLC's Black Music Roadshow continues with the following events.

Rappers Meet Toasters with Krew Sound, Sista Culcha, Dizzy Heights, Cinderella, Live To Break, Cherry Lickshot, Sweet Perfection, Pepi Irie, Freshski, Olive Rankin, Human Beat Box and Horseman at Municipal Hall,

Town Hall Approach Road, Tottenham N15 (December 6).

Bob Andy, Winston Reedy, Blaze, at The Upper Cut Club, 18-20 Strowston Road, London E7 (7).

Miss Mehvish, Bali, Mahmood Jamal, Ahmed Faraz at the Havelock Centre, Havelock Road, Southall, Middlesex (8).

BLACK MUSIC ROADSHOW is a training scheme set up by the GLC's Race Equality Unit in conjunction with Wilf Walker of Black Productions. It's basically a series of London-area concerts promoting black and Asian artists which, at the same time, gives young black Londoners the chance to be trained in all aspects of the music business — press and publicity, stage management, lighting and concert promotion. Among artists who have so far participated in the project include Linton Kwesi Johnson, Abacush, King Sounds, Junior English and Pato Banton. The next series of concerts is: "Rappers Meet Toasters" at Tottenham Municipal Hall with Krew Sound, Dizzy Heights, Sweet Perfection, Sista Culcha, Cinderella, Pepi Irie etc. (6 December); Bob Andy and Winston Reedy at the Upper Cut Club, E.7 (7); Miss Mehvish and Bali, plus poets Mahmood Jamal and Ahmed Faraz at the Havelock Centre (8); and The Cool Notes and LW5 at Brixton The Friar (9).

Working for London

The Friar (9)

ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE