

<http://ripplemusic.blogspot.com/2010/10/ripple-reggae-round-up-featuring.html>

Lee “Scratch” Perry - Revelation

We'll end this first reggae column with a contribution from a true reggae legend. Other than **Bob Marley** himself, **Lee “Scratch” Perry** may just be the next most important figure in reggae music. Some call him a genius, others call him a madman, certifiably insane. Both are probably correct and there's just no denying the importance Perry has had over Jamaican music for the last 40 years. A producer, mixer, songwriter, performer, along with **King Tubby**, Perry created the genre of reggae we now know as dub. Perry produced many of the seminal **Bob Marley** and the Wailers tracks like “Small Axe,” and “Duppy Conqueror,” and was single-handedly responsible for slowing down the hyperkinetic ska beat to create the looping bass-driven beat that has become known as the reggae “riddim.”

With a pedigree like that, any new release from **Lee “Scratch” Perry** is worthy of attention, and *Revelation* is a rock solid Perry release. Featuring huge looping runs of bass in the typical Perry dub style, *Revelation* is just that, a Perry revelation.

The man has it. Simply put. Mad, crazy, insane, whatever you want to call him, no one else in reggae ever so successfully pushed the boundaries of the music away from the pop formula that drowned the genre in the '90's towards something vibrant, unique and, simply wild. “Fire Power,” with it's “having a party” refrain is about as far away from “One Love” as reggae gets but it's still totally recognizable with it's defiant beat and looping bass. Most importantly, it's totally infectious. “Used to Drive a Tractor in Negrille,” is classic Perry; the master delivering his left-field lyrics over a futuristic reggae beat.

As always, in the eccentric world of Perry, no topic is off limits when it comes to lyrics. While most of the songs parlay Perry's devout Rastafarian views, with a strong preponderance of incorporating judeo-christian beliefs and bible mythology, Perry's not adverse to tossing a song like “Freaky Michael” into the mix where he proclaims that he likes his big nose and decries black celebrities who alter themselves. Over the years, Perry's voice has become more weathered and definitely slightly weaker, but that's not a distraction. If anything, it adds that sense of grandfather wisdom to Perry's tales of “Holy Angels” and “Revelation, Revolution and Evolution.” I mean the man is 74 years old, and damn, if he doesn't still sound magnetic.

Eccentric, totally original, bizarre at times, but never less than captivating, Perry is a true treasure. 52 albums into his career and he's still as enticing as ever.

--Racer