

## FAME Review: Sly &amp; Robbie - Sly &amp; Robbie present Stepper Takes the Taxi

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## Sly & Robbie present Stepper Takes the Taxi

[Sly & Robbie](#)

[MVD Audio - MVD5846a](#)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange  
by **Mark S. Tucker**  
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Well, I needn't point out that Sly & Robbie are Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare because the two are well known around the world for their experimentations within the reggae mode...and that can be as much a formula for disaster as for innovation. Here, they're joined by Guillaume 'Stepper' Briard as a saxist, melodica player, keyboardist, and third wheel, along with a raft of sessioneers. Over the last year, I've received a few reggae discs that worked to enhance my appreciation of the possibilities within the style because it's one genre I've never been overly fond of otherwise, due to way too much repetition...even for someone like myself who likes drone musics (and, face it, reggae's fundamentally drone based).

In *Stepper Takes the Taxi*, an 11-spot of strictly instrumental cuts, I find many traits akin to the work of Jah Wobble and Bill Laswell, two cats I'm not entirely pleased with, though Wobble's *Snake Charmer* was a striking mini-LP and Laswell can indeed work with luminaries and turn out some great things, but far more often not. The problem in Wobble's case is frequently the possession of a tin ear for timbre, an aberration which occurs more than a few times here as well. In Laswell's oeuvre, there's a prevalence of what can only be called flatwork despite a sometimes raucous appearance to the contrary. That, without the clatter, also describes songs and sections of tracks in *Stepper*.

On the other hand, if you like cheezoid jazz like Shuggie Otis' and some of the old Kudu label, not to mention quite a number of discs—and that's a genre in and of itself no matter the mode being parodied or, er, tributized—then this is right up your alley, and, in that respect, pretty good. I've heard more examples of mediocrity in this field and in similarish outlays like 'bass and drum' than I care to recount and am not prepared to place *Stepper Takes a Taxi* in that vein...but I wouldn't fight too hard were someone else to do so.

### Track List:

- Fistful Of Horns
- Occupy Downtown
- Frenchman In Kingston
- Taxi To Paris
- Stepping Revolution
- Cool Ruling
- Taxi Tune Up
- Horns Of Kings
- Imminent Danger
- Pimp My Cab
- Matera Lounge

Not sure why, but no songwriting credits are given.

Edited by: David N. Pyles  
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