



## Desmond Dekker

In Memoriam 1941-2006  
(Secret Records)

When Desmond Dekker passed away early in 2006, he left behind a recorded legacy of music that earned him the undisputed title "King of Ska". "In Memoriam" presents the last recordings Dekker ever made, which were laid down in a London studio in 2004. Almost all of the 20 tracks Dekker and his six-piece back band recorded during these sessions are old songs which is something of a double-edged sword for this cd. On the one hand the songs are great, and many are considered classics by reggae and ska aficionados ("007 (Shanty Town)", "Intensified", "Problems" and Dekker's defining moment, "Israelites"). On the other hand, Dekker did these songs more than 30 years ago (and in some cases, over 40 years ago) and those are the definitive versions. His voice still sounds great and youthful here, and the band clearly knows their way around the material, but there's no way to recreate the wonderfully ramshackle sound of of 1960's Jamaican recording studio, leaving the recording sounding too clean and smooth. Do yourselves a favor and seek out one of Desmond Dekker's many Best Of collections to hear these songs in their original glory.

- David Mansdorf