



Riffs: A weekly music column

By Ron Wynn, rwynn@nashvillecitypaper.com
December 01, 2006

Desmond Dekker - *Memoriam 1941-2006* (Secret)

Before Johnny Nash, Jimmy Cliff or Bob Marley helped popularize reggae on the other side of the Atlantic Desmond Dekker's stuttering, at times almost impossible to understand hit "Israelites" turned on hosts of Americans to the charms of Jamaican music. *Memoriam 1941-2006* (Secret) represents the final recording that Dekker made in London two years ago. It serves as both a retrospective work and proof that illness hadn't affected the striking voice, He could still hit high notes and execute the stuttering lines and vocal maneuvers that made such songs as "007 (Shanty Town)," "It Mek," "Rudy Got Soul" and of course "Israelites" so memorable. Appropriately, he also included a fine version of "You Can Get It If You Really Want," one of the songs that made Cliff an international sensation. Other than the omission of "Fu Manchu," this set is a great tribute to Dekker's career and a poignant reminder of his flair and performing mastery.