

DVD Reviews: Israel Vibration

ISRAEL VIBRATION

Live & Jammin'

RAS (6076-88361-9)

Reggae In The Holy Land

RAS (DRG-134)

Israel Vibration have been bringing roots and culture to the world for more than a quarter of a century. For many of those years the band were a trio, but, in 1997, they were reduced to a duo by the departure of Albert "Apple" Craig. This could have been catastrophic, however — uniquely among Jamaican vocal groups — songwriting and lead vocals were shared equally between all three Vibes, and so Cecil "Skelly" Spence and Lascelle "Wiss" Bulgin were able to carry on without him, bringing in female harmonizers to fill out their sound.

Live & Jammin' captures the pair during their 2003 French tour, before enthusiastic crowds who are repaid with a fabulous career-spanning set of songs, although Craig's contributions, of course, are missing. Since their debut album, 1978's *Same Song*, the group have been backed by

the cream of Jamaica's musicians, most regularly in recent years by the Roots Radics. Here they are on stage, finally giving fans the opportunity to see them take on Vibes' classics that predate their arrival, a real treat in itself.

Bouncing from searing cultural pieces, uplifting numbers and into "Feelin' Irie" crowd pleasers, the Vibes put on one Babylon-burning show. The bonuses are for hard-core fans only though — the footage shot in France is particularly tedious. However, the inclusion of the group's "Fighting Soldiers" video is welcome.

Of older vintage comes *Reggae In Holyland*, a "reggaementary" of the Vibes' 1993 tour of Israel — again accompanied by the Radics. This, their first visit to the country, was also a spiritual journey, and the filmmakers capture the trio's awe and outright delight as they wander through the ancient streets of Jaffa, Jerusalem's old city, and gaze upon the Jordan River, experiencing their faith anew. Intercut with concert footage and revealing interviews, this film captures the heart and soul of the Vibes in a mere 45 minutes. Plumping out the package are videos for "Hard Road," "Livity In The Hood," "Feelin' Irie" and "Rudeboy Shufflin'."

— Jo-Anne Greene