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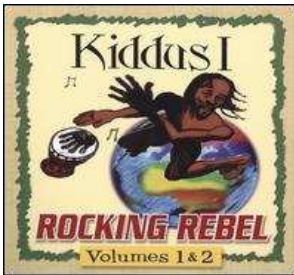
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Rocking Rebel, Vols. 1-2

Kiddus I

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Review

by j. poet

Frank Dowding, better known as Kiddus I, was on the cusp of major stardom when director Ted Bafaloukos tapped him for a feature spot in his 1978 film *Rockers*. Kiddus got his start as one of the singers and drummers in Ras Michael's *Sons of Negus*, an influential roots reggae band. He left the group to begin his solo career just before the filming of *Rockers* commenced. One famous scene in *Rockers* documents the recording of "Graduation in Zion," which became an early hit for Kiddus. The tune was included on the *Rockers* soundtrack album. Kiddus made more singles and had finished an album when he dropped out of sight around 1980. He returned to the studio in 2005 to make *Inna de Yard*, an acoustic album for the French Makasound logo. He's made several albums since then, but he lost the tapes for his debut album in 1981. Luckily, Michael Santoro, a friend of Kiddus, made a copy of the album, and those tapes resurfaced in 2007. They were finally remastered and this long lost artifact from reggae's golden era got its long-delayed release in 2009. The ten singles that make up *Rocking Rebel* were recorded at Tuff Gong, Harry J's, Aquarius, and Sound Dragon in N.Y.C. Players include Robbie Shakespeare, Earl "Chinna" Smith, Tyrone Downie, Earl "Wire" Lindo, and other session heavies, but the scant liner notes don't tell you who played on what track. Highlights of *Vol. 1* include the seminal hit "Graduation in Zion," a moving song of sufferation and redemption; "Harder," which lives up to its title with a tough rhythm track; the R&B-flavored "Rocking Rebel," a dance tune with Temptations-like backing vocals and squeaking and squalling sci-fi keyboards; the slightly disco-fied funk of "Cross Over," with a galloping bassline and a hint of Bob Marley's phrasing in Kiddus' vocal; "Sweet Lady," a love song that lives up to its sugary title; and "Flying at Knots," a dub-heavy track with a dark feel and one of the record's best vocals. Kiddus is a strong singer with clear enunciation and a tenor that trembles with emotion, but the mix, or maybe the limitations of the source material, often submerges the vocals in the backing tracks. *Vol. 2* has the throbbing reggae-ized funk of "Jah Jah Love," a protest song with a bluesy guitar solo; "To Toil," another song of biblical tribulation with a soulful apocalyptic vocal from Kiddus; and the uplifting "Balance," a bubbly disco tune that uses dancing as a metaphor for peace and harmony. Kiddus accents his vocal here with a series of soulful shrieks and shouts. The second disc also includes dub versions of "Harder," "Time," and "Love Child."

Album Browser

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Artist

Kiddus I

Album

Rocking Rebel, Vols. 1-2

Rating

★★★★☆

Release Date

Dec 8, 2009

Label

MVD Audio

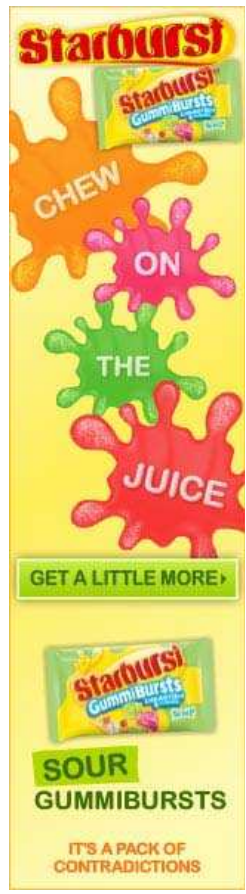
Genre

Reggae

AMG Album ID

R 1660638

Corrections to this Entry?



Tracks

	Title	Composer	Time
1	Graduation in Zion [Original Version]		4:51
2	Time		2:32
3	Harder		4:41
4	Saying a Prayer		4:15
5	Rocking Rebel		3:29
6	Little Ones		6:27
7	Cross Over		4:17
8	Come Give Yourself Over		3:53
9	Sweet Lady		4:24
10	Flying at Knots		9:47
11	To Toil		2:46

12	Jah Jah Love	2:42
13	Love Child	3:42
14	To Survive	4:39
15	There's a Way	9:21
16	Love Child Dub [version]	3:37
17	Harder [Pure Version]	4:41
18	Balance	3:56
19	Harder Dub 2 [version]	3:29
20	Time Dub [version]	3:10
21	Harder Dub 1 [version]	3:37

Releases

Year	Type	Label	Catalog #
2009	CD	MVD Audio	4923

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