

Title Live At Lokerse Feesten
 Artist Skatalites
 Date December 27 - 2008



Label MVD Visual
 Format DVD - Region Free
 Languages English
 Subtitles None
 Length 180 minutes (approx.)
 Producer/Director Gunter Kutsch & Jean Luc Young



Here's a little history of the most influential Ska group coming out of Jamaica. (adapted from The Skatalites Official Website)

In Jamaica in the mid-50's, a fledgling recording industry saw the birth of what became known as Ska. Created by fusing Boogie-Woogie Blues, R+B, Jazz, Mento, Calypso and African rhythms, Ska became the first truly Jamaican music and by the 60's all the vocalists were swarming to the studios to record their songs to this infectious new beat. Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Toots and the Maytals, Jimmy Cliff, Alton Ellis, Ken Boothe are just a few of the names who came to record this new music, which coincided with the whole island's excitement about Jamaica's independence in 1962. The core musicians playing on most of these sessions saw the opportunity to play this music live to the public. Tommy McCook, Rolando Alphonso, Johnny Moore, Lester Sterling, Don Drummond, Lloyd Knibb, Lloyd Brevett, Jerry Haynes, and Jackie Mittoo began working together in 1963 and formed The Ska-talites in May 1964.

The Skatalites record their first LP at Studio One in Kingston, Ska Authentic, and tour the island as the creators of Ska. Their recordings for various producers rule the airwaves, stations JBC and RJR, that is. Foremost among their producers were; Clement 'Sir Coxsone' Dodd, Arthur 'Duke' Reid, Cecil 'Prince Buster' Campbell, Vincent 'King' Edwards, Justin 'Phillip' Yap, Leslie Kong, Lindon Pottinger, Sonya Pottinger and Vincent 'Randy' Chin. The Skatalites led sessions with all the top artists and helped to break young talents such as Delroy Wilson, Desmond Dekker, The Wailers, Lee Perry, etc.

Don Drummond's composition, "Man In The Street", enters the Top 10 in the UK. Trombonist Drummond is not only the Skatalites busiest composer, but the most prolific in all of Ska, with at least 200 tunes to his name by 1965. In August, 1965 The Skatalites play their last show. The break-up results in the formation of two supergroups, Rolando Alphonso and the Soul Vendors and Tommy McCook and the Supersonics.

In June 1983 The Skatalites reform for a reunion performance at the Sunsplash festival in Montego Bay in July. Their show was a smashing success and the band played more concerts in Jamaica while weighing offers to tour abroad. A year later The Skatalites play to thousands at Selhurst Park during the London Sunsplash. The Skatalites play 7 tunes and also back Prince Buster on three

before closing with a reprise of their theme song, "Freedom Sounds".

In 1989 The Skatalites are support act for Bunny Wailer's Liberation Tour featuring 7 original members: Tommy McCook, Roland Alphonso, Lester Sterling, Johnny Moore, Jackie Mittoo, Lloyd Brevett, Lloyd Knibb with special guests Dion Knibb on vocals, Devon James on guitar, and Ken Stewart on keyboards. In 1993 the album 'Skavoovee' is released in the US on Shanachie Records and in Japan as McCooke's Book(sic). The Skavoovee tour featuring the Skatalites, Special Beat, Selector, and The Toasters tours the US

In 1996 and 1997 The Skatalites are nominated for a Grammy Award in the category of Best Reggae Album for their albums 'Hi Bop Ska' and 'Greetings From Skamania'. In 1998 the band loses two of its major forces: Tommy McCook and Rolando Alphonso pass away. A year later Cedric 'Im Brooks joins The Skatalites, shouldering the legacy of Tommy McCook and Rolando Alphonso. After the release of two albums The Skatalites begin their World Tour for the year touching USA, Europe, Mexico, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Russia and Japan which lasted 9 months. In 2003 The Skatalites return to the studio with Toots (and The Maytalls) Hibbert to record a contribution to his new True Love cd featuring many special guests including Willie Nelson, Bonnie Raitt and Eric Clapton. This album subsequently won the Grammy for

In 2005 The Skatalites embark on a new World Tour this year with their new bass player Val Douglas. Mr Douglas is another outstanding Jamaican musician who has played on numerous sessions and his famous A-Team band was the primary backing band for Reggae Sunsplash Tours all through the 80's and 90's. The Skatalites continue to be composed of the top musicians in their genre, as they have from the beginning.

Well, here's a nice DVD with two excellent performances filmed at the Lokerse Feesten in Belgium in 1997 and 2002. The Lokerse Feesten is a Belgium music festival situated in the little town of Lokeren. For 10 days the visitors can enjoy a whole heap of music from different styles and directions. From The Skatalites to The Human League and The Orb in between, all is possible here. We're so glad that they have invited The Skatalites twice. The first concert was filmed in 1997 when Roland Alphonso still was a member of the band. We also see Lester Sterling, Lloyd Knibb and Lloyd Brevett. They all were original band members. Female vocalist Doreen Shaffer joins the band on stage and she still knows how to bring some nice tunes.

In 2002 Roland Alphonso isn't part of the band, he died in 1998. Cedric 'Im Brooks has become a member of the band and legendary trumpet player Johnny 'Dizzy' Moore has also joined the band. Both men are in an excellent shape and they give the audience what they want, pure undiluted ska music. Johnny 'Dizzy' Moore passed away in 2008.

On this DVD we can witness what a fantastic musician Lester Sterling is. Lester Sterling (also known as Lester "Ska" Sterling or Mr Versatile) is a Jamaican trumpet and saxophone player. He is commonly overshadowed by well-known band members such as Tommy McCook, Jackie Mittoo or Don Drummond. Sterling is one of the three original members, along with Doreen Shaffer and Lloyd Knibb, who are still a part of the band. Doreen Shaffer does a couple tunes and the band plays a fantastic set.

The audio & video quality is good, perhaps the addition of subtitles (in the documentary) would have been helpful. The historical impact of this release is pretty obvious since it won't be long before all original members will have left us. Overall it's a good package (see below for some detailed info) and a must buy for all serious reggae fans.

Bonus stuff on the dvd:

1. History: A year-by-year run-down of the group's achievements since it was first formed.
2. Discography
3. On Tour With The Skatalites: In this documentary film we see the group rehearsing, warming up and playing on stage. We meet several of the members of the band, both old and new, who

talk about themselves, how they joined the band, their music and The Skatalites.

4. Slideshow

These are the songs included on the dvd :

2002 Concert

1. Freedom Sound
2. Eastern Standard Time
3. James Bond Theme
4. Guns Of Navarone
5. Can't You See
6. Simmer Down/Turn Your Lamp Down Low
7. Swing Easy
8. El Pussycat
9. The Vow
10. Phoenix City
11. Freedom Sound - Reprise

1997 Concert

1. Freedom Sound
2. Man In The Street
3. Guns Of Navarone
4. El Pussycat
5. James Bond Theme
6. Sugar, Sugar
7. Nice Time
8. Medley: Simmer Down/Turn Your Lamp Down Low
9. Rockfort Rock (El Cumbanchero)
10. Latin Goes Ska
11. Phoenix City
12. Freedom Sound - Reprise

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