

SOUNDS ALMIGHTY

40 TUNES IN TRIBUTE TO MR. DODD



PHOTO BY ROGER STEFFENS

BY MICHAEL TURNER

Not since the death of Michael Manley has the passing of a Jamaican notable received as much international press coverage as that of Clement "Sir Coxson" Dodd, who died May 4 at the age of 72. He had been a dominant cultural figure in Jamaica for over 50 years and lived long enough to become an international one as well.

As most *Beat* readers know, his contributions to music were immense. He was one of the first Jamaicans to record homegrown music, becoming the leader of a local industry that replaced bauxite and bananas as the nation's most famous export. A lot of people helped create this original music, but Dodd was one of the few whose contributions were indispensable. In the '50s he was a leading sound-system operator, blending American rhythm & blues with the showmanship of MCs like Count Matchuki and King Stitt. Towards the end of the decade he began recording local artists, pressed onto acetate for play as "specials" at his dances. Soon other producers (including former Jamaican P.M. Edward Seaga) began releasing singles for the domestic market, and Dodd joined in, quickly becoming the island's leading hitmaker. Sales greatly accelerated with the establishment of his own studio in 1963, at 13 Brentford Road in Kingston. Up until then he had produced maybe 200 records—in the next decade the total was an astounding 2500 (and he stated later that he released less than half the material he recorded).

Although he was not the first Jamaican to build a recording studio, he was the first to install a permanent house band. This was *the* crucial step in the development of a national music. By creating a space for musicians to hang out and giving them employment outside the tourist trade, he in effect created a music lab. Although ska and rocksteady did not originate in his studio, they reached their ultimate refinement there, and history seems to back Dodd's claim that the first reggae music was created at Studio One. For the next decade his yard was a magnet for a generation of youthful artists, dozens of whom became Jamaica's most renowned performers. Thus Dodd can favorably be compared in every respect to America's great studio moguls, like Sam Phillips at Sun, Jim Stewart

and Estelle Axton at Stax-Volt, and of course Berry Gordy at Motown. Like them he was able to develop world-class artistry from a small pool of local talent, alter the course of popular music, and create an instantly identifiable sound. And yet somehow a list of his accomplishments seems beside the point.

The point, of course, being the music. Listening to great music is a unique sort of euphoria for which the late Rahaan Roland Kirk coined the term "eulipia." Dodd himself said that music "lured" him, that wherever musicians were playing he would "find himself there, listening." He ended up being a very fortunate listener: Presiding over his studio for over four decades he was the single constant that helps explain the greatness of his music.

I began my preparations for this article by setting a big stack of 45s next to my work station. As the weeks and months went on, there was considerably more listening than writing, and in the end I decided that listening was the most appropriate way to pay tribute to Mr. Dodd. What follows is not a top 40 list of best, or best-selling, or most important songs or artists. It's merely the records that I've played over and over, the songs that seemed to "Never Grow Old." Additionally, it's something of a listener's guide, hopefully pointing the way to something new for both neophyte and record-hound alike. Along the way there is some history, not just the specifics concerning various selections, but some discussion of the music's larger contexts. Leonard Dillon said that the music of his time was sweet because the people were sweet. Listening now is a mixture of the bitter with the sweet, as many of these happy young performers have since passed away. This piece is therefore not just a tribute to Dodd, but also to Jackie Mittoo and Delroy Wilson, Dennis Brown, Peter Tosh, Count Matchuki, Bob Marley, Jackie Opel, Roland Alphonso, Don Drummond, Tommy McCook and countless others. Time is the master, but there remains this special music that, in the words of Ken Parker, "time don't fear."

THE SKATALITES, ADISSA-BABA (COXSONE, 1965)

It's hard to believe, but Jamaica's most celebrated band was together for less than two years. In this brief time they recorded 50 or so powerful instrumentals for Studio One, an equal amount for the other main producers of the day, in addition to backing just about every vocal hit of their era. These guys played everything: Latin, jazz and pop, but were at their best playing the original compositions of their ill-fated trombonist Don Drummond. Dodd described the beauty of ska as a "double feeling" created by the relaxed hornlines against the power of the rhythm section. This dynamic goes back to



the beginnings of Jamaican music: the tension between the everyday melodies of the fields, fetes and church services against the enduring rhythms of the African drum. "Adissa-Baba" is a striking example of this double sound, with Don Drummond's serpentine trombone figures coiling around Lloyd Knibbs' walloping drums.

[Reissued on *Studio One Classics* (Soul Jazz LP 96)]

JACKIE OPEL, THE MILL MAN (STUDIO ONE, 1965)

Equally evanescent was the career of Jackie Opel, who was briefly ska's most popular vocalist before returning to his native Barbados, where he died in a traffic accident in 1970. He was a performer something in the style of Jackie Wilson, with a rangy voice and mercurial stage presence. Some of his biggest hits updated calypsonian double entendres, but there is nothing subtle about Jackie's "Mill Man": "When I grind—I grind with power. When I grind—I grind for hours." We're listening here to the greatest ska assemblage of all time: Jackie Opel, the Skatalites, and the Wailers on vocal harmony, everybody following Lloyd Brevitt's sawing bass line to an ecstatic, pumping, er, climax.

[*Wailers and Friends: Top Hits Sung by the Legends of Jamaica Ska* (HB 201)]

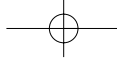
JACKIE MITTOO, JERICHO ROCK (1970)

His name will always be identified with Studio One's greatest years (1964-69), when he was the label's driving force: musical director, arranger and keyboard whiz whose beautiful organ solos and cross-currents have made him something of a cult figure today, thanks to the many reissues that have appeared since his death in 1990. The Hammond B3 was played flamboyantly by jazz artists like Jimmy Smith and Richard "Groove" Holmes, but Jackie's jazz was more relaxed, with shades of the exotica of Les Baxter or Arthur Lyman. "Jericho Rock" is a choice example of his nonchalant style, a version of "Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho." (A timeworn song now, but a landmark when first recorded by Paul Robeson in 1925.) Jackie slows it down, drawing out the beauty of the refrain, iterating it in parallel with the bass strings, and then volleying hip, delicate solos in tandem with famed guitarist Ernest Ranglin.

[*Studio One Party Time in Jamaica* (Studio One)]

BOB ANDY, LET THEM SAY (SUPREME, 1968)

Dodd hired the best musicians and developed lots of



artists, but equally important to the studio's success were his songwriters: obviously Bob Marley, but also Leroy Sibbles, BB Seaton, Larry Marshall, and of course Bob Andy:

*So let them say I'm mad
They don't know how it feels to be sad
I don't know who could be glad
In a situation like this:
My last shirt is torn off my back
But that's not quite the fact
My shoes is down to my sock
No place to lay my head
Don't even own a bed
I can't remember when I've eaten bread.*

Andy says of this song: "I was struggling at the time. Jamaica was struggling....We were broke but we were never poor because poor people don't develop that kind of music. Obviously we were very rich in character." The tune can be found on his *Songbook* lp, which after 30 years remains Studio One's most satisfying and popular album.

ALTON ELLIS, A FOOL (STUDIO ONE, 1968)

A complete musical statement in 90 seconds. I could have selected from many beloved torch songs from Alton, who more than any other artist tapped into the deep sentimentality of Jamaican listeners. I picked this one because it is a bit less known than others, and for the ripeness of the singing: "She acting like a foo-oo-ool," with some lovely background singing offset by a japing organ line. It's so nice you gotta play it twice, when Alton croons "I love her, I love her, I love her, I love her soooo." [*Pirate's Choice* (Studio One)]



**SOUND DIMENSION, ZION LION (WINRO)
HIGH CHARLES, ZION (WINRO)**

The Sound Dimension was the world's greatest studio band, as I would really say. Particularly in the year 1968, when Duke Reid's sweet rocksteady gave ground to Dodd's coarser, less-rigid sound. Studio One carried the day with dozens of wicked riddims like this, which was the original backing track for Marcia Griffiths' slightly too-sweet "Melody Life." The tune was later reworked by a stropky dj named High Charles as a prayer based on Psalm 137 ("By the Rivers of Babylon"). Flip it over and you've got the perfect instrumental with its playful bass line, bobbing and weaving around the muscular rocksteady guitar and rich hornlines.

THE CABLES, WHAT KIND OF WORLD (STUDIO ONE, 1968)

Humorous complaints and satires against the social order have always been part of Caribbean musical tradition, but as conditions unraveled in Jamaica the tone became more severe:

*I can't be happy I can't be free
Everything I try there's always someone
Who wanna hurt me*

*Why can't we love one another, oh
Why can't we help each other
It is a fact we want to better in life
But that doesn't say to hurt our brother.*

A beautiful reasoning lyric by the gifted lead singer Koble Drummond, over a gorgeous backdrop based loosely on Jerry Lieber and Phil Spector's "Spanish Harlem." [The Cables, *What Kind of World* (HB 3503)]

KEN BOOTHE, MY HEART IS GONE (STUDIO ONE, 1967)

Treasure Isle led the way in 1966 and 1967 thanks to the superb rocksteady sound of Tommy McCook and the Supersonics, but the Studio One bands (first the Soul Brothers, then the Soul Vendors) were just a neck behind. Ken Boothe was the label's most popular new artist during this time. He'd had a few hits during the ska era, but his belting style was more suitable to a slower beat, like this dramatic tune done something in the style of Solomon Burke. A Jamaica standard, the tune was later successfully covered by John Holt, Cornell Campbell and Dennis Alcapone.

[Ken Boothe, *Mr. Rocksteady* (Studio One)]

DENNIS BROWN, PERHAPS (COXSONE, 1972)

Nat "King Cole" (a hugely popular artist in Jamaica) had a '50s hit with a slyly rendered version of Osvaldo Farres' "Ouzias, Ouzias, Ouzias (Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps)," but later the song became a novelty item, recorded over the years by the likes of Doris Day and Connie Francis, Samantha Fox and Geri Halliwell. Dennis Brown doesn't just cover this song, he revives it, with deeply felt rendering of lines like:

*If you can't make your mind up
We'll never get parted
And I don't want to wind up
Being parted, broken-hearted.*

Following Delroy Wilson, the Clarendonians and Freddie McGregor, Dennis Brown was the last of Dodd's popular youth singers, a precocious artist who did some of his best work by age 15. Dennis' work at Studio One seems to have been buried under his vast amount of subsequent recordings, but he made many of his most heavenly tunes there, like "Easy Take It Easy," "Something Is Bugging Me," or "It's Impossible."

[Dennis Brown, *If I Follow My Heart* (Studio One)]

PRINCE FRANCIS (AND DENNIS BROWN), JUMP FOR JOY (STUDIO ONE, 1972)

MAD ROY (AND JOHN HOLT), UNIVERSAL LOVE (COXSONE, 1971)

This one will keep your rocking! This one will keep you shocking! Prince Francis was a talented dj who came up through the El Paso sound system alongside Dennis Alcapone, sharing the same impudent, energizing delivery. I love dj tunes and this is one of the best ever, over-dubbing Dennis Brown's lively take of the Four Tops' tepid "Your Love Is Amazing." Thus an example of a Jamaican version besting an American original not once, but twice. (Three times if you count the version.) With similar success, John Holt redefined the Temptations' "I Want A Love I Can Feel," followed by a jocular deejay by one Mad Roy, who turns out to be none other than the great drummer Leroy "Horsemouth" Wallace.

SOUND DIMENSION, REAL ROCK (STUDIO ONE, 1968)

But of course. Thirty-five years after it was composed you still can't attend a reggae event without hearing this at least once— the introductory drum roll and stabbing organ figure gets a response every time. **Reggae-riddims.com** has tabulated 268 versions of this tune (and

counting), and goes on to document that 15 of the 25 most-recorded reggae riddims of all time are Studio One originals.

[*Downbeat the Ruler: Killer Instrumentals—Best of Studio One Vol. 3* (HB 38), *Studio One Rockers* (Soul Jazz LP/CD 48)]

THE BASSIES, THINGS A COME TO BUMP, (STUDIO ONE, 1968)

SOUND DIMENSION, THINGS A COME TO VERSION

Back in the '60s there were hundreds of vocal groups competing for studio time, which probably explains why such a talented group as the Bassies was so short-lived. Led by the gruff singing of Clifford Morrison, they cut a mere seven sides for Dodd, all superb, including "River Jordan," "Checking Out," "I Don't Mind" (a later hit by the Mighty Diamonds), and "Things Come to Bump," which employs a killer stop-and-go riddim similar to Jackie Mittoo's "One Step Beyond." Dodd subsequently released several nice versions of this song including Roland Alphonso's "Bumpy Skank," Lone Ranger's "Plant Up A Vineyard," Carey Johnson's "More Scorchin'," and Jackie Mittoo's "Black Onion." [*Swing Easy* (Studio One)]

THE GAYLADS, LADY WITH THE RED DRESS (COXSONE, 1965)

The label's best-selling group between the Wailers and the Heptones, the Gaylads wrote and backed much of their own material, and are best recognized when Delano Stewart's elegant soprano takes lead vocal. B.B. Seaton, who wrote most of their songs, e-mailed to say: *My favorite Gaylads tune at Studio One is "Lady With the Red Dress." I wrote it one night in a cemetery in (Franklyn Town) Kingston, while I was waiting on a friend who live next door, to go out and paint the town red. I think it was a spiritual vibe as the melody and lyric came so spontaneously and after recording many folks songs in ska, this was the song that gave us the start to a good career. The band that played the song was doing their first session emulating the Beatles as they sung and played their instruments when they came to audition and record their song "How Could I Leave." The late great Dennis Brown covered later on to make it into a hit. They were called the Sharks which consisted of Dwight Pinckney (guitar), Fred Crossley (bass), Danny McFarlane (keyboards), and Lloyd Robinson (drums).*

[*Best of the Gaylads* (Studio One), *Sounds of Young Jamaica* (Studio One)]

SOUND DIMENSION, FEATURING COUNT MATCHUKI, DR. SAPPA TOO (STUDIO ONE, 1968)

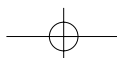
"I am the original....the bigger boss." Count Matchuki was an important artist who is generally regarded as Jamaica's first dj, but we're left with only a few recorded examples of his gab. Judging from this record he sounded little like Jamaican djs today, with a stentorian delivery and reedy voice that sounds like it's coming through a megaphone. But you also can hear the pepper in the patter. Dodd said that the addition of live voice-overs was the crucial ingredient that made his dances so popular, making it seem that each song was directed to the individual listener.

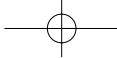
DELROY WILSON, I NEED YOUR LOVING (COXSONE, 1964)

DELROY WILSON, TRUE BELIEVER IN LOVE (STUDIO ONE, 1968)

Many artists experience bitterness over the small sums they received for performances that are still selling today; fortunately many of them have had the talent and

Continued on page 30





SOUNDS ALMIGHTY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

resiliency to survive and even prosper. Not so the late Delroy Wilson, whose downward career arc is documented by increasingly poor recordings which bore little resemblance to the those of the exuberant little fellow who burst out of Trench Town in 1963 to become one of Jamaica's first big stars. He embodied the joy of making music in dozens of gleeful ska sides like "I Need Your Loving," which peeps up Bobby Blue Bland's mid-tempo cha-cha "Call on Me." The Jamaican recording industry was a mere five years old when this song was made, yet it exhibits a level of musicianship long absent from the current scene. Check out sparkling trumpet solo (by Dizzy Moore?), which deftly inserts the melody from Harold Arlen's "Paper Moon." As he matured Delroy adeptly handled all sorts of material, like the romantic mega-hit "Dancing Mood," or the downbeat "Riding For A Fall," but I prefer his sunnier material like the self-penned "True Believer in Love," a giddy piece sung in tandem with Ernest Wilson.

[Delroy Wilson, *Dancing Mood* (Studio One), Delroy Wilson, *The Best Of: Original Twelve* (HB 3507)]

DELROY WILSON/DENNIS ALCAPONE, "RUN RUN" (1971)

Dennis's keening interjections add another layer of excitement to an already-barreling tune led by Delroy's menacing vocal and some furious hand drumming. Dennis was the most musical of djs, his bawling was spontaneous and uninhibited, yet always perfectly integrated into the song. He was particularly superb in tandem with Delroy Wilson, recording hits for Dodd, Bunny Lee and Keith Hudson; they were perhaps the best singer/dj combination ever.

[Dennis Alcapone, *Forever Version* (HB 3505), *Studio One Story* (Soul Jazz LP/CD 68)]



BURNING SPEAR, NEW CIVILIZATION, with CIVILIZATION VERSION (COXSONE 1974)

Winston Rodney opened his first record ("Door Peeper") in 1969 by chanting "I and I the son of the Most High Jah Rastafari." This was not the sort of thing heard on records in 1969, and Dodd was perhaps the only producer of his day who could hear something of value in this unknown, atypical artist. It's said that many of the session musicians disrespected his country sound, but after

Spear came the Abyssinians, the Wailing Souls, the Gladiators, Joseph Hill and then an avalanche of Rastafarian artists who developed the now-classic reggae sound. Spear delivers a virtuous message in "New Civilization," but the spirit is really conjured by the rapturous duo singing (with an uncredited Larry Marshall), intensified through the rippling piano and concluding mouth harp punctuations by Roy Richards. To full effect on the B side.

[Burning Spear, *New Civilization* (HB 168), *Sounds from the Burning Spear: Burning Spear at Studio One* (Soul Jazz CD/LP 101)]

ABYSSINIANS, DECLARATION OF RIGHTS (COXSONE, 1971)

The Abyssinians were Studio One's other pioneering "roots" artists. Two songs recorded there that pretty much define the genre: the famous "Satta Amassa Ganna," with its use of Amharic and its theme of spiritual repatriation, and "Declaration of Rights," with its bold assertion of independence. That's Bernard Collins on the crying lead vocals, backed by the icy harmony of the Manning brothers:

*Fussing and fighting among ourselves
Nothing to achieve this way—it's worse than hell, I say
Get up and fight for your rights
My brothers.
Get up and fight for your rights
My sisters.*

[*Solid Gold, Coxson Style* (HB 80), *Studio One Story* (Soul Jazz LP/CD 68)]

MELLODIES, DREAD OPRESSION (WINRO) 1974 (?)

"Oh man oh, what a dread dread oppression." Dodd recorded a lot of great stuff in the '70s from obscure country groups like this. It's an old-fashioned lament, sung in bedraggled fashion by two men and a woman. There's a nameless depth to some of these bucolic tunes, they seemed to come from an older time, evoking the myths and memories of what had until recently been an isolated and very spiritual land. Dodd also recorded hundreds of gospel tunes for his Tabernacle and Remnant labels and this tune shares that vaguely c&w sound: walk-in bass, lazily picked guitar and simple organ lines.



LEE PERRY AND SOULETTES, PLEASE DON'T GO (C&N, 1965)

Crazy like I tell you. While most ska tunes were fairly straightforward, Dodd also released comic tracks such as Lord Brynner's "Congo War," and Senor Pablo's "Senorita." The leading jester was Lee Perry, who in addition to being Dodd's right-hand man, released some three dozen antic tunes between 1962 and 1966, many of them quite salacious. Despite his shortcomings as a singer,

Lee's brio and cleverness usually made for winning performances as in this uptempo call-and-response with the Soulettes (Rita Marley, and erstwhile Wailers Vision Walker and Precious Gifford), anticipating Bob Marley's later work with the I Three.

[Lee Perry, *Chicken Scratch* (HB 53)]

PRINCE JAZZBO AND HORACE ANDY, OWL VERSION (BONGOMAN, 1972)

Studio One downshifted through the '70s but Dodd continued to develop popular new artists like Horace Andy. Once again Dodd was able to hear something in an unusual artist, finding a wide variety of musical contexts to fit Horace's oddly boyish voice. Here Horace licks the Lee Allen r&b standard "Night Owl." A good performance, but the vocal sounds even better on the B side, mixed into the background beneath the brilliant ravings of Prince Jazzbo. Jazzbo's recordings are a mixed bag, but he recorded two brilliant dj albums for Jamaica's two best producers, "Ital Corner" for Lee Perry, and "Choice of Version" for Coxson (which contains this track).

*Forward ever
Backward never
Sound to let your little heart quiver down the river
Sound to keep you moving around
Like a merry-go-round
In the town I would say
Live it up!*

WINSTON FRANCIS, ALWAYS SOMETHING THERE TO REMIND ME (STUDIO ONE, 1970)

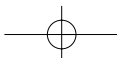
JERRY JONES, COMPARED TO WHAT (STUDIO ONE, 1970) SOUND DIMENSION, COMPARED VERSION (STUDIO ONE, 1970)

"Funny enough it was Mr. Dodd who came around to my house and said 'I have two hits for you' and we recorded "California Dreaming" and "Always Something" the same day," Winston Francis told me. You could probably put together a nice box set of Studio One covers. Dodd had catholic tastes, to say the least. Soul music of course, blues and jazz. The hits but just as often the B-sides. And a surprising amount of soft mainstream pop (while ignoring the Stones, Hendrix and the rest of the pop rebellion). One of Dodd's best interpreters was Winston Francis, a mature stylist who tones down the melodramatic Burt Bacharach/Dionne Warwick piece, blending his rich voice with the Soul Sisters and Jackie Mittoo's organ. Jerry Jones was an American jazz/pop singer somewhat like Nancy Wilson, who was found singing on the North Coast hotel circuit and brought to Kingston for a few sessions. She's remembered for her elegant version of the Four Tops' "Still Waters," but I really love her tart rendition of the Les McCann scathing and more timely than ever "Compared to What."

*The President he's got his war
Folks don't know just what it's for
Nobody gives us a rhyme or reason
Have one doubt, they call it treason
Looks like we always end up in a rut
Everybody now trying to make it real
Compared to what?*

The B side is an amazing piece of early dub, the vocal dropping in and out as the tense riddim builds and finally irrefutably back in with: "try to make it real, real, real, real, yeah, try to make it real yeah, real real real real."

[Winston Francis, *California Dreaming*, (Studio One), *Feel Like Jumping: The Best of Studio One Women* (HB 222)]



FREDDY MCKAY, YOU'LL BE SORRY (MONEY DISC, 1972)

Walking the floor, late-night blues. Freddy's premature death was hardly remarked upon in 1986, but over the years he's come to be regarded as one of reggae's greatest vocalists. Most Jamaican singers were silky soul styl-ists, but Freddy was a blues singer, somewhat along the lines of Johnny Taylor. "You'll Be Sorry" is ostensibly about gaining the upper hand in a bad relationship, but the melancholic Soul Defenders' instrumental and disconso-late singing suggest a far different outcome.

[Freddy McKay, *Picture on the Wall* (Studio One)]



**LARRY MARSHALL, MEAN GIRL (STUDIO ONE, 1969)
PRINCE FAR I, NATTY FARMYARD (COXSONE, 1975)**

Larry Marshall was another Studio One jack-of-all trades: singing backup, conducting auditions, assisting in the control booth, as well as being a superb singer/song-writer. He's best known for the early reggae classics, "Nanny Goat" and "Throw Me Corn," but he was other-wise a popular artist, with over 30 single releases. "Mean Girl" is a rousing blues over yet another classic Sound Dimension riddim. It's been famously versioned over the years by the Mighty Diamonds ("I Need A Roof"), Jacob Miller ("Each One Teach One"), Hugh Mundell ("Zion A Fe Lion"), and Junior Byles ("Heart and Soul"). And it was a minor hit for the late Prince Far I too, in a homely recog-nition of agriculturists:

*Natty don't deal with balmyard
Cause he love up him farmyard
Cultivation to feed all nations.*

[Larry Marshall, *Presenting Larry Marshall* (HB 3508), *Studio One DJ's* (Soul Jazz LP/CD 58)]

CARLTON AND THE SHOES, ME AND YOU (SUPREME, 1968)

THE ETHIOPIAN, INCESSANTLY (STUDIO ONE, 1981)

What's the opposite of blue? Peach? Well then, this song is a musical peach, with its lighthearted singing and impossibly naive lyric:

*We'd walk together hand in hand
And live our life in a fairyland
And oh life would be a dream
A beautiful dream, just for you and me.
We'd be so happy, ever so happy
With nobody near us to see or hear us
We'd have a whole life of laughter before us
And oh, life would be a dream.*

The song is far from insipid however, as it's powered by one of the Sound Dimension's best riddims, which puz-zlingly Coxson used only once more, in 1981, for Leonard Dillon AKA the Ethiopian. By this point Coxson had trans-ferred the bulk of his operations to the United States

mostly confining himself to voice-overs and remixes of his original material. Many of these do-overs can be criticized as bowdlerizations, but there were also brilliant tracks like Winston Francis's "Let's Go to Zion," Earl Sixteen's "Don't Mash Up the Dance," the Jay Tees' "Bucktown Corner," and "Incessantly," where the sure-footed singing and dour lyrics give the tune a completely different shad-ing:

*Incessantly—I man toil to resist poverty
Mainly selling a little collie
To keep I man family from going totally hungry
Yet I am blamed for the sick society
Incessantly."*

[Carlton and the Shoes, *Love Me Forever* (Studio One), *Full Up* (Heartbeat), Ethiopians, *Owner Fe de Yard* (HB 127)]

WAILERS, SIMMER DOWN (STUDIO ONE 1964)

CORNELL CAMPBELL, I'M STILL WAITING (STUDIO ONE, 1975)

ZOOT SIMS, JAILHOUSE (STUDIO ONE, 1966)

A Wailers inclusion is a must, although Dodd's most famous proteges collectively and individually did far bet-ter stuff after leaving Studio One. "Simmer Down" was their first release and a huge seller thanks to the buoyant singing and clever anti-rudeboy message. Later though Bob and Bunny's "Jailhouse" expressed an opposing mes-sage:

*Jailhouse keeps empty
Rudie gets healthy
Baton sticks get shorter
Rudie gets taller.*

This tune was superbly reworked by Zoot Sims, whose soft tenor is overlapped by Jackie's swelling keyboard. Zoot is one of Studio One's true foundation artists, he had several hits there in 1960 as part of the duo Sims and Robinson, and is still performing today as the percussion-ist known as Skully. "I'm Still Waiting" was one of Bob's greatest ballads, a reply to soul singer Billy Stewart's "Sitting in the Park," later more fully realized through the fluent soprano singing of Cornell Campbell.

[Bob Marley and the Wailers, *Greatest Hits at Studio One* (HB 261), Wailing Wailers, *Studio One Classics* (Soul Jazz LP/CD 96)]

DUDLEY SIBLEY, RUN BOY RUN (COXSONE, 1967)

There were dozens of rudeboy tunes, but after dracon-ian crackdowns the hysteria died away, enough so that the singer can laugh after them:

*But when the cops and soldier come
We gonna see if you nah go run
Run boy run
Soldier have long gun*

Dudley also recorded the classic "Love in Our Nation" with Vin Gordon's trombone lullaby belying a pointed lyric: *The gap between the have and the have-nots
It's a real problem because of that.*

[*Blue Beat Special* (Studio One), *Studio One Collector's Edition* (HB 47)]

THE HEPTONES, CHOICE OF COLOURS (COXSONE, 1970)

JACKIE MITTOO, CHOICE OF MUSIC (STUDIO ONE, 1970)

The Heptones were Jamaica's greatest harmony trio. Some of their best material has worn thin, having been recycling endlessly through the dancehalls for the last 30 years, so you have to turn to lesser-known tunes like "Nine Pound Steel," or "It's Like Heaven," to hear the freshness of their harmonies. "Choice of Colours" still sounds new, in large part because of the continuing rele-

vance of the Curtis Mayfield's bold lyric. I also love the way that Leroy, Barry and Earl trade off lead vocals. Jackie Mittoo gets yet another mention for his brilliant instrumental cover, with deft organ lines tickled by his overdubbed piano. And if you can't get enough of this rid-dim there is also Prince Jazzbo's "Choice of Version," and King Sporty's "Choice of Music."

[The Heptones, *Sea of Love* (HB 128), *Reggaematic Sounds* (Studio One)]



TOMMY MCCOOK AND FRANK ANDERSON, PEANUT VENDOR (N&D, 1964)

Finally, an example of how far music sometimes trav-els before coming to rest in Jamaica. The original "El Manisero (Peanut Vendor)" was written on a restaurant napkin in 1928 by the famed Cuban composer Moises Simons. It then became the first Latin hit in the United States, selling over a million copies for Don Aspiazu in 1930. It was a hit again for Stan Kenton in 1956, and Mongo Santamaria in 1966, and has been performed by everyone from Judy Garland to Ma Rainey, Duke Ellington to Desi Arnez. In the Caribbean it was the basis for calyp-sonian Lord Melody's "Advantage Mussolini" in 1935. It pops up again in Jamaica in 1964 as a bouncy ska number. Though the solos (by saxophonist Tommy McCook and trumpeter Frank Anderson) are a bit ragged, the rhythm foundation was something brand new, squarely measured in a way that anticipated the stepping reggae that was to come a decade later. In fact the rhythm reemerged as the basis for Little Roy's 1973 hit "Prophecy" which (of course) has since been versioned in dancehall style over 100 times (most famously as Sly & Robbie's "Unmetered Taxi"), and hence undoubtedly influencing today's Latin music all over again.

And so it go, Dodd hears something and helps forge into something new, which then travels unpredictable ways throughout Jamaica and into the world beyond. Studio One's recorded output has finally reached its finite number, but its story is far from over. In the words of the song: "All things shall perish under the sun, music alone shall live."

References: Charlie Morgan's *Coxson's Music*, Rob Chapman's *Never Grow Old*, both fine references, the for-mer being the definite catalog of Studio One singles, the latter a cross-reference to singles, albums and riddims. I also referred often to *Roots Knotty Roots: A Jamaican Singles Discography* by Bob Schoenfeld and myself. The reader is also referred to the *Studio One Story* (Soul Jazz) and excellent documentary on dvd, which supplied this piece with a couple of quotes. Thanks also to BB Seaton, Ken Parker and Winston Francis for giving me some sense of what it was like to be there.