

Spice, I Wayne, Capleton and Luciano barking over the "Hard Times" riddim.

And you're not even halfway to your destination, as other tough soldiers such as Natural Black just around the bend show up again, this time on "Your Time Soon Come." Then, Jah Cure on the irie-sounding "Same Way" over the same riddim, rock up this 62-track mixtape as one of the best assembled in dancehall roots and lovers rock in a long time.

Various Artists, *Max Glazer Presents Dancehall Classics* (Sequence) ★★★

If you're reading this column and are presumably a dancehall fan, none of these 16 dance-floor cuts that dj Max Glazer (of Federation Sound out of NYC) selects and mixes, should be foreign to you. On *Dancehall Classics*, it's pure "Action" as Terror Fabulous makes you look for the nearest available gal to grab, turn her around and give her just what he boasts in his chorus hook! As the unofficially most-ever-played riddim in history blends in, Chaka Demus and Pliers' "Murder She Wrote" flashes by, bringing into the juggle others like Cutty Ranks, Capleton, Mad Cobra, Shabba Ranks, Dawn Penn, Mad Lion, Dirtsman, Supercat and others who undoubtedly ruled the underworld of the early 1990s when hip-hop and dancehall held hands happily together, brandishing their gold teeth, shiny medallions and other metallic objects of mass destruction.

Luciano, *Reggae Max Part 2* (Jet Star) ★★★

If you're a strong Luciano fan, most likely you'll find that one song you've heard only once, and never seemed to find after. Starting off with his typical theme of unity and love on "It's Not Easy," his gentle flow of melodies sung with such a refined quality gives the roots and lovers rock feeling throughout the entire lp. Whether it's on "Visions" or "Call on Yahwah," his anthem for Rastafarians, Luciano not only preaches and teaches, but encourages on "Be of Good Courage" to his lady, that he's honestly committed. Other stand-out bubblers include "Lessons of Life" where besides singing, he seems to

chant a little, and the dumpling strength of "Jah Will Always See Me Through" and his classic message of "Uterior Motive" finish off this 20-track roundup from the Messenger.

Various Artists, *Unity Riddim Sessions Vol. 1* (Star Recordings) ★★

Various Artists, *Ultimate Dancehall Vol. 1* (Bogalusa) ★★

Produced by Jah Servant, the first volume in the *Unity Riddim Sessions* series ropes in three riddims and corners in some singers and djs from country to country. First up, Wayne Stoddart from JA on "Highest Praise" over the "One Way" riddim sings about giving Jesus Christ a big-up, and Sherwin Gardner, from Trinidad and Tobago, on "The Father Is Knocking" follows over the same riddim, but the rest of the disappointing, gospel-preaching, mediocre attempts, instead of luring you towards them, repel with their overused Christian fanaticism. Mixed by DJ Evangelist, it's not surprising if you see Jesus' image appear when listening to the other, slower rub-a-dub "Forever Love" riddim, swelling up your speakers as "Hide Away Dub" and Mike Roots from the U.S. on "Feed the Children" give the lp some sort of salvation to carry you further towards listening to the entire sermon. And it's worth the wait, because the last and probably the best "If Only" riddim sees U.K.-based Owen Uriah on "I've Been to the Cross," a dub version of it and Jah Servant's instrumental keyboard additions to this riddim bring the essentials of a good rub-a-dub for your spirit.

On *Ultimate Dancehall Vol. 1*, all the songs are produced by DJ Flava except for the opener, "One More Try" by Sean Paul produced by Donovan Germain. Even though the stellar names featured here include Beenie Man, Elephant Man, Sizzla, T.O.K., Vybz Kartel and even Anthony B, this is undoubtedly some of their weakest material to date. In fact, it's really folks like Mr. Easy on "Angel" and Mr. Lex with his "Through Yo Cute" that offer any worth on this compilation. As Mr. Lex continues to excite things up on the microphone, only others such as

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Toots Takes Reggae Grammy, Youssou, Ladysmith Win World Music Awards

The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences awarded the 2004 Grammy for "Best Reggae Album" to Toots and the Maytals for *True Love (V2)* at the ceremony held Feb. 13 at Los Angeles' Staples Center.

The other contenders for the 21st reggae honor were Jimmy Cliff, *Black Magic* (Artemis); Sly and Robbie, *The Dub Revolutionaries* (Sanctuary); Steel Pulse, *African Holocaust* (RAS/Sanctuary); and Various Artists, *Def Jamaica* (Def Jamaica/Def Jam). Last year's reggae Grammy went to Sean Paul for *Dutty Rock* (VP).

The World Music Field has been split into two categories, traditional and contemporary. The winner of the "Best Traditional World Music Album" was Ladysmith Black Mambazo, *Raise Your Spirit Higher* (Heads Up). The other traditional world music nominees were El Grupo Cimarrón, *Sí, Soy Llanero: Joropo Music From the Orinoco Plains of Colombia* (Smithsonian Folkways); Sandra Luna, *Tango Varón* (Times Square); Perú Negro, *Jolgorio* (Times Square); and *Abayudaya: Music From the Jewish People of Uganda* (Smithsonian Folkways).

Youssou N'Dour's *Egypt* (Nonesuch) received the nod for the "Best Contemporary World Music Album." Other nominees in this section were Paco De Lucía, *Cositas Buenas* (Verve International); Bebel Gilberto, *Bebel Gilberto* (Six Degrees); Gipsy Kings, *Roots* (Nonesuch); and Angélique Kidjo, *Oyaya!* (Columbia).

Last year's traditional world music prize was given to Monks of Sherab Ling Monastery for *Sacred Tibetan Chant* (Naxos World), and the contemporary world music album honor to Cesaria Evora for *Voz D'Amor* (Bluebird/RCA).

Other awards of interest went to the Spanish Harlem Orchestra featuring Ruben Blades, *Across 110th St.* in the "Salsa/Merengue" category, Israel "Cachao" Lopez, *Ahora Sí!* in the "Traditional Tropical Latin" division, and Ozomatli took the prize for "Latin Rock/Alternative" for their album *Street Signs*.

—CC Smith

