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40 Years Of
Black Music
Journalism
- 2016 -



DAVIDO BIGGEST & BADDEST

Sean Paul
Always Read The Label

Myles Sanko
Me, Myself & I

Plus...

Prince Buster Tribute
Digable Planets
Eryn Allen Kane
Madeleine & Salomon
Soul II Soul
Joe Fox

And Part 2 of our Michael Jackson/*Dangerous* celebration



FRONTLINES

FROM THE EDITOR

Talk about eclectic – this month we've been all over the place in the search for the best new music.

Let's start with our cover guy, **David**. He's huge – we mean **MASSIVE** – back home in Nigeria. The fellah wouldn't get 10 yards down his own street in Lagos without being mobbed. Now he's planning to take the music that brought him such fame out to the UK, Europe and the United States, proudly waiving the banner for afrobeats, backed by the ultimate marketing clout of Sony Records. We're not talking a one-hit wonder here, but a young man – he's 23 – with a well thought out plan. Expect big things over the next six months, starting with his EP on Oct 21. See page 18 for more.

Now switch to Jamaica, where we find the irrepressible **Sean Paul** celebrating his signing to Island Records and telling us of their support for his next album – a project he's put together with complete creative control and no interference from above. They know he knows what he's doing.

Then we have our man Dan Dodds on the line to rising soul star and former Prince protégée **Erin Allen Kane** as she rides a mid-west freeway to her next live show. The band intros and the dead bug story made it worthwhile on their own. Girl has talent.

Zippping back home, we get the scoop on indie soulman **Myles Sanko**, whose third album is easily his best and is already being flagged up as maybe the strongest new UK soul set of the year. Certainly the man wears his influences well and has achieved a huge sound on *Just Being Me*.

Dep Ed Kevin Le Gendre also spread the net wide this month, meeting up in Soho with French duo **Madeleine and Salomon** to discuss their album of music by politically committed female vocalists as part of a commission from the Melbourne Jazz Centre. It ain't what you expect.

And then we have the second part in our two-part remembrance of **Michael Jackson's** *Dangerous* album, to mark the top-selling project's 25th anniversary of release.

And, of course, our reggae man John Masouri takes time to pay proper tribute to the legendary **Prince Buster**, who passed away since we were last with you.

All the above... and more informed opinions than you can reasonably be asked to stand, in one magazine in your hands, right now. Ooh look, there's a video on **Tahirah Memory's** Facebook of **Lalah Hathaway** with **Jarrold Lawson** and **Robert Glasper**... **CHRIS WELLS**

PLAYLISTS

CHRIS WELLS

1. MYLES SANKO
JUST BEING ME [PROMO]
2. LINDSEY WEBSTER
BACK TO YOUR HEART
[SHANACHIE]
3. LADY WRAY
DO IT AGAIN [BIG CROWN]

KEVIN LE GENDRE

1. MARK DRESSER SEVEN
TRUMPINPUTINSTOOPIN
[CLEAN FEED]
2. DOMINIC J. MARSHALL & FRIENDS
WHITE NIGHTS [CHALLENGE]
3. LIVING COLOUR
PLASTIC PEOPLE [BBE]

JOHN MASOURI

1. BEENIE MAN
YARDIE [APPLE MUSIC]
2. MAXI PRIEST
COVER GIRL [UNRELEASED]
3. KIRKLEDOVE FEATURING DONALD WILLIS
SKA ON THE AVENUE [VP]

MR. DREW

1. USHER
HARD TO II LOVE [RCA]
2. TRAVIS SCOTT
BIRDS IN THE TRAP
[GRAND HUSTLE]
3. SOLANGE
A SEAT AT THE TABLE [COLUMBIA]

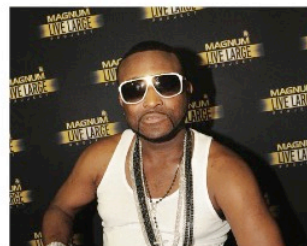


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NEWS

SHAWTY LO DIES IN CAR WRECK



Rapper **Shawty Lo**, best known for his 2007 song *Dey Know*, was killed when his car was involved in a motor vehicle accident near Atlanta early on Wednesday, September 21. He was 40 years old.

Police believe the accident may have been caused by a hit-and-run driver, who fled the scene. Shawty's vehicle went over a guard rail and subsequently caught fire, having struck a tree. Two women also in the car with Shawty were also injured and taken to the hospital, but their condition and identities are not known at time of writing.

Shawty Lo, real name Carlos Walker, was a founding member of the hip-hop group D4L in 2003, as well as D4L Records. In 2013, the rapper made headlines after an online petition sought to cancel Oxygen's reality series *All My Babies' Mamas*, which was to follow Shawty Lo and the 10 mothers of his 11 children. The show never made it to air.

Following his death, Beyoncé played his 2007 single *Dey Know* during her Atlanta gig, mixing into her own song *Diva*, while her dancers performed a special routine specifically for the tribute.



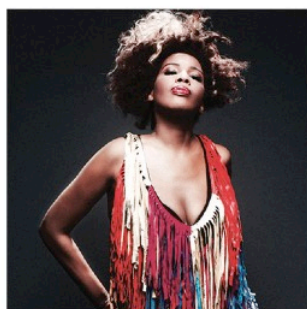
ROD TEMPERTON

Just as we went to press news reached us that former Heatwave member and highly successful songwriter **Rod Temperton** has died.

In a statement, Jon Platt, chairman of music publisher Warner/Chappell, said Temperton died in London just before the end of last month at the age of 66, following "a brief, aggressive battle with cancer."

Temperton, of course, was most famous for his contributions to Michael Jackson's catalogue, including *Thriller*, *Rock With You* and *Off The Wall*. He also penned *Give Me The Night* for George Benson, *Sweet Freedom* for Michael McDonald, and *Always & Forever* and *Boogie Nights* for Heatwave.

"His family is devastated and request total privacy," Mr Platt said. Temperton, whose private funeral has taken place, was nicknamed The Invisible Man because of his low profile.



GRAY DAYS

The idiosyncratic Ms **Macy Gray** has already booked in a couple of UK shows as part of her 2017 tour.

More may be added, but for now she'll be at Manchester Academy on March 18 and London's Union Chapel in Islington on March 20.

Try ents24.com for tickets and further details.



BRIGHT SPARKS

M&S - that's Madeleine & Salomon - run into Kevin Le Gendre in Soho and take him on a *Woman's Journey*.

Autumn leaves bring a shade of golden brown to Britain and memories of summer dim. Yet, not so long ago – in June, actually – as Soho did its warm nights & cold beer thing, I spotted the excellent duo Madeleine & Salomon at a table on the stretch of pavement in front of the Spice Of Life, the venue in which they would perform later that night. Both were relaxed and talkative. Both were drinking coffee.

Vocalist Clotilde Rullaude and pianist Alexandre Saada have been active in their native France and around the world for over a decade yet remain relatively unknown in Britain. However, Madeleine & Salomon – the moniker is the conjunction of the middle name of each – “M&S? No, we haven’t bought Marks & Spencer!” jokes Rullaude – won hearts and minds in Blighty by releasing an excellent album, *A Woman’s Journey*, earlier this year. The genesis of the record reflects their international career. “We had a commission from the Melbourne Jazz Center a few years ago to explore the Great American songbook,” says Rullaude. “I thought about bringing something new to the table, and I thought why not take politically committed American female singers as a focal point? And branch out too. It enabled us to broaden the whole American songbook thing, instead of being stuck in a ‘jazz’ mode per se. Then I spoke to Alexandre and he was into the idea; we took it from there. We looked for songs from women who

had raised their voices against oppression.” Saada takes up the story:

“We chose the songs along two lines: the music had something really powerful, and also the words were really saying something. Sometimes we found songs with great lyrics, but the music we weren’t sure what to do with, and sometimes it was the other way round: great music and lyrics that were less powerful. So we chose what we felt were songs that did both things and then tried to strike a balance.” Rullaude and Saada have pursued distinct yet related paths. While both are committed to the art of improvisation, they are also drawn to anything from poetry to photography and visual arts, and have worked with several respected French jazz elders as well as younger North American players. In 2003 Saada formed a trio that featured Canadian bassist Chris Jennings and drummer David Eléouet, and in 2010 Rullaude recorded with legendary organist Emmanuel Bex. Both highly expressive soloists, Rullaude and Saada also subscribe to the ethos of sparse, skillfully distilled arrangements, which is very much the case on *A Woman’s Journey*. The repertoire features anthems by Nina Simone, Billie Holiday and Nicolette, but the familiar melodies – *Four Women*, *Strange Fruit*, *No Government* – are clothed in unfamiliar sonic settings, often with the harmony stripped down to the bone. The result is a skeletal and shadowy subversion. “I’ve worked on a lot of big productions, with lots of resources and instruments,

“

I didn't feel authentic singing certain songs about the freedom struggle for blacks in the '50s. What right do I have as a French woman today?

- Clotilde Rullaud

”

and I wanted to do something on a much smaller scale,” says Saada, before taking another sip of coffee. “I love just taking a thread and running with it, without knowing exactly where it's gonna go. I wanted to see what we could do with each idea, thinking that the first take would be the best, just keeping spontaneous.

“We thought that you have to be a bit humble and respectful of the history of each piece you're arranging and sometimes take a backseat, let the music come through on its own terms. Simplicity is a really difficult thing sometimes when you're making music. Letting stuff go, so you really get to the essence of the piece of music, that's what it's about.” Rullaud elaborates:

“Yeah, just let go of your ego and be humble. It's like a black belt in martial arts: you know the colour of the belt fades over time and that represents how they recover the freshness of being a novice. That's when you're a real master. It's a similar thing in music where you have knowledge, but you have to forget it. I'm not there to say, 'Look everyone, I'm a great singer!' I might only use a quarter of what I know but it will, hopefully, mean something, because it's serving the song.” “We knew that we wanted something very understated and stripped down and that we could use the real low end of my voice, my low register, at times, and use that the piano to bring in colours to create a backdrop. I think we're both pushing in the same direction, and sometimes we're coming at it from opposite angles, but that's a good thing creatively.”

With odd meters and abstract arrangements in which the most elusive slivers of sound are heard around the main theme, the music almost feels like a series of entries in a very personal diary. But Rullaud and Saada point out that a piece such as *Strange Fruit* is a lament that is powerful *precisely* because it is so stark and unapologetic, and that further embellishment might have a detrimental effect. The key thing is to open up a personal space within the song that retains the absolute meaning rather than attempting a wholesale reinvention for the sake of it.

Cultural historians will know that the aforementioned song is a symbol of racial unity as well as a protest against segregation insofar as it was performed by a black woman and written by a white, Jewish man, Lewis Allan aka Abel Meeropol. Rullaud and Saada, the former bolstered by a strong, yet limpid voice, the latter by a crystalline, classically-inflected touch on the piano, are well aware of the grand sweep of history in which

the material they have chosen to cover exists, and have questioned exactly where they, as Europeans, fit into the scheme of things. Looking at the identity of others made them ponder their own in turn.

“A lot of these songs stemmed from two periods in America – civil rights and the beat generation - and also women's liberation,” says Rullaud. “I didn't feel authentic singing certain songs about the freedom struggle for blacks in the '50s. What right do I have as a French woman today? So it was about finding songs that, as much as they referred to that specific period, nonetheless had a universal resonance. The fact that there is still oppression against women, restricting freedom, is a concern to all, really.”

Indeed, it's a subject that should really interest *tout le monde*. Saada is keen to point out that the oppression of a single group in society is not disconnected from the trials and tribulations of another, and that all of the forms of discrimination imaginable are bound by age-old human failings such as paranoia and mistrust of whoever appears 'different.'

“Well, there's the whole religious question, the fear of women, the fear of the other, in general. Sadly, these things are all part of a bigger picture. It's like whole of Europe seems to be lurching to the right at the moment.” In post-Brexit times the possibility of a swing towards nationalism of the most pernicious kind, a form of pride and prejudice that could lead to extreme behavior, such as hate crime, is alarmingly real. M&S are all too aware of what is at stake, and what needs to be done.

“We hope we could kick people into action,” says Rullaud defiantly. “Maybe to launch a movement against all of this, to get people to think more... and act.”

UK JAZZ CHART TOP 10

1. TRYGVE SEIM

RUMI SONGS [ECM]

2. DONNY MCCASLIN

BEYOND NOW [MOTEMA]

3. SIMON NABATOV TRIO

PICKING ORDER [LEO]

4. DOMINIC J. MARSHALL & FRIENDS

THE TRIOLITHIC [CHALLENGE]

5. MARK DRESSER SEVEN

SEDIMENTAL YOU [CLEAN FEED]

6. CHERRY-TCHICAI-FRANCIOLI-FAVRE

MUSICAL MONSTERS [INTAKT]

7. KEVIN HAYS NEW DAY TRIO

NORTH [SUNNYSIDE]

8. HERB GELLER

FOUR CLASSIC ALBUMS [AVID]

9. OMAR PUENTE

BEST FOOT FORWARD [DESTIN-E]

10. ALBERT AYLER

EUROPEAN STUDIO RECORDINGS 1964 [HATOLOGY]