

Eclectic Reggae From Local Legend

Norma Fraser celebrates release of new CD

There's a reggae revival going on, and our own Norma Fraser is at the forefront. Fraser is celebrating the release of her new CD, and because she was a pioneer of Studio One's early reggae sound, there's a resurgence of interest in her past work. She's writing jingles, licensing her music and booking shows throughout Jamaica, Japan, Turkey, Portugal and Croatia.

Fraser titled her CD *One More Chance* for a few reasons. She strayed from her usual rootsy reggae just a bit on this recording, producing a sound that's more eclectic. "I wanted to show people that there are different sides to me," says the Jamaican-born Fraser, who recorded with Bob Marley and many other reggae legends. "This may be the last chance to hear me in this format." It's also a message to politicians that we may have only one more chance to make a difference in our world. "The opening track, 'Sinking Ship,' that's my message to tell the people, 'Hey, take care of each other, let's love each other or if you don't, your ship is going down,'" she says.

"Dreams Come True," which also happens to be the name of Fraser's publishing company, is a smooth, soulful ballad. Fraser wrote it in 1972, but it sounds more like a '50s love song. The next song, "Slow Hand," has a driving, funky beat that would definitely set the dance floor on fire.

"There's a song called 'Japaica.' I play the keyboards on that," says Fraser. "I'm very, very popular in Japan. I go there every year to perform and they love me so much they call me a 'Japaican,' so this is my tribute to them." The instrumental recalls the music of pre-toaster dancehall.

Why this foreign reggae resurgence? "They've

embraced Rastafarianism," says Fraser, "and because they've embraced Bob Marley and his philosophy, they've also embraced Studio One."

Fraser is booking tours for this year, including Italy in October, Portugal in July and Jamaica in July to celebrate Studio One's 54th anniversary. The singer who was once ambivalent about the music biz has found that it's a lot easier to handle the fame now that she's more experienced.

"I'm picking quality things to do because I could be busy every day, but I don't want to do that anymore. I can do my own management now, and I'm negotiating my own terms. That makes me feel good." **EW**



Norma Fraser CD release show
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