



ROOTS ROCK REGGAE

Jah Sun is well aware of the deep history of reggae music and how much it has influenced other styles of music. His latest release, *Rise As One*, acknowledges this trailblazing art form, particularly on the track "Mad Up Di Place."

"[That] was meant to be a feel-good party song and at the same time pay homage to the early foundation dancehall artists," he says. "The original 'toasters' from Jamaica ... were the first to take a 7-inch record, turn it over to the instrumental side and 'toast' over it. This ... evolved into rapping and is one of the foundational elements of hip hop. I feel it is important to give the early dancehall DJ credit where credit is due."

In addition to the undeniable dance-inducing rhythms of "Place," Jah Sun brings the flavor with positive jams like the album's title track and the hypnotic flow of the aptly titled "Roots Rock Reggae." Jah Sun himself provides dynamic, skillful raps throughout and is an emphatic toaster himself. So what inspires his songs of unification and encouragement?

"My writing process can be a bit strange and nonlinear," Jah Sun says. "The best stuff comes when I am not 'writing.' Much of this album was conceived when I was doing yard work or reading or even house cleaning. It's in these moments that I come up with my best work because I am channeling instead of thinking."

These "strange" sources of inspiration clearly are working well. Jah Sun will be the perfect warm-up for the weekend's Soulstice.

Jah Sun plays with Rocker T and Stevie Culture 8:30 pm Thursday, June 20, at Cozmic, \$8 adv., 10 door.
— Brian Palmer

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