

want to make. My message to the people, is to listen more to the positive messages in Reggae music and not just come for the dance. Give thanks and praises.

AF: Thank you very much Ezzy. And we want to welcome sister LaNiece McKay.

LaNiece McKay: I've been with the band for over two years. I went to high school with one of the original band members, Jason. When they were looking for a back-up singer, I started singing back-up and I was loving it and doing well at it, so I became one of the lead singers. One of the hardest things that I have had to deal with was friendship within the business. I feel that my path in the music is part of a divine plan, and sometimes you think people are your friends but they are not, and you have to leave people behind, because they don't understand that you have to give a lot of you time to the music. It really hurts to have to give up people you love. So far, I really enjoy working with the band, and one of the highlights was doing the Reggae Soca Awards last year in Florida, because as well as performing our own music, we got to back and play for other artists, such as Calypso Rose. We were like the house band; it was great playing for some of the other groups. My message to the people is, look inside yourself and find God, while everyone is looking for material things, look inside and ground yourself and everything will fall in to place. **AF:** Greetings Jason, and tell us something about yourself and what you do in the band.

Jason Smith: Well I was inspired to play this music because this is my lifestyle and some of my favorite artists are Dennis Brown and Tony Rebel. I love so much music, Bob Marley and many others. The hardest thing I have had to deal with was being American and playing Reggae music. A lot of people think that Reggae music is strictly Jamaican, but Reggae is world music. Anyone can travel up that road if they have the talent and the positive will for it. We write all of our own songs and music. The songs on our new release were a collaboration between Billy, Ezzy Judah, LaNiece, and myself. We will be hitting the Bay-area hard with conscious lyrics and jamming roots rock Reggae from our new release *STAND UP!* ↔



NORRIS MAN TM

Concert Review—

Norris Man

Bettors Berkeley's Soul

By Karyl Walker

Reggae music has always had the power to heal, and it is always a wonder how the music of a small island can have such a profound effect on the rest of the world population. That healing power was evident at the Down Low in Berkeley, CA, 08/31, when Rastafarian chanter, Norris Man, launched his second album, *Better You Soul*, distributed by Jah Scout Records. The true dimension of Norris Man's status as an artist was again displayed as he delivered a soul-stirring performance that earned him two encores after the patrons would not let him go.

After a few local acts, including Humble Soul, did their thing and paved the way for the headliner, Norris Man entered the stage to shouts of approval from the audience and immediately delivered the goods. With his usual gusto, the energetic artist, backed by the Bay Area's own Hidden Kulcha band, treated the gathering to his previous hits, "Bad Road," "Ever-living Soul" and "Heathen" before going into the tracks from the Jah Scout produced *Better Your Soul* album.

At one point, he was joined by producer Colin McGregor, head of Jah Scout records, on stage. McGregor's acoustic guitar is a

feature of most tracks on the album, and he belted his stringed strains as the vocalist blessed the house with "When Them Ego Done," "He Who Knows," and the title track, "Better Your Soul." After an hour on stage, a sweating Norris Man exited the stage. He was however called back after the audience demanded of MC Chassy, host of the event, that he recall the reggae ambassador to the stage. The artist then returned to bring his directive of hope and love to an appreciative audience who seemed to be truly soaking up the conscious message that he was offering.

Even though he has made his name internationally as a chanter, Norris Man has begun his career as a DJ and he does have a few recent releases that are done in that idiom. Those who were fortunate to attend were treated to a few DJ pieces by the artist and returned his energy tenfold. After another encore, Norris Man retired from the stage. His performance was well accepted and although it lasted for just under an hour and a half, the crowd was still eager for more.

Ashkenaz

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