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THE LIONS - JUNGLE STRUTTIN'

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The LIONS is a unique Jamaican-inspired outfit, the result of an impromptu recording session by members of Breakestra, Connie Price and the Keystones, Rhythm Roots All-Stars, Orgone, Sound Directions, Plant Life, Poetics and Macy Gray (to name a few). Gathering

at Orgone's Killion Studios, in Los Angeles during the Fall of 2006, they created grooves that went beyond the Reggae spectrum by combining new and traditional rhythms, and dub mixing mastery with the global sounds of Ethiopia, Colombia and Africa. The Lions also added a healthy dose of American-style soul, jazz, and funk to create an album that's both a nod to the funky exploits of reggae acts like **Byron Lee and the Dragonaires** and **Boris Gardner**, and a mash of contemporary sound stylings.

The Lions are an example of the ever-growing musical family found in Los Angeles. There is a heavyweight positive-vibe to be found in the expansive, sometimes artificial, Hollywood-flavored land of Los Angeles. Many of the members of the Lions met through the LA staple rare groove outfit Breakestra and have played in many projects together over the past decade.

Reggae is a tough genre for a new ensemble act, like the Lions, to dive head-first into and pull off with unquestionable authenticity. This is perhaps especially true when, as with the Lions, the majority of the players are so entrenched in the funk scene. But the band did so by paying a huge amount of respect, and by tapping into a mass collective base of education and experience. "I had studied my fair share of Jamaican music by the time opened up for the Skatalites (on my 21st birthday!) Soon after, I became one of the hornsmen for the Soul Syndicate (aka Techniques All-Stars; created the Bam-Bam riddim; worked with Yabby You) backing up all of my favorites: Leroy Sibbles from the Heptones, Derrick Morgan, Cedric Brooks," explains Simon. "Some members of the Lions and I have also backed up such legends as Alton Ellis and Barrington Levy. I have always been a fan of Jamaican-inspired music - from 2 Tone to the remix stylings of King Tubby and Lee Perry," he adds.

"None of us feel like we're experts though," says bandmate Dan Ubick. "Reggae constantly teaches me things and humbles us. You think you know something then you hear some track you've never heard and it just floors you. I've been listening to things like the Wailers for 20+ years now and I still hear new things in those songs. It's deep music."

With tracks leaking out to friends an immediate sense of anticipation and excitement has grown about the band. So far this led to two high-profile gigs for the previously unheard of act. An opening slot before friends **Antibalas** put the Lions in front of a packed-house at the Troubadour in LA (Check for the killer footage of band in action, including vocalist Shakespeare in his white tuxedo, at: <http://www.youtube.com/ubiquityrecords>.) A second gig at the Sunset Junction Festival in Silverlake saw the band play alongside Breakestra to a sun-soaked crowd that swelled into the tens of thousands.

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