



AUGUSTUS PABLO: ORIGINAL ROCKER

By Lol Bell-Brown

Author of *Augustus Pablo: Original Rocker*

If one figure over the years has come to personify the oft-abused epithet “Roots & Culture” then that man must be Augustus Pablo. His name alone seems to conjure up images of ancient and mystical description. He was, quite simply, that rarest of things in creation, a “living legend.”

Born in Jamaica circa 1953 in the parish of St. Andrew, to the west of the island capital of Kingston, at night, from his bed, the young Pablo (born Horace Swaby) could hear the distant thump of sound systems playing out nearby, the music calling him as a shepherd might call a lost sheep to a flock, and he would steal away when his parents were asleep to take in the musical vibes.

As a youth he regularly skipped lessons to practice (hit-making Studio One organ player and arranger) Jackie Mittoo riffs on the school organ with his friend Tyrone Downie, later to achieve fame as The Wailers’ keyboardist, and thereby eliciting frequent beatings from the Masters who, in common with many middle-class Jamaicans, considered reggae music to be in the idle employ of ungodly hands.

Though his parents naturally disapproved of such behavior, the boy was obviously smitten and talented enough for them to acquiesce and purchase a second-hand piano for him to practice on. He abandoned his studies and began to pursue his calling, running a sound system and taking the bus to downtown Kingston on regular record-buying forays.

It was on one such expedition that destiny intervened in the form of a friend’s girlfriend. She was holding a melodica, a small, rudimentary keyboard with a mouthpiece at one end through which one blew, producing a sound somewhere between a harmonica and a kazoo, usually reserved for the musical education of primary school children. Intrigued, Pablo asked if he could try it out, whereupon the girl told him she had no use for it and he could have it. Entering the



King Tubby

Aquarius record shop in Halfway Tree, Pablo attracted the attention of the proprietor, Herman Chin-Loy, who asked him if he could play the instrument. Pablo replied in the positive and Chin-Loy took him to Randy’s studio in North Parade to record his first sides: “Iggy Iggy” and “East Of The River Nile” (an early version of his classic). The later minor-chorded epic inaugurated the nascent “Far East” style that was to become Pablo’s trademark, pioneered by Don Drummond and Jackie Mittoo on the old Studio One tunes that Pablo loved so much, such as “Addis Adaba” and “Drum Song.” Chin-Loy had been producing instrumental records featuring the organ work of erstwhile Upsetter Glen Adams over the past year or two, releasing them under the unlikely nom de disque “Augustus Pablo.” The quiet reserved slip of a youth with the melodica must have seemed like the very embodiment of this figment of Chin-Loy’s imagina-

Photo: Kate Simon

tion, and the name stuck.

Randy's was owned by the family of an old school friend of Pablo's, Clive Chin. Chin was fascinated by the new and unusual sound presented by Pablo and swiftly organized a session for Pablo which resulted in "Java," his first hit in 1971. The tune became a big success, spawning a rash of imitators: Glen Brown, Joe White, Bobby Kalphat, Pablove Black, etc. and establishing Pablo and Chin at the forefront of the burgeoning bass-heavy skank sound, soon to be dubbed "rockers," that was taking over from the faster, more energetic reggae that had prevailed since 1968.

During the early Seventies, Pablo pursued a career as one of Kingston's most prominent session musicians, arranging and playing for most of the top producers of the day: Bunny Lee, Clive Chin, who released Pablo's classic debut album *This Is Augustus Pablo*, Leonard Chin, Derrick Harriot, Lee Perry, Keith Hudson and Gussie Clarke.

By 1972 Pablo had saved enough money through session work to finance his own



Pablo with son Addis

recordings and embarked on a series of unsurpassed classic releases throughout the Seventies. Records such as "Skanking Easy," "Cassava Piece," "Frozen Dub," "Warrika Hill," "555 Crown Street," "Pablo's Theme Song," "Pablo Satta," "Memories Of The Ghetto" and more...an endless list. He also became a renowned producer of other artists, especially many new artists, including dee jays Dillinger and Big Youth, singers Paul Whiteman, Jacob Miller, Hugh Mundell, Junior Delgado and groups like The Heptones, The Immortals and Tetrack.

Pablo worked in close association with King Tubby's studio during its formative years and in 1975 released the epochal King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown, "rockers" being the name of Pablo's sound system and main record label, arguably the finest dub album extant, featuring wild Tubby's dubs to a dozen of Pablo's finest early rhythms. Other albums followed, most notably the instrumental *East Of The River Nile*.

Pablo had only one real hit record in Jamaica, the afore-mentioned "Java," which was versioned many times by many artists over the years. His recordings after "Java," particularly those he issued on his own Rockers label, were generally too esoteric and rootsy for mass popularity amongst the island's music lovers.

In the UK it was a different story. Here in England, Pablo's exotic sound, dominated by his frequent use of melodica as lead instrument, captured the imagination of a certain section of Black youth in Britain, some born here, but others migrating from the Caribbean with their parents, eager to find a musical identity of their own. They found it in the rebel rock sounds of the contemporary reggae music emerging from Jamaica. It was amongst this young audience that Pablo's tough, militant music began to really find favour. His early self-produced titles on the Rockers label perfectly conveyed the required dread soundtrack, thumping out of the towering walls of sound

Aquarius Records, "Pablo In Dub" and "Hap-Ki-Do" courtesy of Santic Records, "Vibrate Onn" courtesy of Lee Perry, and "Pablo Dread Ina Red" courtesy of Vivian Jackson. JapanSplash and PitSplash video footage courtesy of Pablo Records, Ltd. Footage of Pablo and Mundell in Jamaica courtesy of Jerry Stein.

All projects produced by Jah Rastafari and co-produced by Augustus Pablo except "Pablo In Dub" and "Hap-Ki-Do" produced by Leonard Chin, "Higgy Higgy" produced by Leonard Chin-Loy, "Vibrate Onn" produced by Lee Perry, and "Pablo Dread Ina Red" produced by Vivian Jackson.

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Livicated to Addis and Isis

Give thanks to King Selassie I for all his blessings and guidance in producing this music

Thanks to all who over the years have been a part of the Rockers International family. Give thanks to all the fans and lovers of Pablo's music.

LOVE, HONOR AND RESPECT!

Musicians: Below is a list of the musicians Pablo worked with most, though he also used others on occasion:

Drums: Carlton "Carlie" Barrett, Albert Malawi, Leroy "Horsemouth" Wallace, Mikey Boo Richards, Noel Alphonso, Benbow, Style Scott, Santa Davis, Cleveland "Clevie" Brownie

Bass: Robbie Shakespeare, Aston "Family Man" Barrett, Jr. Dan, Chris Meredith, Flabba Holt, Clive Jeffrey

Guitar: Earl "Chinna" Smith, Fazel Prendergast, Dalton Brownie, Gibby Morrison, Cleon (Jah Malla)

Horns: Dirty Harry, Bobby Ellis, Vin Gordon, Deadley Headley, Don D Jr.

Percussion: Sticky, Harry T. Powell, Jah Levi, Jah Theo, Everton DaSilva, Sidney Wolfe, Ras Menelik, Ras Inefireiyol

Keyboards: Pablo generally played all keyboards on his recordings



Pablo with legendary engineer Sylvan Morris of Harry J Studios



One of the few female artists recorded by Pablo, Sister Frica was not a professional singer but delivered an affecting vocal under Pablo's tutelage on this 1977 single.



10. Augustus Pablo: Twin Seal (extended 12" mix)

This great instrumental was only released as a Rockers 12" single.

11. The Immortals: Can't Keep A Good Man Down (7" mix)

Probably the best roots vocal group production by Pablo, this is an obscure 1977 release.

12. Pablo All-Stars: Can't Keep A Good Dub Down
The dub version side of the Immortals 7".

13. Earl Sixteen: Freedom Fighter

Previously unreleased gem from this excellent roots singer.

14. Augustus Pablo: Third Eye

A beautiful, rare 1982 instrumental single.

15. Augustus Pablo All-Stars: Third Eye Version

The dub side to the "Third Eye" single.

16. Jah Levi: Zion A Fe Lion

Another fine Hugh Mundell dee jay effort as he name-checks Pablo's Rockers International sound system.

17. Rockers All-Stars: Abashanti Dub

18. Augustus Pablo: Full Up (12" extended version)

DISC 5: DVD Video

1. "Frozen Dub" Pablo in performance at JapanSplash circa 1986.

2. "Rockers Rock" Pablo in live performance at PitSplash in Japan circa 1988.

3. Impromptu performance footage of Pablo playing guitar and melodica, with Hugh Mundell singing, by a river in Jamaica. This was filmed in 1979 by Jerry Stein and Jeff Roth (sound recording) as part of the filming for the excellent documentary film on Soul Syndicate entitled *Word, Sound and Power* which was released in 1980.

4. Interview footage of Pablo by "Dallas" from 1979, also filmed by Jerry Stein and Jeff Roth.

DVD of the excellent documentary *Word, Sound and Power* available at www.wordsoundandpower.com

Project produced by Randall Grass

Cover photo of Augustus Pablo by Kate Simon

Photos of Jacob Miller and King Tubby by Kate Simon

Photos of Hugh Mundell and Pablo with Mundell by Jeff Roth

All other photos courtesy of Karen Scott

All audio tracks courtesy of Pablo Records, Ltd. except: "Iggie Iggie" courtesy of

system speakers that regularly shook the foundations of clubs and town halls from London to Leicester to Birmingham and Bristol.

These records and others like them could only be heard if you were part of or privy to this Black underground diaspora. It was extremely difficult to find or hear these records until many were compiled on King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown, which could sometimes be found in the better record shops during 1975-76. It's probably safe to say that it blew my mind then, along with the minds of multitudes of other White suburban youth, and still does to this day. It took years to finally track down the original versions of the tracks that made up this album, often not until Pablo started re-pressing them as singles in the early Eighties. By that time Pablo and reggae music had moved on.

Rastafari had become the chosen way of life for many of Jamaica's recording artists, its popularity spread by the phenomenal success of Bob Marley & The Wailers, Burning Spear, Culture, and others. Pablo, a fragile-looking, willowy young man, began like many others to sport fulsome dreadlocks and his music in the latter half of the Seventies became even more spiritual, dark and heavy. He released a series of amazing records of his own productions that are unarguably amongst the most sublime examples of roots reggae music ever made: Asher & Trimble's "Humble Yourself," Jacob Miller's "False Rasta" a/k/a "Who Say Jah No Dread," Delroy Williams' "Foxhole" and "I Stand Black," Hugh Mundell's "Let's All Unite," "Africa Must Be Free In 1983," "Great Tribulation" and "Book Of Life," Sister Frica's "One In The Spirit," Tetrack's "Let's Get Started" and "Let's Get Together," The Immortals' "Why Keep A Good Man Down," Paul Blackman's stunning "Earth, Wind & Fire," Norris Reid's "Entrance To Jah World" and Pablo's own instrumental creations: "Pablo's Theme Song," "Far East," "East Of The River Nile," "Unfinished Melody," "Memories Of The Ghetto," "Pablo Meets Mr. Bassie," "Up Waricka Hill" and more, many issued on the appropriately-named Message label, and all with sublime dub version sides, mostly mixed at Tubby's.



Jacob Miller

Photo: Kate Simon

Roots fans and collectors in the UK have always considered Pablo's music, alongside the finest productions by Yabby You, Lee Perry and Coxson's Studio One, as the peak of the roots reggae style. Countless records that emerged from Jamaica during that Golden Age are now highly sought-after as the fruit of what must be seen as one of the most prodigious outpourings of great music in history.

As the Eighties progressed, reggae music's focus moved away from Rastafari towards a more light-hearted, hedonistic style known as Dancehall and Pablo's music reflected this as he maintained that all reggae music is dancehall music. He scored a hit in 1986 with Junior Delgado's "Raggamuffin Year," which utilized a computer-originated rhythm, though Pablo had long been experimenting with drum machines and digital keyboards to create his rhythms. Pablo's roots style might not have provided many more hits at this point but tracks such as Delroy Williams' "Watch Dog" and "This Love," Junior Delgado's "Forward Revolution" and "Dub School," Icho Candy's

“Babylon,” Ruffy & Tuffy’s “Harm No One,” Yami Bolo’s “Ransom Of A Man’s Life” and “Struggle In Babylon,” Bunny Brissette’s “Better Safe Than Sorry” and Pablo’s own “Struggle In Soweto” and “Eastern Promise,” along with two superb solo albums, 1990’s *Blowing With The Wind* and the ambitious return to acoustic, a double album *King Selassie I Calling* were artistically successful even if they failed to connect with the younger dancehall generation.



Pablo with his daughter Isis

In the Nineties, Pablo’s health deteriorated rapidly. He had suffered from ill health for much of his adult life, though he performed in Japan, England and even the United States to great acclaim in the late Eighties and early Nineties. Sadly, in 1999, he passed away from a rare nerve disorder and reggae music lost one of its most revered and innovative talents. This collection offers great tracks from Pablo’s entire canon, including many rare and previously-unavailable-on-cd tracks. Taken together, they are definitive evidence that Pablo was indeed the “Original Rocker.”

AUGUSTUS PABLO Composer Of Dreams

“East Of The River Nile.” It was a simple phrase yet it conjured up an exotic realm. I first encountered this phrase in 1977 as a title of a recording by one Augustus Pablo listed on a UK reggae chart printed by Black Music magazine, one of the few sources at that time for information about one of the most vibrant musical subcultures in the world. The artist’s name “Augustus Pablo,” was no less mysterious, an improbable combination of names. What sort of music would such a personage make? I ordered the 45 rpm single through the mail from the estimable Daddy Kool record shop; when it arrived a couple weeks later, I wasted no time putting it on my turntable. “East Of The River Nile” did not disappoint. It opened with a minor-key, vaguely oriental ascending line played on what sounded like a harmonica or breathy accordion, guitar and bass, punctuated by rim shots. Then a rat-a-tat-tat on the snare drum and the bass and guitar kicked in with a hypnotic, loping figure, conjuring up an image of a slow, swaying parade of elephants. The harmonica-like instrument played a simple melody with the guitarist flaring off jazzy filigrees. The melody was just a few notes yet instantly memorable. Washes of reverb and echo left notes trailing into space, giving the feeling of distance to the music. The overall effect was cinematic. A story was unfolding. There has never been any recording like it before or since.

All of a sudden the question seemed more urgent: who was Augustus Pablo? Nearly a decade after Pablo’s untimely passing, the answer to that question has been answered only in the vaguest terms. Despite creating two of the fifty greatest reggae albums of all time, despite acquiring a world-wide cult following and despite more than a quarter century of reasonably prolific recording, very few people can say they knew Pablo or much about him. Most of the people who have heard his music never saw him perform, as he performed infrequently, mounting just a handful of tours in Europe, America and Japan. Yet it was not simply his relatively reclusive nature that made him

11. Augustus Pablo: Drums To The King
This track comes from a series of recordings Pablo made which experimented with the integration of a traditional akete percussion ensemble with a digital rhythm track.
12. Junior Delgado: One Day
One of the best tracks from the two albums produced on Junior in the late Eighties for Island.
13. Augustus Pablo: Zion Way Dub
The dub to “One Step More” which shows what Pablo can do with a quintessential digital dancehall groove.
14. Augustus Pablo: Eastern Code
One of Pablo’s hardest hitting “digital” dubs; from 1993 *Heartical Chart* album.
15. Willie Williams: No War
A previously unreleased track featuring the obscure but excellent singer who made the reggae classic “Armageddon Time!”
16. Augustus Pablo: Drum Song
From the *Heartical Chart* album.

DISC FOUR: AUGUSTUS PABLO: Rare Rockers

1. Augustus Pablo: Iggy Iggy
Pablo’s first released single, released by Herman Chin-Loy’s Aquarius Records in 1971.
2. Augustus Pablo: Pablo In Dub
Produced by Leonard Chin, this was a hit and was included in Pablo’s debut album *This Is Augustus Pablo* in 1972.
3. Augustus Pablo: Hap-Ki-Do
A unique early clavinet-led instrumental produced by Leonard Chin.
4. Hugh Mundell: Stop Them Jah (extended 12” mix)
Sought after by collectors, this is the complete 12” extended mix.
5. Asher & Trimble: Humble Yourself (7” version)
An extremely trenchant roots message tune, seemingly the only recording by Asher & Trimble.
6. Rockers All-Stars: Humble version
7. Delroy Williams: Foxhole
This vocal cut appeared on Delroy’s superb obscure 1982 “I Stand Black” album.
8. Rockers All-Stars: Son Of Man Dub
The dub of “Foxhole” appeared only on the 12” single release of “Foxhole.”
9. Sister Frisca: One In The Spirit (extended 12” mix)



15. Tetrack: Let's Get Started

Tetrack, led by Carlton Hines, was one of the few vocal groups produced by Pablo; this was their signature hit released in 1975.

16. Augustus Pablo/Yabby You: Pablo Dread Ina Red

Pablo blows over Yabby You's classic "Conquering Lion" rhythm, a rare collaboration between two of the heaviest roots reggae artists ever. Note Pablo's innovative blowing technique toward the end.

DISC THREE: NEW STYLE ROCKERS

1. Augustus Pablo: Earth's Rightful Ruler

A rare vocal by Pablo himself; it is a Pablo-style hymn to Jah Rastafari; he was inspired to record it when the melody came to him one day while walking in the rural area where he was living at the time.

2. Augustus Pablo: Jah Light

An outstanding instrumental interpretation of "When I Fall In Love."

3. Norris Reid: Entrance To Jah World (extended mix with dub)

Previously only available on a Rockers 12" single.

4. Augustus Pablo: King David's Melody

One of Pablo's most beautiful instrumental compositions, the title track of an outstanding 1982 album release.

5. Augustus Pablo: Short Man Dub

A strong dub from Rockers Meets King Tubby Ina Firehouse "Short Man" refers to Emperor Haile Selassie I.

6. Junior Delgado: Ragamuffin Year

Pablo's biggest hit in the "digital" dancehall era, this 1986 release gave Pablo highest commercial visibility he had attained in several years.

7. Augustus Pablo: Java

A strong updated version of Pablo's breakthrough hit originally recorded in 1972, which inspired many versions. This is from his 1982 album *Earth's Rightful Ruler*.

8. Augustus Pablo: Upful Living

Another beautiful track from the classic *East Of The River Nile* album.

9. Johnny Osborne: Rude Boy

Previously unreleased track with great roots vocalist Johnny Osborne riding a digital rhythm; after a sojourn in Canada, Osborne had a strong run of hits from 1979 through the mid-Eighties, but "Rude Boy" was recorded later.

10. Augustus Pablo: Creation Blues

A boundary-stretching track from *Blowing With The Wind*, Pablo's finest late-period album, which was released in 1990.



obscure. The fact is that even many of those who knew him personally found him enigmatic. Probably only a very small circle of family and associates could confidently say they knew Augustus Pablo. This simply added to his mystique. And of course Augustus Pablo was not the name he was born with. Yet, by the time he was twenty, it was the name people knew him by; those who interacted with him simply called him "Pablo."

"He moved mysteriously," noted Neil 'The Mad Professor' Fraser, the UK producer who worked with Pablo on some of his last recordings. Although Pablo could be quite animated and voluble when he wanted to make a point, in general he was a man of few words, who often spoke rapidly in an indistinct undertone and maintained a serious, reserved, phlegmatic mien rarely broken by a smile.



Pablo with Jah Bull

One consequence of this mystery is that the world defined him as it pleased. If you asked most of those who admired his music how they would categorize his artistry the term "dubmaster" would come up most frequently. Certainly that term dominated media coverage of him. But defining Pablo as a "dubmaster" really was misleading because it suggested that the core of his artistry was the

creation of dub music - re-mixed, electronically re-configured versions of pre-existing recordings that, as a fertile sub-genre of reggae, had a huge impact on the development of hip-hop, dance music, and electronica. Of course he was one of dub music's most important auteurs, along with King Tubby, with whom he frequently collaborated, and Lee "Scratch" Perry. His *King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown* album is widely acknowledged to be the greatest dub album of all time. But dub music was only one avenue for Pablo's talent.

The truth was that Pablo's musical artistry had many dimensions. Besides being one of the foremost architects of dub music, he was a superb musician on a number of instruments: all manner of keyboards, the melodica, of course, synthesizers, xylophone, guitar and various esoteric instruments that he collected from around the world. As such he had an important career as a session musician as well as playing on his own recordings. He was also a composer with an uncanny ability to create deceptively simple yet indelible melodies. Many of his recordings were instrumental works, originated as such by Pablo, as opposed to dubs, which were re-workings of existing recordings. Crucially, he was also a first-rate producer whose productions were distinctive and powerful. He produced the recordings of many singers and dee jays, often drawing out inspired performances from young, untested talent. If asked, Pablo defined himself as an instrumental artist. He disliked the term "dubmaster." The recordings within this box set are selected to show comprehensively for the first time the full range of Pablo's talent and achievement as an artist; as instrumentalist, dub creator, composer and producer.

Pablo had no interest in fame or fortune. Indeed for various periods of time he retreated to the Jamaican countryside and disengaged from the commercial music scene. He explained his rare concert tours abroad by saying "sometimes Jah Rastafari

directs that the works should be carried to the four corners of the earth.” Even then, his perspective was different than most other artists. When I asked him whether he preferred playing for large or small audiences, he said “whether it is one or a thousand it doesn’t matter to me.” I recall one time during an American tour when he and his band were late to a venue in Philadelphia. The restlessness of the crowd and the anxiety of the promoter were rising when at last he arrived about an hour after he had been scheduled to go on. I wondered if they had had trouble on the road. “No,” he said, without concern. “We had to stop along the way to do our laundry.” He and the band went on to deliver a magnificent performance.

He was far from casual, however, when it came to the presentation of the music. The sound mix at a number of the American concerts had not been up to his standards and he preferred not to tour at all if the presentation of the music was not right. “I could just do the works at home,” he said. He regarded music-making — “the works” — as a calling, the result of divine inspiration. It was part and parcel of his commitment to Rastafari and devotion to the inspiration and will of Jah. If he was not inspired, then he would not create. For that reason, after the mid-Seventies, he only occasionally worked as a session musician and only then with artists or on projects he regarded

as especially worthy. Most of his energies were devoted to productions for his own label, whether his own performances or those of other artists, which he could shape without being concerned with commercial considerations or the expectations of a producer. He resisted having his picture on the cover of his albums; often it was only at the insistence of the record companies abroad to whom he licensed his recordings that photographs of him appeared on album covers. The cover of the Jamaican release of his *Earth’s Rightful Ruler* album, for instance, was an illustration of Emperor Haile Selassie, Ras Tafari himself but the American release featured a photo of him on the front jacket. From the late Seventies on, he insisted on crediting the production of his albums to King Selassie I as well as himself and expressing gratitude for the inspiration of Jah Rastafari.



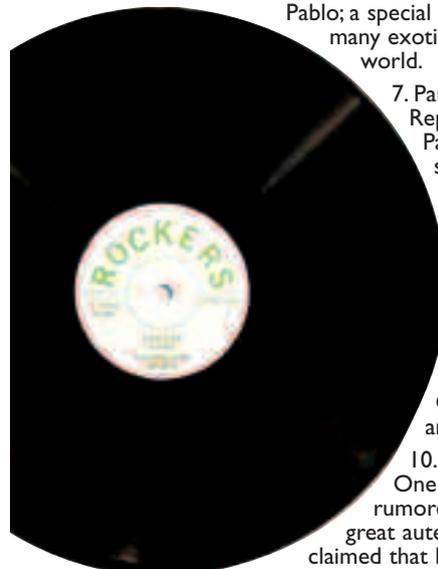
Pablo working his magic in the studio

Despite his detachment, Pablo was a keen observer of the scene, both nationally and internationally. He gathered information in his own way. I recall a remark he made to an interviewer who had mentioned something about the way reggae was characterized abroad. “They can’t fool me,” Pablo remarked. “I know everything.” He did not mean this as a boast but rather a simple indication that he was aware of what was happening even in far-flung locales. When in the late Seventies he asked Joan Higgins, an acquaintance who was to become a key player in managing his business affairs, to investigate record labels in the UK where she was attending school, it was Pablo who directed her to contact Greensleeves Records. He had gathered information and determined that they were a likely partner. That began an association that lasted until his death. Similarly, in 1980 he concluded a licensing deal with Shanachie Entertainment for the North American market, a relationship that also lasted until the end of his life and beyond. Despite his image as a spiritually-oriented, herb-smoking, reclusive pure

producers over the years without having breakthrough success, delivers an impassioned vocal on this rare track.

3. Augustus Pablo: Havendale Rock
Pablo solos on clavinet on this version of the Soul Vendors’ “Swing Easy.”
4. Hugh Mundell: Why Do Black Men Fuss & Fight
Here Pablo prominently uses traditional *akete* percussion to create a deep, propulsive groove.
5. Augustus Pablo: Rockers Meet King Tubbys Ina Fire House
The title track to 1980’s *Rockers Meet King Tubbys Ina Fire House*, perhaps the second-greatest dub album Pablo ever made.
6. Augustus Pablo: AP Special

An instrumental featuring beautiful xylophone soloing from Pablo; a special xylophone from Japan was just one of the many exotic instruments he collected from around the world.



7. Paul Blackman: Earth Wind & Fire
Reportedly the first singer produced by Pablo, Paul Blackman was an obscure early dreadlocks singer who lived in a rural parish of Jamaica at the time.

8. Delroy Williams: Think Twice
At atmospheric vocal from one of Pablo’s talented protégés, a great example of Pablo’s ability to wring outstanding performances from new talent.

9. Augustus Pablo: Israel In Harmony (12” extended version w/ dub)
One of Pablo’s most distinctive instrumentals and dubs.

10. Augustus Pablo/Lee Perry: Vibrate On
One of the few tracks to surface from the long-rumored collaboration album between two of the great auteurs in reggae music; at times Lee Perry has claimed that he destroyed the master tapes.

11. Augustus Pablo: Silent Satta:

Pablo cut at least three versions of The Abyssinians’ “Satta Amasagana” classic roots hymn, one of the most versioned songs in the roots reggae canon.

12. Norris Reid: Black Forces
Another extremely talented Pablo protégé, who seems to have recorded for no one else, delivers a militant vocal on a cut of “Cassava Piece;” it is interesting to compare the effect of this track with Jacob Miller’s “Baby I Love So.”
13. Augustus Pablo: Ital Sip
A superb dub from the *Africa Must Be Free* By 1983 Dub album.
14. Augustus Pablo: Thunderclap
Pablo’s interpretation of the Bill Withers “Ain’t No Sunshine” melody.



One rocksteady hit over a rhythm track based on the Soul Vendors' "Frozen Soul."

6. Dillinger: Take It Easy
One of the greatest dee jays of the 70's, Dillinger rides the Studio One Frozen Soul rhythm.
7. Frozen Dub
King Tubby and Pablo work their dub magic on the classic "Frozen Soul" rhythm.
8. Jacob Miller: Baby I Love You So
The vocal cut to "Cassava Piece," one of Pablo's breakthrough rhythm tracks.
9. Cassava Piece
The original instrumental cut of this rhythm, a seminal track in Pablo's career cut in 1973.
10. King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown
Possibly the greatest dub track ever cut, a powerful deconstruction of "Cassava Piece."

11. Skanking Easy
Pablo loved Studio One rhythms; here he blows over his version of The Soul Vendors' "Swinging Easy," perhaps his first self-production, in 1972. Yes, the melody is based on "Fiddler On The Roof!"
12. Skanking Dub
The dub to one of Pablo's best-loved tracks.
13. Jr. Delgado: Blackman Heart
A first rate vocalist, Jr. Delgado was one of the better-known vocalists Pablo worked with; Delgado scored hits for a variety of producers beginning in the late Seventies, peaking in the Eighties but actively recording into the Nineties.
14. Hugh Mundell: Africa Must Be Free (By The Year 1983)
The signature song by the hypnotic young Pablo protégé, who Pablo took under his wing when he was about twelve years old when Mundell was hanging around studios, looking for a break.
15. Park Lane Special
An atmospheric dub of "Africa Must Be Free."
16. Keep On Dubbing
Pablo often performed this composition in concert.
17. Jah Levi: Selassie Verandah
Under the name Jah Levi, Hugh Mundell was also an excellent dee jay/rapper.

Disc Two: Roots Rockers

1. Jah Iney: El Rockers I
A dee jay version to Pablo's cut of the Studio One classic "Real Rock" rhythm by Jah Iney, also known as Jah T.
2. Earl Sixteen: Changing World
The under-rated roots singer Earl Sixteen, who recorded for a number of

artist, Pablo applied a surprisingly proactive business sense to his work, an approach fostered by his accountant father who, though he disapproved of Pablo's chosen vocation, nonetheless pushed him to set up his labels and publishing company according to sound legal and business protocol. Along with Joan Higgins' business management, others had ongoing roles in Pablo's organization. His brother Garth ran the Rockers International shop in Kingston; Michael "Gichy" McGeachy and Michael "Miko" McKenzie worked on distribution and promotion. Thus, from early on Pablo retained control of his recordings, unlike most artists, marketing them through his licensing partners around the world. Income was reinvested into his productions and his organization, often to the detriment of his personal economics. Nonetheless he approached business from something other than a conventional business perspective. When he delivered the master tapes of King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown to Shanachie Entertainment so that the album could be officially released in the States for the first time, we noticed that there were only eleven tracks listed but twelve tracks were on the tapes. We pointed out the disparity to Pablo, who was unconcerned.

"What will people think when they see there are twelve tracks on the album but only eleven titles listed on the album jacket?" we asked.

"Then they will give thanks," Pablo replied.

One very salient aspect of Pablo that is often overlooked is his commitment to developing new talent. Where most producers in Jamaica made sure to record the current hot singers or dee jays, most of Pablo's productions of other artists were of new, young artists or overlooked artists.

"Well, everyone should give a helping hand (to the youth) still," Pablo once explained to me, "because we started from nothing, really, and we had a lot of people teach us along the way. I feel that each one can set a path that the youth can follow. All the while they can take up an instrument, rather than waste their time firing guns and all these things."



Hugh Mundell

As a result, he produced the first important recordings by Jacob Miller, one of Jamaica's greatest singers, who went on to achieve great success with Inner Circle before his untimely death in a car accident in 1980. Pablo discovered Hugh Mundell, who at age twelve was hustling around Kingston recording studios trying to get a break. Pablo saw something in the youth and spent quite a bit of time rehearsing him until he took him to Lee Perry's studio to cut his first releases which ultimately resulted in a reggae classic, the album *Africa Must Be Free*, which revealed Mundell to be one of the most distinctive and hypnotic singers to emerge from Jamaica.

He also supported an extended family made up of relations and long-time acquaintances who were part of the Rockers International operation as well as meeting the needs of many supplicants who sought him out when he was at the Rockers International shop on Orange Street in downtown Kingston. This is what he dubbed "community outreach," though more accurately it was the community that was reaching out to him rather than vice versa. When royalties were due, he always made sure that a portion was sent to his daughter Isis, who was living with her mother Barbara

Samuels in the States. His son Addis and wife Karen were with him in Jamaica. It is likely that most of his fans around the world were not aware of his family or thought of him as a family man but he was that in his own way as well. Truly Pablo did everything in his own way and the world is a better place as a result. We are left with an extraordinary body of music, some of the greatest examples of which are presented in this box set.

—Randall Grass

AUGUSTUS PABLO: MUSICAL ALCHEMIST

Augustus Pablo was without doubt dub's greatest instrumentalist. Making the melodica his main instrument, this thin man with the bony face was an alchemist in the vanguard of repositioning reggae, taking it from modern expression to postmodern representation. His performance, as if possessed by some alchemic power, helped transmute established reggae form to represent the avante-garde or dub factor.

Few in the music industry, even among musicians, would have believed that music made by a melodica was commercially marketable or musically influential. Yet the gangly, bright complexioned, reclusive Rastafari musician with an aura of mysticism stamped his identity on this somewhat advanced plastic toy. By choosing the melodica as his voice of creative expression, Pablo not only transformed it into a pure musical instrument but, like his primary influence, legendary trombonist Don Drummond of Jamaica's first supergroup, The Skatalites, he also firmly established a sound in reggae that was reflective of his personality. While he did not advance the melodica beyond the miscellaneous instrument category, he introduced its sound as one more of reggae's unique expressions.



Rockers International Shop

Pablo himself always disliked the "dubmaster" term as applied to him, considering himself instead an instrumentalist and/or a composer of instrumental music, and with justifiable reason. Pablo was much more than an architect of dub because the melodica under his control was capable of such superb esthetic focus suggesting, implying and directing the course a piece of music might take. Over the rhythm he coaxed arched airy tones that transformed easily from a plaintive sensibility to a translucent buoyant quality, as if adding other dimensions to the rhythm and overall

form a tune might take. It is a lucidity of style that draws one's attention to the quality musicianship that denotes melodic innovation beyond the general dub factor. He manipulated mood and feel to create exotic atmospheres and tonal colors through a synthesis of deep, melodic bass and textured, percussive timbre. So while dub was music stripped to bare rhythmic essentials, the instrumental and compositional ideas Pablo offered went beyond the dubmaster identity. His approach to making music was as singular as was his personality.

Earl "Chinna" Smith, one of Jamaica's greatest guitarists, was a frequent collaborator with Pablo and saw the ways that Pablo's personality influenced his music.



The Rockers All-Stars

in Rastafari concepts. In this music one can see Pablo consolidating influences, reconciling ideas and mixing a Picasso-like conception in a post-modernist approach that is still authentically Jamaican. The music presented in this collection should make clear to all that Augustus Pablo occupies a primary space on the unfurling manuscript on which Jamaica's music is notated.

—Herbie Miller

Herbie Miller is a cultural historian with specialized interest in slave culture, Caribbean identity and ethnomusicology

The Music

Augustus Pablo will forever be associated with the term "rockers." For one thing, his main record label was called Rockers and his sound system was called Rockers International. The term "rockers" originated in the early Seventies and referred to the slower, heavier reggae rhythms coming to the fore at that time which became the foundation to the "golden age" of roots reggae which ran from roughly 1972 - 1979.

No less an authority than legendary bass player Robbie Shakespeare has said that it was Pablo who originated the term. And of course Pablo was one of the most distinctive and powerful architects of the "rockers" sound. This collection, then, is truly "the rockers story."

Many of the recordings contained in this collection have only been intermittently available, having been issued in very small quantities at different times or released in small quantity just once. Some have never been previously available on CD and some have never been released at all previously. A number of the recordings that appeared on his *King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown*, *East Of The River Nile* and *Original Rockers* albums have been relatively continuously available since they were issued by Shanachie Entertainment and Greensleeves Records beginning around 1980. But the rarity of much of these works has only added to the mystique of Augustus Pablo.

Disc One: Classic Rockers

1. East Of The River Nile
The classic penultimate 1977 version of one of Pablo's signature tunes.
2. Jacob Miller: False Rasta
Also known as Too Much Commercialization Of Rasta; Pablo produced the first notable recordings of Jacob Miller when Miller was in his early teens; Miller went on to be one of Jamaica's greatest, most popular vocalists.
3. 555 Crown St.
The instrumental cut of "False Rasta" with Pablo's melodica leading.
4. 555 Dub
The dub version of one of the heaviest rhythm tracks ever cut.
5. The Heptones: Love Won't Come Easy
Pablo has The Heptones' lead singer Leroy Sibbles update a Heptones Studio

whose music is led by the melodica playing of Lisa Muezel, along with new wave rock bands worldwide, such as the Eighties rock/pop group The Hooters, were indebted to the quiet, unassuming Pablo. Pablo, though, was very conscious that his collaborations with engineers such as Tubby, were experiments that opened pathways into sound that others around the world would later follow by utilizing sophisticated technological studio equipment.



Pablo at the piano

"We used to do a lot of experiment," Pablo told Michael Veal, author of the book *Dub: Soundscapes And Shattered Songs In Jamaican Reggae*. "When we were doing these things it was just a one-in-the-world thing. Everybody used to say our music is "unfinished." In America they used to say that, years ago...and now them comin' and mixing the music just like how (Jamaicans) used to mix: heavy, the whole echo ting and dropout...even the idea of rapping and deejaying—look how long Jamaican people been deejaying!"

"His legacy is most of his life," Karen Scott adds. "I know he loved his family, his friends and everything, but when it came to music it was his life and his love."

Myasthenia Gravis, the chronic nerve disorder that hastened Pablo's transition, was never diagnosed until it was advanced.

"We really didn't know the sickness that he had until late in its stages...and I couldn't really blame myself," Karen reflects. "If anything, I blame the both of us. Even though he said he didn't want to do this and he didn't want to do that, he didn't enforce it and I didn't enforce it. Pablo was all that I could ask for as a man and a husband and father to my son. Pablo was my soul mate. I love him today as I did yesterday and I am honored to be part of his life."

Addis adds: "He was...I don't want to say God-sent, I don't want to use those words, but he had

unconditional love for his children and other people's children and his friends as well. Even those who would disrespect him in certain ways, where some people would stop being friends he would still accept them as a brother or a sister. He was that kind of individual, no matter how much they did to him, he would still have love for those people and everybody, especially his family, my sister Isis and myself."

Augustus Pablo was a mystic whose melodies imparted a fragile melodic style reminiscent of the uncertain gait of his staggered saunter, his meditative introspection and the steadfast integrity of his foundational musical ideas. The music contained in this box set is layered with such examples: fragmented drums and heavy bass tones, sound dropouts and echo, color and collages, nuances and textures, subtle intensity and hard-rocking rhythms, pastiche and invention, a few tone poems in idiomatic terms, and the creative directions that pointed to future popular trends. The performances do not conform to European ideas of "right" or "wrong" musical composition; rather they express a heartfelt emotion realized through musical integrity and proficiency, rooted

"Pablo was a serious youth," Chinna notes, "who faced the music that way, with that serious vision. He worked with certain people like Benbow, Horsey, Ranchie and Fams, and I was privileged to be one. He played the simplest but most effective music. He gave it that spirituality, that Rastafari sound. He had a concept, especially with Tubby. He would lay tracks then overdub the melodica and guitar at Tubby's. As a musician and keyboardist he was a simpler Jackie Mitoo (renowned Studio One keyboardist and arranger). No frills, just the basics, the essence, the economy of sound. Like Miles Davis, he just played what was essential but kept the rockers quality going."



Pablo With Jr. Delgado

Pablo's widow, Karen Scott, a soft-spoken dreadlocked Rastafari woman, added insight into her husband's nature, his circumspect disposition and personal or private persona.

"Pablo was very responsible; he was always strong. I always say my prayers and give thanks for the man Pablo was, for being able to take care of his family and do all that he did. And still help others. Pablo was a man that always put other people first, before himself. I would say he was a person that was down-to-earth, and dealt with everyone the same way. No matter which part of society you might have come from."

Other musicians on the reggae scene cite Pablo's creative generosity, the way he shared ideas in the studio, gave chances to younger artists, recommended working situations and generally encouraged others. Multi-saxophonist Tony Greene remembers Pablo that way:

"Pablo was a determined musician with a vision that instrumental music could work. He encouraged young horn players like Dean Frazer and myself to record and look for our own work as instrumentalists. He was also one of the first musicians to put the business into the music, opening his own record shop and producing other artists."

Chinna Smith amplifies that sentiment. "He had a strong love for music and musicians, and humanity. He was a very quiet person...an introvert, he never talked much about music or anything, he just showed you the concept on the keyboard."

Even on tour with a group of musicians, Pablo was solitary in the midst of the group. He seemed to be content knowing that the impression of himself being somewhat odd only added to the mystique that surrounded him. The result, as Mikey Chung, with whom Pablo played in the Now Generation Band, and I agreed, is that he was so detached that we were acquaintances outside his world. Even a musician as close to him as Chinna, like Pablo a Rastafari of high order, is hard pressed to come up with an animated memory. Not even sports held much excitement for Pablo, according to his brother Garth.

Maybe another side came out in his private moments at home with family, watching television or playing with his young son Addis. Song titles on his many recordings reflect some inspiration from watching Kung Fu and martial arts movies: "Rockers

Comes East,” “Rising Sun,” “East Man Sound” and “Far East” all indicate Pablo’s appreciation for the “far east” sound bequeathed to him by Don Drummond as well as the meditative eastern soundtrack that animates the films he fancied. Karen Scott confirms my suspicion that Pablo, like so many Jamaicans, was a fan of martial arts and westerns.

“At home,” she notes, “Pablo would watch things like Entertainment Report, because of the music. But he also watched westerns, action films, karate and Bruce Lee-type movies.”

With his eccentric appearance, Pablo was visible in any gathering. When we toured Japan in 1998, at hotels we drew stares as we relaxed or moved through the lobby. The group bantered, took in the foreign landscape and engaged other foreigners in conversation. Pablo, though, moved like a sage among us, almost like a spiritual guide, saying little. While we ventured out around town, Pablo was content to explore a private path along with Bagga, his bush doctor. Chinna and I reminisced about our Japanese tour with Pablo. Pablo was already weakened from illness that would eventually cause him to realize his own mortality but he soldiered along with Bagga, his medicine man, seeking Japanese herbal doctors and remedies. Yet at performance time, Pablo always seemed well. Above all the artists on tour, Chinna reminded me, Pablo was the one



Pablo in session

who attracted the most attention both on and off the stage. We remembered the Japanese musician who stopped him to acknowledge his influence.

“Coming from his creative mind and his spirituality,” remarked Chinna, “Pablo’s influence spread all over the world, Europe, Japan, all over. He was one of the first dub organizers, rockin’ that one-drop thing. When he played some keyboard for (Soul) Syndicate, he used a cross-hand approach so he could keep the low bass going. That was unique, just him alone. Yes, he went for the lowest tones, for the texture of it.”

Unlike most artists, who tend to be extroverts, Pablo was reticent. Dennis Howard, who lived around the neighborhood in which Pablo operated, remembers him as a humble youth.

“He had a little crew around him, Tetrack, Yami Bolo, and Hopeton Lindo. I can’t remember him driving, I don’t know if he might have bought a car later. He certainly could have afforded one. Yet religiously, every evening, he would walk by my father’s bar, Jazz Hut, usually with Yami in tow, hailed everyone and took a bus or taxi. I can’t remember him uttering even ten words. He was a man who just hail you up and that’s it!”

Pablo’s son Addis remembers his father in similar terms.



Pablo w/ Everton DaSilva and Michael "Myric" Taylor

“Mine was a funny relationship with my dad, more a spiritual connection,” he says. “We did not share very many words but our connection was very strong. Music was the only thing...when he was in the studio and he would take me along, or in the house when he would play piano, I would practice along with him. In the park we would ride bicycles, stuff like any father and son would do, but along with music, because that was his career. Another spiritual connection, even now that he has passed on, it is just the same, we don’t really have to be with each other to feel that connection because it’s like we are always together. It didn’t have to be that much as kicking a ball or such. Sometimes we would wrestle and stuff like that but most times it was a spiritual connection. He wasn’t much of a funny person but sometimes he would make a joke. Maybe when he was along with his older friends he might have been funny, but I wasn’t around at those times. Once in a while he would talk but most times he was quiet.”

Pablo’s daughter Isis adds: “My father accomplished a great deal in the reggae industry. I will remember him as a diligent and very creative individual, and in his personal life he was a very generous and caring person. And I treasure the moments I had with him as a child. I wish I could see him today, now that I am a young adult. I love him and miss him. I feel good hearing his music, and his voice. I know he lives within me.”

It seems to me that it was quietude that permeates Pablo’s music and it is just that quality that created the impact he made. The impact Pablo made on a generation still intoxicated with a fixation the high level of skill of musicians in the Skatalites and particularly trombonist Don Drummond was the more exciting because like The Skatalites he appealed to the urban working class. While technique and dexterity delighted fans of ska music and the vocal lyricism of roots reggae became the focus of that style, the emphasis on drum and bass and the melodic sparseness of dub represented the next development in the music.

Unlike many artists, this Rastafari musician gained popularity and exerted influence during his lifetime. As dancehalls became sanctuaries, sound systems like King Tubby or Prince Patrick were supported by followers of Rastafari, radical uptown youth, working class folk and university students. Songs such as “Java,” “East Of The River Nile,” “Israel In Harmony” and “King David’s Melody” not only conveyed special meaning for their audience but also they were progressive experiments in production. As a result Pablo had great influence on other musicians. The jazz pianist Monty Alexander, for instance, now features pieces for melodica. The German dub group Sattatree