

## **ARTIST OF THE MONTH**

### **MARCUS SIMEON**

Not being interested in hype or gimmicks, he sees himself as a messenger, more than an entertainer. All his lyrics are conscious and culturally charged. His mission is to educate through music, therefore all his songs carry a message.

Panther News Letter **ARTIST OF THE MONTH** is Marcus Simeon – Son of Small Heath. I hooked up with Marcus to talk about him and his works. Here's his story...



**MARCUS SIMEON**

**NSS:** Greetings Marcus and thanks for taking time out to reason. Please tell the readers a little about yourself; where are you from?

**MS:** Greetings. I was born in Birmingham. I am a son of Small Heath, that's the area of Birmingham where I and I grow. I went to London for the weekend for a rave in 1979. We met two girls and didn't return. It wasn't a conscious decision it just happened that way. My mother still lives in Birmingham so I often come and visit.

I then met my first partner in 1980 and went on to have six children. In 1977 I first heard of Bob Marley and from that day I knew I was a Rasta. His words and message inspired me to learn about myself who I was and where we're from. As a people who have been lost it is important to find ourselves and know who we truly are.

**NSS: When did you first realise your passion for music; what prompted you?**

**MS:** From my dad's blue spot gram and his small collection of Blue Beat records; to following sound systems Duke Alloy, Quaker City, to Bob Marley. I don't play any instruments, but I used to sing in my school choir so I always had a passion for singing. Not being confident with my singing voice I decided to DJ/Rap or Toast, as we called it back in the day. I find it a much easier way to express myself.

**NSS: What individual(s), writer(s) or poet(s) have inspired you in particular?**

**MS:** The Almighty, Jesus, Marcus Garvey, Haile Selassie, Vernon Carrington.

**NSS: What group or organisation are you involved with; what part do they play with your work?**

**MS:** I am a functioning Member of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, working towards repatriation back to Africa. This is reflected in my work. I also run workshops, seminars, group sessions, for young people around the issues of drugs, sexual health, black on black violence, Black History etc. I am available for any form of bookings.

**NSS: How difficult is it for black artists to get their works publicised?**

**MS:** It depends on the music/ literature. Black artists dominate the charts, but conscious music and literature with a positive message, the industry seems to have a problem with, and tends not to publicise.

**NSS: What is your creative process like; what happens when you first sit down to create a works?**

**MS:** All my work comes from my life experiences. I can only write about what I know. Therefore I am telling my story not His or Hers.

**NSS: What discipline do you impose on yourself regarding schedules, goals etc?**

**MS:** The reality dictates the way we have to work. My music has always been secondary to my career; I do it when I have the time, which these days I seem to be finding less.

**NSS: What is/are your current project(s)?**

**MS:** I am at the finishing stage of completing my album *Rasta 4 Life (Old School meets Nu Skool)*. It is a musical project working with young producers, dealing with issues affecting our young people and the possible solutions. The Album *Rasta4Life* is a fund raising tool. Any funds made from the sale of the album or R4L Merchandise will be donated to the MAAP FOUNDATION, an NGO developing youth projects in Africa, so please give your support, thanking you in advance. At the moment MAAP is going through its registration process but should be fully operational by April 2010. The Album will be launched May 2010.

**NSS: What do you think it takes for a person to be successful in your vocation?**

**MS:** To have Faith in the Almighty, determination, hard work and loads of patience.

**NSS: Does your work enable you to travel; if so, where have you visited?**

**MS:** I have performed in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Trinidad & Tobago, Grenada, Jamaica, Ethiopia, Ghana and Suriname. Of all the places I have been, Africa has had the biggest impact. The beauty and history is really there to behold, there is a track on my album called “*TAKE A TRIP*”. I believe that all black people should know the land of their Forefathers and Mothers; Momma Africa.

**NSS: For anybody who is interested in viewing or listening to your work, how would they find you; how do you promote yourself?**

**MS:** [www.myspace.com/rasta4life12](http://www.myspace.com/rasta4life12)

The Rasta4Life Web Site is under construction, which will promote R4L Merchandise, and should be on line May 2010.

**NSS: Finally, is there anything else you would like to add in respect of advice uplifting and encouraging words for the readers and budding talent?**

**MS:** As I said before, have Faith in the Almighty; always be determined to succeed in what you want to really do, work hard, be confident in what you do and have loads of patience.

**NSS: Thanks again Marcus for taking time out to reason with us. May our creator continue to bless and inspire the I with more of your musical gems.**

**MS:** Nuff Blessings to the I; and I Give thanks again for the opportunity.

**Log on next month and meet another *ARTIST OF THE MONTH* here on Panther News Letter.**