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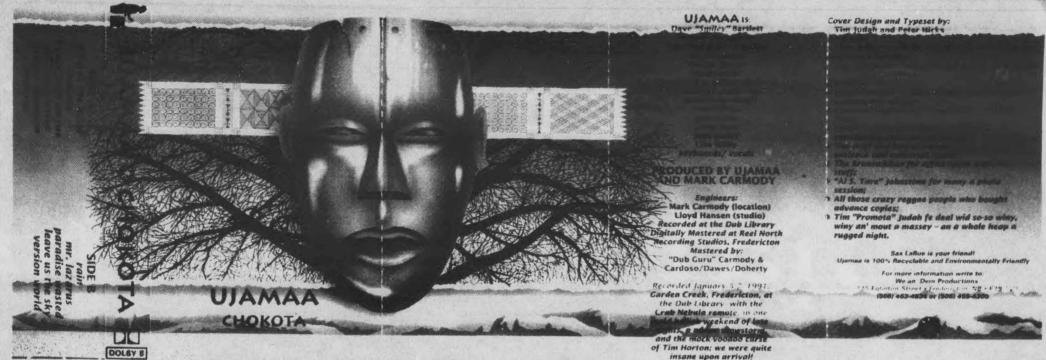
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CHOKOTA, Ujamaa Produced by Mark Carmody and Ujamaa Record Review by Veda Bowlin

Chokota is the debut album, released in December 1991, by local reggae band Ujamaa. All of the music and lyrics in the collection are original and represent the best of the band's compositions. (With any luck, we won't have to wait too long for more).

As should be well known, Ujamaa is

the only reggae band in Fredericton, maybe even in the province; the band was created through an amalgamation of two small reggae groups, Small Axe and Sons of Gilbert, thus the name "Ujamaa," a Swahili word for "togetherness." Kwame Dawes, the Jamaican lead singer, had been lead vocalist in both bands, and proved to be the catalyst in the union. Other members are rhythm guitar player Luis Cardoso, keyboard player and backing vocalist I is a Wilby drummer. Dave Partlett for calist Lisa Wilby, drummer Dave Bartlett, keynotices that the message of advocacy, struggle,
board and sax player Mike Doherty, bass player
Chris Hunt, and lead guitar player Geordie Haley, who stepped into Peter Hick's shoes when
gae music in general and serves to make UjaHicks left the scene. Hicks had been involved in
maa's music authentic. The title track, Chokota, the composition and recording of the music has strong parallels with the roots reggae

heard them several times in Fredericton, I real - by Kwame Dawes; like many of his other comize that they rarely do covers; not even of reg - positions, it demonstrates that he writes from gae greats such as Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, a first-hand experience as an African-Jamaican Burning Spear, and the like. The band is able to who has studied the situation of the African utilize their own music to sustain a full night's people, both at home and abroad, through his performance. Ujamaa has performed exten- tory and literature sively in Fredericton: the Social Club, Trina's,

have all been venues for the band's performances. They have also performed in Moncton and Saint John, and have recently made their fourth appearance at Atlantic Canada's premiere showcase club, Halifax's Flamingo Cafe

and Lounge.

Last Thursday I left campus early five the intention of going home to write an overdue philosophy essay; however, I made the mistake of putting on the Ujamaa cassette. Can you guess what happened? No essay was written -- instead I spent the evening dancing and singing along with the tape and replaying it more times than I care to remember. The tunes are irresistible! They make you want to get up and dance. Anyone who has been to a performance by Ujamaa will know what I mean. Their music is so forceful and compelling that the

Throughout the entire album one which is featured on Chokota.

Ujamaa has a wide and impressive evocative of Africa's history and her people's repertoire of original material, and having struggles for survival. Chokota was composed

in Fredericton: the Social Club, Trina's,
Waters, the Loading Dock, and the Cosmo sial track. It is a tribute to Canada's Native

people and their struggle to regain rights are dying in this wasted land of dreams"). In Cardoso's cleverness. This is not your "run-of-which have been eroded throughout the years. It speaks of the events during the Oka crisis wide as "message music," the stark lines high - only appreciate the music for its dance quality which led to the shooting of a police officer. Ight the plight of the strikering in poor nations. The sax playing is compellingly beautiful; must be appreciate the music for its serious thems.

I found Rain, another one of Cardoso's cleverness. This is not your "run-of-which like the manner of the reggae genre known world - the-mill" stuff, it is haunting and makes one not supplied to the story and the stark lines high - only appreciate the music for its denoted the manner of the reggae genre known world - the-mill" stuff, it is haunting and makes one not supplied to the story appreciate the music for its dance quality but for its serious thems.

I found Rain, another one of Cardoso's cleverness. This is not your "run-of-which have been eroded throughout the years. It is a dying in this wasted land of dreams"). In Cardoso's cleverness. This is not your "run-of-which have been eroded throughout the years. It is a dying in this wasted land of dreams"). In Cardoso's cleverness. This is not your "run-of-which have been eroded throughout the years. It is a dying in this wasted land of dreams"). In Cardoso's cleverness. This is not your "run-of-which have been eroded throughout the years. It is a dying in this wasted land of dreams"). In Cardoso's cleverness. This is not your "run-of-which have been eroded throughout the years. It is a dying in the years. It is a dying in the wasted land of dreams. The wasted land of dreams is not your "run-of-which have been eroded throughout the years. It is a dying in the The sax playing is compellingly beautiful; my only regret is that there wasn't more of it. If Mike Doherty does everything else as well as he plays the saxophone, I'm sure he's blowing a lot of minds out there. The song is ironic in its allusion to the stereotypical cowboy star, who in old westerns always massacred the Indians but could never himself be killed. It celebrates the importance of Native heritage and regrets the importance of Native heritage and regrets the necessity of the killing at Oka. Lisa Wilby's mu-sic provides the vehicle for Dawes lyric on this

Leave us the Sky is indicative of the majority of reggae music. A very thought-provoking lament, and beautiful from first note to its last dying chord, it hits out against those corporations bent on raping the earth with regard for the scars and damage wrought on the environment ("You have taken the earth You have taken the seal The seed is in the soil but the seed won't grow"). The track is done in the slow chanting style known as "dub poetry," and Hick's prominent lead guitar work on this track is simply incredible. track is simply incredible

One of my observations is that several of the tracks carry a common theme; for example, Paradise Wasted, Mr. Lazarus, and Burdens all evoke the existing reality of the world situation, that is, rich and poor nations, thief and beggar nations. Mr. Lazarus lashes the majority of people in the world. There is a harmonious blending of bass, saxophone, and keyboards which makes the track a joy to listen to. Lisa Wilby also provides some good clear contrasting backing vocals for Dawes' strong, rich voice. This theme continues in Paradise Wasted ("Mothers weeping, hungry babies moan...They can't suck milk from stone... People

Jamaica.

Crucial Situation is an emotionally charged song. Written by Luis Cardoso, it is the album's only love song. Crucial Situation is in the tradition of reggae popularly known as lover's rock. The comparison is made between a apartheid, and poverty. This is the epitome of romance and a hazardous song which is the music on Chokota is poetic and riveting, especially where it concerns unpleasant themes such as violence, oppression, apartheid, and poverty. This is the epitome of romance and a hazardous sea voyage; it points to the turbulent and stormy nature of many love

pret them any which way you please. Bird in the Hand is a mixture of melodic vocals and rythmic syncopations, highlighting a duel between the jazzy guitar and saxophone lines. I found this track intriguing and perplexing: I was at a loss as to its meaning, but what the heck! There is no law which states that one must always underout at the manipulations of politicians and cap - stand musicians. The important thing is to enjoy italists which result in oppressive systems for what they do. Both tracks demonstrate the complexity of Cardoso's talent as composer.

Version World is equally interesting and thought-provoking. In Jamaican dialect "version" refers to a musical track which has had the vocals removed, leaving only the drum and the bass line. It is very stark and compelling, and the type of music that those innova-tors of DJ music would chant their lyrics against. In Version World, Ujamaa sings of the false contrived situation in many repressive societies which create oppression and degra-dation for many ("Alpha say apartheid is Nazi-system/ Mix down voices with whips and bru-tality/Wash out sounds with the blood of the people*). A comparison is drawn between the system of apartheid in South Africa and the treatment of music in studios to create a version." Again, one cannot help but notice

Burdens is one of the ancroning songs of Chokota, and denotes anger, passion, doso's compositions, to be the most intectious, and pain while exploring political violence danceable tune of the recording. It simply integrated against Black people and hinting at possible vites one to have fun and I know that many vengeful retaliation. Strong message indeed! It people will find it irresistible. In Rain one sees is because of this type of song that reggae is the symbolic cleansing power and purity of rain still not liked by the political establishment in even amid trepidation of its awesome power.

apartheid, and poverty. This is the epitome of "real" reggae, which I am sure will help to stir

Days run out for me, Life goes from bad to worse, Very soon, very much soon, Time will lead me to the end. Very well. So be it. But one thing I beg of you. If the sun must set for me, If all must come to an end, If you must be rid of me, The way you have done with all my friends, If you must kill me, Do so fost. KILL ME QUICK -Meja Mwangi

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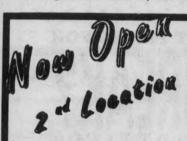
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