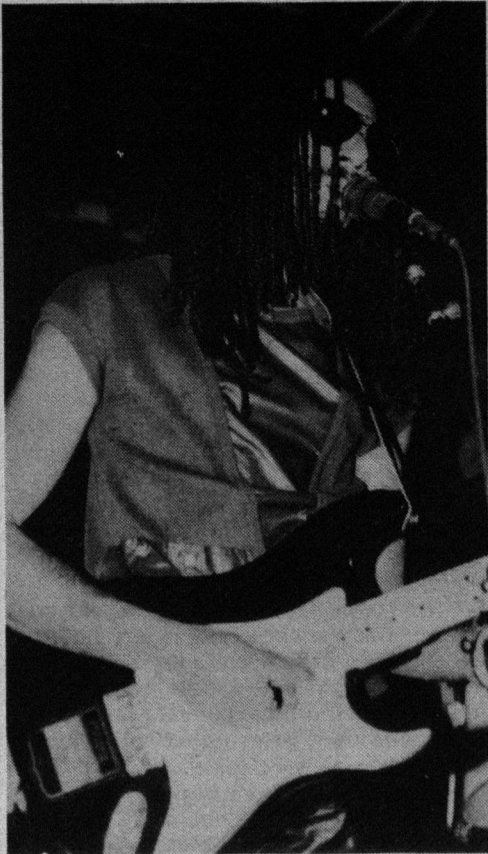


# Reggae's hopeful message lifts spirits



"awakening the people's buried consciousness."

**Bloodfire, Krucial Steppers  
Dinwoodie Oct. 28**

review by Christopher A. Coy

*Bloodfire* played to a large and enthusiastic audience comprised largely of creatively costumed students celebrating Halloween and the end of a gruelling week of mid-term examinations last Friday at Dinwoodie.

Despite the costumes and the occasion the atmosphere was not ghoulish but spiritual. Lead vocalist Clive Ross seemed in religious ecstasy as he strode about the stage between numbers chanting in exaltation to "JAH the ruler of all creation," and prophesying the fall of Babylon (ie. the developed world) when "the righteous will be lifted up on high."

The spiritual message of the music was intermingled with social and political statements. Songs like "Rumours of War" and "Sufferation" drew attention to the oppression of the third world by the super powers. Clive Ross, in another of his between-song-addresses, called for individual freedom and said that, "the legalization of marijuana is inevitable."

Keyboard player Bernie Pitters, whose rhythmic gyrations were exciting to watch, summed up the group's statement in a creative D.J.-style improvisation. "We didn't come to rock Halloween," Pitters

sang, "we came to keep your conscience clean."

*Bloodfire's* members are Clive Ross (bass guitar and lead vocals), Tony Nicholson (rhythm guitar and vocals), Bernie Pitters (keyboards), Alex King (lead guitar), and Tony Withe (drums).

Edmonton's own *Krucial Steppers* appeared as the warm-up band. The *Steppers*, a group less than three months old, seemed somewhat disorganized and unsure of themselves at the beginning of their set. They lacked energy. Vocalist Jeff Deeprouse brought the group to life by the middle of the set, however, singing a good version of Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder they Come."

The appearance of *Bloodfire* and the *Krucial Steppers* on campus is an attestation to the dramatic increase in the popularity of reggae. Since the death of Bob Marley, who brought reggae out of Jamaica, its infant cradle, more and more musicians are playing reggae or incorporating its uniquely syncopated rhythms in their music.

In an interview after the show Clive Ross said, "There is an international acceptance (of reggae) going on right now, but with a contrasting struggle that will always go with reggae, because it is a new music and because it is dangerous to those who want to keep the people down. The theme of our music is international

freedom of all people. And that means the destruction of the present system."

Rhythm guitarist and vocalist, Tony Nicholson said, "Reggae is a message to the people the message of JAH (ie. God). It's like you're more or less prophesying, trying to awaken the people's buried consciousness."

*Bloodfire* is certainly not boring, but they could let their music take them over more. They could commit themselves more to it, become more involved in it. There were indeed some very exciting high points in the performance, but that high energy was not sustained throughout.

Perhaps the problem might be remedied to some degree by incorporating more movement and visual effects to the performance. Some work on the lead and supporting vocals would surely help. The band displays an extremely limited vocal range and there is nothing at all exciting happening in the background. Musically, the vocals are indeed their weak point. A little more variety to the often too repetitious reggae beat would also help to keep things alive.

In spite of their weakness, *Bloodfire* is an entertaining group of musicians and they are a welcome change of pace on campus. Everybody seemed to love it, and no doubt we will be seeing a lot more reggae in Edmonton in the future.

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