

records

Different sides
to reggae coin
in new releases

Third World
All the Way Strong
(CBS)

20th Century Rebels
Rebellion (EP)
(Rebellion)

Third World, the internationally-known Jamaican reggae band, played Massey Hall recently—for \$12 and \$13 a seat. The 20th Century Rebels, on the other hand, are locals—you can't get much more local than Sentinel Road, just down the street from York University, and they just held a free party in honor of their first record release at the Bam Boo. These facts alone should tell you that the two bands represent two quite different sides of the reggae coin.

What they have in common is, of course, the Rastafarian philosophy of universal love, equality, and praise to Jah. From there, Third World takes it in the direction of



slick, sunny and radiant California-style pop—medium-paced, major-keyed, full-sounding bouncy tunes. A few of the cuts on their new albums, notably "Lagos Jump" and "Come on Home," cross over into funk territory. "Special announcement to the universe," sings a

robotic voice on "Love is Out to Get You," "A love mission/Intergalactic." A good summary of what they're about.

The Rebels, on the other hand, are more directly in touch with the "Babylon" around them, and they want it changed. "Chains on my feet, scars I don't like... The children are crying and dem don't know what to do." The opening of "Running From the FBI" sounds like a play on TV detective series music, while the tempo shifts in "Unemployed Expert" add zest to their potent and direct reggae style. Their playing is more than competent: bass and percussion are dynamic and precise, while horns add punch to the mixture periodically.

"The murdah must stop," they conclude. "We're bustin' out of this Babylon." The Rasta bottom line is always the same, whether it's delivered by Third World or the 20th Century Rebels, through the dark hypnotic gloom of Black Uhuru or in the forceful and direct passion of Dennis Brown or Steel Pulse. Third World sums it up: "Once there's love all over the world/No one's gonna take it away." But it's not there yet—that's what groups like the 20th Century Rebels vividly and incisively try to point out.

—ADRIAN IWACHIW

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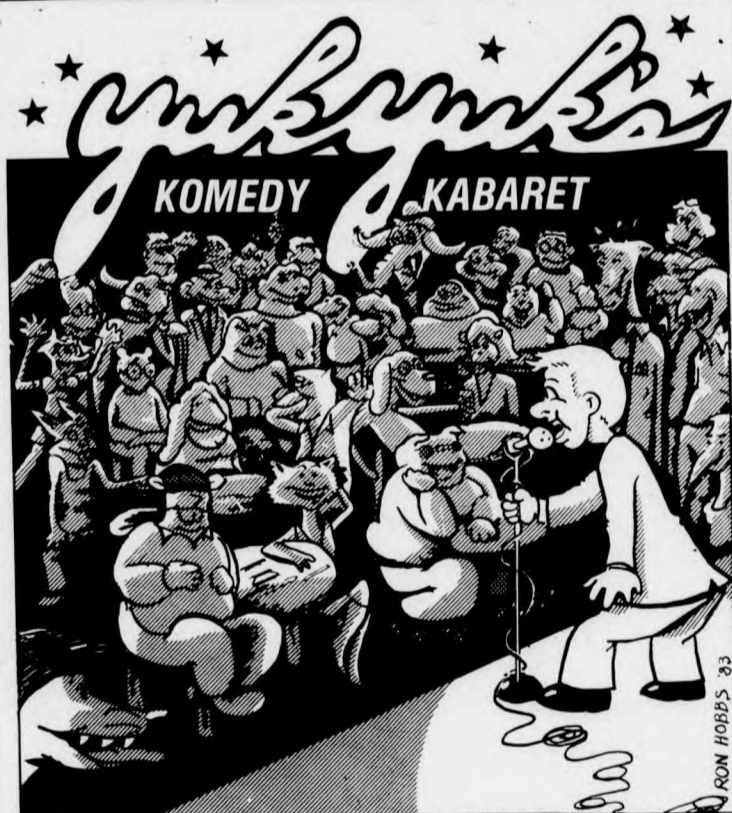
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