

RAS JUDAH – Artist Profile

Ras Judah, a professional Reggae musician, composer and performer, was born and raised in the Jewel of Africa, Botswana, in the 70's.

Like everybody else, music has always been a deep-rooted and integral part of his existence since he was a boy, but his professional musical career began in earnest in 1992 with the ARTISTS REGGAE BAND based in the Central District town of Mahalapye, Botswana. When the band moved to the capital city of Gaborone around 1995 and changed its name to CRUCIAL, it signalled a lot of great things to come for Judah. In Gaborone, he met various musicians with equally diverse musical backgrounds, genres and styles. Among them was well-known Setswana musician Johnny Kobedi who invited Judah to play as a session guitarist on his second Traditional Setswana album. The new inspiration freed his imagination and stretched his creativity.

In 1997 the winds of change were blowing strong and fast. CRUCIAL could not stand the storm and it disbanded for “professional reasons”. Ras Judah, some players from CRUCIAL and other musicians formed STEPPIN' RAZOR. Experience and determination saw STEPPIN' RAZOR transcend frontiers that CRUCIAL could not and it soon established itself as the leading Roots Reggae band in Botswana.

In 1998 Judah got on the reggae train and travelled to Greece, England, Scotland and Ireland. On his European excursion, Ras Judah met with a variety of European musicians and performed with some. In early 2000, Judah travelled to New Zealand where he had a couple of successful solo performances. It was while he was in New Zealand that he initiated and took part in a musical and cultural exchange programme that culminated in him recording a two-track single called “Naletsana. Upon his return to Botswana, Judah's musical growth was evident and his music, though rootsy, was developing an international appeal that gave the music of STEPPIN' RAZOR an unmistakable sound of maturity.

In early 2000 STEPPIN' RAZOR recorded its first album, which featured three of Judah's songs: the title track "African Children", "Tremendous Day" and "Hypocrites and Parasites". The album was a considerable achievement for the band and a real eye opener for Judah. In 2002, with the STEPPIN' RAZOR album out, it was now time for Ras Judah to step out of the shadows and make an album reminiscent of the decade that has been his journey as a musician - journey that began atop a dusty anthill in his home village of Thabala. The project, an eight-track solo album dedicated to Botswana and titled **Jah Warrior** proved to be a long journey.

The recording brings together a wealth of musical diversity from Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and latterly, New Zealand.

Judah moved to New Zealand in September 2004. There he got together with local musicians Aubrey Toko, George Mill, and Dane Nicholson to form OneVibe – a high energy roots reggae band.