

**T**HUMP ..... thump ..... thump  
 bloody thump ..... thump .....  
 thump ..... thump bloody thump  
 ..... steamhammer blows on the skull,  
 with a blunt axe ..... three hours gone  
 and the mix of Dambala's new single  
 "Rebel" just won't come ..... four  
 hours, five hours, they're still not satisfied  
 ..... loudah still and loudah .....  
 accursed perfectionists ..... did  
 Bruegel design this studio or am I  
 dreaming ..... thump ..... thump .....  
 thump bloody YOREEKAH!!!! Suddenly everyone's  
 laughing, dancing, singing ..... the great  
 engineer in the sky has pulled the right lever  
 ..... "million sellah" I hear myself yelling  
 ..... percussionist Horace McKenzie  
 jumps up and down shouting "yes! yes!  
 yes!" ..... seven people simultaneously  
 know that this is The One, the realisation  
 and the celebration exploding side  
 by side.

Later, playing back the tape at guitarist  
 Gus Anyia's flat, the same seven people  
 simultaneously realise that the mix isn't  
 quite as, not exactly what, perhaps a  
 little bit, well not to put too fine a point  
 on it, without beating about the bush, to  
 come straight to the point THE MIX  
 STINX.

"Sometimes strange things happen  
 among the workers during the hemp  
 harvest. It seems as if some dizzy spirit  
 rises from the field which circulates  
 around their legs and mounts mischievously  
 to the brain. The head of the  
 harvester is full of whirlpools, at other  
 times loaded with daydreams."

Baudelaire wrote that — and when  
 Baudelaire laid it down it stayed there.  
 Fortunately, the same can be said of  
 Dambala. The mix of "Rebel" you'll hear  
 on record as a mutha; a mutha completed  
 (it pains me to say) in the first  
 hour of that cumulative cloud six-hour  
 session. Such a fine madness.

But now .....

**SILENCE IN THE COURT, THE  
 COURT'S IN SESSION, JUDGE  
 CROAKSHIT PRESIDES.** .... Dambala,

you are charged with labelling yourself  
 a reggae band in defiance of the Official  
 Roots (Preservation Of Ethnocentric  
 And Orthodox Stagnation) Act of 1979.  
 How do you plead?

"Charged, m'lud."

Step forward and identify yourselves.  
 Name?

"Gus, Anyia, guitarist, born Nigeria."

Next.

"Alvin Christie, guitarist, born Liverpool."

Next.

"Horace McKenzie, percussionist, born  
 Guyana."

Next.

"Thomas Cadette, keyboards, born St.  
 Lucia."

Next.

"James St. Louis, bassie, also from St.  
 Lucia m'crud."

Next.

"Kelvin Lovell, drummie, born Barbados."

Dambala, you are surely aware that  
 reggae music can only lawfully be  
 played by Jamaican musicians? Yet you  
 freely admit that not one of you is of  
 Jamaican extraction. Christie, you wish  
 to say something?

"One of my parents is Jamaican sir."

That makes it worse you ..... you .....  
 you Judas! Yes, McKenzie?

"I don't think you're supposed to be  
 Jamaican to play reggae. Cos we feel the  
 same beat they feel when we hear the  
 music, therefore it's one thing. There is a  
 difference in what we're doing but I  
 don't see why there should be any  
 hardship in that — it's more a variation  
 than a fundamental difference. Being  
 born in different places we express the  
 basics of reggae differently, therefore  
 we cannot play it the normal way it's  
 done. We play it to create our own



# REBEL ROUSERS

Since their formation in 1977, Dambala have been in the forefront of the aesthetic and functional revolutions which are shaping the new reggae — pluralistic, global orientated musicians who have spliced rock, jazz, highlife and politics onto "orthodox" reggae with stunning results. Their 1978 debut single, "Zimbabwe", broke practically every rule in the book and their current follow-up, "Rebel", takes a similar path. Like other comparable new reggae bands, Dambala have been lambasted as roots "traitors" by practically every reggae critic in the UK — a glib, reactionary assault made all the easier in this instance by the fact that Dambala's line-up includes not a single Jamaican. CHRIS MAY meets the band, in the studio and at the Kangaroot Kourt.



feeling within that whole structure."

Take that man out and disembowel him. Dambala, you are charged with conspiring to destroy reggae music, and the whole fabric of roots as we know it, by using blatantly adventurous chord changes, rhythms and instrumental solos. You are charged with using political, materialist and non-metaphorical lyrics in your song "Zimbabwe", thereby raising the labouring man's consciousness. Let the following lyrics be entered as Kourt Exhibit Number One —

"..... crucify Smith and take back Zimbabwe, crucify Smith and take back Namibia, crucify Vorster and take back Azania ..... brothers and sisters out there fighting on the front line, keep up your spirits cos Africa will soon be ours ....."

Anyia, you have admitted writing these revolting lyrics. Do you wish to say anything before we kill you?

"You're probably asking how come a Rasta is involved in politics? Well, it's

not politics, it's just a matter of reality. And the reality must be confronted by every available means of attack. When I was visiting Nigeria two years ago I met some Zimbabwean brothers from ZANU and ZAPU who told me what was going on. They're just using the black people out there as slaves. And most of the very few schools for black children are run by missionaries, so they're dealing with the church mainly. That's why the word crucifixion comes into it, because the church can help but they're not doing as much as they could do. It's necessary for everybody in that country, white and black, to get rid of this man Smith and his system. I feel very strongly about it."

Charged as guilty, you leprous psychopath. Now for Exhibits Numbers Two, Three and Four. That is, the chord changes, rhythms and solos referred to earlier. Having heard these I consider them nothing short of sacrilege; your deviant style has poisoned reggae by incorporating alien influences — more

seriously you have introduced these malignant growths over thundering rockers rhythms, thus compounding your crime and thoroughly confusing those of us responsible for enforcing the said Official Roots (Preservation Of Ethnocentric And Orthodox Stagnation) Act. What is your defence? Christie?

"Everybody in the band has been in England at least fourteen years. Not only moving with black kids but with white kids too. Listening to white music as well as black music, which in itself is a means of progression. This is a very cosmopolitan environment and naturally that's reflected in our music. To be truthful you have to be truthful to yourself and there's bands in this country which have been born in the same environment as we and they are trying to play Jamaican reggae straight. And that's not being truthful. Cos they cannot have that feeling. In this environment it's almost impossible, not unless they go back and forth, like, six months here and six months there. The UK is part of our roots whether we like it or not.

"As soon as I open my mouth they know where I come from so there's no point in trying to hide that. Not that I want to anyway, I'm not ashamed of it."

The man's a lunatic. Give him a full frontal lobotomy. Anyia?

"There must be progress. Right now, all I can hear around me is pure stagnation. I buy this one's album, I buy the next one's album, is the same feel all the time. We have to move on. Those people who go on about roots they don't know what roots it, just right now it's the most cultural word to use. Roots is an individual thing. It's like in this country the Yorkshire man has different roots from the Londoner. Same with black music. Culturally it's the same, but they both got different roots. Augustus Pablo's roots are different from my roots but it's still roots."

Enough! Enough! This is sheer blasphemy. The old one-two crape-roonie. Well it don't work around here, mister. Take Anyia and the rest out and cut their tongues out. Then burn them. Slowly.

The Kourt issues a public warning. Anyone found listening to Dambala reggae will be charged with both conduct likely to rock the boat and with enjoying themselves. Kourt adjourned. Bring on the mothballs.