



Sister  
Simiah



## SISTER SIMIAH BIOG **EARLY YEARS AND SEEDS**

Music has always been a big part of my life, not because I was lucky enough to learn and play instruments as a child but because ever since I can remember music was blazing out of my home. We were a very poor family living in social housing, with very little by way of material things. However bad or hard things were, we did use to find happiness and joy in listening and dancing to music. My mum, a single parent from when I was 2 years old, bringing up 2 children, struggling to provide us with what we wanted. She loved a variety of music and like a lot of women in the 80s went through a disco dancing phase, although this became a bit more than a phase as she had a glass cabinet in the living room full of dance trophies and pictures of her at the world dance championships.

I was a child in the early to mid 80s, with no idea what part reggae music would play in my life, I remember back to the first reggae vibes and seeds I picked up on many years before reaching the dance let alone song writing. My brother sometimes used to buy the latest chart music with the little pocket money he got on a Saturday. I looked forward to hearing what he would come home with and loved hearing all types of music, dancing to rhythms around the house as the music played loud. This one time he came home with some notably good sounding songs and music by the UK group Musical Youth, their songs were played over and over, I never got tired of them, amongst other music I also loved many Bob Marley, UB40 and Madness tracks. One of few happy memories I had as a child, was on one summers day during the holidays as I walked with my brother down a local street, we both realised the street's name and started laughing and joking as we sang and skanked a little dance to the Eddie Grant lyrics from the song (Electric Avenue) which was the name of that actual street. The one most memorable track which I loved back then was uptown top ranking by Althea and Donna. I loved the cool sound of the female voices in unison, the vibes, their style and rhythm was way different to regular pop music of the time.

## **REGGAE DANCES**

A long time ago now, I attended my first reggae dance in Southend at the age of only 14, I think the session was Jah Tubbys sound at the Top Alex, in Alexandra street, a well known reggae venue in Southend at that time. I remember being so impressed seeing Jasmine Joe (later to be aba-shanti) sing with power and strength on the mike and watching him help with setting up the sound. Little did I know who he would grow to become.

Obviously at the age of 14 I was under age. A wayward adult friend of my mums, against her will or knowing, got me into the venue, I had found out that he knew the door men and had begged him to take me to the dance and get me in on the door. It was the most exciting night I had ever experienced. After that night I continued to attend local dances whenever I could, which as a youngster, wasn't very often as it was very hard to find the money. I hid the fact that I was struggling in school from my mum. My mum as a single parent who had dyslexia, had the attitude that the school should educate me and that it was not up to the parents, rarely attending parents evenings in secondary school, she had no idea how much I was struggling or my poor attendance records.

I learned from an early age my mum could not help me with home work and I was too embarrassed to tell the teachers or friends about this. I used to sit around my new older friends houses listening to records on most nights. In the late 80s I grew such strong love for the vibes and conscious message found within reggae music. I quickly distinguished between different reggae styles and realised I could not tolerate local dance hall sounds and their mentality.

Strictly conscious music was the order of the day. This is probably because In my younger childhood I was made to attend a local church of my mum's every week, as a teenager I later came away from religion in my first real act of bravery confronting the bishop, during a coming of age interview, after being asked that I did not believe they were the one and only true church, but that all good people could go to heaven, church or no church. I was finding it so hard in this time as a teenager to link all my worlds together of church, school, social life and musical taste. I'm sure I must have been seen as a bad girl to some back then coming away from the church, going to reggae dances so young but I knew it was a good and safe place to be and followed my heart onto its true path, I knew within myself it was more important to be honest to god and myself, than lie to others. If I had any faith or respect for god or hope for a place in his kingdom I must be true.

Reggae dances were my safe haven, I have always been conscious and thankful of the fact that reggae music existed and the dance was a place to enjoy, be happy and dance and forget about my troubles, get lost in the rhymes, a place where I felt comfortable safe and able to chill, with people of all colours and ages, no negative, drunken violence or heavy drug culture, just conscious vibes, best of all discovering teachings within the music and songs of stories from the bible which thankfully and eventually brought me back to my faith and a good path. The dance always felt the right place for me to be, I loved listening to the knowledge and messages, reggae music supported my faith and guided me in thinking for myself, asking questions and finding answers, it was this which helped my faith become stronger, a truer more honest faith than it ever was before. Reggae music is spiritual conscious music with a message, foundations from the bible and roots, it was that which helped strengthen and reinforce my faith. Ready for whatever the world threw at me. Of course like all young people I had to learn a lessons along the way but the will to want to be a good person within me and within god's sight, the need to feel thorough in my search for who I am and the example I want to be. It took me a long time to realise what happened to me and why I had to go through certain things, it was that which made me realise I was never alone and educated me, I was always and still am guided along the way. We all have so much more to learn in this world.

## **JAH FREE MUSIC**

I first met Jah Free around 1993 mixing his previous band Bushfire in the Chalkwell Tea Rooms Southend, we made an instant connection and later grew a strong friendship and bond. Jah Free helped teach me about life's positives, how to bring positive to others and the rewards it brings rather than focusing on your own problems. He gave me much guidance and help in all things, helping me to grow stronger and helping me learn new skills. I found his musical world and vibes fascinating; he has a joyful way and great sometimes annoying sense of humour. Sometimes funny things happen and we both just sit unable to say a word in laughter. My life with Jah Free is a much needed positive bright and inspirational place to be. We teamed up and started to make plans together with my new ideas and his experience we made a good team. I encouraged him to go forward in his own music and relentlessly provided him with new ideas to help promote his works and push us forward. My organisation design and creativity versus his free spirit and openness and musical skills balance out well within our works. We spent some 3 years or more running Joint Promotions in the Roots hall Club Southend United football ground, which many great artists, sounds and supporters attended, it was a successful, memorable and joyful time for all involved.

After spending much time watching and listening to the works within Jah Free Music studio, I found myself experimenting and exploring sound technology and with a little encouragement singing to support Jah Free Music. I always loved to hear the female voice on reggae tracks in my youth, but realised female singers within reggae music were far and few between. I also always had the need to be creative in every aspect of my life. I continued to practice and create songs back in the 90s and enjoyed the privilege of being able to play around dubbing it up on Jah Frees many mixing desks over the years. Singing become more of a serious thing when Jah Free returned from gigs giving me feedback from the sessions telling me when people liked a particular new song of mine. As a person of little confidence I never could believe it, until one time he returned with evidence to prove to me, a recording, you could hear the audience respond with cheers as he pulled up between versions. This spurred me on, I continued to enjoy creating songs in my own space and time, especially in the

years whilst I was at home alone as a young mum (during Jah Free's Universal Egg Experience Tour, Zion Train and Vibronics period)

Although I desperately missed going out to the sessions, as a person who had little parental support, or family around me to help out... doing things right as a parent, was to me the most important thing, I had to put my child before my own pleasure of music. Access to the studio thankfully enabled me to feel a part of Jah Free Music even though I was not travelling with Jah Free to gigs outside of the UK. Back in those days I was able to build basic tracks on the computer, now day's technology has advanced so much I'm always trying to catch up but hope to once again build some of my own tracks. Some of my old works, I listen back now and cringe because I know they are not sung well but the messages are true and clear so not all bad. There are just a few early works I still listen to. I can't regret those works because those early works were my building blocks which got me where I am today, everybody has to start somewhere.

My first ever song was called Hear Me Calling Jah released on Jah Free Breaking Out CD/LP, there is thoughts to press it on vinyl vintage style and create a revamp version. See what come...

Another special track back in those times was Love One Another originally created by Althea and Donna. When I first heard their track I could not believe I had not realised it before, on the B side of Up Town Top Ranking 7" a truly respectable and conscious works, totally wasted on the UK main stream pop charts. I was determined to try singing it back to its rightful place the dance. Ensuring its conscious message was known about and lives on. Love One Another is a very popular track for the long time Jah Free Music supporter. It was requested that it be put out on Universal Egg Outer national Dub Convention CD/ LP but we only allowed the dub version to be put out trying to avoid a lot of copy rights aggravation which may have come.

Set Me Free was also on the Outer National Dub Convention

There's a big catalogue of songs I have created which Jah Free has played over the years, people may have heard only one or two at a session from a whole load of dubplate and versions which to this day are unreleased. Maybe one day... who knows what path they will take? I Realise I'm extremely lucky to have Jah Free supporting my works within his music over these past 20 years.

He has been able to take my songs to many towns' festivals and countries around the world for which I'm truly grateful.

The first thing I will say to people when they say they like my voice or song is that I'm not a very confident singer. I have learned to love my own creative space when making songs, by shutting out the world, sometimes even Jah Free. I work alone when creating vocals and a lot of my experimental styles end up in the bin before I find something I'm happy with; I don't like to sing on demand or have to rush when creating. The most interesting thing is seeing how I now sing when working with other people's music and vibes. I don't want to listen to others vocals on a track but start fresh with a natural path and see what comes and where the vibes take me.

Give thanks Anaia for this opportunity and supporting my works.

## **SISTER SIMIAH DISCOGRAPHY**

HEAR ME CALLING	CD/LP BREAKING OUT
SYSTEMS...	CD/LP BREAKING OUT
LOVE ONE ANOTHER DUB...	EGG FILES CD
TEMPLES	10” JAHFREE MUSIC
STAR GAZING...	CD UNITY JAHFREEE MUSIC
WATCH OVER....	CD UNITY JAHFREE MUSIC
HEAD TO HEAD....	CD UNITY
ROOTS A RUN...	CD UNITY
LET THE WIND BLOW ...	HONKEY DUB CD
WRITTEN IN THE STARS	DUB VIBES CD
TURNING THE GRACE	12” JAH FREE MUSIC
COME OUT OF BABYLON	12” JAH FREE MUSIC
RASTAFARI VIBES	12” JAH FREE MUSIC
RASTA CHANTA	12” JAH FREE MUSIC
RASTA IN THE HEART	CD JAHFREE MUSIC
MANKIND	
EPHIOPIAN PEOPLE	
SHEPHERD	
FOUNDATION	
IN JAH KINGDOM	
RASTA LIVITY	
TURN AGAIN ISRAEL	
RASTAFARI VIBES	
RASTA CHANTA	
WHAT PURPOSE	12” JAH FREE MUSIC
GUIDE AND PROTECTOR	12” JAHFREE MUSIC
SOON COME....	
ZION GATE /ANAIA RECORDS	
PROMICE KEY DUB IRATION	
DONT BE A FOOL/ CAP ROOTS	