

Music Review: Nattali Rize & Notis-New Era Frequency-Notis



Nattali Rize's foray into reggae began in 2005 as the lead vocalist, co-founder and chief songwriter of the Australian based Blue King Brown. "Water" was their nuanced single about imperialism in the new world and the video racked-up enough views to take them beyond their down under audience. Rize's lyrics were unapologetic about cultural displacement but her delivery made the serious topic sound like uplifting world pop music. *New Era Frequency* has the same consciousness wrapped in velvet made with consoling rhythms from Jamaican production duo Notis and Rize's good-natured vocals. "Generations Will Rise" is fiercely hopeful in a younger generation who will reject mental slavery inside an amicable

arrangement of bright riddims and stark vocals from Kabaka Pyramid. Rize's politics are always present in each song but she also recognizes love as a force for living. Revolutionaries still need companionship and "Rebel Love" featuring Zuggu Dan doubly serves as opposition to the establishment and romantic yearning. Wayne "Unga Barunga" Thompson and Jason "Big Bass" Welsh of Notis provide a heavier sonic bottom to Rize's breezy singing which places them in the reggae and pop worlds at the same time. Her light touch to the microphone is a strategic sell of radicalism without sounding radical. "Heart Of Lion" is rebellion disguised as non-threatening reggae but Rize's words about "Trouble in the jungle take it to the streets" is another edict to demand changes to the status quo. Rize and Notis ultimately handle their duties well by balancing *New Era Frequency's* politics with feel-good playing which will appeal to the most casual fans of reggae.

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