

Music Review: Stephen Marley- Revelations Part II: The Fruit Of Life



Stephen Marley's *Revelation Part II: The Fruit Of Life* departs from *Part I* in its heavier embrace of hip-hop, the addition of dance music and many collaborators. Rap legend Rakim's appearance on the rootsy "So Unjust" with Canadian rapper Kardinal Offishall is a lyrical fit to the Marley philosophy of questioning the establishment. But Rick Ross's verses about his struggles with criminality in "The Lion Roars" with Ky-Mani Marley sounds like something better suited for the *Shottas* soundtrack. The attempt to connect the struggles of those belonging to the African diaspora fares better with Wyclef Jean's addition to "Father Of The Man." Jean reflects on Malcolm X's death, the Iraq War and the media coverage of his run for President of Haiti. His gentle braggadocio floats with the serene production that makes the worries of Babylon disappear into waves of soft guitar and a strolling beat. Waka Flocka is another guest rapper and his verses for "Scars On My Feet" tell of the toil he experienced to leave poverty over a beat that has the essence of trap and reggae rhythms. Marley is not confined to contemporary sounds and looks back to R&B from the 60s on "Music Is Alive" with his brother Damian Jr. Gong and "So Strong" with Shaggy. Busta Rhymes and Konshens have perfectly-timed bedroom raps for the slow-dancing romance of "Pleasure Or Pain." Pitbull guests on "When She Dances" which has remixes from DJ Chino and DJ Noodles. Both versions provide a much-needed balance and escape from a troubled world. Marley's obvious overtures to his American fans with so many guest artists has a few moments

of sonic bumpiness but his voice and the production ultimately melds everything together into the humanity of reggae. *Revelations* is similar to the Nas and Damian Marley *Distant Relatives* album in its spirit of cross-genre collaboration butÂ different because of its stock of multiple styles.