

Review in Berlingske Tidende May 22, 1995 by Per Reinholdt Nielsen

## Bass and bottom

Unique and extremely rare Danish reggae release that measures up to the best in the genre.

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### Reggae

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by Per Reinholdt Nielsen

We've hit rock bottom, and it's a good thing. The Danish group "Bass And Trouble", which is practically commensurate with the Danish reggae scene, is one of the few bands in this country that knows that rhythmic music is about rhythm. It's actually hard to believe just how static the rhythm is in Denmark's hottest selling rock music, where melodies come first and beat is relegated to second place. "Bass And Trouble" have themselves made the important

observation that when a traditional Danish rock song reaches the chorus, the song's rhythm grinds to a stop. Typical Danish rock songs rarely have a solid rhythm track to swing or rock to. But this is not a label you can attach to the songs produced by these Danish groove operators.

The members of "Bass And Trouble" have been hard at work on the beat for many years, and have also managed to renew their sound along the way. If you think that the reggae scene is a dead-end street, where time has stood still since Bob Marley's death in 1981, "Bass And Trouble" will remedy that misconception. This is not only because the band – as they would put it – have managed to combine the Marley sound with that of Dr Dre, currently the most innovative hip-hop producer around, but also because they have built up such a wide register of musical ability and, from their position outside the mainstream of

Danish rock, are free to ignore the clichés that this environment has imposed on so many other bands. Stylistic elements drawn from gently melodic lovers rock, aggressive raggamuffin, solid roots reggae and that funk are combined with the melancholic Moog lines of gangsta rap, the elegant strings of Soul II Soul, rock guitar, and more – to form a supremely musical hybrid that never loses its low-down rocking groove. Thomas Bøje's powerful bass lines blend with YoAkim's artful mix of rhythm-box programming and acoustic drums, and the two of them keep the whole sound pumping on the on-beat and the off-beat. But everything else is rhythmic too, and the CD seductively beckons to the dance floor: from start to finish.

Bass And Trouble perform with an energy that is all their own and an original swing that really deserves a larger, international audience. They also make ideal

use of guest appearances in the form of the rhythmically round and dark rap vocalist Al Agami and by the petit female rapper Natascha Saad, who delivers a superbly powerful performance featuring her own unique and fascinating phrasing. And if the lyrics of singer Philip K do sometimes drift toward a slightly holier-than-thou armchair philosophy, this is more than made up for by his uniquely elegant, precise and melodically gentle vocal performances. There are no weak points at all in Bass And Trouble's second release, "Selector's Item". The album is full of bass and bottom, but also first-rate rhythms, personality and melodies.

### Bass And Trouble:

*Selectors Item. Producer : YoAkim and Phase 5. (Mega).*