

## SIZZLA

### LOVE IS FOREVER

Sizzla Kalonji is one of the most prolific leaders of the conscious Reggae dancehall movement. Emerging in the latter half of the 90s, he helped lead dancehall back to the musical and spiritual influence of roots reggae and heavily Rastafarian subject matter. He was born Miguel Collins on April 17, 1976 in St Mary and was raised in the community of August Town by devout Rastafarian parents. The 1980s witnessed a dancehall explosion, and with the music came the lifestyle. Sizzla watched carefully, collecting his lyrical ammunition. He began his career in the music industry in his early teenage years. After honing his vocal skills, he landed a gig with the Caveman Hi-Fi sound system, where he first made a name for himself as a performer. He cut his first single for the small Zagalou label in 1995, and soon moved on to Fattis "Exterminator" Burrell. Extensive touring with fellow roots and culture artist Luciano followed, earning Sizzla critical acclaim. Working with Fattis marked an important turning point for Sizzla. From the outset their relationship was one of mutual respect and inspiration. A run of successful singles led to the release of Sizzla's debut album, 'Burning Up' (RAS). The alliance again proved fruitful a year later with the follow-up, 'Praise Ye Jah' (JetStar). Securing his position as a top conscious reggae artist, he set about cultivating his role as a spiritual messenger. Sizzla's combination of Rasta principles and up-to-the-minute dancehall rhythms made his hard line approach more palatable. A brilliant and passionate performer, Sizzla broke boundaries, appealing to those looking for something new, music with depth. His major breakthrough came with the release in 1997 of the now classic album, 'Black Woman and Child' (Greensleeves). Bearing all the hallmarks of Bobby 'Digital' Dixon's dancehall-influenced production, the impact on both the reggae and mainstream markets was phenomenal. The evocative title track, issued as a single, rapidly achieved anthemic status. Along with universal praise came Sizzla's first nomination for Best International Reggae Artist of the Year at the 1998 MOBO Awards and a place in various magazines' top 100 albums of the year. Sizzla scored several more hits during 1997, including 'Like Mountain', 'Babylon Cowboy,' 'Kings of the Earth,' and the Luciano duet 'Build a Better World.' This hot streak kicked off an enormously productive recording binge that has lasted for years. He has an ability to fuse passionate lyrical styling with deceptively simple rhythms that take in range of genres from staccato dancehall and gentle roots reggae to surprisingly commercial R&B and soul arrangements. Somewhat controversial, Kalonji has maintained to the views of the Bobo Ashanti Rastafarians, particularly his aggressive condemnations of slavery, inhumane acts, and Western Oppressors. Overall his music is generally positive, advocating faith, compassion for poor black youth, and respect



for women. He remains something of an enigma to the public at large, rarely granting interviews and keeping his concert appearances to a minimum. Nonetheless, he still ranks as arguably the most popular conscious reggae artist of his time. A versatile singjay-style vocalist with a gruff, gravelly tone, he is capable of both rapid fire chatting, powerful, melodic singing, and his best backing riddims are among the strongest in contemporary dancehall. Sizzla Kalonji has released over 45 impressive solo albums and over fifteen combination albums, crossing different genres of Reggae. The number of mix tapes on the street are countless. He also started his own company Kalonji Records; this set the mark of his growth not only as a great reggae artist but also a record label executive and businessman. In a joint venture with Kalonji Records, his most recent album *The Overstanding* was released in November 2006 with Damon Dash Music Group and Koch Records. It is as prolific, infectious, and melodic as the previous albums. This is his third album released through Kalonji Records; as well as 'Black History' and 'Life'. Sizzla Kalonji continues to release music through his career showcasing the level of talent that exudes through his creativity. In addition to his musical breakthroughs, Sizzla continues to build different business opportunities to empower himself and the community by creating an environment for young people to grow and develop skills. Currently, some of his new business initiatives include a signature Sizzla shoe distributed by Pro-Keds; a Sizzla clothing line, an outlet for communities to tell their stories and be creative through Black Magazine, Rasta TV, and a recording studio; plus a sound system to spread the music using Tafari Sounds. As Sizzla Kalonji continues to build and grow, the community builds and grows but most importantly, he is creating opportunities for young people who sometimes don't have opportunities the same way he was given an opportunity.