

IN THE STUDIO

ROCK STEADY
Cliff and Armstrong
recording in L.A.



Reggae King Jimmy Cliff Takes Back His Crown

Working with Rancid's Tim Armstrong, Cliff cuts his best music in decades

WHEN RANCID'S TIM Armstrong first hit the studio with Jimmy Cliff to produce the reggae legend's new record in May, the two had never even met. "I had no idea how it was

Album Untitled EP
Due Out November

going to work out," Armstrong says. During their first session, he picked up an acoustic guitar and started jamming on the Clash's "The Guns of Brixton." Cliff watched for a while, then headed over to an old Jamaican hand drum and started playing along. "For 12 minutes, he was locked into this serious rhythm," Armstrong says. "It was like magic."

The Clash cover appears on Cliff's new EP, due in November (a full album is coming next year). Since getting inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame last year, Cliff has set about reclaiming his legacy as reggae's greatest living artist. "People in the Hall of Fame tend

to clap their hands and say, 'OK, I've done it all,'" says Cliff, 63. "But for me, it was a new beginning." Cliff returned to a batch of songs he had begun writing in 2009, when he skipped his annual European tour and traveled to Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Ghana. "Africa is like an injection for me," says Cliff. "Being there gave me that high feeling - the songs just poured out." Last summer, he road-tested the new material on a rare U.S. run that included a triumphant stop at Bonnaroo.

Cliff's label put him in touch with Armstrong - a reggae-obsessed punk like their mutual friend, the late Joe Strummer - and the producer assembled a five-piece backing band in Hollywood's Sound Factory. Recording live on vintage gear, they averaged a song a day. The resulting tunes have the loose, organ-fueled feel of Sixties-era rock steady. "He reminded me of a lot of things that I had forgotten," the singer says of Armstrong. "He brought me back to my roots."

Cliff began making music half a century ago, becoming a teenage star in Jamaica and mentoring a young Bob Mar-

ley. In 1964, he signed to Island Records, recording a string of bright, soulful singles with deceptively tough lyrics about poverty and war. He became a global superstar after playing outlaw singer Ivan Martin in the 1972 movie *The Harder They Come*; the soundtrack (featuring songs like the title track and "Many Rivers to Cross") helped break reggae around the world.

Four decades later, Cliff's tenor still soars on new tracks like the joyful, flute-soaked "Our Ship Is Sailing" and "World Upside Down," where he rails against economic instability and religious hypocrisy over a sped-up groove. "I've abused myself a lot over the years," he says, "but my voice is still intact - really, it's better."

The latest phase of Cliff's career, the singer says, is just getting started. He hopes to return to acting with movies including a possible sequel to *The Harder They Come* - and he's been writing an album of songs inspired by the soundtrack. "I have not become the artist I believe I am," he says. "I want to become a stadium act. I'm not done at all." **PATRICK DOYLE**

STUDIO NOTES

Petty hits the studio with Heartbreakers

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers have started recording the follow-up to last year's *Mojo*, but it might be a while



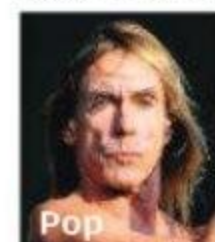
Petty

until they finish the disc. "I did four tracks last week with the Heartbreakers," says

Petty. "We're talking about doing some more, but we're going real slow right now." Petty has told *ROLLING STONE* in the past that he might not ever do another major Heartbreakers tour, but now he's leaving the option open. "I kind of don't want to get on the same merry-go-round again," he says. "But I don't know. It's early."

Iggy, Stooges' guitarist cut first tunes since '79

Iggy Pop and Stooges guitarist **James Williamson** are working on their first new songs since Iggy's 1979 LP, *New Values*. "This spring, James came to my place in Miami and we wrote about 10 songs," says Iggy. "I think we like about



Pop

half of them." One track, "Requiem for a Heavyweight," is a tribute to late Stooges guitarist **Ron**

Asheton, who died in 2009. They performed the acoustic tune at an Asheton tribute gig in Ann Arbor, Michigan, this April. "We're gonna keep writing," adds Iggy. "I think that James would like to make an album, and I'd like to make the score for an intelligent video game or something - so as far as what the format might be, I don't know."

French dance duo Justice go arena-rock

Four years after their debut - featuring the supercatchy "D.A.N.C.E." - took dance music by storm, French duo Justice have finally completed their second album. Recorded over the past year in a Paris



Augé

basement, *Audio, Video, Disco* (out October 25th) layers arena-rock guitars and synths

over booming house beats. "The first album was night in the city," says multi-instrumentalist **Gaspard Augé**. "This one is more like a day in the countryside. There's a bit more sun in it."