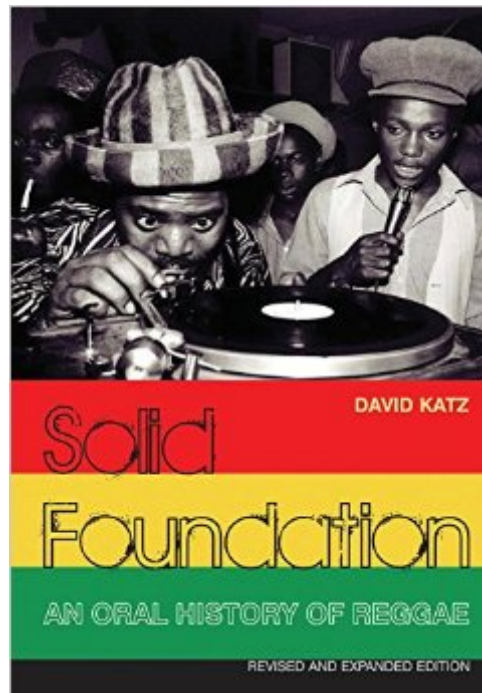


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Solid Foundation: An Oral History Of Reggae



Synopsis

Solid Foundation is the definitive history of reggae, from the earliest Jamaican innovators of the 1940s to the new stars of the 21st century. Drawing on more than 300 firsthand interviews, this landmark book tells the fascinating story of some of the most compelling characters in popular music. It features a diverse range of pioneers, such as The Skatalites, The Wailers, Jimmy Cliff, and Lee 'Scratch' Perry, dub legends such as Augustus Pablo, Prince Jammy, and Scientist, as well as dancehall giants like Elephant Man, Beenie Man, and Buju Banton. It details the entire evolution of Jamaican popular music, including ska, rock steady, roots reggae, dub, dancehall, ragga, and more. First published in 2003, Solid Foundation was widely praised as "a cracking read" and "a necessary work". This fully revised and updated edition brings the story into the 21st century with new chapters on the key performers of recent times and extensive additions throughout.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The books that have been available on the history and background of reggae have (almost) always been organized around the rise of Bob Marley and the Wailers and have (again, almost) always shown an overconcentration on what went on in the UK (as opposed to Jamaica). Katz's book is blessedly different. For one thing, it's an oral history (as opposed to a researched/analytical history) and as such, he lets the artists and producers and other figures speak for themselves. This gets the reader much closer to the source than any other similar text. The story also unfolds in the same way that a bunch of guys shooting the breeze in a bar might tell it which I found extremely compelling. It is also the very first book on reggae that made me really understand the nature of the connection

between London and Jamaica (besides just asserting a large expat community in London). Not only that, but it's the first time I remember reading anyone giving credit to the NY scene as well. Because of the anecdotal nature of the book, it's hard to hold the writer accountable for its weaknesses. It's not really set up to be a research tool (it's hard to find specific facts or specific stories) and after reading it for a while, you realize that there are several voices missing from the narrative. Some have been exposed to death in other places (Marley, Peter Tosh, Lee Perry) but there are others I found conspicuous by their absence (Inner Circle, Brigadier Jerry, Yellowman). Finally, I just LOVE the focus on musicians. These guys are the real heart of reggae but have long stood in the shadows of the singers and producers.

Readable, but just barely. There wasn't much that was new here, to me, and much of what's there seems trivial. Or at least, not presented in a context that makes me want to keep reading. I much preferred the Lloyd Bradley book about Jamaican music.

This is a must have for the serious reggae fan. There is a whole heap of information here and might be too much to digest for the casual dabbler in the genre but if you, like myself, are really into it then this epic volume is essential! One love, Jimbo Jimbo

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