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### Various, "From Dubplate to Download: The Best of Greensleeves Records" [Greensleeves, 2007]

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Okay, so here is my synopsis of this 2-CD set. Greensleeves Records has an amazing catalog. They have established themselves as a premiere reggae label. I am glad they are celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday or anniversary (whatever it is that record labels celebrate). And yet, this compilation does not do them justice.

They definitely have the material – Barrington Levy, Sizzla, Gregory Isaacs, Yellowman, Eek-A-Mouse, Shaggy, Wailing Souls, Wayne Wonder, Beres Hammond, Wayne Smith – I could go on. But the flow of these songs – OHMIGOD. To their credit, the first disc does a much better job than the second at compiling something cohesive. To follow Eek-A-Mouse's "Wa-Do-Dem" with Yellowman's "Zungguzungguzungguzeng" makes sense. J.C. Lodge's "Telephone Love" and Gregory Isaacs' "Rumours" are back to back because they're on the same riddim. Nice.

But let's get to the second disc. It starts off with Shaggy's "Oh Carolina" – a remake of the old ska hit. Then Buju Banton & Cocoa Tea sing, "If you want to be my lover you have to be 18 or older" on "Too Young." Wicked tune. Then we abruptly slow down with Bounty Killer's "Down in the Ghetto" followed by... nope, you'll never guess. Garnett Silk – yes, some roots and culture with "Lord Watch Over Our Shoulders." Then we jump from praising Jah to Beres Hammond's recent break-up with "Over You." But now that he's single he can go meet Sizzla's "Black Woman and Child" because, yes, that's what's next. That got a little slow so Beenie Man adds some energy with "Who Am I?" *Da girls dem sugar*. Then from the dark bass of Beenie, we get the perky "Head's High" from Mr. Vegas. So as not to get in a perky groove, Ward 21 follows with "See dem run when I buss my gun... *Da one yah name blood stain, pussyhole dis mi coppa, fall like rain*" on "Blood Stain." With our fill of slackness, we shift to "get your dance on" with Elephant Man's "Log On." Is my point coming through yet?

Well, I'm still going... Wayne Wonder's "No Letting Go" on the Diwali riddim comes after Ele to be followed by a ganja tune from Hollow Point and Alozade on a completely different type of riddim, the Clappas riddim, "Under Mi Sensi." Shift gears because it's Vybz Kartel next with "Tekk" – "Tek buddy gal, yuh think me easy? Who you ramp wid? Yuh a live easy. Tek me things and yuh tek me money too so tek buddy too, tek buddy too." Pull up! Because we're really taking a turn – Fantan Mojah for a change of pace with "Hail the King" – "It no take nothing at all fi hail di king, him bless me inna what mi doing." After the contemplative song, the finale is none other than Tony Matterhorn's "Dutty Wine" – *Attitude gya!*

So there you have it – some great songs from Greensleeves' thirty year catalog in a very bizarre order. My suggestion: get the compilation if you don't already have these tracks, put it on your iTunes and get creative with your own playlists!



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