

BUCKET SPILLS!

Rob "Bucket" Hingley of The Toasters & NYC SKA September 8th 2000
Conducted at The Motel 6 Airport, Rochester NY about 10:30pm

Interview with Buck, take two. The first one we did with you was at Alfred University, in March 1996, so it was a little while ago.

RH: Alfred was a crazy college show. The kids were into it, and that was before anybody kind of knew what they were doing. Who was on the bill with us? Was it Bim Skala Bim?

You're thinking of the Buffalo State College show that November. Alfred was just Too Hectic and the Toasters... that was it. In that old rickety gym. Davis gym.

RH: Yes

Work on Hard Band For Dead had just been completed. That's kind of a long time ago depending on how you look at it.

In 2000, how's Dog Eat Dog going?

RH: Ummmm, slowly. That single was something we did in Europe to promote a European tour, and that eventually will get turned into a full-length album here, but I haven't really had too much time to get in and rehearse and practice, there's a lot going on so it's going kind of slow. Plus. I'm not really in a rush to get a record out at the moment anyway because of the market, the state of the market is a little uncertain.

Yeah really, what market?

RH: So I think it really doesn't matter if we wait. I'd rather wait comes here then... We played a couple of new songs tonight you might've heard that are gonna be off that, so slow and surely wins the race hopefully.

I heard the 4 song single from Grover, and notice on each of the Toasters albums you have a tendency to usually rework a song from the first Skaboom! record.

RH: What we normally try to do is to take a song that, 'cause now we play everything, the arrangements are different, the band is tighter, and we play things a little more uptempo. We normally try to take an old standard and do a more updated version. But I'm not quite sure which one we're gonna do on this record yet. So far we did Pool Shark, Talk is Cheap, Weekend in L.A., Razor Cut, so we'll take a look and see which one, maybe Run Rudy Run, we might do that update, because we don't actually have a version of that with a chat on it. We might redo that version, a Run Rudy Run revision.

The Toasters have issued albums not only on your Moon Ska label, but also on labels in Germany, Australia, Japan and Brazil, so there must be a demand in those parts of the world. Talk a little bit about that.

RH: I don't know... There's a really good scene in Japan, it's really difficult though. It's hard to deal with the Japanese market, 'cause you can't really sell them anything, you have to wait until they approach you. But we went over there last year [99] and played some shows with Rude Bones and Scafull King, who are like

a really, really great band, so that was great to go over there. Brazil, what can I say; that place is pretty wild, and so we had a good time there. (pauses) Only problem with Brazil is, we can't really afford to go anymore, the last time we went down we didn't get paid, so it's a rather expensive vacation. But it's great, I mean the kids down there go off and ska music and all those types of latin musics are so much more in the mainstream there, pandemically – as opposed to something that's like a fad, you know. People down there are so much more in tune with those types of rhythms, and those types of sounds. It feels comfortable to play it down there. We actually have a song about Brazil on our new record called Road to Rio, and it's gonna be a kind of a calypso-samba party song.

I think in America, ska especially, people get too concerned with the coasts, east versus west and don't pay very much attention to what's going on internationally.

RH: Well generally I think people kind of, are kind of interested in themselves, so what other people are doing is of relatively little interest to them, but it's... It must be said that ska music is definitely a global thing. The way people perceive it, the way people play it in different countries is really, really very acute. I think Brazilian bands have a lot more kind of rock and samba feel, so it's kinda cool to see the way that those guys kind of translate it and perceive it. As opposed to here in America, where I think people tend to get a bit too nitpicky about what it is, and so instead of playing music of what they think they feel, they play music that they think people like, or will like.

The formula, the 'ska' formula.

RH: Yeah, 'cause if they play music that they feel people want them to play, as opposed to playing something that's really coming out of them, ya know what I mean? So in that way, I think a great number of the bands I see abroad are much more into their music aspect of it, than you know, the "Here we are being cool" aspect of it. Like a band from Barcelona that comes to mind is Dr. Calypso, a really fantastic band but they play a lot of reggae and they mix in a lot of samba and meringue stuff. It's bands like that who can really play. But not just ska, they can play anything they want, you know. Those are the interesting bands for me.

What can you share about the European tours? And/or working with Richie Ring Ding? (chuckles) What's that?

And/or working with Richie Ring Ding?

RH: Funny guy, I mean anybody who gets up on stage and tells the audience "Watch me and learn", you gotta love a guy like that. But we all know about Richie, so Richie's a funny guy. And actually the first gig I played with him was 1987 in Bielefeld, Germany. This was I think the first time we went over there on tour, we did

4 shows and we played with the El Bosso and the Ping Pongs, the very very young, and a very much slimmer incarnation of the Doctor at that point. But now he has grown for lack of a better word... Grown into a...

(interrupting) But isn't it strange, haven't you noticed that in some way, the other bands to come out of Germany have his scent on it? He's either toasting on it, producing on it. Somehow he gets his hand in everything that comes from there. Germany.

RH: Well you know, it's kind of like a dog going around and 'pissing on his territory.

Yea, his job is having his scent on everything. I thought it was like a new rule, some new German export law, all ska that's gotta be touched by Him.

RH: Doctor Richie, him cut mi leg ya know?

Yeah, Richie's a good guy.

(laughter) As a performer, how much have you noticed that your concert audiences have changed in the last couple years?

I know it really has.

RH: One of the things that has happened is that it's gotten, I mean the ska bubble burst in terms of it being the "flavor of the week", so I think a lot of the peripheral audience for ska has filtered off to whatever is trendy now. I don't know, I don't listen to the radio too much, but like you said earlier, I think ska will go back to being and having a core audience, which hopefully will be bigger than the audience it had before its most recent, or the current "wave" of popularity, for lack of a better word. So I think it's good that a lot of new blood came in. Simultaneously, I think one of the things that has harmed the ska scene a lot is the fact that some people seem to think it's some kind of exclusive programme for them only and nobody else can come in. You have to have some new people coming in, otherwise it's not gonna go anywhere. I think the fact that it got a little younger is fine, 'cause you've got to have the next generation of kids that are going to keep it going. You know and so... The fact that it's reached out to more people is really good, because the broader base you have, the better. I think it's very healthy. But we'll see where it goes, it definitely is going to retrench and I think you guys have probably seen a lot of bands on a lot of labels sort of disappearing...

Yeah

RH: In a rather swift fashion; I think that trend will continue.

The previous time the Toasters were here in Rochester, last June you were guests at The Aloha Motel on Monroe Avenue

RH: Yea, that was real nice (laughs)

Across from the old Perkins. And while it certainly can't compare to this, what were

your impressions?

RH: Well what they have is this incredible like fifties bar in there... It would be an incredible video shoot, because it's this incredible 1950's rococo luau setting, we could not believe it. We had a good time at the Aloha Motel.

I don't think they realized so much that we were taking a piss out of them so much. There was this very sincere Chinese lady in there who was kind of misconstruing our warped sense of humor, but the Aloha Motel was really fabulous, I have to tell you.

That used to be a hangout for the mafia in this city until somebody was killed there. Brighton is trying to shut that down now for drugs and prostitution, along with The King James. Just thought I'd mention that.

RH: Well that's great. (laughs)

You're a self-proclaimed Darwin man. As a songwriter, what's your take on some of the religious themes within ska music?

Do you think there's a place for it?

RH: People can sing about what they want, I mean what the hell? You know personally I take a fairly dim view of religion, because it seems like a substitute for independent thought. But people can sing about what they want to sing about.

Why not you know?

On one hand there's the preachy bands, who coincidentally enough seem to all purposely distance themselves from the overall ska scene or fraternity / fellowship factor of it – they're more concerned with using the music as a vehicle to reach kids, and seem to care less about what it is they're playing.

RH: So they have an alterior motive?

Sure, because you don't ever hear them referred to as just plain old ska bands. Instead it's always the ominous sounding 'Christian Ska' bands

RH: Well in which case they're proselytizing, and who needs that?

Not me. Then on the other hand, you have all the old sixties ska stuff, where they sing the Old Testament. Psalms and such.

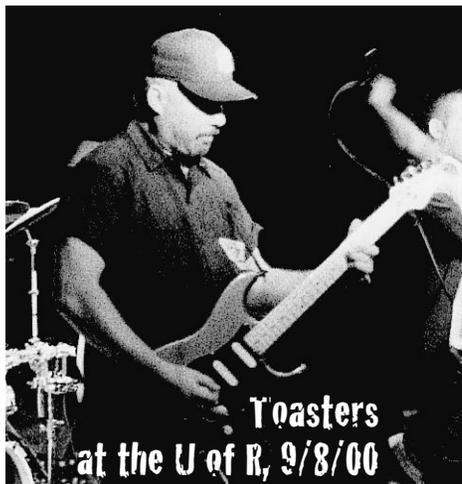
RH: Right, but what you have to understand with that is its context. A lot of those guys who became the first ska singers basically cut their teeth singing in church, and singing in the gospel choir. A lot of the um Rasta guys.

Toots!

RH: All those guys. They sang in the choir, and they're kind of ultra-religious down there [in Jamaica] anyway and so that's where it comes out of, but I think people can sing about what they want. If you don't like it, don't buy it. It's America.

Would that be the same for your thoughts on vulgarity in music? Do you feel that as a musician there's any need, or responsibility for you to be politically correct?

MORE ➤



RH: (sighs) Oh fuck that. Music is sort of like a mirror of society. And music therefore can reflect anything we do, and I mean we [Toasters] have a lot of vulgarity in our set, we use a lot of bad language, but its all.. It's not meant in a mean-spirited way, its meant in a fun way, and people just have to understand that. It's like... well whatever. We like to poke fun at the modus operandi of society and certain. So using some bad language is not like we've really tried to pervert the morals of the people coming to the show, it's just a form of artistic expression; or poetic license. So bugger off you twat! (laughter) **We do the television show, now and again we'll get feedback about content after 11pm. You know the program is good, but you say fuck too much.**

RH: You don't have to listen you know.

That's what I said, fuck off, just change the channel!

RH: We have so much regulation, and over-regulation in our lives. I mean pretty soon... Now you can't smoke, pretty soon you won't be able to drink beer, and after that... I mean what are these, the language-nazis? Tipper Gore and the rest of those assholes.

You have to be correct now. The last 5 years or so something has gotten into people's heads where I can't say this anymore, I can't do this. You can't do a thing anymore; you have to think about every single movement you make before you do it now.

RH: So it's turning us into this hyper-paranoid society where people can't really be humans you know?

That's it.

RH: That's what happens when you let lawyers and accountants run your life. We don't like those types of people and they can bugger off as well.

I think as we get smarter, as the religious people know, the more brains we come up with the less and less we tend to rely on religion. So then it's all this other bullshit that gets in the way.

RH: Well the thing is, if you examine all religions as a historical framework...

(interrupting) **It's a way to control people**

RH: It's... well number one it's a business, let's not have

any doubts about that, it's a great big business, and let's remember the Catholic Church is the biggest landowner in the world.

There ya go.

RH: It has its own bank, it has its own police force...

(overzealous interrupting) **It has its own city!**

It's own little sovereign nation!

RH: Essentially it's a corporation, and the quicker the people wake up to the fact that these people are you know, extorting money out of you under false pretenses... It's thud black. You die, you go in the ground and you get eaten by worms. That's actually what happens.

That's it and no one's gonna help you.

RH: If you want to go into that crazy little house on Sunday and sit on those hard seats and sing, and have a great time, that's up to you, but me I'd rather drink beer and... swear. That's as close to religion as I'll get.

In your travels, you've worked with a lot of people close to the music. Rumor has it, the heat wave of 1966 is what made the ska slow down to rocksteady. Our theory is that the producers thought the singers were getting too much power, so they exercised their control and changed the game. I asked Laurel Aitken that same question, he kind of looked at me, shook his head no, it wasn't the heat, but really wouldn't elaborate further. He was in England at the time.

Can you shed any light on this?

RH: Well first off, any time you ask any of those Jamaican dudes what happened, every single one has a different story. Every single one will claim that he is in fact the originator of it, and every single one of them will immediately turn around and diss everybody else. It's really hard to get any sort of informed opinion of what was happening there at that time. But I think what it was was just essentially a reflection of the fact that they had that upbeat rhythm and, I think the slow down was more based on the fact that they also had an economic collapse in Jamaica and everyone was depressed. Independence had worn off, the slower music, the more mournful, melancholy music was more of a reflection of the fact that they didn't have 2 pennies to scratch their ass with, rather than the heat. I mean in Jamaica it's fuckin' hot anyway. You know what I mean, so how much

"First off, any time you ask any of those Jamaican dudes what happened, every single one has a different story"

hotter could it get? I don't think it's the heat so much, it's the fact that everyone's broke and depressed, so maybe the music became a little more on the mournful tip because of that.

Now too, does anybody give any credit to blues guitarist Rosco Gordon for 'Rosco's Rhythm'? Or the formation of ska beat or whatever? In any part of the equation?

RH: Maybe, I mean the fact that Coxone's just done a recording session with him says something. I mean it's.. Coxone basically said, he told me that the first, he thought the first ska tune was Touch Wood by Delroy Wilson, er... Jackie Opel in about 1956. Or Push Wood. But Lester Sterling said, and he's the guy that came up

with the chop, the horn chop on the offbeat, and I asked him where he got that from and he said he got it from listening to the guitar player from the Boots Randolph Band, the Yakkety Sax guys. (makes noises) dut dut dut da, det det det, da. Well, if you listen to the guitar in that song, Lester said that's what he listened to to get the horn chop. It was from what that guitar player was playing. But it's like you ask different guys, everybody's got different stories, who knows, it just happened you know? Why do we have to know why it happened? Why are we so anal-retentive that we have to know? And then go back... So let's go back and be revisionist and rewrite history and be like total anal retentive!

A lot of the boring questions have already been asked. Yeah, and that's another thing too, we don't often get to talk to people that know more than we do.

RH: I mean it happened because they were playing it, it sounded good, so they did it. There ya go. That's why. That's it.

That's good, we can live with that.

RH: Yeah, maybe they were so drunk out of their minds on rum that they couldn't play fast anymore.

Who knows?

I thought the combination of all of it; the heat, the alcohol, the pot, we should come up with something that's easy to remember. The Jamaican music itself didn't seem like something totally new. They were always ripping off everybody else's stuff, taking little bits, claiming it their own, and never giving the person they ripped off any credit.

RH: Well that's pretty much par for the course. I mean a lot of the ska beats and ska tunes were covers and bites. It's like Mongo Santamaria probably had a lot more to do with ska music than anybody will admit, you know? But then it's like The Skatalites for instance, they have that one song... what's it called? Celebration ska, or the anniversary ska; the song's a Beatles tune!

That drives me crazy when I hear someone using a piece of something else, and you know what they're doing and they won't live up to the fact or even mention that lookit, this is as far as we go with our brain, so that's why we do this.

RH: Well according to them they all invented it, they're all the originator, you know. One time I had a conversation with Tommy McCook and he said he originated it, and I said well Tommy, you were like playing at a damn nightclub at the Bahamas until the thing was virtually over anyways, so what would you know about it? Know what I mean? It's like the only guy I think has any credibility is Lester Sterling, because he was the musical director for Prince Buster, and basically wrote most of those tunes or basically arranged them. He came up as a trumpet player in the army, and he played trumpet for Byron Lee and The Dragonaires, in that band and basically was the musical director there as well. So he wrote the music for Prince Buster who I think is one of the seminal ska guys and

he gets far less of a nod than he should. I think the Skatalites are totally overrated in terms of what they did. They were a bit after the fact, you know? Laurel Aitken was someone who people should pay far more attention to this guy. But by far, the most important guy for ska music is in fact a white guy, and his name is Chris Blackwell.

Island Records' founder

RH: Yes. He's the guy who basically took it to England, introduced it there, and if he hadn't done that then ska music would have gone away by now.

Yeah

RH: So first and most important ska guy, is in fact this one white dude called Chris Blackwell, so...

and he also gave us all those U2 records.

RH: Well that's kind of like a little bit after the fact. But U2 is not a bad band. I mean who would you prefer if you were locked in a padded cell? Would you rather listen to U2 or N'SYNC?

Right. Very true.

RH: (laughter)

As long as we've been talking about history, let's bring it back to you directly...

RH: Wait. Let me tell you about history, history is written from the point of view of the people who had to survive or outlast, or win and so by virtue of its own nature is false. Because if you think history really is only written

by the victor or the survivor; it's only half the

story. It's not the perspective of the guys who died or disappeared, it's the story of the people who lived and got to write it. So it's at least, only half the story. Now if you factor in human error, which is 2%... Alright, then that means it's at best 48 or 49% of the truth. Therefore, history is mostly a lie. Yeah, so when we talk about history, let's keep in mind that most of history is not true, just by definition. History is made of people's points of view and the thing is now, forty some years later, nobody was there, nobody was back in Jamaica, how are you gonna say if one of these guys said yea, I did this, I did that. Is he telling the truth?

Probably not. (laughs) Having worked with a lot of these guys personally, I'd say, hmmm, definitely not. So what's being put forward here as this "Great Golden Age of Jamaican music" stuff is in reality just a bunch of guys who hated each other scrambling and fighting with each other and doing whatever they could to rip off each other's tunes, or take away the musicians, or to get people to come to their studio or blah, blah, blah. Ask Jack Ruby [Jr.] about his father's sound system, but all those guys they're a very quarrelous lot. I'd very much suggest we not really go back and revise it to this great glorious golden age of people who were hanging out and having a great time creating this big glorious thing. I don't think it was like that at all.

Do you think those old Jamaican guys get kind of pissed off because they think they're the pioneers and so they are the ones that should in their minds be reaping the ska benefits now, and it's people like you that came 20 years later, setting up business on 'their' music?

CONTINUED ➤

RH: Well actually I set up business on MY music.

Yeah you did, but they're not thinking of it that way.

RH: Well, what's to stop them from doing that? I can't really be responsible for what they do or, more importantly, what they didn't do. I got into this music for whatever reason and I decided to make a go of it, you know, so I'm trying to help out a lot of those guys with records and some success.

Sure, if it wasn't for you in the U.S. doing what you're doing and what you've done, what's the next step from you, Jump Up! Records? We'd be fucked.

RH: *(taken aback by that last comment)* Well... Oh whatever. I did what I did 'cause I liked it.

I think you did it right too.

RH: I have nothing to say about what those old guys did or didn't do. Most of the time, they got ripped off by the guys producing the sessions and... which is a drag. Working for guys like Duke Reid, Coxone who really burned those guys pretty horribly and got them to just work for sessions, so they the players themselves don't own any of the publishing and those producers and their companies like Treasure Isle, Studio One got very rich on selling the rerecords to CD reissue people like Heartbeat and stuff like that.

Laurel. When he works now, he works because he has to doesn't he?

RH: Yeah

Not because he wants to, but because he has to. That's terrible.

RH: Well, again, that's what happens when you don't own any of your stuff. I mean the music industry kind of sucks because it's kind of like the

artist is traditionally really being taken advantage of at every turn. And it's not just ska music, look at all these really great R&B guys from the fifties and sixties. They haven't made a penny off a lot of the stuff they wrote. Like household tunes that you still hear now on the oldies station. The guys who wrote and performed those tunes are to this day still paupers.

That's why it drives me crazy if I have a CD or something and people want a copy of it, or a tape copy. For ska I say to them now, 'these guys only make a couple thousand copies, I ain't gonna make you a copy, go out and buy it for ten dollars!'

RH: There's a flaw in the way fans look at it, in the sense that they can't sort of put themselves inside the reality of the people who are out making it, and they just don't understand that maybe the guys who are playing the show also have to pay bills, and in order to go on tour a long way from home and do this, they have to make money somehow. So in a way people make a false

assumption that just because people who are in a band play music professionally, in some way they've "sold out". But that's just um, that's really just piss-poor logic essentially.

I think too, part of that might be most of the people that come and see this music are affluent kids from the suburbs that mom & dad take care of every detail in their life, and they don't even think about you and doing what you have to go through, because mom & dad give me everything I need.

RH: Well, they don't even realize that, they have it soft. I mean when I was at university, we had these guys we'd call three-year Marxists. Guys who'd get to college and all of a sudden become totally radicalized, say "We're gonna do this, we're gonna do that". We'd say to them, number one by being in college, you're in the top 2 percent of the privileged elite in the country, so in order for you to have these views, probably being here on a government grant and to sit here, you can't really have that view because you're a hypocrite. And to a lesser extent people who will criticize other people for being sellouts while at the same time will live at home and enjoy the munificence of their parents. You know, um... c'mon kids, take a look around. You have to understand sometimes people do things 'cause they really love it, and if..

Where in my instance, I feel fortunate that I've been able to make a career out of music that I like.

Right. You're lucky enough to not need those constructs other bands do to make you change your music to get what you want.

RH: Yeah.

In a way, you're at the top of the food chain. If you weren't in that position, then you might have to compromise and do things which you didn't want to musically.

RH: I wouldn't really say I was at the top of the food chain, but we've had a pretty good run and we're fortunate to be in a position where what we do is accepted and if we play the way we play, people still want to pay money to come see us. And that's for me the bottom line.

You've been around so long, or long enough that people know what to expect when they go see your band, they're gonna see quality. Members in the lineup my change, but the quality still remains.

RH: That's right. *(laughs)* That's what happens when you're a fossil! *(gets up for another beer)*



The petrification process has set in.

Ask me the controversial ones now.

As someone who built their label the old grassroots way, what do you think of new internet companies like the MP3.coms and Napsters? Earlier, Buford and I were talking about how [Moon's own former] Steve Shafer went on to start his own Seven Wonders of the World online music label. Is that, or are those types of ventures going to hurt you financially?

RH: In one way, and I appreciate what those guys are doing, but unfortunately, they [Napster and MP3], really didn't think about what they're doing. I think anything that harms the artist in any way is bad 'cause without the artist there is no music, and the fact that something that people create and have belong to them can be given away for free, simply because other people think they should have it – that's wrong. So I have to say that even though I like what MP3 and Napster has done in terms of rocking the control of the majors over their own product, in the process it's been harmful to artists. And Metallica, they really don't need the extra bucks, but smaller artists for whom a hundred dollars here, a hundred dollars there, it actually adds up and would be a big deal. I think it's a big disservice to struggling artists, whilst at the same time... It's really a double-edged blade. On one level it hurts struggling artists, but on the other level it does get them publicity. Still, I think these guys, Napster and MP3 are a little bit self-righteous when they complain that this is what they're legitimately doing, when in fact, they know full well they're ripping people off. And if they say they don't, or aren't, then they're telling you a lie.

We recently found Skaville USA 1 & 2 on CD, and the first disc is the original NY Beat: Hit & Run compilation, but this time it's from the UK. How did that work out?

RH: What was that on?

Oi/Ska in '89. From Wales

RH: Ah yea.

Aren't I being nitpicky now? *(laughter)*

RH: That's a, that label is a guy called Roddy Moreno. That was one of the first licensing deals we had in the UK, and that went rather well but it kind of fell apart when he refused to pay mechanical royalties to the artists. So he closed his label down, but he managed to get a bunch of releases out.

I read some time ago that was possibly going to be reissued as Moon's 100th anniversary release, with a detailed label history. What happened with those plans?

RH: We were trying to do that NY Beat, but since we were unable to locate a whole bunch of artists, and not really re-release something without permission, unfortunately, we had to bag that idea there. Too many people have disappeared, were untraceable and I didn't really want to release the record missing 3 or 4 songs. I'm afraid that's just no good, so people are just gonna have to scramble 'round for that one. That's... that seminal... That one is actually the first, if you want to use that word, that was the first "third wave" ska compilation. **Pretty important. Your latest UK venture is with Moon Ska Europe. It seems like there's a lot going on over there, what with Step One,**

Grover, Elmo, Burning Heart, and Pork Pie... Well Pork Pie's been around for a while, but especially Grover just kind of exploded.

RH: Elmo's their budget label, but Grover's a great label and they have a lot of great bands, I think that's the label to watch. Ummm. Moon Ska Europe is gonna probably... Again, it's a license affiliate so it doesn't really belong to us, but we just license a lot of our product to them. I think they're going to go more along the lines of the punk-ska stuff because that's really what the English market is demanding right now. It's good to see things picking up over there as they wane here.

When you're at Beers of the World, which aisle do you head to first?

RH: Beers of the World?

Will you be making a visit tomorrow?

RH: No. You see one of the best things about being in a band is that they give you beers to drink for free. That's the best thing, so I don't really have to go to Beers of the World – except in my mind. *(laughs)*

In 1996 we talked about Alanis Morissette, but now in 2000, what's your take on Britney?

RH: On Britney Spears? Well I don't know, a real basic idea? It's like I really don't like fast food, so why should I like fast music?

Or fast women

RH: Fuck women. Isn't she coming out with some football player?

I don't totally know

RH: I wanna see Venus Williams get the shit beaten out of her by Martina Hingis. Bitch fight! Lindsay Davenport. Lindsay Davenport kinda looks like this promoter in Pittsburgh called John — What the hell's his name? Anyway, I saw this picture of Lindsay Davenport in the paper that looked just like him. I said, oh my god. I'm gonna have to ask him if he's related.

(laughs)

Did Li' Abby really get pregnant?

RH: Yes she did and she moved to New Orleans and hasn't been seen since.

Too much too young. Anything else you'd like to elaborate on? I know you're real tired and want us to leave.

RH: I'm glad The Pietasters got dropped from Hellcat.

They did?

RH: Yes they did.

Who else did Hellcat just get? Django?

RH: Ummmm, yeah but his record is gonna be like electronica, so...

(disbelief) **Breaking news.**

Thanks very much for your time

RH: ...People don't like ska music anymore because they think they can make more money doing other things, so we don't like these people.

(laughter) **No, we hate those people**

RH: They can do what they want, you know. But it's interesting to see over the next 2 years who keeps playing the music they love and who's gonna jump off and chase the next trend.

I think the best of the best are gonna gather into a little group.

RH: Sail off to some remote desert island.

So long Buck! ■

The new Enemy of The System CD is scheduled for a March 2002 release on Asian Man Records. Look for it.

FOR MORE VISIT ONLINE — WWW.TOASTERS.ORG

FIRST APPEARED IN HOI POLLOI PRINT ISSUE # 7 11/01 • WASTE MORE TIME AT HPSKA.COM

Yeah, we missed out on the scoop of the ska century. Sure, in the interview we could have asked about all the bad news. Personal and financial betrayals of a corrupt manager he treated like a son, violated trust and the finances of an already ailing company. But we digressed, because we were having too much of a good time to bother, sorry we skipped over it for ya. Moon Ska had a boom then a bust, and like the countless other great labels in the music's history, is now a thing of the past. As fans, we wholeheartedly appreciate his work for ska in this country. (*The following was taken from www.moonska.com*)

R.I.P. 1983 - 2000 "Eclipse of the moon"



Eighteen years ago, in 1983, Moon Records set out (initially as Icebear), to press and distribute Ska in the USA. Since that time we have seen a phenomenal surge in popularity of the music we loved, metamorphs of which attracted more fans than ever before. Many of these new fans were able to discover the roots and culture of a musical style that reached back over forty years, and was in effect, one of the last unexploited styles of true indie music.

But as popularity waxed, so also has it waned, and with an ebttide of a proportion that none could have foreseen. The spotlight, for whatever reason we might speculate, has moved on. Fans and even bands have surged off to the next trend of the week. Regrettably insufficient support now remains to preserve the status quo. Against this backdrop I have decided to close the doors at Moon Records and concentrate on my own band, The Toasters..

This has been a tough decision to make, since one would always like to optimistically believe that an uptick is just around the corner. However a reality of circumstance, both financial and personal, has rendered it impossible to continue. This is a bad time for indie music and indie distribution in particular. Distributor failure, massive product returns, vanishing bands and evaporating sales have created a tsunami overwhelming cash flow and rendering further business operations impossible. On a personal level I have discovered the bitterest truth that there is no such thing as a friend in the music business. Personal and financial betrayals, have undermined my will to carry on.

There are, however, no regrets. We are grateful for having had the honour to support ska music and to release so many great artists. We have been lucky to have worked with so many dedicated people who did so much to keep the scene alive in the really dark days. Whereas it is easy to second guess, we always believed that we were the little label that could. We took a shot at taking Ska music to the next level and fell just short of the touchline. There are detractors - it's a free world, you can say what you like - but Moon always reserved the right to put out records for bands we admired, and for hardworking bands that we felt deserved a shot on account of their hard work. It was never about being trendy, it was about loving what we did. It was never about the money, we turned down lucrative deals from major labels on more than one occasion because we simply didn't see anyone in those organizations who really cared about the music. They were just looking at the dollars and we felt that would have been a disservice. The record will show that we tried our best and we will always be proud of that.

No cloud is, however, without a silver lining. There remain many quality bands who, I trust, will persevere. And perhaps there is yet a new label to rise from the ashes in the tradition of this great music and carry Ska forward into the dawning of a new era.

Thanks for all the support through the years, we couldn't have done it without you.

Bucket
New York
December 17th, 2000