



BIOGRAPHY

General Levy

As Ragga music finally made it into the mainstream in 1993 with **Chaka Demus & Pliers**, **Shaggy**, **Shabba Ranks** and many more storming the UK national charts, it was left to just one home-grown DJ to fly the flag for British Ragga music. A north-west London youth, **LEVY** began his career DJing as **GENERAL LEVY**, working his way through **Vigilante**, **Java** and **Robbo Ranx's Tipatone sound systems**.

London born, **Paul Levy** the younger of two brothers. Growing up, Paul constantly listened to his elder brother's records and audiotape collections. Recordings by great reggae artists like **Dennis Brown**, **Tenor Saw**, **Little John**, **Johnnie Osborne**, **Nitty Gritty**, **Frankie Paul**, **Barrington Levy**, **Berries Hammond**, **Wayne Wonder**, **Freddie McGregor**, **Yamie Bolo**, **Pinchers**, **Courtney Melody**, **Chuck Turner**, and the omnipresent **Bob Marley**. When he wasn't listening to records, he was immersed in live sound system-sound clash tapes. This was the beginning of **LEVY'S** musical journey.

When DJing became an integral part of the reggae fraternity, Levy was already listening to the like **Saxon**, **Kilamangaro**, **Coxsone**, **Peter Metro** of **Metromedia**, the legendary '**Eek A Mouse**' and '**Major Worries**'. Levy knew he had discovered his destiny...as he started to enter local competitions and to his amazement found that he could connect directly with the crowd and left them wanting more.

This elevated him to the notoriety to the likes of **Vigilante**, **Java** and **Robbo Ranx's Tipatone sound systems**. Whilst on the road with the sound system, this is where he truly learnt his craft as an M.C, prompting local producer **Lloydie Crucial** to give him his first record release. This was shortly followed by **Robbo Ranx's** who recorded the track **The New Cockatoo** on his label **Muzik Street**, which went out on in 1988. These records had local success and were pumped by local pirate stations, **Traffic Jam**, **Fresh FM**, **People's FM** and **Irie FM**. Now bubbling on the U.K Ragga underground scene, he swiftly made a move to South London's **Fashion Records**.

Gussie P, Fashion's in house producer, recorded and produced his debut album where he shared the honours with Jamaican superstar **Capelton**. On the album entitled '**Double Trouble**' culminated in a showcase of his diverse multi talent on the shores of Jamaica. Levy now found he flying the UK flag across Europe and the West Indies. He was now able to boost his income by recording numerous dub plate specials across the world.

The singles released on the Fashion Records following the album **Double Trouble** were; **World of Girls**, **The Wig**, **Original Length and Strength** and a collaboration with Jamaican artist **Cutty Ranks** called '**What Dem Ah Watch We Fa**' followed by '**Champagne Body**' produced by Jamaican producer **Bunny lie lie**.

He completed his first solo album in 1992 at the youthful the age of nineteen. In drafted in production duo **Sly and Robbie**, who recorded most of the track's on the album '**Grudge Me**', including **Guidance** and **Heat**. The album **Wickeder General** launched him as the UK's number one Ragga DJ. It was awarded Best British Reggae Album and also won Best British Reggae Single for **Heat** in 1992. Levy was also voted the Best British Reggae MC the same year.

He then signed a two single deal to the UK's Hip Hop label **Justice Records**, run by **Tim Westwood**. **Dem No Wicked** and **Dem No Bad** were the tracks released. This was Levy's first experience of working outside the reggae world, a refreshing challenge as he now shared the stage with top Hip Hop artists and exposed him to a brand new audience

Pete Tong, then A&R Manager of **London Records** licenced the album **Wickeder General**, which was then repackaged and remarketed with added bonus tracks,

This led to Levy signing a new album deal with **London Records**. His first release was a cover of **The Toots And The Maytals** track '**Monkey Man**'. The track was produced by the now infamous **Shaggy** producer '**Sting**'

Whilst working on his album for **London Records** he decided to co-write and experiment with alternative musical styles. During this time, he was approached by a young up and coming jungle producer named **Marlon Heart** a.k.a **M-Beat**, to collaborate on a track. Titled '**Incredible**' the track was released on the underground and went on to be one of the most influential tracks on the flourishing jungle scene. Once again **London Records** seized the opportunity, to licence, remix and repackage the track, thus helping the track and Levy gain national chart success. The notoriety that Levy received from the **M-Beat** collaboration was truly incredible, taking Levy to an international audience, and established him as a force to be reckoned with.

After this **Levy** completed the album for **London Records** which was entitled **90's Flava**, Whilst working on this album, Levy collaborated with fellow Ragga MC **Top Cat** on the album **Rumble In The Jungle** which took him on a tour of the Far East.

In 1996 Levy joined the label **Renk Records**, **M-Beat's** former label who were initially responsible for the track **Incredible**. This took him to Tuff Gong studio in Jamaica, once again working with **Sly and Robbie**. Jamaican producer **Gitzy** and **M-Beat** worked on the **New Breed** album, which was licensed to **Trojan Records**.

In 1997 **Levy** took the opportunity to tour the European circuit with the likes of **Chaka Demus and Pliers**, **Buju Banton** and **Brigadier Gerry**. This also gave him the opportunity to take a break from recording and to concentrate on writing new material whilst on the road.

After a bout of musical experiments with different genres of music, **Levy** went back to doing what he loves the most, 'straight up dance hall music'. This took him to Ajang stable where

he worked alongside new producer **Jermaine Ford** (son of **Brimsley Ford**, member of legendary British reggae band **Aswad**) bringing a fresh sound into the market place, he recorded tracks such as **Draw The Brakes**, **The Style**, **The Koo**, and **Taliban Slam**. At this stage in his career Levy's status was confirmed as a credible artist. Not only did he appeal to the mainstream, but could also satisfy underground Ragga fans

Levy has always shown enthusiasm to partake in experimental collaborations, having crossed different genres with the likes of **Heatwave**, **Desmond Decker**, **Aswad**, **Jamilia**, **Space Police**, **Da Rude**, **Apache Indian**, **Italy's 99 Posse**, **Shola Ama**, **Greeks rapper B.D Fox Moore**, **Richard Blackwood**, Jamaican dance hall songstress **Nicky Burt**, and Trinidadian calypso legend **Gypsy**.

Whilst working on his latest album Levy teamed with Asian superstar **Bally Jag Pal** and DJ **Zesus** and recorded **Shake What Ya Mama Gave Ya**, a **Ragga and Bangra fusion club smash**. This track added to Levy's portfolio, which again affirmed him as the UK's most versatile M.C. prompting East West Records to sign the project.

Shake What Your Mama Gave Ya! Is released March 7th 2004.

Discography:

Capleton Double Trouble (Gussie P. 1991)

The Wickeder General (Fashion 1992)

Wickedness Increase (FFRR/London 1993)

Top Cat Rumble In The Jungle (Glamma 1995)

New Bread Trojan 1997

East West Records 2003