



## EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

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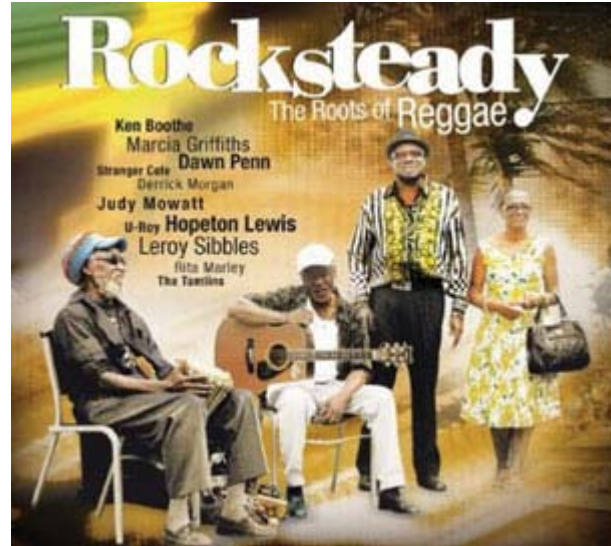
ALBUM REVIEWS

### Various Artists - Rocksteady

#### Rocksteady: the Roots of Reggae

Mary Christa O'Keefe

"Come on and dance to rocksteady," Leroy Sibbles croons invitingly on the opening track of *Rocksteady: the Roots of Reggae*. "Come on and move your feet." It's a frankly nostalgic opening, name-checking bygone giants like Dennis Brown and uniting all the clichés of the genre: people getting ready, music moving you and the remembrance of dances past—all set to a characteristically irresistible languid bobbing beat and brassy highlights. *Rocksteady* is a classic style of Jamaican pop from the mid-to-late '60s—pre-reggae and post-ska—and this album accompanies a documentary film that explores the history of the music. The record consists of almost all covers of standards, and was made in the Tuff Gong studios with a handful of veterans from the Kingston music scene, like golden oldie Hopeton Lewis and dancehall pioneer U-Roy, using genre-faithful techniques and instruments. Nonetheless, *Rocksteady* betrays its modernity through occasional over-polishing and tourist-pandering showiness on some songs, like the cheese-slathered "007 (Shantytown)." For the most part, though, the tracks range from perfectly serviceable to sublime (especially contributions by Judy Mowatt, Dawn Penn, and Gladstone Anderson). *Rocksteady* can be treated like the Buena Vista Social Club breakout record: a solid primer, but one that should be a guide to delving deeper and seeking out more of the original material.



#### Various Artists

*Rocksteady: the Roots of Reggae*

(Moll-Selekta)

★★★★•

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