

BRUTUS CROMBIE'S Reggae Spread

The world's number one reggae writer talks about
THE PIONEERS

THE IMAGE of Reggae has been quite a joke in the past, but with Brutus Crombie's regular features in RM, the interest being shown by other pop publications, and Dandy Livingstone and Judge Dread in the national charts, things are now looking much better.

Aside from the latter there is also the popularity of reggae albums such as the Junior Byles LP, "Beat Down Babylon," "From Bam-Bam To 'Cherry Oh! Baby'" (which contains "Pomps and Pride" — the 1972 Festival Song), and the new Boris Gardiner LP, "The Boris Gardiner Happening Is What's Happening" — all from band leader, businessman Byron Lee's Dynamic Sounds Recording Co. Add The Pioneers (Sidney Crooks, George Agard, and Loren (Jackie) Robinson, in the midst of their first bookings for the Terry King Agency, (they now handle Dandy, Judge Dread, Nicky Thomas, and The Pio-

neers) popped into RM offices long enough for me to scribble down some facts about themselves and the music that is all the rage with the younger generation these days.

If you think the Pioneers are one of the best reggae groups around — and if you've been to one or two of their gigs — then, chances are, you'll probably realise they are currently one of Jamaica's top exponents of reggae, having toured around Europe and appeared at all the major nightclubs and on all the important TV shows back in Jamaica.

Blending.

The group, together since the mid-'60's, has been working in Great Britain recently. And like pany. And The Pioneers (Sidney Crooks, George Agard, and Loren (Jackie) Robinson, in the midst of their first bookings for the Terry King Agency, (they now handle Dandy, Judge Dread, Nicky Thomas, and The Pio-

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ONE THING is always noticed by a cheering audience at a Pioneers performance: The Pioneers are really something else. Not simply three talented young men with considerable singing and songwriting ability, they are also individuals with interesting personalities that make them interesting off-stage people.

And always at the core of the Pioneers professional lives is their love of reggae music and their desire to produce a unique, non-imitative sound. And from the response to their discs, like "Roll Muddy River", the Pioneers have been extremely successful. They can please an audience with their wide repertoire and six changes of stage clothes — and go down a storm in first-rate ballrooms like Margate's Dreamland with their lively act, featuring several numbers from their "Yeah!" album. A sell-out crowd usually squeezes into the ballroom for their talent-



packed act. So it looks like there's no boundary lines for good Reggae artists and songs.

IT WAS a happy day for Reggae music when Sidney, George, and Jackie, who sing like a dream, left their native land for Britain and started the reggae boom back in 1969 with "Long Shot Kick The Bucket" and "Battle Of The Giants" — both discs found a goodly following among Crombie-coated Reggaeites on this side of the water. And for many months now, the astonishingly successful sounds of the Pioneers has captivated reggae enthusiasts from Land's End to John O'Groats, while picking up plenty of exposure (thanks to pluggers Clive Crawley and Brian Haynes) on radio

stations in many countries.

I spoke to the three-member group about one or two popular Jamaican discs, including Scotty's "Skanking In Bed", Zappow's "Nice Time", and Chenley's "To Be A Lover". I also told them Brutus Crombie would love to see Cynthia Richards perform at Kingston's famous Titi For Tat club; visit Duke Reid's Treasure Isle Records; chat with Cedric Warren at Dynamic Sounds; and enjoy a drink at the Aquarius night-club in May Pen.

Sidney Crooks, the 27-year-old leader of the Pioneers, smiled and summed up his listening habits in one sentence: "Yeah, man, I try to hear everything that comes out

of Jamaica — but," he added, "Today's choice of Jamaican labels — Jad, Jaywax, Fame, FRM etc — is the best ever. And whether you collect records by Count Ossie and The Mystic Revelation of Rastafari, Delroy Wilson, or Dennis Brown — you will always find plenty available from the Music City shops".

THUS, there can be no doubt at this point that the early prejudice that turned many would-be fans, most pop writers included, away from reggae music has dissipated, knocked aside by the pioneering work of the Pioneers and other fine artists such as Nicky Thomas, The Marvels, and Dandy.

Right On! Oo yea ... Rab ba ba bam bam!