



PLANETARY

JOHN BROWN'S BODY "PRESSURE POINTS"

Over 9 years John Brown's Body has established itself as the premier American reggae band, through constant touring, four popular studio albums, and one live release with a reggae legend. The band has been called the most original reggae band in the U.S., a moniker it takes very seriously as it unleashes its most significant release yet: PRESSURE POINTS.

They say that out of trials come great rewards. In the case of John Brown's Body, Tribulations indeed spawned this unique musical outfit. Born out of the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, JBB was the successor to Tribulations, an up-tempo reggae band that melded Island sounds to a harder edge. Tribulations enjoyed some modest international recognition, preceding the success of similarly conceived West Coast acts like Sublime and 311, before breaking up in 1994.

Kevin Kinsella, lead singer and chief songwriter of the group, formed John Brown's Body out of the ashes of Tribulations a year later. Founding JBB members Tommy Benedetti, Lee Hamilton, Josh Neuman, and Sam Godin were all road-tested members of Tribulations, well versed in the sounds of Jamaica. "The goal was just to strip out the rock guitar of Tribulations and get back to the classic compositional elements of reggae," says Benedetti.

JBB began performing in Boston, New York City, and Ithaca, building a fan base while focusing on evolving as a group and developing their repertoire. The group's first album, *ALL TIME* (one of *Rolling Stone's* Alternative Top 10 in 1996), was recorded in 1996 at Mang Studios in Boston, by engineers Craig Welsch and Josh Driscoll. These two soon joined JBB on the road as live sound engineers, adding notoriously mind-blowing dub effects to the group's live shows. A positive response to *ALL TIME's* release led the group to more touring, more writing, and eventually a second studio album, *AMONG THEM*. Recorded once again at Mang Studios (as well as at the aptly named Dub Farm), the album was released on Kinsella's own start-up label, I-Town Records. Around this time, JBB added trumpet player Paul Merrill, keyboardist/guitarist/vocalist Nate "Silas" Richardson and harmony vocalist Elliot Martin (formerly of Tribulations and a friend of Kinsella's since high school) to the line-up.

AMONG THEM led to a residency at the legendary NYC venue The Wetlands. It was during these shows that the group came to the attention of venerable independent label Shanachie Records. Within a few months, Shanachie signed John Brown's Body to a record deal, and re-released *AMONG THEM* (1999). JBB hit the road full-time in support, playing the Bob Marley Festival in Florida alongside Lauryn Hill, and making summer appearances at Reggae On The Rocks in Colorado and the Sierra Nevada World Music Festival in California. David Gould replaced Josh Neuman on bass, while Cristofer "C-Money" Welter replaced Paul Merrill (and continues to play trumpet, keyboards, and sing harmonies to this day).

For their next album, the group was looking for an experienced producer to help them take their sound a step further. They turned to Alex Perialis, who had seen success working both with metal groups (Anthrax, Metallica) and hip hop luminaries (Ginuwine, Missy Elliot). JBB and Perialis worked together in New York for a month

and the result was a hard-hitting group of songs that showed serious maturity in the group's songwriting and arranging. THIS DAY hit stores in early 2000.

JBB was forging its own path. The group opened for and befriended the likes of Burning Spear, Toots & The Maytals, Jurassic 5, and Michael Franti (who joined them on stage), as well as playing the best world music, jam-rock, and reggae festivals. A hallmark of the group has always been its devotion to playing strictly original material (with a notable exception being the American hymn "Peace In The Valley"), while most of its peers were content to cover Bob Marley songs and other reggae hits. The band was beginning to show that it had its own unique vision and the ability to help shepherd reggae forward in new directions. Around this time, trombonist and hand percussionist (and Boston native) Alex Beram was added to the line-up.

The band relocated to Boston in 1998; Boston had been Tribulations' home base for many years, and a second home for JBB. After making it official, the group was honored with a 2001 Boston Music Award for "Best World Music Act," and a 2002 Boston Music Award for "Best Live Act." Soon after, the band hit the studio to record its third Shanachie album, SPIRITS ALL AROUND US (2002). Musically, SPIRITS was a big step forward for the band. Blending classic reggae sounds with sonically adventurous material, JBB had begun to dabble in the style later dubbed Future Roots. The record hit radio hard, doing serious time in CMJ's Top 200, AAA, and New World charts. The group headlined nationally, all the while building a following in both the reggae world and the growing jam band scene. The line-up changed as well, as Scott Palmer (from DJ Logic's band) stepped in to replace Gould on bass.

I-Town Records released JUSTIN HINDS LIVE AT GRASSROOTS in 2003, featuring JBB backing one of its musical heroes, as well as Elliot Martin's 2002 solo album BLACK CASTLE. Martin's record went even further into futuristic, drum-and-bass-influenced territory, setting the stage for both the musical leaps on SPIRITS as well as the further evolution found on the newest record.

In late 2003, the band renewed their acquaintance with Easy Star Records vice president Lem Oppenheimer during one of their many shows in Charlottesville, VA. By Summer 2004, Easy Star (making a name for itself with its DUB SIDE OF THE MOON release) had signed the group and began working closely with JBB on their next album. The band meanwhile continued its intense touring schedule (opening for the Dave Matthews Band, among others), while working up the new material that eventually became PRESSURE POINTS.

PRESSURE POINTS is unique among JBB's albums in that the majority of the songs were written this time out by Martin, with Kinsella adding three classic tracks. The band once again called on Alex Perialis to co-produce and engineer the record, which helped anchor the music in the group's past while the simultaneously moving it forward sonically.

The combination of JBB's intense, organic musical attack and Martin's futuristic sequencing has resulted in the most startling and mature John Brown's Body album yet. Just as the clash of Jamaican dub and British songwriting produced major changes in the genre's direction in the late '70s, PRESSURE POINTS (and John Brown's Body) push reggae's envelope today.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE PLANETARY GROUP:

Ever Kipp / ever@planetarygroup.com

617-275-7677