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ARTS DEVO

by JASON CASSIDY • jasonc@newsreview.com



BIRD IS THE WORD *You'd never catch her dead disheveled/ She wore her buttons brassed and beveled/ Air host, Continental ... Houston bound*

That's how you start an album.

Those scene-setting opening lines from the song "Race the Sun," which kicks off *Beyond the Gate*, the new record by local singer/songwriter **Henry Crook Bird**, hooked me. The lyrics of the other five tracks have since tugged on my imagination as well, but "Race the Sun" (an airplane song about a stewardess outflying her home life, living new ones with each takeoff and landing ... am I close?) has so many lines that have gotten under my skin:

Up there time's a foregone end/ They can race the sun and nearly win/ Every touchdown's another one, amen, born again

Dude ...

Call her the shepherd of limbo with a seltzer in her hand

You're killing me, Hank!

The stewardess/shepherd is joined by many other curious characters on the album: the stripper mom with "a wit like a straight razor held to your throat" ("Tracks of Silver"); Magnus the mole ("Magnus"); and a narrator insisting "deep down within me is a green meadow in bloom" ("Green Meadow").

Bird was raised in Marysville, and he delivers his words with plainspoken vocals in a familiar Cali-rural twang that suits the folk storytellin' therein. His acoustic guitar finger-picking is as fine as his lyrics, prettying up the mostly slow numbers and adding a lively solo over strumming uke on the only uptempo song, "Magnus."

This is a wonderful treat from a local artist—maybe my favorite record of 2022 so far—and I couldn't recommend it more highly. Download a copy for only \$5 at henrycrookbird.bandcamp.com and join Bird (and fellow local hillbilly troubadour **Jeff Coleman**) for the *Beyond the Gate* release party on June 12, at 3 p.m., at **Secret Trail Brewing Co.**

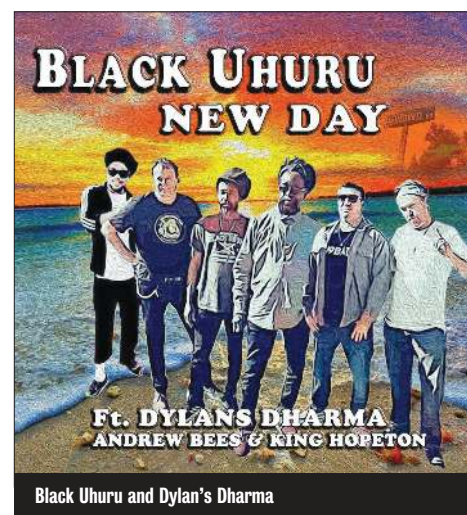


Henry Crook Bird — *Beyond the Gate*

FROM JAMAICA TO HELLTOWN Dylan's **Dharma** is killing it! Since 2019, the much-loved local rock/reggae crew has been working on music with the legendary **Ducky Simpson** of **Black Uhuru**, and last month, the collaboration yielded the album *New Day*, released in conjunction with the

50-year anniversary of the seminal Jamaican reggae/dub band.

The album was recorded with Dylan's Dharma collaborator **King Hopeton** at his studio in the Butte Creek Canyon community of Helltown (and hometown of many of the band members). The debut single, "Brand New Day," is a rerecording of a tune by Dylan's Dharma and features frontman **Dylan Seid** on vocals with Simpson. The accompanying video also stars a cast of Butte County characters and locales—including **LaRocca Vineyards**, the family operation of Dylan's Dharma percussionist/co-namesake, **Dharma LaRocca**. Find the video on YouTube (tinyurl.com/uhuruvideo) and the album at law-records.com.



Black Uhuru and Dylan's Dharma