## Grace Jones – Hurricane and Hurricane Dub (2011)

CD1: *01 – This Is 02 – William's Blood 03 – Corporate Cannibal 04 – I'm Crying (Mother's Tears) 05 – Well Well Well play 06 – Hurricane 07 – Love You to Life 08 – Sunset Sunrise 09 – Devil in My Life* CD2 [Dub]: *01 – This is Dub 02 – Williams' Dub 03 – Cannibal Dub 04 – Well Well Well Dub 05 – Crying Dub 06 – Hurricane Dub 07 – Love You to Life Dub 08 – Sunset Dub*
*play*
*09 – Devil Dub 10 – Hell Dub*

Grace Jones is giving away a teaser from her dub oriented remix album 'Hurricane Dub'.

Born in Jamaica, Grace Jones has never shied away from her West Indian roots. Incorporating Caribbean styles, her seminal early 80s albums made frequent use of the legendary studio at Compass Point.

Returning with her new album 'Hurricane' in 2008, Grace Jones took the echoes of dub to an intense standard. Inspiring some under-the-counter remixes, Digital Mystikz supplied a stunning re-working of 'Love You To Life'. Seemingly taking this on board, Grace Jones confirmed plans for a dub remix album earlier this year. Ivor Guest stood at the controls, with the singer's material given a complete re-working by the producer.

As ever, image is paramount to Grace Jones. The cover for 'Hurricane Dub' features an image from one time creative partner Jean-Paul Goude of the singer wearing a trademark Philip Treacy hat.

Set to drop on September 5th, ‘Hurricane Dub’ could well turn out to be a fascinating about-turn from Grace Jones. Giving fans a taste of what to expect, the singer has released new cut ‘Well Well Well Dub’ as a free download. ---repeatingislands.com

How long has Grace Jones been away from the music industry? Well, the single from her last album was produced by C&C Music Factory. Yes, it has been a long time, but then again, Ms. Jones has always done things on her own time. Hurricane was released in Europe in 2008. It has finally been picked up for North American release. As an added incentive, a disc of dub versions of each of the album’s nine tracks has been appended to the original album.

Jones is an icon. From Studio 54 gay disco heroine to androgynous New Wave dominatrix, from Andy Warhol girl to the world’s scariest Bond Girl, she is one of the last survivors from an era whose stars were not subject to the whims of reality television, internet trends, or targeted marketing. But, like all true pop culture icons, Jones is a icon first, and a model/actress/music-maker second. The quality of her albums has largely depended on who produced them. Her initial post-disco albums with reggae producers Sly & Robbie are the high points, with the Trevor Horn-helmed Slave to the Rhythm (1985) also of note. But by the late ‘80s, Jones’ music career had gone wayward, and relatively few noticed when she disappeared for 19 years. Hurricane‘s initial appearance prompted a fondness many people probably never knew they had. That’s quite possibly because Jones hadn’t changed a bit. The ass-kicking -diva behavior, eccentric sartorial getups, and the rock-solid physique were all still there, and this from a woman who was fast approaching 60.

Also, Hurricane is quite good. Namely, it’s good enough to warrant the inevitable “return to form” and “comeback” labels, good enough to make you appreciate Jones all over again. Take a step back, though, and it is far from perfect. At times it escapes embarrassment by the skin of its teeth.

Hurricane had its origins as far back as 1997. It was all newly-recorded by producer Ivor Guest in 2007, but still has a late ‘90s vibe. It’s full of dense, slow-moving, reggae-inflected trip-hop, with the type of “hard-rock” guitars Massive Attack showcased on their Mezzanine album in 1998. So, yes, the sound is a bit of a look backward. Then again, you have to wonder what kind

of trainwreck might have resulted had Jones been hooked up with an of-the-moment dance-pop production team. Guest's production, featuring playing by much of Jones' old gang, including Sly & Robbie, allows Jones to sink in and simmer.

Sometimes too much so. Tracks like "This Is" and "Corporate Cannibal" play far too much into Jones' persona as the over-the-top, slithering, hissing she-devil who did the voiceover on Arcadia's "Election Day". Some of the lyrics do her no favors. "This is a voice, these are the hands / This is technology mixed with a band," Jones says on "This Is", as if the concept had just occurred to her. "Corporate Cannibal" takes a too-obvious swipe at heartless CEOs. "You won't hear me laughing / As I terminate your day," Jones says, as the heavy-handed music sounds for all the world like a Flight of the Conchords-type parody.

These caricatured moments are juxtaposed with some disarmingly personal statements. "I'm Crying (Mother's Tears)" is Jones' tender, naked ode to her mother, while "Well Well Well" addresses the proverbial Going Home. The best track here, though, is "Williams Blood". Again, Jones celebrates her mother, this time paying homage to the musical and nonconformist tendencies the elder Jones (nee Williams) passed down to her daughter. The song is probably the most accessible one on Hurricane, but it also makes the best use of dynamics. The soaring chorus, with backing from old Prince hands Wendy & Lisa, has a soulful, gospel flavor, while the refrain employs heavy, chugging guitars. It's a great showcase for exactly what Jones is capable of. After all, shouldn't such a free spirit be allowed to cut loose on her own record?

As for the dubs, they are not radical re-workings but rather echo-laden instrumental versions in the traditional reggae sense. They're nice for speaker rattling, and they showcase the careful production, but they're not exactly a clincher for those who have already spent money on Hurricane. When you buy a Grace Jones album, you're paying for Grace Jones, period. And Hurricane gives you plenty of Grace Jones, with all the best and worst that name implies. It's nice to have the singer back in the studio. It's great to see the icon back on the job.
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