



I came from nothing. I used to take a donkey to school, you dig?

CALL TO ARMS

Due here for the Raggamuffin festival this month, Wyclef Jean's first priority is to help his homeland of Haiti, writes **Sally Browne**

WYCLEF Jean's latest release is called *From the Hut, to the Projects, to the Mansion* – a title that sums up the former Fugees star's unusual life.

He grew up in Haiti, living in an environment with no electricity or running water. When he was aged 9 his family moved to "the projects", the housing estates of Brooklyn, where he was shot at and witnessed his cousin's death.

In later years, the hip-hop star and producer has lived the high life, reaping the rewards of multi-platinum sales of his own solo and Fugees records.

But Jean is very much in touch with his homeland – he visits Haiti regularly and runs the charity Yele Haiti, in which he constantly campaigns to raise awareness and money for his impoverished nation.

His commitment to Haiti has been highlighted by his response to the devastating earthquake that hit the island last week.

Jean has called his fans, or "warriors" as he calls them, to arms, asking them to donate \$US5 (\$A5.38), via their mobiles, to his charity at Yele.org to help the victims.

His method of communication is Twitter – where, he says, he's able to directly communicate with his fans.

"Warrior is when you rise to the occasion," he said in an interview before the earthquake.

"You go from nothing to somebody, and a warrior is basically when people count you out, when people say it's over for you, and that goes for anything. You could be a great

businesswoman and they count you out. Those that have been counted out and have risen to the occasion will be the ones who will be the leaders of the new generation."

Jean, who was on the phone to a friend in Haiti when the earthquake struck, has more than one million followers on Twitter and has been posting updates constantly.

His call for donations became one of the most popular topics on the site as fans "retweeted" the message, passing it on by the minute.

"For me, Twitter is my communication, my platform" he says.

"I use Twitter because Twitter is the way I can communicate directly to you and you can know, 'OK, Clef's got a movement, tell the warriors', and 'Clef's just told me to go to wyclef.com and I can hear some new music without waiting for the label.'"

Prior to Haiti's devastation, Jean had been working on a new album – his first self-titled album – which is due out later this year.

The record will feature guests including Natasha Bedingfield, Lil Wayne and Estelle.

At the end of this month he will fly to Australia to headline the Raggamuffin Festival, where he will join former Fugees mate Lauryn Hill and old pal Shaggy as well as other artists including Sly and Robbie, Julian Marley, Sean Kingston and Blue King Brown.

The reggae fest is now in its third year – and reggae is very much the music that Jean grew up on. While his father, a preacher, enjoyed gospel

The Beach Boys

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CD reviews

POP

MTV Unplugged

Katy Perry
(Capitol/EMI)

★★★★☆

Unlike most of her generation, Perry can actually sing. Hard to believe, yes, but impossible? Apparently not. With her synthesised tracks and bouncy numbers, it is quite easy to pass Perry off as another "act", with a lot of distractions and no real singing. However, *MTV Unplugged* proves otherwise. With songs from her album, *One of the Boys*, Perry produces this semi-acoustic album for an MTV performance. Perry even adds a classic sound to her songs. *I Kissed a Girl* sounding less like the original pop tune and more like a Michael Buble duet. Perry also covers Fountain of Wayne's *Hackensack* and includes a new track, *Brick by Brick*. *MTV Unplugged* is a standout performance, showing Perry's vocal versatility.

Matilda Mornane



POP

24 Hours

Tom Jones
(Liberator Music)

★★★★☆

Tom Jones is almost 70, but he's still a devilish dude with a big, raw bellow and a hunger for relevancy. He's reinvented himself in the past by mixing it with the young dudes, and here he goes again. For the first time in his life, he's co-writing the songs, but with the help of Kara DioGuardi and other young writers and production from Future Cut. Most of it sounds like it was given birth sweetly in the 1960s, with big brassy arrangements, strings and sexy backing vocals given the modern touch with gritty drums. It's not all about sex. Jones offers a couple of almost-too-honest confessional ballads. There are covers, too, such as Tommy James's *I'm Alive*, which, with Jones's screaming vocals, is quite a statement.

Bryan Patterson

