

# Jammin'

with

## Steady Groove

By Steve Cooke  
and Tarsha White

"Mike check, one-two! Mike check, one-two!" says Keiwane Powell, as he listens for his voice in the head phones. He is sitting in the engineering section of ECSU's recording studio.

"It's on, man," says Stephen Talley, from the control room. "Just be ready when the music starts."

Talley and Powell, two members of the ECSU-based group, "Steady Groove," are hard at work on recording their new song, "Wamack."

"But I can't hear myself!" says Powell.

"OK, OK, we'll check the levels again."

As student engineer Arian Mallory presses a flashing white button on the studio's console, a mid-tempo reggae style beat pumps through the sound system, giving Powell the motivation he needs to demonstrate his unique style of rap.

"Don't let your girl go-a Wamack! Na-na-na Don't let your girl go-a Wamack."

Meanwhile, Talley is checking out the microphone levels on the recording console to make sure that every lyric comes out clear.

Powell wrote the rap song, which is heavily influenced by Jamaican reggae, for the "guys in ECSU's Wamack Hall," he says. "The song addresses the issue on campus that all of the girls (of ECSU) think that all of the guys in Wamack are all after one thing, and it's not like that."

Wamack also was written "to give the guys credit for dealing with the overcrowded conditions," Powell adds.

"I think that the song is good and gives people a different view of Wamack," said a resident of the dormitory.

Keiwane's brother, Umoja Powell, a senior at John A. Holmes High, is the primary rapper on the song. He is helped out by Keiwane and McGrue (Book Luv) Booker, Adam (Bart) High, Terri Lewis and Kurt (Asheville) Gordon.

The background percussion is provided by a drum machine.

Keiwane, a freshman from Ocho Rios, Jamaica, is a Music Industries major who wants to use his degree "to bring reggae music to an international scene." He also wants to see that reggae music receives "its proper respect."

Powell says he first got interested in music through the influence of his father, who plays lead guitar, piano and sings, and his mother who plays bass guitar and piano.

Powell says that the influence of reggae in the US differs from its influence in Jamaica because "a majority of the people in the US don't understand the words; they just like the beat but in Jamaica the people understand the words and like the beat and have a higher appreciation for the music."

Like Powell, Talley's interest in music comes from his family.

"My family loves to sing," he says. His family primarily sings gospel and church songs.

Talley, who plays drums, says he is the first instrumentalist in his family. A Music Industries major, he plans to use his degree "to bring the quality back into music. I want to focus more on the instrumentalist instead of the drum machine and an individual."

A week after the initial recording session Talley and Powell return to the ECSU Music Department's studio to work on remixing the drum machine track for "Wamack." They are joined by other members of the group, Amanda Freeman, Kimberly Hall and Josephine Artis, backup singers for the group, and Jerald Robertson, a guitarist.

Talley is using a keyboard to experiment with different sounds. The drum track is accented by such devices as a "high hat," a pair of cymbals opened and closed by a pedal. Other sounds include bells, a "kick drum," and bongos.

While Talley and Powell concentrate on the task at hand, the background singers talk to a visitor about their lives.

Freeman, a senior Music Industries major from Windsor, says her interest in music began with singing in church. She



Keiwane Powell, a freshman from Jamaica, is the songwriter for Steady Groove, a band made up of ECSU students. Two of the group's songs can be heard on WRVS.

later performed in ensemble choirs. She plans to use her degree to work with a record company or to own her own music store.

Hall, a sophomore from Merry Hill, N.C., is one of two members of the group who is not a music major. An elementary education major, she says her interest in music comes from "always being involved in music in high school" and taking piano lessons for six years.

"I love music," she says. "All types of music appeal to me, and that's why I enjoy it."

Jerald Robertson, a freshman from Manteo, N.C. majors in music business. The band's only white member, Robertson's interest in music comes from playing guitar for three years and from performing in a few amateur bands. He came to ECSU to learn more about music and the music business.

"I never had a formal music lesson until I came to college," he says.

Artis, a junior elementary education and psychology major, says that her musical influences came from singing in church and from her grandfather and father, who had their own gospel music group.

Steady Groove was originally conceived by students in the Music Industries Club. Powell says their songs and recording projects have been helped by department chairperson Dr. Willie Sullivan, and by Dr. Scott Frederickson and Barry Hill of the ECSU Music Department.

This project also helps as a learning experience and "hands on" training for students in the music merchandising and music engineering classes by allowing them a first hand look at all of the aspects of the recording business.

"Wamack," which will be played on WRVS, is the group's second original song. It follows, "The Harder You Fight," also written by Powell.

"The Harder You Fight," a mid-tempo rap song with a heavy emphasis on drums and bass guitar, has a clear message of love, peace and unity.

The song begins with:

"As we come down toward the fear of 2000, we must recognize that despite our technological achievements and advances, there is a need for Godly love and understanding. Fear not the power of nuclear energy, because nothing can stop life but time. According to prophecy and history, after 2000 years of blood, sweat